

# NST

## Nature, Society, and Thought

a Journal of Dialectical and Historical Materialism

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### NST

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Nature, Society, and Thought

# NST

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a Journal of Dialectical and Historical Materialism

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## Defining “Terrorism” Danny Goldtack

In his time Bertrand Russell invented what he used to call “emotive conjugations,” for example, “I am firm. You are stubborn. He is pig-headed.” This suggests an emotive conjugation relevant to contemporary geopolitics: “I am a freedom-fighter. You are a guerrilla. She is a terrorist.” Certainly all of us who are not pacifists are apt to join in taking our hats off to any freedom-fighters. And practically all of us join in reprehending terrorists. According to the cynical, freedom-fighters and terrorists really amount to the same thing, only with a value judgement shift from plus to minus.

Is it possible to avoid such hypocrisy without adopting the stance either of pacifism or of “anything goes” amoralism here? Can we somehow define “terrorism”—that is, what the ethical noncognitivists used to call the “descriptive meaning” of the concept—in such a way as to make clear the reprehensibility of terrorism, in contrast to some other acts of war?

I am simply assuming here, as against amoralism and pacifism, that some but not all acts of organized violence really do merit the sort of near-universal condemnation evoked by the word “terrorism.” This is not to suggest that all evil acts of organized violence should be called “terrorist,” still less that nothing could ever be morally worse than any act of terrorism.

“Acts of war,” I think, is indeed the proper heading to pursue this inquiry under. Like all who wage wars, whether offensive or defensive, terrorists use violence so as to compel the acceptance of certain political results. Sheer senseless slaughter, motivated by psychopathology or by revenge, say, without any political goal in view, is hardly terrorism.

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Motivations of psychopathology and revenge are certainly prominent enough among terrorists, and the political goal may, to an outsider, be patently unrealistic or even rationalized, but in the absence of any political goal whatever, it seems a misnomer to speak seriously of any such “-ism” as “terrorism.” Should we add that, besides being politically motivated, “terrorist” acts are always, from a legal point of view, crimes? Laws, of course, are made by winners, as the old epigram reminds us:

Treason doth never prosper: what’s the reason?  
For if it prosper, none dare call it treason.

Unless we are willing to concede to the cynics that might makes right from a moral as well as a legal point of view, we ought to be wary of any definitions of “terrorism” which confine it simply by stipulation to acts of violence against an existing state. There is apt to be more than a little manipulative “persuasive” definition involved in such stipulations. In Washington today there is no small interest in directing public condemnation specifically onto those who use violence against existing governments—at any rate, such existing governments as are currently friendly to the government of the United States.

Here, for instance, is a 1983 definition of “terrorism” from the Department of Defence:

The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence by a revolutionary organization against individuals or property with the intention of coercing or intimidating governments or societies, often for political or ideological purposes.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, almost any offensive military action whatsoever is meant to attack certain “immediate victims” in order to intimidate the leaders on the enemy side into surrendering or making concessions: for instance, counterattacks against armed aggression are apt to be intended, if possible, to intimidate the government of the aggressor state into calling its invasion off. Note the specification of “a revolutionary organization” here. On the one hand, that rules any “counter-revolutionary terrorism” out by definition. On the other hand, this definition makes George Washington a “terrorist.” He certainly did lead a revolutionary organization in the unlawful use of force or violence with the object of coercing the British government for a political purpose (independence). This definition is rather an extreme example.

But, more generally, in the verbal output of so many self-appointed “anti-terrorism experts” today, the smug double standard is all too



transparently obvious. Why, we ask, is it "terroristic" to place a bomb on a plane, but not "terroristic" to drop a bomb from a plane? Of course, the people riding on a plane are usually going to be more affluent individuals, by and large, than those residing under a bomb-dropping plane. The cynical view exists that "terrorism" is nothing but the term of moral censure which the world's haves employ to cover all acts of war against them by the world's have-nots.

But such a view is over-simple. What is called terrorism offends the conscience of practically all—not just haves and their supporters. To be sure, from different quarters quite different things do get called terrorism. But it doesn't follow that nothing *really is* terrorism. The key to delineating the proper concept of terrorism will be to follow the thread of the near-universal moral condemnation, insofar as it is justified. The object will be to identify a subclass of acts of war which really are morally objectionable for a special distinct reason.

At that rate, the overall justification, or lack of it, of the war or war-aims in furtherance of which the objected-to acts are performed will not be the issue. Arguably all acts in furtherance of an unjust war are morally unacceptable. Terroristic acts will have to be unacceptable for some further reason having to do with the specific sorts of acts that they are. In that case, acts having the specific character in question, even in furtherance of a just war, might be unacceptable because they are terroristic. And other acts of war, whether engaged in while fighting a just war or an unjust one, might have a specific character making them morally abhorrent even if they didn't have the specific character of being terrorist acts.

Terrorism has something to do with terror, I suppose. I take it that mass terror is its express aim. Any side in a war, of course, will seek as far as possible to paralyze the other side with fear. The specific reprehensibility of terrorism consists in the deliberate attack on civilian targets not directly involved in the war effort in order to spread wholesale terror among the ordinary population for the sake of securing whatever political end is in view. "Terrorism" is a species of crimes against humanity, morally speaking if not legally, and the nub of the offence is the deliberate aiming at civilians not directly involved in the opposing war effort. We are in the general area called that of war crimes by international lawyers, who are accustomed to cite laws of war prohibiting or severely limiting attacks upon civilians.

We are also in that general area called by traditional Roman Catholic moral theory the realm of "double effect." Roman Catholic moral theory sharply distinguishes between aiming at an evil, for whatever desirable or undesirable end, and merely bringing such an evil about as

a foreseeable or even foreseen byproduct of action taken in furtherance of an otherwise acceptable end. If the end being sought is not actually meant to be caused by the evil in question, even though that evil can be expected to result from the means selected, as a distinct byproduct, the action taken may be morally innocent (according to traditional Catholic moral thought) where it would not be innocent action were the evil in question instead being specifically aimed at, even if only as a means to an otherwise acceptable end. According to a more consequentialist view, the only duty is to do, as far as possible, whatever will secure the net maximization of good results. From such a consequentialist viewpoint, the distinction between bad results actually aimed at and bad results merely foreseen as the indirect byproduct of activities aimed at other results, is a distinction which makes no real moral difference. From that point of view, "double effect" is simply double-talk. If it is immoral specifically to aim bombs at a hospital, is it not immoral likewise to aim bombs at an adjacent military target knowing full well that their successful detonation will destroy the hospital also? Doubtless this often is the case, but I am not convinced that there is never something specifically reprehensible about *aiming* at a definite evil result, whether for its own sake or as a means to something else, in contrast to merely accepting such a result, while actually aiming elsewhere.

In any case, the reprehensibility of terrorism consists in aiming specifically at civilian targets not directly involved in the opposing side's war effort in order to spread massive terror among the general population in furtherance of whatever political result is being pursued.

With this understanding of "terrorism," the distinction still exists between what has been called retail terrorism and wholesale terrorism, the latter practised primarily by governments waging a certain kind of war. We could call it Blitzkrieg war, in memory of Guernica and Rotterdam, which certainly do fit the definition of "terrorism" just given. But so do the cases of Dresden, Tokyo and Hiroshima. There too you had the definite targeting of ordinary civilians in order to further their enemy's war-aims by producing massive terror among them. The same thing obviously applies to the wholesale antipersonnel terror-bombing of Vietnam, South and North, with which the United States attempted to make the Vietnamese surrender in the late sixties and early seventies.

Let me close with some remarks on military strategy. Blitzkrieg warfare did work most impressively in Rotterdam and perhaps in Hiroshima, but not in London, Berlin, or Tokyo, where it only stiffened the

other side's resistance. It appears that (as the very name "lightning war" implies) it probably has to be part of a sudden short-sharp-shock to succeed. In a protracted war it is self-defeating. The opposing population is aroused, not terrorized. Its morale is strengthened, not weakened, the longer the process goes on. That is why small-scale, retail terrorism is so glaringly ineffective around the world. And even larger-scale foreign-financed terrorist banditry has failed to bring down the governments targeted.

Let us now contrast this phenomenon with that of people's war. This is war fought not merely on behalf of an entire people but by that people itself, or at least its majority. Such was the war of national liberation led by General Washington. Such was the long-drawn-out war of liberation fought by the Vietnamese people against Japanese, French, and finally U.S. imperialism. To quote Mao Zedong's famous words, in a people's war guerrilla partisans are like fish and the people like the sea. For the guerrillas depend on the people for recruits, for food, for information on the movement of government forces, and for keeping their own movements secret from those government forces. The government forces are for a long time much stronger than their opponents—more numerous, better armed, with much better transport and communications—and thus in a much better position to terrorize the local population. The main thing the freedom-fighters have going for them on the other side is popular support. Otherwise their cause is lost, they are like fish out of the sea. In these circumstances what kind of military sense does terrorism make? On the other hand, to cow a subject population, will not massive terror tend to serve the interests of a military occupation or a military dictatorship? These strategic reflections ought to qualify our recognition that the reprehensibility of terrorist military means is in principle independent of the justice or injustice of the war being waged.

*Department of Philosophy  
University of Toronto*

## **NOTES**

1. Unfortunately, hours of library searching have failed to track down this quotation, taken from an unreferenced background briefing paper distributed at

a Church conference held in the United States in the mid-1980s. However, my research assistant did succeed in digging up the following—which is almost as good (bad)—from *Patterns of International Terrorism: 1980*, a research paper issued by the C.I.A.'s National Foreign Assessment Center:

Terrorism: The threat or use of violence for political purposes by individuals or groups, whether acting for, or in opposition to, established governmental authority, when such actions are intended to shock or intimidate a target group wider than the immediate victims.

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# **Nationalism and Ethnic Rivalry in the Early Twentieth Century: Focus on the Armenian Community in Ottoman Turkey**

**Berch Berberoglu**

The recent upsurge in nationalist movements in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe on the one hand and the protracted national liberation struggles in the Third World on the other have reaffirmed the importance of the phenomenon of nationalism as a decisive factor elucidating the analysis of ethnic conflicts and rivalries which take place within the broader context of class relations and class struggles in society.

This paper examines the role of ethnic minorities in Third World social formations and the political implications of their position in society vis-à-vis the rise of nationalism in these formations. Focusing on Armenians in the Ottoman social formation in the early twentieth century, the paper examines the class structure of the Armenian community, their position and role vis-à-vis European capital and the Ottoman state, and their relations with Turkish capital, as well as their political position in the balance of class forces and class alliances within the context of the development of Ottoman economy and society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To place the Armenian community within the proper social context of late Ottoman society, comparisons are also made with other (mainly Greek and Jewish) minorities concentrated within the immediate domain of the Ottoman central state.

The purpose of such analysis is twofold: (1) to delineate the class

position and role of minority ethnic groups in general and the Armenian community in particular in late Ottoman society; and (2) to explain the rise of Turkish nationalism ushered in by the Young Turk revolution of 1908 and the subsequent hostilities towards Ottoman minorities, especially Armenians, that led to the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians in 1915—the first genocide of the twentieth century committed against a people with the premeditated purpose of exterminating an entire ethnic population.<sup>1</sup>

The implications of this analysis go beyond attempts at understanding the Armenian genocide as such; they help place in the proper context the subsequent rise of Kemalism in post-Ottoman Turkey and the continued oppression of other ethnic minorities in Turkey to this day, including the Kurds, the Greeks, and the Jews, as well as the Armenians. Moreover, an understanding of the roots of nationalism and ethnic rivalry in late Ottoman society and modern Turkey may help us understand the phenomenon of nationalism in general and its rise in other formations undergoing a similar experience throughout the Third World.

### *Two alternative theories of nationalism and ethnic conflict*

There are two broad theoretical approaches addressing the rise of nationalism and ethnic conflict in the Third World. In their general outline, these can be referred to as: (1) the collaborationism thesis; and (2) the ethnic-rivalry thesis.

Although the Ottoman Empire evolved at an earlier period and is generally viewed as occupying a different historical position in the Middle East, the fact that it was dominated by Western Europe and was turned into a de facto semicolony ruled by a centralized Ottoman Palace bureaucracy, places it in a situation similar to that of many contemporary neocolonial Third World states dominated by imperialism. For this reason Ottoman Turkey qualifies to be examined on the same basis as contemporary neocolonial states in the periphery of the world capitalist system

### *The collaborationism thesis*

One approach views ethnic minorities in the Third World (especially those belonging to a culture, religion, and language group other than that of the locally dominant “race”) as dependent on and collaborating with imperialism. This is explained in terms of the prominence of some segments of these ethnic groups—large landowners and



merchants involved in import export trade—who have established contact with Western imperialist centers, and, through their key position in the economy, have cultivated a collaborative relationship with the local central state subordinated to (or willingly allied with) foreign capital and the imperial states (Yin 1983; Leys 1975; Keyder 1987).<sup>2</sup> Through the intermediary of these powerful landed and commercial interests, other remaining classes and sectors of minority ethnic groups are integrated into a broader cultural and social relationship with the imperial centers that places such groups in a position that is more in line with the interests of external forces than with local “indigenous” classes and groups who otherwise constitute the majority of the population.

Such a situation, according to this theory, leads these ethnic minorities to identify their interests with those of imperialism, which, through its control of the neocolonial state apparatus, turns the country into an appendage, i.e., an extension of its interests. As a result, local ethnic minorities, led by their dominant classes, become the targets of local nationalist/anti-imperialist movements as betrayers of the national interest and as agents of foreign capital and imperialist interests, who historically, have had a heavy hand in the control and exploitation of the labor, resources, and wealth of the nation.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the diverse cultural, religious, and other identifiable characteristics of these groups result in the reinforcement of such resentment toward the minority ethnic communities and thus fuel deeply rooted feelings of nationalism and ethnic chauvinism (see Gardezi and Rashid 1989; Amin 1978; Ake 1978).<sup>4</sup>

In this view of ethnic relations in the Third World minority ethnic groups (especially their dominant, economically powerful classes) are characterized as collaborators of imperialism against the national interest—a characterization which has given rise to nationalism, and, following a successful nationalist revolution, has often resulted in mass deportations, severe repression, and, sometimes, the extermination of an entire people. Thus, in the Ottoman context, Armenians, together with Greeks and Jews, were viewed by Turks precisely in these terms.

Evidence in support of this argument has been provided in terms of the key position of Armenian (and other ethnic) landlords and/or merchants and their comprador status vis-à-vis foreign capital, hence their intermediary role with imperialism and the Ottoman Palace bureaucracy (see Issawi 1980). The riots and subsequent massacres of Armenians in the late nineteenth century and, in a more open and violent form, the mass genocide inflicted upon them later with the

accession to power of the ultranationalist Young Turk regime in the early twentieth century, culminating in the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians in 1915, can thus be seen as an extreme response to the “collaborationist” characterization of segments of the Armenian community in Ottoman Turkey (Lewis 1961, 350; Chaliand and Ternon 1983). Such collaboration with European imperialism, together with the struggles for Armenian self-determination and national autonomy within the Ottoman Empire during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is said to have prompted the events that ensued in the final phase of collapse of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>5</sup>

The political implications of this view of ethnic conflict in semi-colonial social formations like Ottoman Turkey, point to the “reactionary,” “collaborationist,” and “proimperialist” nature of dominant classes within the minority ethnic communities, who, through their prominent position within their respective groups, came to represent them as a whole, hence assigning blame to the entire ethnic community.<sup>6</sup> Thus, regardless of the actual (quite powerless) position of the majority of the ethnic population, the economically and socially prominent status of the wealthy few among them was enough to provoke the ethnic rivalry and conflict that eventually led to the genocide at the turn of the century.

### *The ethnic-rivalry thesis*

A second approach to the role of ethnic minorities in the Third World views the situation in terms of rivalry between the numerically superior dominant group and economically prominent sectors of other, less numerous groups among the local population. In contrast to the collaborationism thesis, this theory argues that bulk of the minority ethnic populations in the Third World is made up of small-holding peasants in rural areas and shopkeepers and other small business people in the cities; large landowners and import-export merchants, generally viewed as having an intermediary position with and dependent on imperialism, constitute a small segment of the ethnic community and do not play a dominant role in society, except for enjoying a prominent position in the economy (Mamdani 1976; Shivji 1976).<sup>7</sup>

The primary basis of ethnic rivalry and the rise of nationalism is thus seen as the result of competition and conflict generated by successful small businesses in the minority ethnic community, who are generally more successful than their “native” counterparts. This engenders resentment and hostility toward the more successful minority groups, especially when they possess cultural characteristics (e.g.,

language, religion, traditions, etc.) that seem alien to the dominant culture and society. When such competition and rivalry becomes apparent and visible, nationalist movements begin to emerge and attempt to mobilize sectors of the local population with promises of national renewal and salvation. The heightened ideological form of such mobilization, when put into practice upon the seizure of state power, results in a form of nationalist, petty-bourgeois authoritarianism that leads to severe repression and pogroms carried out against the minority populations (Mamdani 1976).<sup>8</sup>

The proponents of this approach argue that, in the Ottoman context, the majority of the Armenian community was made up of peasants and small merchants or shopkeepers while only a small segment of the Armenian population consisted of large landowners and compradors. Moreover, the Armenians played an important role in the administration of the Ottoman state and were not significantly involved in overseas trade, nor in ventures jointly operated by foreign capital. Thus, according to this analysis of the class composition and role of different segments of the Armenian community in Ottoman Turkey, the Armenians in general could *not* be characterized as collaborators of imperialism, for most members of this ethnic community had interests that were nationally based. Their success in their craft or business, however, did generate tensions and conflict with the larger Turkish community and constituted, in Turkish eyes, a threat to Turkish national and class-specific interests (Eliot 1965, 153; Turgay 1982, 305; Karabekir 1945, 468).

The periodic riots, looting, and destruction of Armenian neighborhoods, the killings of large numbers of Armenians in selective, orchestrated massacres sanctioned by the government,<sup>9</sup> and the absence of Western intervention to halt the atrocities committed against the Armenian population, are argued to be evidence against the collaborationism thesis and in fact point to developments that set the stage for full-scale repression of the Armenian community with the coming to power of the Young Turk regime and cleared the way for the “final solution” to “the Armenian problem”—the 1915 massacre of 1.5 million Armenians.<sup>10</sup>

But why were the Armenians singled out from among a large number of ethnic groups residing in far corners of the Ottoman Empire—from Albanians and Bulgarians in the west to Arabs and Kurds in the east, as well as numerous other ethnic groups, including Circassians, Lazs, Alevi, Greeks, Jews? What were the factors that led to this singling out process, culminating in the extermination of an entire

group of people?

There are a number of specific explanations addressing these questions—ranging from pan-Turkic expansionism to that of retaliation against armed uprising in the east, and a combination of other factors peculiar to the position of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, such as the strong presence of Armenians at high levels of the Ottoman state bureaucracy and the prosperous economic position of some segments of the Armenian population tied to Europe and other centers of Western imperialism. Nationalist ideology promoted by the late Ottoman (Young Turk) state which emerged in the early twentieth century is generally viewed as evolving within the context of a combination of these factors.

To be able to substantiate these arguments, grouped in one or another of the two main theoretical approaches to the role of ethnic minorities in general and the Armenian community in particular in late Ottoman society, we need to examine the class structure of the Ottoman formation and the class position of ethnic minorities, in particular the Armenians, within it.

***The class structure of late Ottoman society and the role of ethnic minorities***

From its formation in the late thirteenth century to its disintegration and collapse in the early twentieth century, Ottoman society was dominated by a strong central state that, despite continued dynastic struggles at the throne, lasted for over six hundred years. Dominated by the Asiatic mode of production for centuries, land in the Ottoman formation was the property of the state which controlled and regulated it through a system of administrative structures (Berberoglu 1982, 5). However, the state's land allocation system (*timar*), which involved the granting of land to warriors who took part in the Empire's military adventures, together with the administration of state lands by the tax collectors in rural areas, who maintained de facto control of the land, eventually led to the development of private ownership of land and other means of production and the emergence of a landowning class. Some of these landowners were Armenian, others were Greek and Kurdish, and still others Turkish. The broad masses of the people in rural areas, however, were either peasants tilling small parcels of land or were serfs or laborers working on lands controlled by large landowners (Berberoglu 1982, 8). In the cities and urban areas, merchants engaged in local and international trade, small-scale manufacturers

self-employed artisans, and businessmen, together with the state bureaucracy and workers in different branches of production and services, constituted the bulk of the population.

***The class structure of Ottoman society in the early twentieth century***

To gain greater insight into the class structure of the Ottoman social formation at the turn of the century, it is necessary to take account of the structure of class forces dominating the Empire's economy and polity during the final phase of its development.<sup>11</sup>

(1) Political power in the Empire rested in the throne of the central authority, the *Padisah* or Sultan, and his administrative deputy called the *Sadrizam* or Grand Vezir. Below this, and under the direct control of the Sultan, there existed the large but carefully organized Ottoman Palace bureaucracy (Berkes 1964, 11–16; Sencer 1963; Divitcioglu 1971, 47–108).

(2) The dominant economic interests in Ottoman Turkey during this period were made up of a grouping of big landowners (the *ayans*, *derebeys*, and *agas* in the countryside, and comprador capitalists of mainly minority ethnic origin in major urban centers. In 1913, the traditional landed gentry (the *ayans* and *derebeys*, together with the *agas*, constituted five percent of the farmer families and owned sixty-five percent of the arable land. Given their vast economic power in the countryside, the big landowners were able to monopolize local political power and, through links with the rural Islamic clergy, impose their social and cultural domination over the peasantry. The subjugation of the peasant masses by the landlord-clergy coalition (the *esraf*) thus served the double function of exploitation and legitimization.

(3) Largely involved in import-export trade and domestic marketing tied to European imports, the minority commercial interests, comprised of Greek and Armenian merchants and primarily concentrated in large urban centers, formed the basis of the Empire's comprador bourgeoisie (Avcioglu 1975, 284–86; Lewis 1968, 454–56; Gibb and Bowen 1957). The role of minority compradors has been pivotal in two contradictory respects. First, through their key position in the urban economy they were in effect the agency for external economic penetration and control. Second, their position in the economy, vis-à-vis national industrial development, hindered the transition to the capitalist mode of production. Consequently, on balance, while their strategic role in accelerating contact with the West played a progressive role in the admittedly limited transformation of the Asiatic mode in an earlier period, the

continued existence of the minority bourgeoisie as a comprador class—as opposed to their transformation into industrial capitalists—perpetuated the backward structure of Ottoman industry and contributed instead to the further dependence of the Ottoman economy on European capital through debt bondage and as supplier of raw materials, which assisted the development of capitalism in Western Europe. It is this latter role of minority comprador agents of European imperialism that in good part gave rise to the nationalist movement of the Society of Union and Progress and to the Kemalist forces, who made a last ditch effort to save the Turkish state in the final years of the Ottoman Empire.

(4) Closely linked with the minority comprador group and the Palace bureaucracy was foreign finance capital or the imperialist bourgeoisie. The penetration into Ottoman Turkey of imperialist finance capital during this period was based on the Empire's role as a raw materials-supplying semi-colony of the expanding European economy. Concentrated largely in the raw materials sector, foreign capital was also engaged in the construction of a network of railways in Western and Central Anatolia, with the sole purpose of accelerating the process of raw materials extraction in Turkey.<sup>12</sup> The absence of the development to any significant degree of European manufacturing industries in Ottoman Turkey was "compensated" for by the flow into the Empire of European goods that were handled through the intermediary of the minority comprador bourgeoisie. Hence, it was in this classic sense—as an exporter of raw materials and importer of finished goods—that the Ottoman Empire became, in essence, a *de facto* semi-colony (Cavdar 1970; Ergil 1975, 130–31).

(5) The dependent structure of the Ottoman economy during the nineteenth century, coupled with its tributary position in the Mediterranean economy encompassing the period since the early sixteenth century, did not permit the development of large-scale local industry. Consequently, there never developed a full-blown class of industrialists that would resemble the classical European national industrial bourgeoisie. While a limited expansion did take place in small-scale manufacturing and processing industries, it was largely the minority comprador bourgeoisie that, in addition to its traditional place in commerce, extended into the ownership and control of these industries and prospered under the terms of the Empire's externally oriented economy. The small number of ethnic Turkish firms that operated in Ottoman Turkey at the time, however, had interests that were diametrically opposed to those of the imperialist and minority bourgeoisies. Although weak in numbers and economic strength, the political

aspirations of Turkish industrialists coincided with and took expression in the leadership of the nationalist forces as their economic position began to deteriorate with the further expansion into industry and trade of the metropolitan and minority bourgeoisies. It was this deterioration in the position of the Turkish national bourgeoisie that later drove its members on to the side of the nationalist leadership in the struggle against the forces of imperialism and reaction, represented mainly by the Palace and the minority comprador bourgeoisie.

(6) With the limited size and restricted nature of both national and foreign-owned local industry, the size of the working class was also small: in 1915, the number of workers employed in the industrial sector totaled only 13,485.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, the ethnic composition of the working class was highly fragmented: sixty percent of all those employed in Ottoman industry were Greeks, fifteen percent Armenians, ten percent Jews, and only fifteen percent Turks. Such ethnic diversity became an obstacle to the development of working-class unity.

The small, specifically Turkish segment of the working class was not only scattered among many small establishments, and not only isolated politically and culturally from the overwhelming majority of Turks who remained on the land as peasants, it was also culturally and politically isolated from the non-Turkish segments of the working class. (Ergil 1975, 210)

This split within the working class reached its peak during the liberation struggle when non-Turkish workers identified with and joined the ranks of forces of their own ethnic groups and fought against the forces of Turkish national liberation. Isolated as they were in Istanbul and Izmir—the main centers of industry which came under the control of foreign occupation forces during the liberation struggle—Turkish workers were cut off from Anatolia and could not contribute directly to or affect the outcome of the national-liberation struggle. Thus, several factors—mainly the numerical inferiority, ethnic heterogeneity, and geographical isolation of the Ottoman working class—held back the workers from direct participation in the National Front, which otherwise might well have influenced the direction and outcome of the liberation struggle.

(7) In the Turkish countryside, the majority of the rural population consisted of small-holding peasants. Dispersed throughout the Anatolian interior and engaged in subsistence agriculture, the Turkish peasantry was under the direct control of big landowners, who exercised economic, political, and cultural domination over them through links with the rural Islamic clergy (Ozgur 1972: 79–81; Cem

1970: 310–11; Avcioglu 1975: 286–300). While one percent of farmer families in 1913 accounted for 3,000,000 hectares (or thirty nine percent) of arable land, eighty-seven percent of farmer families had access to only 2,700,000 hectares (or thirty-five percent) of arable land.<sup>14</sup> This disparity in wealth and economic position did not, however, lead to the radicalization of the small-holding peasantry; neither did it ensure its voluntary participation in the national-liberation struggle. Although objectively occupying a revolutionary position in terms of its class interests, the Turkish peasantry, in light of the enormous economic and political power and socioreligious control exercised over them by the dominant *esraf*, was unable to develop revolutionary class consciousness and transform the agrarian structure through united class action. Despite the grip of the landlords and the clergy over the peasant masses throughout Turkey, there were a number of mass peasant uprisings in Ottoman-Turkish history (e.g., *Celali Isyanlari*) which challenged the rule of the *esraf* and the traditional landed gentry.

(8) Finally, in addition to the small-holding peasantry, rural Turkey also contained a class of small merchants and local artisans, who, together with doctors, lawyers, teachers, and locally based government officials, made up the core of the Anatolian petty bourgeoisie. It was in this intermediate group that the Kemalist forces first found their crucial support in laying the basis of their national campaign among the masses of the Anatolian peasantry. Dominated and controlled by imperialism and the minority bourgeoisie in the urban centers and oppressed under the rule of the *ayan*, the *derebey*, and the *esraf* in the countryside, the Ottoman petty bourgeoisie was highly fragmented, weak and lacked an organizational base to consolidate its power to serve its own class interests in national politics.

Moreover, the lack of an organizational link between the urban and the rural areas among the different sections of the petty bourgeoisie was a major obstacle to the development of petty-bourgeois class solidarity throughout Ottoman Turkey. Among the different strata of this class, the sections associated with the various bureaucratic organizations of the state—above all, junior army officers and nationalist intellectuals and journalists, who in an earlier period had embraced Unionist politics and had participated in the Young Turk nationalist movement—emerged as the top leadership of the nationalist movement which came to confront the various ethnic groups holding an important position in Ottoman society.

#### *The role of ethnic minorities in the Ottoman social formation*

Ethnic minorities—made up of Armenians, Greeks, Jews, and



numerous other national groups situated throughout the empire—played an important role in the Ottoman social structure. Concentrated mainly in Istanbul and Izmir, the Greeks, the Armenians, and, to a lesser extent, the Jews had already obtained a commanding lead in the trade and finance of the Ottoman Empire by the late eighteenth century (Issawi 1980, 54). As the ethnic population grew in size over the decades, their position further improved and began to play a dominant role in key branches of the Ottoman economy by the end of the nineteenth century. In the Ottoman capital, Istanbul, Armenians, Greeks, and Jews together constituted upward of half the population of the city during this period. Of the one million inhabitants of Istanbul, 500,000 were Turks, 400,000 Armenians and Greeks, and 100,000 Jews and Europeans (Adjarian 1980, 62).<sup>15</sup> Elsewhere, in Izmir and other major cities of the Empire, although relatively smaller in population size the minority communities had obtained a disproportionate control of the local economy and reaped substantial wealth from the Empire's commerce, finance, and other economic activities. A German account of the role of Greeks, Armenians, and Jews in the Ottoman economy, published in 1912 in Berlin, states:

They have divided everything between them or together dominate the terrain. Practically all that concerns the immediate necessities of life is in Greek hands. All branches related less directly to living but rather to the acquisition of civilization are almost exclusively in the sphere of the Armenians; they have the large textile businesses, the large iron, tin, and zinc businesses, and also all that pertains to the building trade. Only the small fancy-goods, haberdashery, and colonial goods trades are left to the Jews. Even the money business—from large bankers down to paltry money-changers—is, in Constantinople, mainly in Greco-Armenian hands; there are only small Jewish bankers there, and very few money-changers. . . . The antiquity dealers and rug merchants of Constantinople are almost without exception Sephardim. (Sussnitski 1980, 70)

In Izmir and Salonika, however, the Jews played a more active role in trade and commerce, though Greek and Armenian presence in the former was quite substantial.

In his book *The Economic History of the Middle East and North Africa*, Charles Issawi points out the central role played by Armenian, Greek, and Jewish compradors in the Empire's import-export trade by focusing on "the growth of export-import firms that could handle and finance the outward flow of agricultural produce and the inward flow of manufactures and other consumer goods" (1982, 6). "These firms,

he adds, “were almost wholly foreign:

British in Egypt and Iraq, French in Syria and North Africa, British and Russian in Iran, British, French, Austrian, Italian, and others in Turkey. . . . Their access to the farmers was through small merchants and moneylenders recruited chiefly from minority groups—Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Syro-Lebanese Christians—who advanced money, bought crops for resale to the exporters, and marketed the goods consumed in the countryside. Sometimes minority members established their own contacts with Britain, France, and other industrial countries, setting up branches of export firms. (Issawi 1982, 6)

Thus, In “Turkey,” writes Issawi, “the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, in that order, dominated the urban sector and controlled a considerable part of the rural.

The Galata bankers, consisting of Levantines and minority members, had controlled finance, and their replacement by modern banks only enlarged the field; in 1912, of the 112 bankers and bank managers in the Ottoman Empire only one was a Muslim Turk. In industry, it has been estimated that only 15 percent of capital belonged to Turks. In commerce, Armenians and Greeks established themselves in Europe early in the nineteenth century and handled most of its trade with Turkey. In agriculture, *millets* [national/ethnic communities set up by Sultan Mohammed II in the fifteenth century] were particularly active in such important cash crops as silk and cotton. (1982, 89–90)

In other activities, the percentage breakdown for 1912 was as follows:

Economic Activity	Tasks	Greeks	Armenians	Other
Internal trade	15	43	23	19
Industry and crafts	12	49	30	10
Professions	14	44	22	20

Source: O. G. Indzhikyan, *V Burzhuaziya osmanskoi imperii* (Yerevan, 1977), 211–14; cited in C. Issawi, *The Economic History of the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1982), 90

Another, Turkish, account of the economic activities of Greeks, Armenians, and Jews in western Turkey (mainly Istanbul and Izmir) provides a more detailed description of their involvement in foreign

export trade—in this case the shipment abroad of agricultural products:

Almost all the produce from a vast segment of Anatolia connected with Izmir used to come there and fill the large area from the Fruit Market as far as the Customs. And in this area swarmed people of all nations and also those whose origins were unknown but who used to be known as the residents of Izmir. These people carried various papers of identification, as if they were Europeans, but their hive consisted of Greeks, Armenians, and especially Jews. This hive had a ceaseless activity, its members buzzing around and endlessly sucking the available honey supply to the extent of flooding their gizzards. There were also a few Turkish shops here and there....

When the producer in Anatolia was not bound by contract to a foreign export merchant, he would bring the remainder of his crop to the middlemen at the Fruit Market.... Thus, the Turkish merchants constituted mostly, in fact wholly, this class of people who satisfied themselves by being the middlemen between the producers and the export merchants....

In this commercial battleground, the producers were the victims; the foreign and semi-foreign elements the profiteers; the Turks the onlookers. Certainly, the strongest, most active, and cleverest were the Jews. (Usakligil 1980, 72–73)

Thus, as the above partial, Turkish account of the role of ethnic minorities in the Ottoman formation clearly demonstrates, the Armenian, Greek, and Jewish tripartite ethnic enclave in Ottoman Turkey came to be viewed in Turkish eyes as a “semi-foreign element,” having interests contrary to that of the vast majority of the Ottoman population and the Turkish nation in general. Strong, ideologically ridden, nationalist views similar to the one expressed above were instrumental in the hands of the Young Turks in fueling feelings of resentment among the Turkish population against all non-Muslim ethnic minorities in Ottoman society, especially against Armenians, given their close proximity to centers of Ottoman state power during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

### ***The position of the Armenian community***

The number of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire during this period has been estimated at about 2.5 million, with over 80% living in rural areas, mainly in eastern Anatolia and in the Adana and Maras regions in the south (Artinian 1970; 1975). In the main urban center,

Istanbul, Armenians numbered some 200,000 at the beginning of this century. Izmir on the west coast, Erzurum, Kars, and Van in the east, Sivas and Amasya in the northcentral region, and Adana, Mersin, Diyarbakir, and Maras in the southeast were other, less populated urban centers of Anatolia where Armenians were concentrated; they ranged from 10,000 to 100,000 in each of these medium-sized cities, with many more residing within each of the *vilayets*, or provinces (Artinian 1970).<sup>16</sup> The remainder of the Armenian population lived in small towns and villages throughout eastern and southern Anatolia, where they made a living by tilling their small plots of land. Only a small percentage of the Armenian population was made up of large landowners, while the vast majority was made up of peasants cultivating their own few acres of land (Walker 1980, 94–95).

In the cities and urban centers, such as Istanbul and its adjacent municipalities, a different class structure prevailed. Here, merchants, bankers, manufacturers and middlemen played an important role, despite the fact that most Armenian city dwellers were either small business owners, craftsmen, or common laborers.<sup>17</sup> In setting up the system of *millets* in the fifteenth century, Sultan Mohammed II designated the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople as the leader of the *Ermeni millet*.<sup>18</sup> Under this system of political administration, the Patriarch was in charge of the religious, educational, and social life of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. However, “by the nineteenth century,” writes Louise Nalbandian, “this Patriarchal office had become so weakened that the real power was not in the hands of the Patriarch but was held by an oligarchy comprised of wealthy conservative elements among the Armenians of Constantinople” (1967, 43).

This oligarchy was drawn from the *amira* class, which consisted of bankers, rich merchants, and government officials. By controlling the Patriarch, the *amiras* dominated the national and much of the religious activity of the Armenians of Constantinople. (Nalbandian 1967, 43)

Thus, by the early nineteenth century, the Armenian elite played a dominant role within the Armenian community, and was very influential in the Ottoman power structure as well, due in large part to their strategic position within the economy and state administration.

The bankers, constituting the dominant element of this elite, played a direct role in the Empire’s economy: they collected taxes, made loans to the state, insured funds against losses, and dominated foreign

exchange and commercial operations, which brought them into close contact with Europe and the West.<sup>19</sup> As one close observer of Ottoman society notes:

The magnates, known as *amiras*, played a dominant role in the Armenian church and community and an important one in Ottoman administration. One group of *amiras* consisted of *sarrafs*, or bankers, who furnished tax farmers and other provincial officials with the capital required for bidding and guaranteed that the stipulated tax revenues would be paid into the imperial treasury. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Armenian bankers were prominent in foreign exchange and commercial operations as well. (Issawi 1980, 62)

Thus, while the bulk of the Armenian urban population consisted of common laborers and craftsmen organized in guilds, or *esnaf*, the elite elements (led by the *amiras*) were clearly a dominant force in influencing the key institutions of Ottoman society as well as controlling the Armenian community itself (Walker 1980, 97).<sup>20</sup> As Adjarian explains:

The *amiras* were the old Armenian government functionaries. Their emergence took place in the following manner. The government would nominate a Turkish Pasa as a governor, the latter would designate an Armenian money-changer as guarantor for the payment of taxes; the money-changer would defray the expenses of the Palace and, after entering these against payable taxes, he would personally collect the taxes from the people. The *amiras* were mostly from the provinces and, as the most influential people in the country, would participate in all national (i.e., Armenian) affairs. The patriarch and the National Assembly were in their hands.<sup>21</sup> (1980, 62)

Another group of Armenian magnates consisted of high government officials in charge of various state institutions or departments and as head of numerous economic enterprises (e.g., the customs, mint, powder works, mines, army supplies, etc.):

The general collection of customs duties was entrusted to Hovannes Duzian celebi, and later to Mkerdich Jezayirlian amira. From 1795 the position of superintendent of powder mills was in the hands of the Dadians, by inheritance. The position of purveyor of bread for the army belonged to the Noradungians. The mint was entrusted to the Duzians, who

previously had held the position of Chief Imperial Goldsmith. . . .

Hovannes bey Dadian was appointed general manager of the paper mill at Beykoz, manager of the spinning mill at Eyyub, and superintendent of the powder mill at Azatli. He was sent to Europe three times at government expense, to improve his knowledge of technology, especially in the preparation of gunpowder. . . . The leather mill at Beykoz, the [woolen] cloth mill at Nicomedia, the silk mill at Hereke, the linen mill and the iron-smelting mill at Zeytin-Burnu were all built under his supervision.

The imperial architecture was entrusted to Janig Amira Serverian and later to the famous Balian family, by inheritance. Nigoghos Balian was sent to Paris and upon his return he built the palace at Dolma Bahce. . . .

As Turkish pride did not permit entrusting ministries completely to Armenians, the government placed an Armenian by each minister as his counsellor or assistant, but in reality as the true administrator. (Adjarian 1980, 63)

The presence of Armenians in other branches of the Ottoman government was widespread and extended to different professions directly under the jurisdiction of the central government (Krikorian 1977). It included the Imperial Palace, the educational system, health, public works, and foreign affairs, to mention a few of the key administrative posts and professional assignments sanctioned by the state:

The ministry of the Imperial Private Treasury was always in the hands of the Armenians (by Private Treasury we mean the Sultan's personal wealth) such as Hagop Pasa Kazazian, Mikael Pasa Portukalian, and Hovannes Sakez Pasa, even during the days of the Armenophobe and perpetrator of massacres Sultan Abdul Hamid. . . .

The Imperial Medical University was run mostly by Armenians; the principal lecturers were Servichen, Nigoghayos Rousinian, Khentamian, Antranik Bey Gerjigian, Stepan Pasa Aslanian, etc. At the other government schools Portukalian Pasa, Terzian, H. Yusufian, Mihran Karakash, Hagop Boyajian, etc. lectured. At governmental institutions Garabed Karakash, Khederian, and Kuyumjian introduced the double-entry system in accounting; by double-entry system we understand Italian accounting, which is now accepted everywhere. The founders of this system were the Armenian merchants of Chugha (Ispahan). Harutiun Pasa Dadian was the soul of the Foreign Ministry, and

although nominally a counsellor he was the true administrator. . . . The superintendent for mines and forestry was Bedros Kuyumjian. Hovannes Chamich, Odian, Margosian, Aslanian etc. were well-known in the Ministry of Public Works.<sup>12</sup> (Adjarian 1980, 63)

The pivotal position of this select segment of the Armenian population in the Ottoman state, economy, and society brought them to centers of power and influence within the Empire and furthered their domination of the Armenian community well into the nineteenth century. The Armenian masses “passively submitted to this domination until the 1830’s,” writes Nalbandian,

when new forces began to demand a voice in the activities of the community. These were the intellectuals and the more dynamic representatives of the organized guilds or *esnaf* class. The conflict over representative government within the community turned into a class struggle which at first involved the *esnafs*, amiras, and the Patriarchate, and afterward the vast majority of the people. (1967, 43–44)

“The class struggle between the *esnafs* and the amiras,” adds Nalbandian, “increased to such an extent that both the Patriarchate and the Ottoman government intervened in order to bring about harmony.”

As a result, a new National Committee was officially established on December 12, 1841, and its twenty-seven members were drawn mainly from the *esnaf* class and consisted entirely of common folk. However, this victory for the *esnafs* and the masses did not last long: interference from the amiras soon brought about the complete breakdown of communal activity. (1967, 44)

Despite the subsequent formation of a National Assembly consisting of sixteen amiras and fourteen *esnafs* appointed by the newly elected Patriarch Mattheos Tchukhadjian, “the vast majority of the people, who were neither of the amira nor of the *esnaf* class, did not have legal representation on the National Assembly” (Nalbandian 1967, 44–45). The consolidation of amira power later through the elected assemblies, the resignation of Patriarch Mattheos resulting from his inability to control this power and maintain institutional legitimacy, and growing resentment among the Armenian masses against amira domination of their community, set the stage for the emergence of a mass movement and a popular uprising at mid century:

In 1848, for the first time in centuries, the Armenians of Constantinople rose up in protest against...domination.

The demonstration was remarkable in the history of the Armenians of Turkey. For the first time in centuries, the masse...#had come together to voice their protest and thus accomplished what was in effect the Armenian counterpart of the European revolutions of 1848. Although small by comparison, this outburst in Constantinople was a giant step toward democracy. It indicated that the Armenians were ready to resort to revolutionary methods in order to achieve political freedom. (Nalbandian 1967, 45)

While the class struggle between the Armenian masses and the wealthy and powerful Armenian bourgeoisie continued during the second half of the nineteenth century, the prominence of the amiras within Ottoman society, as the dominant class representing de facto the Armenian community, led to resentment among broad segments of the Turkish population, especially the nationalist elements within it, based primarily among the nationalist intelligentsia and generals and officers in the military. Such resentment against the Armenian amiras soon turned into a generalized resentment against the Armenian community as a whole and gave rise to riots and repression of Armenians and led to the massacres of 1894–96 (Melson 1982, 481–509) and to the subsequent rise to power of the Young Turk nationalists led by Enver, Cemal, and Talat Pasas in the first decade of the twentieth century, to be followed by the emergence of Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) during the war of national liberation a decade later.

The rise to power of these nationalist forces in Ottoman Turkey at the turn of the century had grave consequences for the Armenian population and were responsible for the atrocities committed against the Armenian people during this period.

### ***Ethnic rivalry and the rise of Turkish nationalism***

The expansion of the economic power of ethnic minorities—in particular, Armenians—during the nineteenth century began to be felt by the Turkish population in both urban and rural areas, as the non-Moslem ethnic groups—Greeks, Armenians, and Jews—began to dominate the commercial and financial activities of the Empire and bought up much of the cultivatable land in the rural areas, while out-competing and outmaneuvering their Turkish business rivals in the cities and towns where Turks were the dominant force previously (Eliot 1965, 153; Turgay 1982, 305). As wealth was transferred from Turkish



to Armenian or Greek—and to a lesser extent Jewish—hands, the widening gap between the Turks and these minority ethnic groups led to resentment against the prosperous sectors of the non-Muslim population who increasingly occupied center stage in the economy and society. As a Trade Report on the situation in Erzurum, in eastern Turkey, states:

An unequivocal sign of rising prosperity is to be found in the enhanced value of land. Within a short time it has doubled in price. This may be accounted for chiefly by the fairer treatment the cultivators experience under the Tanzima. . . . It is, however, remarkable that the purchasers of land are universally Armenians, and the sellers almost always Mussulmans, a fact of strong significance as to the effect of the Tanzimat on the Christian part of the population, which is evidently rising in prosperity. (cited in Issawi 1980, 65)

Elsewhere in eastern Turkey,

Armenians occupied key positions in trade and business, which facilitated anti-Armenian agitation among the . . . Muslim masses, and in the first place the Kurds. For example, in the *vilayet* [province] of Sivas (where Armenians formed 35 percent of the population), out of 166 large importers 125 were Armenians; out of 37 bankers 32 were Armenians, and out of 9,800 small traders 6,800 were Armenians. Armenians owned 130 of the 150 industrial enterprises. In the *vilayet* of Van, Armenians held 98 percent of the trade, 80 percent of the agriculture, and only 20 percent of the livestock breeding. There were 18 large merchants, all Armenian, 50 moneylenders (30 Armenians and 20 Turks), 20 money-changers, all Armenians, 1,100 craftsmen (1,020 Armenians and 80 Turks), 50 *rentiers* (20 Armenians and 30 Turks); 80 vegetable merchants (50 Armenians and 30 Turks), 200 fruit merchants, all Armenians. All members of the liberal professions—physicians, pharmacists, lawyers, etc. were Armenians.<sup>23</sup> (Lazarev 1980, 67)

In the western region of the Empire—in Izmir, Bursa, and elsewhere—the situation was similar. According to a report by the British Foreign Office,

In Izmir the general improvement “however is more generally to the advantage of the Christian races who are . . . buying up the Turks.” Before Gulhane the large Turkish landlords “lived by a

system of oppression and plunder which was put a stop to by the Hatt. The Christians then came forward as cultivators, the numbers increased by newcomers” whereas the Turks, handicapped by conscription, “fall into the hands of some Christian usurious banker [Armenian, Greek, or occasionally European] to whom the whole property or estate is soon sacrifice...in the immediate vicinity of Smyrna very few Turkish landed proprietors remain.” (cited in Issawi 1980, 56)

Further west, “Every one who has any familiarity with the Aeolic and Ionian coasts,” reports British author W. M. Ramsay, “knows of many a flourishing Greek village, which not so many years ago was empty or peopled only by Turks. The Turks are losing, or have in places lost, their hold on the coast and on the valleys that open on the coast...As the railway goes inland, the Greek element goes with it and even in front of it” (1897, 130–31).

“This feeling of being overwhelmed and driven out caused much resentment among Turks,” writes Issawi, “and helps to account for the intense bitterness and violence in the struggle between Turks, Armenians, and Greeks in the period from 1895 to 1923” (1980, 56).

Although numerous attempts to bring about an Armenian national uprising in the east led to severe repression and massacres of thousands of Armenians at the end of the nineteenth century (e.g., the 1894–96 massacres),<sup>24</sup> the turning point for the very survival of the Armenian community in Ottoman Turkey was the Young Turk revolution of 1908. “From the revolution’s beginning,” writes Paul Saba, “oppressed nations within the empire seized the occasion to declare their independence, while foreign powers sought to take advantage of Turkish internal disorder for their own gain”:

In 1908, Bulgaria announced its independence; soon after Crete revolted to unite with Greece. Austro-Hungary annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina and in 1911–12, Italy invaded and conquered Libya. Finally, in 1913, a united Balkan alliance drove the Turks out of Macedonia. Within the remnants of the Empire other oppressed nationalities, including the Armenians and the Arab peoples, were demanding greater autonomy or self-determination.<sup>25</sup> (1989, 188)

It was within this context of disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of the Turkish nationalist forces to salvage the pieces of the crumbling Empire that the Young Turk reaction took its most ruthless form:

Turkey jolted toward military dictatorship, and Turkification became the dominant ideology in leading CUP [Committee of Union and Progress] and government circles. Pan-Turkism, as theorized by the CUP, was an extreme expression of the contradictory and ambivalent response of Turkish nationalists to Western penetration and its destructive impact on the unity of the Ottoman Empire. On the one hand, Pan-Turkism was an extremely virulent form of nationalism, a very Western ideology. On the other hand, it was a nationalism which was consciously and deliberately anti-Western, xenophobic, and predicated on the glorification of the Turk's distant pagan past. Racism, chauvinism, militarism, and a disregard for much of traditional Islam were all features of Pan-Turkism. Taken together, this combination of ideological elements foreshadowed a similar ideology which was to emerge in Germany in the 1920s: Nazism. (Saba 1989, 189)

Saba goes on to point out that:

Pan-Turkish theorists conceptualized Turks as a master race, and envisioned the forcible creation of a great empire ("Turan") of all "Turo-Aryan" peoples throughout Asia. Russia, the Slavic peoples and Armenians were all seen as obstacles to this goal. The Turks were to be united in a new purified state in which there would be no place for "alien" peoples. The CUP's efforts at popular mobilization of the Turkish masses on the basis of nationalist appeals, racial intolerance and Nazi-like cults of the Turk's pagan past created a climate of growing intolerance for all minority peoples within the Empire. (1989, 189)

Within this context of Pan-Turkish nationalist expansionism to the east, the Ottoman Empire entered World War I and hoped to overrun Russia as part of its strategy to reconquer ancient Turan. "Within two weeks of the campaign, however, 80 percent of the troops [of the Third Army] had been killed either by Russian forces or by the terrible Caucasian winter."

Defeated in battle, the Young Turks determined to strike at an easier target. In early February 1915, the Central Council of the Committee of Union and Progress decided upon the systematic extermination of all Armenians within the Ottoman Empire. Armenian sympathy for Russia and their illegal possession of arms provided the pretexts, while the absence of allied observers in the area as a result of the war provided the opportunity for

Turkish reaction to strike its blow virtually unobserved.

Planned, supervised and directed at every level by the Committee of Union and Progress with a fierce blend of racial fanaticism and twentieth century rationalism, unrestrained by remorse or conscience, the same pattern of extermination was employed throughout the Armenian provinces. It was a pattern which, in many respects, foreshadowed the holocaust visited upon European Jewry by the Nazis. (Saba 1989, 189–90)

Thus the first genocide of the twentieth century unfolded in full force and continued until it consumed the lives of 1.5 million Armenians. One of the bloodiest massacres in history, the Armenian genocide witnessed the rape, assault, plunder, and murder of an entire population with the premeditated, ultranationalist objective of wiping out the Armenian community of Ottoman Turkey.<sup>26</sup>

This act of planned genocide perpetrated against the Armenian people nearly achieved its stated aims, as most of the estimated 1.5 to 2 million Armenian inhabitants of Ottoman Turkey were exterminated through mass murder or marched to their deaths in the Syrian desert and the eastern plains. Less than fifteen percent of the prewar Armenian population was able to escape the horror of the genocide and take refuge in Russia or other surrounding states, while after the final collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the new Turkish state in 1923, there were less than 100,000 Armenians remaining in the entire country (Walker 1980, 230).<sup>27</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The questions raised in the above analysis of the role of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent genocide carried out by the Young Turk government in 1915 lead us to draw some conclusions on the nature and causes of ethnic conflict and rivalry between Armenians and Turks at the turn of the century that came to be defined as the Armenian question.

The arguments presented by both the “collaborationism” thesis and the “ethnic rivalry” thesis do partly explain the Armenian case, as they do the position of other ethnic minorities in the Ottoman Empire, including the Greeks and the Jews. The idea of “middle-man minorities” is not a new one, and is generally applicable to segments of ethnic populations similarly situated in many societies around the world where such minorities exist. However, such a generalization cannot be made to characterize the role of an entire people when only a small fraction of whom actually occupy this position. The ideological impor-

tance of utilizing a small segment of a minority ethnic group by the leading elements of dominant forces in society to characterize the status of an entire group becomes significant in the formulation and dissemination of a nationalist ideology over the entire society, where the target group comes to play a scapegoat function. Similarly, such ideological manipulation for nationalist ends can also be carried out when economic rivalry between dominant and minority ethnic groups yields results in favor of the latter and thus creates resentment toward seemingly “alien” ethnic/cultural groups (with language, religion, and traditions different from that of the dominant population) who become more successful and prominent in economic, political, social and cultural fields than the “native” or “earlier-settled” peoples increasingly finding themselves in a disadvantaged position.<sup>28</sup>

The Armenian population of Ottoman Turkey was placed in such a situation by the ruling Young Turk regime which succeeded in advancing its ultranationalist political ideology and thereby consolidated its control over society.

Some observers have pointed out that the special economic position of segments of the Armenian community in major trading centers like Istanbul and Izmir placed them in close political relations with various European powers, e.g. France and Britain, whose rivalry with Germany in access to sources of Middle East oil controlled by the Ottoman throne brought the Armenians to the middle of this global conflict on Ottoman soil. Further, the apparent hope among other segments of the Armenian population for European backing of a possible movement toward greater autonomy, or even the establishment of an independent Armenian state in the eastern territories populated by Armenians, may have contributed to sporadic armed uprisings in a number of Armenian provinces in the east. This, coupled with the real or apparent Czarist push to destabilize the Ottoman state by aiding Armenians to rebel, with later plans of incorporating these territories into the Transcaucasus region of the expanding Russian Empire, came to alarm the newly emergent Young Turk government—an action which came into direct conflict with the latter’s ultranationalist projection of power extending to territories beyond that controlled by the Ottoman central state and toward the establishment of a greater Turkish empire that extended to its historic central Asian origins.

The question of pan-Turkic expansionism to the east must be seen in this context of the nationalist project, where ethnic conflict and rivalries were promoted to achieve imperial ends. It is, therefore, entirely logical to view the hostilities generated between Armenians and Kurds

in eastern Turkey as part of the Young Turk campaign to suppress ethnic rebellions by way of setting them against each other and thereby to clear the way for further Turkish national and territorial expansion.

The Armenians became the first victims of this political design; the Kurds, too, were to follow as victims of this process in due course. The argument that the Young Turks used the Kurds against the Armenians and then planned to move against the Kurds to clear the way for Turkish expansion to this territory and beyond, as part of their campaign to establish a greater central Asian Turkish empire, seems to make sense within the context of the actual developments there during this period.

Caught between these currents of global, regional, and national power politics and standing in the way of the parties who wanted to use them to advance their own interests, the Armenians paid a heavy price in the form of mass deportations, massacres, and annihilation of nearly all of their people. It is clear that outside powers were heavily involved in the final phase of the collapse and disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, whose territories were later directly occupied by the Western imperialist powers during World War I. The particular position of the Armenians in this power struggle, identified as friend or foe by one or another of the contending forces in this conflict, cost the Armenians some 1.5 million lives.

The strategic location of some Armenians close to centers of Ottoman power in the service of the Ottoman government, acknowledged by the state in previous decades as a valuable contribution to the empire, did not help the Armenian case either, as they may have been seen as political insiders ready to conspire against the Ottoman state together with the possible successful national uprising of Armenians in the eastern provinces. Hence, the proximity of Armenians to sensitive government posts to which they had access may have been an additional contributing factor justifying, in Turkish minds, the move to crush the Armenians and thereby eliminate this threat against the Ottoman state.

The Greeks and especially the Jews, mainly residing in large urban centers like Istanbul and Izmir, did not have any similar territorial claims; nor were they seen as standing in the way of Turkish expansionist plans. Likewise, the Ottoman provinces in North Africa and the Arabian peninsula did not interfere with the Young Turks' ultranationalist vision, as they were too far from centers of power and control in this period of Ottoman decline and decay; hence these regions were easily acquired by the European powers and turned into outposts of Western imperialism—the spoils being divided between

France and Britain, the two dominant powers in the world political economy at the time. The Greek invasion of western Turkey and the subsequent defeat of Greece in bloody battles in Izmir and elsewhere along the western coast of Turkey did result in the deaths of a large number of Greeks in Turkey during the war, but the existence of a Greek homeland provided “a way out” of a similar situation by mass deportations of Greeks to Greece, hence escaping a large-scale massacre.

The Armenians were accorded no such protection from the advancing Ottoman forces, who, through direct government orders from the center, moved in with full force to remove them from their historic homeland. The forced marches, killings, and wholesale massacre of entire villages populated by Armenians marked the beginning of the first genocide of the twentieth century—a genocide planned to annihilate an entire ethnic population who, according to those in power, stood in the path of the Turkish national project.

All the accusations the Young Turk government leveled against the Armenians in Ottoman Turkey—“collaboration with foreign powers,” “disloyalty to the state,” widespread “armed uprisings,” “conspiracy to overthrow the Ottoman state,” and so forth—are refuted by Armenian scholars and the Armenian community at large, who point to the peaceful nature of the Armenian population of Turkey, an ethnic enclave that made great contributions to the Ottoman state and society for centuries and were historically acknowledged as such even by a succession of Ottoman governments until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Thus, it is pointed out, whatever the motives of the Turkish government at the time, the Armenians were not and could not be the source of any such hostilities and had no reason for being so, as they occupied a prominent economic, political, and cultural position in the Ottoman domain; the deadly predicament of Armenians during this period originated in and was the result of an emergent nationalist force who used the excuse of “the Armenian threat” to control and dominate a fragile empire which had entered a period of decline and decay due to *its own insertion into, and the resultant contradictions of, the world economy and polity*.

Setting aside the claims of one or the other side of the conflict with regard to the historical record as to the sources of the first genocide of the twentieth century, the mass killings of some 1.5 million people in a premeditated manner, violating every precept of human morality, could not be justified under any circumstance, for whatever reason. The Turkish governments over the past seven decades, as well as the present government of Turkey, have denied that such a massacre ever took

place; the hundreds of thousands of Armenians who died during this period in various eastern provinces of the empire are said to have been the victims of war that inflicted casualties and death on both sides. But the 1.5 million Armenians who died in 1915—an undisputed fact widely accepted in the international community—could not have vanished into thin air. Just as the premeditated genocide of some six million Jews by the Hitler regime in Germany during World War II cannot be accepted as “casualties of war,” the massacre of a million and a half Armenians cannot be wished away as the consequence of “wartime atrocities.”

The Kurds, too, have suffered greatly under similar ultranationalist regimes in Turkey, and more recently in Iraq, and closely escaped a similar extermination by the current Ba’th regime in Baghdad, first during the Iran-Iraq war and more recently when the United States, which encouraged the Kurds to rebel, was forced by international pressure to live up to its commitment to the Kurds by at least preventing an Iraqi massacre in retaliation for the failed Kurdish uprising in early 1991.

If we are to learn any lessons from such events and prevent a similar occurrence of mass genocide in the future, we must become cognizant of the ill use to which the excuse of war is put as a cover for nationalist or global designs to disarm and exterminate a people who block or advance such self-serving reactionary objectives in different historical and geographic contexts throughout the world.

*Department of Sociology  
University of Nevada, Reno*

## NOTES

1. For a detailed account of the Armenian genocide of 1915, see Hovannisian (1987); Kuper (1982, chap. 6); Dadrian (1986, 311–60; 1989, 272); Braude and Lewis (1982); Chaliand and Ternon (1983); and Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal (1985).

2. This approach identifies the Chinese in Southeast Asia, East Indians in Africa, and Greeks, Armenians, and Jews in the Middle East and elsewhere as examples of ethnic groups playing an intermediary role vis-à-vis imperialism—a role greatly facilitating the expansion of foreign capital and the imperial state in these regions. See, for example, Yin (1983); Scoble and Wiseberg (1985); Mamdani (1976); Leys (1975); Keyder (1987). For a general discussion on this



question, see Blaut (1987).

3..This line of reasoning is similar to the characterization of an intermediate, comprador bourgeoisie in dependency theory, as the compradors are often, though not always, members of ethnic minorities.

4. This is especially the case in the postcolonial setting, where newly formed formally independent states foster ethnic rivalries and conflict to stay in power. See Gardezi and Rashid (1989); Amin (1978); Ake (1978).

5.. See the various essays in Braude and Lewis (1982).

6. This, despite the fact that the majority of the Armenians in Ottoman Turkey were ordinary laboring people and remained loyal to the Ottoman state. In his despatch of April 30, 1888 to the Marquis of Salisbury, British Ambassador Sir W. White reports that in his private meeting with Sultan Abdul Hamit the Sultan explained to him that “the Armenian nation . . . could neither be suspected nor incriminated of disloyalty. . . . [T]he large mass [of Armenians] were perfectly loyal.” See Simsir (1983, 554)

7. The emphasis in this formulation is less on the dominant classes of ethnic communities and more on competition between the middle layers of society, where the conflict lies among the middle classes of rival ethnic groups mobilized around class-specific ethnic/national ideologies.

8. Such an internally-generated dynamic is similar to the rise of fascism in the advanced capitalist formations of Europe in the early twentieth century, such as in Germany and Italy. Although the general conditions leading to such developments are similar in both cases, the specific circumstances that shape the nature and development of such movements may be quite different and may yield varied results in different social formations.

9. According to Langer (1935, 203), “blood was shed in the capital [Istanbul] itself; in the provinces there were massacres at Trebizond and many other places. . . . It was perfectly obvious that the Sultan [Abdul Hamit] was determined to end the Armenian question by exterminating the Armenians.”

10. For a documentation of the Armenian holocaust and the extent of the massacres, see note 1.

11. The following account of the Ottoman class structure at the turn of the century is excerpted from my earlier work on the political economy of Turkey (Berberoglu 1982).

12. The Izmir-Aydin and Istanbul-Bagdad railways are notable examples of this. As Rosa Luxemburg points out in her analysis of railway construction in Anatolian Turkey during this period, through this process not only did European capital gain access to vast resources of the Empire and extract surplus value from wage labor employed in railway construction, but even the financing of these projects was locally based and came directly from the Ottoman state treasury. See Luxemburg (1951, 439–45). Also see Cavdar (1970, 5–52, 110–67) and Earle (1966).

13. For a detailed analysis of the Turkish industrial proletariat during this period, see Rozaliev (1974, 17–25, 53–80).

14. Moreover, although landless peasants (or agricultural workers)

constituted only eight percent of farmer families, only a small number of peasants who did own land were able to survive without also working on the estates of the big landowners (Ergil and Rhodes 1974, 84).

15. Also see Shaw (1978, 332) and Karpat (1985, 51–55; 1978, 254).

16. Also see Karpat (1985, 51–55) and McCarthy (1983, 47–88) for various contradictory estimates of the Armenian population by the Armenian Patriarchate and the Ottoman government, as well as independent European sources.

17. Among the more important trades in which Armenian craftsmen were prominent were: jewelry, textiles, gold, silver, and copper work, and shoemaking. See Arpee (1909) and Leart (1913). Also see Walker (1980, 94–98).

18. *Ermeni* means Armenian in Turkish. The *Ermeni millet* refers to the Armenian national/ethnic community.

19. As Artinian points out, “By the middle of the nineteenth century there were over thirty Armenian commercial firms in London and Manchester with their headquarters located either in Smyrna [Izmir] or Istanbul” (1970, 7). Also see Walker (1980).

20. This was also the case in the territories adjacent to Ottoman Turkey, such as in Russian Transcaucasia. According to Walker

The Armenian bourgeoisie...became the dominant commercial class in Tiflis, Baku and the other cities of Transcaucasia. By 1876 two thirds of the merchants in Tiflis were Armenian, and four out of the six banks were controlled by Armenians; in Baku, by the last decade of the century, Armenians controlled more than half the oil wells. (1980, 60–61)

The economic condition of the peasantry, however, was quite different. Although they were by far the largest class in this region, they remained powerless and their condition was not that much better than the serfs of Russia enslaved to the large landowners. As the Armenian bourgeoisie developed and prospered during this period, the separation of the bourgeoisie from the peasantry became more pronounced. In 1897, the Armenian population for the whole of Russian Transcaucasia (including the acquisitions of the 1876–77 war, Kars, Ardahan, and Batum) was made up as shown in the following table:

*The Armenian Population in Russian Transcaucasia, 1897 (in Percent)*

Landlords and clergy	0.8
Peasantry	70.0
Bourgeoisie	7.3
Workers	16.2
Craftsmen	5.7

*Source:*: Vartan Gregorian, “The Impact of Russia on the Armenians and Armenia,” in *Russia and Asia*, edited by Wayne S. Vucinich (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972), 199; cited in Christopher J. Walker, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1980) 61.

21. However, Barsoumian points out that, despite their enormous wealth and power within the Armenian community, the *amiras* had virtually *no* political power within the Ottoman State (1982, 176–77). Also see Turgay (1982, 305).

22. More than that, in 1864 the administrations of telegraphs, postal, and public works were entrusted to Krikor Efendi Aghaton, who presided over these three ministries for some time.

23. Another (Austrian) source which provides more details on the number of Armenians in the Sivas province engaged in various businesses, confirms this, while being slightly at variance with Lazarev's figures in two instances. Namely, number of Armenian large importers is reported here as being 141 (instead of 125) out of 166, and Armenian owners of industrial enterprises 127 (instead of 130) out of 150. See Kapri (1913, 65–67).

24. The events that sparked the massacres of 1894–96 include the uprising of Armenians in Talori, in the Vilayet of Bitlis, where Ottoman troops were sent to quell the revolt, a mass demonstration in August 1895, and the armed occupation of the Ottoman Bank by Armenian revolutionaries in September 1896. See Melson (1982, 481–509).

25. On this point, also see Nassibian (1984, 26).

26. For an extended bibliographic compilation of historical sources on the Armenian genocide, see Hovannisian (1978) and Dadrian (1986, 311–60). Also see Chaliand and Ternon (1983) and Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (1985).

27 Paul Saba points out that in terms of the very survival of Armenians as an ethnic group

the year 1915 was one of disaster for the Armenians. Before the war it has been estimated that there were between 1,500,000 and 2,000,000 Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. By 1916, some 250,000 had managed to flee to Russia and escape the carnage. Another 1,000,000 were killed, half of them women and children. Of the approximately 600,000 survivors, about 200,000 were forcibly converted to Islam. The remaining 400,000, mostly in refugee and concentration camps, suffered a wretched existence. Some 50,000 to 100,000 of these were killed during the Turkish invasion of the Caucasus in May–September 1918, while approximately another 250,000 were murdered in 1919–1923 during post-war attempts by survivors to return to their homes. (1989, 190–191)

28. Such a situation is similar to the kind of resentment developed against new immigrant populations who later excel to positions of wealth, power, and prominence at a rate faster than the existing “earlier-settled” groups in the same territory.

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# **The Dilemma of Navajo Industrial Workers: Cultural Values and Social Change— An Empirical Study**

**Jennie R. Joe and Dorothy Lonewolf Miller**

*The Indian should be made to work for a living. Their land did not cost them anything. Neither humanity nor justice demands that Indians should be pampered wards of our national government. If they will not work, let them starve.*

Charles Beave, 1835

## ***Introduction***

Despite various efforts by the federal government to impose the Western work ethic on Native Americans and despite repeated societal and bureaucratic attempts to both exclude and include Native Americans in the mainstream labor force, the problem of unemployment on Indian reservations has not been significantly altered over the years. The failure of federal Indian policies such as the Allotment Act of 1887 (Dawes Act) and the Relocation Program of 1950-60 illustrates the difficulties facing Native Americans within an industrialized society. The reasons for chronic unemployment on Native American reservations include rural isolation, lack of employment opportunities, and an inadequate capital base. Many seek to “blame the victims” for their poor economic and employment records, poor health, poor education, poor skills, alcoholism, etc. In addition, some believe that the Native American culture is a barrier to Native American employment in the

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Anglo industrial world. On the other hand, studies such as that of Moore (1989) have countered the myth of the “lazy Indian” by presenting a comprehensive history of the contributions of American Indians to the U.S. economy as wage workers under tribal-sovereignty agreements between tribes and private industry. This study analyzes the economic and socio-cultural effects of one such agreement, that between the Navajo Nation on the one hand and the Peabody Coal Company and the Salt River Project (Page Power Plant) on the other. This agreement involves the mining of coal on the Navajo reservation and the production of electricity for the entire southwestern United States.

The Navajo tribe occupies a territory approximately the size of the state of West Virginia, covering parts of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah. With a population of approximately 200,000, the Navajo tribe is the largest Indian tribe in the United States. Traditionally, Navajo tribal members relied on animal husbandry and dry-farming for economic subsistence. Since the 1960s, some of the natural resources of the isolated Navajo Nation have been developed to meet energy needs throughout the West—providing an important energy resource for the southwestern U.S. economy and a financial resource for the Navajo tribe.

Vast natural resources of coal, uranium, and other valuable minerals have been developed by large U.S. industrial firms like the Peabody Mining Company. Black Mesa, located on the Navajo reservation in northern Arizona, is solid coal, and the mining and the subsequent burning of this coal at the Page Power Plant has created such an outpouring of smoke that when the first astronauts viewed the earth from the moon, the smoke from the Page Plant was the only visible sign of activity on the earth. The power generated at the Page Plant from the waters of the Colorado River meets the power needs of Los Angeles, Phoenix, Tucson, and nearly all the surrounding area.

This Navajo industrial enterprise in mining and power generation represents a meshing of finance, private enterprise, and tribal collaboration. Navajos obtain “set-aside” employment as one result of this entrepreneurial contract, which includes the wages of Navajo workers as a portion of the tribal “pay off.” Today, approximately 12% of all Navajo males between the ages of 20-65 are employed under these tribal/private ownership agreements. Navajo workers constitute about 55% of all employees in the Page Electrical Power Plant and 78% of the workers at the Peabody Mining Company on the reservation (*Navajo Nation FAX* 88, 1988). The Navajo tribe has thus become an example of tribal groups who are bargaining away their natural resources for jobs

and income. Talbot argues that Native American tribes and people are locked into underdevelopment by such capitalistic manipulation (1976). According to Talbot, not only are the reservations losing control over their natural resources, but the labor of their Indian inhabitants is also being exploited.

In this study, we examine the sociocultural adaptation of a select group of Native Americans to the economic ways of life of mainstream society. We examine a unique economic structure on the Navajo reservation that offers some options to the well-documented structural unemployment that exists on most Indian reservations. Further, we examine the relationship between Navajo traditional culture and "work," using the industrial Navajo labor force as an example.

Navajo workers attempt to blend their traditional way of life with the work role of modern industry while still retaining their residence on the reservation. This presents a major dilemma for Navajo wage earners who are trying to adapt to an Anglo industrial work place that is destroying their Sacred Lands by using up its irreplaceable resources of water and coal. Thus we also attempt in this study to analyze some of the underlying sociocultural conflicts faced by the Navajo workers employed in mining and electric-power production, that is, who are engaged in the type of employment that alters their physical environment, defaces "Mother Earth," and endangers the fragile ecology of their sacred lands.

### ***Empirical study of Navajo industrial workers***

#### ***A. Population studied***

An interview survey was conducted of workers employed in the Page Power Plant, the Peabody Mining Company, and in construction. A control sample of unemployed Navajos actively seeking work in a summer-job program on the reservation was also included in the survey. Thus, three comparison groups were studied: Navajo industrial workers (N=48); Navajos who worked more unstable jobs in the construction industry (N=26); and Navajos in the labor market who were currently unemployed (N=27). These groups varied along a stability continuum and along an income continuum, but apart from their employment status were generally a homogeneous group of working-age Navajos (96 males and 5 females).

The mean ages of the three groups of Navajos studied were industrial workers, 36.3 years; construction workers, 30 years;

unemployed workers, 35 years. Construction workers tended to be younger than those of the other groups, possibly because of the physical agility required on building projects.

A second characteristic of importance in the understanding of Navajo workers is the length of time these workers have spent in employment *off* the reservation. Nearly all of these workers had been relocated to employment elsewhere but returned to settle on the Navajo reservation. The mean years these workers spent off the Navajo reservation and the average number of jobs held by them over the past five years are shown below:

Table 1. Employment History On and Off Reservation

Type of worker	Years off reservation	Number of jobs in last 5 years
Industrial	6.0	1.5
Construction	5.8	3.7
Unemployed	7.1	3.5

These averages reveal that the Navajo industrial workers are relatively stable in their jobs, but both construction workers and the unemployed have transient employment.

#### *B. Method of study*

With input from the Navajo Tribe's Office of Occupational Safety, the Navajo labor union (United Mine Workers), traditional Navajo leaders, and selected Navajo workers, we developed and pilot-tested a structured interview guide, focusing on the socioeconomic background, attitudes toward work, job-safety issues, and cultural values of these Navajo workers. Interviews were conducted by bilingual Navajos trained by an anthropology-sociology team. The interviews were conducted at the workers' homes after regular working hours or by appointment. Cooperation was excellent.

#### *History of Native Americans in the labor force*

Historically, adaptations to the mainstream labor market have been fraught with difficulties. For example, Martin Robin, studying Indian history between 1871–1933, states:

The expropriation of the Indians, the transfer of land to spec-

ulators, settlers, and developers, played an important role in the emergence of the new capitalistic economy. Indian labor cadres of the past were poor material for the new system. By inclination and habit, the Indian did not fit the new industrial mold. His customary casual and seasonal work schedules hardly prepared him for the discipline, pace, and rhythm of industrial employment. Valuing traditional ties with the community, he was not motivated to pursue status and monetary rewards in the competitive economy, and he was reluctant to submit to the authority of white managers in bureaucratic industrial enterprises. Many found seasonal work on ranches, railroads, logging camps, and fishing industries. Not being a serious competitor to the white capitalist, landowner or laborer, the Indian was ignored, patronized, or exploited. (cited in Knight 1978,

Knight maintains that different spheres of Indian culture were affected and changed at variable rates (1978). The “new Indian cultures forming during the industrial period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were in the direction of European frontier society” (19). ~Subsequently, educational systems set up by both religious orders and government agencies made important inroads into Native American culture, preparing students for a work life as domestics and farm laborers.

In the 1930s the great Depression led to governmental subsidies and the rise of government-conceived “tribal governments” accompanying the industrial sidelining of Native American wage workers, who were encouraged to return to their reservations as “surplus labor.” But the advent of World War II made Native American labor once again important. Native Americans moved off the reservation to large cities to become employed in shipbuilding and other war industries or moved to nearby towns and farming communities to fill the various laboring jobs left vacant by the more mobile Anglos.

After World War II, most Native Americans lost their war-time jobs as the economic boom following the war largely bypassed Native American workers. The Native American population increased rapidly, education and health care improved somewhat, and of greater significance, government welfare on the reservations tended to replace wage-income. The late 1950s witnessed the beginning of the “welfare economy” for Native Americans (Hawthorne 1966). The mid- and late 1960s saw a massive rise in government funding in the name of the

Native American peoples. This led to what Hawthorne describes as the “emergence of an Indian administrative middle-class dependent upon government funding, with relatively few persons engaged in productive enterprises. With exceptions, the new Indian middle-class is for the most part a classic example of an ethnic bourgeois” (20).

Beginning in the late 1950s, the massive relocation program of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) attempted to move Native Americans into large urban areas for employment and training, and plans were afoot to “terminate” Indian reservations. Today, over half of all Native Americans reside in the urban areas away from the reservation. Much of this urban population is in the wage-labor market, while others are in schools, working for the government, or attending various training programs. Massive Indian opposition to termination has led to other types of programs in an attempt to solve the massive unemployment and welfare-dependency so characteristic of reservation life.

Knight holds that as a general strategy for Indian employment, small-scale capitalism cannot compete with larger industry (1978). Native crafts production has proved to be a financial failure, and the number of Native American artisans is steadily dwindling, being replaced by mass-produced, machine made, imitation Indian arts and crafts (often manufactured in Taiwan, Mexico, and Korea).

### *Navajo labor*

The history of the Navajo labor force is that of Navajos moving from a subsistence economy based upon the traditional ways of life of sheepherding, weaving, etc., toward a wage-dependent economy. In 1958, only 10 % of Navajo income came from livestock and agriculture, only 1% from arts and crafts; 68% from wages; 5% from mineral leases; and 16% from railroad retirement, social security, welfare (Aberle 1969, 245). Weiss describes the Navajos as a “land-based proletariat” (1979).

The Federal Relocation Program of the 1950s and 1960s attracted many of the “brightest and best” of the young Navajos into West Coast cities and into off-reservation schools, training facilities, and universities. Such BIA-sponsored programs spread the Navajo “problem” into the urban ghettos of Denver, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. The urban Indian became a new “half-breed” struggling for survival (Miller 1976). The problems of alcoholism, mental health, child neglect, and crime spread like a blight over both urban and reservation populations.

The government, having tried to move Native Americans off the reservation to enter the lower classes as a “wage reserve,” now

turned to developing industries on the various reservations to provide "wage-work." Many of these "wage-work" industries failed.

As the need for natural resources grew in the post-World War II atomic age, and as the populations of the cities and countryside swelled, the need for uranium, coal, and power became a major demand, and some Native American reservations were pressured to permit mining and power production on their reservations in conjunction with "private industry." Today, Native Americans on those reservations rich in minerals and other resources are confronting the rapid development of such enterprises.

Over the past two decades, private industry, mining, and construction projects have moved onto the Navajo reservation via cooperative agreements with the tribe. These tribal-industrial agreements emerged from the national need for energy swelled by the growth of population, particularly in the cities of the West. Indian tribal ownership of coal land in the Southwest was estimated at 100% in Arizona and 40% in New Mexico. Thus the Navajo and Hopi tribes became crucial participators in the energy development drama when great coal deposits were found on their reservations. The Four Corners Project was initiated to convert coal to electricity on the reservation and then to transfer this energy to the cities of the Sun Belt and California.

The tremendous wealth involved in the development of such vast resources has had many side affects, including the manipulation of the rivalry between the Navajo and Hopi tribes that led to the tragic relocation of Navajo families from Navajo and Hopi Joint-Use areas, and to the corruption and manipulation of the power that attends the acquisition of great and sudden wealth (*Arizona Republican*, 4-11 Oct. 1987). For example, in 1964, one coal lease gave the Peabody Company the right to strip mine 40,000 acres on the Navajo reservation. In 1966, a second coal lease gave Peabody the right to strip mine 25,000 acres in the Joint-Use area. Peabody signed an additional lease for water use for processing coal (a water intensive method, leading to rapid depletion of the fragile ground-water ecology of the Four Corners area). No open hearings, no community discussions, no administrative disclosures were conducted by either the Navajo and Hopi governments or the BIA (Clemmer 1978). Navajos and Hopis had lost control of 65,000 acres of their land and had not even been aware of the decision. Peabody mines this coal using the world's largest scoop shovels, sending it in two directions: by railroad to the Salt River Project (hereafter referred to as

the Page Plant) and through a 273-mile pipeline carrying a “slurry” mix of water and coal to the Southern California Edison plant at Bullhead City, Arizona.

Neither reservation Indians nor other people in the West were adequately informed about the potential effects of energy development upon their lands and their lives. As Jorgensen (1978) states, “Cost-benefit analyses is a standard tool of capitalist development economies that transforms all costs to dollars, omitting (the impact upon) community structure, politics, religion, and history of the local resistance” (1978, 15). Jorgensen adds that the result is a massive shift from social to economic and technological considerations, and from the local communities and regions to metropolitan areas and the operations of national and private corporations (15).

### *Navajo culture*

The emergent Navajo industrial work force is often overlooked in anthropological studies, which in general focus on issues of cultural change and retention. Similarly, the sacred traditions of the Navajo who is a secular employee in a modern industrial plant are not considered significant in economic studies of this population. Yet Navajo sacred traditions are the basis for Navajo life, and it is essential that an understanding of the “Navajo Way” be considered in any research study of Navajo people, either economic or anthropological.

The Navajo culture is based on the myth that the Navajo people ascended from the center of the Earth, that place being the land lying between the Four Sacred Mountains. The “Navajo Way” refers to the generalized view of the relationship between Navajos and their place in the world. The “Sacred Land” is thus a concept that describes the unique religious and philosophical relationship that Navajos feel about their place. This feeling-state is termed *hozho*, a blend of being at harmony with one’s environment and at peace with one’s circumstances (Joe 1975). In order to experience *hozho*, one’s mind must be free of wrong thoughts, anger, and all things negative. A Navajo’s quest for the state of harmony or balance, i.e., of *hozho*, leads to an accommodation of all types of differences and diffuse experiences and a seeking to balance these differences despite their inherent contradiction. Thus, the Navajo culture is an important factor in aiding individuals to adapt to rapid change or to discontinuous events.

These elements in the culture use such tactics as building strong intrafamily and clan relationships, belonging to a same sex and age



group, sharing goods and services, seeking consensus, and avoiding ambition and competition. Such elements influence the Navajos in their daily lives and direct their relationships and actions. These elements are especially significant in determining their attitudes about work and wages, as this study will demonstrate. Indeed, the Navajo have always been an industrious people, whether working as dry farmers, sheep-herders, or hunters. Wage work, which is nontraditional, is now the emerging economic base for many Navajos. How this wage work, i.e., selling time and labor, contradicts the cultural views of time and ~freedom of choice is a subject that will be addressed in this study.

**Research analysis**

In this study, we sought to trace the cultural influence of the Navajo Way upon the adaptation, attitude, and behavior of Navajo workers in a modern industrial workplace.

The Navajo workers in the industrial-worker sample were rated according to their degree of “traditionality” as measured by their response to the Joe Traditionality Scale (see table 2). These items are selected indicators of various aspects of the “Navajo Way.”

Table 2. *Degree of Traditionalism of Navajo Industrial Workers*

Items	%
Speaks Navajo fluently	82
Considers self religious	81
Considers family traditional	78
Spouse Navajo	75
Participates in tribal elections	72
Uses prayer pollen	66
Names Sacred Mountains	64
Uses traditional healers	54
Traditional Navajo or Native American Church	47
Tells children Navajo stories, customs	47
Assists with sings	42
Keeps Sacred Earth Bundle	32

As table 2 shows, over two-thirds of these workers have retained most of the values and practices of traditional Navajo culture. Nearly all of these subjects are married with children and appear to have a fairly high degree of family stability.

Table 3 shows that over half (57%) live with or near their parents.

Table 3. Navajo Workers' Response to Cultural and Family Items (N=74)

Family Values	%
Shares wages with needy family	94
Does not miss work because of drinking	88
Has children in home	86
Shares management of paycheck with spouse	85
Spouse Navajo	63
Lives with/close to parents	57
Tells children Navajo stories	47
Spouse employed	33
Wants children to do same work	28

The responses to the questions on these family values indicate these Navajo workers remain closely tied to their family and their tribe and that the continuity of family is indeed important.

A modified Guttman Scalogram analysis of the relationship between these items revealed three family types among these Navajo workers: 1) close family, 2) average family, and 3) dysfunctional family. Only 17% of these workers' families were classified as dysfunctional, i.e., the families included persons with a drinking problem, persons alienated from primary groups, or persons estranged from spouse or children. Wages from steady employment act as a family supportive force and indicate that this group of Navajo employees differ markedly from other Navajo families on the reservation, i.e., it has been estimated that over 50% of Navajo families on the reservation today are "dysfunctional" (Navajo Social Services, personal communication).

The wage income provides these workers with a stable identity and places them and their families in the emerging reservation middle-income strata. The other representatives of the reservation middle income strata are the federal and tribal employees, who form a bureaucratic social group on the reservation (Robbins 1975).

Traditional values of these workers are evident. For example, the response to a question about sharing wages with the family was almost unanimous. All but two workers agreed with the statement: "I share my wages whenever my family needs help." Eighty-eight percent agreed with the statement, "Sometimes your family is more important than a

job.” These responses emphasize the Navajo traditional attitudes about family held by these industrial workers.

Anglo and Navajo societies are both still marked by different priorities in their evaluation of a successful member of each society. While Anglo individuals may be rewarded with status and financial acknowledgment for devoting most of their time to their work and less to their families, and may even cut geographical ties in order to further advance in their careers, the same behavior displayed by Navajo individuals could result in negative sanctions carried out by the workers’ own families. Status achievement by means of accumulating wealth and by moving away from one’s familiar social environment may cause this individual to be confronted with the worst Navajo accusation, “He acts as if he did not have any relatives” (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1947).

Kluckhohn and Leighton also observed that the Navajo are essentially group-minded and work best in a familiar environment with family or friends. The group orientation of these Navajo workers also emerged from the survey data, in which ninety percent stated they always get along with their fellow workers and that they have many friends, some of whom date back to their childhood and who may also be employed at the same workplace.

Navajos are egalitarian; many are linked by the clan system which has complex layers of obligations and reciprocities. Traditionally, they work well as individuals while holding to broad group goals. They tend to distrust outsiders and to look to their own families for direction and approval. For example, in a previous study of industrial workers, the Navajo Labor Commission (1984) noted that many Navajo workers voiced complaints that their supervisors were Anglo or Mexicans, did not speak Navajo, and did not understand the Navajo culture. Yet, did most workers really want Navajo supervisors in their work place?

We asked the 74 industrial workers to respond to the statement: “A good job is one where the boss is a Navajo.” Fifty-seven percent disagreed, 26% were not sure, but only seventeen percent of these Navajo workers preferred a Navajo boss. There may be many reasons for this, some of which are rooted in the Navajo culture. It may be uncomfortable for a Navajo to seek or maintain the role of a “boss” over other Navajos, given the egalitarian nature of the reservation social system. For example, among clan members there are many mutual obligations and responsibilities, some of which would be difficult to fulfill if one were a boss and the other a worker in a hierarchical arrangement. Clan

duties may conflict with supervisory duties. Also, in the Navajo culture it is improper for one person to put himself or herself over another person—such personal aggrandizement may create social tensions and distrust, which can give rise to feelings of envy—a state of feeling much disdained by most Navajos. In short, it may be culturally awkward to try to adapt an egalitarian social order such as that of Navajo tribal life to the hierarchical authority structure of a modern industrial organization.

The world of industrial work is a foreign land to many Navajo Indians, yet they appear to be making a good adjustment. We asked these respondents: “How satisfied are you with your present job?” Most, 62%, were very satisfied, 28% were moderately satisfied, and 10% stated that they did not like their job. Navajo workers are proud of their newly-attained work skills, and 40% stated that they wished to increase their skills by obtaining further technical training, if possible.

We asked these workers: “What kind of a job would you like to have in five years?” The responses to this open-ended question were coded by the use of content analysis methodology (Berelson 1967).

Over half (52%) of these respondents constitute a very stable labor force, reporting that they plan to be at the same job (albeit not necessarily in the same position) five years into the future. Further, perhaps reflecting these workers’ traditional Navajo background, 16% state they would like to be able to have their own business in five years’ time, some as artists or silversmiths. About one-fourth did not have long-range plans regarding their participation in the labor force, which may be an indication of a lack of a long-range commitment to wage work.

According to Kluckhohn and Leighton (1947), Navajos conceive life as being dangerous and unpredictable and therefore seek stability in their relationships. Perhaps this traditional view of the world is reflected in their attitudes toward their jobs (58% wish to remain in the same job five years from now). Another indication of this desire for job stability is that 59% of all respondents agreed to the statement, “A good job is a steady job, even if it’s for low pay.”

Adams (1965) felt that Navajos valued those forms of employment which most preserve and reinforce the traditional fabric of their society. We asked these Navajo workers the following questions: “If you had a *real* choice, which kinds of work would you most like to do?” We divided the Navajo workers into a high-traditional and a low-traditional group, based on their responses to the traditionalism items (see Table 2). Out of twelve possible responses to these items, the mean response

score was 7.8 items. We divided the subjects above and below the mean into two groups, high-traditional and low-traditional, respectively, and compared their *most preferred* choice of future work

Table 4. Navajo Workers Traditionality By Choice of Preferred Job (N=74)

Degree of traditionality	Self-employed or season	Steady job on reservation	Job off reservation
high-traditional	63	65	30
low traditional	37	35	70

Three factors loom as significant: 1) Navajos who are traditional would choose to have employment or to engage in work that would keep them residing on the reservation. 2) Traditional Navajos would choose equally to work at a steady job (43%) or to work as artists, silversmiths, small shop operators, or to do seasonal work if given the choice (50%). 3) Of the Navajos who would prefer to accept steady employment *off* the reservation, 70% of these were from the nontraditional group, although these constitute only a few of the total population studied (less than 10%). Thus, our empirical data appear to indicate that these Navajo industrial workers still hold strongly to many of their traditional values as noted by previous anthropological studies, but can blend these values into the modern labor market found on the reservation.

We asked the Navajo workers if they raised sheep as a source of supplemental income. In the high-traditional group 70% raised sheep, while in the low-traditional group 33% raised sheep. Since all these workers appear to be earning a reasonable wage, the supplemental income may not be as essential as is their desire to fulfill the traditional Navajo role as a “herder” with ties close to the land (Adams 1971).

Some of the respondents commented that they kept sheep “in order to teach their children.” Thus for many of these Navajos, retaining their residence and their spiritual base on the land and *with* the land is a crucial factor in their lives. Many commute long distances on the reservation to their industrial jobs so that they can maintain their home on the land with their families and their animals. The pick-up truck is thus the prevalent symbol of tribal life.

Based on Navajo tradition, which encompasses the value of “adaptability as well as `traditionality,” the cause for clinging to traditional ways of shepherding as a major source for Navajo economic subsistence can perhaps be found in the notorious instability of the Anglo

job market. Since the Navajos are already forced to deal with various different societal structures and forms of income, they are not willing to surrender their traditions or their relationship to their land. The apparent immobility or stagnation, typical of many Third World cultures, is not "innate" or "natural," but a frightened reaction to conditions whose dynamics are neither understood nor mastered.

Schoepfle, Burton, and Begishe (1984) observed that even the more educated Navajos who move to off-reservation border towns and live in nontraditional nuclear family households attempt to keep their sheep herds intact by leaving the livestock in the care of relatives. The authors assume that people engaged in off-reservation wage work still prefer to maintain a subsistence-based economic safety net in the event of unemployment.

As noted earlier, the supposed lack of ambition often remarked about by non-Indian employers regarding their Navajo employees perhaps can be best explained as resulting from the Navajo concept of life as being dangerous and unpredictable (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1947). Hence, Navajos may be preoccupied with security rather than with material or career advancement. As noted above, the cultural goal of the Navajo is to achieve a state of moderate well-being or "harmony." Navajos look with suspicion upon those individuals who appear to be accumulating excessive wealth without sharing it with their relatives. Often those individuals are accused of witchcraft or of taking valuables from the dead (Kluckhohn and Leighton 1947).

Research into Native American employer-employee relationships often stresses absenteeism or leaving the job (Robbins 1975; Taylor and O'Connor 1969). The reasons given for unexcused absences were based mostly on family and personal obligations. Ceremonies, for instance, are not scheduled according to the Anglo work week, and their duration often covers more than one work day. Aside from these facts, however, it is crucial to understand the importance of ceremonial activities and family obligations to many Native American workers. Family and cultural values may seem to have more importance than a day's wages.

The Anglo labor market places great demands upon its participants. In order to successfully compete in the work environment, employees are expected to put their jobs before their families or their geographical ties (Hall 1969, 211). Occupation is one of the most important sources for status in Anglo society, and the submission to work demands is often accepted as inevitable for career advancement. Quite the opposite value is true for most Native Americans. A Navajo individual's identity

derives from harmonious relationships with one's family members. Partaking in the daily chores, thus demonstrating willingness to cooperate, is one of the bases for ensuring such harmony with the social environment. Forfeiting these relationships for the sake of material or career advancement may result in negative sanctions from one's family, which cannot be compensated by economic rewards.

For example, when income was compared to family relationships and geographical ties, Adams (1965) found that among the Shonto Navajos, permanent off-reservation wage work ranked last in the list of choices for income supplementation, even though it offered the greatest economic rewards. Welfare payments or uncompensated unemployment were given preference over any type of employment which would remove an individual from his or her familiar social and geographical environment for a prolonged period of time. Shonto Navajos preferred seasonal off-reservation employment, especially during the seasons of slack activities at home. Adams concluded that regardless of the actual economic rewards, Navajos most value those forms of employment which most preserve and reinforce the traditional fabric of their society and least value those activities which threaten or disrupt it. Their presence on their land takes precedence over earning regular wages.

As to the problems so frequently mentioned in the literature on Indian workers, i.e., absenteeism and drinking, this study presents evidence of workers who have overcome these problems. Despite the long distances to be traveled, only 15% of the respondents answered that they sometimes miss work, and 30% stated that they are sometimes late for work. The weather and geography of the Navajo reservation thus seem to represent the real problems rather than an attitude of employment rejection on the part of the Navajo worker.

Twelve percent agreed that "drinking sometimes causes me to miss work"; fifteen percent of these workers have an arrest record for either public intoxication or driving while under the influence of alcohol. However, these subjects appear now to be able to maintain control over their drinking and to report to work on a fairly regular basis. These men could not carry out these dangerous industrial jobs if they were drinking during the work week, and in order to stay employed, it has been necessary for them to learn to control their drinking, at least during the work week.

However, Navajo workers in the labor force seem to hold some ambivalent attitudes toward the central importance of regular employment with respect to their self-concept. We asked them to reply to a true-false statement, "Because Indians are born free, some do not want

to have a regular job.” Two-thirds of all respondents seemed to agree with this statement to a greater or lesser degree; only one-third definitely disagreed with the statement. It appears these Navajo workers reflect some underlying distrust of working for wages on a regular basis as they think of themselves as being “born free.” While it is true that since the first mandatory stock reduction, Navajos have relied upon wage work for support, still these workers continue to express conflicting values about “regular work” as a desirable lifestyle. While many studies report “work” to be the central force of life for industrial employees, this may not entirely be the case for Navajo Indians. Sorkin has reasoned that “work is central for an individual under two conditions—because it is normalized as a duty or because it is imposed as a constraint. Its loss of centrality and subjective potency can be explained by factors that block one or the other of these two mechanisms” (1969,19). Perhaps neither is the case for Native Americans residing on reservations, i.e., work may not be seen as a “duty” nor is work imposed as a constraint by norms arising from the Navajo culture. According to Barsh, “Indians constitute the lower rung of labor in income and occupational-level terms” (1988). He notes that on the reservations half or more of the work force is chronically unemployed, 44% of the employed Indians work less than half the year, and a majority of those employed work for the government. Barsh adds, “One could argue that reservations are simply welfare ghettos in the countryside.”

Barsh’s arguments are buttressed by some of the data from Navajo workers. The industrial and construction employees studied in this report account for less than 12% of the current Navajo labor force (*Navajo FAX* 1988). Henderson (1979) argues that these private-sector reservation workers are “a diverse group on the reservation with attitudes and patterns of living significantly different from other segments of the Navajo tribe. These Navajo workers are therefore an important source of social change.” He further notes that “there have been few systematic studies of the role occupations play in changing personal characteristics of tribal members.”

Aberle wrote that the pervasive poverty found on the Navajo reservation “has some roots in custom, but has its present causes in current economic conditions and represents an adjustment to them” (1969). Our data strongly suggest that regular, stable, well-paid jobs are indeed a strong force for personal and social change, as suggested by Henderson (1979) and Aberle (1969), although these workers are not necessarily a “diverse” group because they remain *Navajo* in culture and



practice, tied to their home land.

***Comparison with other Navajos in the labor force***

The subjects who were regularly employed at Page and Peabody industries are different in several ways from those Navajos who work in construction, which is a volatile employment base. They also differ in some respects from those Navajos who are unemployed and under-employed in the reservation labor force. For example, in response to an item, “Work is important to my identity,” nearly all industrial workers agreed (98%), while 84% of the construction workers and 76% of the unemployed agreed with that statement. As can be seen, the more stable the workers’ jobs, the more important work is to their concept of themselves.

Another indication of personal attitudes toward work is seen in the data regarding job satisfaction. The longer a Navajo has been employed and the more stable one’s job, then the greater is one’s expressed degree of job satisfaction. This is shown in table 5.

*Table 5. Stability of Navajo Workers By Degree of Job Satisfaction (N=74)*

Degree of Job Satisfaction	Work Stability		
	Most Stable (Page) %	Moderately Stable (Peabody) %	Least Stable Construction %
Very satisfied	82	70	72
Ambivalent	16	30	28
Not satisfied	0	0	0

As the table shows, the most stable workers (Page workers) are the most satisfied, while the least stable (construction) were the most dissatisfied.

Upon closer examination, however, industrial and construction workers in this study were not as secure in their jobs as it might first appear. In fact, over the past five years, 46% of even these secure ~workers had received unemployment assistance during some period of job instability. This instability was also reflected in these workers’ stated job goals for the next five years. Table 6 compares the Navajo industrial workers’ future job aspirations with those Navajos employed in the less stable occupation of construction::

Table 6. Job Stability of Navajo Workers By Job Aspirations  
Over Next Five Years (N=74)

Aspirations over next 5 years	Work Stability		
	Most Stable	Moderately Stable	Least Stable
	(Page) %	(Peabody) %	(Construction) %
Better job	57	54	88
Same job	43	45	12

Again we see that Navajos who are employed at the most stable jobs are more likely to plan to continue that employment than are the construction workers who are irregularly employed. Thus, social structure seems to impact on their commitment to their work.

When we further examine the work careers of these Navajo workers, we find that many are intergenerational workers, i.e., that their own parents were also employed in similar jobs. Among these workers, 53% of their fathers and 27% of their mothers had been employed during their developmental years. Thus, they tended to be second-generation "workers," unlike so many reservation Indians.

Not only did employment of parents play an important role in these workers' backgrounds, but also the stable workers were more likely to report the *presence* of a father in their family than were the unemployed workers (24% to 15%).

Before these Navajo workers obtained their current on-reservation jobs, 85% had been employed off the reservation; 45% of those who worked off the reservation had been on the relocation programs working in West Coast or inland cities far from the reservation. They returned to the reservation for a variety of reasons, as shown in table 7

Table 7. Relocated Navajo Workers' Reason for Their  
Return to the Reservation (N=61)

Reason for Return	(Page) %	(Peabody) %	(Construction) %
Wanted to return	25	32	43
Laid off	19	23	17
Work on reservation	6	36	4
Personal problems	37	9	35

Of these Navajo workers returning to the reservation, 26% originally had returned because of problems in their family or personal lives and

34% because they wanted to return to their own culture and society. Work on the reservation appears to have solved their problems and to have given them a “home” on their reservation, thus appearing to provide an ideal answer for the disaffected but skilled urban Navajo worker with strong traditional roots. Some 40% reported that their spouse was also employed. Most report that they have a regular plan for spending their paycheck, many reporting installment payments due for a car, house, furniture, etc. *In fact, the more stable the job, the higher the pay, and the greater the number of installment payments due by these Navajo workers.* These findings also reflect the socioeconomic deficit facing most reservation dwellers—Navajo workers *start* climbing the consumer ladder far behind Anglo blue-collar workers. They must buy a car, a house, furniture, equipment—their previous level of existence had been at the subsistence or welfare level. Yet most can handle consumer debt providing that their jobs are stable. As seen in table 8, job stability is related to consumer debt.

Table 8. Job Stability among Navajo Workers by Number of Monthly Installments Due

Number of Payments	Stable (Page and Peabody) %	Less Stable (Construction) %
1-3	54	78
4-6	42	22
More than 6	4	0

As table 8 shows, 46% of the most stable workers had four or more monthly payments, while only 22% of the less stable workers had four or more monthly payments. The less stable the employment, the ~smaller the consumer debt load.

In some respects, these Navajo workers are similar to Anglo blue-collar workers in regard to their installment debt load. They are full participants in the U.S. credit world, buying mobile homes, cars, appliances, furniture, and clothes on credit. This is to be expected since reservation Navajos are late-starters in the middle-income “consumption class”—they are buying homes and cars to “catch up” to the lifestyle of Anglo “workers.”

Other aspects of borrowing money or using credit are also a familiar concept to Navajo workers. Only 21% of these workers had no experience with applying for a loan, 34% felt that they could easily

apply for and obtain a loan. Over half (55%) felt that obtaining a loan would be difficult or impossible. This is perhaps an indication of some of the difficulty these Navajo workers are experiencing in the handling of their credit, which is perhaps not at all different from the experiences of other minority employees in the United States. We asked them about their savings and banking resources. Their responses are reported in table 9.

Table 9. Navajo Workers Banking Resources by Job Stability (N=74)

Banking	Stable Page and Peabody %	Less Stable Construction %
Savings	29	20
Checking	43	20
Other	18	12
No. banking	10	48

As the table shows, construction workers, who are the most unstable of the Navajo workers studied, are the least likely to have any type of bank account (48%) in contrast to the steadily employed Navajo industrial workers, of whom 90% have some banking resources. Stably employed Navajo workers are better able to adopt modern banking practices, saving and planning for their economic futures, than are the less stably employed Navajo construction workers.

The wage differential between the Navajo industrial workers and the other two worker groups studied are significant, leading to charges of a worker-elite group. The yearly income of the industrial workers averaged \$24,000, the construction workers averaged \$9,660, and the unemployed workers averaged \$1,718. These figures reveal the potential economic discontinuity found on the Navajo reservation and cast a long shadow upon cultural attitudes.

In comparing employed Navajos with unemployed Navajos, we found that one of the major differences between these Navajo employed workers and the Navajo unemployed subjects is that those who were employed report that they feel they are well qualified for a job in contrast to the unemployed workers. Thus, vocational training and prior work experience would appear to be crucial to the preparation of a Navajo for meaningful work. Overall, prior work experience seems to be the best predictor of a satisfactory employment adjustment for these employed Navajo workers.

Other personal attributes were also important for predicting good

work performance, e.g., being on time to work, working despite personal desires, maintaining sobriety, and accepting a commitment to regular employment. Other researchers have noted these variables as well. Peretti (1975) found significant differences at the between rates of tardiness and good work attitudes; the literature on alcohol abuse is full of references to the adverse effects of alcohol and drug use on employment. Table 10 correlates a number of adverse factors to the stability of employment

*Table 10. Navajo Workers by Stability of Work and Adverse Personal Attitudes toward Work (N=103)*

Adverse Work Indicators	Stable	Unstable	Unemployed
	(Page & Peabody) %	(Construction) %	Controls %
Sometimes late for work	12	56	75
Miss work when feel like it	12	20	31
Miss work when drinking	8	20	27
May quit job	6	24	34
Sometimes careless on job	6	32	31
Legal problem, drinking	8	17	26

As this table clearly shows, the more stable the Navajo workers' employment, the better their attitudes toward work. This seems to indicate that the social structure of a stable work situation greatly impacts upon Navajo attitudes and practices, leading to better work habits, lower alcohol use, and an increase in commitment and care about the job. We conclude from this that regular, well-paying employment located close to a Navajo Indian's reservation home is a more important social change factor than has been apparent in all the past efforts to train and place Native Americans for employment the reservation.

The employed industrial workers are also deeply concerned about the impact of the mining and burning of coal upon their Navajo reservation—the "Sacred Land." Recently these concerns were also recognized by non-Navajos when heavy haze appeared in the Grand Canyon.

The Grand Canyon is one of the wonders of the world. This magnificent canyon is on the northern border of the Hopi Tribe and the Navajo Nation. Over the past ten years, visibility into the Grand Canyon has steadily decreased; Navajos and Hopis have complained that the "haze" was caused by the pollution from the huge Navajo generating station at Page, Arizona. For years the spokespeople for the Salt River Project, a principal owner of the mining and electrical generating plant, have denied that vast emissions of heavy coal smoke

have created the Grand Canyon haze. However, a recent investigation by the National Academy of Sciences (1990) found that this plant has “contributed significantly” to the haze in the Grand Canyon. Finally, National Park Service scientists interjected a tracer chemical into one of the smokestacks of the Navajo Plant. Later, during episodes of haze, they found “significant concentrations” of the chemical on the rim of the Canyon (*Arizona Daily Star*, 12 Oct. 1990, Cox News Service).

Navajo industrial workers were compared for their level of traditionality (see table 2), their knowledge about, and concern for, their Sacred Mountains and for Mother Earth, and for their level of satisfaction with their present job. The question we sought to answer was whether traditional Navajos who work in this polluting industry faced conflict as a result of their feelings about their job and their feelings about the sacredness of their lands. As is the case for industrial workers everywhere, the larger moral or environmental issues are often not clear. Workers work for wages, whether or not they are engaged in “moral” work or “environmentally safe” work. Yet these issues may play a role in the level of work satisfaction or the workers’ feelings of conflict about the end results of their labor. Among these Navajo workers, there are several levels of ambivalence about their job of mining the coal from their Sacred Mountains or using up the water from their sparse lands. Most of the Navajo workers in this study classified themselves as “traditional” (76%). As would be expected, the traditional Navajos expressed greater knowledge of, and concern for, their “Sacred Mountains:” 66% of the Navajos in the high-traditional group showed a high level of concern as compared with 29% of those in the low-traditional group.

The relationship between concern for the Sacred Mountains and each Navajo worker’s level of traditionality is in the expected direction, i.e., the more “traditional” the Navajo worker, the greater their concern for the Sacred Mountains.

Further, while 71% of the Navajo workers expressed “satisfaction” with their present job, there were significant variations in their job satisfaction when viewed against their concern regarding the Sacred Mountains: Among those satisfied with their jobs, 40% expressed little knowledge or concern about the Sacred Mountains, while among those Navajo workers *not* satisfied with their present job, 85% expressed concern over the Sacred Mountains.

This ambivalence is typical of traditional persons facing the destruction of their own tradition and culture due to the intrusion of industrial work, which seems to provide an improved economic way of

life. This is the basic dilemma facing Navajo industrial workers, who use their own mountain and water resources to make a decent wage and thus be able to live on their reservation.

***Summary discussion***

"Separation, assimilation, extermination are catchwords to describe white policies toward the American Indian...The central focus of uneasiness has always been land" (Chamberlain 1975).

The findings from this survey highlight the central importance of their land to these Navajo subjects. Most of the subjects in this study have a history of sojourning in cities and towns away from their reservation to search for work. When jobs opened up on the Navajo land, these workers returned to make their home on the reservation. When they were asked about their "ideal job," only 10% would think of ever living and working off the reservation, irrespective of the career possibilities. Indeed, for these Navajos, their focus is their land.

Historically, Navajos have had to work off their lands, following the railroads, construction work, government jobs, war work, and finally, the employment placement of the Relocation Programs. But always, the Navajo workers dreamed of "home."With the advent of the great energy resource harvesting on Navajo land, the tribe made agreements with the private industries who were to mine the coal of Black Mesa and who were to draw electricity from the Colorado River to give preferential treatment in hiring Navajo workers. This created an opportunity for approximately 12% of the available Navajo labor force to find stable, well-paying work on the reservation, enabling them to live upon their land. Of all the government-sponsored programs over the past fifty years, this tribal-private industry combination finally seems to have temporarily "solved" the unemployment problem for this small group of Native American workers.

Even though Navajos were introduced to a cash economy over a century ago, and while many were educated in boarding schools, their employment potential has not been fully developed and realized. There are many reasons for this gap between education and employment. While a boarding school education focused, in part, on the acquisition of employment skills, much of its curriculum was geared towards erasing the Navajo culture and replacing it with those values of the competitive Anglo labor market such as career ambition, devaluation of family relationships, mutual interdependence, and punctuality. In particular after World War II, the Navajo people experienced an increase in the exposure to Anglo values. However, there is still a wide gap between

the meaning of work for Navajo people and the willingness to make sacrifices in one's personal relationships for the sake of economic advancement. While the necessity for supplementing traditional forms of subsistence with cash income has convinced many Navajos of the inevitability of entering the labor market as seasonal, migrant, or full-time employees, the cultural meaning of occupational and economic "success" per se has not yet been fully incorporated into the Navajo culture.

The Peabody Mining Company projected in 1964 a 35-year life for this strip mining effort before the profitable coal would be depleted (Clemmer 1978). Will the Navajo-Hopi lands recover from the scars left by this mining enterprise?

The great strip mining of the Navajo-Hopi lands forecasts desperate days ahead. For example, Dan Katchangua, a Hopi medicine man, in a letter to the BIA wrote: "For the very small dead-end wages of very small value, we must compare these with the values of Mother Earth, her resources, her air, water, people and wild life" (1970). However, the impact of the income from land leasing plays an important role in tribal life; for example, the Navajo royalties from 1965-2000 will be 58 million dollars.

Studies point out that land reclamation of arid areas such as Black Mesa may take at least 300 years and may not be possible at all (Environmental Studies Board 1974). The water for the industrial plants and for the making of coal "slurry" for pipeline transportation is drawn from five deep wells that tap a fossil aquifer embedded deep in the earth for millions of years. There are no guarantees that the upper water tables will not be adversely affected, as indeed now appears to be the case. For example, the Hopi Tribe protested that the water to the Peabody Mining operation should be cut off due to the increasing aridity of the lands. The Navajo tribe, even though fearing losses of jobs and loss of rent for the tribal treasury, has also formally protested. Further, there is a groundswell of concern as the Navajos watch their water sources dry up and their grazing lands fade into dry gulches. Recently (April 1990) Navajos protested the oil and gas explorations of the Chuska Energy Company on Navajo land in southwestern Utah.

Other concerns are that earth extracted from mining would be carried by run-off, carrying clay and toxic elements into Dot Klick Wash, adversely affecting agriculture, fauna, and human life. Indeed, there have been several recent accounts of the death of animals from toxic run-off in that wash (*Navajo Times*, 14 April 1989). McGavock and Levins (1973) have stated that "the industrial use of such huge



quantities of water would be condemned as environmentally suicidal.”

According to Vernon Maseyesva (1989), chairperson of the Hopi Tribe, “it is unfair to both Hopi and Navajo tribes to withdraw water to slurry Black Mesa coal to California at \$1.27 per acre foot. The Hopi Tribe has a large pristine untapped water source below these mesas and this administration will do everything to protect this valuable natural resource.” Loesch, an official from the Department of Interior, ruled that environmental impact statements (required by the National Environmental Policy Act) were not needed for Indian territory, “because it was not public land.”

In 1970, a study by HEW estimated that “gases from the Four Corner Plant would damage vegetation and human health.” Jorgensen sums up the situation as follows:

The contraction of rural population and their economic bases, caused by Capitalist development and corporate control has ripened these regions for the expropriation and development of energy resources, often regardless of the enormous costs in water, infrastructure, and social lifeway. The creation of this reservation drought has intensified the condition and brought severe damage to traditional Indian cultures, and, in terms of status and self-esteem, to Indian personalities. The consent of tribal officials (to the extraction of resources) was uninformed because tribal offices did not know what effects energy development might have on their communities and environments. They were not appraised of the activities of these companies in other areas, the market value of their resources, strategies for mitigating more favorable contracts, or the long range implications of the contracts they signed. (Jorgensen 1978, 18)

This is the dilemma in which the Navajo workers live and work. Are the Navajo workers being introduced into an industrial system that will self-destruct as their own Sacred Lands fade into desert?

The long-range view is dismal and, as these workers blend both cultures, their survival may depend upon the retention of traditional values. Yet, like employees everywhere, the Navajo industrial worker cannot solve these larger issues. This lack of control only adds to the tension arising out of the dilemma of becoming stable workers with its financial and social rewards while participating in the destruction of their own Sacred Land. This cultural and social dilemma is acted out at both the macro- and micro-level of Native American life as the blending processes continue.

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*Native American Research and Training Center*  
University of Arizona, Tucson

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### **On the Significance of Militant Materialism”: Dialectical-Materialist Logic and Critical Thinking**

**Clark Everling**

“On the Significance of Militant Materialism” was a paper presented by V. I. Lenin in 1922 (1967b, 662–70). There he emphasized the need for the development and propagation of dialectical materialism as a method of critical thinking. He made it clear that this required an understanding of the philosophical grounds of dialectical materialism and an understanding of dialectics as developed in Hegelian as well as in Marxist philosophy (667–68).

Lenin, like Marx, saw the problem of critical thinking, and the problem of knowledge itself, first of all as logical problems. He contrasted the understanding of things and phenomena as they exist in human practice, concretely and comprehensively, and evolving according to their own contradictions, with logical methods which isolated concepts in formal abstractions (1967c, 536–37). These abstractions make our concepts independent of concrete diversity and of our understanding of the places and purposes of things and phenomena within human experience. This article will examine the continued importance of these distinctions and present dialectical-materialist logic both as a method of critical thinking and a method of scholarship.

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Lenin recorded his understanding of dialectics in his *Philosophical Notebooks* (1981), in which he primarily reviewed and critiqued Hegel's major works. While he never lived to complete the study of dialectical materialism he had hoped to write, Lenin made specific use of the method as he had defined it in his *Notebooks* in three works: *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, *State and Revolution*, and *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*. My approach to understanding dialectical-materialist logic in this paper rests on Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*, especially his summary of the steps involved in dialectical-materialist logic (1981, 220–22) and his notes entitled "On the Question of Dialectics" (357–61). Lenin's methods and conclusions correspond to Marx's discussion of his method for the investigation and writing of *Capital*, which he summarized as a series of logical steps in his introduction to the *Grundrisse* (1986b, 1740). This correspondence of Marx's and Lenin's approaches is supported by, and their philosophical principles elaborated in, E. V. Ilyenkov's *The Dialectics of the Abstract and Concrete in Marx's Capital* (1982).

Lenin stated in "On the Question of Dialectics" that contradiction was the heart of dialectical materialism and that dialectical materialism was the essence of Marxism (1981, 358–60). He stated further that *any and all* individual or general things or phenomena without exception, "any proposition" (such as: "John is a man, Fido is a dog, *this* is a leaf of a tree") was best understood through dialectical-materialist logic (359–62).

This means that we understand the individual identity or universality of any thing or phenomenon first of all according to contradiction, as a relation of opposites. Secondly, because the principle of contradiction is itself universal, we understand any concepts, categories, or laws concerning things and phenomena according to this same principle. In other words, concepts, categories, and laws must themselves be understood as a unity of opposites (Lenin 1981, 15051). The general and the particular are always realized through one another in mutual determination. We cannot seek to understand particulars without regard to their own interactions and development any more than we can ignore the laws and categories which are manifested through these particulars in their mutual determination.

The significance of these points for the interpretation that will be presented here is that dialectical materialism always begins from the perspective of the contradictions within any and all things and phenomena themselves and not from the concepts and categories which are findings of dialectical and historical materialism. This is the reverse

of those discussions of dialectical and historical materialism which present these as summaries of their most general principles.<sup>1</sup> *Quantity* and *quality*, for example, are not categories which exist independently of the particular things and phenomena through which they are realized (Cornforth 1971, 99–105). Similarly, we understand *class struggle* through the concrete forms and contents of its own development and not as an abstract category to be imposed upon data, as E. V. Ilyenkov once said, “like a child’s bucket upon a sand pile.” (1977, 228)

Even more fundamental is the dialectical unity of objective dialectics, epistemology, and logic, and it is for that reason that Marx and Lenin saw the problem of knowledge first as a logical problem. Lenin summarized this unity in his *Philosophical Notebooks* (1981, 317–18), but never had occasion to elaborate on it further. This elaboration is central to what I am attempting here.

Marx demonstrated in his “Theses on Feuerbach” (Marx and Engels 1968, 197–99) and elsewhere (68–78) that if we grant that an objective reality exists outside of and independently of consciousness, then we must also say that our thoughts and language do not refer most basically to other ideas and words but to the reflection of human practice. Practice itself is a product of interaction, what Ilyenkov has called the product of human sensuous activities as these exist contemporaneously and historically as a result of all of our activities in all of our interactions with nature, including with one another (1977, 229–38).

What we observe sensually and objectively, then, is not simply nature but is nature as modified by human interactions (Ilyenkov 1977, 233–34). Our language and ideas reflect this objective reality in all of its diversity. But because reality is diverse and because our language summarizes that diversity, words express many identities and relationships reflecting numerous aspects of the existence and development of even a single thing. Our language reflects our practice as unities within diversities (Lenin 1981, 275). Things and phenomena in their appearance and development have numerous and separate aspects, all equally existent and capable of being understood as a relationship among them, as a relationship among interacting and opposing parts of things and phenomena in themselves and in their development (Lenin 1981, 220).

These things said, it is possible to summarize the unity of objective dialectics, epistemology, and logic. Dialectical materialism recognizes the existence of an objective reality independent of consciousness. As humans we are engaged in the creation and recreation of that reality through our own activities, through our practice, as we reproduce ourselves in our interactions with nature and our involvement in the

development of human society. This philosophy holds as part of its epistemology, its theory of knowledge, that our thoughts and language reflect that practice and that we can know the places and purposes of things and phenomena within that practice by understanding them in their diverse relationships to themselves and to one another. Logic is the way in which we gain knowledge of that objective and diverse reality, but this logic requires the reconstruction of practice as a relationship among things in all of their facets and in their development (Lenin 1967c, 536–37). This means that logic must understand all of these aspects and their development together as a unity of opposites, of opposing facets, features, changes. Consequently, dialectical materialism aims at a strictly logical and historical reconstruction of the results of objectively existing human practice (Ilyenkov 1982, 200) as we have come to know this practice through our interaction with the world and as this practice is reflected in our thoughts and language. This means that our knowledge is relative, but it is relative to the demonstration of relationships of things to one another in their own existence and development and not simply to the observer (Lenin 1981, 358).

In order to demonstrate the unity of dialectics, epistemology, and logic and to understand how any and all things and phenomena may be understood in practice, we must first examine formal logic and the specific barriers which it poses to our understanding of objective diversity and development when not comprehended dialectically. We shall therefore begin by discussing the principles by which formal logic establishes the identities and universalities of things and phenomena. Using the commodity as an example, we shall then examine the limitations of these principles for objective and historical knowledge when formal logic is applied nondialectically. Following this section, we shall consider dialectical-materialist logic both according to its logical principles and as a methodology, concluding with a discussion of the logical, methodological, and political significance of dialectical materialism.

### *Formal logic*

In its formal definition, a commodity is an article for trade or exchange.<sup>2</sup> The articles which we trade or exchange can be as varied as we can imagine; these articles can be many different kinds of things, and there can be many subgroupings among things of the same kind. Each of these articles has its own concrete individual properties, such as its physical properties and its utility. Each of these articles is a sepa-



rate identity itself. And each individual article within a certain class of articles is an identity in its own right because of its own unique properties.

At the same time, we know the commodity as a formal identity because this identity is established through the abstraction of elements common to these many diverse things. The commodity is an article, one among any articles involved in exchange, however concretely diverse they may be. Exchange is the common element abstracted from all of them.

Each of these identities, ranging from a general identity like the commodity to the diverse identities of very individual articles to be exchanged, is established in the same way. We have isolated elements within each of these relations, whether the very general or very specific individual relation or anything in between, according to the isolation of elements which are the same or similar within each of them, and we define and name them as that identity according to those common elements.

The principle of identity within formal logic does not mean that a thing can have only one identity and no other. For example, all articles for exchange are recognized as having a use value, and this is part of the basis for their exchange. But use value is an identity separate from exchange value. Use value within formal logic is the isolation of the common element of utility from among diverse articles and diverse subjective reasons of the parties to the exchange. Use value and exchange value are understood to be directly joined in barter because barter is by definition an exchange of goods for one another on the basis of utility. Barter is a definite thing and is a different identity, a different relation, from an exchange involving money. To say that we are speaking of barter on the basis of money is a logical contradiction, for to do so would be to state that the thing has two identities in one relation at one and the same time. Since barter means an exchange of goods in kind and not for money, each of these identities signifies a separate relationship among things and phenomena.

The extent to which things and phenomena may be said to exist generally or universally within formal logic is established in the same way we have just seen. Universality means the isolation of elements according to their sameness or similarity from sensually concrete diversity. A universal relation can be shown to exist to the extent that we can establish a relation of sameness among diverse things and phenomena. For example, barter of articles for one another is one such universal relation. The exchange of articles for money is another, and separate,

universal relation. The commodity as an exchange of articles on any basis is still another and larger universal relation which includes both barter and monetary exchange.

Within formal logic, then, sensual reality is understood to be diverse and concretely existing, but categorizations of sensual reality are expressed according to principles defining identity and universality as the mental abstraction of elements of sameness from within diversity. The rules of formal logic are therefore primarily rules of thought and language. Formal identities and universalities thus allow us to think and speak about elements of commonality and to generalize and communicate about them. Formal logic secures the identities or names of things and phenomena and basically corresponds to their immediate sensual appearances.

Formal logic is therefore necessary for common understandings and everyday considerations. It is adequate as far as it goes, as Lenin once said. (1967c, 536) But it is also necessary to understand its limitations, when taken mechanistically, for deeper knowledge and the ways in which, left to itself, it allows us to mystify ourselves (Marx and Engels 1975, 68–72) in the interpretation of sensually diverse objective reality. More specifically, formal logic has three major limitations in this regard.

First, by positing the rules of identity and universality as rules of thought and language, formal logic, taken mechanistically, counterposes thought to objective reality and leaves them as separate relations. The identities and universalities which we discover by these rules are understood to be abstracted common elements and therefore to have their primary existences in thought and language and not within the sensual diversity from which they are drawn. The consideration and the examination of samenesses and similarities, in fact, disregard the diverse facets, aspects, and elements which are by definition excluded.

Second, as implied in the first point, formal logic, taken mechanistically, counterposes the abstract to the concrete. Higher levels of abstraction, like the commodity as a summary of all forms of exchange, take us further away from the concretely diverse forms which they attempt to summarize. Attempts to get closer to the concrete diversities subsumed by these identities and universalities become purely formal. For example, barter is a particular and more concrete form of exchange. But understood according to the methods of formal logic, we identify it with a particular and largely self-contained historical period during which goods were exchanged in kind. What we have established, however, is a smaller and less universal formal abstraction which we

identify as separate from monetary relations and consequently we see no change or development during this period such as the simultaneous use of money or where money comes from in the first place and how it eventually prevails over barter. Our understanding of history becomes unilinear: first one thing or period, then another.

Third, the mechanistic counterposing of thought to objective reality and of the abstract and the concrete creates unbridgeable epistemological problems. If we can know things and phenomena in their objective existence only through mentally abstracted sameness which excludes diversity, and if we can only identify the universality of them by ever higher levels of abstraction away from what is recognized to be a sensually concrete diversity, then we are left with little grounds for claiming an ability to know. If our identities and universality are established as tenuously as just indicated, then we are hard pressed to demonstrate that they express anything outside of thought and language themselves. Once we grant that uncertainty and relativity to the observer, it is only a single step to saying that we have no evidence of the existence of anything outside of our thoughts. It is for these reasons, as Lenin demonstrated in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1967a, 84–130), that all philosophies except dialectical materialism, including mechanistic versions of materialism (and, I would add, mechanically applied dialectical materialism), ultimately collapse into idealism, that is, philosophies which posit ideas themselves as the basic reality and are thus vulnerable to the epistemological challenges just cited.

### ***Dialectical-materialist logic***

Marx established throughout his work that the solution to the relationship of ideas and language to objective reality was in understanding practice. If one acknowledges the existence of an objective reality which is shaped, structured, and modified through the constant motion of collective human practical activities and which exists outside of and independently of our consciousness, then it is necessary to find the meanings of words and concepts within practice, since these words and concepts may be shown to correspond to human practical activities, i.e., since words and concepts have their objective meanings in practice (Marx 1986b, 41–45).

Dialectical-materialist logic takes the position that words and concepts have their meanings according to their places and purposes within a relationship among things and phenomena. We understand both individual identity and universality not abstractly but as concrete relationships as these exist among unities of opposites in their practical

existence and evolution through contradiction. The goal of dialectical-materialist logic is always a strictly logical and historical reconstruction of the development of things and phenomena in practice as they are joined as an identity of opposites (Ilyenkov 1982, 200).

To examine this further, let us take agricultural commodity relations in the western United States during the late nineteenth century as an example. While this paper is not the place to examine the agricultural commodity exhaustively or show the dialectical evolution of all of its elements, this example has the advantage of allowing us to see commodity relations in formation in a fairly familiar context. The broad outline of the farmers' circumstances during this period is well known, but the facts of this situation are usually treated within a narrow concept of formal logic. The elements are therefore usually seen as composing separate relations and not as an identity of opposites in which subsistence farming is one moment within a larger and mutually determining relationship. This means that within dialectical-materialist logic the identity and universality of subsistence farming exists and evolves through its interaction with other things and phenomena as these have come to be interconnected in the historical development of each of them through the others. We shall first summarize the facts about farming during this period (Cochran and Miller 1965, 211–27; Hicks 1961, 135) and then consider their investigation according to formal and dialectical-materialist logic.

The flow of agricultural produce toward cities on terms unfavorable to agricultural producers is, in general, a historic inequality between country and town, the United States included. The Homestead Act of 1862 opened the West to farmers willing to claim and produce on the land, but most of this land went to railroads and speculators. Farmers then had to purchase their land at relatively high prices and attempt to pay for it by selling agricultural produce, which they financed with credit from local bankers and merchants. There were droughts and national economic depressions, which further undercut the farmers' livelihoods. Even in the best of circumstances, farmers' existence throughout the late 1800s was precarious, and most could not make a net profit from their produce.

Simultaneously for most of these same Western farmers during much of this period, their survival depended upon their lack of integration with Eastern markets and financial institutions. Local creditors would underwrite farm operating and building expenses using collateral unacceptable in Eastern financial markets. Grain could be sold to local merchants and although the prices farmers received were below those

in the East, partly because of monopolistic railroad rates, this represented a local outlet for grain and a renewal of the source of local credit for the farmers' indebtedness. Moreover, the continuing indebtedness of most farmers encouraged a continual push westward which kept land prices high, and thus the farmers' equity in land remained a financial reserve. It was the growing integration with Eastern markets for produce, credit, more expensive agricultural equipment, and the growing lack of available land which by the late 1800s created an ever more common dependence and vulnerability for farmers.

According to its formal definition, the subsistence farming described above involves the common element of the farmers' ability to produce for themselves and their families on land which they possess. Subsistence farming in this period can be examined according to the methods of formal logic by providing statistics on the expansion of wheat and corn production. Alternatively, one can examine the number and kinds of people who moved westward or consider the railroad as a crucial factor in the development of the West. One can show the problem of rainfall during certain years as a particularly sharp injury to the farmers' conditions or else demonstrate the farmers' distance from and lack of knowledge of Eastern markets as a source of weakness. There is nothing mistaken about any of these approaches so long as the explanation of agricultural production does not end there and each and all of these are seen as interrelated and mutually determinative according to their relative places within a whole.

Dialectical-materialist logic holds that if we are to understand any thing or phenomenon, we must examine it comprehensively according to all of its interconnections and mutually determining elements. The methodologies suggested in the previous paragraph treat these phenomena according to formal abstraction and thus hold them in relative isolation from one another so that each of them is seen as a "factor" in an explanation that privileges the isolating of elements, not their integration. For example, when the facts discussed above are considered formally, subsistence farming is one essentially continuous relationship which involves the farmer's activities on the land. Credit is another and separate relationship which is also historically continuous, although it may be more or less stringent for the farmer at various times. As a producer of commodities and concerned with marketing, the farmer shares an abstract formal sameness with business people.

An explanation of the farmers' circumstances within formal logic alone, then, considers each of these relations separately and looks for that one among these factors which is a new or changed element, that

which disrupts the continuities of all of these. The year 1886 was a period of drought followed by an extremely bitter winter. Railroads and financiers all restricted their investments in Western farming after this, and land fell in value. Weather conditions can then be called “cause” within this change, and secondary explanations can be sought in the farmers’ lack of marketing abilities and knowledge of markets even in the previously relatively good times (Cochran and Miller 1965, 218). Farmers’ political activism during the 1890s, such as in the Populist Party, can then be attributed to their bitterness over the bad weather and their rising indebtedness (Hicks 1961, 34–35).

Yet it is very difficult to understand all of the diverse and emerging relationships through these formal-logic explanations. It is clear that after 1886, the character of credit and transportation changed qualitatively for the farmer. But it is not clear why these changes can be fundamentally attributed to the weather. If national credit has the same basic features of credit provided locally, then why should not farmers’ fortunes and land values revive with better times? Why did farmers become politically active around the issue of the money supply during the 1890s when they were in debt throughout the late 1800s? Answers to these questions within formal logic become essentially tautological. Farmers are concerned with credit and the money supply because their debts have increased. Lost crop production during bad weather causes unmanageable indebtedness and foreclosures on farms.

Formal logic relies upon explanations according to samenesses. Things and phenomena are treated as having continuous and uninterrupted existences as long as they can be shown to share the same or similar elements. We do not see change and development within these phenomena prior to that time except as gradual dissimilarities among common elements. Once a break in continuity occurs, it is attributed to a new element, but it is not clear how this element shares a relationship to all of the others or why it is sufficient cause to change their own forms and development. It is now possible to examine how dialectical-materialist logic overcomes the limitations of formal logic in allowing us to understand historical development and diversity, mutually determining and emerging relationships, and the development of identity and universality through contradiction.

First, unlike the categories of formal logic, the agricultural commodity, or any other thing or phenomenon within dialectical-materialist logic, is always seen as existing at a particular historical stage, in a particular historical relation (Marx 1986b, 23). The farmer’s existence in this particular relation is not simply the existence of farmers in

general (i.e., an abstract universal sameness stretching throughout the late 1800s) but is a definite particular existence composed of those elements which make possible farming in certain ways. Farmers, for example, are concerned with survival at any time, but there is a considerable difference between carving one's existence out of the North Dakota wilderness in 1865 and the infrastructure of local and national production and national government policy upon which farming depends in the 1890s. Subsistence is thus a sameness, a definite activity of the farmer in his or her use of the land, but it is a sameness, a universal relation, which is created through the concrete diversity of all of the elements necessary to the farmer's production and survival in particular historical times and circumstances.

Examined concretely in the period during the 1870s and early 1880s, subsistence farming is defined as the use of land for the production of commodities for national markets under locally determined conditions and as a means of collateral and equity available to the farmer. The agricultural commodity within this relation grows out of these conditions and has its characteristics as an individual identity determined by this relation of opposition between subsistence and exchange. For most homesteaders, the commodity within a national market appears as a relative and subordinate part of their activity: most of their commodity production is being sold in local markets; local sources of credit for seed and equipment are available; and their equity in land counterbalance their dependence on the eventual sale of this commodity in Eastern industrial markets. The farmers' ability to reproduce themselves as independent commodity producers is thus primarily dependent upon these more localized economic relations and the access to and value of land.

Second, unlike formal logic, dialectical-materialist logic understands the creation of the universal or general through diverse particulars, and understands diversity and difference as opposition. In this way, Marx, like Hegel, followed Spinoza's principle of *determinato est negato* [determination is negation] (Marx 1986b, 28). The determination of any identity indicates that it was given that particular form and content through its relationship in mutual opposition with other things and phenomena. Historical differences in the form and content of individual identities like farming or credit are a consequence of their determination within respectively different relationships.

The relation of subsistence farming and the commodity production described here forms a unity of opposites in several ways (Marx 1984, 3031) in which all of these elements (land, markets, credit, etc.) create

subsistence farming in this particular form as they are in turn given their own particular form by that subsistence farming. In this way, they form a relationship of direct identity in which each of the elements within this relation is given its identity in interaction with the other elements within the relationship. For example, since subsistence farming in this form is the use of land to produce commodities and as a financial resource to sustain the production and sale of those commodities within local markets, the usefulness and value of land in this way is directly identical with the creation of local credit and marketing arrangements. Similarly, within this particular relation, subsistence farming and each of these other elements are mutually dependent in that neither exists without the other. Finally, all of these elements are mutually creative; subsistence farming defined as the activities of the farmer in direct and mutually determining interaction with all of the elements mentioned above produces agricultural commodities, while the production and distribution of the agricultural commodities in this way recreates the farmer's existence in its present form.

Understood as a relationship of all of these elements to one another, we can see that subsistence farming defined as the use of land as a financial resource in the production and reproduction of commodities is the essence of this relation (Ilyenkov 1982, 7288). Land is accessible and can be used as equity for moving further west or sustaining or satisfying indebtedness; local credit and local agricultural markets depend upon the ability of local farmers to renew and expand; agricultural technology permits levels of production sufficient for smaller farmers; and the impact of Eastern market prices and monopolistic transportation are still partially absorbed by local merchants. The sale of agricultural commodities to Eastern markets is an element within the relationship defining subsistence farming, but it does not share a direct and determining relationship with all of the elements. The sale of these commodities in this way is, instead, dependent upon the other elements through which it exists. Even without the successful sale of commodities to Eastern markets, the Western subsistence farmer of the 1870s and 1880s could still make use of land, credit, local marketing arrangements, and have access to goods necessary to maintain farming life or to recreate that life somewhere else. We know each of these elements just mentioned as a phenomenal form, as an idea or conception, because of their place and relationship within the practice of subsistence farming as all of them are mutually defining with it (Marx 1986a, 43–48). Subsistence farming is the universal essence of this relation because it and only it shares a mutually determining relationship with all of the other elements.



Third, dialectical-materialist logic posits that the categories of relationships among things and phenomena—including identity and universality, interconnection and contradiction—are themselves understood as concretely existing in and through objective relationships. As in formal logic, we know things and phenomena as forms or ideas but only as a consequence of their interactions among other things and phenomena and, further, only as the collective contemporary and historical activities of humans have shaped and structured relationships among them. There are several important aspects to this point.

As indicated above, the formal definition of subsistence farming in the 1870s and 1880s identifies the common element of the farmers' ability to produce for their families on land that they possess. But even that formal identity itself is not simply a mental summary but rather an objectively existent general relation which reflects the attempt of farmers to provide for themselves and their families as this is defined by and defines a variety of historical circumstances.

In the section above, we defined subsistence farming in the 1870s and early 1880s as an individual phenomenon in which the farmer's role in production is performed through, and consequently defined by, the availability of land, credit, transportation, and other elements. In this same way, it is made universal or general through these elements just as each of them is made more universal and general through it. In other words, universality, like individuality, is not simply a formal abstraction but is a relationship of one thing made in and through its mutual determination by other things. To clarify this point, let us examine the relationships among these elements as they emerge over time.

Subsistence farming, credit, commodities, markets, and so on are not simply abstract identities but are unified diversities within themselves, parts of universal relations composed of many individual elements (Lenin 1981, 359). In addition to the localized conditions discussed above, there are some lands which are better located for production and transportation; monopolistic controls of credit, marketing, and transportation center great power in Eastern markets, and so on. Thus, each of these individual/universal relations, along with subsistence farming itself, is part of the still larger universal relation of industrial capitalist commodity production as it is developing.

We have seen that throughout this period the larger whole of Western agricultural commodity production has subsistence farming as its essence. At the same time, however, agricultural commodity production bound for Eastern markets is the phenomenal or ideal form of an emerging relation between subsistence farming and Eastern urban

markets. In other words, subsistence farming and agricultural commodity production are a unity of opposites and together are an individual element within the overall relation of industrial capitalist commodity production. We say, then, that at this point subsistence farming is a universal relation of all of those elements necessary to its existence and that Eastern industrial capitalist markets are another such universal relation. These two universal relations are interconnected through the unity of subsistence farming and agricultural commodity production although they are still essentially separate relations in which Eastern capitalist markets do not directly determine all aspects of subsistence farming such as the access to land and credit, or vice versa.

This point illustrates that interconnection and contradiction are themselves objective categories because they represent definite stages in the development of things and phenomena through one another (Ilyenkov 1982, 57–69). Interconnection means that phenomena within a particular relation are joined in a mutually determining way according to certain elements of each, but their unity is not the essence of either of the respective relationships of which they are a part. In this case, farmers' sale of commodities to Eastern markets forms a mutually determining relationship of opposites with farmers' subsistence activities, but this unity creates only an individual element within the whole relation of subsistence farming.

Over time, as credit and banking, transportation, agricultural equipment, and land are also interconnected with and mutually determined by Eastern industrial capitalist commodity production, subsistence farming is drawn ever more tightly into the orbit of the latter and is ever more dependent upon its former elements. Each of these elements is increasingly defined by industrial capitalist commodity production according to itself.

In this way subsistence farmers quite literally produce and reproduce themselves as their opposites. The farmers' reliance upon each of the elements within this relation recreates subsistence farming according to each of those elements upon which it is dependent. Subsistence farming comes to mean the production of agricultural commodities for Eastern urban markets. The expansion of local credit markets to sustain the farmer attracts ever more Eastern capital and eventually establishes interest according to Eastern rates. Prices and control and storage of agricultural commodities are increasingly concentrated in Eastern hands. Land values are determined according to the most successful production of commodities: desirable land is increasingly unavailable while land not suitable for large scale commodity production loses its

value. Agricultural machinery is standardized for mass production of commodities. In other words, farming takes on a new form, negating its previous existence and turning the elements of its independence in commodity-money exchange into its opposite. All of these qualities change gradually and unevenly across the landscape, and new forms emerge and become quantitatively more numerous until qualitatively different forms are established according to their interactions and places within the new relationship as a whole.

As a result, the farmer's subsistence itself begins to take a new phenomenal, or ideal, form. It can no longer be created and recreated primarily through relatively independent and localized farming relations. Because the farmer is now dependent upon the conditions of commodity production in qualitatively new ways, all of the elements necessary to his or her own life and social existence must be secured in these ways under increasingly competitive and tightly controlled circumstances. The farmer's subsistence thus begins to have a new identity, one formed by the opposition between commodity production and the necessities of the farmer's life it cannot now secure: accessible credit, security on one's own land, control of the conditions of commodity production. Subsistence defined in and through Eastern capitalist control of the availability of land, markets, loans and capital, and available machinery and techniques consequently creates the need for the farmer to attempt to control the conditions of the availability of each of these.

We see some or all of these elements at issue in numerous forms of struggle emerging first in the decade previous to the ones examined here and continuing throughout the period: farmers' cooperative movements such as the Grange, which seek to increase purchasing and marketing power; the Populist Party movement and its attempt to control the money supply; various proposals for federal subsidies to farmers and for the storage and marketing of their produce. Ultimately, we see the increasing elimination of family subsistence farms and the rising number of large business farms. These new forms and contents of the farmers' existence themselves do not emerge episodically or only within a single period, but each reflects the dialectical opposition between the farmers' attempt to use their land for commodity production and financial stability and their determination by credit and marketing as opposing elements. The farmer could survive as a relatively independent small commodity producer only as long as combinations of available land and local financial resources were compatible with this. The essential opposition between these—the farmers' attempt

to secure an independent existence and the ultimate control of prices and credit within the Eastern centers of capitalism—show themselves in the continuous opposing interaction of these forces, which produce organizational forms like the Grange as a consequence.

We can understand the dialectical-materialist concepts of cause and necessity and of actuality and possibility within this discussion (Ilyenkov 1982, 225–30). Cause is that which through its repeated interaction with the other elements within a relationship ultimately negates that relation and becomes the essence of a new relationship. We see above how the agricultural commodity plays this role as the cause of the farmer's increasingly precarious subsistence. We understand necessity in the farmers' need to secure their existence, which creates or causes a whole series of new forms of farmers' collective action to arise. Actuality refers to the existence of all of the elements within these relations which we have described and their mutual determination through one another. Possibility refers to the chance and circumstances by which one of these elements might emerge as the essence of the whole and actuality, again, to its emergence.

In considering possibility further, we can see in the emergence of farmers' movements as a new form that they have a place within this new relation of agricultural commodity production, which is itself defined by Eastern industrial capitalist production. These farmers' collective movements respond to a variety of issues (marketing and purchasing, transportation, the money supply, land prices, and banking and credit), which are themselves phenomenal forms or elements within this new relation of agricultural commodity production. Farmers' movements which respond to these appearances, however, cannot redefine the relation as a whole because none of them has the capacity to become the essence of that relationship themselves. Only by joining with industrial workers, who are dependent upon their labor power as a commodity, could the farmers actually form a political movement capable of controlling capitalist commodity production. How they attempt this in various ways shows us under what circumstances and to what extent such a reorganization of these relations was possible.

In all of these activities, however, we see farmers in a new identity and universality, that is, the conditions which defined what a farmer is have changed from subsistence farming as defined primarily by production on one's land to the ability to moderate or control the condition of one's dependence upon agricultural commodity production. Farmers in this new relation cannot exist except through their dependence upon and need to control and manipulate conditions of credit, money, trans-

portation, and so on. Through their repeated interaction with these kinds of social movements, they increasingly become joined in a dependence upon the federal government to regulate the conditions of agricultural commodity production. By the 1930s, farming, as defined by the mutual determination of agricultural commodity production and government regulation, has become the essence of this relation. In our own day, we see that the interaction of government regulation as essence with large corporate farms has allowed the latter to shape and structure farming in their own image and to thus become the essence themselves of agricultural commodity production.

Each of these successive universal essences represents a negation of the previous one, i.e., a negation of it as negation (negation of the negation). It is not simply a repetition or multiplication of the previous forms and contents (Cameron 1987, 144–45). Instead, each negation is a product of ever wider interconnections and deeper contradictions. In our example above, we saw the farmer, as small commodity producer, become interconnected with credit, Eastern markets, and so on, and then determined by these, the agricultural commodity itself becomes the essence and subsistence farming then becomes interconnected with the federal government for its reproduction. In this way, development takes the form of a spiral, and each successive negation appears as a “leap” in development as things and phenomena change qualitatively in their interconnections, essences, and appearances (Lenin 1981, 221–22, 359).

Through these successive relationships, farming develops from a simple and relatively primitive individual/universal phenomenon to an ever more complexly universal and individual one. In its earlier form of small commodity production, farming relies very much upon the farmers’ own subsistence activities in satisfying their necessities. It is only as farming becomes increasingly integrated within the national commodity relationships which I have described that we know subsistence farming as a form and content which is both more universal (as an extensive form and content made through ever wider relationships with other things and phenomena) and as a more definite and concrete individual form and content (whose existence is defined through its opposition with these other things and which is also increasingly itself standardized as an activity and thus differentiated among them precisely because its existence is made in and through them) (Marx 1986b, 41–45).

In the course of its historical development, we see the repeated interaction between the subsistence of the farmer through those things

and phenomena necessary and possible for her or his life and family and the increasingly institutionalized processes of capitalist appropriation which ever more undermine and destroy the bases of the farmer's existence. This is what Marx described as the fundamental contradiction of capitalism: the incompatibility between the socialization of production and private appropriation (Marx and Engels 1964, 11–13). As farmers' lives become more an extension of the national productive system as a whole and as they rely upon ever more social and collective institutions for their existence, so too does the system of private appropriation ever more repel and subordinate those social institutions. Moreover, we understand this law of capitalism as it is produced through the empirical particulars which we have examined, and we observe its objective existence through their repeated interaction along this line. In this way, as in others, we see dialectical-materialist logic as the understanding of contradiction through smaller and larger individual/universal relations, and we understand the necessities of things and phenomena for one another at all of these levels according to their own mutual determinations.

Thus, within dialectical-materialist logic, any identity of any and all things and phenomena is understood to be in constant motion through the interconnection and contradictions of all of the elements with which it becomes joined out of some necessity. "Farmers" and "farming" actually are a series of concrete and opposing identities growing out of their successive interactions that become more general or universal through their interconnection and mutual definition through an ever wider variety of things.

### *Objective dialectics, epistemology, and logic*

The examples given throughout this discussion of dialectical materialism demonstrate the unity of objective dialectics, epistemology, and logic within dialectical materialism. This final section will examine each of these in turn.

Objectivity has a specific meaning within the dialectical-materialist philosophy. The dialectics among these things and phenomena are objective because the identity and universality of each and all of them are formed only through their relationships of mutual determination. Consequently, the phenomenal or ideal forms by which we know things and phenomena emerge through and arise from these contradictory interactions, and their specific meanings and historical development can only be deduced by an analysis of those relationships. Identities and universalities are not only made through relationships among

things, but, as we saw in the previous section, individual and universal change positions in development (Ilyenkov 1982, 209–33).

For the epistemology of dialectical materialism, this means that these objective dialectics are understood as products of practice. Society is the premise of our perceptions (of what we perceive sensually) and of our conceptions (of our concepts or theories of what we perceive). We understand our sensual perceptions, and the formal identities and formal universalities which in general correspond to them, as fragmentary, and we examine them according to their place within a larger relation (Marx 1986b, 38–39). We establish a theory of that relation by discovering that individual thing or phenomenon within it which is the essence, the universal basis of this whole, whose interaction with the others creates and recreates this as a relation. We also examine this universal essence and all of these elements as individuals interconnected within still larger universal relations. The identities of these relations as mutually defining allow us to understand their necessity for one another, i.e., what each element lacks which is supplied by its relationship to the other, its opposite (Ilyenkov 1982, 266). Finally, we understand possibility within and among these relations because of our ability to deduce how and under what circumstances any of these elements might be able to become the essence of all of the others.

Logically, dialectical materialism requires the reconstruction of any identity or universal relation from the comprehensive examination of all of its interconnections through the understanding of its essence as a historical evolution. Marx described this as a two-stage process (1986b, 37–38). First, there is the “journey” from the sensually concrete and formally logical identities through the interconnections of these things or phenomena as they exist in their own activities, their own life. We understand these interconnections as identities of opposites and deduce the essence of this relation. We have now arrived at an abstract conception of the whole, but it is, as Marx called it, a “concrete abstraction” because it is formed as a mental abstraction through our understanding of the place of a definite thing or phenomenon in mutually determining relationship among things and phenomena.

Second, we test this conception of the whole by examining how the essence became interconnected with these things and phenomena in its evolution. This is the “journey” from the abstract back to the concrete, but this time the concrete is the understanding of how all of these elements have developed together and formed this essential relation. We know that if this individual is the essence of the whole relation and

recreates all of its elements according to itself, that it is equally dependent upon each of them for its own existence and reproduction. We therefore locate these elements in their previous and relative separate existences prior to their becoming part of this essential relation and understand how and under what circumstances and of what necessity they came to be joined.

Dialectical-materialist logic understands analysis and synthesis and induction and deduction as these exist within the development of an objective relation itself (Ilyenkov 1982, 227–30). We analyze the elements of this relation according to the differences among these elements as they have become joined with others in their development and synthesized into this whole. We induce particular elements for our examination by exploring their historical interconnections, and we deduce their relationship to one another according to their mutual determination and the place of one of them as the universal essence of this whole. These logical processes, then, are themselves determined by their unity within this relation and are not simply mental techniques for separating and isolating the elements from their own concrete interaction and development.

Similarly, identity and universality within dialectical logic are always understood as a unity of opposites. Any individual, as Lenin said, exists in a way which leads us on to the universal (1981, 359). Any universal relation is also an individual because it is itself interconnected with and made individual through its mutual determination within a still larger unity of opposites. No identity or universality has any meaning except according to its place and purpose within a relationship among things and phenomena. Excerpted from its place within this concrete unity, any identity or universal relation quickly becomes an isolated abstraction which is one-sided and anachronistic and mystifies us both by seeming to have a life of its own apart from its place within human practice and by seeming to have an existence as an idea which is apart from and prior to the concrete particulars with which it is associated (Marx and Engels 1975, 68–72).

### ***Conclusions***

Dialectical-materialist logic requires the understanding of any and all things and phenomena as a relationship among them in all of their interconnections, determinations, and development. It is in this way that we deduce the places and purposes of things within human experience and decide, as Lenin put it, their relationships to “human wants” (1967c, 537). To take an example from our own day, socialism and commodity production form a unity of opposites through which the



development of socialism requires the restructuring of state productive relations for more rapid changes in investment and product and technological development (Aganbegyan 1988, 45-67). Socialist countries, like other nations, exist in mutual determination in certain interconnections also with the transnational corporations which produce capitalist commodities on a world scale and which are themselves heavily dependent upon the state.

The relationships of commodities, socialism, and transnational corporations require a discussion of their own. The point here is that we know about socialism or transnational corporations or anything else according to their own interconnections and mutual determinations. We see socialism or global corporations as individual identities whose existence depends upon the elements which have come to compose their activities, the moments of their lives. We understand these according to their own contradictions and their own evolution. It is not, and logically cannot be, a question of treating any of these elements abstractly, absolutely, and one-sidedly: treating socialism and commodities as entirely separate universal relations and defining one as simply the absence of the other (Bolotin 1988, 28-33). It is rather a question of how and why these have come to be associated in the forms that we now find them and what the place and purpose of each of these is in this relation and within the larger universals of class struggle and human practice. This also requires grasping the socialist and human essences within these relations and understanding the possibilities and struggles necessary for the greater realization of both socialism and humanism.

Said otherwise, the understanding of identities and universalities as an objective relationship among things and phenomena provides the basis for objective comparisons, contrasts, and evaluations. Dialectical materialism is opposed on grounds of logic and principle to the establishment of identity and universality by the isolation of things and phenomena from one another in ways that absolutize these abstractions and then use them to organize data. This is the way, as Lenin understood, that power and privilege anchor themselves behind abstract ideas and treat these as absolutes (1981, 360). The effect of this is to obscure our vision and knowledge and reduce or eliminate free discussion. These absolute ideas then become the bases for dogma and self-censorship of our thoughts (Yakovlev 1988, 51). The denial of antagonistic contradictions within socialism and the capitalist pronouncements that a "free market" economy is, of natural cause, the future of world development, are of the same kind. We see these same methods at work in Stalin's virtual ban on the discussion of

commodities under socialism, thus obscuring their real movement (Bolotin 1988, 28–33), and in the capitalists' denial of their dependence upon and intimate interaction with government for the reproduction of capitalist economic relations.

Human practical activity is the basis of identity and universality. This has several important consequences. First, practice is the basis of theory. Proving the truth in practice, as Marx said, does not separate theory from practice (Marx and Engels 1968, 197–99) or make practice into simply a testing ground. Rather, we prove the place of our theoretical conceptions by demonstrating their place and purpose within a mutually determinative relationship among things. Correct practice requires correct theory, but the latter can only be derived from an examination of practice. Second, the fact that identity and universality exist in practical activity means that things and phenomena can be compared and contrasted according to the demonstration of their places within practice (Lenin 1981, 360). This means that anyone can conceptualize such a relationship on the basis of their own observation and experience. This democratizes knowledge and insists that official and academic knowledge and certain uses of language do not receive exclusive privilege over experiential knowledge. The truth for all of us must be determined by the demonstration of objectively existing relationships and not by arbitrary grants of privilege.

Third, so long as ideas are treated formally and one-sidedly, we remain stuck in contemplation. We can interpret the world but not change it. Such abstractions not only mask privilege, but obfuscate the universality of contradiction. It is not, for example, that questions of political economy are to be examined in their own development as a unity of opposites while issues of sexism and racism are not; nor are racism and sexism simply reflections of political economy or related to the production of surplus value. The examination of these or anything else as formal identities, even within an otherwise dialectical analysis, has the consequence of treating them only abstractly and not understanding them according to any and all of their own interconnections and development. The same is true of the roles of the state or any other thing or phenomena. Not only are our perceptions and conceptions mystified in this way, but we cannot formulate a proper theory which enables us to act upon them according to their interactions within an objective relation.

Dialectical materialism requires an openness of correlation toward interconnections and mutual determinations among any and all things and phenomena (Yakovlev 1988, 41). Marx discovered that contradiction is the solution to the problem of the concrete in thought (Ilyenkov

1982, 233). It is only through contradiction and the evolution of things through one another that we can understand our premises and ourselves as objective relationships of things and phenomena in their own mutual interaction. It is the only means by which we can understand concretely the results of our activities as they exist in practice and, consequently, that we can understand and reflect upon our own humanity.

*School of Labor Studies*  
*Empire State College, S.U.N.Y.*

#### NOTES

1. Among those works presenting dialectical materialism as a summary of its most general principles see: Afanasyev (1987), Cornforth (1971). For a discussion of the elevation of the categories of dialectical materialism to a “Kantian” status under Stalin, see Cameron (1987, 14461). A recent work which relies upon the approaches which I have followed here is Naletov (1984).

2. This discussion of formal logic relies upon the philosophical history and principles elaborated in Ilyenkov (1982, 988). His examination is especially useful in understanding the relationship of formal and dialectical contradictions. See also Ilyenkov 1977 and Marquit 1982, 1990a, 1990b.

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## Background Materials

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*As part of its series of conferences for the discussion of theoretical issues, the Marxist Educational Press sponsored a Workshop Weekend at the University of Minnesota, 11–13 October 1991. The following two papers were presented at the Workshop on Problems of Socialist Societies Today: The Construction and Reconstruction of Socialism. Both authors live in the part of Germany that formerly constituted the German Democratic Republic*

### **The Unification of Germany: Causes and Prospects**

**Leonard Goldstein**

The collapse of socialism in the German Democratic Republic was the result of a combination of economic and political-ideological causes. If I confine my remarks to the events in the GDR, I am not unmindful of the fact that not only has the whole of Eastern European socialism disappeared, but we are also watching the death throes of socialism in the Soviet Union. In an even larger context we have to note that in many parts of the world Communist parties are split and ineffectual in the face of what seems to be a viable and triumphant capitalism more than willing to go to war to maintain its dominant economic position.

The GDR as a state was created in October 1949, a product of the

postwar settlement between the Western capitalist powers and the Soviet Union. It was created out of the Soviet zone of occupation shortly after the Western Allies, under the leadership of the United States, had unilaterally established the Federal Republic of Germany in September 1949 as a bulwark state to spearhead President Truman's anticommunist crusade in Europe. Stalin's hand had been forced at every stage from 1946 onwards. By 1949 the cold war was on, and repeated efforts of the Soviets to reunite Germany as a democratic and neutral state (1949, 1952, 1954) met with no response; when the FRG was brought into NATO, the Soviets gave up the effort. The GDR was created in response to Western antagonism and under the occupation of the Red Army, which enabled the development of socialism there. Thus the Soviet Union, under Stalin, dominated the process. The key to an understanding of the defeat of socialism lies in the nature of the Soviet economy and the subordinate relation of the GDR to that economy. Thus it is necessary to say something about the Soviet economy and the manner in which its condition affected the economy of East Germany.

Socialism was established in a backward Russian capitalism, with extensive devastation resulting from war, capitalist military intervention, and civil war. Out of necessity, then, the entire surplus product had to be centralized, put into the hands of the state, and all decisions about the use of this surplus were centralized. The economy was not only highly centralized but also became bureaucratically top-heavy, reducing its effectiveness enormously, and causing, as it turned out, its ultimate collapse. The situation was similar after the Second World War: immeasurable loss of life and destruction of housing and industrial plant, so that the Soviet Union was hardly in a position to help the new socialist countries much. Indeed, between 1945 and 1947 the Soviet Union dismantled a large part of the Eastern German plants in order to overcome the war damage of the German fascist armies. The Russians carried off one set of the railroad rails of the double-railed system. Moreover, the Eastern Germans had to pay war reparations, which in 1948 amounted to twenty-five percent of the gross national product, which left very little over for investment, and that little went into steel and mining. The by-now German Democratic Republic had very little means for research and the application of research in industry. The GDR had to equip not only its own plants but also those of the Soviet Union and other socialist states. At this time the Federal Republic of Germany was receiving Marshall Plan dollars for investment in plant and equipment.

By the end of the 1950s the scientific-technological revolution

offered new possibilities for the improvement of the Soviet economy. For various reasons this potential was not taken up. The main reason, it has been argued, was that the shock of the German fascist attack was such as to make the Soviet Union determined to build up its defenses so that it could never be attacked again. This meant that while the scientific-technological revolution was realized in the defense industry, these advances were completely isolated from normal industry for fear that the enemy would learn military secrets. The Soviet achievements in space technology and armaments indicated that the Soviet Union had the potential to compete successfully with capitalism. But this potential was wasted by failing to apply the scientific-technological advances to normal industry and by sticking to the extensive method of economic development which ignored innovation and cost-effective accounting in civil industry. In this way, the Soviet economy was no match for the economic war that the imperialist states had already mounted.

On the other hand, the imperialist states could use the scientific-technological revolution for armaments, research, and investment as well as for social-welfare policies which were able to stabilize the system, quite apart from the billions coming in from imperialist investment in the so-called Third World. The superiority of the imperialist powers became particularly oppressive through sudden artificially high prices of raw materials such as oil, the manipulated increase of interest rates on loans, the considerable rise in the standard of living in the West, and a long period of prosperity after 1983. Coupled with these objective developments were the inability of Soviet economists to understand the dynamics of the scientific-technological revolution as it affected the imperialist economies, and their failure to see how categories like commodity, price, value, and profit still affected the Soviet economy and were not merely obsolete bourgeois categories.

In 1961 the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SUPG), formed in 1946 as the Marxist-Leninist party of the GDR by the merger of the Communist and Social Democratic parties, had evaluated the level of economic achievement differently than had the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It raised the question as to how new products and new technology could be developed. Clearly the old administrative methods were no longer adequate. With a great deal of difficulty and many mistakes the SUPG was able to go over from extensive to intensive economic development. New ways of organizing industry were introduced (*Kombinate*). By the 1960s the GDR had developed to a point where higher rates of investment were possible. Walter Ulbricht could see that the Soviet economy was lingering behind, that as long as the

Soviet Union insisted the products from the GDR remain as they had been, the economic development of the GDR was not possible, and he now sought an accommodation with the FRG, seeking in this way to share the high technology of the West. This did not suit the Soviet Union, and Ulbricht was replaced by Erich Honecker. Through a combination of economic and social policies Honecker sought inner political stability. Investment in industry sank as an extensive housing program developed. The high price of raw materials as well as the high interest rates also affected the GDR. From the beginning of the 1980s the economic conditions began to stagnate and worsen.

Even if consumption hardly sank, there was little economic progress, and people began saying that everything was getting worse. Electronics were necessary for economic survival. But the COCOM conditions were sharpened, and while the Soviet Union had microchips, the supply was inadequate. In other words, without the ability to apply the scientific-technological revolution to its own industry, and being unable to get it from the Soviet Union, the GDR was doomed. The GDR made a desperate attempt to make its own microchips, but it came to the market with chips that could in no way compete with what the Japanese could produce.

By now the outlook was hopeless, and when Hungary, which was in fact bankrupt, bought its survival by opening its borders, the GDR was finished, whether the Honecker government was capable or stupid.

One must be clear on a number of points. The first is that as long as socialist productivity was low, no open borders were possible. The so-called brain drain, the emigration of intellectuals to the USA and Western Europe, affected the whole Third World. The poorer socialist countries could not continue to train skilled workers, engineers, and doctors who then went to the West. And they went to the West not because there was no democracy in the East, which is not to say there were no problems in this regard, but because the living standard in the West was higher, and the West made every effort to lure the intellectuals away. It is also important to see that GDR citizens did not compare their standard of living with that of the Soviet Union or Hungary but almost exclusively with that of the FRG—not even with that of England, France, or Austria. The standards for necessities grew not out of life in the GDR but out of advertisements from the West, indicating that commercial advertisements have a clear political force in blinding people to their real interests. I have so far concentrated primarily on the economics of the collapse of socialism in the GDR. Let me now turn to the less narrowly



economic and weave in more political events.

The difficulty of building socialism under the conditions outlined was very great. Fear of the Slavs generated by the Nazis frightened many able people into fleeing to the West right after the war, taking valuable knowledge with them. The GDR faced an economically, financially, and militarily powerful enemy in the West. The eastern part of Germany had always been the poorest and least industrialized. In addition, the agricultural potential of the GDR was not great. The West German economic miracle and the felt need for participation in decision-making in economics and politics served as powerful magnets to the Germans in the East. As one writer put it, "The attractions of West Germany's imperialist prosperity and bourgeois-parliamentary democracy lured hundreds of thousands into the Federal Republic every year; between 1949 and August 1961 over 2.6 million left the GDR for West Germany, the majority of them young people under 25" (Minnerup 1982, 10).

With U.S. financial help plus the indigenous capital that successfully survived the war—that of Krupp, Hoechst, Daimler Benz, Thyssen, I.G. Farben, Volkswagen, and Siemens, some of whose profits came from the slave labor of the concentration camps and farmed-out slave labor—West Germany developed very rapidly. What also has to be kept in mind is that the GDR paid reparations to the Soviets for war damage, while the FRG paid very little, so that capital for investment in the GDR was scarce. Let me enlarge on this point. The German government is now pumping money into the former GDR, not for investment but as unproductive money, money that is used to cushion unemployment. The people in the East are supposed to feel grateful for this money as a gift. Yet, West Germany *owes* the GDR money. Hitler-Germany was ordered by the Allies to pay ten billion marks to the Soviet Union and another ten billion to the United States, Britain, and France as war reparation. The GDR paid about thirteen billion to the Soviet Union while the FRG paid only half a billion to the other Allies. Taking into account the size of the two German states and their populations, the GDR paid about ninety-six percent of the total for a war that Germany as a whole lost. At today's value, taking the interest into account, this would amount to about seven hundred billion marks. This money should be paid to the new provinces without strings. It would allow the newly formed provinces to finance their economies and maintain their social infrastructures. Instead, the "gift" is demeaning and saps confidence.

The development of the FRG had a powerful "shop-window" effect

on GDR citizens. West Berlin, in the heart of the GDR, played a special part in this process and was deliberately used to fan the flames of envy and attract GDR citizens. West Berlin was used by the West German intelligence service, led by General Gehlen, the former Nazi intelligence chief, as a base for espionage, sabotage, and the economic undermining of its neighbor.

The GDR's economic development, moreover, was constrained by an effective Western blockade. Walter Hallstein, a West German state secretary and later president of the Common Market Commission, declared in 1955 that the FRG would break off relations with any state that recognized the GDR. No capitalist state did so for fifteen years. According to Jonathan Steele, a foreign editor of the *British Guardian* newspaper, "throughout the 1960s the ban had considerable effect on the third world," and he added that "the Hallstein doctrine was the diplomatic arm of a West German policy of trying to prevent the Communists in the GDR from consolidating their rule." I have already referred to the so-called COCOM list of potentially strategic materials which no capitalist state could sell to any socialist state. The aim was not so much to protect Western military secrets as to hinder the economic development of Eastern European socialism. This is the meaning of the cold war.

The GDR's economic problems were not only affected by the Western blockade, but also by its own economic structure and policies. These may be summarized as central planning with an emphasis on investment in heavy industry. This led to a shortage of consumer goods and a general dearth of fruit and vegetables. Many industrial products and clothing were frequently hard to obtain. The SUPG never dealt with this problem except by totally irresponsible know-nothing propaganda.

Discontent with the economy openly surfaced for the first time in 1953, when the building workers went on strike against the norms imposed on them. "Imposed" is the right word, since the workers were not consulted; indeed in 1949 the factory councils were abolished, creating a good deal of dissatisfaction, amplified by the worsening economic situation in the early 1950s. The 1953 workers' action led to mass expulsions from the Socialist Unity Party and an increasingly rigid political control not only over SUPG members but the whole population, and over the arts and religion.

The exodus westward as well as the economic sabotage led finally to the closing of the border in August of 1961. The Wall stabilized the economic situation and the economy improved, but the political cost was very high, for the Wall not only meant that one could no longer go to West Berlin, it primarily represented the inability to travel, and this

was to become a major complaint.

These economic and political weaknesses should not hide the fact that the achievements made under the socialist government were by no means negligible. A new chemical industry was built up based on lignite alone. New methods of textile production were invented, and an automobile industry developed. Although there was still some rationing in the early sixties, basic goods were never unobtainable. Prices were subsidized and stable. Similarly, rent, utilities, and fares (except long-distance calls) were kept at low prices, and medical care was based on an income tax, which was low. On the other hand, luxury and cheap foreign consumer articles were hard to come by and more often than not available only for Western currency at the so-called Intershops. An East German citizen could expect to wait for ten years to get a car. Furthermore, the quality of goods was often inferior to those in the West.

In social welfare the gains were also significant. Women had maternity leave of one year with full pay and another two years without pay but with the job guaranteed; paid leave from work of up to four weeks a year to care for sick children; protection against redundancy for single mothers, who also had priority for flats; and abortion was available on demand. Every child had a right to a place in a crèche and nursery school. This was followed by ten years compulsory schooling at a polytechnic comprehensive school. Those who passed the pre-university exams were guaranteed a place in a university. All school leavers were guaranteed jobs, and there was no unemployment. All citizens were entitled to a home, but in spite of a big housing program in recent years, flats were still very hard to get. Newlyweds received about 8,000 Marks (\$4,200) without interest. Health, dental, and optical services were based on a low-cost social insurance. Culture, sport, and holidays at trade-union resorts were heavily subsidized and thus available to all.

Despite these achievements, popular dissatisfaction with the economy and political situation came to a head again in the 1980s. First among factors accelerating events toward a crisis was frustration with the unwillingness of the GDR leadership to correct manifest inadequacies. Nor did the press report on the desire for reform. Second, the economy showed signs of worsening and this, too, was ignored by the press. Third, the restrictions on travel were a continuing source of frustration, and those who applied to leave the GDR legally encountered official harassment.

More immediately, a wave of anger arose when it turned out that the results of local elections in May 1989 showing ninety-five percent support for the government had been fiddled. Now a mass exodus of

people to West Germany via Hungary took place and was not initially reported in the press. Young workers in despair and disgust were leaving the country at the rate of about fifteen hundred a week, and even with unification this exodus has hardly abated.

The celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of the GDR took place in a situation of economic crisis ignored by the government and precipitated angry demonstrations demanding change. This time the demonstrations included not only the masses but loyal members of the SUPG. This forced the resignation of Erich Honecker, who was followed by Egon Krenz, who unexpectedly opened the Wall in November. At the same time, the population attacked the much-hated Ministry of State Security *Stasi* and without violence forced it to dissolve. In December the entire leadership of the SUPG resigned, and with this came the end of the GDR. Hans Modrow and Gregor Gysi took up the leadership of the Party, and Modrow became prime minister, carrying a government of national unity up to the elections in March.

By now the SUPG had lost over two million members, and had painfully restructured itself as the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), which now has less than 150,000 members.

What brought the SUPG government down, then, was that it was unable to work out an adequate economic policy in an economic situation that was clearly headed for disaster. Neither the electronics, nor the capital, nor the time were available to save the GDR. And by 3 October 1990 the two German peoples were one.

What were the conditions for the unification to which the CDU-SDP agreed by treaty with the FRG? Let me enumerate some of them.

1. Monetary union. The West Germans offered at the beginning a rate of exchange of 2:1, that is, two East Marks for one West Mark. Vigorous protests in street demonstrations made the West Germans offer for each bank account 4,000 and for children 2,000 at 1:1 and the rest at 2:1. This meant that if a family of husband and wife and two children had, say, 50,000 in the bank, they would end up with 31,000 West Marks, losing 19,000 in the process. Retired people fared better. Life insurance payments were halved; you had saved to pay a premium on a policy on which the beneficiary now only got half the value.

Businesses were forced to exchange at the rate of 2:1, so that their capital was cut in half. Yet wages had to be paid at 1:1. Under these conditions you can hardly buy raw materials; you cannot capitalize your old technology; you can neither get nor give credit, since everybody has lost half of their capital. Add to this that the whole East market of the GDR, Poland, Hungary, and so on have gone over to hard

currency and in that process their money was devalued, so that if you are paid at all, it is with a devalued currency, quite apart from the fact that they themselves had no hard currency, so that in the end you do not get paid for goods that you have already delivered.

2. The Christian Democrat-Social Democrat government put all government property into a *Treuhand*, an agency responsible for the privatization of all state-owned industry, and the management of the Trust was given to a West German. The Trust made it possible for West German firms to make arrangements to sell their goods in the stores, which in any case had been bought by big West German chain stores, forcing out the GDR goods, which were sold at throw-away prices. The Eastern German shops were now stocked with West German goods, attractively packaged, which sold at higher prices. And the euphoria to buy West German goods, a symbolic gesture of rejection of the hated restrictive past and the inability to buy the attractive consumer goods of the West, was such at the beginning that many people were more than glad to buy these goods. The effect of the refusal to buy GDR goods meant that many firms went bankrupt, which increased the unemployment by leaps and bounds.

Agriculture is in decline everywhere. The cooperatives which had always received loans from the state for seed corn in spring are now bankrupt. They were unable to sell their products in the autumn because the supermarkets, now owned by Western companies, boycotted their produce. Thousands of gallons of milk had to be poured away, bread fed to the pigs, and potatoes and cauliflower ploughed under. Millions of fruit trees were cut down in the "Havelland" after Bonn had promised to compensate the farmers for destroying the competitive orchards. Since the banks refuse to give them loans, the once-flourishing cooperatives are forced to leave vast agricultural areas uncultivated, and sell off animals and machinery.

The treaty of unification requires that if a business is to be sold, the GDR buyer is to have the right of first refusal. This has been ignored. West German investors have bought the best parts of GDR industry for a song. At the same time, unwanted competition has been removed. In many cases plants have been arbitrarily declared inefficient and closed down or sold cheap. For example, a branch of the chemical industry in the Halle area was mostly successful, but will be much reduced in capacity, throwing about fifty thousand workers out of their jobs. Demands have so far not been answered that the part of the industry environmentally friendly and capable of producing successfully for the world market be retained. The most striking example of the closing

down of an efficient industry because it presented unwelcome competition is Interflug, the GDR airline, a successful business which had plans to work together with British Airways. Interflug was seen as a threat to Lufthansa, and the *Treuhand* closed it down.

In short, the GDR economy did not collapse because it was totally inefficient, although indeed much of it was; it was systematically destroyed for the benefit of West German capital, to reduce competition, to make it possible to buy up businesses cheaply, and also to convince the GDR people that their productivity was vastly inferior to the West Germans and make them accept lower wages and conditions. Indeed, the whole area was to be regarded as a source of cheap labor and as a market. One East German economist put it this way: Most companies regard the region of the future East of the country primarily as a market. Accordingly, the market will be a stimulant for the West while in the East there will be a lack of employment. The funds for unemployment compensation will come for the most part out of taxes from Western workers, while the additional profits from the sale of West German products will flow into the tills of the companies. Not least of all, the large army of unemployed, already a reality, will weaken the position of trade unions in the Western provinces. Finally, workers in the Western provinces will be put under pressure by the cheap labor in the East. Already the employers are using this situation by heavily increasing overtime work.

The terms of unification have not meant that there would be a new constitution for the new Germany, although in the 1950s under Adenauer it was agreed that with unification the constitution would be rewritten. What has in fact happened is that the West German constitution has been imposed on the East, and all the good parts of the East German constitution have been scrapped, such as housing, health benefits, *cršches*, and women's rights. All this will go and much of it is already gone. The whole medical service is in the process of being restructured and privatized; most doctors will have to start their own individual practices instead of working in health centers as before. Many doctors are women, often in their forties, who will not be able to obtain bank credit to build up a practice, which includes buying instruments and medical supplies, hiring office help, and the like. This means that many women doctors will be prevented from practicing.

One of the unacceptable FRG laws is the law against abortion, which GDR women had on demand. Also, the FRG *Berufsverbot* (banning Communists from jobs in the civil service, including education) would mean that since the East German Socialist Unity Party had over

two million members, many former GDR citizens will not be able to get jobs as teachers, postal workers, and the like. While West Germans take over these jobs, unemployment is rising. With unification, East Germany has become part of NATO. Troop reduction is mainly through reduction of the former East German National Army officers, some of whom, after a political vetting, have been absorbed into the *Bundeswehr*. The rest are to be unemployed. The same holds for the police. A small number of former East German police have been taken into the police system, the remaining let go and their jobs taken over by more reliable recruits from West Germany and West Berlin. The tendency is thus to reduce the places available to East Germans and to recruit West Germans. In this way the unemployment increases in the East and declines in the West. By now there are about four million unemployed in the Eastern part of Germany, where the work force had a constitutional right to a job and where there had been no unemployment. What is lost here is the principle of the right to a job with a wage commensurate with human dignity. Capitalist countries cannot offer that; indeed, they calculate on about a four percent unemployment rate.

Academics are just as badly hit. With unification, thousands of teachers were fired, all suspected of being Marxists or Communists. Universities closed various institutes, some colleges were shut down altogether, and the Academy of Sciences will disappear—on instructions from Bonn. The aim here is also to get rid of the Marxists, reduce staff, and then rehire a few of the more reliable, but fill the posts mainly with West German academics. The Association of Democratic Scientists, an organization of progressive academics founded in West Germany some years ago but now with a branch in the Eastern part of Berlin, has called this policy “academic colonialism” and is fighting vigorously against it. Yet it is not only the Marxist-dominated social science departments that are being dissolved. The institutes of molecular biology, cancer research, and Latin American studies are also being closed. Academics who worked in these institutions, some internationally known, now face unemployment. Furthermore, about 600,000 former employees of public and legal institutions and administration have been suspended and face unemployment, while at the same time tens of thousands of civil servants have been sent from the West to these same jobs (at three times the salaries).

West German law does not provide for student scholarships as the GDR government had. The GDR had scholarships of a fixed sum for each student irrespective of the parents’ financial situation. Students now get government loans, so that when they graduate they will be

heavily indebted. To avoid taking loans some students find jobs to finance their studies. Women students are discriminated against since it is harder for women to find jobs; in the high unemployment situation women are regarded as mothers or potential mothers who might cause disruption. The result is that women are now being let go and find it hard to find new jobs (so far only twenty-five percent have been able to do so). Even women who are not fired are having to stop work because, since national funding has ceased, more and more child-care facilities run by factories are being closed down.

Support for cultural activity is also going by the board. Although GDR support for culture had a negative side, amounting sometimes to a kind of censorship, most reasonable-sized provincial cities had theaters performing plays and operas the year round. East Berlin had two opera houses, six major theaters, two children's theaters, and more—all subsidized. With commercialization of the theaters prices have trebled, and the companies are playing to the West Berliners who alone can afford the tickets. Most of the museums in East Berlin have already fallen into the hands of West Berlin institutions, with the result, for example, that the Museum for German History in the historic Armory has been handed over to the head of the West Berlin museums, who has fired all the staff except for a few caretakers.

When the people of the GDR took to the streets and brought down a corrupt, incompetent government, many of them had ideas of making a socialist society more attractive—that is, less rigid, more democratic. When the Wall came down and the people were confronted with the consumer wealth of West Germany, they were seduced into thinking that a market economy was the answer to their economic problems and that unity with the other Germany would be the way to achieve it quickly. They were persuaded by representatives of the ruling party in Bonn, who practically ran the election campaign in the spring of 1990, that the best way to unification was simply to join the Federal Republic on the basis of article 23 of its constitution. The implications of this fatal decision, although pointed out at the time by various intellectuals and left-wing politicians, only became clear later. It meant self-dissolution of the GDR. This had already been imposed by the FRG before unification; both treaties determining the relations between the German states were framed almost unilaterally by Bonn. The short legislative period of the first freely elected government in the GDR (six months) was characterized by dependence and complete subservience to the government in Bonn. Even before unification a sellout of the GDR took place; hardly any of the social achievements were kept, nor



were property-rights questions settled in the interests of GDR citizens. Since the GDR ceased to exist as an independent state on 3 October 1990, no legal basis exists to defend the rights of the former GDR citizens. Everything is decided in Bonn, with little possibility of influence on those decisions.

The unification is an annexation or colonization. Unity means a coalescence of two parts to produce a new unity. But the FRG has simply expanded into the East, retaining nothing of what was positive of the structures of the other Germany, whether it be the egalitarian education system, the legal rights of women, the broad-based cultural and sports movements accessible to everyone, or the democratic structures in the media which were created by the upheaval. One cannot avoid the impression that every reminder of the former GDR is to be extirpated and with it the identity of the people who lived there. Whether this identity will be lost and with it the achievements of these people remains to be seen.

What about the future? It is evident that in East Germany, as well as the Soviet Union and the rest of Eastern Europe, the Stalinist model of socialism has failed, a socialism characterized by a rigid centralized economy and a leadership unwilling to apply the new technology to industry for fear of exposing itself to military attack, with the result that there was little or no room for independent initiative and a fatal unwillingness to go to the working class to find ways out of the impasse. An authoritarian state governed tightly from the top, requiring an ever-growing state security system that robbed the people of all hope of ever governing their lives in a democratic socialist fashion. This model of socialism is gone, and few of us will regret its death. But this is not to say that the ideal of socialism died with it. As long as there is exploitation the working class will be forced to struggle against it. The death of one model of socialism is not the death of them all.

Germany is united. The euphoria over the taking down of the Wall was shared by people in the East and West. And the coming together of the German nation, separated after the war, seemed to be the natural desire of the Germans themselves as well as of those millions who watched with empathy the unrehearsed spectacle on their television screens throughout the world. A united Germany seemed a good thing, although some had doubts. Yet today, hardly a year later, emotions in Germany have soured. In the East people are witnessing the disappearance of half of their jobs, with a resulting unemployment rate higher than that during the depression of the 1930s. They also experience an identity crisis, because although told they are at one with the

West, they are treated like second-class citizens, in many jobs being paid only sixty percent of what their Western colleagues earn. In the West people complain of increased income taxes necessary to relieve the economic chaos in the East. The saying is that the invisible wall between the two Germanies is now more solid than the concrete wall ever was.

People in the East will not take this colonization lying down. The likelihood is not so much that eventually many will return to left politics (since exploitation continues, democracy or no), but that, as in the thirties, many will go fascist. The blessings of the free market and liberal democracy are thus not unmixed. Social peace in Germany may be bought at the expense of an intensification of exploitation of the rest of the world (as, for example, the Deutsche Bank will in the end refuse to cancel Third World debt), but the exploited of the world will not take that exploitation forever. If resistance does not take place in Europe, then it will take place in South America or elsewhere, if not now, then in the not-too-distant future. Either way we are headed for difficult times, made the more difficult as we know that the U.S. armed forces are for hire and will travel anywhere at any time to suppress any group, class, or nation that resists the imperialist hegemony of the United States. There will be plenty of intellectuals around to justify the butchery. The experience of defeat is a hard teacher; the essential point is to learn how to provide adequate leadership when the people do rise up against exploitation.

*Potsdam Teachers College*

*Potsdam*

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# The Destruction of the German Democratic Republic

Volker Grillitsch

The subject of this paper is the destruction of the German Democratic Republic. Now if something is destroyed there usually is an agent. Otherwise it would be called a collapse or perhaps a breakdown. This agent can be a who or a what. So, who or what destroyed the German Democratic Republic? On the surface, the answer to this question can easily be found by looking at the results of the elections on 18 March 1990: it was its own people who voted in a majority for the Christian Democrats and their conservative/right-wing Alliance for Germany, who had left no doubt in their election campaign that their goal was unification of Germany at the earliest moment possible. I'll return to that question a bit later. The question, however, which seems to be more important is: *why* did people do that? What made them act the way they did? These questions should keep historians, sociologists, psychologists, and even political leaders busy for quite a long time. It is impossible to pin down one single cause for the collapse of the GDR, or the Eastern European socialist system, if you like, and we are all aware of that. There is a complex of causes, which can be roughly divided into an external (international) and an internal (national) part.

Let me briefly speak about the international aspect first: As early as the late sixties the European Communist and workers' parties emphasized that the international class struggle would not be decided in the military but in the economic battlefield. This is a right and true

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Marxist statement, I think. And as a Marxist I have to acknowledge that the East lost this economic battle. The efficiency of the socialist economies never allowed them really to compete with the most developed industrialized Western nations. Of course, it is true that the economic achievements in those countries are based on the exploitation of the raw materials all over the world, that they are based on the exploitation of billions of people all over the world, that their wealth is based on the poverty of parts of even their own populations. Of course, it is true that there were (and still are) embargo lists and trade wars and what not. But these factors—known right from the beginning—do not sufficiently explain the failure of the economic system in Eastern Europe. Despite the fact that the CMEA (or COMECON, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) was founded as early as 1950, the system never worked as intended. At its best, it was an attempt to coordinate the national target figures, to achieve a certain division of labor by specialization on certain industrial products in the individual countries and, hence, create a certain mutual interdependence. But at the same time it could happen that the socialist countries competed with each other on the capitalist-dominated world market to sell their products. It is true that about seventy percent of the GDR's foreign trade was done within the CMEA but, nevertheless, the impact of the remaining thirty percent was strong enough to make the GDR dependent on the world market, if only for some raw materials. Much of this thirty percent (a total of twenty-seven percent) was trade with West Germany and other Western European states, and here the GDR held a special status, because its trade with the FRG was not subject to EC import restrictions and quotas, particularly in agricultural produce. Thus, despite all export restrictions from the West such as COCOM lists or high-tech embargoes, the GDR still had easier access to the Western European markets and technologies than other socialist countries.

But in its export structure the GDR has to be seen as a developing country, since industrial products and advanced technologies did not dominate the export to the West, but agricultural produce (unprocessed meat, sugar, etc.), raw materials (leather, semi-refined oil products), textiles and clothing (including leather clothing and shoes), and toys. In order for industrial products to be sold in the West, they even had to be subsidized, since the production cost compared unfavorably with East Asian producers, for example.

A second factor in the international sphere was the CSCE process, which was not finished in August 1975 with the Helsinki Final Act, which in fact only marked the first visible result of that process. In

particular, basket three, on human rights, influenced the growth of civil rights movements in the GDR.

Third, the effects of Gorbachev's new thinking—itself a result of the multitude of insoluble conflicts in the Soviet Union and abroad—influenced the developments in the GDR. The changes in the Soviet Union's domestic affairs, the new approach to socialist history, was seen as a silver lining on the horizon since any change in the Soviet Union in the past had also entailed changes within the GDR. Most of the problems in the Soviet Union and in the GDR had the same roots—a highly centralized, bureaucratic system of administration, and the same underlying ideology. The general assumption was that the Soviet Union could well exist without the GDR, but the GDR could not exist without the Soviet Union. The GDR economy was much too dependent on the raw materials and the USSR market. But many of the internal problems of the USSR also existed in a similar or slightly different form in the GDR.

So, what were the *internal* conflicts? (This is in random order and does not mean that I am competent to answer my own questions fully. Much work is needed by social scientists to research all the details of this highly complex matter.)

I am a linguist and used to looking at the language. The first thing that strikes me is the term *socialism* as it was used in the GDR in recent years. The term was *real existierender Sozialismus in den Farben der DDR* “socialism as it exists in the colors of the GDR.” Now, if a term does not properly describe the thing at hand I either have the wrong term or the wrong thing. If I find that my definition no longer describes the state of affairs, I have to make up a new definition or at least extend the original. Since reality in the GDR no longer coincided with the theoretical understanding of what *socialism* means, the thing had to be given a new name, *socialism as it exists*—a trick which justifies *any* feature of society; it will always be *as it exists*. This phrase came into use sometime in the mid-seventies.

In the course of the events in the Soviet Union, the leadership of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SUPG) increasingly disagreed with Gorbachev and his attempts to give a sober assessment of seventy years of socialist history in the USSR, that is, with *glasnost*. A statement by Kurt Hager, *Politburo* member responsible for ideological questions, became notorious: There is no necessity to repaper your own walls just because your neighbor does so. This statement I consider to be arrogant in two ways: a) toward the Soviet Union, because it told them what they were doing we had long done, and b) toward our own population,

because almost everybody in the country felt and knew that there was an ever-increasing gap between the real conditions in the country and their official reflection in the media or in Party reports, for instance. In order to emphasize the advanced development of the system in the GDR in comparison with the Soviet Union, the theory of different speed of societal development in different countries was applied and the “in the colors of the GDR” added.

To calm down the growing unrest even among the comrades the theorem of “continuity and renewal” as sort of a new philosophical category was brought forward. It was to prove that things continuously change—and always for the better—and that the Party is in control of everything. We were made to believe that corrections were being made but fundamental changes were not necessary. Nevertheless, the events in the USSR went on, and proof of Stalin-era crimes was published. These revelations provoked a tremendous number of questions not only about Stalin, but also about the role the SUPG leaders had played during the Stalin period and after. The immediate reaction to the publication of a series of articles in the Soviet press was the banning in the GDR of *Sputnik*, a sort of Soviet *Reader's Digest*, causing an uproar in the country, because the digest was an easy and fast way of reading key articles of the Soviet press. Another reaction was the attempt to ban the journal of the German-Soviet Friendship Society, which could only be prevented by awarding it a high Soviet medal.

I have to say, however, that all the events in the Soviet Union merely functioned as a kind of a catalyst. The internal conflicts within our society could no longer be ignored.

*Conflict one:* (and again, this is in random order): There was an ever-increasing gap between the everyday experience of the citizens and the public reflection of their problems. A few examples: The economy did not work as you would expect it to. For days people would be idle at work because there was no regular supply of materials and toward the end of the month they had to work overtime—for extra payment, of course—to fulfill the plan. In the media, however, everybody only heard of outstanding achievements—and had to wait for ten years or more for a car. Or you would read about the record harvests in recent years—and the butcher shops in the countryside were almost empty. So, one effect was that people didn't listen to the reports anymore, switched over to Western TV channels, and saw the affluent society there in the commercials.

*Conflict two:* With the Eighth Party Congress in June 1971, major emphasis was given to consumption. The production of consumer

durables became a major issue; the scale always was the Federal Republic. We wanted to compete with the capitalist system in its own domain. Since we worked in a planned economy, the supply was always behind, demands developed much faster—not only because there were commercials on Western TV. To produce certain consumer goods certain technologies and machinery were needed, some of them only available from Western sources. To buy Western know-how, consumer goods, or raw materials and machinery on the world market, the GDR needed convertible currencies badly. One way of getting them was the so-called Inter-shops, which were installed first of all along the transit roads between West Berlin and the Federal Republic to sell products to Westerners and get the money. Soon GDR citizens went there and paid with money they had got from relatives in the West. This was welcomed—it brought additional currency. With the improved travel conditions more and more people had access to Western currency—but a substantial number of people did not. Thus not only a division within the population was created, it also opened the door widely to corruption and bribery. Whoever had access to something short in supply—spare parts, building materials, cars, apartments, or car mechanics' services—was vulnerable to bribery. Some people openly demanded payment in *Deutschmark* for their services, even though this was illegal. Over the years the *Deutschmark* had become the second currency in the GDR. Only the most devoted and class-conscious Party members did not participate in that business—and ironically they are the ones who are now subjected to questions about their privileges.

*Conflict three:* Privileges. Nowhere in Marx or Engels or Lenin can anything be read that leaders of the working classes have to be privileged. And yet it was common practice, most notoriously with the well-guarded *Politburo* settlement in Wandlitz near Berlin. Beyond that, also, there was a whole elaborate system of holiday homes, health cures, special shops, preference for a new car, and so forth, for certain levels of the high-ranking echelons of the Party and state apparatus. For some people socialism seemed to be kind of a huge self-service shop.

*Conflict four:* All means of production were nationally owned. This was so anonymous that individuals in their work environment did not develop a sense of ownership—how could they? Everything was centrally planned and workers' participation in the decision-making was reduced almost to zero. They had the right to make proposals about increasing production, but as soon as it came to implementation, most proposals had to fail because rigid central planning structures could not show the flexibility necessary to integrate new elements. Many, many

useful ideas ended in failure. On the other hand, the target figures had to be changed constantly since at the beginning of a plan period the obstacles on the way could not be assessed. All in all, this led to massive lethargy among the workers. I am convinced that the violation of the basic principles of democratic centralism is mainly responsible for this feature of our society, which makes me ask if the principle of democratic centralism can work at all. Or does it not inevitably involve the shift of emphasis to the center? Over the years we had more and more centralism and less and less democracy in it. This went to such extremes that the General Secretary himself was thanked for the courageous action he had taken to guarantee the orange supply for Christmas one year—and this was made public in the report of the *Politburo* to the Central Committee.

*Conflict five:* The socialist state patronized its population “on behalf of the people.” Certain civil rights were granted at random as kind of an award. The right to travel, for example, was granted to those people who had relatives in the West who could cover the cost. But it also happened that the next application of the same person was turned down and no reason for that needed to be given. Or just to mention another aspect: freedom of information and speech. Books, papers, journals, and films from the GDR and abroad were put on the Index at random, and it could well happen that a film was made in the GDR, shown the first night and probably on some other occasions, and then was banned. No official argument was ever given. Artists who had left the GDR (and their numbers increased particularly after November 1976, the date of the expatriation of singer Wolf Biermann), with or without giving up their GDR-citizenship, no longer officially existed. Films with actors who had left the country were no longer shown, the records of singers were no longer available or broadcast on GDR radio stations. Everybody who mentioned or criticized existing failures or deficiencies had to be aware of secret-police action. The “sword and shield of the revolution” had turned into a highly oppressive apparatus. Distrust and not confidence had become the dominating principle in the relations between the state and its citizens. Even though not everybody might have experienced it in the same way, the recent revelations quite clearly show that a substantial part of the population was subjected to constant or temporary surveillance. The secrecy of correspondence was routinely violated; political opponents, very often trying to improve the socialist system, were criminalized and deported. Many others could not stand the strain any longer and voluntarily left the country, as did the thousands of young people who gave up their ties and everything



they had and left via Hungary or the various embassies—and laughed while they left as if rescued from a serious danger.

*Conflict six:* Election results were falsified, in particular, in 1989. Despite the presence of the public in the polling stations for the vote count, the finally published results deviated substantially from the count in the polling stations. These like these had been known for some time, but the leadership did not want to end them, and this neglect infuriated the population more and more.

*Conflict seven:* By summer 1989 the SUPG had not only lost a lot of credibility but essentially the control of the country. The Party no longer acted, but only reacted and even remained speechless for quite a long period. And when a statement was published, it was either too late or completely irrelevant politically. This entailed opposition within the Party and the outbreak of open confrontation between members and leadership. In this situation even the principle of democratic centralism as practiced in the GDR to appease and discipline Party members failed to work. Whole Party branches either left the Party or declared their disagreement and resistance.

In the final consequence—and here I refer to my initial question: who destroyed the country?—the SUPG in its inability to adapt to the new situation, nationally and internationally, after 1975 and particularly after 1986, is largely responsible for the final destruction of the GDR. This is the rational conclusion I draw from the history of the events. We have to face the fact that this model of an alternative society has failed. We are a bit wiser now and know how it does *not* work. And even if it is a negative one, this is a result, a realization that excludes this way of constructing an alternative society from any further attempts.

Any further attempts? Can there be any further attempts at all? Or is it true what Chancellor Helmut Kohl only recently triumphantly declared: that Communism is dead now and forever? Are all the problems of our world all of a sudden solved? I don't think so. But it will take time, not simply to reorganize forces, but mainly to think about new concepts.

In Germany right now restoration of the worst kind seems to be in full swing, as the recent neo-Nazi attacks on foreigners with broad approval, not only silent, but by cheering crowds, seem to indicate. It is hardly possible nowadays to discuss social problems without meeting with intolerance, prejudice, even violence. It will take a long time to overcome this.

Let me finish with some considerations about the future. A U.S.

friend recently said to me, "I had always hoped to live long enough to see socialism come true in this country. Now I don't think that anymore." His words precisely hit the heart of the matter: A vision, a hope got lost, and it will take probably even generations to build up hope again. Restoration seems to be in full swing worldwide, and there seems to be no force to stop it. In Eastern Germany nowadays it is even almost impossible to use the word *socialism* or *socialist*. You risk more than your position. I was physically attacked on the mere assumption that I had been a member of the SUPG. And yet, as a Marxist I shall never give up my optimism—as foolish as it might seem at the moment. I remember the lawyer I met in a remote mining village in the Rocky Mountains—I should say "a former mining village," because the mine was closed after a methane accident in which fifteen miners were killed and the mine could not afford new safety devices. Thirty out of about one hundred people in the village were affected, and the lawyer is representing in court quite a number of them against the company. They'll probably never be able to pay him, and yet he stands in for them. Socialism as it existed in the European countries, including the GDR, is dead; to be frank, I probably do not even regret that. Wait a minute before you cry out in protest and say that *any* form of socialism is better than capitalist exploitation. What is socialist in a society which privileges a few and keeps a majority in an inferior status?

Will we go back to early industrial capitalism and send children into the mines again? Surely not. You cannot send the people in Eastern Europe back to that stage. It won't be long before people are used to their newly gained freedoms, and then they will remember those days when their rents were only five percent of their income and child care was almost free; when women could go out to work in the morning, and be respected and have their children well attended and educated. It won't be long before people remember those days when public transport was available to everybody at a cost which was not worth mentioning. It won't be long before people remember those days when you could go and see your doctor without having to tremble with fear over the bills. It won't be long before people remember all the social benefits they once had and ask the question: How was that possible? And then we will know that society here is not anymore what it used to be either.

*English/American Studies Department  
Humboldt University, Berlin*

## Book Reviews

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*Poets, Politics, and the People*. By V. G. Kiernan. Edited with an introduction by Harvey J. Kaye. London and New York: Verso/Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1989, 239 pages, cloth \$50, paper \$17.95.

The aspects of Shakespeare that a critic selects for discussion can be a mirror that displays the critic's own features, and in V. G. Kiernan's treatment of Shakespeare we can see the hopes for humanity that have sustained Kiernan through his distinguished career as a Marxist historian. Praising Shakespeare for seeing "the individual as the sum of his relationships, actual or possible, with his fellows" (82) and calling Shakespeare "one of the men of the age who were trying to salvage the consciousness of a social whole made up of its human parts; to preserve and adapt, that is, the talents humanity had acquired for combining and cooperating otherwise than by blind compulsion," Kiernan observes that "historical progress is regulated not alone by the pace of objective development but also by the capacity of those who desire progress to form coherent leagues, to pool their energies in furthering it" (83). As a historian committed to a study of the British past—again like Shakespeare, who is "in all his work . . . a preserver, modernizer, transmitter of the values of an older time for the benefit of a later one" (84)—Kiernan must admit that people's movements have, despite protests and revolts, failed again and again in the formation of the requisite "coherent leagues." Nonetheless, Kiernan remains dedicated to humanity and to its potential for collective action:

It has never been so true as today that only removal of the control of the machines from owners nearly as robot-like as themselves can emancipate humanity, collectively and individually. In this light we can profitably recall the words of the *Communist*

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*Manifesto* about old relations of production becoming a fetter that has to be burst; only now it is not so much the forces of production that cry out for liberation, but the talents and energies of human beings, the teeming vitality of the human race.

These are the words that conclude *Poets, Politics, and the People*, appearing at the end of the final essay, titled “Socialism, the Prophetic Memory.” With the other influential British Marxist historians—A.L. Morton, Dona Torr, Rodney Hilton, Christopher Hill, Eric Hobsbawm, George Rude, John Saville, and Dorothy and E.P. Thompson—Victor Gordon Kiernan has been a significant contributor to the politically potent “prophetic memory” that drives the socialist movement in Britain even in the dark days of Thatcherism.

Harvey J. Kaye, the editor of this volume, the second of the projected four that will make up Kiernan’s collected essays, is the acknowledged expert on the British Marxist historians. He has selected well in shaping this book, offering in a coherent grouping some of Kiernan’s best work in British studies, a field in which literary, historical, and cultural work come together (as they have similarly cohered, with the decline of New Criticism, in the powerful growth of cultural studies). Kaye quotes Margot Heinemann, “herself a prominent student of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, and also a comrade of the former members of the Historians Group,” who noted that “much of the most distinguished Marxist literary commentary of recent years has indeed come from people who are primarily or partly historians—among them A. L. Morton, Victor Kiernan, E.P. Thompson, Jack Lindsay, and Christopher Hill” (12). Marx and Engels did, after all, initiate the Marxist scrutiny of literature, and Kiernan is a worthy twentieth-century practitioner whose essays—particularly those in this volume on human relationships in Shakespeare, on the limits of Wordsworth’s sympathy with “the people,” and on Tennyson as the poet of imperialism—have been influential even before the recent academic revival of historically informed literary criticism. What Kaye has achieved is a collection in which the themes of the literary essays reflect the historical insights and the political agenda of the other essays—and vice versa. Kaye has given us not a miscellany but a solid book, the unifying theme of which is precisely the necessity—and difficulty—of achieving the level of popular commitment that any “coherent league” would require.

Kiernan does not flinch from the recognition that “it would seem

that socialist consciousness has always been restricted to a very few, and that the bulk of the working class (as of every other, it may be) is inert except when activated by some direct material stimulus" ("Labour and the Literate," 175). Thus, Kiernan must turn his fascinated gaze upon a movement like that of the Covenanters of Scotland who, even if they were "men of a decaying social order who got into a blind alley and spent their energies there," nonetheless demonstrated a power to inspire that has been lacking in all protest movements that have proved "incapable of lifting men's minds to anything so ideal, so distant, so necessary, as socialism" ("The Covenanters," 6162).

Kiernan can similarly see in Wordsworth's allegiance to the "obsolete social group" of Lake District peasantry a valuable warning to Eastern European governments who would be "compelled to come to terms with a tenacious peasant individualism" ("Wordsworth and the People," 120, 122). The appeal of the residual peasant way of life—like the fervor of the Covenanters, like the enthusiasms of the Evangelicals ("Evangelicalism and the French Revolution")—was a force that impeded progress toward socialism. Kiernan is right to insist that we must understand the power to secure conviction—and thereby become a social force—that has resided in such structures of feeling. Accordingly, as Harvey Kaye recognizes in his introduction, Kiernan challenges "left and socialist intellectuals to articulate the aspirations, ideals, and vision of socialism out of a 'dialogue' with 'the people'" that acknowledges the systems of value that compete with socialism for their minds and hearts (15). These values will seldom be so blatantly antidemocratic as those in Tennyson's version of the Arthurian legends ("Tennyson, King Arthur, and Imperialism") but they will be, as Marx said of religion, expressions of a genuinely felt misery, products of specific social circumstances.

The failure of socialism thus far to inspire the level of popular commitment needed to carry it through to final victory is, then, something that Victor Kiernan helps us to understand. Whether in Eastern Europe or Nicaragua or the United States, the way forward is not to be rapidly traversed. Kiernan points to the "inevitability of gradualness": "If our ancient regime ever does come to an end, it may be through pressure of opinion stiffened by the cumulative effect of numerous small nibblings and scratchings" ("Patterns of Protest in English History," 37). Otherwise, Kiernan feels, the coming of socialism will require a "great moral renewal"(222) that it has not so far succeeded in inspiring. Despite his sober appraisals of the way forward, Kiernan clearly does not despair, at least in part because in Shakespeare, and in history, he finds

confirmation of “the talents humanity [has] acquired for combining and cooperating otherwise than by blind compulsion.”

Victor N. Paananen  
*Department of English*  
*Michigan State University*

*A History of the Navajos: The Reservation Years.* By Garrick Bailey and Roberta Glenn Bailey. Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press, 1989, 378 pages, paper \$17.50. Distributed by University of Washington Press, Seattle.

The Baileys are mainstream ethnohistorians. As such they have written a history reflecting in general the mainstream perspectives of their discipline. In some respects this is good, in other respects not.

An important strength of this work is the detailed research conducted by the authors. During the period 1977–1982 the authors pursued extensive field work as well as library and archival investigations. While comprehensive, most of the cited published sources are fairly standard among the works of researchers focusing on the Navajo of this period. The authors did, however, conduct in-depth historical reviews of local newspapers which added important information to their study, particularly in the areas of wage labor and development of natural resources. Oddly, based on the relative scarcity of field notes cited, the original contribution of interviews to the research as a whole appears to be minimal.

*A History of the Navajos* is organized chronologically, focusing on the period 1868–1975, “the reservation years.” Each chapter covers approximately twenty-five to thirty years, and is separated into sections detailing various social institutions or processes. Common to several of the chapters, for example, are sections discussing wage labor, education, livestock, hunting, economic development, mineral development, religion, government policy, and political organization. The benefit of this form of organization is that the history is comprehensive in scope, and there is continuity of analysis among sections spanning several chapters. The obvious drawback is the tendency toward a superficial analysis of many aspects of Navajo culture and political economy over more than one hundred years of history.

Perhaps the lack of guiding theory and clear definitions of central concepts is the most serious flaw in this work. The authors launch directly into chronological narrative in the first chapter. One decade follows the next in their discussion, and one fact follows the previous fact, but nowhere is there a discussion of the theoretical or conceptual organization of this study. Why have the authors given so much space to certain classes of facts, and little or none to other historical facts? What theoretical framework links the social institutions with each other, and links historical processes of one decade with another decade? What conceptual framework guided the authors in their field work and archival research? The reader cannot answer these questions because the authors have not discussed them. As a result of the authors' lack of theoretical clarity, the historical narrative suffers in various places from lack of analysis where needed, or incorrect analysis when attempted.

The authors do not have an analysis of capitalism. As a result they vastly underestimate the integration of the Navajo economy with greater national and international capitalist development, particularly during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. The authors report, for example, that during this period "the Anglo-American trade network integrated the Navajos, though only marginally, into the national economy"(100). Just two paragraphs later, however, the authors correctly observe that the Navajo people suffered terribly when "the panic of 1893 caused the national economy to collapse, and drastically lowered prices of livestock and wool." Obviously, if the Navajo were "only marginally"integrated into the larger capitalist economy, a capitalist crisis of overproduction would not have so profoundly affected them!

The fact is that the military defeat of the Navajo and their incarceration in a concentration camp during the mid-1860s were direct consequences of the national expansion of capitalism coast to coast. The Navajo were released into a land where their means of production and subsistence had been destroyed. They were largely dependent on commercially produced foods and implements made by northern industries and provided by the military. Their handicrafts, once made primarily for consumption and occasional trade, rapidly fell under the control of expanding merchant capital in the form of corporately linked trading posts, financed by domestic and foreign capital.

Navajo rugs were marketed on the East Coast in direct competition with the international trade in Persian rugs. Navajo weavers fabricated Persian look-alikes under order of traders who knew the national and

international markets. By the 1880s woven Navajo articles of clothing had become too expensive for most Navajos to wear. They wore clothing made in factories in the North and East because it was cheaper than their hand-woven commodities. Finally, the Navajo were historically able to preserve their culture while in the grip of capitalism precisely because the capital invested was merchant capital, not industrial capital. The trading posts needed locally produced crafts, not wage laborers. The development of merchant capital conflicted only minimally with Navajo culture, and actually retarded the disintegration of that culture.

*A History of the Navajos* provides a great deal of descriptive information about the Navajo, and is a good source of historical facts about Navajo social institutions. The study is comprehensive in scope, yet concise in length. It is not, however, a theoretically sound political-economic analysis. It is descriptive, not explanatory. In the work the reader is likely to find facts, but not answers.

Lawrence D. Weiss  
*Department of Sociology*  
*University of Alaska, Anchorage*

*The Red Angel: The Life and Times of Elaine Black Yoneda, 1906–1988.*  
By Vivian McGuckin Raineri. New York: International Publishers, 1991,  
346 pages, cloth \$19.00, paper \$9.95.

Often history fails to reveal accomplishments and contributions of women, leaving a vacancy in the story of our country. This is especially apparent when the woman does not conform to established social and political molds. Such a woman was Elaine Black Yoneda, who chose to live in accord with her radical understanding of social and political happenings of her day. By disclosing the life and achievements of such a woman, Raineri has performed a valuable service.

Elaine was the American-born daughter of Jewish immigrants who fled czarist Russia because of their revolutionary affiliations. Unlike many Jewish immigrants, who spent their lives pulling themselves up from poverty, the parents of Elaine achieved middle-class financial status. They may have retained their political views; this is not



clarified. They were as eager as most immigrants for their children to become good, accepted Americans. From their original residence on the lower East Side of New York, they moved to Brooklyn, then to the West Coast, where they and their daughter spent the rest of their lives. They did not expose Elaine to radical activities, but rather clothed and nurtured her to be a college student. The daughter rejected this future for the more radical life she was destined to live after observing the brutal activity of the Red Squad at an unemployment demonstration.

Initially she had not wished to attend this demonstration. She accompanied her first husband, Edward F. Russell, Jr., who was more committed to radical movements than Elaine. She wore an evening gown, in preparation for a dinner party. It was this outfit that won her and Edward their release when they were detained with others by the police. But it did not deter her from being a witness for those arrested and it was for her the beginning of a life of work in the International Labor Defense (ILD), defending the rights of workers.

Her marriage ended soon after the birth of a daughter, Joyce. Her second marriage was to Karl Hama (Yoneda), a Japanese-American, whom she met at this first demonstration. This union lasted for the remainder of her life; the couple had a son, Tom.

Raineri gives a general review of many struggles of workers on the West Coast to achieve a livelihood and dignity, for which they were exposed to beatings, imprisonment, and murders by the brutality of vicious authorities. She has also included a review of other important political and racial incidents not centered on the West Coast, many of which—such as the cases of Sacco and Vanzetti, the Scotsboro boys, and Angelo Herndon—have been widely reported elsewhere. Although the ILD took some part in these cases, Elaine was not directly involved. What is most valuable in this book are the accounts of many important but less publicized events on the West Coast in which Elaine participated beginning in 1930, on the staff of the ILD and as ILD secretary in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

The ILD, founded in the mid-1920s, was organized, supported, and maintained by the Communist Party. Raineri has given a thorough delineation of ILD principles and its role in the labor struggles in which Elaine took part, although for readers not familiar with this period a fuller analysis of the causes of these events would have been helpful. The repressive measures used to put down the workers will shock readers of *The Red Angel* not previously familiar with these pages of labor history.

Elaine, as ILD representative and from 1931 a member of the

Communist Party, devoted herself completely to the support and counsel of workers in civil rights battles. In this account of this historically significant period, the character and importance of the contributions of the ILD and of this woman are revealed.

An event of major importance—and a traumatic experience for Elaine, Karl, and Tom—was the internment of the Japanese community. After Pearl Harbor, ethnic Japanese, both American citizens and legally resident aliens, were ordered to register and prepare for removal to concentration camps enclosed with the same barbed wire that we were fighting to destroy in Germany. This administrative order was approved not only by racist officials in Washington, but also by liberals and democratic thinkers, including President Roosevelt. This shame of America was not contested by any civil rights groups—not by the ILD, not by the Communist Party.

Living on the West Coast at this time were approximately 120,000 peaceful Japanese. Many were agricultural workers; many owned their own productive land. Realtors and the agricultural industries aggressively sought this land. With the internment of the Japanese they were able to purchase it at low cost, since the Japanese were forced to sell all property and personal possessions they could not take with them.

Karl was ordered to internment as was their three-year-old son. Elaine was free. She fought for the right to accompany them and obtained permission. Eventually, Karl was released for military service. Elaine could leave the camps but not her “Japanese” son. Only after an agreement that she report monthly the activities of her son were she and Tom permitted to leave.

Generally Raineri has given a good picture of the difficulties and race pressures on the West Coast. Especially fine is the account of the internment of the Japanese community and the inclusion as an appendix of the “Summary and Recommendations of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.”

Many quotations are used without indicating sources, detracting from information the reader would like to have. We get to know Elaine in her early life, but after she begins work in the ILD, we learn little about her personal life, her family, or her daughter, until the Japanese internment.

Despite these omissions, this book is a valuable source for the history of its period.

Pearl Zipser  
*City College of New York*