

Turning Hunters into Herders: A Critical Examination of Soviet Development Policy among the Evenki of Southeastern Siberia

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ABSTRACT. The construction of the Baikal-Amur railway corridor through the northern *raioni* of the Buriat Autonomous Republic and Amurskaia *oblast'* (R.S.F.S.R.) has had a marked impact on the traditional hunting, trapping, and herding activities of the aboriginal Evenki population. Traditional occupations have been adapted to support large numbers of migrant labourers and a burgeoning urban population. The effects of industrial development range from the ardent promotion of reindeer breeding over other aboriginal economic sectors to the complete marginalization of all aboriginal economic initiatives and their replacement with forms of economy foreign to the region. The significance of industrial development among the Evenki is understood in the context of Soviet development policy. While Soviet prescriptions for the Evenki may be made logically consistent by appealing to an interpretation of world history, when they are evaluated from a regional level of analysis they appear to be both voluntaristic and economic. The contradictions of Soviet development policy have produced state/civil society conflicts that can be interpreted as a form of alienation.

Key words: U.S.S.R., Siberia, Buriatskaia A.S.S.R., Evenki, Baikal-Amurskaia railway main line, non-capitalist path of development

RÉSUMÉ. La construction du chemin de fer Baikal-Amour en direction des *raioni* du nord de la république autonome Buryatique et l'*oblast'* de l'Amurskaia (R.S.F.S.R.), a eu un impact profond sur les activités traditionnelles de la population autochtone Evenki (chasse et élevage). Les occupations traditionnelles ont été affectées pour satisfaire les besoins croissants d'une main d'oeuvre immigrante et d'une population urbaine grandissante. Les effets du développement industriel vont de la croissance privilégiée de l'élevage du renne au dépens d'autres secteurs de l'économie aborigène à la marginalisation complète de toutes initiatives autochtones et leur remplacement par des formes économiques étrangères. L'importance du développement industriel chez les Evenki est compris dans le contexte de la politique de développement soviétique. En dépit du fait que les prescriptions soviétiques sur le développement des Evenki peuvent sembler cohérentes dans une optique particulière de l'histoire du monde, elles deviennent volontaristes et réductionnistes quand elles sont évaluées dans une perspective régionale. Les contradictions de la politique de développement soviétique ont produit conflits entre l'état et la société civile qui peuvent être interprétée comme une instance d'alienation.

Mots clés: U.R.S.S., Sibérie, Buryatskaia A.S.S.R., Evenki, chemin-de-fer Baikal-Amour, course de développement non-capitaliste

РЕЗЮМЕ. Сооружение Байкало-Амурской магистрали, проходившее через северные участки Бурятской Автономной Республики и Амурской области оказало значительное влияние на традиционные виды трудовой деятельности коренного эвенкийского населения; охоту, звероловство и оленеводство. Данная статья посвящена исследованию приспособления традиционной трудовой деятельности для удовлетворения потребностей большого числа приезжих рабочих и растущего городского населения. В работе показано какими могут быть последствия промышленного развития региона - от всемерного поощрения приоритетного развития выращивания северных оленей в ущерб остальным отраслям экономической инициативы абортентов и замена её формами, чуждыми экономике региона. Значение промышленного развития для эвенков обсуждается в соответствии с политикой советского правительства, касавшиеся эвенков могли быть более последовательны, если бы принимался во внимание мировой исторический опыт; когда такие вопросы решаются на узкорегionalном уровне, результаты могут быть вольтаристскими и иметь сугубо экономической поход. В свою очередь, поднимается вопрос о том; может ли существование конфликта «государство-гражданин» рассматриваться как форма отчуждения.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА. СССР, Сибирь, Бурятская АССР, эвенки, Байкало-Амурская Магистраль, некапиталистический путь развития.

INTRODUCTION

An examination of the effects of northern development policy on Siberian aboriginal peoples provides a relatively solid ground from which to compare Western and Eastern approaches to development. Just as the history of relations

between the Canadian state and Canadian native peoples exposes a side of capitalism that might otherwise be "invisible," a description of the relations between the Soviet state and Soviet pre-capitalist peoples provides new insights about Soviet socialism. This paper will describe Soviet approaches to the development of their northern peoples with

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the aim of preparing the way for further work on comparing Western and Eastern development initiatives. The analysis of Soviet development policy will be illustrated with reference to the experience of the Evenki with the construction of a railway corridor through their traditional hunting and reindeer herding lands.

The majority of the texts consulted in this paper are Soviet descriptions of their own development policy in action. Very few Western scholars have done their own field work in this region of Siberia. To compensate for the lack of direct insight into the character of Soviet development practices, a description of Soviet development theory will be presented that is grounded in a theoretical tradition that both West and East share — Marxism.

This approach reverses the logic of traditional policy analyses. Ordinarily, one starts from field work conducted in a northern settlement and then proceeds to identify the problems of a development strategy by analyzing the biases and ideological preconceptions held by state planners. This paper will instead uncover the ideological foundations of Soviet policy and assume that the concrete effects can be predicted from the theory. This deductive approach is not altogether unreasonable given the nature of Soviet society. Theory in a tightly administered economy is inseparable from goal setting. An analysis of Soviet development policy does not solely reveal the attitude of Soviet planners to development. It simultaneously reveals official Soviet prescriptions for Siberian development.

The exposition of the principles of Soviet development policy will be supported by analyzing the role that traditional Evenk occupations will have in the newly industrialized regional economy. It will be shown that the Soviet experience on this count is ambivalent. While aboriginal industries are not brushed aside in all regions, attempts are made to restructure them into a form that may not match local imperatives. This quality of Soviet development policy reflects, in turn, the issue of local development in Marxist theory and the question of state/civil society conflicts within Soviet socialism.

THE EVENKI AND THE BAIKAL-AMUR (RAILWAY) MAIN LINE

The Evenki are a widely dispersed group of Siberian hunters and reindeer herders. It is difficult to generalize about their current economic conditions since Evenki settlements cover almost one-quarter of the territory of Siberia and the Far East. This territory is now subdivided into a number of autonomous republics, territories (*krai*), provinces (*oblasti*), and ethnic districts (*okrugi*). Only one territorial administrative unit is nominally established expressly for the Evenki: the Evenk autonomous *okrug*. In all other regions they share territory with any number of ethnic groups, including Russians, Yakuti, Buriati, Eveni, Dolgani, and Nentsy (Boiko and Vasiliev, 1981:4-6).

For the purposes of this paper, the southern part of Evenk traditional lands will be examined. It is through this portion of their territory that a new railroad is being constructed known as the Baikal-Amur (Railway) Main Line (BAM). The right-of-way crosses the Buriat Autonomous Republic and the Chitinskaia and Amurskaia *oblasti* of the Russian Federated Republic and a branch line extends into the Aldanskii region (*raion*) of the Yakut Autonomous Republic. Approximately 9400 Evenki live in political districts being crossed

by the BAM, as compared to the total 1979 Union-wide population of 28 000 (Boiko, 1979a:14). The total number of Evenki in the Buriat Autonomous Republic was 1543 in 1979. Roughly one-third of this number live in the BAM zone in the Severo-Baikal'skii and Bauntovskii *raioni* (Belikov, pers. comm. 1988). Approximately 1500 Evenki have been affected by railway development in Amurskaia *oblast'*. They reside in Dzhaltulakskii, Zeiskii, and Selemdzhinskii *raioni*. Roughly 2700 Evenki live in the Aldanskii *raion* of the Yakut Autonomous Republic. The remaining 3500 Evenki live in the northern *raioni* of Irkutskaiia and Chitinskaia *oblasti* and of Khababarovskii Krai (Boiko, 1979a:14) (Fig. 1).

The experiences of the Evenki in the BAM zone are particularly interesting because of the rapid rate of changes in their lifestyle. The quick pace of industrialization and urbanization produces a stark contrast between the traditional lives of these people and the modern roles they are being asked to assume. This contrast is not unfamiliar to a North American reader, since many of the dislocating effects of this style of development can be found in the Canadian and American North in such projects as the Alaska Pipeline, the James Bay hydro-electric stations, and the exploration for natural gas in the Mackenzie Valley and Beaufort Sea.

However, summarizing the impacts of the BAM is challenging because of the scarcity of literature examining the impact of development on traditional aboriginal occupations. In addition, the time frame of the project is long. The project was initiated before World War II. Intensive surveying and construction began in the early 1970s and continues to the present day (Shabad, 1979). This case study relies heavily on two Soviet sources. The first is a study done by members of the Tyndin Sociological Detachment of the Severo-Aziatic expedition led by the prominent Soviet sociologist V.I. Boiko. They evaluated the impact of railway development on the Evenki in Amurskaia *oblast'* from 10 October to 5 November 1979 (Boiko *et al.*, 1979). The other is a collection of essays by scholars from the Buriat Academy of Sciences who recently studied the way of life of the Evenki in the northern regions of the Buriat Autonomous Republic (Sanzhiev and Atutov, 1988).

While both studies were conducted in two distinct regions and at different times, they are both excellent illustrations of the general attitudes of Soviet officials towards development. Although there is evidence that the preference for megaprojects is currently being challenged (Vitebsky, 1989; Pika and Prokhorov, 1988), it is important to understand the official attitudes that the reformers are struggling against. In many ways the BAM project is an archetypical illustration of the legacy of Soviet development policy, a policy that has set as its goal the creation of industrial employment in the midst of regions that have for centuries relied on "weakly developed productive forces" (Boiko, 1979a:8).

Amurskaia Oblast'

Boiko (1979a:5) begins his analysis by describing the rate of change in the lifestyle of the Evenki as "explosive." The BAM not only entails a railway but "territorial-productive complexes," which are to multiply the productive capacity of the region by creating industrial sites along the railway right-of-way. One indication of its scale are the slogans that were used when referring to it in the Soviet press: "The Project

of the Century," "The Project of All-Peoples," and "The Railway of Discovery and Renewal" (Sobolev and Drozdova, 1977:62).

At the time of railway construction in Amurskaia *oblast'* only 30% of the Evenki lived in villages. Their urbanization rate was in fact the lowest of all the Siberian peoples (Boiko, 1979b:29). Table 1 gives the proportion of the Evenk population engaged in various sectors of public production. "Public production" translates the Russian word *obshchestvennoe proizvodstvo*, which roughly includes employees on state and collective farms. Private hunting, herding, or farming would not be classified as public production. Sixty-five percent (975) of the Evenk population of this *oblast'* were engaged in public production (Boiko, 1979a:157) and 14.7% (221) of the population were unemployed (Zolototrubovii, 1979:90). The proportion of able-bodied people working in domestic or private production was 1.3 times the national average (Zolototrubovii, 1979:91). The large size of the sphere of non-public production suggests that the absolute number of Evenki engaged in traditional occupations may in fact be higher.

Despite the great contrast between the predominantly rural lifestyles of the Evenki and the urban job positions that will be created, the general conclusion of Boiko *et al.* (1979) is that the experience of development would be positive. Beloshapkina (1979:111) mentions a critical factor that mediated the "explosive" time frame of the railway's impact — the identification of the Evenki with non-traditional occupations. She explains that, at least for reindeer breeders, "the narrow set of simple functions in the reindeer herder's work cannot satisfy the modern young man who has gotten a sound basic polytechnical education in secondary school and is ready to master a speciality in any field." However, Boiko *et al.* (1979:10, 72, 106) do not recommend a rejection of reindeer breeding. Soviet planners have identified a need for reindeer meat in order to feed the growing numbers of imported industrial workers. This leads Beloshapkina (1979:111) to the conclusion that the reindeer industry must be restructured to bring "the character and substance of the work in this industry into line with the resources and level of training of the modern worker." This usually means the use of helicopters, electronic communications, and shift work to decrease the amount of physical hardship of the individual

herder while simultaneously decreasing the isolation of the nomadic herders.

There is one curious aspect to these general recommendations. The enthusiasm for the restructuring of reindeer breeding into a variation on industrial employment is based on certain assumptions about the nature of Evenk traditional society that contradict the writings of other Soviet scholars. A critical analysis of the anthropology of Boiko *et al.* (1979) reveals that their definition of the "traditional" is conveniently tailored to the type of production thought to be suitable for the priorities of the state.

Boiko *et al.* (1979:111-112) strengthen their case for the reorganization of reindeer herding by pointing to the deeply held associations that the Evenki make with the reindeer. But classification of the Evenki as traditional reindeer herders overlooks the conditions under which the Evenki traditionally bred their deer. Other Soviet authors have noted that the Evenki have traditionally been hunters. In precontact times, the Evenki hunted hoofed animals and fowl on a subsistence basis. The hunting process was facilitated by domesticated reindeer, which served as a means of transport as well as a ready source of milk, meat, and clothing (Vasilevich and Smolnyak, 1965:624-626).

Boiko *et al.* (1979:65-71) do discuss the rise of reindeer breeding. However, from the text, the rise of commercial breeding appears not to be a traditional development but instead one that arose with the development of a trading and tax-paying relationship between the Evenki and the Russians. Reindeer became invaluable in transporting goods between the remote trapping areas and the Cossack trading post as well as in the process of intensive trapping. Since deer stocks were privately owned, the meteoric rise of the breeding sector led to the development of a wealthy strata in Evenk society that profited from the fact that some families did not own reindeer. These richer Evenki would act as middlemen in commodity trading or would lend reindeer in exchange for furs or services. Thus, the establishment of commodity production is thought to have gradually led to the dissolution of the traditional communal structure (Vasilevich and Smolnyak, 1965:624; Serebriankovii, 1979:64).

The relative weight of reindeer breeding in the Evenk economy underwent another important shift with the replacement of the market by the state sector after the 1917 revolution. Reindeer production was increasingly expected to supply raw material for food and clothing in the state market rather than merely transportation. In 1927, 92.7% of all far eastern (Evenk) economic units (*khoziaistva*) were oriented towards hunting and trapping (Serebriankovii, 1979:64). After collectivization, in 1937, the average proportion of hunting and trapping income in Evenk collective farms in the northern regions of Amurskaia *oblast'* dropped to 24.2%, while the proportion of income derived from reindeer breeding rose to 39.0%. The average proportion of income from hunting and trapping in state sector farms was to drop to 16.7% by 1960 and to 13.0% by 1975 (Serebriankovii, 1979:67-68).

Serebriankovii uses these dramatic statistics to demonstrate the decline in importance of hunting and trapping in the Evenk way of life. It is important to emphasize that this decline is true only for the *state* sector. From 1971 to 1975, Evenk collective farms were responsible for 100% of the production of deer but only 29% of the furs trapped. Further, Serebriankovii (1979:74) accounts for the drop in importance

TABLE 1. Distribution of the Evenk work force engaged in public production by work fields in Amurskaia *oblast'* (Zolototrubovii, 1979:81)*

Work field	Pop. (%)	Pop. (#)
Agriculture	70.9	[691]
Industry and construction	1.5	[14]
Transportation and communication	0.9	[9]
Consumer and commerce	3.2	[31]
Medicine	7.7	[75]
Education and culture	13.8	[135]
Administration and finance	2.0	[20]

*Zolototrubovii did not supply the raw figures for these percentages. The numbers in square brackets were derived by estimating the Evenk population of Amurskaia *oblast'* at 1500 and by noting that 65% of this figure were engaged in public production [975]. The large agricultural category includes crop and livestock production as well as reindeer herding and state fur trapping. (The latter two industries are administered by the Department of Agriculture, *GosAgroProm.*) Amateur, non-collectivized or "poached" hunting and herding would not appear in the agricultural category or in this table of "public production."

of hunting and trapping by noting that state prices for furs were low, making it unprofitable for state farms to exploit this sector. This seems to indicate that the shift in importance of reindeer herding among "traditional" industries is more a product of state planning than of any factor internal to Evenk society.

The dismissal of hunting and trapping is significant in the context of the construction of the BAM, since it points to a tension not only between the process of industrialization and the traditional lifestyles of people, but between the types of "traditional" industries thought to be appropriate to serve as a support to industrial development.

There are, however, some costs involved even in this modest recognition of the traditional economy. The implications of encouraging the development of reindeer breeding are dramatically reflected in the statistics of Boiko *et al.* (1979). The average age of the nomadic herder is 40. As Zolototrubovii (1979:85) notes:

It is no accident that young people, especially those who have completed a general secondary school, are in no hurry to acquire this trade. . . . The nomadic mode of life prevents a person from using social and cultural facilities, narrows his circle of personal contacts, and hinders his development of new moral qualities. We must evidently reorganise . . . on the State farms of the BAM [railway] zone, otherwise we may face a reindeer herder shortage.

Yet at the same time, the average age of the hunter/trapper is around 30:

Young people enter this industry fairly readily, probably being attracted to it for more than just material and aesthetic reasons. The very nature of the hunter/trapper's occupation differs considerably from that of the reindeer herder. The hunter/trapper's annual work cycle is such that he spends as much as half a year . . . in the taiga. The rest of the time he is employed in various jobs in his village . . . [1979:86].

These descriptions are made more vivid by Boiko's investigation of "satisfaction" (*udovletvorenii*) among "traditional" workers. In another work conducted among the Evenki in Aldanskii raion (Yakutskaiia A.S.S.R.), Boiko and Vasiliev (1981:104-115) found 80-100% of the hunters "satisfied" with their work regardless of the level of education attained. By contrast, the level of satisfaction among reindeer workers declined from 85 to 60% as education rose from an elementary level to the ninth grade. There were no cases of herders with a level of education higher than the ninth grade. The same pattern was found when the variable "satisfaction" was measured against age. All young hunters (16-24) reported being satisfied with hunting, while high rates of satisfaction among herders was only found above the age of 25 (78%). Boiko *et al.* (1979:86,109) mention that the same pattern of dissatisfaction exists in Amurskaia oblast'.

Zolototrubovii (1979:91) explains the high rate of dissatisfaction among traditional workers as the "phenomenon of superfluous education" (*izlishnoe obrazovanie*).

Limited job choice, "forced" [*vynuzhdennaia*] employment accompanied by functional underuse of the native population's education, have not only adverse economic consequences (unjustified outlay on education), but social ones as well. A certain devaluation of education as such takes place in the eyes of Evenk youth. It is only natural that a lack of job choice shows up later as dissatisfaction with work. Thus, among the entire native population employed in public production the proportion of people wholly or partly dis-

satisfied with their work runs to 29.2%, but among the "forcibly" employed this figure rises to 49.1% [Zolototrubovii, 1979:90] [quotation marks in the original].

D'iachenko and Udalovaia (1979:94) observe that although many young Evenk workers are overqualified for their jobs, they prefer to remain in their own ethnic area rather than emigrate to other areas where they cannot enjoy their ethnic traditions. Beloshapkina (1979:108-112) also identifies an ambivalence in the attitude of young Evenk workers towards reindeer breeding. Although some would prefer jobs in this industry, they concede that while they were at school they had missed the opportunity to learn traditional skills from their elders and that they are not prepared for the hardy physical lifestyle that this industry involves.

None of the scholars addresses the striking difference in satisfaction rates between herders and hunters. This allows one to hypothesize another factor at work in the data on "satisfaction." Perhaps the source of "dissatisfaction" is not due solely to an inadequate supply of social services to herders or to a low level of technology. The difference in satisfaction rates may be related to the fact that reindeer breeding has been organized to suit the state sector, while hunting/trapping remains an occupation independent from state supervision. Stated another way, the organization of reindeer breeding may not match what the people themselves consider to be appropriate. Instead this sector may be administered to meet imperatives that do not coincide with the imperatives of the local worker. In this case it is possible that "dissatisfaction" might be better translated as a form of "alienation." I will return to the concept of alienation in the final section, where it will be shown how the anthropologic reinterpretation of reindeer herding corresponds to the unique understanding of development theory held by Soviet theorists.

Buriat Autonomous Republic

The cost of compromising the diversity of traditional activities in Amurskaia oblast' can be better evaluated if the experience of the Evenki in the Buriat Autonomous Republic is consulted. While the argument can be made that the reorganization of traditional industries creates some dissatisfaction for native workers, it can also be argued that the reorganization of traditional industries is better than their marginalization. Economic reorganization in this administrative region has taken the different route of replacing Evenk traditional industries with crop and livestock production.

This contrast immediately shows up in the statistical sketches of the region (Table 2). Out of a total 1984 population of 529 Evenki in the Bauntovskii raion of the republic, only 210 (40%) work in public production. (Tsydypova [1988] uses the term *narodnoe khoziaistvo*, which for our purposes will be translated as "public production.") Again, the small proportion of the population engaged in public production suggests that some Evenki may work in private or domestic production. Tsydypova notes that the current professional structure differs dramatically from that of only ten years ago. The major shifts were of Evenki moving from traditional "agricultural" occupations to crop and livestock agriculture as well as other urban occupations (Tsydypova, 1988:21).

The marked difference in the lifestyles of the Evenki in the Buriat Autonomous Republic from the Evenki in Amurskaia oblast' seems to stem from a different method of managing the explosive pace of development initiated by

TABLE 2. Distribution of the Evenk work force engaged in public production by work fields in Bauntovskii raion (Tsydypova, 1988:21)*

Work field	Pop. (#)	Pop. (%)
Agriculture	123	59
Industry and construction	21	19
Transportation and communication	0	0
Consumer and commerce	12	6
Medicine	9	4
Education and culture	19	9
Other	35	17

*Tsydypova supplied the raw figures. Percentages were calculated from Tsydypova's total of 210 Evenki engaged in public production for this raion. (However, the total of the numbers in Tsydypova's table add up to 219.) As with Table 1, the agricultural category includes crop and livestock production as well as reindeer herding and state fur trapping.

the BAM. The decision by planners in the Buriat republic to bypass traditional industries seems to have been influenced by two particularly powerful variables: the rapid influx of new workers and the ensuing urbanization of the region.

In the Buriat Autonomous Republic, the urbanization rate of the Evenki is now higher than that of the other nationalities in the republic (Mangataeva, 1988:12). In 1970, the Severobaikal'skii and Bauntovskii raioni supported only 2.3% of the population of the Buriat Autonomous Republic and 0.8% of the urban population. These numbers had grown to 9.5% and 13.2% respectively by 1988. The intensive growth of the population was credited to a high influx of people and a high fertility rate, which was correlated to the young age of most of the migrants (Mangataeva, 1988:8). One new city and eight new towns were founded to support the new migrants (Zhambalova *et al.*, 1988:35). By the year 2000, it is projected that the population will increase one and a half times to 140 000 people (Zhambalova *et al.*, 1988:45).

Rapid urbanization, in turn, demanded changes in the economy in order to support the growing population. The statistics seem to indicate that traditional industries are unable to compete. Instead, forms of agriculture indigenous to other parts of the Soviet Union are being introduced to feed the growing population. Zhambalova *et al.* (1988:37) make a point of emphasizing the large percentage increase of cultivated acreage in Bauntovskii and Severobaikal'skii raioni from 1975 to 1985. There was a respective increase in cultivated acreage in both raioni of 138 and 108%, while the size of pastures increased only by 39 and 14%. Although the percentage increases were large, the absolute value of these increases were small. For Bauntovskii raion cultivated acreage increased from 2400 to 5700 ha and pastures increased from 23 000 to 32 000 ha. In Severobaikal'skii raion the cultivated acreage increased from 1200 to 2500 ha, while pastures increased from 10 600 to 12 100 ha.

At the same time, the role of traditional industries in the regional economy is downplayed in the literature. Zhambalova *et al.* (1988:33, 41) observe that traditional industries achieved their predominance only because of weakly developed transportation links in the republic. They correlate the rapid growth of crop and livestock production in Severobaikal'skii raion directly with the BAM: "Agriculture has developed at an accelerated pace only in the Severobaikal'skii raion. This is expected [zakonomerno] since the foundation of the BAM zone started specifically with this raion." The corollary of this is that with the strengthening of the transportation

network, the role of traditional industries could be expected to decrease.

The remaining traditional industries have now been consolidated in five state sector enterprises for their "preservation" (*sokhranenie*) (Zhambalova *et al.*, 1988:35). Ironically, many of the employees in these "traditional" enterprises are not Evenk. In all of the state enterprises in the Severobaikal'skii raion, there are only ten state-employed Evenk hunters. A similar pattern is found in other hunting enterprises in the republic (Table 3).

TABLE 3. Composition of state hunters by nationality, 1 January 1988 (Atutov *et al.*, 1988:58)*

Enterprise	Total # of hunters	Nationality			
		Russian	Buriat	Evenk	Other
Severobaikalskii collective farm	26	15	4	6	1
Bagdarinskii state farm	26	19	3	4	0
Uoianskii state farm	26	25	0	0	1

*There is some confusion regarding the number of Evenk hunters in the Uoianskii state farm. Tsydypova indicates that on this farm there are no Evenk hunters out of a total of 27 employed hunters (1988:22). Krivoi (1988) notes that in the Uoianskii state farm there are only 5 Evenk hunters out of a total of 30 employed hunters. Since the latter article is more recent, perhaps this is an indication that this problem is being addressed.

The problem of native employment is also reported with the industry of reindeer herding in the Buriatskaia A.S.S.R.:

The traditional occupation of the Evenki — reindeer herding — is not prospering in the Buriat republic. There has been a sharp decline in the numbers of reindeer herds. [As late as] the 1930s each Evenk family had between 10 and 50 head of reindeer. Even in the 1970s there were more than 5000 head of deer. Presently there are scarcely any reindeer in the [Buriat] republic. Stocks number less than 2000 and only seven to eight people are employed in caring for them out of all the numbers of the Evenki. . . . The Evenki do not even own deer privately. Now the children only see reindeer in pictures [Belikov, pers. comm. 1988].

Although the effects of industrial development in the Buriat republic seem to be qualitatively more intense than those in Amurskaia oblast', scholars from the Buriat Academy of Sciences suggest a similar hypothesis to that of Boiko and his colleagues. Tsydypova (1988:23) observes that there is an inconsistency between the qualifications of young Evenk workers entering the workforce and the type of labour promised by traditional industries. She notes that the older generation of hunters and herders are the bearers of traditional skills, which are a type of labour that consists of "low qualifications and arduous physical labour" (1988:23). The younger generation has a higher level of training but at the current time there are no job sites that make use of their training. It is for this reason, she notes, that there are high rates of dissatisfaction on the part of workers with their occupations (Table 4). Tsydypova (1988:23, 24) notes that the majority of the dissatisfied are young people with an education. To alleviate this problem she recommends that more effort be spent in developing "specialists" in deer breeding and the preparation of furs and leather. Interestingly, she also notes that the restructuring of the Evenk economy is hindered by the lack of education of the Evenki as a group. She states that

Among the Evenki, 15.7% have a lower than elementary education, 30.7% have an elementary education, 28.3% have an uncompleted high school [*srednoe*] education, 15.1% have a general high school education, 0.73% have an uncompleted higher education, [and] 4.0% have a higher education. Such a [low] level of education appears to be the specific reason why high rates of lowly qualified, manual labour is associated with the Evenk professional structure. It is only in the occupations of industry, transport and construction that there is a shortage of manual workers, not in the trade and agricultural sectors. For this reason, the Evenki work in these subordinate [*podsobnoe*] and poorly paid professions [1988:24].

TABLE 4. The adaptation of the labour force to their occupations in four northern Evenk villages, Buriat Autonomous Republic (Tsydyпова, 1988:24)

Village	Workers who wish to change their place of residence (%)	Workers who wish to change their place of work and occupation (%)
Rossoshino	16.7	11.1
Ust'-Dzhelinda	19.6	9.7
Kholodnoe	17.5	21.9
Uoian	23.5	7.1

This observation adds another dimension to the above plea for more sophisticated technology to satisfy the educated, younger generation. Not only are resources not being invested in modernizing traditional industries, but workers who only possess traditional skills cannot find employment in their traditional speciality. As noted above, jobs in traditional occupations are scarce. The Evenki who do work are either offered employment in industrial job sites or are simply unemployed. In the Severobaikal'skii *raion* 15% of the eligible Evenk workers cannot find any work at all (Krivoi, 1988). Unemployment is particularly bad in the Evenk villages of Staryii Uoian and Kholodnoe (Belikov, pers. comm. 1988).

In this more explosive example of development, it is considered more expedient to develop forms of production foreign to this region. Along with the change in the productive forces, workers who are already accustomed to industrial relations of production are imported. This, in turn, further marginalizes the aboriginal population. When Tsydyпова reflects on how the problems with professional development among the Evenki in the republic are to be solved, she returns to the familiar hypothesis of Boiko:

Urbanization, with its wide range of employment positions for qualified workers, as well as the opening up of industry, is appearing to compete with the traditional industries of the Evenki — deer herding, hunting and fishing. . . . Concerted effort will for the most part contribute to the alleviation of these problems by restructuring the traditional sectors of the northern economy . . . on a new scientific and technological foundation and by transforming agricultural and commercial labour into a variety of industrial labour [Tsydyпова, 1988:20].

It seems that in the face of the rapidly expanding migrant and urban population of the Buriat republic, resources are scarce for the consolidation of traditional Evenk industries on their own terms.

THE NON-CAPITALIST PATH

The development strategy implemented in the BAM zone has had the effect of excluding the Evenki from active par-

ticipation in the rapid changes in the regional economy. Planners have created the double problem of either completely marginalizing the aboriginal population or organizing their dispirited participation in traditional occupations that they do not recognize as their own. The same contradictions encountered by Soviet planners in implementing a development strategy in the BAM zone can be discovered within Soviet development theory as a whole.

The Soviet theorists have codified their prescriptions for northern development in a theoretical package known as the non-capitalist path of development (*nekapitalisticheskii put' razvitiia*). The various components of the theory of the non-capitalist path were developed after Lenin's death (see Ramnarine, 1983:72-172). Most Soviet works reference a key speech by Lenin (1920). Supporting quotes come from Marx (1977, 1984a,b) and Lenin (1916, 1919, 1921). The majority of Soviet works use Third World examples or they examine the development of Soviet Central Asia (Beysembaev, 1974; Akhmedova, 1976; Andreev, 1977; Trubnikov, 1980; Karakhanov, 1983). For discussions on the relationship of Siberian development to the theory of the non-capitalist path see Sergeev (1955), Balitskii (1969), Antropova (1971), and Kuoljok (1985).

At the centre of the doctrine lies the Leninist theory of imperialism (Ramnarine, 1983:70) and the related notion of a socialist world system (Graf, 1987:679). Both concepts are based on a modification of the orthodox Marxist schema of historical development.

The orthodox "five-stage" schema charts a society's progress from the primitive commune to socialist society through the classical, feudal, and bourgeois societal stages. Critics observe that the five-stage schema sketched by Marx in *Capital* was strictly developed with Western Europe in mind and thus should not be carelessly applied to non-Western contexts (Hobsbawm, 1980; Melotti, 1977; Sawyer, 1977). In fact, Marx himself denied that his account of the development of capitalism in Western Europe could be transformed into "a historico-philosophical theory of the general course fatally imposed on all people, whatever the historical circumstances in which they find themselves placed." Such a theory, according to Marx (1984a:136), would do him "both too much honour and too much discredit."

A more revealing criticism of the orthodox model is that there is not a single society that can be empirically demonstrated to have passed through all of the five stages (Semenov, 1980:36-40). Theorists of the non-capitalist path directly confront this criticism by assuming a distinctive position on the nature of historical determinacy. Their view of history, best codified by the prominent Soviet historian Yurii Semenov (1980), avoids the Eurocentrism of the five-stage schema by changing the level of analysis. Instead of assuming that social formations (such as feudalism or capitalism) are congruent with a specific society, Semenov (1980:37) claims that social formations must be analyzed at a level more general and abstract than any particular society — the level of world history. Specific societies are thought of either as centres for historical development or as peripheral areas that gravitate toward the centres. The five stages of the orthodox model are elevated to five historical epochs of world history. The Near East served as a centre for the first class society: the Asiatic mode of production. The influence of this centre led to the replacement of the primitive-communal epoch of human history. Similarly Western Europe served as the centre

for the capitalist epoch, drawing all other peripheral pre-capitalist nations into its wake through commerce. Semenov observes that the most favourable conditions for the formation of new centres often exist at the periphery of disintegrating centres. Thus, Semenov (1980:48) observes that the revolution in the backward periphery of Eastern Europe placed the Soviet Union at the centre of a new epoch:

The world socialist system appears as the only one that can be and necessarily will become global. And in the more distant future, with the transition to communism, human society will inevitably transform itself into a single social organism.

The vision of historical determinacy held by theorists of the non-capitalist path of development is operationalized by means of the Leninist theory of imperialism. It is claimed that world capitalism failed to develop the peripheral nations due to its inherent laws that led to uneven development, unequal exchange, and the centralization of wealth. The sterility of capitalism created both the possibility and the necessity of a revolution. The revolution, whether in the Russian Empire of the tsars, or in a Third World country, is expected to be led by the proletariat in alliance with other oppressed groups. In the case of Siberia, the alliance is said to have consisted of the Russian proletariat and the oppressed native classes. The latter consisted of all those natives who were not *kulak* [rich] reindeer breeders, shamans, merchants or former clan elders (Kuoljok, 1985:34).

The primary challenge facing a project for non-capitalist development, such as the BAM, rests with its prescribed alliance with the proletariat. As Soviet theorists themselves point out, often the proletariat in developing areas is small in number and weak (Balitskii, 1969:25-26). This weakness can be overcome by negotiating for the assistance of proletarians elsewhere (Lenin, 1920:244; Kuoljok, 1985:34).

The problem of negotiating proletarian assistance gives the non-capitalist path of development a curious flavour in the context of the Marxist tradition. Marxist prescriptions for development are commonly criticized for being either "voluntaristic" or "economistic." In the former instance, the theorist is accused of placing too much emphasis on human volition in accounting for historical change, while not paying enough respect to the material constraints that may restrict the range of practical decisions. The latter label applies to theories that define human actors almost as puppets dependent on the iron necessities generated by faceless economic forces. Each respective error can disable a development strategy by rendering it either impractical or cynically fatalistic. Ironically, the advocates of the non-capitalist path succeed in achieving both.

The voluntarism in the doctrine is illustrated by the assertion that a society can "leap" any number of stages simply by political education and by assistance from the world socialist movement (Ramnarine, 1983:234). Development does not spontaneously unfold out of the contradictions within a mode of production that act as fetters to the development of an economy. Instead development is consciously induced regardless of the nature of productive relations. The voluntaristic aspects of the non-capitalist path are illustrated particularly dramatically in the analysis of Boiko's team. Their vision of development singles out education as the primary factor. According to them, high rates of dissatisfaction and the ensuing stagnation of the reindeer breeding industry result from the securing of a competent

and cosmopolitan work force that has left the forces of production behind.

On the other hand, the concept of a non-capitalist path is also economicist in that it still preserves the image of capitalism within the theory while at the same time rejecting the necessity of capitalist development (Ramnarine, 1983:239). The goal of development is the establishment of proletarian relations of production. The necessity for creating a proletariat comes from the assumption that a socialist world system is establishing itself in the Soviet Union. Although the Siberian periphery had little experience with capitalism, one of the classes of the capitalist mode of production is artificially created. The image of capitalism is preserved negatively in that no distinctive new model of productive relations is put forward by the doctrine. This aspect can be seen in the recommendation of Boiko *et al.* (1979:10, 72, 106, 111) that herding be restructured not only to match the industrial training of the workers but to serve as a support to the new industrial economy promised by BAM.

These theoretical shortcomings create a problem when dealing with the development of the Siberian minorities. When Lenin (1916:69) spoke about the privileged position of the proletariat, it was in the context of defending the revolution: "The dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary to overthrow the bourgeoisie and repel its attempts at counter-revolution." This side of the concept is defended. However, the other implicit meaning of the term is not defended but remains an unarticulated assumption. From the point of view of a Siberian hunter, the dictatorship of the proletariat will appear to be the dictatorship of industrial society, that is, the context in which proletarians are found. Soviet theorists do not think it necessary to defend the assumption that urbanized industrial relations of production are inherently progressive.

ALIENATION AND SOVIET DEVELOPMENT POLICY

A critical examination of Soviet texts has shown that there has not been a smooth transformation of Evenk hunters into either shift-work herders or industrial proletarians. The common theme that characterizes the processes of development in the Soviet North is the conflict between a locally oriented society and the national imperatives of the Soviet state. The disjuncture between the state and society can be effectively criticized by means of the concept of alienation taken from Marxist philosophy. This classical concept is appealing for two reasons: first, it ironically criticizes Soviet socialism on its own theoretical terrain; second, the concept has recently become popular among Soviet academics as a tool for understanding the problems of their own state (Narskii, 1988; Markovich, 1989). More provocatively, the existence of alienation plays an important role in predicting popular mobilizations to change the social order.

Marx used the concept of alienation in three senses. The most common usage of the term concerns the production of commodities. A worker is confronted with the effects of alienation when the product of his or her labour is sold on the market without an equitable return to the worker. However, the term was also used by Marx in a broader sense to indicate an activity in which a worker did not feel content with his or her work. Labour in this case is seen as an *external* form imposed on the worker (Marx, 1964). Finally, Marx

wrote that alienation was rooted in the expansion of the division of labour, which made the individual labourer powerless before the demands of a worldwide market (Marx and Engels, 1988).

Soviet theorists have traditionally denied the existence of alienation within the Soviet Union, since the socialist revolution was thought to have eliminated the exploitation of labour through the production of commodities for the market. Western scholars have made the same observation (Bartels and Bartels, 1988). Nonetheless, commercial alienation does not exhaust the content of the term. The persistence of alienation within the labour process and within the division of labour can be clearly illustrated through the example of the Evenki of the BAM zone.

The disparity in rates of satisfaction overtly demonstrates that the Evenk herders are discontented with the structure of this "traditional" sector. In this case, the label "traditional" serves to divert attention from the structure of the herding process itself. Instead the reader is asked to recognize the need to adopt industrial methods in order to secure the very reproduction of the herding industry. A much more elegant and plausible hypothesis is that the high rates of dissatisfaction arise due to the alienation of the Evenki from the unregimented tempo of informally organized hunting and herding.

The contradiction between Evenk traditional workers and the external division of labour cuts even deeper. First, there is a conflict among different levels of administration. Hunting is primarily an individually administered activity, while herding in these districts is administered directly by the Department of Agriculture. To establish a sufficient explanation of the disparity in rates of satisfaction, one must examine the difference between locally administered production and centrally planned production. Second, the marginalization of traditional industries in favour of "foreign" forms of agriculture and industry points to the imposition of national economic interests over those of local populations.

The evocativeness of the concept of alienation is attested to by the well-crafted defence of the actions of the Soviet state by Yurii Popkov (1986). Popkov denies that traditional Siberian societies are alienated *by* the socialist state. Instead he argues that they are alienated *from* the state. He argues that traditional relations of production preserved a notion of property that embraces the ethnic group as a "localised microcosm" (cf. Marx, 1984b:121). The "common" (*obshchestvennaia*) property of the Evenki is thus not "joint" (*sov-mestnaia*) property with the rest of the national economy. In order to become socialist, Popkov argues that native people must discard their concept of "our own" (*k svoim*).

Popkov's argument is solid if one accepts Yurii Semenov's axiom that social formations should not be identified with a particular social organism. However, if one accepts that the character of actually existing socialism in the Soviet Union is not congruent to its abstract ideal, then Popkov's concepts give one a solid basis to understand the conviction and momentum of current social movements in Soviet Siberia. Recent land reforms have devolved authority over land to specific enterprises through the provision of life-long leases of land and reindeer herds (Vitebsky, 1989). These reforms can be thought of as strengthening the common property of local communities. The declarations of Siberian aboriginal groups call for an acceleration of this process to the extent

of securing control over wildlife management and the exploitation of mineral resources (unpubl. open letter from All-Union Festival of the Peoples of Siberia, Yakutsk, July 1989). Furthermore, the movement to "municipalize" state "joint" property is considered to be one of the fundamental tenets of the radical left in the Soviet Union (Kagarlitsky, 1990:377-378).

The recent conflicts over state property in Siberia indicate a broader contradiction within Soviet Marxism. Marxism credits itself with a materialist analysis. If regional development is subordinated to national development, then cracks begin to appear in a materialist analysis of production relations at the regional level. The identification of alienation in the lives of the Evenki points to the profound importance of local social relations. On an abstract level, appeals to the logic of world history may rationalize Soviet development theory, but on a more practical note, it clearly it is not in the interest of the national economy to have local workers withdraw from active participation in it. The case of the Evenki suggests that the role of local economies in Soviet Marxist theory needs to be reconsidered.

CONCLUSION

The Soviet experience with "explosive" industrial development has been shown to have achieved mixed success. On the one hand, an effort is being made to integrate traditional economies into a rapidly expanding industrial infrastructure. On the other hand, the manner in which this integration is administered may not always meet local imperatives or, in regions where the pace of development is compressed, aboriginal economic contributions are simply brushed aside. When the experiences of the Evenki are analyzed on a more theoretical level, it can be demonstrated that there is a tension created when Soviet Marxists approach the challenge of "developing" pre-capitalist peoples. If the transformation of hunters into herders can be justified by an appeal to world history, then how can such changes be rationalized to the particular people in question? When the problem of development is approached from the point of view of the region being affected, then the project displays strong elements of theoretical voluntarism and economism. It seems that in a heterogeneous social formation such as the Soviet Union, the question of whether "materialism" should be defined on a regional or a national level becomes crucial.

Canadians will find an odd irony in this observation since this formulation sounds similar (and may in fact be analogous) to the abstract "national interest" that the Canadian Government uses to justify its own northern development policy, even though it is situated in a vastly different political and economic context. As William Graf observes, the model of the non-capitalist path does share some common ground with Western modernization theory:

Both modernization theory . . . and the [non-capitalist path] in its several varieties start from the primacy of the political. This suggests elite control of the state apparatus in order to ensure state-directed accumulation. In the one case, the elite is presumed to be educated and capitalist oriented, in the other to contain a revolutionary potential. Either way, the development process is imposed and guided from above and aims at emulation of development processes already accomplished elsewhere. Indigenous starting points, aspirations and

potentials are regarded as obstacles to be overcome. Science and technology as well as rationality and efficiency are prescribed as organising principles for social change [Graf, 1987:690].

The similarities in *approaches* to northern development challenge one to distinguish Western and Eastern development strategies.

One of the more dramatic impacts of the Soviet development model is that measured by the variable "satisfaction" (*udovletvorennye*). The existence of "dissatisfaction" points to an instance of classical Marxist alienation in the labour process as well as in the division of labour. The persistence of these forms of alienation implies that a conflict exists between the Soviet state and a still vibrant civil society over how local economies are to be administered and not over how their products are to be distributed. The conflict over the administration of local economies necessarily involves a redefinition of the place of state property within the Soviet Union. As the processes of restructuring accelerate within Soviet politics, one should expect more demands for aboriginal self-government in Siberia. The demands of Soviet native peoples in this context are not unlike the demands of other aboriginal groups worldwide. Further research into the similarities between the experience of the Evenki and other circumpolar peoples would not only lead to a deeper understanding of the plight of this particular people, but it would inform political practice among northern minorities elsewhere.

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