

EUROPEAN MIND
A Lakota Indian View
by Russell Means

Kether.com Note: The transcript I used to put this on kether.com is a photocopy booklet of extremely low quality. Where I am uncertain as to what the word or words are, I put them in [brackets]. The booklet was typed in very small print, so my page breaks do not correspond to those in the booklet. Each of my pages equals approximately a half page of a booklet's page. Ironically, given the title, this booklet was given to me by some friends of mine in England. It was printed by First Water Press, in London UK, 1986. For more on Russell Means, I recommend you visit his website, russellmeans.com.

Note: This is the transcript of an address by Russell Means of the Lakota Tribe of Native American People in a gathering at the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota, North America, in July 1980. The transcript is made from a copy of a tape recording, and the beginning is missing.

". . . primarily it seems that the term, "American Indian" is being rejected as European in origin, which is true, but all the above terms are European in origin, the only non-European way is to speak of Lakota, or more precisely of O'Glama, Brul'e, etc., of the MiuSuki, and all the rest of the several hundred correct tribal names. There is also some confusion about the word 'Indian', a mistaken belief that it refers to the country 'India.' When Columbus washed up on the beach in the Caribbean, he was not looking for a country called 'India.' Europeans were calling that country 'Hindustan' in 1492, look it up on the old maps. Columbus called the Tribal People he met "Indio" from the Italian "in Dio", meaning "in God."

It takes a strong effort on the part of each American Indian not to become "Europeanised." The strength for this effort can only come from the traditional ways, the traditional values that our elders retained. It must come from the Hoop, the Four Directions, the Relations. It cannot come from the pages of a book, or a thousand books. No European can ever teach a Lakota to be a Lakota, a Hopi to be Hopi. A Master's Degree in "Indian Studies" or in "Education" or in anything else, cannot make a person into a human being, or provide knowledge into the traditional ways. It can only make you into a "mental European", an outsider.

I should be clear about something here, because there seems to be some confusion about it. when I speak of "Europeans" or of "mental Europeans", I'm not allowing for false distinctions. I'm not saying that, on the one hand, there are the by-products of a few thousand years of genocidal, reactionary, European, intellectual development, which is bad, and on the other hand, there is some new revolutionary intellectual development which is good. I am referring here to the so-called theories of "Marxism", and "Anarchism" and "Leftism" in general. I don't believe these theories can be separated from the rest of the European intellectual tradition. It's really just the same old song.

The process really began much earlier. Newton, for example, revolutionised physics, and the so-called "Natural Sciences", by reducing the physical universe to a linear arithematical equation. Descartes did the same thing with culture, John Locke did it with Politics, and Adam Smith did it with Economics. Each one of these "Thinkers" took a piece of the spirituality of human existence, and converted it into a code, an abstraction. They picked up where Christianity ended, they "secularised" Christian Religion, as the "scholars" like to say, and in so doing they made Europe more able and ready to act as an expansionist culture. Each of these intellectual revolutions served to abstract the European mentality even further, to remove the wonderful complexity and spirituality from the Universe, and to replace it with a logical sequence: one, two, three; answer.

This is what has come to be termed "efficiency" in the European mind. Whatever is mechanical is perfect, whatever seems to work at the moment, that is, proves the mechanical model to be the right one, is considered "correct," even when it is clearly untrue. This is why "truth" changes so fast in the European mind. The answers which result from such a process are only stopgaps, only temporary. They must be continuously discarded in favour of new stopgaps which support

[the mechanical models and keep them, the models, alive. Hegel and Marx were heirs to the thinking of Newton, Descartes, Locke and Smith. Hegel finished the process of "secularising theology", and that is put in his own terms.]

He secularised the religious thinking through which Europe understood the universe. Then, Marx put Hegel's philosophy in terms of "Materialism", which is to say that Marx de-spiritualised Hegel's work altogether. Again, this is in Marx's own terms, and this is now seen as the "future revolutionary potential of Europe." Europeans may see this as revolutionary, but American Indians see it simply as still more of that same old European conflict between "being" and "gaining."

The intellectual roots of a new Marxist form of European imperialism lying in Marx and his followers links to the tradition of Newton, Hegel, and others. "Being" is a spiritual proposition. "Gaining" is a material act. Traditionally, American Indians have always attempted to "be" the best people they could. Part of that spiritual process was, and is, to give away wealth, to discard wealth, in order "not to gain." Material gain is an indicator of false status among Traditional People, while it is "proof that the system works" to Europeans. Clearly there are two completely opposing views at issue here, and Marxism is very far over to the other side, (away) from the American Indian view.

But let's look at a major implication of this. It's not merely an intellectual debate. The European materialist tradition, of de-spiritualising the universe is very similar to the mental process which goes into de-humanising another person. And who seems most expert at de-humanising other people? And Why? Soldiers, who have seen a lot of combat, learn to do this to the enemy before going out into combat. Murderers do it, before going out to commit murder. Nazi SS guards did it to concentration camp inmates. Cops do it, corporation leaders do it to the workers they send into the uranium mines and steel mills. Politicians do it to everyone in sight.

And what the process has in common for each group, doing the dehumanising, is that it makes it "alright" to kill and otherwise destroy other people. One of the Christian commandments says "Thou Shalt Not Kill", at least not humans, so the trick is to mentally convert the victim into non-humans. Then, you can proclaim violations of your own commandment as a virtue. In terms of the de-spiritualisation of the universe, the mental process works so that it becomes virtuous to destroy the planet. Terms like "progress" and "freedom" are used to justify butchery and the de-humanisation process. For example, a real-estate speculator may refer to "developing" a parcel of ground in by opening a gravel quarry. "Development" here means "total, permanent destruction" with the earth itself removed, but European logic has gained a few tons of gravel, with which more land can be developed, through the construction of road beds. Ultimately, the whole universe is open, in the European view, to this sort of insanity.

Most important here perhaps, is the fact that Europeans feel no sense of loss in all this. After all, their philosophers have de-spiritualised reality, so there is no satisfaction for them to be gained in simply observing the wonder of a mountain, or a lake, or a people, in being. No satisfaction is measured in terms of gaining material, so the mountain becomes gravel, and the lake becomes coolant for a factory, and the people are rounded up for "processing through the indoctrinalisation mills Europeans like to call "Schools."

But each new piece of that "progress" ups the ante, out in the real world. Take fuel for the industrial machine, as an example. Little more than two centuries ago, nearly everyone used wood, a replenishable, natural item as fuel for the very human needs of cooking and staying warm. Along came the Industrial Revolution, and coal became the dominant fuel. As production became the social imperative for Europe, pollution began to become a problem in the cities, and the earth was ripped open to provide coal, whereas wood had always been gathered or harvested at no great expense to the environment.

Later oil became the major fuel as the technology of production was perfected, through a series of scientific "revolutions." Pollution increased dramatically, and nobody yet knows what the environmental cost [of pumping all] that oil out of the [ground will really be in the long run.] Now, there's an energy crisis, and uranium is becoming [a] dominant fuel. Capitalists, at least, can be relied upon to develop uranium as a fuel at the rate rate at which they can show a good profit. That's their ethic, and maybe that will buy some time. Marxists, on the other hand, can be relied upon to develop uranium fuel as rapidly as possible, simply because it's the most "efficient" production fuel available. That's their ethic, and I fail to see where it's preferable. Like I said, Marxism is right smack in the middle of the European tradition. It's the same old song.

There is a rule of thumb which can be applied here: you cannot judge the real nature of a European revolutionary doctrine on the basis it proposes to make within the European power structure and society. You can only judge it by the effects it will have on pan-European peoples. This is because every revolution in European history has served to reinforce Europe's tendencies and abilities to export

destruction to other people, other cultures, and the environment itself. I defy anyone to point out an example where this is not true. So now we, as American Indian People, are asked to believe that a "new" European revolutionary doctrine, such as Marxism, will reverse the negative effects of European history on us. European power relationships are to be adjusted once again, and that's supposed to make things better for all of us.

But what does this really mean? Right now, we who live on the Pine Ridge Reservation, are living in what White Society has designated a "National Sacrifice Area." What this means is that we have a lot of uranium deposits here, and white culture, not us, needs this uranium as energy production material. The cheapest, most efficient way for industry to extract and deal with the processing of of this uranium is to dump the waste by-products right here at the digging site, right here, where we live. This waste is radioactive, and will make the region uninhabitable forever. This is considered by industry, and by the white society that created this industry, to be an "acceptable price" to pay, for energy resource development. Along the way, they also plan to drain the water table under this part of South Dakota, as part of the industrial process, so the region becomes doubly uninhabitable. The same sort of thing is happening down in the land of the Navajo and Hopi, up in the land of the Northern Cheyenne, and Crow, and elsewhere. Thirty percent of the coal in the West, and half of the uranium deposits in the US have been found to lie under "Reservation Land", so there's no way this can be called a "minor issue." We are resisting being turned into a "National Sacrifice Area", we are resisting being turned into a "National Sacrifice People." The costs of this industrial process are not acceptable to us. It is genocide to dig uranium here and drain the water table. No more, no less.

Now, let's suppose that in our resistance to extermination we begin to seek allies. We have. Let's suppose further that we were to take revolutionary Marxism at its word, that it intends nothing less than the complete overthrow of the European capitalist order which has presented this threat to our very existence, this would seem to be a natural alliance for American Indians to enter into. After all, as the Marxists say, it's the capitalists who set us up to be a National Sacrifice. This is true, as far as it goes. But, as I've tried to point out, this "truth" is very deceptive.

Revolutionary Marxism is committed to even further perpetuation and perfection of the very industrial process which is destroying us all. It offers only to "redistribute" the results- the money, maybe- of this industrialisation to a wider section of the population. It offers to take wealth from the capitalists, and pass it around. But in order to do so, Marxism must maintain the industrial system. Once again, the power relations within European society will have to be altered, but once again, the effects upon the American Indian Peoples here, and pan-European elsewhere, will remain the same.

This is much the same as when the power of the church was redistributed to the private businesses, during the so-called "bourgeois revolution"; European society changed a bit, at least, superficially, but its conduct towards non-Europeans continued as before. You can see what the American Revolution of 1776 did for American Indians - it's the same old song.

Revolutionary Marxism, like industrial society in other forms, seeks to rationalise" all people, in relation to industry; maximum industry, maximum production. It's a materialist's doctrine that despises the American Indian's spiritual tradition, our cultures, our life-ways.

I hear a leading Soviet Scientist saying that "when uranium is exhausted, then alternatives will be found." I see the Vietnamese taking over a nuclear power plant abandoned by the US Military. Have they dismantled and destroyed it? No. They are using it. I see China exploding nuclear bombs, developing uranium reactors, and preparing a space programme, in order to colonise and exploit the planets, the same as the Europeans colonised and exploited this hemisphere. It's the same old song, but maybe with a faster tempo this time.

The statement of the Soviet Scientist is very interesting, does he know what alternative energy source will be? No, he simply "has faith." "Science will find a way." I hear revolutionary Marxists saying that "The destruction of the environment, pollution, and radiation, will all be controlled." And I see the impact upon their words. Do they know how these things will be controlled? No, they simply have faith. "Science will find a way." "Industrialism is fine and necessary." How do they know this? Faith. "Science will find a way." Faith of this sort has always been known in Europe as "religion." Science has become the new European religion for both capitalists and Marxists. They are truly inseparable. They are part and parcel of the same culture. So, in both theory and practice, Marxism demands that non-European Peoples give up their values, their traditions, their cultural existence altogether. We will all be industrialised science addicts in a Marxist society.

I do not believe that Capitalism itself is really responsible for the situation in which American Indians have been declared a National Sacrifice. No, it is the European Tradition. European Culture itself is responsible. Marxism is just the latest continuation of this tradition, not a solution to it. To ally with Marxism is to ally with the very same forces that declare us an "acceptable cost." There is another way.

There is the traditional Lakota way, and the ways of the other American Indian People, it's the way that knows that humans do not have the right to degrade Mother Earth, that there are forces beyond anything the European mind has conceived, that humans must be in harmony with all relations, or the relations will eventually eliminate the disharmony. A lopsided emphasis on humans, by humans, the European's arrogance of acting as though they were beyond the nature of all related things, can only result in a total disharmony, and a re-adjustment, which cuts arrogant humans down to size, gives them a taste of that reality beyond their grasp, or control, and restores the harmony. There is no need for a revolutionary theory to bring this about. It's beyond human control. The Nature Peoples of this Planet know this, and so they do not theorise about it. Theory is an abstract. Our knowledge is real.

Distilled to its basic terms, European Faith, including the New Faith in Science, equals the belief that man is God. Europe has always sought a Messiah, whether it be the man Jesus Christ, or the man Karl Marx, or the man Albert Einstein. American Indians know this to be totally absurd. Humans are the weakest of all creatures, so weak that other creatures are willing to give up their flesh that we may live. Humans are able to survive only through the exercise of rationality, since they lack the ability of other

creatures to gain food through the use of fang and claw. But rationality is a curse, since it causes humans to forget the natural order of things, in ways other creatures do not. A wolf never forgets his or her place in the natural order. American Indians can, Europeans almost always do.

We pray our thanks to the deer, our relations, for allowing us their flesh to eat. Europeans simply take the flesh for granted, and consider the deer inferior. After all, Europeans consider themselves God-like in their rationalism and science. God is the Supreme Being, All Else must be inferior. All European tradition, Marxism included, has conspired to defy the Natural Order of All Things. Mother Earth has been abused, the Powers have been abused, and this cannot go on forever. No theory can alter that simple fact. Mother Earth will retaliate, the whole environment will retaliate, and the abusers will be eliminated. Things will come full circle, back to where they started; that's the revolution. And that's the prophecy of my people, of the Hopi People, and other Correct Peoples.

American Indians have been trying to explain this to the Europeans for centuries, but, as I said earlier, Europeans have proven themselves unable to hear. The Natural Order will win out, and the [offenders] will die [out,] the way deer die when they offend the harmony by over populating a region. It's only a matter of time until what Europeans call "a major catastrophe of global proportions" will occur. It's the role of the American Indian Peoples, the role of all natural beings to survive. A part of our survival is to resist, resist not to overthrow a government, or take political power, but because it's natural to resist extermination, to survive. We don't want power over white institutions, we want white institutions to disappear. That's revolutions.

American Indians are still in touch with these realities, the prophecies, the traditions of our ancestors; we learn from the elders, from nature, from the powers. and when the catastrophe is over, we American Indian Peoples will still be here to inhabit the hemisphere. I don't care if it's only a handful, living high in the Andes, American Indian People will survive. Harmony will be established. That's revolution.

What I'm putting out here is not a racial proposition, but a cultural proposition; those who ultimately advocate and defend the realities of European culture and its industrialism, are my enemies. Those who resist it, who struggle against it, are my allies, the allies of the American Indian People, and I don't give a damn what their skin colour happens to be. "Caucasian" is the white term for the "white race"; "European" is an outlook I oppose. The Vietnamese communists are not exactly what you might consider genetic Caucasians, but they are now [functioning as] mental Europeans. The same holds true [for] Chinese Communists, Japanese Capitalists, or Bantu Catholics, or Peter MacDollan, down at the Navajo Reservation, or Dicky Wilson, up here at Pine Ridge- there is no racism involved in this, just an acknowledgement of the mind and spirit that makes up culture.

In Marxist terms, I suppose I'm a "Cultural Nationalist." I work first with my people, the traditional Lakota People, because we hold a common world-view and share an immediate struggle. Beyond this I work with other traditional American Indian Peoples, again because of a certain communality, and world view, and form of struggle. Beyond that, I work with anyone who experienced the colonial oppression of Europe and those who resist its cultural and industrial totality. Obviously this includes

genetic Caucasians who struggle to resist the dominant norms of European culture; the Irish and the Basques come to mind, but there are many others. I work primarily with my own people, with my own community. Other people who hold non-European perspectives should do the same. I believe in the slogan "trust your brother's vision", although I'd like to add "sister's" into the bargain. I trust the community and the culturally based vision of all the races that naturally resist industrialisation and human extinction. Clearly, individual Whites can share in this, given only that they reach the awareness that continuation of the industrial imperatives of Europe is not a vision, but species suicide.

White is one of the sacred colours of the Lakota People. Red, Yellow, White, and Black, the Four Directions, the Four Seasons, the Four Periods of Life and Ageing, the Four Races of Humanity. Mix red, yellow, white, and black together, and you get brown, the colour of the Fifth Race. This is a natural ordering of things. It therefore seems natural to me to work with all races, each with its own special meaning, identity and message. But there is a peculiar behaviour among most Caucasians: as soon as I become critical of Europe, and its impact on other cultures, they become defensive. They begin to defend themselves. But I'm not attacking them personally, I'm attacking Europe. In personalising my observations on Europe, they are personalising European culture, identifying themselves with it. By defending themselves in this context, they are ultimately defending the Death Culture. This is a confusion which must be overcome, and it must be overcome in a hurry. None of us has energy to waste in such a false struggle.

So, I suppose, to conclude this, I should state clearly that leading anyone toward Marxism is the last thing on my mind. Marxism is as alien to my culture as Capitalism and Christianity are. In fact, I can say I don't think I'm trying to lead anyone toward anything. To some extent I try to be a "leader", in the sense that the white media like to use that term, when the American Indian Movement was a young organisation. This was the result of a confusion I no longer have. You cannot be everything to everyone, I do not propose to be used in such a fashion by my enemies. I am not a leader, I am an O'Glama Lakota Patriot, that is all I want, and all I need to be, and I am very comfortable with who I am.