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**From Talking Chiefs to a Native Corporate Elite:
The Birth of Class and Nationalism Among Canadian Inuit**

by

Nancy Marybelle Mitchell, B.A., M.A.

A thesis submitted to
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

March, 1992

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ABSTRACT

Tracing the gradual transformation of relationships upon contact with successive waves of outsiders, this thesis demonstrates that Canadian Inuit are entering into class relationships, a process being tempered by a drive for ethno-regional collective rights. Although changes in the means of production were effected as Inuit entered into relationships with explorers, whalers, traders, missionaries and police, the definitive link with capitalist practice occurred with the state initiation of cooperatives beginning in the late 1950s. At this time, virtually all Inuit were transformed from independent to simple commodity producers with only limited control over what and how they could produce. The co-op also fanned an incipient pan-Eskimo sentiment. Functioning for a time as an underground government, it tried, but failed to legitimate this role. Beginning in the 1970s, development corporations, created in conjunction with the settlement of land claims which are extinguishing Inuit rights to the land, usurped the co-op's position of dominance. All Inuit are now shareholders in these corporations which exist on state capital and are controlled by an Inuit ruling class. Because of its denigrated ethnic status, however, this ruling class is precluded from involvement in mainstream political and economic power. On a theoretical level, this dissertation demonstrates Bonacich's proposition (1980:21) that nationalism develops neither spontaneously nor separately, but grows "out of the class relations generated by the development of capitalism and imperialism, and represents efforts to create

alliances across class lines, or, alternatively to prevent alliances from developing within major classes across national lines." Furthermore, as articulationists argue, transformation of the indigenous mode of production and the genesis of a collective identity are not occurring in a linear fashion, but through a process of simultaneous undermining and reinforcing of indigenous practices, a process which is at times facilitated, and at times resisted by forces within the dominated mode of production.

The arctic research of Frank Vallee, Professor Emeritus of Carleton University, provided the original inspiration for this thesis. In addition, Professor Vallee's support and encouragement throughout the many years of the project are greatly appreciated. I am also grateful for the constructive criticism and useful advice given by Professor Wallace Clement who kept my sights focussed on the larger picture. Professor Daiva Stasiulis provided provocative commentary during the latter years of writing. I should be remiss if I did not thank Carleton University's Department of Graduate Studies and Research and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology for their forbearance in not exercising rights of closure as the completion of this thesis required ever more time extensions. I also thank Christine Vincent for comments on the final draft, and Cindy Raycroft for her assistance in typing the manuscript and her exceptional ability to understand my scribbled intentions. Finally, on a personal level, although it seems inadequate, I thank my now grown sons, James and Stephen, for their support and understanding.

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**Note concerning place names in Northern Quebec and the
use of *Eskimo* and *Inuit***

Place names in northern Quebec have recently been officially changed to Inuit names, but since this is an historical project, utilizing archival material and quoting from numerous sources, I have reverted the English/French names to minimize the confusion that resulted from retaining the older names in quotations, or for association names (as for instance, the George River Co-operative Association in Kangirsualudjuaq). Similarly, although Inuit refer to their territory in the northern part of the province of Quebec as *Nunavik*, I have referred to it as northern Quebec, arctic Quebec or Nouveau-Québec. The map of arctic Canada is in the process of being rewritten. Within only a few months of writing this, if the Nunavut land claims settlement is concluded, Inuit will have the right to change place names in the NWT to Inuktitut.

I use both *Eskimo* and *Inuit* interchangeably throughout the text. I have assumed that *Eskimo* is a more general term, referring to all circumpolar people, but I note that the Inuit Circumpolar Conference uses *Inuit* to refer to the international arctic population, at least in the English version of its name. Within Canada, the people of the western Arctic refer to themselves as *Inuvialuit*, while those of the eastern Arctic are known as *Inuit*. Other terms are used in Greenland, Alaska and Siberia.

Inuk is the singular form of Inuit, referring to one person and *Inuktitut* refers to the language. Although it is not grammatically correct, I have used "Inuit" as an adjective -- as in Inuit art -- even when it refers to an object owned by one person. I point out that *Inuit* is plural since it is frequently seen as "Inuits," an unfortunate error. These are the sorts of problems that occur when one attempts to incorporate selected words from another language in an English text. Time and practice will clarify usage, but in this transitional period, it is difficult to be both grammatically and politically correct.

Organizations Referred to in the Text

Arctic Co-operatives Limited (ACL)

The centralized marketing and purchasing agency for Inuit and Indian co-ops in the Northwest Territories, located in Winnipeg, Manitoba. ACL absorbed Canadian Arctic Producers Limited and Canadian Arctic Producers in 1982.

Avataq Cultural Institute

An Inuit organization dedicated to cultural preservation, based in Inukjuak, northern Quebec.

Baffin Region Inuit Association (BRIA)

A regional affiliate of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, based in Iqaluit and representing Baffin Island, Igloolik, Hall Beach, Resolute Bay, Grise Fiord and Sanikiluaq. Established in 1975.

Canadian Arctic Co-operative Federation Limited (CACFL)

Established in 1972 as the central service agency for NWT co-ops, its first areas of activity were purchasing for northern retail stores and management training. Along with Canadian Arctic Producers, it was absorbed by Arctic Co-operatives Limited in 1982 and no longer exists as a separate entity.

Canadian Arctic Producers (CAP)

Established in 1965 by the Co-operative Union of Canada under the direction of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to serve as the central marketing agency for all arctic co-ops, it was based in Ottawa for many years, but moved to Winnipeg upon amalgamation with CACFL.

Canadian Eskimo Arts Council (CEAC)

An advisory committee of non-native art specialists established in 1959 to advise the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative on its annual graphics collections. CEAC's mandate and composition changed over the years until it was terminated in 1989.

Committee for Original People's Entitlement (COPE)

Based in Inuvik, COPE represents Inuit of the Mackenzie Delta and Tuktoyaktuk, Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk and Coppermine. Established in 1969, it negotiated a land claim separate from Inuit Tapirisat and was the first native association in the Arctic.

Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (DIAND)

Established in 1953 as the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, DIAND now has responsibility for all matters pertaining to aboriginal people.

Direction Générale du Nouveau-Québec (DGNQ)

Established in 1963 under the Ministère des Richesses Naturelles to administer the people and resources of northern Quebec.

Dorset Fine Arts

The marketing agency owned by members of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative in Cape Dorset who took over the wholesaling of their art from Canadian Arctic Producers in 1978, establishing a showroom in Toronto.

Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)

The Government of the Northwest Territories, established in 1970, has responsibility for Inuit arts and crafts development in the NWT, administered under a division of its Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

Hudson's Bay Company (HBC)

The fur trading company which, along with the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, was responsible for marketing the first Inuit arts and crafts in the early 1950s. The northern marketing operation of the HBC, now a separate entity renamed the North West Company Inc., operates a wholesale showroom in Toronto to which arctic posts, formerly called HBC posts, but now known as the Northern stores, send purchases.

Inuit Art Foundation (IAF)

Established in 1985, IAF's first project was the publication of *Inuit Art Quarterly*. IAF received expanded funding in 1989 to enable it to assume responsibility for artist education and art promotion.

Inuit Art Section

This section of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development now functions mainly as a research and documentation centre, but previously it mounted exhibitions and played a hands-on role in artist education and art promotion, activities now devolved to the Inuit Art Foundation.

Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC)

Established in 1981, after the launching of Canada's Anik B satellite in 1978 which made a northern communications system possible, IBC's mandate is to provide Inuit in arctic Canada with a broadcasting service that will strengthen their language, culture and identity.

Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC)

A transnational Inuit organization whose aims include unity of circumpolar Inuit, the promotion of their rights and interests at an international level and their participation in political, economic and social institutions. The first meeting of Inuit from Canada, Alaska and Greenland met in Barrow, Alaska in 1977. Siberian Inuit have since been allowed to attend ICC meetings.

Inuit Committee on National Issues (ICNI)

Created in 1979 under the direction of Inuit Tapirisat to lobby for aboriginal rights, ICNI reports directly to the annual meeting of ITC. The six regional affiliates of ITC appoint one member each to ICNI and the two chairpersons are elected by ITC's annual general meeting.

Inuit Cultural Institute (ICI)

Established in 1974 as a project of Inuit Tapirisat, ICI is dedicated to preserving the history, traditions and cultural identity of Inuit. Based in Rankin Inlet, ICI established an Inuit Language Commission in 1976 which introduced a new orthography for Roman and syllabic writing.

Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC)

Established in 1971 as a national organization to represent all Canadian Inuit, ITC has six regional affiliates: Committee for Original People's Entitlement; Baffin Region Inuit Association; Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Keewatin Inuit Association, Makivik Corporation and the Labrador Inuit Association.

Inuit Tungavunga Nunami (ITN)

The dissident organization opposing the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, comprised of members from Povungnituk, Sugluk and Ivujivik in northern Quebec.

Inuvialuit Development Corporation (IDC)

Established in 1977 and based in Inuvik, IDC is the economic development arm for COPE land claims beneficiaries.

Kativik Regional Government

When the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement was signed in 1975, Inuit communities were established as municipalities which, together, form the Kativik Regional Government, under the provincial government of Quebec.

Kativik School Board

Established as a result of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, to serve arctic Quebec communities.

Keewatin Inuit Association (KIA)

A regional affiliate of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, representing Inuit of the Keewatin region, KIA was established in 1975.

Kitikmeot Inuit Association (KIA)

An affiliate of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, based in Cambridge Bay and representing Inuit in the central and western Arctic communities not served by COPE.

Labrador Inuit Association (LIA)

Formed in 1974, LIA submitted a land claim proposal in 1977. The association now operates several subsidiaries including the Labrador Inuit Development Corporation and Torngâsok Cultural Centre.

La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec (FCNQ)

The service and distribution agency for member co-ops in northern Quebec, FCNQ was established in 1967 and has its head office in Montreal. FCNQ offers an umbrella service to co-ops, providing both a retail store purchasing and an art marketing service to its members.

Makivik Corporation

Established in 1978 to receive monetary compensation from the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and to take over the role, duties and powers of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association, Makivik is a holding company which operates profit-making subsidiaries such as Air Inuit and Kigiak Construction Company.

Northern

Formerly the Hudson's Bay Company, the Northern is a chain of retail stores established across northern Canada, including the Northwest Territories and arctic Quebec, during the early years of the fur trade. The Northern buys from producers and ships to its distribution agency, the North West Company Inc., based in Toronto. Although both the Northern stores and The North West Company Inc., are now autonomous, the Hudson's Bay Company, which continues to operate in southern Canada, retains a minor financial interest in the company.

Northern Images

A chain of retail stores dedicated mainly to Inuit arts and crafts operated by Arctic Co-operatives Limited and located in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Whitehorse, Edmonton, Churchill, Winnipeg and Kenora, Ontario.

Northern Quebec Inuit Association (NQIA)

Formed in 1972 at a meeting in Inukjuak, its president was Charlie Watt, a DIAND employee and chief signatory to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. It was absorbed by Makivik Corporation in 1978 and Watt became president of the new corporation.

Northwest Territories Cooperative Business Development Fund (NWTCBDF)

Seed funding for the NWTCBDF was provided in 1986 by the federal and NWT governments to provide capital for the co-ops. The fund functions as the financial arm of the NWT co-ops which must apply to it for loans and other financial services.

Nunasi Corporation

Formerly the Inuit Development Corporation, Nunasi has been operating in the Nunavut region as the vehicle to receive land claims compensation, even though the agreement has not yet been finalized. (IDC was established in 1976 by ITC as the business organization for the Inuit of Nunavut, to invest and manage the funds received from land claims).

Taqramiut Nipingat Inc. (TNI)

A non-profit communications company serving northern Quebec Inuit and incorporated in 1975. With production facilities in Sugluk, TNI serves northern Quebec community radio stations with radio and television programs which it produces.

The North West Company Inc.

Formerly the Inuit Art Marketing Service of the Hudson's Bay Company, the North West Company Inc., was the first organization to systematically wholesale Inuit art in southern Canada. In 1986, the HBC sold its Northern Stores Division, including the Inuit Art Marketing Division and, in the spring of 1990, the company was re-incorporated as "The North West Company," a revival of the name of its fur-trading rival which was bought out in 1821.

Torngások Cultural Centre

The agency established by the Labrador Inuit Association to preserve the culture of Labrador Inuit, Torngások is based in Nain.

Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN)

Based in Arviat (Eskimo Point), NWT, with an office in Ottawa, TFN is the Inuit organization responsible for land claims in the eastern and central areas of the NWT, the area affected by the proposal to divide the territories creating Nunavut in the east and Denendeh in the west.

Tuttavik

The wholesale arts and crafts marketing agency owned jointly by Arctic Co-operatives Limited and La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec, Tuttavik operates a wholesale showroom in Toronto. It was established in 1986.

Preface

I have several objectives in this thesis. The first is to reconstruct Inuit relationships and practices before contact with Europeans and to determine the extent to which these have persisted, been replaced by or supplemented with new relationships and practices. The second is to trace the development of a collective identity among Inuit who, for centuries before contact, lived in nomadic groups of at the most a few dozen individuals, referring to themselves, simply, as 'the people.'

Yet a third objective is to demonstrate the interplay of these two processes, from a classless to a class society and from apolitical, family-based social/economic units to an ethno-regional drive for collective rights. In the pages that follow, I shall demonstrate with reference to the Inuit case that, as Bonacich (1980:21) has argued, nationalism developed neither spontaneously nor separately, but grew "out of the class relations generated by the development of capitalism and imperialism, and represents efforts to create alliances across class lines, or, alternatively to prevent alliances from developing within major classes across national lines."

The heavily documented and systematic argument proceeds at several levels: empirical, analytical, and theoretical. The general format I have followed is to open discussion of each of the major contact periods with a summary of relevant historical data. This is followed with an analysis of the effect of the

contact agent upon relationships within the "natural" or indigenous mode of production, a concept which subsumes all those practices -- economic, political, and ideological -- which obtained in the pre-contact situation. Carrying the analysis one step further, I then draw theoretical implications at the conclusion of each section, pulling together both story and theory in the final chapter.

The empirical contribution of the thesis is the consolidation of the history of contact and its effect upon Inuit practices. The early contact history involves a re-ordering of data extracted from secondary analyses, but the period dominated by the cooperative and culminating in land claims settlements utilizes original research. At the level of theory, I have used the Inuit case to critique competing perspectives on development: dependency and articulationism.

Since contact has been recent and relatively well documented, the Inuit case provides an almost ideal opportunity to plot the course of transformed relationships, as well as the intersection of class and nationalism. The lack of a recorded pre-contact history is only a slight handicap, about which I say more in the short literature review which is appended. Suffice it to say here that the reconstruction of pre-contact relations has been pieced together from explorers' and ethnographic accounts of Inuit as they were first "found."

The history of the thesis

The thesis is organized into five parts. The first is an examination of the concepts available to us for understanding the effects of imperialism, and the second encompasses contact with explorers, whalers, traders, missionaries and police.

Part III deals with the co-op movement, and Part IV with settlement of land claims and the institution of the native development corporation. In the concluding chapter which comprises Part V, I draw together the story and the analysis. I shall say more about Part I and the theoretical problem below. First, I want to say a few words about how Parts II and III were constructed.

The second section of the thesis, dealing with the agents and forces of change prior to centralization and the institution of the co-operative, has necessitated the imposition of a new structure on scattered and generally non-analytical references. Before analyzing change, it was first necessary to establish the nature of pre-contact relationships. Numerous ethnographic accounts of Inuit at the point of contact were mined for evidence to use in reconstructing an Inuit history focusing on *relationships* rather than *events*. Although Inuit pre-history is being painstakingly reconstructed by archaeologists, their interest has been somewhat different from my own. I believe that this is the first time that attention has been focused in this way on relationships among Inuit, either *pre* or *post* contact.

Similarly, data for intra-group relationships in the early contact period were extracted from numerous accounts, most of them community-based and descriptive, of the invasion of explorers, whalers, traders, missionaries and police (the latter as representatives of the state). The major exception to the limited usefulness of most of these studies was W. Gillies Ross' work (1975) on whaling activity in the Hudson Bay/Baffinland area in the nineteenth century. His

scholarly, detailed, and exhaustive research was invaluable in reconstructing relations, not only between whaler and Eskimo, but between Eskimo and Eskimo, and provided a solid foundation for the subsequent discussion of changing relationships between Inuit and European, and among Inuit to the present day.

Unfortunately, there exists in the literature no integrated description, let alone analysis, of the symbiotic effect of police, missionary and trader. Drawing from a number of texts (especially Usher, 1965, 1970; Vallee, 1967a), I have put together a composite picture of this transformative force, focusing on structured interactions among the players. I have tried to limit my descriptions of events to those cases in which it seemed necessary to make clear the context in which such interaction was occurring. There is, of course, considerable information available on the fur trade, which has been a focus for Canadian historians (such as Innis, 1962) interpreting history from the point of view of resource development. Because of that focus, however, there is scant mention of relationships among people and these must be assiduously sought for, and sometimes deduced from meager data.

Nevertheless, the fur trade data is considerably more satisfactory than is the evidence I was able to garner concerning missionary and police activity. The story of the police has been told in the most non-systematic and amateur fashion. For instance, in 1936, the RCMP commissioned one Harwood Steele, a British gentleman who had never been in the Arctic, to write an official history entitled *Policing the Arctic*. Suffice it to say here that this large volume has the content of

an adventure comic book. Like much writing about the Arctic, it is more fantasy than fact. Steele's focus was on the lives of the brave men in red; the Eskimo was regarded as an unknown quantity whose savage will was to be bent to the laws of civilization.

The most difficult story to reconstruct was the impact of the churches, mainly the Roman Catholic and the Anglican which, competing for converts, were aligned with the traders and the state. Most of the chronicling of church history in the Arctic has been, like that of the police, officially commissioned by professional writers who had no first hand experience and whose accounts are clearly speculative, both in terms of events and the imputation of spiritual conversion on the part of the "heathen" Eskimo. Centred on the times and tribulations of the missionaries in question, they display a complete disregard for the priorities of the "converts." There is no analysis at all of the impact of the church, and one longed for a Gillies Ross to painstakingly search diaries and historical records of missions which exist for the Catholic Church in the *Codex Historicus* at Saint Paul University in Ottawa, but which may not exist for the Anglican Church.

The third section of the thesis deals with the cooperative movement which I cast as the crucial transforming agent, definitively linking pre-contact practices with those of western capitalism. This is the most original part of the thesis, drawing upon evidence of a completely different sort: a comprehensive (although not exhaustive) analysis of previously unanalyzed and mostly unpublished documents (letters, memoranda, minutes, reports *etc.*) and over twenty-five years

of first-hand experience working with Inuit, ten of them with the northern Quebec cooperatives. I shall not discuss here the nature of the documentary evidence but, since my personal experience has provided me with unequalled access both to data and the stories behind the stories, and since I draw on it both explicitly and implicitly throughout the thesis, I shall digress briefly here to give a capsule history of my quarter century of hands-on involvement in the field.

My fieldwork, if I may call it that, began in Spence Bay where I lived for two years, teaching for one, in the mid-sixties. I was merely accompanying my husband, a federal administrator, to his first posting in this remote and exotic place. Entirely ignorant of the Inuit, I entertained the usual romantic notions that they were cheerful people who enjoyed living in sub-freezing snowhouses in which we southerners would surely die. I was not there as a student or researcher, and the only beneficial impact of this stint on my future academic pursuits was the shaking up of my ethnocentric biases. Although this study is, of necessity, given the task I have set myself, a "macro" analysis of centuries of history, I believe it has benefitted both from this challenge to my ethnocentric preconceptions, and from the participant observation work I did in a completely unrelated area, deviance and social control, to obtain a Master's degree.

Soon after leaving Spence Bay, I began working with La Fédération des Co-opératives du Nouveau-Québec, then based in Lévis, a small village across the river from Quebec city, and later re-located to Montreal. I was part of a core group which provided expertise in various areas. Mine was arts and crafts

development and loosely defined "public relations." In order to avoid what we deplored as the usual "white power play," we committed ourselves to resigning in ten years whether or not there were Inuit ready to run the federation. If they weren't ready to fill our vacated positions, other whites could.

In anticipation of my departure, I had been pursuing an M.A. in sociology at McGill University in Montreal, collecting data all the while in the expectation that I would eventually analyze what I then referred to vaguely as "social change" among Inuit. Since my undergraduate work had been in English literature and philosophy, I had to persuade McGill to admit me as a graduate student in sociology by demonstrating that I could pass an undergraduate course. An anonymous advisor steered me to "deviance and social control," a popular course which was then taught at McGill from only the interactionist or labelling perspective. This became my very narrow exposure to sociology; for, I stuck with it through a Master's thesis based upon a participant observation study of inmates in a Montreal insane asylum, having been persuaded that only anthropologists could study Eskimos! My sociological perspective was thus the accidental result of my initial ignorance of the difference between anthropology and sociology. I dub it a happy accident; for, I maintain but won't argue here, that in spite of the collapsing barriers between the two disciplines there *is* a difference in the types of questions one asks and, consequently, the types of conclusions at which one arrives.

My sociological grooming at McGill was a handicap when I arrived at

Carleton University in Ottawa. By this time I considered it acceptable to do a doctoral dissertation on the organization of Eskimo art through the co-operatives from an interactionist perspective, a kind of detailed description of the minutiae of shared understandings involved in getting the art from producer to user. It was unclear to me how I would work in the crucial bits concerning the involvement of the state, but I knew this would have to be dealt with, if only peripherally. The art story had been encouraged by my McGill advisors who now considered it an appropriate subject for sociology, perhaps because Howard Becker, labelling theorist pre-eminent, had turned from deviance to the sociology of art.

To make a long story short, I became convinced, during my Ph.D. course work year at Carleton that Eskimo art could not be dealt with in isolation from an analysis of political and economic developments. The state story and the missionary story and the whole story was in no way peripheral to the story of how the art got -- and still gets -- from producer to user. In defence of the time spent in the theory and practice of the ethnographic approach, however, I hasten to add that it, like my personal reorientation in Spence Bay, has allowed me to appreciate the cross-cultural and human dimensions of the structured interaction I am attempting to elucidate here.

For several years after resigning from La Fédération des Co-opératives du Nouveau-Québec, I concentrated on sociology. It was as if I were starting all over again; for, the concepts I was dealing with bore no relation to anything I had done previously. Not having had any introductory course, even, to sociology, I was

entirely ignorant of the range of theory, a disadvantage which was somewhat redressed by the fact that, unlike most of my cohort, I had solid data against which to continuously refine and test the theoretical concepts being introduced in seminars and reading. All of the course papers I wrote were small steps towards the grand finale you hold here.

My comprehensive examinations, with the exception of the first which was in the area of deviance (a topic it seemed expedient to retain in my repertoire) reflected my maturation as a sociologist and fed directly into this dissertation. In the second comp, I examined weberian and marxist class and ethnicity arguments, testing them against the evidence, and concluding that the latter were both more logically coherent and capable of application to the Inuit case. The structural approach to class analysis, I concluded, was intellectually honest, and, in spite of its glib dismissal as theology, Althusser's work, in particular, had inspired some practical class models. It was during this second examination that I came to some basic decisions about what sociology really is. The crucial issue, I came to see, is the unit of analysis, a breakthrough for someone whose previous work had focussed completely uncritically upon individuals at the most basic level of interaction.

In the third and final comprehensive, I delved deeply into the informing epistemology of the structuralist and the voluntarist arguments, again testing the conclusions I had arrived at in the second comp and my knowledge of the phenomena I was trying to explain. The work done for this exam formed the

basis for the discussion in the introductory chapter to this thesis.

Although I had organized an exhibition of Inuit art and written some articles on the subject while I was doing my course work and examinations, I did not anticipate that I would ever again become directly involved in working for or with Inuit. The opportunity to be the founding editor of a periodical devoted to Inuit art was, however, too much to resist, and I undertook this in 1985. A few years later, I was responsible for organizing the Inuit Art Foundation with broad educational objectives and, in 1989, due to a reorganizing of priorities within the federal bureaucracy, this foundation, a registered charitable organization, received five-year core funding to deliver art education to Inuit and to promote their art. I am now the executive director of this organization as well as continuing editor of the *Inuit Art Quarterly*.

That was a long digression to set up the context for Part III which I am claiming as the most original contribution of the thesis. The conclusions in Part IV, which deals with recent history over the last decade or so of land claims negotiations, are more tentative and speculative than those in Parts II and III, based as they are upon limited documentation. Eventually, the same kind of research and analysis will have to be done for the land claims movement as I have done for the co-op.

The Story

In order to achieve my several objectives, it has first been necessary to pull together the whole history of contact. I have traced the gradual transformation of

Inuit relationships through contact with successive waves of outsiders -- explorers, whalers, traders, missionaries, police, and bureaucrats, all carrying capitalist practices -- to argue that relationships in the indigenous mode of production have been irreversibly altered. Early traders and explorers had a negligible effect upon Inuit social relations of production. Whalers, who constituted what I refer to as the second wave of contact, entered into more sustained relationships with the indigenous people, hiring Inuit to help them accomplish their objectives. But the relationship between the two groups was collaborative; each depended upon the other. Changes in Inuit social relations at this time were not, I argue, of such consequence that Inuit were utterly unable, when the whalers withdrew, to resume pre-contact practices. Whalers introduced new means of production (guns and whaleboats especially), encouraged people to hunt animals for exchange, and bought Inuit labour power, but while these may be considered undermining effects, the whalers also reinforced pre-contact work practices, encouraging Inuit to do the same work they had always done.

Similarly, the adoption of foreign names and learning of foreign languages may be considered examples of the undermining of ethnic identity but, on the other hand, the breakdown of territorial barriers fostered by Inuit congregating at whaling harbours and the opportunity to counterpose Inuit identity against that of the outsiders are factors contributing to a broader awareness of kind. There is no evidence to support a conclusion that changes effected through contact with whalers were irreversible. Indeed, it is probable that Inuit could have revived the

skills and practices necessary to support the pre-contact or indigenous mode of production.

The third wave of contact, beginning at the turn of the twentieth century and culminating in the fifth decade, took place with what is often referred to as a "triumvirate:" trader, police and missionary. Within that half century, Inuit made serious moves towards capitalist practices. By the end of the 1950s, the pre-contact economy and ideology had been largely replaced and Inuit were centralized in "communities" formed around the trading post and mission. Changes in the means of production were pervasive, and the main work done now by Eskimos was trapping of white fox for which they had little other use, supplemented with subsistence hunting (increasingly reliant upon mechanized weaponry and equipment), and some seasonal wage employment. They had no control over the market and were no longer able, by their own means, to satisfy their needs. Ideological domination was successfully achieved by the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches which competed vigorously for converts. Inuit ideological practices had been driven underground and they now deferred to the religion of capitalism, aligning themselves with the two competing denominations. Politically, extended family groupings were amalgamated into artificial communities in which a new ethnic identity was being forged.

A significant indicator of a move towards capitalist practices is the ascension of the nuclear family as the unit of production and consumption and the recognition of private as opposed to communal property. Sharing of country food

continued to be practised, but in a modified form. According to Vallee (1967a:72), by the late fifties in Baker Lake, foxes were considered the property of the person in whose trap they were found, in contrast to the earlier practice of sharing game with everyone, regardless of whose harpoon killed it. Other indicators are a growing disparity in wealth between those Inuit who continued a subsistence existence and those employed by the trading companies, missions or police detachments. Vallee (1962) describes a line of cleavage which developed between *kabloonamiut* (Inuit attached to white people and sometimes referred to as "talking chiefs") and *nunamiut* (camp people who remained on the land). Inuit language, shamanism, and folkways were devalued, and affiliation with either the Roman or the Anglican Church became a salient line of cleavage.

Vallee also noted an emerging "consciousness of kind" and some evidence of resentment led him to conclude (1967a:218-219) that there was, in the late fifties, the beginning of a pan-Eskimo movement, led then, as now, by acculturated Inuit. His prophetic insight was that this is a role Inuit are most likely to assume "if they feel socially rebuffed by the Kabloona [non-native] or if they view themselves as victims of discrimination." This, as I have shown in Part IV, has provided the impetus for a nationalist movement among Inuit of northern Quebec, led by Inuit who had been courted by the non-native ruling class before they signed the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, but who were then rebuffed because of their inferior ethnic status.

By the late 1950s, it was, I argue, no longer a case of exploitation *between*

modes of production, but of new relationships having *penetrated* the indigenous mode of production. The balance of pre-contact practices and those adopted upon contact with the capitalist mode of production had been, I conclude, irreversibly altered, and Inuit had been fully prepped for entry into capitalist relations of production.

The third transformative effect occurred under the aegis of the state-sponsored co-operative movement. In Part III, I demonstrate that the Eskimo co-operative was a state initiative which provided the definitive link between the capitalist and the indigenous modes of production. The co-op, a transitional entity, is of necessity a contradictory structure embodying both capitalist and non-capitalist practices. On the one hand, it deals with producers in an egalitarian manner; on the other, it is obliged to operate within a capitalist market which differentially distributes rewards. This is true of all co-ops, but even more so of a co-op bridging two modes of production, one tending towards the communal/cooperative ideal and, the other, the individual/competitive ideal.

The co-op institutionalized authority of one Inuk over another, greatly enhanced opportunities for wage employment, and developed the simple commodity production of stone sculpture to a point far surpassing the trader's ability to commodify fur. By the early sixties, virtually every adult had been transformed into a simple commodity producer. The simple commodity production of stone carvings meant a move to imported tools and technology to quarry stone. This in turn enhanced the need for cash. The more manufactured

goods they needed, the more cash they had to have, and in order to get more cash, they needed more manufactured goods.

Like all simple commodity producers, Inuit retain some control over the terms and conditions of their work. They own their tools and control disposition of the compensation they receive for their labour. And they successfully incorporate carving into a work cycle which includes subsistence hunting and gathering, wage labour, and social assistance. But their inability to influence the market means that the co-op exercises considerable power in determining what is made and what is paid for it.

Although, in an ideal situation, talent would be exploited for the benefit of all, the co-op contributes to a disparity in wealth through the differential reward of talent. Disparities in wealth have reached new heights, and private ownership has become the norm. Co-op ideology promoted the idea that Inuit could be independent and equal partners in the Canadian economy, but the effect was an organization aligned with state and church to keep Inuit in their place and outside the mainstream economy.

Cutting across kinship lines and exploiting communal ideology, the co-op succeeded in fanning an incipient "pan-Eskimeness" at the same time as it entrenched an asymmetrical relationship between Inuit and non-Inuit. It also generated divisions within the group by making bosses, managers, and directors out of some, and employees and customers out of others and, as I have detailed in Part III, promoting a split between Inuit in the Northwest Territories and those in

Quebec. Indeed, Inuit became pawns in the Quebec/Ottawa struggle as well as Canada's long-standing ambition to establish undisputed sovereignty over its arctic regions.

By the late seventies, an Inuit resistance movement could be detected. Its first manifestation was an attempt to recapture past practices through the revival of life on the land. Stronger expressions have been noted, however, such as the Inuit takeover of the Northwest Territories' co-op movement, long dominated by federal and territorial bureaucrats.

The co-op, I argue, has been unable to reproduce its hegemony in the face of intensified state activity in the Arctic. It is now competing with the ubiquitous development corporation, established in the late seventies to receive and channel money from land claims settlements. This act in the contact drama is dealt with in Part IV of the thesis and, although it is not as rigorously researched as preceding sections, I believe that the process of movement towards fully capitalist relations is clear. The impetus for land claims settlements is coming from the state, prompted by the desire to secure rights to natural resources to be exploited by the multinationals. Inuit, who by law *must* be beneficiaries of land claim settlements with the state, have been made into shareholders of the development corporations, with real power and control being concentrated in the hands of a few.

Inuit have been dispossessed of their land, and inequalities in wealth and power have now, I argue, been exacerbated to the point where we can reasonably

talk of class distinctions among them, not a self-contained class system, but one which is aligned with the class structure in the dominant Canadian society. As argued by both articulationist and dependency theorists, the domination of the capitalist mode of production is aided and abetted by a native ruling class, or, to borrow a term from Rolf Knight (1978:20), an "ethnic bourgeoisie."

Equal incorporation has not occurred, however, due to the denigrated ethnic status of Inuit and the fact that the capital they are using is from the state and not self generated. Nor is the development corporation likely to create great wealth for its shareholders and directors, since activity is restricted to renewable resource development with potentially profitable non-renewable resource development being reserved for the multinationals. The fact that the capital controlled by the development corporations is state-dispensed precludes involvement in mainstream industrial development, except under conditions imposed by the state.

The outcome of these successive waves of contact is that the balance of communal and competitive forces that obtained in the indigenous mode of production has been irreversibly transformed, and Inuit practices are now aligned with those in the dominating capitalist mode of production. Not coincidentally, sustained contact with outsiders has also generated ethno-regional movements for collective rights. A growing perception of inequality has sparked an Inuit resistance movement which is mainly non-confrontational and which relies upon the manipulation of pan-Eskimo sentiment to the point of what, for lack of a

better term, can be called a "soft nationalism."

Before contact, Inuit, few in number, were scattered in small hunting groups across thousands of miles of arctic Canada. In the last decade they have begun to organize politically and, along with Canada's other First Peoples, are demanding "self-government," an ambiguous term about which I shall have more to say, but which, at times, seems to be synonymous with "sovereignty." I refer to this phenomenon as "nationalism," and throughout the thesis I attempt to show a movement from the virtual non-existence of a consciousness of kind to a full blown collective identity. Further, the development of these lines of affiliation, class and nationalism, are, as I attempt to demonstrate, integrally related.

The theoretical problem and argument

While it is a relatively easy task to describe the changes in lifestyle which occurred upon contact, analysis of *structural* transformations demands an appropriate frame of reference. The main contending "theories" of, or perspectives on, social change are articulationism (or modes of production) and dependency. After examining the theoretical arguments and their utility in explaining internal changes in Inuit society as well as changing relations with the broader society, I have concluded that the articulationist framework is most useful. Dependency theory, like pluralism and internal colonialism, does not allow one to get much beyond description and, most damning, is that these models treat dominated/dependent people as undifferentiated, *i.e.*, they assume a homogeneity which does not exist.

There are three concepts at issue in this thesis: mode of production, class,

and nationalism. They are at issue for two reasons. First, although attempts have been made to link them theoretically, there is as yet no "model" which may be applied. Secondly, they are at issue because this is a cross cultural analysis. There are, for instance, no class models which take into account the shifts in *intra* and *inter*-group relationships resulting from contact of the capitalist mode of production (CMP) with modes other than the feudal.

To deal with them in turn: "modes of production" is, of course, a concept, not a concrete reality. Although often used as a synonym for lifestyle, a mode of production is the theoretical matrix or framework in which human relationships may be ordered, the complex totality of the ideological, political and economic instances in which the latter is dominant, at least in the last instance. If it is to be useful as an analytical concept rather than a descriptive term, however, we have to be able to dissect the articulation of the political, ideological and economic instances and, most crucial, we have to ground this abstract construction in human relations. This was the project of the Althusserian class theorists -- Poulantzas, Carchedi, and Wright -- who connected the idea of a mode of production with activity which takes place at the level of classes, conceived of as a particular combination of the effects of the political, economic and ideological instances.

Class is, of course, still an abstraction, but a more manageable one. The adoption of class as the salient unit of analysis does, however, create a problem for the analysis of classless modes of production. The only recourse appears to be to define the non-capitalistic mode in terms of what it has not got, a strategy

which implies the impossibility of avoiding an ethnocentric bias. Capitalism must always, it seems, be our point of reference.

The only defence I have been able to muster is that the analysis is not starting from a clean slate. The outcome, *i.e.*, incorporation of Inuit into the capitalist mode of production, is known. The big questions are how, when, where, and why class divisions began playing a salient role? Was there any internal differentiation in the indigenous mode of production? If so, did it have a material, political, or ideological base? Were there incipient class cleavages or, put another way, did the indigenous mode of production contain the seeds of its own transformation? Left to its own devices, might it have remained relatively unaltered or, the Gunder Frank problematic, might it have been transformed into an entirely new creature? While common wisdom has it that Inuit were primitive communists, involved in a classless mode of production which was not predestined to become capitalism, this is impossible to determine retrospectively. Since they are now, as I demonstrate, involved in capitalist practices, it seems logical to assume that relations in the indigenous mode of production (IMP) were either a precursor to class relations, or displaced by new relationships.

The only questions we can answer now concern the degree of fit. Was this a more or less "natural" process or was it forced? Was capitalism a likely or even a logical outcome, or was it superimposed? If the latter, what kind of resistance was encountered in the IMP? Were relationships in the IMP materially based, forming the foundation for fully capitalist, *i.e.*, class relations? To oversimplify

with one example, can pre-contact food sharing practices be considered the logical basis for the commodification of food?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to identify the relationships which existed in the indigenous mode of production and their transformation as contact was made with capitalist practice. I have approached this task through a systematic application of these questions: What kind of work did people do (*i.e.*, how did they reproduce themselves)? Did the organization of this work involve relations of subordination, cooperation, or exploitation? Who made decisions about the work that was done? How were products distributed and consumed? Was a surplus produced? If so, how was it distributed? How did the economic system reproduce itself? And finally, what kind of collective relations were engendered? To answer such questions is to do something quite different from merely *describing* how people live (as hunters and gatherers, *etc*); it is to specify a mode of production.

The first class analysis of Inuit

This is, I believe, the first systematic application of class analysis to Inuit. Each wave of northern invaders sought facilitators from among the indigenous people to help them accomplish their purpose. At first informal and largely indistinguishable from their peers, the "talking chiefs" phenomena, as it was called, gradually escalated into a more formal syndrome, whereby leaders with class-based power are facilitating the state/industrial take-over of the land and resources. We can now talk about the existence of an Inuit ruling class, if not a bourgeoisie,

whose members do not legally own the means of production nor labour power, but who nonetheless effectively control the process of investment and allocation of resources, and are in a position to benefit from doing so. Although they do not *own* capital, they control capital which comes from the state, compensation for allowing the extinguishment of Inuit rights over the land, compensation ostensibly to benefit all Inuit.

We can also identify simple commodity producers or semi-autonomous wage earners, which Wright places in a contradictory class location between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Some Inuit carvers control how they do their work and have some control over what they produce, although they do not control its disposition and, not being in a position to affect prices, the compensation they receive for their work could be considered analogous to a wage (Clement, 1986:75). As I write this preface, movement towards full-scale proletarianization has been initiated by the Government of the Northwest Territories which is undertaking to convert arts and crafts producers to assembly line wage workers in handicraft *cum* souvenir factories.

I have argued that the indigenous mode of production contained a balance of communal and competitive forces, the seeds, if you will, of its own destruction. This balance has been irreversibly altered through contact with the capitalist mode of production, to the point that the indigenous mode of production, although not (yet) fully capitalist, has itself been transformed. And I have demonstrated that this transformation process was not linear, but proceeded through a simultaneous

undermining and buttressing of preceding modes and forms (Meillassoux, 1972; Rey, 1973; Bradby, 1975). This double effect is a central theoretical concept in articulationism which postulates that the indigenous mode of production will persist as long as it is functional for capital. An example is the early encouragement given by traders to Inuit to stay on the land and hunt. Their labour power was not needed, but they were needed to deliver raw materials and, eventually, the land itself to capital. Also, as Meillassoux (1972:102) suggests, non-capitalist practices are useful to capital as a form of "social security." The subsistence hunting which continues among Inuit is not merely a form of resistance, as people try to hold on to or recapture the past, but has a role to play in facilitating capital.

Genesis of a Collective identity

While my first objective has been a re-ordering of history to document the transformation of social relations of production, the second objective of this thesis has been to trace the birth of a collective identity among a previously fragmented population and, thirdly, to identify its intersection with class relations. Although marxists have, generally, regarded ethnicity as an anachronism which would eventually disappear, there has lately been a recognition that the relationship is more complex, although there is no question that marxist theorists continue to consider that economic processes are fundamental.

The intersection of class and racism/ethnicity/nationalism is acknowledged to be both crucial and complex, but remains at an incipient stage of analysis. The

complexity of the class/nationalism relation is addressed by Wolpe (1975:241) who considers that:

The concrete social totality is constituted by the complex articulation of class relations within racial or ethnic groups, as well as the relation of classes across these groups together, we may add, with the ideological and political practices which 'fit' these relationships.

In an argument reflecting the articulationist proposition of simultaneous buttressing and undermining, Wright (1978:1390) suggests that "capitalism simultaneously undermines and reproduces racism," but his illustration of this argument -- capital treats all labour power as identical, but in the interests of maintaining dominance, it intensifies racism and ethnic antagonism -- is merely a recasting of the divide-and-conquer theory rejected by Bonacich (1972) who maintains that labour also plays a role in sustaining racism. In her later article (1980), Bonacich succeeded in clarifying the crosscutting processes of class and nationalist conflict and cooperation, arguing that although nationalism may appear to be a 'promordial' line of affiliation, it is really a *consequence* of the class relations generated by "the development of capitalism and imperialism" (p.21, emphasis added).

In the chapters that follow, I show that a collective identity among Inuit took shape around various invasions: the fur trade, the co-op movement and, lately, an intensified invasion by the state attempting to settle land claims. Although Inuit collaborated with invading forces, mounting virtually no resistance to capitalist domination, they have lately, as a response to unequal incorporation

into the capitalist mode of production, begun to apply collective leverage to the state.

The effect of the fur trade on Inuit ethnic identity may have been accidental, but this was not true for the cooperative movement which, crosscutting kinship and religious ties, became, as Vallee predicted it would, a vehicle for pan-Eskimo sentiment. The co-op became, in effect, an "underground government," a role which it tried but failed to formalize. Like all of Canada's First Peoples, Inuit are still under the tutelage of a department of the federal government, somewhat analogous to a colonial administration. They want free of this control, but at the same time, they recognize their dependence upon it. Although inhibited by their class interests, there is now what I refer to as a nationalist movement underway, project of the leaders created to settle land claims, now rebuffed and launching calls for Inuit solidarity and self-government.

The term "self-government" as it is being used by Canada's First Peoples is, as I have suggested, ambiguous. The lack of a shared understanding of what is possible within the Canadian polity is evident, but the treaties being signed as well as continuing financial dependence on the state will probably keep demands modest.

The argument summarized

My thesis is that the Inuit subsistence mode of production, what I call the indigenous mode of production, is being absorbed into the capitalist mode of production, which means that Inuit are entering into class relationships and,

further, that this process is being tempered by a drive for ethno-regional collective rights or what may be called nationalism, at least an incipient or "soft" nationalism. The point I make is that development of a collective identity is *coincident* with participation in the capitalist mode of production, but this is not *coincidental*. For, to quote Stuart Hall (1980:341-342), racism [and ethnic discrimination] is really "the site of capital's continuing hegemony," discovering "what other ideologies have to construct: an apparently 'natural' and universal basis in nature itself." It may also be considered the site of resistance, for the same reason.

Part I

The Concepts Available to Us for an Understanding of the Effects of Imperialism

Chapter One

The Problem and the Unit of Analysis

The problem

The problem I have set myself in this thesis is to trace the development of class relations and collective identity among Inuit, not as an end in itself, but in order to contribute to the sociological understanding of these processes, separately and in relation. My thesis is that the natural¹ or, as I prefer to call it, *indigenous* mode of production embodies contradictory forces of capitalism and communalism, and, depending upon the nature of contact as well as such other forces as environmental crisis or an abundance of valued goods, its particular balance will be altered in the direction of one extreme or the other. Moreover, transformation of social relations of production and genesis of a collective identity do not occur in a linear fashion, but through a complex process of reinforcing and undermining.

Although Inuit were previously members of a classless society and a

¹ There is a semantic problem here as "natural" has unintended implications. Writers in the articulationist school have generally used the term *pre-capitalist* modes of production (PCMP), but this is a value-laden term, largely abandoned in favour of *non-capitalist* modes of production (NCMP). This is, however, a less than satisfactory substitution since this general term could mean a socialist or a feudal mode. What I wanted is a term which denotes a self-contained mode of production unsullied by contact with other modes of production. I considered "subsistence mode of production" which is accurate in the case of Inuit, but has the slight disadvantage of conjuring up the Dobb/Sweezy debate by implying that production for exchange is the significant factor. Choices boiled down to "domestic," "indigenous" and "pre-contact." The acronym for the latter, PCMP, can be mistaken for pre-capitalist mode of production, but perhaps it is a moot point since, in the case of Inuit, it was a pre-capitalist mode. There is no need to be coy when the outcome is known. I finally opted, however, for "indigenous mode of production," which carries the connotation of being self-contained.

fragmented race, they are now involved in class relationships and a drive for ethno-regional collective rights. Changes in the means of production occurred upon first contact with explorers and Hudson's Bay Company trading ships, but large-scale deterioration of skills and alterations in social relations of production did not occur until contact with whalers who hired Inuit and encouraged them to settle at whaling harbours. The missionaries, police and sedentary traders who followed exerted a major transformative effect over the several decades from approximately 1920 to 1960. During this period, Inuit were encouraged and induced to settle in administrative centres which grew up around the trading/police/mission posts. By the mid-twentieth century, an incipient class distinction could be detected, between those who settled in the new villages where they entered into relationships with non-natives, and those who remained in the outlying camps, visiting the posts only occasionally to trade, be registered by the police or baptized or married.

The definitive link with capitalist practice occurred with the institution of state-sponsored co-ops beginning in the late 1950s. Virtually all Inuit were transformed into simple commodity producers with only limited control over what and how they could produce. The co-op also fanned an incipient pan-Eskimo sentiment and attempted to assert hegemony over Inuit, a role which was usurped in the seventies by development corporations created by land claims settlements which are extinguishing Inuit rights to the land. All Inuit are now shareholders in these corporations which exist on state capital and are controlled by what can be

called an Inuit ruling class. Inuit are being incorporated into the Canadian class structure, but their denigrated ethnic status prevents this from being an equal incorporation, a situation which has prompted both resistance and a crystallizing of collective identity as Inuit.

Analyzing Inuit social relations of production over several centuries, I show in the chapters that follow that transformation occurred through a process of class cooperation and conflict, tempered by ethnic identity which is also treated as an "historical process" (Abele and Stasiulis, 1989:265). Although I did not set out to do so, I have effectively demonstrated Edna Bonacich's proposition (1980:21) that nationalism "calls upon 'primordial' bonds of affiliation," but "...it both grows out of the class relations generated by the development of capitalism and imperialism, and represents efforts to create alliances across class lines, or, alternatively, to prevent alliances from developing within major classes across national lines."

Because of the short history of contact, and because Inuit are geographically isolated and relatively unassimilated, the threads of history are not as hopelessly entangled as they are, for instance, with reference to African-European contact. The Inuit case provides an almost ideal opportunity to plot the development of both class relations and ethnic identity, and their linkages, at each step of the way.²

² It is an *almost* ideal opportunity because the lack of a recorded pre-contact history is a slight handicap, as is the inadequate documentation of interaction between Eskimo and outsider, and the generally poor analysis of the important period of contact with missionary, trader and police in the first half of the twentieth century. The deficiencies of the literature and the methods I have employed to overcome them are discussed at the end of this chapter and in the appended literature review.

Although the thesis would have been enriched by including a discussion of gender relations, I have deliberately not attempted to do this since the data for the *pre-* and early contact period do not exist and would have to be diligently searched for in obscure sources with little guarantee of success. Most serious is the lack of any reliable observations concerning pre-contact relations between men and women, making it impossible to demonstrate transformation.³ There are a few references in the literature to the effect that women were treated as property, but this is not a safe assumption, given the superficial nature of the observations as well as conflicting evidence that women exercised rights over property and were not excluded from the role of *angagoq* (shaman), a role which allowed the incumbent some ascendancy over the group. Indeed, there is now some thought that, publicly deferential and privately influential, Inuit women might have wielded considerable informal power which they have recently begun to exercise more overtly. Having come out of the closet, as it were, they are now playing a prominent role as leaders of co-ops, development corporations, and political organizations.

Unable to give it equal weight with my discussion of class and nationalism, my decision was not to attempt to come to conclusions concerning gender, but when I have access to data, or am able to make a significant observation, I have done so with a view to its serving as a marker to future researchers, who I hope

³ Bourgeault (1983; 1988a) is having some success in reconstructing the role of Indian women in the early contact period because of their involvement in the fur trade and the extensive records kept by the fur trading companies. Parallel data for Inuit women would, however, be extremely hard to come by.

will find the re-ordering of history I have accomplished here a useful starting point for an analysis of how gender has both modified class relations and affected collective identity.

There are various ways in which the history of contact can be organized. Much Canadian history has been written around the exploitation of resources, and Rea (1968) has provided an insightful application of staple theory to northern development. Since my concern here is with the transformation of practices and relationships, I have adopted Vallee's approach (1971), reconstructing Inuit relationships before contact with Europeans, and then systematically describing and analyzing their transformation upon contact with successive waves of outsiders. A comprehensive history of contact has not been written, and one of the contributions of this thesis is the pulling together of a vast and disparate body of community-based and descriptive accounts containing little interpretation or analysis. Having determined the extent to which indigenous practices have persisted, been replaced by, or supplemented with new relations, I then extract implications for a theory of development or, as I prefer to call it, a theory of transformation.

In brief, and with specific reference to the Inuit case, the elements of what I am calling a theory of transformation can be broken down as follows: (1) All modes of production can be placed on a continuum which has as its two extremes, capitalism and non-capitalism, or communalism, the pure form of either existing only in theory. The weighting of these contradictory forces determines the

character of a particular, historical social formation which contains the seeds, if you will, of its own destruction; (2) Depending upon the nature of contact (as well as such other forces as ecological crisis), the balance of these contradictory forces will be altered in the direction of one extreme or the other, competitive capitalism or cooperative communalism; (3) In the case of a subsistence or indigenous mode of production, contact with the capitalist mode of production (CMP) leads inevitably to subsumption of indigenous practices. This does not occur in a linear fashion, but through a complex process of simultaneous reinforcing and undermining, a double effect which is a central theoretical concept in articulationism, which postulates that the indigenous mode of production will persist as long as it is functional for capital; (4) The transformation of the mode of production is facilitated and, under certain conditions, thwarted by groups within the indigenous mode of production and if, as was the case with Inuit, there are no distinguishable groupings, they will be created to deliver land and/or labour and/or resources to capital. The problem is to identify the groups, *i.e.*, classes;

(5) Capital may seek to create a world in its own image, but, in the case of contact with an ethnically distinguished group, it succeeds in creating a dependent form of capitalism, a dependent ruling class, and an inferior working class;

(6) This lack of homology results from i) the requirements of the capitalist mode of production and ii) the resistance of the indigenous mode of production (Taylor, 1979:228). With reference to the first, the CMP may or may not need labour, land and/or resources. In the case of Inuit, their land and resources were needed

but, since their labour was not, there was no impetus to incorporation into the working class. With reference to resistance, the second factor preventing homology, several analysts (Bonacich, 1972, 1980; Wallerstein, 1975b; Wolpe, 1975; Hall, 1980) suggest that this is most effectively accomplished through manipulation of nationalist/racial/ethnic sentiment. Therefore, in those cases in which a mode of production coincides with an ethnically distinguished or distinguishable group, race and ethnicity operate *against* incorporation and *for* resistance, both reinforcing and undermining class relations.

Except for the first premise I have made above concerning the contradictory nature of modes of production, the other propositions are drawn from dependency and articulationist theory. It may be that my casting of the process of transformation is generalizable to all cases of contact between the capitalist and a subsistence mode of production which coincides with a racially or ethnically distinguished group, but I am not claiming that here.

Since this is the first systematic analysis of political, economic and ideological transformation of Inuit, my discussion in this introductory chapter is not, as is customary, a critique of previous work in the field but, rather, of the concepts and models available to us for understanding social change. A discussion of the relevant literature on Canadian Inuit is contained in the appendix; here, I delineate a frame of reference in which the story can be told and the analysis shaped.

The unit of analysis

While it is a relatively easy task to describe the changes in lifestyle which result from contact, analysis of *structural* transformations must proceed within an appropriate theoretical framework. The main contending perspectives on social change are articulationism and dependency. The articulationist perspective, encompassing economic, political and ideological relations, has immediate appeal as a global reference to social change but, when not used simplistically as a synonym for "lifestyle," it tends to reify structures and gloss over arenas of conflict. The main stumbling block for critics is the high level of abstraction of the concept of a "mode of production." On the other hand, although less abstract, "nation," the basic datum in the dependency perspective is misleading; for, as several critics have pointed out, it tends to encourage spatial and political analysis.⁴ Attention is focussed upon such topics as capital drain, foreign trade and investment, *i.e.*, relations of exchange (between the metropolis and the hinterland), rather than production relations.

Writers in both perspectives have, however, designated "class" the appropriate unit of analysis, the link between theory and concrete analysis. The concept of class, a collective rather than an individual reality, grounds analysis but, in its objectivist/structural versions, it also prevents it from being limited to a specific time and place and focussed upon particular personalities as the key to

⁴ Veltmeyer (1978:55) considers that the "Achilles heel" of dependency theory is its focus on metropole/satellite relations, *i.e.* *regional* rather than *class* relations. Palma (1978:900) makes similar comments with particular reference to Gunder Frank (see also Chilcote, 1974:14).

social change. Although "class" is, as Foster-Carter (1978:55) puts it, "one level of abstraction" from people, it is a manageable abstraction, carrying structural weight, but clearly involving relationships among people in particular places as they make their own history (though not under circumstances of their own choosing).

Although, as I later discuss, the link between theory and concrete analysis has been only tenuously made, it is crucial to analyze the class relationships which result in national/regional dependency or articulation/transformation of modes of production. Writers in both perspectives suggest that *alliances* between classes are the mechanism of social transformation in an imperialist context. Representing the articulationist school, Pierre Phillipe Rey (1973:48) tells us that "the operative value of the term class is that it can explain the present in terms of alliances between the dominant classes of two separate and articulated modes of production..." and elaborating upon Rey's argument, Taylor writes (1979:236-237):

Unless imperialism can establish the political dominance of a class or alliance of classes which can gain ideological support amongst sectors of the population and intervene, via the state, in the combination of modes of production to promote the dominance of the capitalist mode, the reproduction of the capitalist social relations necessary for the enlarged reproduction of the capitalist mode cannot be guaranteed.

As for dependency theory, while it has been criticized for its focus upon relations of exchange and lack of class analysis, theorists within the perspective have generally argued that the process of dependency is facilitated by a "comprador bourgeoisie." Cardoso and Faletto, for instance, stress the necessity of understanding the history of capital accumulation as the history of class struggles:

We return to the tradition of political thought that there is no metaphysical relation of dependence between one nation and another, between one state and another. These relations are made possible through a network of interests and coercions that bind some social groups to others, some classes to others (1979:173).

Dos Santos (1970, 1973) has also argued the importance of class, and Galtung (1971:83) talked about an alliance, or a "bridgehead" founded upon a "harmony of interests," which is established between elite groups in the metropolis and the hinterland. Perhaps a more accurate criticism would be that, although dependency theorists have acknowledged and reiterated the significance of class alliances in the international movement of capitalism, this has remained at an incipient level of analysis since, more theoretical than substantive, their work has not resulted in the development of class models capable of application.

On the other hand, although glibly dismissed as theological and theoreticist, the articulationist problematic *has* resulted in useful models for class analysis (especially Wright, 1979). These models, are, however, only useful for analysis within the capitalist mode of production, as they stop short of a consideration of class formation in the imperialist context. There is an implicit assumption that the capitalist mode of production more or less automatically transforms or replaces relations within other modes of production. Although Wright's framework for class analysis seems capable of broad application, even he has not avoided what Taylor (1979:31) refers to as a "Europocentric bias," reminiscent of long discredited modernization analysis. Articulationists do not speak of underdevelopment or dependency, but of societies *in transition* to a capitalist mode of production which

assumes, of course, the outcome. This ethnocentric fallacy has been underscored by the move of some theorists within the perspective to abandon the value-laden term, *pre-capitalist* in favour of *non-capitalist* modes of production. In general, however, the third world is considered to be still in the transition phase, marked by an articulation of capitalist and non-capitalist practices.

In short, even when articulationists allow theoretically for the persistence of non-capitalist structures, they have tended, as Abramson (1979:174) says, towards a teleological view of capital's effect. This criticism is particularly apt with reference to Rey's argument (1973:82-87) in which he distinguished three stages of articulation as capitalism pursues its goal of the universal destruction and replacement of other modes of production.⁵ This is, of course, an old argument, harking back to the Dobb/Sweezy debate of the 1950s. Is capital *really* destined to create a world in its own image? It is also an important argument, and not just at the theoretical level, since as well as establishing the process and setting the limits to development, it also sets limits for the nationalist struggles of so-called "developing" nations, a battle Canadian Inuit have only just engaged. Will resistance be a factor in outcome?

⁵ Rey (1973:82-87) posits a model in which an initial link in the sphere of exchange reinforces the pre-capitalist mode. Capitalism then "takes root," subordinating the *pre-* or non-capitalist mode, but making use of it. After this transitional phase, the non-capitalist mode is eliminated. If we were to apply this model to the Canadian Arctic, we would argue that the initial link was made by the fur trade, the co-op was the transitional form, and the demise of the indigenous mode of production is inevitable. But if the concept of transition is to be meaningful in a structural sense, rather than a chronological, descriptive sense, we have to show the articulation of capitalist and non-capitalist practices and relationships, i.e., a contradictory combination.

The teleological debate, or will capital inevitably create a world in its own image?

The classical marxist view of development is unabashedly teleological.

Imperialist theories based upon the logic of capital accumulation are reminiscent of modernization theories which assumed that the third world would necessarily follow the development pattern of the industrialized world. World systems theorists have carried this view to an extreme, arguing that because all nations are now involved in international trade, there is but one mode of production and that is capitalist (Wallerstein, 1975a:16). But we need not single out world systems theory; for, the dominant tendency in dependency and articulationist theory as well is to assume that there is no effective resistance to capitalist take-over. A corollary is, then, that capitalism is capitalism regardless of how it develops (*i.e.*, that it is homologous). Gunder Frank who, like Wallerstein, considers that capitalism is defined by involvement in a world market, should receive credit for advancing the view that, ubiquitous though it may be, capitalism is *not* homologous.⁶ In fact, Foster-Carter (1978:65) pays tribute to dependency theorists in general for having demonstrated that capital in the colonies is "a grossly deformed *progeny*" (see also Kay, 1975:104). O'Brien (1975:22) makes a similar point, arguing that dependency theory has:

* As Phillips (1977:12) points out, however, Frank had two political objectives: (1) to attack the cultural lag thesis (*i.e.*, that "it is the persistence of pre-capitalist structures which accounts for underdevelopment") and (2) to undermine the concomitant development strategy (*i.e.*, "the strategy of capitalist development led by the national bourgeoisie"). Gunder Frank had, of course, a practical interest in developing an argument that would support "a revolution of an immediately socialist character" (Palma, 1978:899).

...modified substantially the simplistic Marxist views on the likely effects of capitalist expansion in the underdeveloped countries, by stressing the interplay between the internal and external structures, whereas classical Marxists tended to see the expansion of capitalism into underdeveloped countries as simply a process of destruction and replacement of pre-capitalist structures.

There is, however, within dependency theory, the general view that, left to its own devices, capitalism *would* have developed in the third world, and that it is only because such development was "blocked" that a "peripheral" form of capitalism could be imposed, *i.e.*, that the satellite nations no longer, but once did, in the words of O'Brien (1975:12), possess "an autonomous capacity for change and growth." As theoretically unappealing as this proposition may be to advocates of diversity, it must be taken seriously. Indeed, my analysis of the Inuit case will reveal that capitalist practices were not merely transplanted, but were nurtured to life from seeds already present in the ensemble of pre-contact practices. It does not follow, however, that movement towards western capitalism is inevitable. If my conclusions concerning the Inuit case are capable of being generalized, a so-called indigenous mode of production embodies contradictory forces and, depending upon the nature of contact, balance will be altered in the direction of one extreme or the other, competitive capitalist or communal practices.

Although articulationists have tended to assume that capital is both ubiquitous and homologous, *i.e.*, that the pre-contact or indigenous mode of production plays a passive role, there is a growing tendency to pay attention to patterns of "destruction/maintenance" (Rey, 1973:22), even if the outcome is more

or less predictable.⁷ Also, resistance is considered a force to be reckoned with. Rey may have postulated an evolutionary model of capitalism but, like some dependency theorists, he *also* recognized the variability of capital's effects throughout the world, suggesting that this was due to the resistance of the non-capitalist mode. Picking up on Rey's argument, Taylor (1979:228) considers that the articulation of different modes of production is structured, on one hand, by the "reproductive requirements of the capitalist mode of production," and on the other by "the resistance of the non-capitalist mode..."

Theorists within both the articulationist and the dependency schools are wrestling with the same problems: the ubiquity of capital, the similarity of its effects throughout the world, and the role played by non-capitalist structures (modes of production, or nations/regions) in this process. There is some convergence on these issues. Cardoso and Faletto (1979), for example, take a position close to Taylor's concerning the significance of internal and external structures, and there is general agreement between dependency and modes of production theorists that class is the appropriate unit of analysis. The main line of cleavage between the two schools concerns the identification of capitalism, hence classes.

⁷ Similarly, Bettelheim (1972:297) considers that the *dominant* tendency is dissolution of other modes by the CMP, but that a *secondary* tendency is dissolution/conservation: "This means that within a capitalist social formation, the non-capitalist forms of production, before they disappear are 'restructured' (partly dissolved) and thus subordinated to the predominant capitalist relations (and so conserved)."

The identification of classes: The relations of production/relations of exchange controversy:

For articulationists, classes are defined at the level of relations of production and they argue that it is because of dependency theory's focus upon relations of exchange that they are unable to explain "development" or to develop a framework for class analysis (Laclau, 1971; Roxborough, 1979). Both dependency and world systems theorists consider that capital advances through a network of market relations, while articulationists consider that capital's search is for *labour* rather than markets.

The relations of production/relations of exchange debate has its roots in the Dobb/Sweezy polemic of the fifties. Focussing upon relations of exchange, Sweezy (1970) maintained that the prime mover in the transformation of the feudal mode of production (FMP) was external, specifically, the growth of production for the market which led to a growing desire on the part of the lords for increased revenue. Focussing on relations of production, Dobb (1978) argued, however, that the FMP was transformed by an internal prime mover, specifically, the class struggle between the direct producers and their feudal overlords.

Over-exploitation of the labour force led, he argued, to its exhaustion and eventual disappearance, thus making it impossible for the FMP to be reproduced.

As Brenner (1977:55) suggests, Sweezy, like Wallerstein subscribed to the *homo economicus* argument in which the subjective motives of the exploiting classes are important. Brenner (pp.33-39) considers, in fact, that there is a direct epistemological link from Adam Smith through Sweezy and Gunder Frank to

Wallerstein, in that all equate capitalism with exchange and assume that trade can transform the relations of production. As he suggests, classes are thus considered the *result* of, not the basis for, capitalist development.⁸

The Dobb/Sweezy argument was been perpetuated in the Frank/Laclau debate. Frank's view (1969) that Latin America has been capitalist since the first days of conquest was based upon the equation of capitalism and market relations. Arguing that Frank's error was to base his analysis upon relations of exchange, Laclau (1971:30) considered that, while the CMP might dominate the feudal mode of production in Latin America, it had not entirely replaced it. If Frank had based his argument upon relations of production, he would, Laclau maintains, have realized that Latin America was not fully capitalist since the...

...pre-capitalist character of the dominant relations of production in Latin America was not only *not* incompatible with production for the world market, but was actually intensified by the expansion of the latter. The feudal regime of the haciendas tended to increase its servile extractions on the peasantry as the growing demands of the world market stimulated maximization of their surplus. Thus, far from expansion of the external market acting as a disintegrating force on feudalism, its effect was rather to accentuate and consolidate it.

The implications of this argument are enormous; for, as Foster-Carter (1978:51) pointed out:

⁸ According to Brenner (1977:77-82), Wallerstein also thinks that the transition from the feudal to the capitalist mode of production occurred because of choices the ruling class made as to how they would exploit the direct producers. Brenner argues that capitalism in Europe did not result from choices made by the ruling class, but from the methods they were required to use to increase their surplus, i.e., as a result of class conflict (since the peasants were no longer unfree and played a role). He considers that capitalism first developed as "an unintended consequence of class conflicts -- conflicts in which the peasantry freed themselves from the extra-economic controls of the ruling class, while the latter secured ownership of the land."

We thus have the paradox of capitalism's relation to other modes of production being conceived not (or not simply) as a *succession* or *evolution* (as in the 'stages' model: primitive communal, ancient, slave, feudal, capitalist modes of production, with the 'asiatic' awkwardly at a tangent). Nor yet as some kind of dialectical *transcendence* and *dissolution* (one could debate whether internal or external, interstitial or marginal, as in the classic Dobb/Sweezy polemic on feudalism and capitalism). Nor even as a *transition* (unless prolonged to the point of analytical vacuity). On the contrary, this capitalism neither evolves mechanically from what precedes it, nor does it necessarily dissolve it. Indeed, so far from banishing pre-capitalist forms, it not only coexists with them but buttresses them, and even on occasions devilishly conjures them up *ex nihilo*.

As far as I know, no-one has attempted to demonstrate that the CMP conjures up non-capitalist modes, but the buttressing thesis has been subscribed to by several theorists who argue, generally, that it is not in capital's interest to destroy immediately preceding modes and forms (e.g., Meillassoux, 1972; Rey, 1973; Bradby, 1975). The argument, varying in particulars, is that non-capitalist practices will persist as long as they are functional for capital, providing raw materials, land, labour power or markets (see Bradby, 1975:129 for a summary of these). Meillassoux (1972:102) considered that the pre-capitalist mode provides a form of "social security" to take up the slack during unemployment, sickness and old age, "a function which the capitalist mode of production prefers not to assume in underdeveloped countries."⁹

⁹ Julian Clarke (1977:62) considers, however, that the argument that non-capitalist modes continue to exist to serve the needs of capital is untenable since, if capital could secure its needs in such a manner, it would mean that it is capable of "bringing into existence...its own conditions of reproduction" and, therefore, that it is incapable of dissolution! This is, he suggests, an uncomfortable position for marxists. Although Clarke's may, at first glance, seem to be a reasonable proposition, it rests, I think, on an oversimplification of the relations between non-capitalist modes and the CMP. I agree with the articulationists that the relationship entails a delicate balancing of forces (maintenance and destruction). These can be tipped in one direction or the other, particularly as capital's survival needs become more pressing and can no longer be satisfied by the non-capitalist mode. Also, of course, there is a school of thought which considers

The general impression left by such arguments is, again, that the indigenous mode of production plays a relatively insignificant role in outcome. Rey (1973), however, suggested that, because the logic of capital is constant (it is always seeking to destroy the modes of production with which it comes in contact), when results vary, it *must* be because of the variable resistance of the non-capitalist mode. His interest was, of course, as Foster-Carter says (1978:55), to understand "the material basis and workings of *class alliances*" (the title of his book) and he has drawn attention to the fact of *both* cooperation and resistance among classes. Rey says (1973:15):

L'articulation de deux modes de production non pas comme un donne statique, mais comme un procès, c'est-à-dire un combat entre les deux modes de production, avec les affrontements et les alliances qu'un tel combat implique: affrontements et alliances essentiellement entre les *classes* que ces modes de production définissent.

Rey was criticized by Bradby (1975:149-152) for his insistence upon violence as an accompaniment to capitalist penetration. There are, she insists (p.151) cases "where absolutely no extra-economic force has been used to expel the country population, but where capital is embarrassed by an all-too-great potential labour-force." If we ignore for the moment latter-day ecological violence, the destruction of the Inuit indigenous mode of production is occurring peacefully enough, although subtle forms of coercion have been employed. Force is not necessary when people do not resist, and the argument of this thesis is that there are powerful structural constraints working to contain resistance, which brings us full

that revolution (purposive) is required to tip the scales and bring about dissolution of the capitalist mode of production and, presumably, any other modes which it may dominate at that time.

circle, back to the problem of identifying, as opposed to designating, the unit of analysis. How *do* we connect theory and reality? Class may, as most agree, be the appropriate unit of analysis, but the task remains to develop a workable model.

Attempting to make the abstract concrete

Space prohibits a discussion here of the epistemological debate engaged by Althusser and his critics, but I want to make a few comments concerning "subjectivist" and "objectivist" approaches to class theorizing.

The historicist approach advocated by E.P. Thompson, Althusser's chief critic, clearly cannot provide any more than a rationalization for *ad hoc* class analysis. Indeed, a careful reading of Thompson's avowedly anti-structural writing on class reveals that he, too, is aware of the limits of human agency. He acknowledges (1978:171) that "*La Structure* still dominates experience," up to an uncertain point, which is not very different from what others have concluded in the determinism/free will debate. But it is not sufficient to merely declare that "the working class made itself as much as it was made" (Thompson, 1968:213); the opposing forces of necessity and agency must somehow be reconciled.

A compelling reconciliation of structuralism and ethnomethodology has been advanced by Keat and Urry (1978:193) who propose that "all human action...is caused or determined by the patterns of both social relations and individual meanings." A non-reified theory would, they say, acknowledge both that people are "dominated in important ways by the structure of social relations" and

that "such relations do not have an existence in society apart from the human activity that produced and continues to produce them." They are saved from a phenomenological view by their argument that the subjective meanings which prompt people to act are not "simply individual," but "their content is logically dependent upon the shared meanings, rules, and conventions and their structured interrelationships, within the language at the societal level" (p.193). Similarly, Bourdieu (1979:chap 1) considers that thought can be linked to action through the insertion of the element of time.¹⁰ He is arguing for strategy, *i.e.*, human agency, mediated by a *structured* human disposition, the habitus.¹¹ The problem, of course, with operationalizing these arguments, is that they call for a theory of human nature which we do not yet have.

The most useful class models now available to us are certainly those which derive their inspiration from Althusserian structuralism *in spite* of Althusser's denigration of his own project.¹² It may be, though, that they pay insufficient

¹⁰ Apparently utilizing Althusser's distinction between history as science and history as experience, Bourdieu argues that it is time which constitutes the essential difference between a subjectivist and an objectivist perspective (surely, this *is* the essential difference between structure and process). His point is elaborated with reference to the crucial separation of time between receiving and reciprocating in gift giving, otherwise it would be swapping (1979:5).

¹¹ In explicit denunciation of Althusserianism, Bourdieu maintains (pp.82-83) that there is "a dialectical relation between the objectivist structures and the cognitive and motivating structures which they produce." This he calls "the theory of practice," involving both structural determinants and human appropriation in the form of the habitus, an unconscious disposition which may be individual or collective. Surely, though, this habitus is yet another level of structural analysis, at the level of the individual.

¹² Althusser repudiated the category of theoretical practice in his *Essays in Self Criticism* (1976:147) in which he declared it a concept "dangerous in its ambiguity," and he washed his hands of structuralism (p.120), but he gave no quarter on the issue of freely acting persons in history (pp.51-52).

heed to the problem of allowing for human agency. Foster-Carter (1978:77) seems to be suggesting that more attention needs to be paid in modes of production analysis to the political and ideological, not in an ethnomethodological sense, but in the utilization of "peoples' own consciousness of their position."

When I later discuss the response of Inuit to subsumption by the capitalist mode of production, I deal with all three instances, the economic, the political and the ideological, and also include some discussion of subjective motivations for collaboration with and resistance to transformation although, like Bourdieu, and Keat and Urry, I see these as patterned expressions, more predictable than not.

Following Althusser in conceiving of classes as the "effects" of structures rather than the result of conscious human agency, Poulantzas (1975), Carchedi (1977), and Wright (1979) nonetheless attempt to ground their conceptions in the actions of real people, maintaining that we can theorize about class at the level of the mode of production and move down successive levels of abstraction to talk about concrete junctures. As Wright (1979:12) advises:

It is one thing to make the epistemological claim that explanation requires the decoding of hidden contradictions; it is another to develop a strategy for studying the social world which allows one to link systematically such underlying structural processes to empirically observable phenomena. General maxims about moving from the concrete to the abstract and back to the concrete are not very helpful. The problem is *how* to move from the concrete to the abstract, and how to move back.

The critics charge, however, that it is not clear what kind of linkages (or leaps) are made by these theoreticians to get from the abstract to the concrete. Connell (1979:327) describes what he calls "the peculiar style of Althusserian class analysis"

as a "characteristic combination of a tightly-laced conceptual system with a promiscuous application of class categories in practice."

Certainly, a major problem for all three is how to connect abstract theorizing and concrete reality. Yet another problem is that none of them has successfully addressed the problem of shifts in *inter* and *intra* group relationships resulting from contact of the capitalist mode of production with modes other than the feudal, and none make adequate provision for such crosscutting lines of affiliation as nationalism, age, or gender.

Although Poulantzas acknowledges the effects of imperialism in which *dissolution* of the non-capitalist mode overrides conservation, he makes virtually no reference to non-capitalist modes (other than the feudal). One exception has to do with immigrant labour which, he says (1975:46) results from the establishment of capital's dominance within the non-capitalist mode, which reproduces itself in a specific form, within the dominated and dependent formations themselves." And this "internalized and induced reproduction...also has its effects in the reverse direction, from the dependent formations on the metropolises: in the case of labour-power, this takes the form of immigrant labour." But is that all that happens, given the grand argument concerning the collision of modes of production, combining, dissolving and forming new classes? Following structuralist logic, what Poulantzas does for the capitalist mode of production -- delineating factors at three levels (instances) and translating these into class positions -- would have to be done for various modes of production, and then the *combination* would

have to be elucidated. It is a very complex problem and surely one that involves a deeper plunge into the consequences of imperialism than Poulantzas has made.

Like Poulantzas, Carchedi defines classes by three criteria, the economic, the ideological and the political, but under the economic he adds to ownership and productiveness (expropriation of labour), a third factor, the *function* (social or technical) performed by agents in the production process. According to Carchedi, non-owners are not *necessarily* exploited, if you consider (p.33) that "real ownership is the power to dispose of the means of production and of the labour power (and thus of product)." The distinction between ownership and control is used by others (Poulantzas, 1975; Wright, 1979), and I shall call upon it in Part IV to explain the position of Inuit leaders of the recently established development corporations whose capital they control, but do not own.

Carchedi's introduction of the practical criterion of function, apparently overriding formal criteria (although he says it does not), seems to be an implicit recognition of the irrelevance of the abstract model in determining what is actually happening on the ground. But to criticisms that he is identifying classes *only* in functional terms,¹³ Carchedi responds that "far from identifying social classes only in terms of the social function performed, I have given an identification in terms of the ownership, productiveness, and functional aspects, where only the former

¹³ Although he admits that Carchedi's use of the word 'function' is not necessarily functional ("one might as well say 'operations' or 'tasks'"), Connell (1979:331) considers that *all* Althusserians are "repeatedly forced into a functionalist logic" in which "things are analyzed in terms of the contribution they make to the well-being or continued existence of a larger system of a certain kind..."

has a determinant character" (1977:34). It is difficult to concede him this point, considering such statements as "all groups which carry out the global functions of capital, *i.e.*, carry out supervisory or control tasks, are considered part of the capitalist class, notwithstanding their status as employees." He later admits (p.167) that "a detailed proof" of the determinant nature of ownership (over expropriation and function) "will have to be left to another occasion," conveying the impression that this is, for the time being anyhow, an arbitrary foundation for his argument (not that he should be required to re-invent the wheel).

Looked at in another way, though, it makes sense that objective class place and concrete class position might not coincide (as Wright also argues) and, furthermore, that what intervenes to prevent such coincidence is, as Carchedi suggests, the function which is actually (*i.e.*, *in time*) being performed (*cf.*, Bourdieu, 1978). Carchedi does not make this clear, but to do him justice, it needs to be said that language is a serious obstacle in his work, never more than when he tries to explain himself: for example, his attempt to avoid economism by calling it "economic identification" (p.167), and his contention that we "need" to consider positions "otherwise we would be identifying the social system with the people making it up" (p.171).

Carchedi's introduction of the criterion of function is useful as a way of grounding objective class placements, which can be determined, but are not necessarily realized. One must look at what people are *really* doing, in historical time, *but* their theoretical placement is determinant in the sense that it draws up

the sides -- bourgeoisie and proletariat -- and provides the standard against which historically concrete human alliances are gauged. In other words, it determines the parameters of Rey's 'combat' although, on the practical level, people may, as Carchedi argues, take up sides which contradict their objective placement.

Although Carchedi's reasoning has some practical ramifications, a problem is that, like that of Poulantzas, his class model is ethnocentric. He considers only the capitalist mode of production. A further problem is expressed by Connell (1979:320) with reference to the "theoretical effort" of both Carchedi and Poulantzas which he describes as "a kind of categorical frenzy, an elaboration of criteria so abstract and intricate that one cannot even seriously argue with their later stages."¹⁴

In summary, although Poulantzas and Carchedi provide useful insights -- the distinction between active and passive ownership and the distinction between abstract/objective positioning and historical function-- neither provides a class model that allows one to account for effects generated by contact with modes of production other than the feudal. Apart from this shortcoming, neither has succeeded in connecting theory and reality in an applicable class model. One thing is clear, and that is, as Connell (1979:311) declares, at the most concrete level "no automatic conclusions can be read off from the theory of the abstract

¹⁴ Referring, specifically, to "Carchedi's 66-category table for economic identification," Connell asks us to "reflect that this is only for two classes and only on the basis of production relations; if we add just one more class, and multiply by three to allow for political and ideological criteria in comparable numbers, we get something like 297 criteria for the identification of classes under capitalism."

structures." The relationship cannot, as he points out, be solved *linguistically*, but must be supplemented, presumably with empirical research although, as Wright (1979:11) suggests, it is surely possible to first outline a theoretical framework in which the transformation of modes of production makes sense.

Linking theory to empirical research agendas¹⁵

It is with some relief that one turns to Erik Olin Wright who fares not much better than his peers in demonstrating the logical connection between abstract theorizing and concrete reality, but who succeeds in cutting through the epistemological underbrush to develop a workable class model. Wright acknowledges that the Althusserian concept of structural causality has been very difficult to use in empirical studies, but does not consider that this is due to the high level of abstraction at which it has been pitched, but to the fact that "the global notion of structural causality contains within itself several distinct forms of causality" (p.14). Breaking down this global notion of structural causality, he considers that there are at least six "basic" and "interdependent" modes of determination: structural limitation, selection, reproduction/non-reproduction, limits of functional compatability, transformation, and mediation. These are rather ambiguous concepts but, fortunately, his concrete framework for analysis is somewhat clearer than his theoretical rationale.

Without much discussion of how he connects theory and practice, he announces that the real stuff of class relations involves control over the physical

¹⁵ Wright's term (1979:11).

means of production, labour power, and investments and resource allocation, criteria which also hold at the abstract level of the mode of production (p.73). He develops an argument (pp.74-88) for identifying class positions, including some which are contradictory and, when decisions along these lines are unclear, we may, he suggests, identify actual classes on the basis of "immediate" and "fundamental" interests. The positing of immediate and fundamental interests is obviously a felicitous way of connecting the abstract and the real, and it seems to perform for Wright the same purpose as Carchedi's criterion of function. It is also useful in overcoming ethnocentrism, making it possible to talk about situations in which there is no entrenched class system, such as that of the Inuit. Action based upon immediate interests may result in a class placement which contradicts abstract assignment of position (positions are abstract; places are concrete).

Immediate interests (wages, living conditions, ethnic discrimination) are not, however, solely the doing of individual actors. In the first place, decisions about such interests are taken under specified conditions, and refer not to individuals but to *classes*. Wright thus dissociates himself from utilitarian arguments of individuals as "rational, utility-maximizing individuals" (1979:89) and, although he does not specifically say so, human agency arguments that people make history. As he says: "...to talk about real objectives of struggle is to talk about a certain *constellation* of subjective motives/consciousness in the actors" (p.88, emphasis added; again, cf., Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus*).

Like Poulantzas and Carchedi, Wright makes provision for a petty

bourgeoisie remnant, but in Wright's case, it is not clear whether this is a carry-over into capitalism from the feudal mode of production, or whether it is to be considered a mode of production in its own right.¹⁶ A related problem is that Wright appears to be arguing for an evolutionary view of proletarianization, specifically of simple commodity producers who now occupy "residual islands of petty bourgeois relations of production" (p.81). The teleological fallacy was discussed earlier and my analysis of the movement of Inuit towards capitalist practices demonstrates Hall's observation (1980:317) that teleological interpretations of Marx's analysis of capitalism, based on that famous phrase "creates a world after its own image" are a simplistic form of marxism ignoring "the fact of conquest, and thus the very different conditions in which pre-conquest social strata have been inserted into the capitalist mode." In spite of the fact that in the Inuit case it has been weak, both structural and subjective forms of resistance are as much of an option as cooperation and, like the latter, take place at the level of classes. And further, resistance is most effectively accomplished through manipulation of, to borrow a term from Wallerstein (1975b:373), "ethno-national consciousness."

The crucial intersection of class and nationalism

Marxist theorists have tended to regard ethnicity as a residual category, or a "spent force" (Parkin 1979:31). Early "internationalist" arguments proceeded from an assumption that as industrialization progressed class affiliation would eventually

¹⁶ He refers to it variously as a mode of production, part of a simple commodity mode of production, and as part of the capitalist mode of production (pp. 63, 74, 75, 79).

override race, ethnic and religious divisions. The upsurge in race/ethnic conflict, however, as well as more sophisticated modes of class theorizing, have led to scattered attempts to rethink the relationship, although the basic commitment remains to the proposition that class relations are primary, and racism and other crosscutting lines of affiliation are a divide-and-conquer strategy utilized by capital (*e.g.*, Wright, 1978).

The simplistic divide-and-conquer thesis needs no critiquing here, but there are more sophisticated versions of this proposition which, rather than viewing capital as a conspirator having its way with an unresisting working class, consider that the latter also plays a role. For instance, Wallerstein's thesis is that "ethno-national consciousness is the constant resort of all those for whom class organization offers the risk of a loss of relative advantage through the normal workings of the market and class-dominated political bargaining" (1975b:373). Rejecting the weberian idea that status groups are a parallel, but crosscutting phenomenon to social classes, Wallerstein considers that "class" and "ethno-nation" are two sets of clothing worn at different times, for the same reality (1975b:369). Status groups are merely "a mode by which "sectors of the bourgeoisie and *of the proletariat* assert short-term interests amidst the cyclical rhythms of the world economy" (1980:171, emphasis added).

Bonacich (1972) also focussed attention upon the role that labour plays in creating and sustaining racial/ethnic tensions. Briefly summarized, she argues that "business tries to pay as little as possible for labour," regardless of its ethnic

composition. Given that there are at least two ethnically distinguished groups whose price of labour differs for the same work, capital will naturally opt for cheaper labour. The more expensive labour group(s) attempt to exclude this option, their success depending upon their "political resources" (pp.550-553). Her argument of an "ethnically split labour market" rests, ultimately, upon the assumption that racism is "a product of historical accident which produced a correlation between ethnicity and the price of labour" (1980:14).

In an important argument, Wolpe (1975) links expressions of collective identity with the advancement of capital and the class struggle. The manipulation of nationalist/racist/ethnic sentiments is, he considers, integral to the strategy of dissolution/conservation involved in capitalist penetration of pre-capitalist modes of production. He describes the complexity of the class/national relationship as follows (1975:241):

...the concrete social totality is constituted by the complex articulation of class relations within racial or ethnic groups, as well as the relation of classes across these groups together, we may add, with the ideological and political practices which "fit" these relationships.

As he elaborates (p.244, emphasis added):

In certain conditions of imperialist development, ideological and political domination tend to be *expressed* not in terms of the relations of class exploitation which they must sustain, but in racial, ethnic, national etc., terms and, in all cases, this is related to the fact that the specific mode of exploitation involves the conservation, in some form, of the non-capitalist modes of production and social organization, the existence of which provides the foundation of that exploitation. Indeed, it is in part the very attempt to *conserve and control* the non-capitalist societies in the face of the tendency of capitalist development to disintegrate them and thereby to undermine the basis of exploitation, that accounts for political policies and ideologies which centre on cultural, ethnic, national, and racial

characteristics.

Hall, too, talks about the reproduction of classes structured by race, and argues (1980:341-342) that racism is really the site of "capital's continuing hegemony," discovering what "other ideologies have to construct: an apparently 'natural' and universal basis in nature itself." It is also the site of resistance, for the same reason.

Clearly, class and nationalism, by which I mean an ethno-regional drive for collective rights, is a crucial intersection to be addressed whether we characterize world-wide relationships as hierarchical or as an articulated combination of modes of production. Considering the permutations and combinations involved, the class/nationalism intersection has been clarified exceedingly well, I think, in Bonacich's "tentative" argument of 1980. In this short article, she manages to pull together virtually all of the issues involved in the dependency/articulationist debate, depicting the story of imperialism in what seems, in light of the highly abstract articulationist arguments in particular, almost too simplistic a fashion; yet, it is hard to fault her logic. If, as both dependency and articulationist theorists have argued, the key to understanding the progression of capitalism is to be found in a dissection of relationships between classes (structured or mediated, as we are discussing here, by ethnic/national relations),¹⁷ then her schematization (*fig. 1*) is clearly sensible.

¹⁷ For purposes of simplicity, I am following Bonacich in considering nationalism/racism/ethnicity to be the same general phenomena. It is her view (1980:9) that: "Ethnicity and race are 'communalistic' forms of social affiliation, sharing an assumption of a special bond between people of like origins..." and she treats "all of these as a single phenomenon."

Fig. 1: Class and Ethnic Relations Resulting from Imperialism (reproduced from Bonacich, 1980:17)

* The classes here are left somewhat ambiguous to indicate the possibility that full-blown capitalism has not yet emerged

As Bonacich says (1980:16), "a fully developed class analysis of ethnicity needs to consider all of the possible class relations between 'ethnic groups' that result from imperialism." She points out that "nationalism at one level tends to provoke counter-nationalism at other levels..." and in some cases "key classes may be absent, also with ramifications for nationalism" (e.g., the lack of a large white working class in Brazil and Mexico may account for the softer race lines there than in South Africa and the United States). Pertinent groupings also have to be identified for the non-capitalist mode of production (Bonacich deliberately does not deal with pre-capitalist ethnic relations), and the model must be applied in specific circumstances. Nevertheless, the salient relations are undoubtedly those she specifies.

The general thrust of Bonacich's argument is that "nationalist divisions may be an important factor in the preservation of capitalism" (1980:21) and she makes four important points: 1) nationalist movements are generated by each class for different reasons; 2) non-nationalistic options are available to each class and are often acted upon (thus demonstrating the lack of universality or inevitability of ethnic attachments); 3) the emergence of nationalism *depends upon* the structure of the entire system of relationships, *i.e.*, is contingent upon where a group fits within the entire world capitalist system and how others react to it and, to repeat an important point, 4) in spite of the fact that nationalism calls upon "primordial" bonds of affiliation, it both *grows out of the class relations* generated by the development of capitalism and imperialism, and *represents efforts to create alliances*

across class lines, or, alternatively to *prevent alliances from developing within major classes across national lines*" (1980:21. emphasis added).¹⁸

In short, nationalism is not as Bonacich says (1980:16), "a unitary phenomenon," but one which can be manipulated by both ruling class and/or exploited classes to temper other relations. Similarly, Abele and Stasiulis (1989:268) argue that race and ethnicity are "constituent features of class formation and potential resistance," providing "the modalities, conflicts and contradictions through which class is lived in Canada." Poulantzas' comment (1975:24) comes to mind here: "When the national bourgeoisie forms part of the people, it still remains a bourgeoisie, leading to contradictions among the people..." The important questions are, as Bonacich (1980:112) suggests: Under what conditions will ethnic or racial affiliation be invoked? Under what conditions will this lead to extreme conflict? And under what conditions will ethnicity and race subside as major axes of social organization and conflict? To this we might add the question of how these conditions mesh with, rather than being reduced to class processes. As Abele and Stasiulis (1989:265) caution, race, ethnicity, and gender, are not categories to be "added on," but incorporated as "meaningful and legitimate categories...."

Rejecting reductionism

As useful as Wright's class model is, his argument concerning the intersection of class and race/ethnicity is unacceptably reductionist. Carchedi does not even talk

¹⁸ She concludes that "nationalist movements are, at root, the product of class forces."

about it, and as for Poulantzas, although he does not directly address the subject, in fact, seems deliberately to *avoid* doing so, some implications may be cautiously teased out of his analysis. If we accept that a mode of production is a complex totality of the economic, political and ideological instances, in which the economic is dominant, we are able to conclude two things (at least). First, that any discussion of concrete classes must proceed from the assumption that every form of social stratification is framed by class, that "the concept of social class," in Poulantzas' words (1975:199), "is pertinent to all levels of analysis: the division into class forms the frame of reference for every social stratification." He does not mean by this simply that classes are the *basic* social grouping, but that other forms of social grouping are ultimately *reducible* to class. Because the term class, as he conceives it, refers to the overall effect of an ensemble of given structures, it logically encompasses *all* relations.

Following Poulantzas' line of argument, it may be that ethnic groups can, in some cases, be considered a class fraction, the result of combinations of classes from more than one mode of production. The only evidence that Poulantzas *might* agree is one meagre reference to the "national bourgeoisie" which, he says, is "a fraction of the industrial bourgeoisie." When we talk about national bourgeoisies we are talking in the context of imperialism which, presumably, is explained for Poulantzas with reference to an articulation of modes of production, although, for obvious reasons, the exact process of class dissolution and recombination is not explicated at a concrete level. To complete a comment by

Poulantzas (1975:24) noted earlier, it is important to keep in mind that the national bourgeoisie remains a bourgeoisie when it "forms part of the people," because, as he maintains, "the classes, fractions and strata that form part of these alliances, do not for all that lose their class determination and dissolve into an undifferentiated type of merger or alliance."

Keeping in mind that Poulantzas himself has not had the temerity to discuss race/ethnicity as a pertinent effect, we can only remain at a very general level and conclude that, no matter how it might complicate the analysis, it *is*, for him, reducible to class, *i.e.*, any member of any racial/ethnic group will have an objective class place in which the economic is determinant. The exact relationship may be too difficult ever to be formally explicated because, not only are classes diluted and new classes formed by the articulation of modes of production, but within those classes and combinations various social groupings are also dissolving, forming and combining. Structuralists use the word 'complex' often and advisedly.

Erik Olin Wright has considerably more to say about the ethnic problem than do his colleagues. He agrees with, and attempts to demonstrate empirically (1978), the unifying marxist proposition that class relations (ultimately) predominate over racism and ethnic discrimination, but he firmly rejects any simple reduction of the latter to the former. "The empirical and theoretical problem is," he says (1978:1389), "to sort out the complex interplay of racism and class relations, not to absorb the former into the latter."

Like Wolpe, Wright proposes that "capitalism *simultaneously* undermines

and reproduces racism, and it is essential to disentangle these two tendencies if one is to genuinely understand the relationship between class and race in contemporary capitalism" (1978:1390, emphasis added). Briefly, the argument Wright uses to demonstrate this thesis is that in the interest of accumulation capital will treat all labour power as identical. In the interest of maintaining dominance in the class struggle, however, capital will *intensify* racism, thereby dividing and weakening the working class along racial and ethnic lines. "The result will be an increase in the rate of exploitation of both white and black workers, although the effects may well be more intense for blacks and other minorities than for whites" (1978:1391).

Even though, in the articulationist tradition, Wright acknowledges the contradictory nature of capitalist strategy which at once sustains and undermines, his 1978 argument is a recasting of the simplistic divide-and-conquer thesis.¹⁹ He would, however, probably rest his case concerning the class/nationalism intersection on the distinction between immediate and fundamental interests (1979:88-91). As he explains, the class location of various positions in the social structure (*e.g.*, students and pensioners) are not directly determined by production relations (control over labour power, physical means of production, and investment and resources), but they can be located with reference to such immediate interests as wages and living conditions, as can racial and ethnic groups.

¹⁹ As Wright argues (1978:1391-1392), "...to the extent that the working class is divided along racial and ethnic lines, the collective power of the working class is reduced, and thus the capacity of workers to win demands against capital is decreased."

Wright attributes part of "the impressive durability" of capitalism to "its capacity...to displace conflicts from the fundamental to the immediate level..." (1979:109). At the level of immediate interests, workers may be divided -- by racial and ethnic tensions and other conditions -- but, this does not alter the fact that they share a fundamental class interest.

Although an improvement over the proposition demonstrated in his 1978 article, this appears to be little more than another false consciousness argument. His reasoning on the subject of the class/nationalism intersection is much less subtle than that of Wolpe and Bonacich, perhaps because it was not for him, as it was for them, a serious focus of enquiry. But, without further critique of the concepts and arguments available to us for an understanding of social transformation, I turn to an analysis of a concrete social formation, an analysis which is largely inspired by Bonacich's conception of the interrelationships provoked by imperialism, but which selectively draws upon ideas from all of the theorists discussed here.

The Inuit case

The following chapters are organized around waves of Inuit-European contact beginning in the sixteenth century and persisting to the present day. It is, of course, not individual people who are important, but the practices they embody and the new relationships they make possible for Inuit. There were four important waves of contact: explorers and itinerant traders; whalers; police, missionaries and traders culminating in the birth of the co-op (in the mid-

twentieth century) and, finally, the state settling land claims.

Not only were Inuit relations of production altered upon contact with Europeans, but ethnic identity also took shape around these invasions which were, it should be noted, both peaceful and of Europeans as *representatives* of outside institutions. Except in the Mackenzie Delta, there was no settler population against which Inuit identity was counterposed. Instead, there were missionaries, traders, police and bureaucrats, all there to "organize" the indigenous people in one way or another. As I shall demonstrate in the following chapters, relationships which existed in the pre-contact mode of production were developed into, or articulated with capitalist relations, and Inuit identity at the same time blossomed into a more or less determined nationalism. I shall attempt to show that there is more than an historical relationship between these two processes.

The argument is that the indigenous mode of production in which Inuit were involved is being incorporated into the capitalist mode of production (which means that Inuit are entering into class relations, but not necessarily that they are abandoning non-capitalist practices) and, further, that this process is being tempered by a drive for ethno-regional collective rights. The point I make is that development of ethnic identity is *coincident* with participation in the capitalist mode of production, but this is not *coincidental*.

In tracing penetration of the capitalist mode of production into the indigenous mode of production, I shall be keeping in mind the large questions raised in the foregoing discussion: Is capital homologous, creating a world in its

own image? Is the indigenous mode of production passive or resistant? Under what conditions are ethnic/racial affiliation invoked? Specifically, in order to determine the nature of indigenous relationships and their transformation in a structured rather than a descriptive way, the analysis is shaped around a set of questions I have formulated, following an approach by de Kadt and Williams (1974:4): 1) What kind of work is done (*i.e.*, how do people feed themselves or, more generally, how are people reproduced?); 2) How is this task accomplished (*i.e.*, what are the means of production, and what productive techniques are utilized in the man/nature relationship?); 3) How do people relate to each other in the course of pursuing their work? Is the work directed? Do producers have autonomy? 4) Is a surplus produced? If so, what form does it take? Where does it end up? What gets done with it? Who benefits, and, finally, 5) Are relationships solely determined by exigencies of production, or are there political and ideological bases of affiliation or dissension? Are these affected by, or do they affect production techniques and relations and distribution?

Answering these questions, I am able to show the movement from a classless mode of production to unequal incorporation into the capitalist mode of production as well as a developing "ethno-national consciousness" (Wallerstein, 1975b:373) which facilitates transformation of production relations and resistance on the part of a denigrated Inuit ruling class and a disenchanting population.

Some Methodological Provisos

Before proceeding to that task, a few methodological provisos are in order. Since

Inuit have constructed an oral rather than a written history, pre-contact relationships can be reconstructed only with reference to archaeological evidence and ethnographic accounts dating from the time of contact. It is necessary, as it were, to catch them at the point of transition and extrapolate backwards.

The first contact was with explorers and, fortunately, they have provided some accounts of the Eskimo as they found them. Explorers do not necessarily make good social scientists, however, and, there tends to be a frustrating focus on geography, weather, rations, relations on board ship and their own derring-do. Few were involved with the Inuit and few learned to speak the language. The members of the Fifth Thule Expedition (1921-24) and the American explorer, Hall, were notable exceptions. Leaving his boat, Hall lived for a while with the Inuit and learned to communicate in their language, albeit at what appears to be a rather rudimentary level. But even he was pre-occupied with his own adventures and the most remarkably non-European aspects of his hosts' lifestyle, such as hygiene practices.

Explorers' logs have been supplemented with ethnographies such as Jenness' 1922 account of the Copper Eskimo and Turner's 1894 description of Ungava Inuit. Since previous contact with Europeans had, in most cases, been sporadic and unsustained, the ethnographers considered that they had found the Eskimo in a virtually natural state. As Damas says (1984a:395), when Stefansson visited the Copper Eskimo in 1910 and 1911, "they still offered the closest approach to an aboriginal state that an ethnographer could observe among the

Central Eskimo tribes."²⁰

The second methodological proviso has to do with the social science sin of generalization. It was my decision to deal not with a distinct sub-grouping, but with Canadian Inuit in general. Indeed, some of the points I make in the following pages might also apply to Greenland and Alaskan Eskimos. Given their focus on the unique features of cultural groups, I can understand the horror with which anthropologists, archaeologists in particular, will greet my historical gloss. I claim as my defence the parameters of the over-all task I have undertaken; namely, an analysis of altered social relations of production and the development of a collective identity over several centuries of contact. I might also point to the increasingly frequent conclusions by scholars that Inuit groups were more similar than dissimilar. Harp (1984:22) says, for instance:

As the horizons of archaeological knowledge widened, students of Arctic prehistory have reduced their former stress on localized cultural diversity and have been more impressed by the high degree of cultural uniformity that has geographically pervaded the circumpolar homelands of the Eskimo.

A decade earlier, Graburn and Strong (1973:137-138) made a similar observation, stressing "both the cultural homogeneity of so far-flung a group of peoples and the great variety of adaptations to local circumstances that often go unrealized in the lay mind." Cultural homogeneity was attributed by them (and others) to Inuit having spread from a common homeland as well as contact through nomadic

²⁰ According to Graburn (1969:122-123), Low claimed that the people he met at Sugluk in 1904 had never seen a white man (but, adds Graburn, there are claims that the Anglican missionary, Stewart, had visited the area in 1902).

travel (see also Szathmary, 1984:64 and Burch, 1987:1). Nevertheless, I do not wish to perpetuate what McGhee (1987:13) refers to as the "naive" view that Inuit have been adapting to the Arctic climate in a unilinear fashion, fine-tuning their material culture over many centuries. "The development of prehistoric Inuit culture and art in Arctic Canada was," he says, "neither simple nor direct." However, in spite of his stress upon a discontinuous history with setbacks due to environmental constraints,²¹ McGhee concurs with the majority view concerning origins of Eskimos and their similarities. He wrote (1984:376):

In summary then, archaeology has provided fairly certain evidence that all Canadian Eskimo tribes of the historic period are descended biologically and culturally from the Thule people who first swept across the area from Alaska after the tenth century. Thule culture is the historical factor that explains the biological, linguistic, and cultural similarities of all Eskimo between Bering Strait and Greenland.

The third and final methodological proviso, implicit in what I have said above, is that my analysis begins with Inuit as they appeared in arctic Canada. I shall not attempt to trace the culture back, as Birket-Smith (1959:177) puts it, to its "very source at the emergence of mankind." It is logically tempting to try to trace Inuit to their Asiatic roots,²² but quite beyond the limits of practicality. Birket-Smith (1959:177-178) suggests that, to keep the problem "within reasonable bounds," we

²¹ McGhee (1984:376) considers that diversification among Inuit groups resulted from "adaptation to regional environmental variations" and "deteriorating environmental conditions after the thirteenth century," a process "accentuated by indirect and direct contacts with Europeans and with European technology prior to the period during which the Canadian Eskimos were described by ethnographers."

²² Although there are some dissenting voices (Birket-Smith 1959:201), the majority view is that Inuit emigrated to Canada from Asia, approximately 15,000 years ago.

should consider the *synthesis* rather than the *origin* of the separate elements of a culture and...

...not any synthesis of these elements, but as the formation of that particular complex which distinguishes it from other patterns of culture. As regards Eskimo culture, this means its adaptation to the sea, and as Rink has already expressed it, "its cradle stood at the spot where this adaptation took place."

I begin my story with Inuit as they were, "at the brink of transition,"²³ to capitalist practice.

²³ This expression is taken from Damas (1984A:395) who used it with reference to the Fifth Thule Expedition.

Part II

First Contact in Which Indigenous Practices Are Both Undermined and Sustained

*Yes, these were the things we used to
rely on when I was still
A small child; when the world around me
was still very strange
And new to my knowledge; when I was
only starting to explore
My own world. However, there wasn't
much to see except the
Land, the sea, and the sky above. The
people were there and
I felt then to be much the same as the
next person. Most of
Them were always so kind and gentle in
their manners. They
Were helpful in every way and shared
their things with others.*

2

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*They loved their way of life; and they
loved their food;
And they loved their children; and they
loved to hunt the
Animals; and they loved the land; and
they loved to play;
And they loved to dance; and they loved
to live...happily
And freely. They had no private property;
so anyone was
Always welcome in one's place at any
time. They knew
Nothing about money and didn't live to
compete with others;
They didn't live to pay taxes; they
didn't live the easy
Way. they lived the hard way, but they
were free.*

*Yes, it was like this when I was still
a little kid and I
Enjoyed many of those days. As I grew
older, things began to
Change and I changed with them. Things
I never knew were
Getting into my head and I have not
forgotten them. Like
Any other child, I observed the teaching
of my parents and
I tried to follow them as much as I
could. There were things I did
Not like; there were things I could
not do; but still I had
To do them because I could not live any
other way.*

(Alootook Ipellie, 1980)

Chapter Two

At the Brink of Transition¹: Inuit Relationships As They Were At First Contact

Production and reproduction in the pre-contact mode of production

It is a truism to say that Inuit have sustained and recreated life over many centuries, utilizing scarce resources in an extreme climate.² Subsistence work involved the exploitation of marine resources, although there were some inland groups, poorer than others, who depended mainly upon caribou.

Pre-contact life revolved around the work of procuring food which, because of the limited means of subsistence available (harpoons, bone knives, bows and arrows) and the severe and long winter, was an all-consuming task. Winter temperatures in the Canadian arctic can remain below -50°F for long periods and, in the highest latitude, the sun is entirely absent for some 100 days each year. The short summer period is of only a few weeks duration in the high Arctic, with temperatures reaching only moderate highs, perhaps 40°F. The period of open water is brief, lasting only a few weeks in the most northerly areas and, in winter, the lakes and rivers freeze to a depth sufficient to allow aircraft weighing several tons to use them as runways.

¹ This phrase is from Damas (1984a:395).

² The discussion in this chapter is, of necessity, highly generalized. My objective is to draw a composite portrait of pre-contact Inuit practices. For those interested in the many regional and historical variations, I recommend Weyer (1962).

There is scarcely an adult Inuk who does not have memories of starvation and death. Rasmussen reported (in Weyer, 1962:116) that for the Inuit of King William Land:

Life is thus an almost uninterrupted struggle for bare existence, and periods of death and actual starvation are not infrequent. Three years before my visit, eighteen people died of starvation at Simpson Strait. The year before, seven died of hunger north of Cape Britannia. Twenty-five is not a great number perhaps, but out of a total of 259 it makes a terrible percentage for death by starvation alone. And yet this may happen any winter, when there are no caribou to be had.

In such extreme conditions, it makes no sense to even speculate as to whether ideological or economic practices were superordinate. The religion practised by Inuit had, for instance, a virtually singular focus upon the necessity of obtaining food. As Vallee (1967a:170) concluded, the spirits were believed to affect "what we would call productive activity: hunting, cooking, sewing, fishing and so on." In the language of this thesis, the ideology of pre-contact Inuit served to ensure reproduction of the mode of production by supporting the chief economic activity, the hunt. Amulets were worn by young boys to ensure that they would grow up to be productive hunters, and by young girls to ensure that they would bear male babies. Water was placed on the noses of harpooned seals to appease their spirits. Caribou skins would not be worked when seals were being hunted. Such prohibitions were designed to ensure that the animals would keep coming to feed the people and that the weather would facilitate their capture.³ Several authors

³ Some taboos also served to conserve resources and reduce disease. As Vallee (1967a:170) observed: "...the displeasure of Nuliajuk at seeing unused carcasses on the tundra acted as a check on over-hunting; the taboo requiring people to vacate the dwelling where a death had occurred and preventing people from wearing the clothing of the dead probably curtailed the spread of

have argued that the "pre-Christian religion" of the Eskimos was "a sustained attempt to control the environment" (Vallee, 1967a:169). The most important spirit or force or power was "sila" which is translated to English as "weather," but which carries, as Vallee says, the connotation of nature which, in turn, carries the connotation of purpose and will.

In spite of such propitiatory strategies, food remained, as a rule, scarce and difficult to obtain. Accordingly, a practical approach was taken towards non-producing members. As Birket-Smith (1959:145) put it: "The first great unwritten law of the settlement is that no-one may without reason avoid the struggle for food and clothing." When food was plentiful, non-producers would be looked after, but in times of scarcity they were left to their own devices. Similarly, infants and the aged were not provided with shelter and sustenance if this jeopardized the existence of producing members. As Weyer concluded (1962:139): "By occasionally deliberately killing infants, invalids, and aged persons the Eskimos, either knowingly or unconsciously, control their numbers to conform to the supporting capacity of the land."⁴

As it was considered unnatural for Inuit to remain unmarried, marriage at a

disease."

⁴ Rasmussen (1931:139) also observed that "it is solely economy that lies behind the custom that girls are killed at birth." Female children are an expense and when they are of an age to be of use, they marry and leave the family. Also, he pointed out, a woman nursing a female child decreases her chances of having a male. The prevalence of female infanticide among the Netsilik may be inferred from his report (p.141) that 18 marriages yielded 96 births, out of which 38 female babies were killed. As an aside, Weyer (1962:124-126) points out that several early explorers commented upon the low level of Inuit "fecundity" without considering the factors of infanticide, prolonged breastfeeding (to age four or five), and the high rate of mortality from other causes.

young age was the rule. According to Birket-Smith (1959:138), "the rule" was that men married as soon as they could "hunt sufficient food to keep a wife, the girls on reaching puberty and sometimes even before." Polygny was common when a man was a good hunter and able to support more than one wife, or when, due to infanticide, there was a shortage of women.⁵

There were no formal rules governing marriage, save that the espoused not be close relations nor bear the same name (Inuit names are genderless). Parents arranged marriages for their children when they were quite young, thus extending the kinship alliance. Since the bride moved to the home of the husband's parents, the need for the mother of the groom to have a helper was also a strong inducement for the marriage. Similarly, child adoption served to support the gender and age based division of labour (Dunning, cited in Damas, 1975:258-259), as well as extending alliances between kin and non-kin.

Means of subsistence

As for their food, so were the Eskimo dependent upon wildlife for the raw materials from which they made clothes, shelter, tools and weapons. In addition to animal skins, bones, antler, and ivory, raw materials consisted of snow, ice, stone and, occasionally, driftwood and grass. Although not entirely unknown, metal did not figure largely in Canadian Eskimo material culture. The Copper Eskimos who lived around Coronation Gulf had some familiarity with both copper and iron, but as Birket-Smith (1959:133) points out, they worked them by cold

⁵ Turner (1979:25) found that a good hunter might have three or four wives and mentioned an instance in which one man had five wives.

hammering, in the same way that the Greenlanders worked iron obtained from meteors, "that is to say, by the same method as any other 'stone.'"

Flint or other hard rock was used for arrow, lance and harpoon points as well as for scrapers, adzes and knives (Burch, 1987:4). Soapstone or steatite, the basis of the contemporary carving industry, was used only for oil lamps and pots.

Inuit developed what Birket-Smith (1959:137) refers to as an "extravagant" material culture,⁶ but this is not the place to enter into an exhaustive description of weapons and tools and their regional variations. The harpoon was the principal hunting weapon, but bows and arrows, bird darts and stone traps were also used. Fish were harpooned in leisters or, in a few western areas, caught in nets, and transportation was by kayak, umiak (a large skin boat), or sled and dogs.

An important feature of the means of subsistence utilized by Inuit hunters was that they were made from materials they procured themselves, often by-products of their food. They also made and/or procured the implements their wives used to accomplish their work: needles of bone or ivory; various flensing implements; pots and kudliks (lamps). For her part, the female made baskets from grass, pails from skins, thread from animal sinew, a lamp wick from moss, and bedding and the summer tent from animal skins.

Another important feature of the tools and implements utilized by Inuit is that they were owned by their makers/users. Although the land, sea and air were

⁶ Burch (1987:3) notes that the most "sophisticated" Inuit technology was used for marine mammal hunting: "Inuit could kill and retrieve anything from a 20 kg. seal to a 900 kg. walrus to a 50,000 ton bowhead whale."

for all to use, and although various rules governed the division of game among all members of a group no matter who felled it, pre-contact Inuit did practise some rights of private property. Indeed, personal ownership was such an acknowledged right among them that, as Birket-Smith (1959:146) remarked, "...it would be inconceivable, for instance, for even a parent to sell [trade] any of his children's toys without first asking permission of the youthful owners."

The idea of personal possession was most highly developed among the Greenland and Alaskan Eskimos, perhaps because of greater opportunities to accumulate wealth and greater exposure to outside practices,⁷ but, even among the poorer inland Caribou Inuit, the male laid claim to his hunting implements and kayak, while the female owned her lamp, cooking pots and other implements (Jenness, 1922:86; Birket-Smith, 1959:146; Oswalt, 1962:153). Rasmussen (1931:193) noted that upon marriage the woman brought her tools and implements as a trousseau, and these remained in her possession in the event of a separation. Clothing was also considered personal property (Birket-Smith, 1959:146; Rasmussen, 1931:193), as were found objects such as bits of copper and pyrites (Jenness, 1922:88).

Great value was placed upon belongings which were not easily replaced. Rasmussen (1931:193) relates the story of a woman who, having no soapstone cooking pot in her marriage outfit, "...bought one and paid for it -- of course with

⁷ Birket-Smith, who noted that in Alaska there was "no restriction on how much property an individual may possess," considered that the practice of accumulating "unproductive capital" came from the northwest coast Indians (1959:146-147).

her husband's approval -- with a newly-born child." Birket-Smith (1959:73) made a similar observation regarding the "price" of another prized possession: "In the woodless region around the Magnetic North Pole a wooden sledge is such a precious possession that a wife may be bought for one..."

Dogs were a highly valued resource owned/controlled by men although a woman might, according to Jenness (1922:88), own one or more. The accumulation of wealth in the form of dogs was, however, constrained by the necessity of feeding this living resource. As Rasmussen reported with reference to the Netsilik Eskimos (1931:148): "The difficulty of procuring dog feed necessitates the keeping of very few dogs. Many have only one, some two to four, and only very few of the most skilful hunters can permit themselves the luxury of what may be called a real team of seven to eight dogs." And Mathiassen reported (1928:85) that "only a few Iglulik Eskimos have a complete team," so that "almost every time they are going on a journey they have to borrow dogs from others..."

The large skin boat known as the umiak (or 'women's boat' because it was paddled by women) was a particularly valued possession, sometimes owned by one, and sometimes, by two or more families.

Apart from tangible items, amulets and shamanic powers could be owned by an individual. "Magic words and phrases" were also prized as personal property (Weyer, 1962:194), and Jenness (1922:92) refers to a man who agreed to provide a woman with food and clothing for the rest of her life in return for revealing "a few magic phrases."

Personal possessions could be bartered for, stolen, bequeathed or, in spite of scarcity, placed in graves. Both Hall (1970:527) and Birket-Smith (1959:159) remarked the practice of depositing personal possessions in the grave. According to Mary-Rousseliere (1984:440), Inuit also bequeathed their property and, if not allocated elsewhere, a man's property went to the oldest son, a woman's to the eldest daughter. Jenness (1922:92) says, however, that, among the Copper Eskimo, he was aware of "no priority of claim" on the part of elder children. Goods not placed on the grave were divided among the heirs of the deceased, with the children receiving "most or all of it." Distribution was not formalized, but took place after "peaceful discussion."⁸

Several writers have concluded that theft was unknown among Inuit, but this appears to have been a matter of expediency rather than an indicator of a communal attitude towards property. Jenness (1922:236) equated the absence of thievery among the Copper Eskimo, with the lack of privacy (as well as a natural honesty). Since it would be difficult to conceal stolen objects, theft was pointless. Inuit were not, however, as scrupulous about the belongings of strangers, including those of other Inuit (Weyer, 1962:217, citing Nelson, 1899). As the American explorer Hall, indicated (1970:228), before visiting in strange igloos he "delivered"

⁸ It is interesting to note Jenness' further comment (p.92) that "Implements and utensils of value that may be left on the grave are often recovered in after years by one or other of the survivors, when time has effaced the memory of their misfortune." Fleming (1965:170) also tells of a woman taking an ivory doll from an old grave, explaining that "the spirit of the dead child had long ago passed into another and she was free to appropriate the figure." At the time he was writing, "the custom had developed of replacing the actual implements after three days by models," a practice he attributes to the "scarcity of all materials in the Arctic," but which Inuit rationalized by saying that the spirits of the deceased required only "the spirit of the implements" (p.102).

everything he had on him "*as was customary with the Innuits*" into the hands of his Eskimo companion "for safekeeping" (emphasis added). This observation implies, of course, that thievery was to be expected among Inuit not known to each other.

It was considered a grave breach of etiquette to take food from another's cache *unless* one were in dire straits and in danger of starvation, and this relaxation of the rights of ownership in extreme situations is generally considered to have functioned as a form of insurance since anyone might find themselves in a similar situation (Weyer, 1962:188-189). It would surely have been futile to try to prevent starving people from helping themselves to food near to hand.

It is interesting to note that Inuit appear not to have had any concept paralleling our legalistic concept of extended ownership in which items not being used may be forbidden to others. As Birket-Smith (1959:146) noted: "Essentially the position is this: personal possession is conditioned by actual use of the property; a man who is not using his fox trap must allow another man to set it..."

Although the land could not be "owned," Inuit clearly had a sense of territory, which is different from treating it as communal property. As D'Anglure puts it (1984:486): "...despite the great mobility of the band, several generations could succeed each other in the same region. One always knew one's place of birth and a particular tie attached one to that place." Jenness (1922:91-92) considered that, for the Copper Eskimos,

...land is the property of the community which uses it as a hunting and fishing ground. Strangers have no rights there unless they are accepted as members of the tribe for the time being, and conform to its customs in such matters as the sharing of food.

It is important to realize that the Canadian Arctic is a vast area, comprising approximately forty per cent of the country's land mass. Numbering only several thousand, and dependent upon non-domesticated food sources, pre-contact Inuit did not settle in large numbers in one spot, but worked a particular area in shifting, but never very large, hunting aggregates. "Nomadic" does not imply constant travel to new places; Inuit travelled a route which brought them, seasonally, to the same places. Contact with others of their kind was sporadic and, often, hostile. Damas (1984a:393) makes the point, however, that rather than defended territories, "customary tribal hunting grounds seldom overlapped." As with so many pre-contact practices, the explanation for this probably derives from practical rather than ideological considerations. As was pointed out by Anders (1966:77), with reference to the east coast of Baffin Island: "The boundaries of each camp are mainly determined by the knowledge of the ice conditions of the area. That is, unless a hunter is familiar with the ice characteristics he will usually not hunt in the region." It was also practical in the sense that resources would not support a free-for-all situation.

Social relations of production

Depending upon the tasks at hand, the nuclear family unit was supplemented with other members of the extended family and, often, non-related affiliates, unfortunates who were "adopted" by the group. Citing Boas, Weyer (1962:208) remarked that, among the Central Eskimos, these fringe members were almost servants "...particularly bachelors without any relatives, cripples who are not able

to provide for themselves, or men who have lost their sledges and dogs."⁹ Turner (cited in Weyer, 1962:208) also remarked the "improvident" men in Hudson Strait who "must live with the others or dwell by themselves and pass a miserable existence, scarcely being noticed by their fellows even during a season of abundance."

In optimum hunting conditions, or when a larger labour force was required, families assembled into what Damas (1975:255) calls "bands." Bands were not synonymous with kinship although "there was sometimes a core kin group consisting of a powerful family whose relatives decided to live with them, and other families with less significant economic connections might attach themselves to this group" (Graburn and Strong, 1973:153). Smaller aggregates which could be comprised of one or several households were called "hunting groups" by Damas (1975:256, following Rogers) and "camps" by Graburn and Strong. I shall adopt Damas' usage here, and reserve "camps" to refer to the clusters that later formed around the trading posts.

Damas (1975:257) considers that "tribes" are yet a third unit, and refers to the identification made by members of the Fifth Thule Expedition (Rasmussen, Mathiassen, Birket-Smith) of the Copper, Iglulik, and Netsilik Eskimos. They were, Damas says, distinguished as tribes on the basis of "cultural differences," although he later (1984a:393) decided that their criteria for separating the Central

⁹ Alaskan Inuit practised slavery. Nelson (1899, cited in Weyer, 1962:208) claimed that "in the region of Bering Strait female captives taken in wars, unlike other captives, were commonly spared from death and taken as slaves."

Eskimo "tribes" is "not strongly supported." He noted, however, that there "are other criteria that do support the separation," namely, geneology and geography, since each of the "tribes" was "separated from the neighbouring ones by an expanse of usually uninhabited country." While there may be some grounds for designating tribes, it is important to note that there are no *political* grounds for doing so. As Vallee (1967a:21) points out, the anthropological designation of a group called the "Caribou Eskimos" [for instance], is "misleading" since the people it refers to had no "collective designation" to distinguish themselves from others. It should not, he says, be taken as a label "to designate a grouping of people who regard themselves as a separate interior group."

Regardless of what they are called, all groupings were for the purpose of work, their size and composition being determined by the seasonal tasks to be accomplished. In spring, Inuit hunted seals, whales and walrus by kayak and lived in skin tents. In summer, they travelled the land in search of caribou, wolves, bears, foxes and rabbits. Fall was the sewing period in preparation for winter, when the Inuit lived in snow houses (sometimes sod, stones, and whale bone were used). In winter, the main work was sealing at the breathing holes or hunting polar bears.

Although the various work groups were not strictly kinship based, affiliations were extended and affirmed through various practices which linked participants in reciprocal relationships: marriage; child betrothal (which put parents in kinship alliance even if the marriage never took place); spouse

exchange; adoption; naming newborns after deceased persons, and the institution of various partnerships such as wrestling, singing, or hunting (DIAND, 1986:16-17). Such alliances increased chances for survival.

Within groups, labour was co-operative, and the division of labour was age and gender-based, although not strictly so. As Mathiassen (1928:209-210) noted:

The distribution of labour between man and woman -- for there is no other distribution of labour -- is at once apparent: the man goes hunting, procures food and skins for the house and he is also the artisan who builds the house, makes the sledge, fashions his and his wife's implements, scrapes skins. The wife sews clothing, prepares the skin (except the scraping, with which the husband helps), attends to the lamp, cooks meat and looks after the children. But it is no rare occurrence for women to participate in the hunt, especially salmon fishing where, however, net fishing is always the task of the men, the women fishing with the hook.

Each person had to be skilled in all the tasks appropriate to his/her gender if the group was to function as a self-sufficient unit. Although some Inuit were better artisans than others, as D'Anglure (1984:492) points out, there was only occasional and limited technical specialization "when a particular talent distinguished an individual's performances from others." He gives the example of a particular family's experience of a region, type of game, or technique.

In larger aggregates, of course, the potential for relations of inequality is somewhat greater than in the smaller family unit which provides the opportunity for exploitation only between the sexes or age groups. In a group containing several adult male hunters, there exists the potential for exploitation of the producers, not that this was the case among pre-contact Inuit. As I shall discuss later, however, they were not strictly egalitarian.

As mentioned previously, there was no formal governance of Inuit social/work groups. As several writers (Hall, 1970:523-524; Turner, 1979:29, *et al*) have remarked, Inuit hunting groups were *guided*, as opposed to being *governed*, by an informal leader known as the *isumaitoq* (one who thinks).¹⁰ Usually, this was an older male¹¹ of demonstrated competence in the most important life skill, the procuring of food.¹² As Damas (1975:257-258) says:

The powers of the *isumataaq* [sic] seem to have been fairly clear. The head of the extended family unit controlled decisions such as those regarding adoption and sharing of possessions and products of the hunt and trade; he also made decisions as to the hunt and the movement of his groups.

Graburn and Strong (1973:163) considered that "secular leaders...are leaders primarily because they can bestow economic benefits upon their followers."

Personality was also important, and the *isumaitoq*'s authority was doubly assured if, in addition to possessing valued skills, he also possessed an *umiak*, the large skin boat capable of carrying 20 or 30 people and used for moving families from one camp to another as well as for whale hunting.

The subtle "style" of Inuit leadership may have misled some observers into thinking that it was entirely a matter of being deferred to rather than of wielding

¹⁰ Graburn and Strong (1973:153) contrast this situation to that in Alaska where there were more permanent villages and the leader "may have been considered a 'chief' in that he had more formal authority in social, ritual, and economic affairs and was more likely to retain his position permanently and perhaps even pass it on to his son."

¹¹ Women were excluded from the position because of the necessity of providing leadership in the hunt.

¹² Damas (1975:257) has determined that, for the *Iglulingmiut*, the *isumaitoq* was usually "the head of the largest segment of close kindred."

authority, but the exercise of authority among Inuit may not have been as innocent as some have inferred. Birket-Smith (1959:53) says, for example, that "an outstanding person in the Eskimo community can maintain his position because he does not place himself outside public opinion, but leads it." Also, as Mathiassen (1928:209) explains:

Within each settlement, which as a rule comprises a few families, often connected by kinship, there is as a rule an older man who enjoys the respect of the others and who decides when a move is to be made to another hunting centre, when a hunt is to be started, how the spoils are to be divided, when the dogs are to be fed, etc. He is called *isumaitoq* [sic], "he who thinks." It is not always the oldest man, but as a rule an elderly man who is a clever hunter or, as head of a large family, exercises great authority. He cannot be called a chief; there is no obligation to follow his counsel; but they do so in most cases, partly because they rely upon his experience, *partly because it pays to be on good terms with this man.* (emphasis added)

The leadership style is consistent with the oft-remarked non-assertive Inuit demeanour. As Birket-Smith commented (1959:52): "It is difficult for an average Eskimo to assert himself against others. It would never occur to him to give an order, even if it were necessary." However, to quote Birket-Smith again (1959:53): "Rule by public opinion need not be synonymous with democracy."

There are subtle as well as more overt forms of coercion and, as Mathiassen was astute enough to remark, Inuit followed the erstwhile commander because it paid to be on "good terms" with him (presumably because he had the power to impede or promote one's interests). This is an important point; for, it destroys the prevailing stereotype of primitive Inuit living an idyllically egalitarian existence.

It is important to note, however, that the leader's authority was not legally enshrined *and*, like those whose loyalty he commanded, he was a producer. In fact his authority *depended* upon his ability to produce. I have not been able to find any evidence concerning the likelihood of the isumaitoq's retaining his position of relative power in the event of declining competence. Given a very low life expectancy, this is unlikely to have presented much of a problem. Apparently, too, different people could assume a temporary leadership role when they had specific skills to offer, such as being able to navigate during a storm (DIAND, 1986:16).

Although there was no institutionalized inequality, there *was* one social position which came close to allowing its incumbent ascendancy over the community; namely, the office of shaman (angagok). Ostensibly a religious leader, the angagok, who it is important to note could be male or female, sometimes wielded a double authority by combining the function of isumaitoq (Smith, 1984:354; see also Graburn and Strong, 1973:153-154). In any case, given that religious practices were believed to have economic repercussions, it is inaccurate to relegate the influence of the shamans to the religious domain. Their perceived ability to bring food might even account for their sometimes being accorded the status of secular leader, isumaitoq, as well.

The angagok played a role in all aspects of Inuit life, as Weyer (1962:422) put it, "in all the affairs of life in which the element of luck figures prominently...sickness, death, fluctuations of game supply, and the vagaries of the

weather." The Inuit angagok is generally considered a "benefactor" to the community; for, as Birket-Smith (1959:171) says, he or she fights against hostile spirits" (visiting upon occasion, the old woman at the bottom of the sea who controls the fortunes of the hunt). This role is, of course, not peculiar to Inuit; shamans are also found in many other cultures (Weyer, 1962:425).

Not everyone could attain to the position of angagok, although the mechanism by which this role was transmitted is rather ambiguous. Apparently, Inuit believed that shamans were born, not made. As Birket-Smith (1959:171) observed: "An Eskimo almost never becomes a shaman of his own free will. It is *si!a* or the spirits themselves who, through dreams or some other manner, appoint the chosen one." How can we explain, then, the fact that shamans were often the children of shamans, and Jenness' observation (1922:92) that among the Copper Eskimos shamanistic power was a kind of intangible property that could be bought and sold, or bequeathed?

There is evidence to consider the practice of shamanism to be more a commercial venture than a manifestation of the supernatural. Indeed, even though one was presumably endowed at birth with supernatural power, training for the profession was essential. We might choose to call this initiation rather than training were it not (again) for the commercial nature of the procedure. The angagok trainer did not pass on his skills free of charge. As Rasmussen (in Weyer, 1962:433) remarked:

Sometimes the instructor, having initiated a novice into the mysteries of the angagok's art and having helped him to obtain a familiar spirit, receives

recompense for his service. At Iglulik it was customary for the beginner to give a tent pole to his instructor, wood being scarce in these regions...other instances will be recalled in which a familiar spirit is actually bought, sometimes for a very high price.

Once initiated/trained, the angagok expected payment for services provided to individuals, such as curing illness or making a barren wife pregnant. Hall (1970:525) reported from first hand experience:

If a person falls ill the angeko [sic] is sent for. He comes, and, before proceeding to his peculiar work, demands payment for his services, stating his price, usually some article to which he has taken a liking. Whatever he demands must be given at once, otherwise the expected good result of the ministration would not follow.

He tells of a woman giving her indispensable cooking pan to a female angagok. She had given, he says (p.526):

...nearly all her valuable things, even to some of her garments [but] I was hardly astonished, for I knew that the Innuits [sic] considered that in proportion to the value of what they give for an angeko's services, so are the benefits conferred upon the sick."¹³

Clearly, as Weyer (1962:433) notes:

The angagok does not undergo the trials of his preparation simply for the spiritual satisfaction of approaching closer than ordinary mortals to the mysteries of the supernatural. It is to his economic advantage to learn the art of curing disease and bestowing good luck in hunting. The angagok's specialized ability commands a price.

Payment to the angagok could be "substantial," according to Stefansson (cited in Weyer, 1962:434), often "as high as an umiak with equipment;" for, "it was well known that unless one paid the shaman well he could not get cured." Jenness

¹³ Hall had a particular dislike for the shaman with whom he was in contact, considering the man to be a tyrant. He says (p.145) that he ordered the Eskimos "to do this and do that, and with a single exception, all obeyed." It was Hall's opinion that anyone, man or woman, could become an angagok "if shrewd enough to obtain a mental ascendancy over others" (p.525).

(1922:195) noted that payment did not depend upon results.

According to Graburn and Strong (1973:169-170), angagoks were not above using their powers in their own self-interest: "Shamans often used their powers for their own advancement; they might use evil magic by sending their familiar spirits to harm someone with whom they had quarrelled or whose wife they wished to use." Similarly, Vallee (1967a:175) was told by informants that some angagoks abused "their powers to kill and bewitch those who stood in the way of their desires," and "an *angakok* [sic] who used his powers for selfish ends could literally get away with murder..." They succeeded because people were afraid of their power. Shamans were also allowed to enforce punishment against those violating taboos, and Marsh (1987:138) says that these could be "quite remunerative for the angagok."

Lest it appear that the angagok is a worldly mercenary ruthlessly exploiting his or her hapless relatives and neighbours, it should be noted that a fee for service was exacted only in the case of an individual seeking benefits. Angagoks had two realms of activity: on the personal level, they cured physical ailments, and on the social level, they attempted to ensure a successful hunt, good weather *etc.* They expected no payment for their efforts in the latter sphere (Weyer, 1962:434-435). Of course, any results they obtained in relation to the hunt were as much in their own interest as they were in the interest of the community.

Shamans were feared, but not universally respected by Inuit. As Birket-Smith says (1929:259):

Ordinarily only the shamans have stood out from among the mass, but, be it noticed, without actually enjoying any great respect for that reason. A clever shaman may possess great power because he is clever and feared, not actually because he is a shaman. And a poor shaman never attains the same level as regards respect as an ordinary skilful hunter.

The shaman, then, did not enjoy prestige because of his office, but because of his individual worthiness. He also had to get his own food, although he could supplement his efforts with the "fees" he was paid by his fellows. I believe this fee served as an equalizing force, neutralizing the shaman's potential to exercise outright tyranny as well, of course, as neutralizing his altruistic potential. It placed him in a reciprocal relationship with others of the group; they depended upon him, but, in a more concrete way, *he* depended upon *them*. Clearly, the shaman cannot be considered an exploiting figure. As Birket-Smith (1959:171) noted:

The shamans do not constitute a separate social class. They live and hunt exactly like any other member of the community even if they are paid when their assistance is entreated, and they dress like ordinary people do. Only among the Central tribes will they fasten strips of caribou skin and small bone carvings of human figures, harpoons, knives etc. to their belts. All these are gifts, 'for presents give strength,' and the donors are confident that the spirit helpers will recognize them by their gifts and therefore will never do them any harm. The shamans are respected and may even be feared, but their authority depends wholly on their own personality. I have known some who were in really high esteem and others --inefficient hunters and poor devils on the whole -- who were met with a shrug of the shoulders and a half-indulgent smile by their own camp-fellows.

Shamans could never be considered as constituting a class, given that they were isolated individuals with no group solidarity. As Vallee (1967a:173) expresses it: "The *angakoks* were not grouped into a priesthood, but operated as independent practitioners." Bishop Marsh (1987:134), probably referring to a later time, says, however, that there could be from one to thirty angagoks in a village and "they

banded together in a lodge and supported one another in their controls over the community itself." They spoke, as some continue to do, in their own language, an archaic form of the Eskimo tongue, which is an indication of some kind of solidarity, as is the requirement for initiation into the rank, if we may call it that, through ordeal and apprenticeship. Although the shaman was well positioned to foster his or her self interest, the important thing was that inequality was not institutionalized, but rested upon one individual's ability to influence another.

To sum up, then, although some members of the community (the isumaitok and the angagok) were more influential than others, this influence was not institutionalized, but depended mainly upon their being able to, or being perceived to be able to, confer some economic benefit upon the group. Vallee (1967a:173) writes that the angagoks were "graded" by others "according to their efficacy" and "good ones were in constant demand, enjoying considerable power, prestige, and comparative wealth." He notes further: "The Eskimo respect for power is not a post-Kabloona phenomenon." Apart from this, of course, distinctions in competence were made all down the line.

There was little distinction between rich and poor, since the general poverty in which all Inuit lived worked against the accumulation of wealth. Besides, there was little to accumulate besides food and dogs, with their attendant disadvantages of having to be stored or fed. It should be noted, however, that there was no ideology *opposed* to the accumulation of wealth, and Alaskan and Greenland Inuit had no scruples against accumulating property.

The precondition for accumulation is the presence of a surplus. This was virtually non-existent among Canadian Inuit, but there was, albeit limited, some surplus production of food, described by Weyer (1962:188) as "the most important capital of the Eskimo." As I suggested earlier, food is an ephemeral form of wealth with a limited "shelf life" as it were.¹⁴ Perhaps for this reason, as well as because it is a form of insurance, the food one obtained could not be hoarded, but was subject to rules of sharing. Although surplus food could be cached, and was considered to be exclusively owned, when it was brought out for eating, it was eaten communally (Damas, 1984a:402). Like incest and the deliberate violation of *taboos*, hoarding would be punished by the group, with punishment usually taking the form of gossiping about, or in extreme cases, abandoning or executing the offender.

Food sharing: "An expedient adjustment to irregularities in food supply"¹⁵

Given the extreme situation of the pre-contact Eskimo, a surplus of food was always problematic.¹⁶ Seldom did a hunter obtain more food than was required for his immediate family and, if he did, it had to be shared with the larger group. It is this practice more than anything that accounts for the common perception of pre-contact Inuit society as communal. As Birket-Smith (1959:146) observed:

¹⁴ Perhaps it is because of the perishable qualities of food that, according to Rasmussen (1931:60), among the Netsilik, "it is a law...that as soon as a cache is more than a winter and a summer old, it falls to the one who has use for it."

¹⁵ Weyer's felicitous phrase (1962:188).

¹⁶ Birket-Smith (1959:92-93) refers to the information obtained by Rasmussen during his stay with the Netsilik in 1923 that a good hunter usually got 20 or 30 seals over the winter, and better hunters might get 70 or 80.

"One essential reason for describing the Eskimo society as communistic is that the spirits of the chase do not exclusively belong to the hunter who secured them." It seems to me, however, that there is a further requisite: if a truly communal approach can be said to exist, and that is that the distribution must be according to *need*.

The rules governing food distribution, a term which is, I think, more apt than "sharing," varied and, although several writers have attempted to codify them, common denominators are somewhat elusive (Damas, 1972:224, 1984b:402-403; Rasmussen, 1932:106-107). Apart from sharing partnerships, various criteria governing food distribution are proffered: the kind and size of animal; who killed it; who was present during the hunt and the cutting up; the amount of food then available to the group (Rasmussen, 1932:106-107; Birket-Smith, 1959:146; Damas, 1972:224, 1984b:402-403; Weyer, 1962:176-186; Graburn, 1969:66-70). Any surplus remaining after the general distribution would be stored and, as discussed earlier, considered to be the personal property of whoever cached it, rights which were violated with impunity if another were starving. Also, after the formal distribution, food was regularly shared with visitors or work companions (Graburn, 1969:70).

Practices surrounding the sharing of food varied over time and place, leading Weyer (1962:176) to comment that "the apportioning of the products of the hunt is sometimes so wide as to include the entire settlement, sometimes so narrow as to be limited to a family or even the individual." It should be noted as well that a further distribution, based on age and gender, was effected at the level

of the household. Although rules covering distribution cannot be generalized, there was one overriding consideration. As D'Anglure (1984:490) expresses it:

Circumstances played an important role in this division, which operated maximally in times of scarcity, but was not necessary in periods of abundance, and disappeared during times of famine when domestic units were more concerned with survival than with sharing.

It is telling that whatever degree of communalism may have existed broke down, as several writers have indicated, when starvation threatened (Graburn, 1969:73; D'Anglure 1984:490 *et al*). At such times, not only were non-producing members not fed, but they were abandoned, or even killed. There are many tales of parents eating their children or each other, and of murders being committed to provide food for starving companions. Communal ideals were quickly forgotten as individuals scrambled to survive.

To return to my main point, the principles governing food sharing were not, it appears, based solely, or even mainly, upon need. Neither were they disinterested. Birket-Smith (1959:146) noted that although food sharing was based upon "very definite rules" which varied from place to place, "division is not equal." As indicated earlier, most analysts of this phenomenon consider that sharing served as insurance. Summarizing mores regarding food distribution, Weyer (1962:189) concluded "individual interests rather than group interests" were "dominant." It was his view that:

The group serves as an insurance organization...Fundamentally, it is not solicitude toward the group as a group that prompts the individual to forfeit his premium; rather it is the conviction that unless he does so he will not derive the benefits when his personal or family interests are at stake.

Further: "Through cooperation within the group, the ups and downs which would endanger the members if they were isolated are smoothed out." The one exception which he mentions is when the young hunter shares his catch with the woman who served as his mother's midwife.

Clearly, there is also in food distribution practices some potential for secondary gain. As Graburn (1969:66) says: "In theory there was complete reciprocity: each person took from the group and contributed to its welfare as much as the next." Invariably, of course, "some men were better hunters than others and consistently contributed more to the 'common pot.'" *Most important*, as he goes on to say, is that although "these men took less than they gave...reciprocity was fulfilled *in the form of the prestige and followers they gained*" (emphasis added). Food sharing was not an ideological practice; for, as Damas (1972:236) noted, the "enforcement of sharing procedures did not rest on supernatural sanctions but rather on the force of public opinion."

Again, it appears that the communalism and egalitarianism attributed to pre-contact Inuit is misleading. While food sharing may appear to be a communal practice, it was, rather, as Weyer (1962:188) succinctly put it, "an expedient adjustment to irregularities in the food supply" and, possessing the potential for secondary gain in the form of prestige and power, it was, I believe, a significant precursor to the commodification of food and its by-products.

Relations of exchange

Pre-contact Inuit clearly had a sense of value, prerequisites for trading, a practice

which supplemented food distribution. Contrary to what is commonly supposed, it appears that the exchange of value was not necessarily superimposed on indigenous practices by Europeans. As Rasmussen reported (1932:52,62):

...it had already become clear to me that, with the exception of everything that the terms of company and hospitality imply, one got nothing without payment from the Netsilingmiut; even for conversations for scientific purposes they wanted payment..."Well, I'll relate some tales; but a pocket-knife -- I suppose I won't get that?"

I find it interesting that the early explorers and ethnographers often refer to 'buying' and 'selling' when describing Eskimo practices. Such usage *might* merely reflect the author's preconceptions,¹⁷ but it strikes me as significant that, whereas the Europeans who first came in contact with Inuit were greatly impressed by and wrote in detail concerning the exotic elements of Inuit culture (hygiene, food, dress, *etc.*), they were apparently unimpressed by any greatly divergent attitude towards ownership and exchange. La Potherie, a member of the 1697 French expedition to Hudson Bay, reported (in Avataq, 1990:38-39) that Inuit "gave him [a colleague] to understand that they were well enough off to trade." The Eskimos came on board ship and proceeded to trade even the clothes they wore for trivia -- bells, playing cards, old sheet music, *etc.*, -- which was nonetheless, La Potherie says, "precious to them."

Coates (1985:148) has concluded from his research into the early fur trade period (1910s and 1920s) that, although Inuit demands "fell short of the capitalistic fervor of the whalers or traders," they differed from the less acquisitive Indians in

¹⁷ Indeed, as Oswalt (1979:49) points out: "If there was a failing of explorers that was greater than all others in the interpretation of Eskimos, it was their Westernization of Eskimo concepts."

that "they recognized good commercial prospects, found much of the technology useful and saw value in the private accumulation of wealth." He refers to F.H. Kitto who recorded, he says, "the extent of this materialism." Also, Graburn's description of the daily exchanges in pre-contact Inuit society are remarkably similar to the arrangements which prevail in rural societies in southern Canada (perhaps anywhere), whereby neighbours keep a tally of favours owed and pool labour to erect barns, *etc.* Graburn writes (1969:71-72) that among Inuit:

Help was exchanged between those who were undertaking tasks greater than one person could carry out, such as a caribou hunt or the building of an umiak. Help and food were often in the same sphere of exchange. When a man helped a widow to erect a snow house, he would get a meal, or when a widower did a favor for a woman, she might soften his boots.

In addition to building up credit by sharing one's catch and laying some away for bad times, some Inuit were able to accumulate food and animal by-products to be traded outside the family band, for tangible or intangible items. As Birket-Smith (1929:147) noted:

The trading connexions of primitive peoples are often much more comprehensive than is generally thought, and among the Eskimos there was, before the advent of the trading posts undermined it, a considerable intercourse between the different groups.

There are numerous mentions of trading across group boundaries in the literature. Mathiassen (1928:101-102) refers to stories of the Aivilik "buying" (his word) wood in exchange for dogs from the Qaernermiut and, during the time he spent with them, exchanging European trade goods for lamps and musk-ox dippers from the Netsilik. D'Anglure (1984:479) notes that Inuit in northern Quebec "met and conducted economic and matrimonial exchanges with people from the interior and

the islands." The islanders needed caribou skins and clothing, and the inlanders needed dogs and ivory. Rasmussen (1931:26-27) tells how the most skilful hunters accumulated large stores of meat and undertook long journeys "for the purpose of bartering for the precious things they longed for" (usually iron and wood). Birket-Smith (1959:108) observed that the inland tribes undertook "regular journeys to the arctic coast every spring in order to buy seal oil, baleen for fishing lines, walrus ivory, etc., which they pay for with caribou and wolverine skins, snowshoes, and other inland products."

Referring to Sahlins' point "that food does not enter into systems of direct exchange or trade," Damas (1972:238) stresses that this is not the case with trade among the central Eskimos. The only thing of value the Netsilik had to trade, for instance, was animal products -- horn, deerskin, musk-ox and deer meat and fish - - "all products prized by the more sea-oriented Iglulik." Inuit sometimes even bought and sold women and children. As Rasmussen (1931:193) observed: "Adoptive children are always bought and the price for them varies greatly, although it is always high."¹⁸

Alaskan Inuit staged great trading fairs similar to the potlatch of the northwest coast Indians, but these were unknown among Canadian Inuit. There were, however, trading centres which Birket-Smith (1959:149) says were at good hunting places "near the boundary between the different groups." Rasmussen

¹⁸ According to Birket-Smith (1959:141), the price for a son might be (post-contact, of course) a frying pan or a handful of nails, the value of which must be considered as relative to their scarcity.

(1931:401) refers to "the great trade fair at Akilineq, where they met both Caribou Eskimos from Baker Lake and Hikoligjuaq and the coast dwellers from the shores of Queen Maud's Sea, Victorialand and sometimes even from Hudson Bay."

Given the miles to be covered, trading voyages might last years.

Before turning to a discussion of pre-contact collective identity, I want to make one final comment about relations of production and exchange. Although relations of exchange may have resulted in a transfer of surplus value, trading was conducted on the basis of need and equivalency was reckoned on that basis as well, and exerted no transforming effect upon the indigenous mode of production. Nor did the pre-contact social relations of production; for, individuals controlled no means of production other than their own. As Meillassoux (1972:101) suggests, however, control of "the means of human reproduction: subsistence and women," may be more important than control of the means of material production (as is the case in agricultural self-sustaining formations). Among pre-contact Inuit, the exercising of territorial rights, the various rules governing the size and composition of hunting aggregations and food sharing practices effectively controlled subsistence. And the practice of infanticide, wife exchange, child betrothal and spousal exchange were means by which control over human reproduction, hence control over subsistence, was exerted for the benefit of the group.

Pre-contact collective Identity

Trading involved contact with other Inuit groups as well as Indians, thus providing a foil for ethnic identity. Ironically, although Inuit are, even now, considered to be

an homogeneous group, they did not, until recently, perceive themselves to be a group with a common history and interests. The Arctic was populated for many, many years with hundreds of discrete hunting groups, bands and, perhaps, tribes, but none of these constituted, in the words of Mathiassen (1928:209) a "political or social unity." Some Inuit bands referred to themselves by the use of place names bearing the suffix *miut* meaning "people of" as in, for example, *Puvirnitungmiut* which means "the people of the place of the putrid flesh," or in *Netsilingmiut*, which means "people of the seal." These kinds of distinctions continue to be made, according to a publication by the Northern Quebec Inuit Association (1974:11) in which it is stated:

We call ourselves by different names. If we live on the Hudson Bay coast, we are known as *Siquinirmiut* -- "the People of the Sun." If we live farther North on the Hudson's Strait, we are known as *Tarramiut* -- "The People of the Shadow." If we live near Ungava Bay, we are known as *Ungavamiut* -- "the People from the Other Side."

As for a shared history, Inuit believe that, before them, the land was inhabited by the non-Inuit people referred to as *Tunrit*, and several myths have to do with Inuit outsmarting these legendary giants.¹⁹ For the period we are considering, however, Inuit were in contact with each other, and with Indians.

Contrary to the common perception of the non-warlike nature of the Inuit, hostility within the group appears to have been the norm. There was a lot of space in which to move without encountering other bands, but, when a strange caravan conveying strangers was sighted, it was under suspicion until friendly

¹⁹ It is generally considered that the Tunrit were the Dorset ancestors of the Thule (Anders, 1965:50).

intentions were communicated. There are several mentions in the literature of forms of protocol designed to signal peaceful intent in such situations. The Copper Eskimos, for instance, held their arms over their heads "to show that they carried no weapons" (Weyer, 1962:160), and among the Netsilingmiut, Rasmussen (1931:203) noted that:

When the sledges had been stopped at a distance of about a mile from the settlement a woman was sent up to tell who they were and that no hostile feelings were entertained. Only when the truce-bearer had been well received could the rest drive up without hesitation.

Rasmussen (1931:202) considered that Inuit lived naturally in a state of war, and he was told by an Eskimo near Wager Bay that "in the olden days, there was always war between the people here and the tribes from Repulse Bay," and this had resulted in near extermination of the Wager Bay population (cited in Ross, 1975:149, footnote 3, *chap ix*). Ross notes that this account was corroborated by Comer. The general impression that Inuit lived together in harmony is based upon the lack of organized battle, but that kind of war was not likely to have occurred among groups averaging less than 50 people and preoccupied with finding food. A more accurate comparison would be to the family or blood feud, and there are many mentions in the literature of vengeance being exacted by blood relatives.

Hostility among Inuit was not entirely absent even when contact was deliberately sought for trading purposes. Rasmussen (1931:41) notes, for instance, that while trading at Akilineq "as a rule" was a peaceful affair, "it did happen occasionally that fierce battles were fought with the bow and arrow, many people

being killed."

The suspicion under which groups outside one's own hunting group or band were held posed marriage problems. Damas (1984b:397) notes, for instance, that the Copper Eskimos appear to have avoided intermarrying with other groups and "represented a close approach to a discrete marriage universe or deme." Feuds and wars were often over women, with women being stolen from other bands, presumably to avoid marriage between close blood relations.

The problem is what to make of this *intra*-group hostility. Inuit were family-oriented, but, in their case, the family was virtually synonymous with "community," and kinship was extended by various alliances, such as child betrothal and naming. Damas (1975:258) summarizes the alliances within and outside the kinship system for the Copper, Netsilik and Iglulik groups: spouse-exchange partners, child betrothal mates, adoptive pairings, name-avoidance pairs, rough-joking partners, mock antagonists, seal-sharing partnerships, age mate alliances, trading partners, dancing partners and namesake relationships. These relationships served an important function in that they helped ensure survival by increasing beyond one's kindred the number of persons who would be concerned for one's welfare. Jenness (1922:87) considered, for instance, that spouse-exchange ensured safe travel through areas where one had no kin, and Damas (1975:259) considered that: "The structured seal-sharing partnerships of the Copper and Netsilik Eskimo do not extend kinship but rather bridge the gaps between family groups for economic purposes."

In the pre-contact period, there was no impetus for Inuit to think of themselves as a distinct people beyond relationships and practices which determined local affiliations. This is not to say, however, that they did not acknowledge similarities among Inuit *per se*. They made distinctions between Inuit and *Tunrit* and, as is clear from some of their myths, contact with Indians elicited a different kind of response than did contact with others of their kind. As Weyer says (1962:152), Eskimos considered that the Indians constituted an "out-group," and contact with them was always tense, if not hostile. As early as 1720, the Hudson's Bay Company was reporting massacres of Inuit by Indians (Arima, 1984:459), and Rasmussen (1931:121-122) quoted an Eskimo informant, Qaqortingneq, who said:

We counted the *Tunrit* a foreign people, yet they spoke our language, lived with us and had the same customs as we had; the *Itqilit* [Indians] are quite different...Yet we are distant relations of theirs, so to speak...half man and half dog children of a girl married to a dog...she made magic over them and, as they drifted away shouted that they were always to be at enmity with people. That is how the *Itqilit* became wicked people and there has always been enmity between them and the Inuit...the people who used to go up to *Akilineq* to trade in the old days have sometimes seen them and told of their cruelty...

Freuchen (1961:29) even considered that Indians might have been responsible for driving Inuit to the Arctic coast. Certainly, tales of the massacres that resulted when the two groups met abound in the literature, with only infrequent mention of relatively peaceful trading relations (see Arima, 1984:459). Graburn (1969:76), for one, sees hostility as the norm between the two groups, and considers that early

attempts at trading were probably due to the intervention of the white man:²⁰

All my many informants, both Eskimo and Indian stated that the Eskimos and Indians of the area [northern Quebec] had as little to do with each other as possible before the white man arrived, except when an opportunity presented for one group to surprise and kill the other. The Eskimos thought the Indians were aggressive, militant poachers. The Indians thought the Eskimos...were crude people who behaved like animals and did not even know they had souls! (see also Arima, 1984:459).

Graburn comments further that his informants "advanced no economic motive for this warfare,"²¹ but he notes that "quite often...both groups were out hunting the same group of caribou and each would gladly raid the other's caches."

Not all writers agree, however, that relations between Inuit and Indians can be characterized as unrelieved hostility. With reference to Labrador Inuit and Indians, Taylor (1984:509) considers, for instance, that "early relations may have been characterized more by avoidance than hostility, with limited trade and social interaction becoming more common after the advent of European settlement." Smith (1984:347-348) also implies a mutual avoidance in the Mackenzie Delta. Taking a middle position, and citing several authorities, Arima (1984:459) strikes a compromise position, maintaining that "Inuit-Indian relations were variable with both hostilities and trade occurring."

²⁰ Jenness (1922:47) would agree with Graburn that trading between Indians and Eskimos was the result of outside intervention. He reports that it was Stefansson who was responsible for bringing the Eskimos and Indians of Great Bear Lake together in 1910, and "since then they have regularly visited the lake each summer and traded their dogs for guns and ammunition." before that "they were afraid of the Indians."

²¹ The Indians told him they "used to enjoy it" and the Eskimos claimed "they only attacked the Indians in revenge" (Graburn, 1969:76). Graburn considers that the Eskimo were generally the losers in clashes with Indians, and this may, perhaps, explain why his Eskimo informants took up, as they claimed, a defensive rather than an offensive strategy.

There was, however, some voluntary intermarriage and adoption of children between Indians and Eskimos according to Smith (1984:348, citing Stefansson), and there are examples of trading partnerships being formed between the two groups. The important thing is that Indians were treated as an out-group by, it seems, all groups of Inuit. They were also distinguished from, and treated differently than other Inuit, in spite of a lack of solidarity among the scattered Inuit groups. Hostilities towards Indians may have provoked the first manifestations of ethnic solidarity among Inuit, and, perhaps making more of it than he intended, Graburn's comment (1969:76) that fights usually broke out when Inuit and Indians were hunting the same caribou, may be an indicator that this fledgling solidarity was a response to competition for resources. If this is an accurate assumption, it would have to be considered a secondary phenomenon arising out of the primary economic conflict rather than a "natural" god-given line of affiliation. At any rate, it was not just Indians who elicited a hostile response, but anyone outside of one's band who came into one's hunting territory. This was true for Europeans, too, although the response was mitigated by the fact that Europeans had things Inuit wanted.

The most we can say at this stage concerning a collective identity among pre-contact Inuit was that the unit with which one identified was small, and relatively stable, its size varying according to the seasonal nature of the hunt as well as the normal cycle of birth and death. Group solidarity was assured through kinship or other forms of alliance, and collective identity (as "the people of the

seal," *etc.*) was synonymous with membership in a producing/consuming unit which acted defensively in a number of instances, including when its economic livelihood was threatened.

Conclusion

The problem now is how to characterize the pre-contact mode of production. Pre-contact Inuit were involved in what is usually described as a hunting and gathering economy in which power relations were of a deferential sort, but as Clammer points out (1975:223, citing Marx): "A simple description of an economy does not exhaust the concept of mode of production."

The work that has been done towards identification of non-capitalist modes of productions is, say Copans and Seddon (1978:38), "crudely empirical" and based upon African fieldwork. A rough list of *pre* or *non*-capitalist modes of production, with no evolutionary significance has resulted: cynergetic (hunting), lineage and segmentary, tribal-village, tributary, Asiatic and African.²² The problem with this method is that it could result in an endless list of different kinds of modes of production, distinguished by regional or historical peculiarities. Also, it provides no basis for comparative analysis. A better method, I posit, is to consider all modes of production on a continuum which has as its two extremes, capitalism and non-capitalism or communalism, the pure form of either existing only in theory.

²² See also McIllassoux (1972:97-98) who considers it unfortunate that many anthropologists have "followed Marx in the weakest area of his analysis: the endless reconstruction of a succession of hypothetical pre-capitalist formations." They are, he says, "content to debate whether a particular area is to be classified as belonging to the 'asiatic' or to the 'germanic' modes of production, without any investigation in depth and mostly without doing their own fieldwork."

In reality, a mode of production, indigenous or not, can be analyzed according to the balance maintained between the polar forces of capitalism and communalism, the essential contradiction. All theoretical modes of production embody both competitive and communal practices, and it is the weighting of each which will determine the character of a particular, historical, social formation. Thus each mode contains, as we have been told, "the seeds of its own destruction."

Proceeding in this manner, it makes little, if any, sense to worry about identifying various "impure" modes of production although, surely, this can be done. The urge to identify, *i.e.*, isolate different kinds of modes of production is, I suggest, a vestige of the old anthropology which neglected to see societies/cultures/modes in relation to other societies/cultures/modes.

Since we know at the outset that change in pre-contact Inuit practices was towards capitalist practices, the best course, I suggest, is to label the pre-contact ensemble of practices an indigenous mode of production which conveys the idea that it developed in response to factors other than contact with another mode of production. This makes, I think, eminently more sense than attempting to categorize it as "primitive communism" or, as I am tempted to do here, since we know the outcome, as "primitive" capitalism. As we have seen, there were both communal and competitive elements present in the pre-contact mode of production, and to read it as purely or mostly communal is an error, due, perhaps, to a neglect of the hidden structures. Certainly, Inuit shared their food, but this had the effect of minimizing risks to self at a later date. Sharing was not

disinterested. Certainly, they had no enshrined leadership, but this allowed for the exercising of another kind of authority, family (*i.e.*, age and gender) based. The land and its resources were not personally owned/controlled, a stricture which had the effect of ensuring subsistence production and perpetuating the group. And, as we have seen, territorial rights were exerted by hunting groups, and means of subsistence were personally owned and controlled.

No doubt there are features of the pre-contact mode upon which a communal mode *could* have been built -- for example, free and cooperative labour -- and these, it may turn out, will rear their heads to resist capitalist take-over. One thing is clear, however, from the evidence in this chapter, and that is that there were many features of the indigenous mode of production which were not inimical to involvement in the capitalist mode of production, and these will also have important repercussions for the degree of resistance or cooperation mounted in the transformation process. Stopping short of staking claims, pre-contact Inuit exerted rights over customary hunting territories. They understood the concept of exchanging value for value.²³ The cooperative nature of their work was based upon expediency and, most significant, in times of starvation, was replaced with individually competitive behaviour. Also, there is no evidence to suggest that Canadian Inuit were any more averse to amassing personal wealth than were their cousins in Alaska and Greenland. Furthermore, certain practices such as child

²³ Neathy (1984:383-384) refers to an incident recorded in Miertsching concerning McClure who found the inhabitants of an isolated settlement on Victoria Island "who practiced barter but seemed not to have the Europeans' conception of a gift." A young woman offered McClure her baby in exchange for a shawl he had wrapped around her, intending it as a gift.

betrothal and the killing of female babies *could*, as Meillassoux (1972:101) pointed out, be an important mechanism of control over means of human reproduction, hence subsistence, and therefore an incipient relation of exploitation, but it is not known *who* controlled these practices. It might have been the male head of household, the female head of household, the isumaitoq, the shaman (who could be female), the hunting group, or the band, or various and/or varying combinations of these. Also, except in the extreme case of starvation, decisions affecting subsistence benefitted the group as a whole and not any segment of it. It cannot be assumed that decisions were made by men for women. Indeed, a recent publication from the Inuit Women's Association (Pauktuutit, 1989:12) puts a new twist on things by suggesting that men and women were equal partners, with women being publicly deferential and privately influential in decision-making.

A further reason for avoiding the term "primitive capitalism," is that the capitalist mode of production is distinguished by the commodification of labour power, creating surplus value which accrues to the owner's benefit. Clearly, this situation was not present to any significant extent among pre-contact Inuit who remained free labourers (although not entirely free to direct their own work), and owned their means of subsistence. It is only by an incredulous stretch of the imagination that relations between the general population and the isumaitoq or shaman could be construed as capitalist, "primitive" or otherwise. These appear to have been only slightly privileged positions which did not depend upon dispossessing others of the means of production, nor the extraction of surplus

value from their labour, except through exchange of value. It was more a fee for service arrangement, as both the camp leader and the shaman had to exchange their expertise, one more tangible than the other, for goods and/or prestige. Naturally, the opportunity existed to work the situation to their benefit, but this cannot be called exploitation. It is, rather, appropriation (Rey, 1979:46).

Characterizing the indigenous mode of production as 'primitive capitalism' would, however, be acceptable, as long as what is meant is not that it is undeveloped capitalism, but, rather, that the term is being used retrospectively to denote an historical situation in which there was movement towards capitalism. The question remains as to whether, left to its own devices, the indigenous mode of production would or could have developed in this direction, or whether it might have developed in another, the communal direction. Such questions can hardly be answered. A more relevant question, I think, is whether or not it contained the seeds of its own destruction. What was the essential contradiction in the indigenous mode of production?

I believe it was the basic contradiction of human nature. On the one hand we have free and cooperative (collective) labour and, on the other, self-seeking individualism, never more apparent than when survival is up for grabs. Then, as Hobbes gloomily predicted, it became every man for himself. All that was required to tip the scales was the introduction of a climate more conducive to either cooperation or competition (collectivism or individualism; capitalism or communalism). Since, as we see in succeeding chapters, contact was with the

capitalist mode of production, the competitive dynamic was buttressed and the communal dynamic undermined, but not in a linear fashion.

As for the group identity which obtained in the indigenous mode of production, this, as has been shown, was highly ethnocentric, fragmented, suspicious, intolerant and synonymous with economic practice. They did, however, perceive that "Inuit" (the people) were distinct from Indians and, when the time came, Europeans.

Chapter Three

Earliest Contact: Random and Unsustained; Incidental rather than Purposeful

The earliest contact Inuit had with Europeans was with explorers and itinerant traders. Trading and exploring activities overlapped, with the explorers trading as a side-line, and the early traders becoming involved in exploratory forays into unknown areas in search of trading opportunities and to affirm the British presence in northern Canada. First contacts of either with Inuit were characterized by exchange, in spite of the fact that Inuit had no surplus products to trade. So desirable were the manufactured items offered by the newcomers, especially wood and iron, that the Inuit willingly exchanged the necessities of life for them.

The nature of contact varied across the Arctic. In the southern part of Hudson Bay, contact was earlier, with Inuit travelling to sedentary posts to trade, but farther north, first contacts with Europeans were more likely to have been with explorers during the first half of the nineteenth century (Ross, 1975:36). Those who lived on the north shore of Hudson Strait, had only "brief opportunities for trade with passing ships in most summers," while those on the south shore "remained isolated," and "in a few areas, notably Southampton Island, European influence was entirely absent," until the whalers came.

Inuit in northern Quebec had been visited from the late sixteenth century on by British, Danish and French ships seeking the Northwest Passage: Frobisher, Davis, Weymouth, Hudson *et al.*, (D'Anglure, 1984:499). The area was also attractive to the Hudson's Bay Company because of reputed mineral wealth, and attempts were made to establish posts there in the mid-eighteenth century, the first at Richmond Gulf where silver, lead and diamonds were believed to exist. It was moved to Little Whale River a year later where, "for some years," the Hudson's Bay Company organized summer beluga hunts (D'Anglure, 1984:499). In 1759, it was moved to Great Whale River where it operated "intermittently until 1855 when it became permanent." Attempts to establish posts on the Ungava side were not as successful since ice was a hindrance to resupply and the Inuit went inland in summer to hunt caribou (Ross, 1975:29).

J. Garth Taylor (1984:509) points out that "it is not yet known exactly when Labrador Inuit first made contact with Europeans." There are stories of Norsemen from Greenland visiting the area as well as European fishermen and whalers, but Taylor says that although there are some reports of hostile contact with native people, the evidence suggests that there were no Inuit in the area until the sixteenth century [although there may have been Indians or Innu]. Hostile encounters between Inuit and European fishermen were reported by Champlain in the seventeenth century, but Taylor (citing Trudel) says that it is not clear whether these were Inuit residents of Labrador or visitors from more northerly areas. The first clear reports of European and Inuit contact are from the early eighteenth

century when the French established sedentary seal and cod fisheries in southeastern Labrador. Relations were not friendly, but there was some trading with local Inuit, and trade relations became "even more regular after 1743" (Taylor, 1984:511). Labrador was made a British possession in 1763. The French were expelled, European settlement was expanded and, by the end of the eighteenth century, several fish and fur trading posts had been opened by British trading companies south of Hopedale. The Moravian missionaries who had begun establishing missions *cum* trading posts in 1752, enjoyed a trading monopoly in Labrador until 1926, when their trading operations were transferred to the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC).

The Netsilingmiut living in the central Arctic were visited repeatedly by a succession of explorers from the early nineteenth century on -- Ross, Back, Simpson, Franklin, Rae, Anderson, Hall *et al* -- all seeking the Northwest passage to the trading empire of the Orient, and, later, Franklin's lost expedition. In the western Arctic, the fur trading companies sponsored overland exploration in an attempt to open up the area to trade as well as to chart the coast and keep out Russian traders based in Alaska. They were also inspired by tales of copper and gold. Samuel Hearne set off from Churchill in 1769 to look for a copper mine and, several years later, in 1789, Alexander Mackenzie, an employee of the North West Company, traced the river named after him to the Arctic Ocean. Although both Hearne and Mackenzie succeeded as explorers, Francis (1986:69) labels them failures as traders. Because the lands they visited "did not seem productive of

furs, or anything else of value, the fur trade companies did not bother to persist in either direction."

Inuit contact with explorers

European explorers began making determined efforts to penetrate the Arctic as early as the sixteenth century, but they were not particularly intrested in contacting the people, nor were they interested in "settling" the land. Their consuming mission was to find the elusive Northwest Passage. Oswalt (1979:51) dubs the search for the passage "the perfect craze," but, as he adds: "In the course of the most magnificent failure in navigational history Westerners met Eskimos time and again." He considers that most Eskimo groups were eventually "discovered" by the explorers (1979:268), but this must be considered something of an exaggeration, since contact between Eskimos and explorers was certainly infrequent.

Although the explorers may have discovered (*i.e.*, encountered) virtually every Inuit group in arctic Canada, they had little influence upon them. Damas (1984a:394-395) considers, for instance, that "the culture of the Central Eskimo was little influenced by contact with European and American explorers of the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries," since their "goals were the expansion of geographical knowledge rather than a search for commercial opportunities." Similarly, Oswalt (1979:70) notes that: "Eskimo contacts were unplanned in the course of geographical discoveries." Exploration was, he says, the "primary goal" of the English explorers who "numbered Eskimos among the curiosities of distant lands rather than as subjects for study." The explorers did, however, meet with,

and sometimes write about, the people they encountered, although, to quote Oswalt again (*p.*70), "trade and curiosity were the only purpose for close contacts" and:

If these people were described in more detail than walrus or whales, it was because more could be written about them on the basis of short-term observations...no-one could communicate with Eskimos except by signs...thus even if the English had been fascinated by Eskimos in their native land -- which they were not -- observations could not have been very sophisticated given the barriers to communication.

The impact of the explorers seems not to have been enhanced by the practice of wintering-over. According to Oswalt (1979:185-186), "numerous" English ships looking for the Northwest Passage wintered in the Arctic Islands between 1825 and 1859, but they wintered north of where the Eskimos lived and "therefore few if any intimate contacts were established." He reports further (*p.*189) that Franklin "was pleased when Eskimos were not seen since they delayed his progress." The English explorer Frobisher was something of an exception; for, according to Oswalt (1979:25), he produced "the first notable accounts about Eskimos." Eventually, explorers came to realize that the native people could be useful to them, and they began to deliberately seek them out for assistance and for trade. This is not to suggest, however, that a symbiotic relationship developed between them and the Eskimos; for, as Francis writes (1986:9): "The history of exploration is largely the history of European and American activity in the North. During the same period the Indians and Inuit went about their daily lives indifferent to the motives and mishaps of the intruders from far away."

Map 2: *Areas of contact with explorers, (reproduced from Neatby, 1984:378) showing "routes of exploration in the Hudson Bay, northern Arctic, and Mackenzie River areas (after Burpee 1927; Chalmers, Eccles, and Fullard 1966)."*

Early trading contacts

The arctic traders had a similarly minor impact. In its earliest days, the Hudson's Bay Company was more interested in whaling and exploration than it was in trading with the Eskimos. The HBC's 1670 charter gave it control over "all the drainages of Hudson Bay, including the ill-defined western sector of Labrador" (Oswalt, 1979:168), but the Company's trading efforts were concentrated on the sub-arctic trade with Indians. Many years were to pass before serious trading relations were established with Inuit. It was not until the twentieth century fashion world began to covet white fox, that the HBC pursued more active trading with Inuit.¹

An attempt had been made as early as 1689 to establish an arctic post on the west coast of Hudson Bay at the site now known as Churchill, where it was expected that a trade in whale bone, ivory and oil could be encouraged (Ross, 1975:31, citing Rich), but success was not achieved there until 1717 with the founding of the Prince of Wales Fort by James Knight (Arima, 1984:459). A small number of Inuit made the arduous trip by sled or kayak to the Churchill post to trade and, meeting several Inuit during his trip to Repulse Bay in 1846-47, Rae, an HBC employee, "was pleased to observe that the closer they got to Churchill the more the Eskimos trusted the whites to set the value of the trade" (Ross, 1975:32),

¹ There were, as Usher (1970 I:16) put it, "two rather different fur trades" in Canada: "The earliest was the Indian trade of the subarctic forest, based on beaver, mink, marten, muskrat and lynx. The second was the Eskimo trade of the Arctic tundra, based almost entirely on the white fox."

"an attitude that he inferred was conditioned by frequent visits to the trading post."² Ross considers Depot Island to have been the "approximate northern limit" from which Inuit would make trading trips to Fort Churchill in the first half of the nineteenth century, but the influence of the trading post was extended, he says, by "intertribal barter." The Padlimiut was one group "well situated for trade at Fort Churchill" and, for a time, their travels to and from the post were facilitated by the loan of a large boat from the Hudson's Bay Company (Ross, 1975:70, citing Rae). It is interesting to note that, according to Rae, the Padlimiut who were "not reluctant to exploit their advantage," would not let other Eskimos pass through their territory to the post, "preferring to barter all their own half-worn weapons, tools, cooking utensils etc., with these, at a much higher price than would be paid for new articles at the trading post, and thus secure a double profit."

Starting in the 1720s, the HBC sent a trading ship from Churchill as far north as Marble Island "at first irregularly but virtually annually by midcentury" (Ross, 1975:31-32; Arima, 1984:459; Francis, 1986:37). In spite of the fact that they were considered fearsome savages, the Company was hoping to extend trade with the Eskimos. Ross quotes orders given to a captain in 1798 to make the point that the Hudson's Bay Company's attitude towards the trade was "somewhat

² This was not necessarily the case; for, Inuit never had much influence in determining exchange value. Traders, and later, whalers "paid" them what they wished, although there are some reported cases in which individual Inuit were able to strike a good bargain. As an aside, Rae also considered some of these "Churchill-oriented" natives to be "partially civilized," since they wore European clothing and worked at various jobs around the trading post (Ross, 1975:70).

cautious" due to the fear of Eskimo hostility: "You are not to go, or send your boat, on Shore with the Esquemaux on any pretence whatever and be sure to Keep yourself always on your guard with your Great Guns and small Arms loaded that you will not be surprised" (HBC, 1798, cited in Ross, 1975:25-27).

Summer trading, whaling, and exploring voyages in the Hudson Bay area became regular after 1750 (Ross, 1975:32), but the trade they conducted was described by Ross (*p.*27) as essentially "a souvenir trade." The "sloop trade," as he also called it, was terminated in 1790, but trading voyages were resumed early in the nineteenth century. Isobel Finlayson, wife of a trader, described the transactions on board a Company Ship off the Upper Savage Islands in 1840 (cited in Ross, 1975:27):

By the time I went on deck a pretty brisk trade was going on, seal, bear, and fox skins, walrus teeth, whalebone, and oil, having already been bartered for saws, needles, knives, fishhooks, iron and etc. The bargains were made through the gang-way and in the boats, no one being allowed to come on board...The men were all in small canoes, composed of a wooden frame entirely covered with seal skin...Several Oomiaks, or women's boats, filled with women, and children, were also along side, the Ladies appearing even more skilfull in making good bargains than their husbands.³

Having exhausted their supplies of bone, oil and furs, the Eskimos "next offered articles of curiosity, such as portions of their own clothing, spears, darts, and harpoons, besides various little trifles carved in wood and bone" (Finlayson, in Ross, 1975:27). "On other occasions," notes Ross, they bartered kayaks, dogs,

³ One captain described the women near Hudson Bay as "indefatigable in the geegaws to please their men and children" (Willson, 1899:224).

toys, umiak sails, and paddles, as well as their clothes. Apparently, the designation of this trade as "souvenir" was apt only with reference to the perspective of the traders, since Inuit were trading the necessities of life, even, as Finlayson (cited in Ross, 1975:27) reported, "the clothes in which babies were dressed." Graburn (1969:96-97) remarked that "Although there were no over-all means of comparing values, the accounts [of the HBC] give us a fair idea of what the Eskimos received in trade." He cites Lyon who noted that: "A nail was considered a fair equivalent for a spear with ivory head, and with line and bladder attached to it. Small pieces of iron hoop were equally valuable and a knife might purchase any article."

There were many years when the trading ships made no contact at all with Inuit. After examining twenty-two HBC logbooks for the ten year period 1850-1860, Ross (1975:25) reports that there had been encounters with Eskimos in the strait on only ten voyages, "or just under half." In 1857, during the interviews conducted by the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company, Captain Herd, who had been sailing into the bay for 22 years reported: "We sometimes trade with them [Eskimos]; perhaps upon an average, once in every fourth year or so." Also, contact with Inuit did not always result in trade. The ships were mainly looking for whale bone and ivory and, given the lack of a surplus of these items among Inuit and the unpredictable nature of trading contact, it can be imagined that the traders were often frustrated in their efforts. According to Ross (p.25):

Of 16 occasions on which Company vessels encountered Eskimos...between 1850 and 1870, 3 resulted in no trade; 2 brought about a small amount of trade; 9 produced an indefinite amount, and only 2 clearly obtained

meaningful quantities of Eskimo products. One vessel received 278 fox skins and 204 pounds of walrus tusks (*Prince Albert* 1852: 2 Aug) and another 55 pounds of ivory and 9 skins (*Prince Arthur* 1858: 1, 2 Aug).

The HBC was not the only trading company trying to gain a foothold in northern Canada. The North West Company, operating out of Montreal, was a rival until 1821, when it was amalgamated with the HBC.⁴ At this time, the HBC began having more serious intentions regarding development of the arctic trade notes Francis (1986:114) who treats this as an attempt to intercept the Russian American Company, based in Alaska and showing signs of wanting to move into the Canadian North. Like Francis, Neatby (1984:380) considers that, by intensifying trading activities in the North, Britain was attempting "to confirm its territorial claims against Russia whose activities in Alaska, as elsewhere, were regarded by the statesmen of western Europe, with a chronic distrust." But a second reason, he suggests, was "to promote geography and the other material sciences." The "mandate" of the HBC went far beyond the economic. Given "dominion" over the North, it was responsible for much exploration and mapping of the northern regions. In 1836, Governor Simpson of the HBC commissioned an expedition to complete the survey of the arctic coast (Francis, 1986:116). By 1847, the Company had "completed a survey, with the exception of Fury and Hecla Straits, of the entire northern coast of the North American continent"

⁴ The North West Company had been formed in 1784 by some Montreal merchants and its first Northwest Territories' trading post was established in 1786 at Fort Resolution, near the mouth of the Slave River. It was a partner in the North West Company, Alexander Mackenzie, who in 1789 explored the river named after him to the Arctic Ocean even though the fur trading companies were not then operating beyond the tree line nor trading with the Eskimos (Neatby, 1984:379).

(Willson, 1899:465).

Eventually, however, the HBC's presence in arctic Canada was asserted through the establishment of dozens of permanent posts whose main function was trading, in spite of chronic problems encouraging the Inuit trade. It is interesting to note that "the trader Finlayson" (cited in Ross, 1975:30) considered "the prospects of a substantial Eskimo trade would remain poor 'until they shall have learned to increase their wants.'" Ross thinks, however, that it was not so much a case of the Eskimos not desiring trade goods as it was of "insurmountable logistic problems." They lacked containers and ways to transport large quantities of oil, and were just barely able to get enough oil and skins for their own needs.⁵

Effect of these early contacts on Eskimo practices

Ross (1975:36) characterizes relations prior to the whaling period as "extremely restricted." He was referring specifically to Hudson Bay, but the situation was similar elsewhere. Given the lack of planned, regular, and sustained contact, it can be assumed that encounters with explorers and early traders had little effect upon indigenous socio-economic structures. The Europeans did, however, have some effect on the means of production, with a consequent impact, however slight, upon techniques of production.

⁵ Glover and Cooke (cited in Ross, 1975:32) also mentioned the practical difficulties of delivering goods to the post at Churchill. Inuit had no way to store seal and whale oil between trips to the post, and bulky products such as whale bone, oil and hides were hard to transport by dog sled (there were no umiaks in Hudson Bay in the nineteenth century). A further problem was that optimum sledding conditions occurred in late winter and spring which were also prime sealing times.

Goods and materials obtained from these early agents of contact were highly prized. Most sought after were wood and metal for which there were no counterparts in the traditional culture. Iron was harder than any substance available locally, and wood was a felicitous replacement for bone in sled runners and harpoon shafts. The Eskimos "were impressed with the size of wood used in ship construction" since the only wood they had seen previously was from "plants with stems no thicker than the finger" (Captain John Ross, cited in Oswalt, 1979:66-67). Also, as all the explorers and traders reported, the Inuit continued to be enchanted with such frivolous items as "belles, looking glasses, and other toys" (Frobisher, cited in Francis, 1986:12).

Such items had not been entirely unknown to Inuit before the explorers came; for, as Francis (1986:20-21) points out, Frobisher's is the first contact about which we have a written account, yet he found that the Inuit "owned metal goods, seemed at home on a sailing vessel, and were eager to trade, all indications that they were familiar with European ships and men" (see also Oswalt, 1979:38). Francis' theory is that some of the fishermen from France, Portugal, Spain and England visiting the shores of Newfoundland-Labrador at the end of the fifteenth century "probably sailed far enough to meet the natives of Baffin Island and trade with them." In any case, Fitzhugh (1985:34) concludes that "Frobisher's reports show a cohesive band of hunters who were already familiar with European materials and who knew how to take advantage, by trade and thievery, of the presence of a large, well-equipped expedition."

Although only a small number of Inuit groups came into direct contact with the ships, new materials spread through trade far beyond the point of initial contact, greatly extending the influence of the strangers. Ross (1984:18) notes, for instance, that Parry found that although the Eskimos they met at Winter Island in 1821 appeared to have had no direct contact with Europeans previously, they owned such European goods as beads, copper kettles and knives, assumed to have been obtained in trade from Eskimos to the south, since the closest trading post was at Churchill, over 600 miles away. As Parry concluded (in Ross, 1984:18): "Through a series of transactions...the goods had passed from group to group, reaching the remote Iglulingmiut well ahead of the first face-to-face encounter with Europeans." Parry added "an abundance of metal and wooden objects" to this store during the time he spent with the Aivilingmiut and the Iglulingmiut (Mary-Rousseliere, 1984:443).

Unfortunately, as Ross points out (1975:29), since the sailors almost never went ashore, "there are no reliable observations to indicate the role that European goods played in the native culture prior to the entrance of the whalers." In the main, however, new materials, being scarce, appear to have *supplemented* rather than *replaced* existing materials. When available, substitutions were made, but it can be assumed that a return to earlier ways of doing things was always possible. Some old skills began to be less important, however, replaced with new techniques as Inuit learned to work with foreign materials such as wood and iron. They were ingenious in refashioning European articles to suit their own purposes. At this

stage, anyhow, they succeeded in taking what they needed from the newcomers and adapting it to suit their own needs.

Although the work of fashioning tools and implements changed slightly, the procurement of game and related domestic duties did not alter significantly. Efficiency may have been enhanced slightly through the use of new materials, but was offset by the necessity of procuring more local products and preparing and sewing more clothing and implements, *etc.*, to exchange for the foreign goods.

Since the new materials did not greatly alter hunting techniques, the customary social relations of production were unaffected. And only in rare cases were Inuit employed by the newcomers. Some of the Inuit trading into Churchill between 1795 and 1813 were hired by the trader to hunt seals and white whales (for oil), an "industry" which "failed when the Inuit no longer wanted to linger after trading" (Glover, cited in Arima, 1984:459). The explorer John Rae hired local Eskimos as guides and casual labour, for which they were paid in gifts, and on both Hudson Bay expeditions, he employed the same interpreter from Churchill, "but it is clear that employment of Eskimos in Hudson Bay before the whalers came extended to only a few individuals" (Ross, 1975:36). As Ross concludes:

Only in the southern regions near the trading posts were the economic activities of the Eskimos harnessed in a systematic way. Elsewhere, the duration of contact was usually too short to organize the productive capacity of the Eskimos, and the roles in which Eskimos could enter the employ of the white man were distinctly limited.

Trading relations stimulated

The most profound impact of the availability of new goods appears to have been on trade among different groups of Inuit, the extent of which, as Ross (1975:29) concluded, is not possible to determine. It can also be assumed that the introduction of highly valued European goods served to enhance prestige within one's own group; for, not only were the owners of new means of production able to be better providers, they were also in a favourable position to trade with other Inuit.

As noted previously, the practice of trading was not unknown to Inuit. We know from several accounts that, as Oswalt (1979:279) put it: "The earliest direct contacts with Europeans were viewed by Eskimos as trading opportunities." Ross (1975:27) comments that:

...the impression gained from travellers' reports is that they were determined traders. To attract ships they set fires on shore. To reach them they made difficult voyages through pack ice in skin boats, up to 20 miles off shore (Chappell 1817:125). To obtain desired goods they badgered the Europeans to distraction, pilfered and pick-pocketed with professional ease, traded the very clothes from their backs -- even "their nether garments, a piece of indecorum I had never before witnessed" (Lyon 1825:38) -- and sometimes retired from the scene naked (Chappell 1817:70). Parry noted that they were "well accustomed to bargain-making" (Parry 1824:13).

Eskimos wanted nails, needles, beads, wood, fishhooks, pots, saws, and anything made of iron. The desire for iron was, says Oswalt (1979:39), "insatiable," and Inuit would go to great lengths to obtain it. When Davis returned in 1586, trading became unruly with the Eskimos "taking anything that could be carried off, even a

boat," and on the third trip, they went so far as to rip boards off the pinnacle to obtain nails (Oswalt, 1979:39-41). So desirable were the goods brought north by explorers that, when trading negotiations failed, Eskimos would "steal" what they wanted. As Fitzhugh (1985:34) puts it: "Once the pattern of hostility closed their peaceful access to these materials, Inuit avoided contact and took their opportunities as they could, stealing when possible and scavenging the European sites after each successive departure."⁶

Inuit aggression towards the Europeans varied, but much has been made of every hostile encounter, such as the one that took place between Franklin and the Mackenzie Eskimos in 1826. After some peaceful trading, hostilities erupted when the Eskimos discovered all the goods on the ship. They tried to board and help themselves and, when Franklin's Eskimo companion later reproved them for this behaviour, "the Eskimo response was that they could not resist taking all the things that they saw for the first time." They later returned some items that Franklin requested (Oswalt, 1979:188-189), a move Oswalt interprets as "a gesture of good faith."⁷

Although one might assume that trading would involve a surplus, this

⁶ The abandonment of McClure's ship at Mercy Bay in 1853 and John Ross's *Victory* near Thom Bay in 1832, provided a real boon to Eskimos and was responsible for bringing wood and metal to the Copper Eskimo and the Netsilik (Damas, 1984a:395).

⁷ J.G. Taylor (1984:510) reports that relations between Inuit and European fishermen in southern Labrador were also hostile, with the Inuit often stealing boats "and iron objects from the shore installations" of the fishermen, although there were some peaceful trade contacts towards the end of the seventeenth century.

probably was not the case. It appears that Eskimos were only too willing to trade the necessities of life, and there is no way to know now what effect this had on their ability to survive as individuals, or as a group. It is probably fortunate that contact with the ships was as restricted as it was. Although Inuit willingness to trade kayaks and fur clothing for knives and bells, beggars credibility, I am reluctant to attribute this to a trait often ascribed to them; namely, a lack of foresight. The value they placed on trade goods clearly outweighed the value attached to items they might be able to replace. They had a chance of finding more seal and caribou, but would never be able to obtain wood and iron from the natural environment.

There might have been some impetus towards production of a surplus, not with a view to trading with the explorers, who posted no schedules, but with a view towards trading with each other. Given the difficulty of satisfying subsistence needs, however, it is unlikely that any significant accumulation was possible, even with the more efficient foreign means of production. In summary, the introduction by the explorers of new means of production undermined pre-contact practices having to do with the crafting of tools and implements but, at the same time, by enhancing a demand for products of the hunt, it reinforced practices related to the procuring and treatment of wildlife.

Effect on ethnic identity

It did not occur to the explorers that the indigenous people had any claim over the land, and they unabashedly planted their flags and claimed vast tracts for their

crowns. It was if the land had not existed or was empty before they "discovered" it. Although it was a non-issue at the time, the staking out of the Arctic by foreigners was later to erupt as a major irritant to Canada.

As for the immediate effect of the early European contact on Inuit identity, this was minimal since communication was inhibited by language barriers which prevented Europeans from conveying, for instance, their belief that the Eskimos were savages. The Hudson's Bay Company had established friendly relations with Indians, but they were less inclined to trust Inuit. Chappell, in Hudson Strait during the second decade of the nineteenth century warned that "...the master of a vessel...should be particularly cautious in not trusting a boat on shore, unless well armed; and by no means ought he to admit more than two or three Eskimo at the same time into his vessel, however friendly they might appear" (cited in Graburn, 1969:89). La Potherie, a member of the 1697 French expedition to northern Quebec wrote about the Eskimos, who they were "longing" to see: "They are a very cruel people with whom, up to that time, no one had had any commercial dealings" (Avataq, 1990:37).

There were, however, some occasions on which Inuit displayed friendship towards the Europeans. Amundsen, for instance, found the people at Gjoa Haven friendly even though [or because] they had never seen white men (Francis, 1986:189). European perceptions appear to have been coloured by the instances of hostility. Frobisher had a skirmish with Eskimos on the east shore of lower Baffin Island in 1576, for instance, which involved mutual kidnappings (Neatby,

1984:377).⁸ And four of Hudson's sailors were, for another instance, killed in 1610 by unfriendly Inuit (Oswalt, 1979:53-54).⁹ In the west, the Eskimo of the Mackenzie delta were generally hostile to the Europeans, and a notorious example is the Inuit ambush of a 1799 canoe party sent by the North West Company down the Mackenzie. The Inuit refused proffered gifts, stole paddles and other items and killed sailors (Oswalt, 1979:195-196). "Until the 1850s," says Oswalt (p.196), "Mackenzie Eskimos either harassed or openly attacked most explorers and were restrained only because they feared the effectiveness of European guns."¹⁰

Although such instances may have been isolated, they fed the outsiders' ignorance of Eskimos and contributed to their reputation as an unfriendly race. Traders to the south were so prejudiced against them that, when James Knight disappeared in 1719 with two ships: "The traders at Churchill accepted without

⁸ As Oswalt (1979:26) says, "In written history this is the first clear account of an English-Eskimo encounter." On August 19, 1576, Frobisher's first encounter with natives, Eskimos attempted to cut the sailors off from their ships. A few days later, five of Frobisher's men were captured, and Frobisher retaliated by kidnapping an Eskimo in a kayak and taking him back to England. Neatby (1984:377) thinks "...it may be conjectured that these people had already suffered ill usage at the hands of European fishermen, who mistrusted them...", but it may also have been due to over-reaction on the part of the British.

⁹ Henry Hudson had been left to starve by mutineers who, on their way out, were beset by Inuit. According to Neatby (1984:377): "The killing was evidently unprovoked as the Europeans had held a friendly conference with the natives the previous day and had come ashore unharmed."

¹⁰ The degree of hostility displayed by the Mackenzie Eskimos was exceptional, and John Rae's theory (in Oswalt, 1979:196) was that the Mackenzie Eskimos were different because of their proximity to Athapaskan Indians who had guns by this time. It might be, he thought, that the Eskimos' survival depended upon their becoming "war-like." This is borne out by Samuel Hearne's observation during a trip accompanied by Indians north on the Mackenzie looking for copper. As they went farther north, the Indians were clearly preparing for an anticipated skirmish with Eskimos (Francis, 1986:59). As he reports, Hearne tried unsuccessfully to dissuade them: "But so far were my intreaties from having the wished-for effect, that it was concluded I was actuated by cowardice; and they told me, with great marks of derision, that I was afraid of the Esquimaux." The conclusion was the notorious massacre at Bloody Falls.

question the hypothesis that 'every man was killed by the Eskimo'" (Neatby, 1984:377). Similarly, when Rae reported in England that on his 1854 trip, the Eskimos on King William Island told him that 40 bodies had been found near the mouth of the Back River, "the belief that the castaways had been massacred by the Eskimos found wide acceptance" (Neatby, 1984:382).

Franklin had been warned by traders that he and his party would be murdered on the Coppermine, but he went anyhow and found the Eskimos frightened but not dangerous. On his 1826 trip, however, he narrowly escaped being killed by Eskimos, being saved only by his Eskimo interpreter who "brought about a truce, permitting the explorers to make their escape on the rising tide" (Neatby, 1984:380). This incident may have been due to Franklin's having precipitously fired at them. After the incident in which Eskimos had boarded his ship and helped themselves, the next time Franklin encountered kayaks, he fired a shot to dissuade them from coming near (Oswalt, 1979:188-189).

As discussed in chapter two, Inuit were wary of all strangers, Indians and, even, other Inuit. It is probable that they were even more suspicious of the exotic Europeans, since they were not immune to the universal human fear of the unknown. Frobisher's contact is the first "about which we have any details" and, apparently, the Eskimos feared the worst (Francis, 1986:21). Francis describes an instance in which Inuit chose death to escape the Europeans: "During one encounter when one or two native men were wounded, they threw themselves from a high cliff into the water to drown rather than trust to the mercies of their

attackers." Neatby (1984:383) cites Miertsching's explanation of the hostility directed towards McClure's expedition:

...to these simple folk our ship seemed some sort of great monster; they called it a swimming island, etc. At every movement of the ship, although it was half an hour's pull distant, they showed fresh alarm and an electric shock, as it were, went through them all.

Rasmussen (1931:27-28) reported that "The Arviligjuarmiut still had many recollections of their first meeting with the white men." They told him that John Ross's ship was first seen early in the winter by a man named Aviluktoq and "when he saw the ship's high masts he thought it was a great spirit and fled." The next day, men from his group set out "to attack it with harpoons and bows." Also, when he asked "what their forefathers had passed on about the first encounters with whites," Graburn's informants at Sugluk told him that "some of them had fled for the hills, leaving everything behind at the sight of the huge ships and the sound of the thunderous guns" (1969:91). They also reported that some Inuit "became friendly, but were always suspicious and killed the intruders whenever they had the opportunity," and "an additional reason" for killing the white men was that they were causing poor hunting years by "getting too much game." Graburn concluded that "early social relations" between Eskimos and Europeans were "extremely unpredictable," ranging "from extremes of joy and companionship to extremes of slaughter and treachery."

Although Eskimo memory of such encounters must now, one or two hundred years later, be considered the stuff of legend, a recently published

account from oral history by Tautungie Kubluitok (in McGrath, 1987:5) of early Inuit contact with sailors, *The Big Ship*, is interesting for what it reveals of the Inuit view of early contact history, a perspective which is not available in any other form. I think it is worth reproducing in its entirety:

In the olden days we were a very isolated people, but the people before us were even more isolated. We thought, and understandably so, that we were the only people on earth. Little did we know that there were more people, in the land of the Qablunaat and all over.

A group of Inuit had their camp set up on the seashore. These people would go on hunting trips by qajaq; the qajaq was the only type of boat they knew. They didn't even imagine that there could be anything different.

One morning, a man went out of his tent and saw something at the waterfront. It was a massive structure with many wing-like forms that waved in the wind. Unbeknownst to the people, the thing had made its way into the bay. The huge looming sails were frightening and as the man did not have any way of knowing what it could be, he became afraid of it.

This group of Inuit had a shaman. They summoned him quickly and helped him don his ceremonial fringe belt. Then they performed a ritual to try and gain an understanding of what was happening to them. The shaman said "These beings are not to be feared. They are people, too, just like us. They have bodies like us and they move about like us. The difference is only in the language that they speak. They are not threatening."

The shaman's insight did not seem to calm the people. He went on to explain that the strangers' purpose in coming was to find out more about the Inuit. When a crew member walked about on the ship's deck, the people were absolutely terrified. Then a crew member who was cut on deck fixing the sail lowered a dory down the ship's side. When the Inuit realized that the strangers were actually coming to shore, they all fled inland. The shaman was unable to convince the people that they had no reason to flee. As he was soon the only one left behind at camp, he went to join the others. The Inuit group slept overnight up there on the bare tundra.

The next day it became evident that the big ship had left, so the group proceeded back to the shore and to their tents. Oh my! Their belongings! Their finely crafted tools, all their precious implements, had been taken away and replaced with unfamiliar items. There was some strange, unappetizing food, and who knows what else. They had no idea what these things were or how they could be used.

The people felt incredibly sorry that they had lost their possessions. They didn't know that the exchange items were, in fact, useful objects. Oh, how they regretted that the strange big ship now had all of their belongings; their snowknives, knives, bows and arrows, and other tools. They had lost all of their hunting weapons to the big ship and felt deeply grieved.

This slice of history is undoubtedly tainted with some retrospective reconstruction, such as the regret over having given up their vital weapons so easily, although this may be an indication of the hardship suffered when items required for subsistence were traded somewhat impulsively. It does, however, present a highly plausible version of the fear and consternation Inuit must have felt upon the arrival of strangers with unknown accoutrements and an unintelligible language. Even the shaman, who was, after all, a leader and tried to stand his ground, quickly capitulated when the others refused to follow.

Clearly, misperceptions abounded on both sides in a situation in which the protagonists did not understand each other's language, and expectations were widely divergent. It is probable that all contact situations were precariously balanced between curiosity and fear, and an example of how tolerant uncertainty can precipitously turn into fearful defensiveness is Oswalt's account (1979:39) of Davis' 1586 voyage when Eskimos traded and then proceeded to help themselves. Apparently:

Davis found them 'marvellous thievish,' but so disarmingly open in their thefts that their behaviour was at first considered more humorous than malicious. Soon, however, the constant thefts became a problem, and a small cannon and an arquebus were fired.

Surely, Davis' firing on them, bespeaks an unwarranted escalation of negative perception. Not surprisingly, the Eskimos later hurled stones from slings at the sailors, and full-scale hostilities ensued. Apart from the tension felt on both sides in a strange situation, theft simply did not have the same meaning for both parties. Francis (1986:96) describes how Franklin's grounded boats were surrounded by several hundred Inuit in 1826:

...who attempted to pillage the craft in a very forthright, even friendly, manner. At no time did they appear to have hostile intentions, but the Inuit pressed close around the stranded sailors, carrying off supplies, trade items, even a pistol...From then on Franklin kept these Inuit at bay with lowered muskets

As Francis observed (*pp.*97-98), "while the natives were rowdy and thieving they were also cheerful, friendly, and hospitable, and at no time did they make an armed attack on the boats." Fitzhugh (1985:35-36) succinctly characterizes these early encounters, with specific reference to late sixteenth century contacts in Baffin Island which, he says, were similar to Norse encounters in the Arctic and Greenland:

These encounters began with expressions of friendship and joy by the Inuits [*sic*], followed by trading and entertainment. Soon the Europeans lost important materials, precipitating the breakdown of the trade and peaceful social contact. Finally, reciprocal raiding and stealing and stealth prevailed as each side strived to gain an upper hand by strength of arms or by captive-taking and negotiation.

He considers that it was the Inuit desire for tools and weapons that precipitated

hostilities, but the picture one has is that the Europeans were braced for assault from the Eskimos who they were predisposed to think of as vicious and warlike. As Francis (1986:21) says, they were looked upon as "treacherous and primitive, filthy in their personal habits and probably cannibals...judging by their predilection for raw meat."

Hostility and fear were not, however, invariable responses, even among the apparently hostile-prone Mackenzie Eskimos. On his 1826 voyage, Franklin and his crew reported that they "were shown much kindness by a small group of Eskimos camping near the shore" (Neatby, 1984:380). In many reported instances, Eskimos appeared glad to have the opportunity to trade with the ships' crews and to become involved with them in other ways. In 1830, for instance, when Ross wintered with the Netsilik on Boothia Peninsula, he found that: "The Inuit were pleased to receive iron goods from the strangers in return for skin clothing, snowshoes, sled dogs, seal meat and fresh fish" (Francis, 1986:105). The Eskimos provided Ross "with detailed information about the lie of the land, helping him to plan his spring sledding expeditions and going along as guides and hunters." Similarly, Parry and Lyon had good relations with the Inuit in Foxe Basin in 1821. Parry enlisted their help in drawing a map of the west side of Melville Peninsula, and Lyon visited the natives in their homes and invited the shaman on board to cure an ill officer (Neatby, 1984:380).

By the nineteenth century, Europeans were beginning to realize that there could be advantages in forging closer relationships with Eskimos. Ross became

ice-bound in Lord Mayor's Bay in 1829 for three years, and he might have perished were it not for assistance provided by the Boothia Inuit who "fraternized with the Europeans, hunted with them, supplied them with fresh meat, and initiated the captain's nephew...into the techniques of travel by sledge" (Neatby, 1984:382, citing Ross). As Neatby notes, "hitherto the British had explored in the Arctic by ship or boat exclusively."

It is significant that the organized expression of hostility was not directed towards conquering an alien race, nor preventing them from coming into Eskimo territory but, rather, to secure goods which were used to increase one's productive capacity and enhance esteem and bargaining power.

Conclusion

It can be assumed that, in most cases, European-Eskimo contact before the whaling period was minimal and erratic, and did little more than whet the native peoples' appetite for foreign materials. In the southern sections of Ungava and Hudson Bay, where people were in contact with a trading post, the European influence was more pervasive. Some Inuit took up residence near the post where they were employed as interpreters, handymen, hunters and guides (Ross, 1975:35). Most, however, traded into the posts, and there is evidence that goods thus obtained made their way by intertribal barter to people farther north. Inuit to the north were more likely to have contacted explorers who conducted what Ross calls a souvenir trade but, even in cases where they wintered over, the explorers were "here today and gone tomorrow" (Ross, 1975:36).

Fitzhugh (1985:20) makes the point that during this period of contact "raw materials and artifacts obtained from Europeans *supplemented* rather than *replaced* materials available in the existing native exchange system" (emphasis added). The introduction of European trade goods might have modified patterns of prestige and the balance of power but, while it paved the way for, it did not at this time effect structural changes in the indigenous mode of production. The new goods made hunting and domestic chores more efficient and enhanced individual prestige, but as Ross (1984:25) notes, before the whaling period in Hudson Bay, Eskimo-white contacts were few and far between and did not result in any significant modification of the aboriginal economy.

A return to old materials was still possible, but attached to materials are skills, and, at some minimal level, their deterioration would have begun at this time. To an extent which can only be guessed at, contact with the capitalist mode of production undermined some indigenous practices, while, at the same time, it reinforced others. Inuit were, if anything, encouraged by their early visitors to stay on the land to hunt and produce as always, although there was some pressure exerted towards the production of a surplus which could be traded.

The articulationist argument is that it is not in capital's interest to immediately destroy preceding modes and forms which it will preserve as long as they are functional for capital (Meillassoux, 1972; Rey, 1973; Bradby, 1975). In this case, non-capitalist formations were buttressed to the extent that they provided capital with subsistence and/or marketable raw materials. There might

have been some transfer of value, but trading with the visiting Europeans did not tie Inuit into new relationships and, although opportunities were rare, it is clear that Inuit well understood the logic of trading before they met Europeans. The intensified exploitation of raw materials for trading did, however, constitute an undermining of indigenous practices.

Restrictions on maximizing a surplus provided a built-in resistance to transformation of non-capitalist structures, but the indigenous mode of production was ripe for transformation. The introduction of new means of production and the enhanced trading opportunities provided by the newcomers played to the competitive/individualistic dynamic in the indigenous mode of production.

Concerning the impact of the early Europeans on collective identity, Inuit oral tradition was peopled with *Tunrit* and strange beings, but previous experience of non-Eskimos had been limited to Indians who had a lifestyle similar to that of the Inuit. "Inuit" (which means simply "the people") were recognized as being different from either of these groups, but this recognition did not foster any significant degree of ethnic solidarity, probably because of non-threatening circumstances. Contact with Europeans did, however, generate some fledgling attempts to organize around ethnic identity. Tautungi's story reveals a sense of "us" and "them," although, as was noted in chapter two, Inuit were fearful even of strange Inuit, *i.e.*, people from outside their own hunting groups and were, typically, prepared to do battle with newcomers. In Tautungi's story, Inuit action appears to have been spontaneously self-defensive rather than a collective effort

to drive the newcomers away. In the explorers accounts, it is significant that Inuit hostility was prompted by a desire/need to obtain goods from the Europeans. The latter escalated, if not initiated, conflict through their own desire to control the exchange, and uncertainty as to how to interpret the rules by which the Eskimos were playing.

The Eskimos who became most aware of the differences between themselves and the outsiders were those most involved in relationships with the newcomers.¹¹ Except for a few instances of temporary employment, those relationships were economic, centred on trade but not developed enough to be considered relations of exchange. These incipient trading relations were not transformative and, although they paved the way for a structural shift, the explorers and early traders were not a major force of change. The whalers were, however, as Francis (1984:92) says, "a different story." As he puts it, they brought "new ways of making a living, new laws, and new gods; sudden wealth and sudden death." These are the subject of the next chapter.

¹¹ Relationships with the newcomers were not close at the time, but in Labrador, the intermarriage of Europeans and Inuit at the end of the eighteenth century resulted in the creation of a new ethnic group known as Settlers.

Chapter Four

The Whalers: Indigenous Practices Are Both Bolstered and Undermined

The impact of whaling on Inuit indigenous practices was much greater than is generally recognized and warrants treatment in some detail. By the time the arctic whaling industry had terminated, in the second decade of the twentieth century, there had been more than 6,000 voyages into the area between Greenland and the Central Canadian Arctic alone, most to the Davis Strait whaling grounds (Ross, 1984:3). "Whaling represented," says Ross, its foremost chronicler, "the first substantial exploitation of resources by outside interests and the first major thrust of an alien culture among the Eskimos..."

Ross mined whaling logbooks and journals to reconstruct Euro-Inuit relations during the whaling period, which he has done in considerable detail (1975). He regrets the fact that the members of the Thule Expedition did not try to elicit information on whaling, and that the whalers themselves left few accounts of their relations with Eskimos, but as he writes (1984:28): "Generally speaking, whalers were not much inclined to record their experiences." This gap in the literature has been redressed somewhat with the recent publication (Eber, 1989) of some Inuit memories of encounters with whalers in the eastern Arctic, but it may well be that the Inuit perspective on whaling activities has been, as Ross says

(1975:22), "irretrievably lost."

It is with reference to whaling that regional differences start to assume a greater significance, since contact varied across the Arctic. The main arenas of interaction were at Herschel Island in the western Arctic, and in the Hudson Bay and Baffin Island areas in the eastern Arctic. There was no contact at all in the central Arctic, which meant that the people who lived there were isolated longer. Basque crews had whaled Newfoundland and southern Labrador waters in the early 1800s (Francis, 1984:i; Fitzhugh, 1985:20). Since the kind of pioneering analysis Ross did of eastern Arctic whaling has not been done for the western Arctic, the discussion in this chapter draws heavily on his work and focusses on the Hudson Bay/Baffin Island area.

A short history of contact with whalers

According to Ross (1984:5), American ships reached Davis Strait, between Greenland and Canada, by 1729, with British whaleships arriving around 1750. The Dutch dominated the Davis Strait whale fishery during the eighteenth century, but after 1800, ships from England and Scotland dominated "along with a handful of Dutch ships in the 1820s and a number of American whalers after 1845."¹ Cumberland Sound, on the west coast of Baffin Island, was an important whaling ground because of the high concentration of whales and the unusually large

¹ Ross (1975:37) says: "After a number of adventurous voyages to Davis Strait in the first half of the eighteenth century," American whalers had left the site to the British and Dutch. American interests were, however, reasserted in 1846. The number of voyages after this were few, but important. It was the Americans who introduced the practice of wintering which brought crews and Inuit of Baffin Island into close contact. In 1860, American operations, under the initiative of Captain Christopher B. Chapel, were extended into Hudson Bay.

population of Inuit (estimated at about 1,000) who were available to work for the crews (Ross, 1984:5). Relations between Inuit and whalers were intensified in the Sound due to wintering over and the presence of permanent whaling stations. As Ross says (1984:6; see also Neatby, 1984:384-385), Eskimos in that area:

...were quickly attracted into a close economic and social relationship with the whaling crews. They manned whaleboats, pursued whales, participated in flensing, transported blubber by dog sled, hunted to provide fresh caribou meat, acted as guides on sled trips, made up and repaired skin clothing, and carried out many other tasks.

The earliest whaling station was established at Spicer Island in Hudson Strait in 1877, a year round station with a non-native staff, although Eskimo whaling crews were employed and the staff traded for furs (Ross, 1975:57, citing Gordon and Payne). The Scots established a station in 1899 on the north shore of Southampton Island, but it was closed a few years later, in 1903, without having had any significant impact on the Sadlermiut who lived there since the station imported labour from Repulse Bay and Hudson Strait (about 150 people) to do the whaling (Francis, 1984:86).²

It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that whalers left the Strait and penetrated into Hudson Bay. Although it never became a highly frequented site,

² The Sadlermiut who, Francis (1984:86) says, were extinguished within 25 years by typhus, inhabited the south coast of the island, trading occasionally at the station but keeping "a vigilant distance." Ross (1984:125; footnote) points out that the Sadlermiut were "almost totally successful in avoiding contact with other Eskimo groups and with explorers and whalers." Comer's August 9, 1903 journal entry records that in 1902, 65 out of the 70 people in the group died. Both Low and Comer "believed that well-armed Eskimos from other regions, relocated to Southampton Island to work for the whaling station, had destroyed the subsistence base of the island's original inhabitants and brought about their starvation." Ross notes that "Mathiassen, on the other hand, heard oral testimony that they had died from disease carried by the whaler *Active*," an account which is, he says, "supported by details in whaling logbooks."

Map 3

Whaling Activity and fur trade posts in the Canadian Arctic (reproduced from Neatby, 1984:378), showing "whaling activity in Davis Strait 1719-1911, Hudson Bay 1860-1915, and Beaufort Sea 1889-1908 (after Ross 1978, 1979) and fur trade posts with routes and dates of penetration in the Canadian Arctic (after Usher 1971)."

Map 4

Place names in Hudson Bay region referred to by Ross (reproduced from Ross, 1975:26).

attracting fewer than 150 voyages, it was an important area of activity "because ships normally over-wintered"³ and "an unusually intense and sustained contact developed between whalers and Eskimos" (Ross, 1984:4). There were, Ross says (1975:135), few periods between 1860 and 1915 when whaling ships were not present in the Bay.

Although American and Scottish whalers established several shore stations in Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay after 1900, Ross (1975:60) found that "insufficient documentation" made it "difficult to determine" the nature of their operations and the influence they had upon the native population." It is clear, however, that the Hudson Bay stations "never attained the economic importance or the permanence of the stations in Cumberland Sound," nor did they have as much impact on Inuit "settlement patterns or economic activities."

Since whalers did not winter in Hudson Strait, and there was only one whaling station there, which operated only briefly, "contact was restricted almost entirely to summer" (Ross, 1975:60). In the northwestern sector of Hudson Bay, between Marble Island and Lyon Inlet, Eskimos took up residence near the wintering whalers, a practice which "provided opportunity for close relations for ten months of the year." Although the Aivilingmiut and the Qaernermiut "had the closest ties with whalers," other groups -- Netsilingmiut, Sinimiut and Iglulingmiut

³ Wintering-over was a necessity; for, as Oswalt (1979:293) points out, it was seldom possible to reach the northwestern sector of Hudson Bay via Hudson Strait before mid-August which left only a month of open water. Ross (1975:57) considers that long wintering was the most distinctive aspect of Hudson Bay whaling, "a necessary evil" due to the "inaccessibility of the whaling grounds, the shortness of the whaling season, and the technological obsolescence of the whaling fleet."

-- were also affected (Ross, 1975:60).

In the western Arctic, the most important centre of whaling activity was Herschel Island where a base was established by American whalers, mostly from San Francisco, in the 1890s (Usher, 1970 I:23). Usher believed that "the appearance of the American whaling fleet at Herschel Island...was of profound consequence to the Mackenzie people, who until then had been largely unaffected by the white man." Stefansson, who was in the western Arctic for several years just after the turn of the century, remarked (in Francis, 1984:92) that the whalers in the western Arctic had wrought more changes on the Eskimo in only a few years than the Hudson's Bay Company had on the Indians in a hundred years.

Apart from the influence of the American whalers, a large number of Alaskan Eskimos invaded the Mackenzie delta at this time, coming along with the ships as servants or on their own in search of better hunting (Usher, 1971:24-25):

Now, men, women and children alike were in close contact with American whalers (as well as acculturated Alaskan Eskimos) for extended periods. They worked with them, even inter-married with them; they learned their language, their customs, their technology, their value systems and economic goals.

While contact in the eastern Arctic was limited, the influence of the whalers at Herschel Island was pervasive and, declares Neatby (1984:385) "damaging." This assessment is based on the fact that the whalers brought disease and drunkenness which disrupted native life (see also Oswalt, 1979:293). Francis (1984:93) notes that the Mackenzie Inuit, who numbered at least 2,500 in the mid-nineteenth century before the whalers came, had been reduced to 250 by the time whaling

declined in the area, the result of "epidemic diseases" introduced by the whalers. As Usher (1970 I:25) pointed out, "practically everyone" in the area visited Herschel Island at least once a year, "drawn by the year round presence" of the whalers and their "material culture."

The impact of whaling

The impact of whaling went far beyond the introduction of disease; for not only did the whalers undertake trading activities, they also utilized the labour of the local people. At first the whalers conducted what Ross (1975:63) terms a "subsistence trade" for furs, skins, and food, but, by the early 1900s, as whaling entered its decline, the whalers were functioning "as sedentary trading posts for ten months of the year, and as mobile ones during the summer periods" (Ross, 1975:136). The story was similar, but more "pronounced" in the western Arctic where, as Francis (1984:92) writes, "Inuit came to rely on processed food and woollen clothing supplied from the whaling ships."

The whalers also introduced new means of production, the most momentous of which were guns and whaleboats. The new technology resulted in significant alterations in the social relations of production as well as changes in population distribution which resulted when Inuit made trips to the whaling areas to trade, some taking up residence near the whaleboats.⁴ According to Peter Pitseolak of Cape Dorset (in Eber, 1989:23), "The people went there to wait

⁴ Brody (1977:21) considers that the whalers changed the life of the Igloodik Eskimos entirely since they remained on the coast instead of travelling inland to hunt and fish, as they had done previously between break-up and freeze-up.

because they wanted ammunition and food - whatever the ships could give them."

Not only did arctic whaling bring about "fundamental changes in human geography," says (Ross, 1984:3), but it also "played a role in the extension of Canadian sovereignty and administration into the region." For a long time unconcerned, Canada suddenly realized in the early 1900s that she was allowing foreign ships unimpeded access to her territory.⁵ There was, however, no heed paid by politicians of the time to the changes being wrought in Inuit life, greatest in the areas of direct contact, but extended through intertribal relationships to even more remote groups (Ross, 1975:60).

The effect of whaling on Inuit means of production

An unprecedented strain on resources occurred as the whalers came to realize that their survival depended upon being able to procure fresh food in the Arctic, and that skin clothing made by Inuit was superior to their own. Ross (1975:108) estimated that one wintering whale ship used about 100 caribou per voyage, or as many as one Eskimo family would use in a year. He thought it "unlikely that this additional demand for caribou initiated a general decline of barren-ground herds," but given that Inuit were already hard-pressed to provide for themselves, it would certainly have put a considerable strain on human resources.

Resources were further strained when the whalers realized the commercial value of skins and furs beyond their own needs. Trading for these became increasingly important as whaling declined. The most desirable commodities were

⁵ As Francis (1984:i) points out, "Whaling was an industry in the grand tradition of Canadian resource industries -- uncontrolled, rapacious, and foreign-owned."

whale bone, ivory, oil, furs and skins (Ross, 1975:65), and it is probable that the accelerating demand for these materials led to a decline in their abundance, as well as putting a strain on Inuit wildlife harvesting resources and increasing the demand for more efficient imported firearms. One thing is clear: when whaling began, Inuit were still dependent upon hand-made, non-mechanical hunting implements which barely sufficed for their own needs. Now, they were required to provide for as many as 100 extra bodies at a time which meant, according to Ross, providing for at least the equivalent of one more Inuit family for a whole year. In a shortage, the Inuit would either have had to go without, or transfer reliance to alternate food and clothing sources and other forms of shelter and means of production.

It is not surprising that by the turn of the century, Inuit in some areas were heavily dependent upon processed food. As Francis (1984:95) points out, when Amundsen reached the Beaufort Sea in 1905, he noticed that "the Eskimo on Herschel Island have grown so accustomed to white men's food that if they cannot obtain it they deem it a great hardship." And in 1909, "an RNWP [Royal Northwest Mounted Police] officer stationed at the island claimed that when no ships reached the spot natives faced starvation and had to be relieved with rations of flour and bacon."

The strain on caribou resources was also reflected in poorer quality clothing. Stefansson reported (in Francis, 1984:95) that, at the turn of the twentieth century, most Mackenzie Inuit were "so poorly clad that they [were]

unable to hunt seal in winter through being insufficiently protected from the cold."

As he explained:

This insufficiency of clothing is the result of two things: first, the introduction of rifles that destroyed the caribou upon which they depended for clothing, and secondly, the multiplication of new wants such as the desire for tea, tobacco, sugar and ammunition, forces them to barter for these expensive luxuries the skins which they might otherwise have used to dress in for the cold.

In exchange for what they got from the Inuit, the whalers provided rifles, shells, fish hooks, needles, calico, knives, hatchets, saws, files, gimlets, awls, forks, spoons, scissors, beads, matches, dominoes, fiddles, accordions, sewing machines, sunglasses, metal containers, steel traps, European clothes and telescopes (Ross, 1984:19). Inuit of the period were often decked out in red flannel underwear and scarves and living in canvas tents heated by iron stoves (Francis, 1984:96).

Over the whaling period, trading had progressed from incidental, to a subsistence trade in food and skin clothing consumed on the spot, to a full-blown commercial trade for articles to be resold in the ships' homelands (Ross, 1975:63-67). As the commercial trade became more important, the whaling ships offered an ever wider range of goods to the Eskimos. In the western Arctic, Captain Bodfish observed at the turn of the century (in Usher, 1970 I:26) that "Arctic whalers were trading ships as well as whalers, and it was quite on the cards that a good profit might be made in trade even if very few whales were taken."

Some imported items replaced their traditional counterparts because of advantages such as "greater durability, strength, lightness, or the ability to hold a sharp edge or point" (Ross, 1984:21). Steel was, for instance, a much superior

replacement for stone and bone in spear heads and needles. But some imported items, such as telescopes and nails, had no counterpart in Inuit material culture and were additions (Ross, 1975:87). In most cases, the advantages of the new goods appear to have outweighed the disadvantages; for, although the availability of more efficient manufactured substitutes contributed to the deterioration of handicraft skills practised by generations of Inuit, it also liberated them from some of the more frustrating labour of hunting, gathering and preparing materials from the wild. This had, however to be weighed against the intensified requirement to procure food and skins for trade.

Firearms and whaleboats were the most significant items distributed by the whalers. The Hudson's Bay Company post at Churchill had introduced guns to people living on the west coast of Hudson Bay, and it was in the whalers' interests to provide Eskimos with guns and to keep them supplied with shot. Captain Comer of the *Era*, for instance, carried 24 guns and a large supply of ammunition with him on his 1903-5 voyage. Over two winters, the *Era* and a second ship, the *A.T. Gifford*, distributed 70 guns to the Eskimos of Northwestern Hudson Bay (Ross, 1975:99). Ross calculates that since the population of the area at the time, using Low's figures, was about 280, "one out of every 4 men, women and children received a gun [and] one has to suppose that every hunter by this time owned at least one gun, probably more." Inuit would trade 50 white fox skins for a flintlock musket, and powder and shot were staple items of trade (Ross, 1975:97, citing Ferguson and Gilder). In addition to trading guns to Inuit, whaling captains often

provided them with guns and ammunition to hunt food for the ships.

The introduction of firearms had an enormous effect on hunting techniques. Hunters could shoot from a greater distance and no longer needed to sneak up on their quarry and risk alerting it with footsteps crunching in the snow (Ross, 1975:102). Guns easily replaced the primitive bow and arrow as the weapon of choice in winter caribou stalking, and were also favoured in summer when caribou roamed the tundra in large herds. Rifles were also useful in hunting basking seals which could be shot from greater distance and, according to Boas (cited in Ross, 1975:104), guns were favoured over harpoons by most of the hunters in Cumberland Sound. Firearms also provided an advantage against large game animals such as polar bears, musk-oxen and walrus (*p.*105).

Pre-contact techniques and weapons were not, however, immediately abandoned but were, as Ross (1975:106) says, retained for use on occasions in which rifles offered little advantage such as caribou spearing on lakes or seal hunting at breathing holes. For a time, Inuit used the best of both worlds, adopting rifles to kill seals, for instance, but retrieving them with harpoon and line; for, firearms had a major disadvantage in that, lacking retrieval capability, "many animals sank or were swept away by currents" (Ross, 1984:19). In general, harpoons were retained for water hunting, especially in late summer when the seals, low in blubber, easily sank (Ross, 1975:105, citing Boas). Nevertheless, the adoption of the rifle had an inexorable effect on hunting skills. According to Ross (1975:104-105, citing Hanbury):

...by the turn of the century, the skill of harpoon-throwing was said to persist only on the central arctic coast, where the Eskimos, 'having no firearms, are obliged to crawl up close enough to throw a harpoon with some chance of success, and they suffer many disappointments.'

Undoubtedly, the use of rifles also put pressure on wildlife resources, "thus undermining," says Ross (p.97) "the foundation of Eskimo life." Although Ross has found no evidence that increase "in Eskimo kill and in commercial demand for skins" depleted seal, walrus or bear populations, he considers that it was a different story for the musk-oxen population which "declined significantly during the whaling period," its geographical range also diminishing (p.109). The lack of factual information has prevented an examination of the role of the whalers in musk-ox trade and hunting, he says, but "whalers undoubtedly contributed to the decline of musk-oxen west of Hudson Bay by trading for skins and supplying Eskimos with rifles." It is significant that when the police boat *Neptune* arrived in Cape Fullerton in 1903, Captain Moodie "prohibited the killing of musk-oxen for their hides alone, and outlawed the export of skins" (Ross, 1975:110). It was Moodie's view that "these animals are becoming scarcer every year, and even the whalers agree that at the present rate of killing, they will soon become extinct on the west coast of Hudson bay" (cited in Ross, 1975:109). The next year, Moodie banned all hunting of musk-oxen and recommended to the government a year-round ban on killing, except for natives using it for food, a restriction which was written into the Northwest Game Act of 1917 (Ross, 1975:110).

The decline of caribou in the western Arctic after 1900 was blamed on whalers at Herschel Island who supplied guns and encouraged Inuit to procure

fresh meat for them (Ross, 1975:106, citing several authors). In line with the minority opinion of Seton (in Ross, 1975:109), however, Ross considers that in the Hudson Bay area there is no evidence to indicate that the introduction of rifles by the whalers and the demand for fresh meat by wintering crews brought about a "noticeable general decline of barren-ground caribou."⁶

There appears to be no argument concerning the decimation of whale stocks. There was no restriction upon the exploitation of this resource and, apparently, no thought given to conservation. In some cases, there was outright wastefulness. Ross (1984:116, *footnote*) points out that since Comer and his men pursued whales more than 100 miles from the vessel, "it was impractical for the boats to transport bulky blubber long distances to the ship for rendering into oil." The high price that could be obtained for whale bone made it possible, however, "to ignore the oil altogether" and "when the men made a kill they simply extracted the bone from the whale's mouth and left the rest of the carcass." Eventually, only the bone was taken and the blubber was left for the animals and the Eskimos, "a significant inheritance for a group of Eskimos," since "a whale carcass could provide a large quantity of human food, dog food, and oil for heating and cooking" (Ross, 1975:145, *footnote ch. II, 20*). This practice of the whalers also had an effect on Inuit settlement patterns. Captain Comer noted, for instance, that when several whales were killed at Lyon Inlet in the summer of 1905, the

⁶ Seton estimated the annual kill by wintering whalers in both the western Arctic and Hudson Bay at 1,000 head or less, while the northern Indians and Eskimos would take 40,000, "suggesting that 'the talk about destruction' by whalers was exaggerated" (Ross, 1975:109).

Inuit planned to camp there during the coming winter "as they [were] now sure of dog food and oil" (in Ross, 1975:145). As Ross points out, "whale carcasses also attracted animals that the Eskimos could utilize." He repeats an example from Leden of a man travelling north from Churchill in 1913 who camped at a whale carcass, and in a few days, trapped 30 foxes worth about \$1800 (p.54).

To summarize, firearms enabled Inuit to obtain more wildlife, which was necessary as hunters were now providing for more than their immediate families. Not only were they providing food and skin clothing for the whalers, but they were also working to produce a surplus that could be traded -- for firearms and a continuing supply of ammunition. This meant that they had to be close enough to the post to replenish supplies. Those living far enough away that only one annual trip to the post was possible, were at a disadvantage because travelling conditions restricted the trading goods they could transport, and they were not able to purchase enough ammunition to last: "When powder and shot ran short (and what explorer failed to report a strong demand for these products in outlying regions?), or when metal parts broke, their guns were ineffective" (Ross, 1975:106). For these Inuit, "traditional weapons would be retained on a standby basis."⁷

The second major import at this time was whaleboats, and Ross (1975:87) finds it curious that the effect of the whaleboat which had been the means of

⁷ Joe Curley told Eber (1989:164) that "One of the main benefits [of the whalers] was that the Inuit gained some weapons," but he added that they were "not very useful," once the "ammunition was all used up."

summer travel and sea-mammal hunting for some Eskimos for over a century, received little attention from previous analysts. Boas had, for instance, described the kayak and umiak, "but paid no attention to the whaleboat which had been in use among the Eskimos of Cumberland Sound twenty years before his work in the 1880s." Similarly, by the time of the Fifth Thule Expedition, kayaks had disappeared in parts of Hudson Bay, but "there was no attempt to explain how this had come about or to examine the role of the whaleboat, which had then been in use among the Aivilingmiut for almost 60 years." Whaleboats possessed many advantages over the kayak. They were "more secure against the attacks of a wounded walrus," always "a serious threat to kayak hunters," and hunting trips could be extended because "camping gear could easily be carried and more meat could be transported home" (Ross, 1975:94). Whaleboats quickly replaced the large skin umiaks and, in areas such as western Hudson Bay where there were no umiaks, it was "a cultural addition of great significance" (Ross, 1975:87). The kayak, being lighter, continued to be used for certain purposes and was not entirely replaced at this time.

By 1903, Ross (1984:20) estimates that there were at least 20 whaleboats between Chesterfield Inlet and Repulse Bay "roughly one boat for every two or three families." Eskimos obtained whaleboats as wages, or in trade. An informant told Eber (1989:102) that his father had been given a boat for getting a whale for John Murray: "Whoever caught a whale got a boat. Automatically the boat he used was given to him. They would say, 'We're giving you this in thanks.'"

Whaleboats had a double advantage as he who owned one increased his prospects for employment by the whalers as well as the scope of his own travel. Although receipt of a whaleboat "entailed no commitment" to work again for that whaler, as Ross (1975:91) says:

...it was more than likely that the recipient would once again offer his services in order to collect further wages in the form of whaling gear, guns, ammunition and so on. In this way the Eskimo whaleboat captains maintained status among their own people by a constant reinforcement of material wealth.

Owners of whaleboats assumed a leadership role among their colleagues, and so desirable were the boats that some Inuit arranged "well in advance" to purchase one and then proceeded to accumulate the necessary skins (Ross, 1975:147, *footnote ch. V, 6*). As Comer recorded in his journal in 1901 (in Ross, *p. 147*): "A native who sent word to us last winter wishing to trade some musk-ox skins for a boat came today having 27 for which I let him have an old boat for them."

The introduction of whaleboats, firearms and other trade goods was, as Damas (cited in Ross, 1975:136) says, "the most striking effect of this early contact." Some things performed old functions more efficiently, and those items which had no counterpart in the pre-contact culture made new activities possible (Ross, 1984:20). The adoption of new means of production *also* tied Inuit into new relationships with outsiders, especially, as Ross (1975:97) points out, in the case of firearms; for, "Much more than the simple acquisition of a knife or hatchet, the purchase of a gun immediately committed an Eskimo to repeated trade contacts in the future in order to secure the powder, flints or caps, and

bullets, without which the weapon was useless."

If the imported goods had disappeared, could Inuit have returned to former practices? Clearly, Inuit independence had been compromised by dependence upon imported weaponry which necessitated continuing trade contact with Europeans. In articulationist talk, the introduction of new means of production both buttressed and undermined the indigenous mode of production. While the new arrangements favoured the continuance of previous work -- the hunting and gathering of local resources -- and even increased its efficiency, they also contributed to a loss of skills, restricted movement, and put pressure on resources in the interests of obtaining a surplus. A surplus, to be traded for ever more goods, especially ammunition, was required to sustain the cycle. Predictably, the new means of production also altered the social relations of production. **Social relations of production transformed as a result of contact with whalers** Summarizing the effect of the introduction of the whaleboat in western Hudson Bay, Ross (1975:95-96) says it...

...made summer hunts more cooperative than individual, created new leadership roles, facilitated trade contacts with whalers, Hudson's Bay Company posts, and neighbouring tribes, and provided a sound basis for employment as whaling crews.

By increasing range and accuracy, the rifle had the opposite effect in that it facilitated solitary hunting. It was no longer as necessary for several hunters to cooperate in caribou drives (Ross, 1975:102).

Contact with whalers also provided the opportunity for entirely new relations of production; for the first time, Inuit became employees. As Ross says

(1975:77), "almost all the whalers entering Hudson Bay employed some Eskimos." The "incompleteness of whaling records frustrates any attempt to visualize the real extent of Eskimo employment," says Ross (1975:81), but it is clear that for the Inuit in the whaling areas, there were "many opportunities to obtain jobs," especially after 1890. Reconstructing employment histories of several Inuit from logbooks and journals, he concluded that "the continuity of Eskimo employment in the last two decades of whaling is remarkable."

There were "three levels of socio-economic relationship between Eskimos and wintering whalers" (Ross, 1975:77): ship's natives; outside or strange natives, and squatter natives. *Ship's natives* were Eskimos hired with their families to keep the ships supplied with fresh meat. They used their dog teams for transportation and acted as guides, while the women made and repaired clothing. In return, they were given one or two meals a day on the ship and firearms for hunting. At the end of their service, they would receive "substantial material rewards" sometimes including whaleboats.

Outside or strange natives were Eskimos who came from other regions to trade meat or skins, or just out of curiosity. They had "no special attachment to the whalers," but "in times of famine or other crises," the captains might provide them with food. *Squatter natives*, a term not used by the whalers, refers to Eskimos who settled at the winter harbours but had "no firm arrangement to work for the vessels." Ross considers that they "nevertheless, derived some advantages from fairly continuous residence there," carrying on their subsistence hunting

during the winter, but "able to obtain trade goods from time to time by barter or part-time labour," cutting up blubber, cutting trenches through the harbour ice in spring, and providing sailors with meat for which they might be paid with some tobacco.

In the early Hudson Bay whaling period, Inuit worked for the whalers only during the winter (Ross, 1975:77). They would come looking for the whalers after their autumn caribou hunt, and they usually departed their temporary encampments near the whalers' winter quarters by May. Occasionally, some stayed to assist in floe whaling, transporting blubber from floe edge camps to the vessels by sled or boat, or working in whaleboat crews. They would be discharged at the end of floe edge whaling (*pp.*77-78). It was only after 1880 that summer employment became important. *P* / the turn of the century, when whaling was entering its decline, "American whalers were hiring Eskimos to serve both as hunters in winter and as boat crews in summer" (*p.*79).

Eskimos became more in demand as whalers as the period progressed and whales became scarcer. As Ross (1975:85) notes, they graduated from being employed as "economic serfs" to employment as "skilled hunters," while the "unqualified and inexperienced collection of 'green hands'" on board ship "were relegated to inferior tasks." Opportunities for employment made settlement near the whalers even more desirable. This interference with the pre-contact cycle of subsistence hunting and travel caused hardship, according to one of Eber's informants (1989:164-165), since it would be November before whaling was over,

too late for people to obtain caribou skins for winter clothing:

People working for the whalers sometimes had no time to go out and hunt for caribou during the shedding season -- the time when you catch the caribou before the coats are too thick. We used to see people walking around with real thick clothing and it made them quite uncomfortable. Some of them looked very shabby.

Ross (1975:129) refers to the effect of the whalers on the winter population distribution as "a 'shifting centralization,' in which the location of the large winter settlements often varied from one year to the next, depending on the harbours selected by the whaling masters. And, during the later period of "maximum employment," it affected the summer as well as the winter population, since after 1900 many Inuit had regular employment as whalers on long whaleboat cruises, their families staying behind in large camps at Whale Point or Repulse Bay. Since whalers rarely wintered in Hudson Strait, the same opportunities for year round employment did not exist there (Ross, 1975:83-84).

The whalers also imported labour. In 1899, over a hundred Eskimos were relocated to Southampton Island to work for the Scottish whaling station (Ross, 1975:84). In the western Arctic, "since there were no Inuit living in the immediate neighbourhood," Hartson Bodfish, who over-wintered in Franklin Bay in 1897, "transported forty-two men, women, and children to the harbour to hunt for the ship, along with seventy-two dogs to haul the meat" (Francis, 1984:82). And, in the western Arctic, since the coastal Inuit were sea harvesters, Alaskan Inuit were imported to Herschel Island to hunt caribou (Coates, 1985:144). By the 1920s, as Coates points out, almost three-quarters of the Inuit population of the area was

made up of Alaskan migrants.

The whalers also functioned as employers in absentia, hiring Inuit on a contract basis to harvest whales after the ships had left. Their catch would be delivered to the ship upon her return, or to another ship from the same firm (Ross, 1975:79). Comer, for instance, arranged on his 1900-2 voyage that "his 'ship's natives' should work on behalf of the *Era* during her absence, delivering their catch to the ship on her return in 1903, and continuing in his employment" (Ross, 1984:52). For their part, although the products obtained belonged to the ship, the Eskimos benefitted from the use of boats and whaling gear which they could use for their own hunting and travel (Ross, 1975:79; Francis, 1984:96). They were also assured rights to the non-commercial parts of whales they caught and could expect to continue to work for the vessel after its return to the whaling grounds (Ross, 1975:79).

Employment with the whalers was eagerly sought because, as Ross says (1975:85), it provided the opportunity to obtain material goods. Boas (in Francis, 1984:40-41) described payday at the Cumberland Sound whaling station in 1883-84:

Every Saturday the women come into the house of the station, at the blowing of the horn, to receive their bread, coffee, sirup, and the precious tobacco. In return the Eskimo is expected to deliver in the kitchen of the station a piece of every seal he catches."⁸

⁸ Leah Nutaraq who lives in Iqaluit and remembers the whalers remarked (in Eber, 1989:7): "Even up till today we call Saturday '*Sivataqbik*' - the day of the biscuits. But we received more than biscuits; it was payment day. The qallunaq would ring a bell to gather all the people together, and if the husbands were away after the whales, the women would go to get their supplies. We got coffee, molasses from a barrel, and biscuits as payment...When it was time to trade sealskins, he

Payment was made to families, and the whalers set the terms of the trade. As Ross says (1975:80):

There was no fixed rate of pay. They received what the whaling master chose to give them, although the Eskimo frequently expressed ideas on what would please them most, and in some instances made agreements at the beginning of service that they would work in return for certain commodities.

Although Captain Taylor of the Hudson's Bay Company whaler *Ocean Nymph* thought that the American whalers were greatly overpaying the Eskimos for goods, Ross (1975:66) considers that, "in fact, the whalemen did not assess this trade in commercial terms at all." Their primary concern in 1857 was, he says, not trading, but whaling, "and they regarded meat and skins as articles essential for winter survival, for which they were more than willing to pay generously." This situation is the converse of Inuit willingness to trade valuable furs and ivory for inexpensive manufactured goods whose value to them was proportionate to their rarity.

There were other benefits of employment: regular meals, medical and dental treatment, equipment manufacture and repair. The whalers also provided an unofficial kind of welfare,⁹ and Ross considers (1975:85) that the provision of these services, and the responsibility the whalers took for Eskimo welfare, made employment "something more than a simple exploitation of labour."

There is one highly significant feature of Inuit employment with the whalers

would do the same."

⁹ As Comer reported (Ross 1984:64): "We have now collected about seventy-five deer skins for winter clothing and spring use. If our natives are not successful we will let them have some of them. These skins we have got from outside natives who have not been in boats looking for whales."

3

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which needs to be discussed, and that is the practice of using some Inuit as "head natives" to organize the work of others.

Head natives: internal differentiation reinforced and extended

"Gradually," writes Ross (1975:80), "certain Eskimos began to assume the role of liaison between captains and the rank and file of native labour, and to function as labour bosses or, as the whalers termed them, 'head natives.'" An Inuk who possessed a whaleboat was a particularly useful head native since he could organize crews to participate in hunting and whaling. "He functioned," says Ross (1975:80), "virtually as an employer among them." The head natives recruited other workers to whom they relayed the captain's orders and since supervision of the head natives by the whalers was minimal (Ross, 1975:85), they came to be powerful people. As Joe Curley told Eber (1989:108):

My father was the captain's man. In those days the Scotch and the Americans had their Inuit leaders, and my father Scotch Tom, my uncle who adopted me - his Inuit name was Angutimmarik - was the man for the Scottish people. That was the tradition in the past. The whalers would pick a person as chief, and he would become the most powerful person.

Head natives also received payments on behalf of the work gang and, since there was no fixed rate of pay, this added to their power (Ross, 1975:80).

The traits favoured in the selection of head natives were mostly consistent with leadership qualities valued in the pre-contact situation. In a word, the whalers wanted good hunters but, in addition, the ability to learn some English and to organize others was considered an asset. According to Ross (1975:80): "Not infrequently angekoks [sic], or shamans, possessed these characteristics and

were ready to cooperate with the whalers in order to increase their authority over other Eskimos." Fleming (1965:67) writes of an angagok who had been the "boss man" for Captain Murray of the whaler *Active* and who, trying to insert himself into the missionary's good graces, told him "that on board the whaler he was the captain's 'voice.'" The captain told him what he wanted and he "then arranged for the Eskimo to carry out the captain's commands..." He offered to do the same for the missionary.

Another reason for the angagok's popularity as head native is that ritual was always an accompaniment to the killing of the whale. Taylor (1985:121) writes that "the importance of ritual to Eskimo whalers has long been recognized," and repeats Birket-Smith's observation that whale hunting is particularly "hedged by strict taboo, magic formulas, and the use of amulets." Writing specifically of Labrador, Taylor notes (p.124) that the whale hunt was "sometimes directed" by a shaman "who received directions from a *tuurngaq* (helping spirit) during the pre-whaling ceremonies." According to Eber, "the famous Inuit bosses Harry and Angutimmarik, also known as Scotch Tom, who whaled respectively for the American Captain George Comer and Scottish master John Murray, were both shamans." Osuitok Ipelee of Cape Dorset told Eber (1989:37) that "a shaman wouldn't tell people about his powers, but on a hunt, if a shaman wanted to go in a certain direction, that is the way the people would go." Ross does not mention the *isumaitoq* (the secular leader) as possessing any particular advantage in the role of head native, but it is likely that there would have been some competition

between the angagoks (the spiritual leaders) and the isumaitoqs, especially when it came to organizing work crews.

Although Inuit were "hired" for the first time, their relationship to the whalers can hardly be construed as a conventional employer-employee situation. As several writers point out, the whalers and Inuit were involved in a mutual dependency revolving around the need for food, the whalers depending upon country food supplied by the Inuit and they, in turn, relying upon processed food from the ships when game was not available (Ross, 1975:63; Coates, 1985:138-139).¹⁰ Inuk Harry Kilabuk, who had lived at an east Baffin whaling station, told Eber (1989:165) that:

In the whaling days the qallunaaq just hopped on the sled without paying for the trip or the hunter asking for anything. The qallunaaq used to get a ride and eat, and the Inuit never thought about pay. They were living in harmony together. The qallunaat lived just like the Inuit, and they used to help each other out...when the Inuit were working for the whalers, I have heard people say, even though we were beginning to be run by white people, they were really happy, and enjoyed what they were doing.

A second informant, Joe Curley, added: "I really can't recall any disagreements between the Inuit and the qallunaat. Sometimes the whalers would have the mate do something he didn't want to do, but there were never feelings of inferiority or superiority between the whalers and Inuit." Although these retrospective analyses may have benefitted from comparison with a less favourable situation now, the

¹⁰ Ross (1975:136) points out: "Because Eskimos taken on as ships' natives received part of the game obtained when hunting for the ships, they had a stake in the success of the vessels, and responded favourably." This is, however, tantamount to saying that because General Motors workers want their pay, they will do everything possible to increase corporate profits. The system *works* that way, but motivation is not as deliberate as all that.

relationship between whalers and Inuit can probably be described as symbiotic. Employment offered by the whalers affected the nomadic cycle, but does not appear to have greatly disrupted normal work practices and routines. Since Inuit were hired mainly as hunters, their "work" was essentially "an extension of their traditional pursuits," says Ross (1975:81).¹¹ Inuit did not have to learn new skills, and since they continued to hunt as they always had, the "seasonal time schedule" was not replaced with "a daily or hourly one" (Ross, 1975:81).¹² Obedience (on the part of whites as well) was required on long summer whaling cruises, and freedom of action was "somewhat curtailed during spring floe-whaling" which depended upon cooperation, but the whaling masters "normally exerted only a loose kind of authority" over Inuit (Ross, 1975:81,83). Ross' impression is that "the Eskimos were reasonably free to come and go whenever they pleased, as long as they continued to bring in meat and skins" (p.83). "There was not," he says (p.136), "an atmosphere of absolute subservience to outside authority."¹³

¹¹ Apparently, the whalers found it difficult to get Inuit to persevere in such "unchallenging jobs" as getting ice from the ponds or sawing channels in the spring, so they employed them in ways that continued their traditional roles "and left the menial tasks to their own sailors" (Ross, 1975:81).

¹² This may not be an entirely correct assumption. A hunter from Lake Harbour told Eber (1989:28) that although his parents "had their own names for months, they had never known days - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday." Another informant told her that "as was their custom, the qallunaat ate at regular hours -- they had 'meal-times'-- so even the Inuit became controlled by time and started having breakfast, lunch and supper" (p.98).

¹³ As Ross (1975:83) points out, however, the captains did not tolerate too much disobedience. Captain Comer, for instance, fired two natives, Stonewall and Chester, because they took their wives and sailed to Southampton Island. But see Hall (1970:116-117) who says "they generally went out cruising for whales just when they pleased, came back when they pleased, and did as they pleased... They *would* be independent in the fullest sense of the word, and restraint was what they could not brook."

It seems clear that new relationships at this time both reinforced and undermined old relationships. The balance is significant, and although not amenable to measurement, its nature might be inferred from the interdependence for food which probably served to inhibit dominance over, or exploitation of Inuit. The mutual dependence of whaler and Eskimo was, Ross (1975:65) maintains, strengthened over the years, "the Eskimos becoming more organized in their hunting for the ships and the whalers assuming additional responsibility for Eskimo welfare." Nevertheless, as Francis (1984:96) points out:

Increasingly the economic life of many of the northern people was centred on the activities of foreign whalers, and their traditional seasonal cycle of subsistence hunting and fishing was replaced by a new pattern which included periods of wage employment.

The important question is whether a return to previous practices was possible. Undoubtedly it was, although there would have been considerable hardship in achieving it. Many groups had experienced no direct contact and, even among those who had come to rely upon imported goods, there would have been a high proportion who were still able to feed themselves. The greatest obstacle in achieving independence, however, was the desire of the people themselves for the new goods brought by the whalers (see Girvan, 1973:26). In any case, the economic relationship between Inuit and whalers escalated beyond what Ross had called a "subsistence trade" to commercial trade in whale bone, oil, ivory, furs and skins when the whalers recognized the value beyond their own needs of goods produced by Inuit (Ross, 1975:65). And, by encouraging the production of a surplus to be bartered, the way was being paved for full scale commodification of

goods.

The production and disposition of a surplus

As whaling became less profitable, what had begun as a souvenir trade aboard the whaling vessels with sailors escalated into "an organized, economically important activity in which the returns accrued to the owners of the vessels rather than to the individual whalers" (Ross, 1984:13). The decline in the number of whales made it impossible for the whaling companies "to ignore this potential source of revenue" (Ross, 1975:63). Indeed, so necessary was this trade to augment declining profits that, in 1900, the *Active* added to its articles the stricture that the crew will not be allowed to barter with the natives and all produce of whatever kind brought on board the vessel becomes the property of the owners. As whaling declined and the commercial trade increased, "American ships were transformed into sea-going emporia offering a bewildering variety of goods for trade" (Francis, 1984:95), and according to Ross (1975:136):

...by the early 1900s the trade goods carried north by whalers resembled in quantity and variety the indents of Hudson's Bay Company trading posts. In fact, the whalers functioned as sedentary trading posts for ten months of the year, and as mobile ones during the summer periods.

At first, the whalers traded with the Eskimos that settled near the vessels and those who journeyed to the boats specifically for that purpose but, later, some captains "took the initiative in trade by travelling away from the harbours by dog sled with Eskimo guides to contact isolated groups" (Ross, 1975:71).

It was, of course, in the whalers' interests to encourage Inuit to produce a surplus, and they traded powder and shot so the Eskimos could catch more

caribou than they required for themselves. It is unlikely, however, that the Eskimos, many of whom were, by any standards, extremely impoverished,¹⁴ could generate a sufficient surplus to satisfy the whalers, and Captain Parker of the *Orray Taft* noted in 1864 (in Ross, 1975:61) that the quantity of goods brought by Eskimos was "often disappointing." Ross suggests, however, that "impoverished or not, Eskimos were unlikely to secure and store a large surplus of animal products throughout the year in hopes of a trade encounter with a passing vehicle during the summer." The HBC ships had encountered the same problem on the west coast of Hudson Bay in the eighteenth century. As Robson noted as early as 1752 (in Ross, 1975:145, *footnote, ch. III, 1*): "The people, therefore, having no dependence upon our coming to trade with them, take very little care to provide a supply larger than is necessary for their own subsistence." Another obstacle to trade was the difficulty in transporting such bulky items as whale bone, oil or skins to whalers who might be several miles offshore (Ross, 1975:61) and, as noted previously, Inuit lacked suitable containers in which to store and transport goods.

The equality of the exchange is a matter of some importance, although, as previously pointed out, the value of the goods brought by the whalers cannot be measured solely in dollars and cents. In 1903, when Superintendent Moodie arrived in Hudson Bay to establish a Northwest Mounted Police post, he reported that "everything owned by the trader is valued at twenty times its price, and everything owned by the native is cut down in value a hundred fold" (in Francis,

¹⁴ Virtually all observers of the time commented on the shabbiness of Inuit dress and accoutrements.

1984:95). He gave as an example a new rifle worth \$10 exchanged for 15 musk-ox robes which would have brought \$750 in the South.

The Eskimos did not have any knowledge of prices, nor did they set the terms of the trade. Bishop Fleming (1965:164) described the practice followed by Captain Murray of the *Active*:

When the ship arrived the natives came swarming on board, bringing their fur, ivory and blubber and, with the innocence of children, handed these to Murray. They had complete confidence that he would supply them in turn with all they needed for the ensuing year. Nor was their confidence misplaced. He gave each family such things as he felt they required, and not necessarily in proportion to the quantity of fur which any individual hunter had brought in. If dissatisfaction arose, the captain simply pointed out that the hunter in question had ample supplies to go on with and that any balance that might be due to him had been given to his dependents, such as his aged parents or the less successful members of his family.

Undoubtedly, there were some inequalities in exchange, but given the limited possibilities of producing a surplus, Inuit cannot be considered to have entered into an exploitative relationship with the Europeans at this time. The whaler-Eskimo relationship should be characterized as contradictory, with indigenous practises both reinforced and undermined. These contradictory forces were held in balance, on the one hand, by the need to keep Inuit producing from the land and, on the other, by the constraints which existed on accumulation. Something would have to intervene to tip the balance before commodification of labour and products could become a driving force.

Effect on collective identity

The whaling period represents the first prolonged contact between Inuit and an alien culture, and it is interesting that encounters between whalers and Inuit

appear not to have provoked the hostility experienced by many of the explorers. Perhaps this was because, as Ross (1975:64) points out, the newcomers were motivated to maintain good relations with the local people since they realized only too well that their success depended upon their cooperation. In fact, as he notes, the captain of the *Ocean Nymph* observed in his 1867 log that "we must try and please them as well as we can as they might spread unfavourable reports among their friends if we offend them." Not only did the natives *work* for the newcomers, they also socialized with them at concerts, dances and football games devised by the sailors to while away the hours (Ross, 1975:52). Many learned at least a rudimentary form of English and willingly adopted the English names bestowed upon them by the whalers who found Eskimo names difficult to pronounce. Eskimos were named after whaling vessels (Era, Ben Tucker), or popular culture heroes (Stonewall Jackson) or, like Cock-eyed Jack, named on the basis of a prominent physical trait (Ross, 1975:80). The Eskimos used their English names when dealing with whites, as they continue to do. An interesting twist is that, as Eber notes (1989:22, referring to an RNWP Sessional Paper), when the Canadian government established police detachments on the west coast of Hudson Bay "it was quickly noted that Inuit families had become known as Americans or Scots, depending on which set of whalers they worked for."

Although some of the explorers and their crews probably fathered children with Inuit women, this practice was more widespread during whaling voyages

which sometimes lasted two or three years.¹⁵ According to Francis (1984:79), it was commonplace for a captain whose wife was not accompanying him, to "set up housekeeping with local Inuit women." Some of these relationships "had all the stability of a recognized marriage, the whalers living ashore with the same woman winter after winter," but others were, he says, "exploitative and disruptive of the Inuit community."

The captains did not restrict fraternization with natives, nor were there strictures on the Inuit side. It was with "shocked surprise" that Bishop Fleming observed (1965:57)...

...some of the Eskimo women putting on lascivious airs and making shameless gestures to the members of the crew. The mate explained that because of the length of the voyage and the close confinement of the men they were given *carte blanche* to do as they pleased, when they pleased, if not on duty. Human nature being what it is, the inevitable happened.¹⁶

The extent of cross cultural alliances was assessed by Ross (1975:122) from an examination of the record of births at or near Cape Fullerton between 1889 and 1911, using Comer's records. "In this period, of 46 children reported born, almost half were sired by whalemens, personnel of the Northwest Mounted Police, and

¹⁵ Eber writes (1989:xvii) that "it is a rare Inuk who has no whaler ancestor." One of her interpreters is reported to have commented: "It would certainly be a surprise to some people down south to know they have so many relatives up here." Some whalers assumed parental responsibility for children born of an alliance with an Eskimo woman, even taking them south to school. There is some evidence to suggest that children born of white fathers were not well treated by Inuit. In a letter to Stefansson, Comer said (in Eber, 1989:123): "There is not the affection for them by the Native Father that he has for a full-blooded child" and, in times of famine, "children of the white man are the first to be allowed to starve or perish."

¹⁶ Dr. L.E. Borden, surgeon for the 1903-04 voyage of the *Neptune*, and first medical person among the Aivilingmiut and Qaernermiut, also observed that "the women are very loose morally, thinking it no harm and sexual intercourse is very frequent" (in Ross, 1975:120-121).

crew members of the government steamer *Neptune*." Ross concludes that "any ideas of a pure-blood Eskimo population in northwest Hudson Bay must be abandoned." Since the sailors were of many ethnic backgrounds, the Inuit gene pool received a cosmopolitan infusion. As Ross (1975:121) suggests...

...many ethnic backgrounds are likely to have been represented in the Eskimo population by the end of the whaling period. Aside from Americans and Scots, the whaling crews frequently included American Negroes, Portuguese from the Azores, natives of the Canary Islands and Madeira, and individuals from a variety of European countries.¹⁷

Not only did Inuit mix easily with the newcomers, but there was a commingling of Inuit groups to a greater degree than formerly due to the presence of migrant labour and the prolonged stay of various groups at the winter harbours. As Ross says (1984:21): "The attraction of Eskimos to winter harbours eroded barriers of hostility and suspicion, encouraged the transfer of individuals from one group to another, and led to remarkable alterations in the pattern of Eskimo distribution." Intertribal trading relations also received a boost from the influx of new trade goods which probably meant more frequent and, possibly, more varied contacts.

In some cases, however, trading relations were undermined. Formerly, the Aivilingmiut had trading relations with the Caribou Eskimos, but they now traded directly with the whalers (Ross, 1975:71, citing Birket-Smith). On the whole, however, Ross (1975:71) considers that whaling improved the trading situation, especially for the northern tribes. Relations were "strengthened," he suggests,

¹⁷ As an aside, it was Dr. Borden's view that "the children with white blood in their veins of which there are a number in every district are not so strong as a pure bred native and are more apt to succumb, even if they live they are poorer native" (in Ross, 1975:122).

among the Netsilingmiut, Sinimiut, and Aivilingmiut, "tribes formerly separated by barriers of mistrust and fear, but who now found economic advantage in cooperation."

It is interesting that, unlike the situation near the Hudson's Bay Post at Churchill, natives who were in close proximity to the whalers do not appear to have prevented others from coming to trade. Ross (1975:75) found that "logbooks and journals frequently record the arrival of strange Eskimos who came to visit and trade." Also, in light of Inuit respect for territorial rights, it is interesting to note that "a number of these people settled more or less permanently in the region, obtaining the same opportunities for trade and employment as the coastal tribes."

It appears that contact with the Hudson Bay whalers nurtured a developing Inuit solidarity, "erasing," as Mathiassen said (in Ross, 1975:134), "the old tribal boundaries." Ross (1975:131) considers that "the economic opportunities provided by Hudson Bay whalers effectively broke down the barrier separating the Aivilingmiut from the Sinimiut and the Netsilingmiut to the west, and brought about an eastward movement of these tribes to Repulse Bay..." He notes further that "whaling triggered off a dramatic sequence of occupance in northwest Hudson Bay," the result of which was that "the geographical distribution of Eskimo groups at the time of the Fifth Thule Expedition was strikingly different from that shown by Boas in the nineteenth century."

Furthermore, it is Ross' view that it was during the whaling period that

Inuit began to distinguish themselves into "proto-classes," labelled by Vallee (1962:10; 1967a:136) as *kabloonamiut* (those who entered into relationships with the whites) and *nunamiut* (those who continued to live on the land). Not only had the process of differentiation of Inuit and Europeans been initiated, but Inuit themselves were now being differentiated, a process clearly resting upon economic considerations.

Although I shall have much more to say in later chapters about the emergence of these fledging class distinctions, it is important to note here that they were intricately entangled, if not synonymous with, ethnic relations which were, in turn, economically based. Those Inuit who were employed by the newcomers were in a better position to benefit from new technology and this set them apart from those who were not. Inuit were sorting themselves into categories based upon economic advantages which derived from association with an outside ethnic group, and they were named for this group, *kabloonamiut*, people of the kabloona. As an interesting aside, Pauta Saila told Eber (1989:59) that Johnnibo, an Eskimo particularly favoured by the white men, had been killed by his own people because: "People long ago used to be jealous of those who were treated kindly by the qallunaat. Johnnibo was rich without seeming to work hard, and the white people treated him so kindly." The Inuit accused Johnnibo of being an angagok, to which his response was "I have never been a shaman, but if I were I would never use the powers for my own benefit." Annie Manning, an Inuk schoolteacher, also told Eber (p.59):

His death was something that could happen in those days...It was hard for them to understand Johnibo because he was so different. He was well off and he had been to the south. In the old days it was hard to accept a person like him. Johnibo was an achiever.

Canadian sovereignty

A word needs to be said here concerning the effect of whaling on Canadian sovereignty which, in turn, has had repercussions for Inuit. As we shall see in the next chapter, the police as representatives of the state were sent north to make sure the Eskimos knew they were living within the boundaries of Canada, and that the Americans knew it, too, and that they were fishing in Canadian waters. The first role Eskimos played, then, as far as the Canadian state was concerned, was as squatters to support Canadian claims to sovereignty over the North, a sovereignty which Canada belatedly realized was being challenged by the Americans. There is a degree of irony in the fact that Inuit are starting to lay claim over territory which Canada is having trouble convincing the Americans is hers. Of course, nobody has ever seriously entertained the idea that it might have belonged to the aboriginal inhabitants. As Ross (1984:33) says:

At no time did the whalers entertain the idea that the land, the waters, and the resources might belong to the aboriginal people who had resided there for centuries, and that the commercial exploitation of these regions should be carried out only with the consent of the resident population. Such views, which now appear entirely reasonable and justified and are being put forward with vigour by the native societies of the north, were then non-existent, among the whites at least. Territorial rights were for 'civilized' people, not for nomadic hunters.

Canada did nothing to establish an arctic presence until the late nineteenth century when the presence of foreign whalers and explorers "began to generate

ripples of concern," and a somewhat belated attempt was made to collect customs duties on the trade goods carried by whalers and to enforce law and order (Ross, 1984:35). Police detachments were set up in Hudson Bay and at Herschel Island in 1903. The Eastern Arctic Patrol led by A.P. Low coincided with Comer's 1903 voyage, making him the first American to feel the brunt of Canada's newly awakened interest in the North. The police had a difficult time controlling the trading practices and social pastimes of the whalers but, by this time, whaling was on the decline.

Decline of whaling

A number of factors contributed to the decline of whaling in the Canadian Arctic. Part of the American whaling fleet was destroyed during the American Civil War; many arctic whalers were lost north of Alaska in 1871 and 1876; whale stocks were depleted from over-harvesting; substitutes for whale bone and whale oil were developed; oil prices fell; capital costs rose, and it was increasingly difficult to obtain crews (Ross, 1975:37, 40). In 1846, the American whaling fleet numbered 736 vessels but, in 1901, only 40. Whalers attempted to redress their losses through more intensive trading, but whaling had entered into a decline from which it never recovered. The last voyage into Hudson Bay was made in 1915 by the American whaler *A.T. Gifford*. In the western Arctic, whaling declined after 1910, mainly due to the destruction of ships which discouraged investors, a drop in the value of baleen which was replaced by spring steel (\$5.80/lb in 1904, and \$.50 in 1910), and exploitation which led to resource depletion (Francis, 1984:82-83).

In all cases, the retreat of the whalers left the Inuit, who had to some extent become dependent upon them, stranded. According to Anders (1966:62), "When a whaling station closed down, the Eskimos would move to another in the hope that they would be hired." Apparently 120 people -- men, women, and children -- appeared at Blacklead Island, looking for work after the closing of the New Gummiute Station. Leah Nutaraq estimates (in Eber, 1989:9) that in her childhood there were 32 Inuit families living at Blacklead and working for the whalers. "When the whalers stopped coming," she says, "they had to scatter to new camps." As Coates (1985:146-147) sums up:

The Inuit, having altered their seasonal habitation patterns, consumption patterns, and social activities to involve the whalers, found themselves suddenly abandoned, their skills no longer marketable, and the animal resources they depended on for survival, all but extinct in some areas.

Conclusion

The negative effects of whaling have been well publicized -- disease, debauchery,¹⁸ depletion of resources, illegitimate children, disruption of traditional lifestyle, population decline,¹⁹ but Ross insists that it was not as damaging as was often assumed. He refers to Commander Low of the *Neptune* who, after being heavily critical of the whalers and asserting the authority of the

¹⁸ Alcohol was dispensed freely by the whalers at Herschel Island, but not in Hudson Bay. As Ross (1975:123, citing Hohman) says: "By the 1840s temperance ships were a clear majority in the American whaling fleet." The Scottish whalers also observed "the temperance principle" and "it appears that few if any whalers regularly issued spirits to crew members" (Ross, 1975:124).

¹⁹ Both Low and Mathiassen considered that whaling caused a decline in the number of Hudson Bay Eskimos, but Ross (1975:118) thinks that their claims can be neither substantiated nor disproved by the existing population data. Also, the "uncertainty about the precise meaning of tribal names" and the "geographical limits of population estimates" confuse the issue.

Canadian state, conceded (in Ross, 1975:138) that: "On the whole, the whalers may be taken as beneficial to the Eskimos." While not necessarily considering it to have been beneficial, it is generally agreed that whaling in the eastern Arctic was not nearly as detrimental as it was in the west. Jenness (1968:10) declares unequivocally:

In far northern Alaska, and in the Mackenzie River delta which adjoins it to the east, whaling crews left behind an Eskimo population reduced by European diseases and alcohol-promoted disorders to barely one-tenth of its earlier number; a population so demoralized that even today it has not recovered its pre-European virility.

But the question here is not whether these effects on lifestyle were positive or negative, but whether they were structural. A test of structural change is whether or not former practices can be resumed. Could the indigenous mode of production reproduce itself? Undoubtedly it could have; for, as I have shown, although contact with the capitalist mode of production had begun to undermine indigenous practices, it also sustained them.

The work that Inuit did remained relatively unchanged for both males and females although some species not particularly valued in the pre-contact period, such as musk-ox, fox, wolf and wolverine which had little food value, were now sought for trade (Ross, 1975:136). Also, hunting became more intense as Inuit strove to accumulate a surplus to be traded with the whalers for imported items. As Ross (1975:136) puts it, "to spend a proportion of time hunting animals specifically for exchange was the first step towards the commercial trapping economy that became dominant after the First World War."

The items most desired by Inuit as trade goods were manufactured means of production, particularly whaleboats and firearms, which worked to theirs, and the whalers' benefit by increasing the efficiency of the hunt and by enabling them to obtain more and more trade goods. In general, however, these items *supplemented* rather than *replaced* previous means of production, although some highly desirable items, such as guns and telescopes, had no parallels in the indigenous mode of production.

The imported means of production introduced by the whalers facilitated the harvesting of resources, but they also increased the strain on those resources. That, coupled with intensified pressures to trade, led to an increasing reliance on processed food and manufactured clothing.

Possession of the new means of production put one in a better position to secure a continuing supply of trade goods, thus enhancing material wealth and power over one's peers. A whaleboat owner achieved new authority over others, becoming "a boss." Hunting techniques were also altered, becoming either more individual (the effect of guns), or more cooperative (the effect of whaleboats). For the first time, Inuit sold their labour power, becoming employees of the whalers, which enhanced their prestige in the community as it meant greater access to material wealth. Some Inuit were singled out as "head natives," or gang bosses, organizing the work crews and handling the payroll. It was not, however, necessary to learn new skills to be an employee as, for the most part, Inuit were hired to do what they had always done, hunt. It is important to note that they

were hired to produce, not to facilitate exchange.

Thus were pre-contact skills valued and encouraged even while they were being undermined. Inuit were provided with more efficient means of production to increase their exploitation of local resources, but this led inevitably to the deterioration of the skills used to procure materials and make and use indigenous implements and weapons.

Sustained interaction with the whalers also had the double effect of undermining and sustaining ethnic identity. Many Inuit learned a foreign language and adopted Anglicized names, at least for use with non-natives. Customary territorial divisions were eroded as Inuit congregated in camps around the whaling harbours, a prelude to massive centralization in the mid-twentieth century. On the other hand, the breakdown of territorial boundaries and intertribal hostilities paved the way to a broader affiliation along ethnic lines. Inuit who had previously referred to themselves only as "the people" began to perceive themselves as a particular kind of people, distinct from Europeans. And, most significant for this thesis, that difference was perceived to have economic repercussions to the point of forming, as Vallee (1962, 1967a) discovered, the basis for a new ranking system as *kabloonamiut* or *nunamiut*.

Although contact with the capitalist mode of production both undermined and sustained practices in the indigenous mode of production, the balance of power was maintained by practical constraints on the accumulation of a surplus to trade (there were no practices in the indigenous mode operating against such

accumulation, had it been possible). It might have been slightly tipped in favour of its dissolution, however. He is referring to the situation of individuals, not structural change, but Coates considers, for instance, that, in spite of its cooperative nature, "whaling was an extremely exploitative industry." As he says (1985:139):

Area after area was abandoned after the whaling resources were depleted; the whalers simply moved on to a new, hopefully profitable field. This recurring cycle of resource discovery, intensive harvesting and abandonment brought temporary prosperity to regional groups, but just as systematically induced resource depletion and economic dislocation.

Ross (1975:136) considers that rather than undermining ("deliberately" eradicating) their "material and intellectual culture," the whalers "strengthened and exploited the traditional hunting skills of the people." As he points out, "the whalemen appear to have accepted the Eskimos as partners rather than servants, possibly because of their need for cooperation during the wintering period."²⁰

Perhaps more to the point, Low, who had led several police patrols to the Arctic to control interaction between Inuit and whalemen and to assert Canadian sovereignty, did not believe that the Inuit could survive if the whalers withdrew. If that happened, he said, the government would have to "take their place and supply the Eskimos with the necessary guns and ammunition" (in Ross, 1984:220). A 1911 census showed that each family in Arctic Bay, on Baffin Island, owned an

²⁰ This must, however, be taken with a grain of salt, for Ross obviously considers that westernization of the Eskimos was desirable. As he says (1975:136-137): "Employment was not disruptive to the traditional way of life and in fact, it had its constructive aspects. It encouraged and rewarded qualities of dependability, honesty and hard work, trained Eskimos in techniques of whaling, handling sailing vessels, and other operations, introduced a second language to some extent, and offered some economic security."

average of 2.6 guns, and, as Ross (1984:220) says, "they had abandoned the manufacture and use of bows, arrows, lances, and spears." Even so, it is likely that Inuit *could* have revived these skills, as indeed they have begun to do, although not without hardship. This was not, however, put to the test as a new wave of traders moved in to fill the vacuum left by the whalers. Ross (1975:222) considers it "fortunate" that...

...whaling was succeeded by organized trading activities, at first by small Scottish, English, and Canadian firms, but increasingly by the large and powerful Hudson's Bay Company which, after two-and-a-half centuries of fur trading south of the tree-line, was at last eager to take advantage of the resources of the Arctic regions.

What role did Inuit play in all of this? Was there any degree of resistance to new practices? From all accounts, Inuit were ready accomplices. As Nutaraq, who had been a child at Blacklead Island, told Eber (1989:16-17): "The Inuit wanted to make the captains happy, so the shamans practised their arts to make the whales give themselves to the hunters." Eskimos did not set the terms of trade, but they were not shy at making their wants known and in negotiating a good deal for themselves. For the most part, they *came* to the whalers.

There were no structural constraints promoting resistance and, at the conscious level, Inuit had no desire to avoid becoming enmeshed in new relationships. Nor did they have a chance to; for, as Francis (1984:105-106) points out:

By the time the last bowhead was taken from the sea, the whalers had been supplanted by other newcomers...The Canadian Arctic was now the white man's frontier, home to a diverse collection of trappers and traders, missionaries and policemen, prospectors and scientists. For the Inuit,

isolation was gone forever.

The whalers had paved the way, bringing the Eskimos in one scant half century "from a subsistence hunting economy to the threshold of a commercial trapping economy" (Ross, 1975:136). The whalers were traders when they left and, as Francis (1984:107) so eloquently expresses it, they left the Eskimo "hungry for the white man's trade."

Chapter 5

Traders, Missionaries and Police: A Community of Interest

The vacuum left by whalers in the first few decades of the twentieth century was quickly filled by traders, missionaries and police, a community of interest which dominated from about 1920 to 1960 and which had a symbiotic effect on indigenous practices. In the space of a few decades, this alliance succeeded in delivering the capitalist mode of production to Inuit. But, before discussing the transformation of indigenous practices, it is first necessary to situate the discussion with a brief history of how each came to be in the Arctic, and what they did there. The effect they had on Inuit means of production, social relations of production, and collective identity will be discussed in chapter six. Here, I deal with the expansion of the fur trade, the ideological struggle waged by the missionaries and, finally, state intervention in the form of police patrols.

The real beginning of the arctic trade

After the decline of whaling in the early twentieth century, the fur trading companies and independent traders arrived in force to fill the gap left by the whalers who had helped to ensure their success by creating new needs among the Eskimos and by attracting them to ports accessible by ships. The whalers had also made the trader's job easier by introducing steel traps and providing Inuit with an education in credit. Graburn (1969:104) claims that the principle of credit, "the idea of being given something at one time and then returning something else to

the same person was familiar to the Eskimo," but the extent of credit relations between trader and Eskimo were unprecedented. Jenness (1964:41) goes so far as to claim that "grubstakes" sometimes made "bond-slaves" out of Eskimos who found themselves "indebted for more furs...than they could pay in several years."

The white fox trade had its beginnings in the last days of the whale fishery with a period of overlap in which whalers traded for furs and the traders engaged in whale hunts. The Hudson's Bay Company had been attempting, since the late nineteenth century, to compete with American whalers in Hudson Bay who they thought were competing for oil and furs with the Churchill post (Ross, 1975:66). The HBC ship *Ocean Nymph* was dispatched in 1866 to Roes Welcome Sound specifically "to compete" with the Americans by attempting, Ross says, to create a "desire for a variety of manufactured goods" among the Eskimos, thus securing "a supply of marketable furs." The logbooks of the *Ocean Nymph* noted that the people were "greatly delighted...at the impressive array of goods in the deck-house, and the Captain made it known that 'if we get a good trade from them this time they are likely to have a post among them for trading'" (Ross, 1975:66).

In spite of its trading monopoly over Rupert's Land, the HBC lacked means to enforce it other than persuading Eskimos to deal with them rather than the whalers or other traders, and lobbying the Canadian government to impose restrictions on foreign whalers and to enact legislation which favoured its operations over those of their rivals. As discussed in chapter three, although some desultory ship-board trading for whale bone, ivory and animal oil was carried out,

early trading efforts had relatively little impact on Inuit economic or social organization. Few Inuit came into contact with traders before the twentieth century when permanent posts were established across the Arctic, spurred on by the international demand for white fox.

Usher (1970 I:16) considers that the 1909 establishment of Cape Wolstenholme in Quebec marked "the real beginning" of the HBC's arctic trade. The establishment of permanent posts in the eastern Arctic and elsewhere was hampered by Inuit hostility, competition from whalers and environmental conditions, but, once begun, expansion of the fur trade throughout the territory took only 15 years (Bromley, 1986:7; Usher, 1970 I:16).

As in the east, the western Arctic fur trade intensified as whaling declined. The Hudson's Bay Company had to compete with several other fur trading operations, including the Northern Trading Company, the Canalska Trading Company and Révillon Frères, as well as numerous free traders in the Mackenzie district and the Keewatin (Usher, 1971:27). Independent traders, including some former whalers, converted whaling vessels to "floating posts" which travelled as far east as Coronation Gulf, "conducting winter trade from sheltered harbours," a tactic which was outlawed in the 1920s, "apparently through pressure from more established interests." Some whaling captains also established permanent posts to compete with the HBC (Bromley, 1986:20). Usher (1970 I:26) points out that "unlike other parts of the Canadian Arctic, the new Western Arctic fur trade was characterized by individual enterprise, competitive trade, and an abundance of

material goods..." It was, he says, a "highly competitive situation in which a great variety of goods could be obtained in trade" and the goods thus obtained were "cheaper than Bay trade goods, by virtue of having been shipped directly by sea from the American west coast rather than overland across Canada." Eskimos even placed orders for such goods as whaleboats and rifles to be brought directly from San Francisco. As in the eastern Arctic, the whalers were considered serious competition and the Hudson's Bay Company tried to discourage them from trading with the natives by offering them "mail privileges in exchange for ending trade with the natives," a deal that was refused (Bromley, 1986:19).

In direct competition with the San Francisco whalers, the HBC established a permanent post at Herschel Island in 1915 "and in subsequent years, many others eastwards along the coast" (Usher, 1970 I:28). Herschel Island and Aklavik -- where a post had been established in 1912 -- became the centres of the western Arctic fur trade (Usher, 1970 I:27).

As Coates (1985:149-150) noted: "By the 1920s, traders criss-crossed the far north, creating a network which stretched from Herschel Island to Baffin Island." There were almost 70 posts, he says, located in 48 places across the Arctic, with another 21 in the Keewatin. By this time, as well, there were only two major companies competing with the HBC, although "the influx of independents from the south continued to grow as transportation improved and fur prices soared" (Bromley, 1986:16).

State regulation of the fur trade

Growing competition from American whalers/traders motivated the major trading companies to lobby the federal N.W.T. Yukon branch to enact "measures which would offset the advantages the Americans enjoyed" (Usher, 1970 1:28). Their project was aided and abetted by missionaries, scientists and police who had followed the whalers north and who, as Usher (*pp.*28-29) says, "acted as a pressure group for wildlife conservation and the protection of Eskimos from commercial exploitation."

The combined efforts of the various actors resulted in the Northwest Game Act of 1917 which restricted trading, trapping and hunting for all except the indigenous people. Later amendments restricted trade to permanent posts, a direct move to thwart itinerant American traders and "tripping," a practice which involved independent traders intercepting Inuit hunters in their camps before they had a chance to take their stockpiled pelts to a trading post (Usher, 1970 1:29). Further regulations enacted in 1929 imposed restrictions on buildings and the duration of trade, and in 1924, "a longstanding regulation prohibiting coastal trade by foreign ships was invoked by the Customs and Excise Branch" (Usher, 1970 1:20, 29). In spite of these regulatory efforts, the fur trade continued to flourish because of rising prices. As Usher observes: "White fox had risen sharply toward the end of the war and after, due to a fad for summer furs in the U.S., and improved dyeing methods, to which this fur was well suited." By 1919, the animal was worth \$54.15 in the NWT. Prices of other furs had risen as well, and the

Mackenzie Delta trappers "attained unprecedented prosperity," some of them enjoying far higher incomes than the average Canadian at the time (Usher, 1970 I:28).

Since the white fox had no food value and was not a favoured clothing material, its harvesting for sale was not a direct source of deprivation for Inuit, although its pursuit distracted them from pursuing other wildlife harvesting activities, and its cyclical nature extending over a five- year period caused hardship. The sale of fox pelts did, however, enable Inuit to obtain guns, which increased the efficiency of subsistence hunting as well as enabling them to "buy" imported food and clothing. The strain put on fox resources appears to have been inconsequential.

Ascendancy of the HBC

Competition between traders was intensive and fought on a national as well as a local level. Influential Inuit were hired to help the HBC compete with other traders in return for which they would be provided with goods and, sometimes, housing. As Copland (1985:149-150) reports:

The smaller houses on either side of the Company property were all occupied by Inuit families. These buildings had been given or loaned to influential Inuit men by the Company when competition for furs was intense. From that time on they and their descendants had occupied the houses -- free of rent -- and received free rations.

By 1930, the year of nation-wide depression, fur trade competition in the North had peaked and, by 1939, the HBC had swallowed up most of its competitors by shrewdly buying up stock in rival companies (Coates, 1985:111; Usher, 1970 I:21).

As Usher (1970 I:16-17) writes:

The Depression ruined most of the free traders and even the larger trading concerns, and by World War Two, the Hudson's Bay Company had overcome most of its competition. The total number of posts in operation in the north had declined greatly, and the future pattern of settlement, based on the established fur trade centres, was well established. The monopolistic position of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Arctic thus dates only from the late 1930s.

The Hudson's Bay Company had been forced to close many of its own outposts during the depression. As Bromley notes (1986:21): "Of the 35 Company stores along the Arctic coast before 1940, only nine were left at the end of that year."

For some groups (e.g., the Copper and Netsilik Eskimos), the depression did not happen as they were relatively late in adopting trapping and missed out on the 1920s period of prosperity (Usher, 1970 I:34). Native trappers in the western Arctic who had previously enjoyed unprecedented prosperity, suffered most. In spite of this set-back, trading and trapping in the western Arctic intensified, with a continuing migration of non-native trappers into the Coronation Gulf area into the thirties "despite and even because of the Depression;" for:

At a time when industrial jobs were not available, and agricultural income was negligible, trapping and trading provided a reasonable alternative even with the prevailing low fur prices. There was in fact a profusion of trading establishments in the first half of the decade, and greatly increased competition at selected locations.

Usher points out that this "colonization period" coincided with the "apex of the schooner days in the western Arctic." After 1935, he says, virtually no more trading boats were brought into the Arctic.

Virtually every adult Inuk has vivid memories of starvation and death

during the depression when the only way that hunters could even *look* for food was through the extension of credit at the HBC posts (Usher, 1970 I:17). Many individual traders are still remembered for providing outfits to hunters. This was not necessarily altruism; for, as Neatby (1984:387) points out: "The Hudson's Bay Company obtained a virtual monopoly of trade on the understanding that no native would be permitted to starve within reach of any of its posts." A letter from the Director of the Lands, N.W.T. and Yukon Branch, to the Deputy Minister of the Department of the Interior, written in February 1936 (cited in Jenness, 1964:54) states that:

In dealing with applications for permits to establish posts in outlying districts the Department has stipulated that the applicants must assume full responsibility for the welfare of the natives who trade with them and the destitute natives must be maintained without expense to the Department.

Until taken over by the police, HBC post managers were responsible for the distribution of family allowance and social security cheques.

It was clearly in the traders' interests to facilitate trapping by lending traps and advancing credit. The HBC also sold whaleboats at cost "to help the people move about freely" (Copland, 1985:22). Writing of Lake Harbour in 1929, Copland, a former HBC post manager, reports (p.123):

We gave debt ranging from sixty to a hundred or more dollars to tide the men over until their traps began to yield returns. We interviewed each family and discussed their winter plans, and talked about how much time we believed should be spent trapping and how much time on sealing. We knew the location of each camp and tried to decide with them, the way to achieve maximum efficiency.

As always, the traders continued to encourage Inuit to remain on the land to

exploit the natural environment. Copland, who spent 16 years as an arctic trader, from 1923 to 1938, says (1985:190):

As far as I could see it, the manager's main task at an Arctic post was to make certain that the Inuit, for whose welfare the company held him responsible, should diligently and profitably live and work within the natural economy of their environment.

Since cash was not in general use in the Arctic until much later, goods were exchanged in a system of barter, using wooden, and later, aluminium tokens. The missionary Donald Marsh (1987:103) has provided a detailed description of trading with sticks. The husband first selected necessities, tea, cartridges and perhaps a muzzle loader (which was used as late as the 1930s), and some powder and caps: "Then, having taken care of all the necessities, there would be a certain amount left over to trade, and he might motion to his wife to buy the things she wanted," such as a tartan shawl, beads, pots, thread and needles. Several observers, including Marsh (*p.*106), have remarked that Inuit always spent the full amount of their credit, rather than saving any portion of it. "Of course," as Graburn pointed out (1969:126), "if the Eskimo had been in debt when he came in no tokens were put in front of him until he had paid off the debt in skins."

The Eskimos had by now become accustomed to a great variety of imported goods -- rifles, shotguns, primus stoves, tobacco, cloth, metal, lumber and preserved food -- and were increasingly dependent upon outsiders, mainly the Hudson's Bay Company, for a continuing supply of these necessities. The Inuit are reported to have taken advantage of the competition among the traders, by playing one company off against the other. Graburn (1969:119) notes that having

two or more stores available "is still the Golden Age" in Eskimo memory. Taking advantage of the situation, they were "able to bargain one against the other, raise the prices, and buy large motorized boats." As Fleming (1965:191-192) decided in Wakeham Bay where the HBC and Révillon Frères were competing for business: "The Eskimo who has sometimes suffered as much as he has gained from the white man is likely to press an advantage when it presents itself." This was, he considered, "often true of half-breed interpreters who shrewdly played off one company against another."

Decline of the fur trade

The Company quickly established itself as the leader and did not stop at merely trading for furs. Its managers also encouraged various economic enterprises, although it is not clear whether these were intended as profitable adjuncts to fur trading or whether they were in fulfilment of its role as welfare agent. Fisheries and whaling camps were established near Fort Chimo and Great Whale River, and the Company encouraged rudimentary mining operations, collecting garnet crystals and working the mica mines originally opened by the Scottish whalers (Copland, 1985:116). The HBC also encouraged handicraft production. In Coral Harbour in 1927, for instance, the women were encouraged to make "cuddly toys" and, later, in Lake Harbour, a production line was set up, "the men cutting the patterns out of sealskin with thin metal templates and the women stitching and stuffing" (Copland, 1985:102, 116). Copland thought that this must have been a suggestion from the London office (*p.* 102), and we may speculate that it was with

the hope of a continuing economic relationship with Inuit when the demand for furs dropped off.

The arctic fur trade never did regain its pre-depression momentum. By the mid-fifties, fur trading was relatively unimportant, although some trading has continued. In 1959, as Usher notes (1970 I:17), when "the fur trade waned, and alternative sources of income became available to the Eskimos, the Fur Trade Department of the Hudson's Bay Company changed its name, significantly, to the Northern Stores Department." The Company's focus had shifted to retailing; Inuit achieved new status as consumers, and the fur trade gave way to an economy built around government services and administration.

But the HBC was only one actor during this period; competing traders were aided and abetted by competing missions. In northern Quebec, for instance, the French Oblates and Révillon Frères were allies, as were the Hudson's Bay Company managers and the mainly British Anglican missionaries. Federal government employees tended to empathize with the anglo faction, while the Quebec provincial employees lined up with the francophones (Vallee, 1967b:7).

The ideological struggle

Since I have not been able to uncover any analysis of the effect of the missionaries upon the Inuit, I have had to rely upon a miscellaneous assembly of data which often has a personal and anecdotal flavour. What Ross has done for the whaling industry needs to be done for the missions. The lack of analysis should not, however, be interpreted as a lack of importance; for, the effect of the missionaries

cannot be underestimated. As Oswalt (1979:285) says:

Beginning in 1721, with the first Lutheran mission in Greenland, missionaries slowly emerged as the most powerful intellectual influence on Eskimo life. All Eskimos have had direct and intimate contact with them, often for hundreds of years.

Although most Inuit did not come into contact with the missionaries until the beginning of the twentieth century, conversion of Inuit to Christianity began in Labrador in 1752 with the Moravians. The Moravians also had some contact with the Inuit of Ungava who came to trade at the Moravian stores along the Labrador coast (D'Anglure, 1984:503). Conversion of arctic Quebec did not, however, begin until 1860, when an Anglican mission was established at the post at Little Whale River. In 1900 an Anglican mission was established at Fort Chimo and another at Great Whale River (D'Anglure, p.503). Missions were established at whaling sites in the western Arctic around the same time.

The missionaries had gone North to ameliorate the effect of the whalers, and Oswalt (1979:285) considers that they were a generally positive force, "the most effective and visible buffer between Eskimos and the harsher representatives of European and Euro-American culture." The arctic missionaries are, however, generally derided for their successful efforts in discrediting the pre-contact Inuit ideology, while the benefits they provided in terms of education and health care are discounted. But discussion of their transformative effect, along with that of the trader and the police, must wait for chapter six.

Missionaries establish close but uneasy links with traders and whalers

Although traders, and perhaps the police, sometimes hindered conversion by

modelling an irreverent lifestyle (Choque, 1987b:6), typically, both Catholic and Anglican missionaries settled near the posts and police detachments for practical reasons.¹ Reverend Peck went to Little Whale River, the extreme northern station of the Hudson's Bay Company, because "it was at that time the best base for operations upon the Eskimos" who "came in considerable numbers to this place for the purposes of trade, exchange and barter" (Lewis, 1904:75-76).

In a few places, such as Baker Lake, Christian RCMP officers and traders acted as unofficial missionaries, preaching to Inuit, holding prayer meetings and distributing bibles, but usually, the missionaries set themselves up as watchdogs over the morals of both traders and Inuit. The whalers were an even greater challenge, and the missionaries mounted surveillance over them, attempting to counteract the influence of the worldly crews, in spite of the fact that they were forced to depend upon the whaling vessels to provide transportation to their scattered flock. As Marsh (1987:99) writes: "Many a missionary to the Arctic depended on the whaling ships for transportation, often paying for his passage by working as crew." The Scottish whaling firm of Blacklead Island, for instance, had helped establish Peck's mission by transporting personnel and stores free of charge.

It can be imagined that the values of the crews and missionaries often

¹ In some cases, the traders helped convert Inuit to Christianity by setting a *good* example, but one of the problems mentioned by Anglican missionaries Peck and Fleming was the often poor example set by whites in the North. As Peck's biographer, Lewis, observed (1904:108): "It is always one of the sorest trials to find the heathen pointing the finger of scorn at the un-Christlike lives of our fellow country-men, and telling the preacher to convert them first."

clashed. When a Dundee whaler came to Cumberland Sound in 1901, Peck was tried by "the immoral conduct of the crew and [by] the fact that this snare of the devil proved too subtle and strong for some of the candidates for baptism" (Lewis, 1904:311). After chastising the crew, Peck wrote in his diary: "The extermination of the whole of the Eskimo population in Cumberland Sound and elsewhere is only a matter of time, if some check is not put to these awful practices" (Lewis, *pp.*311-312). His fondest hope was that he would someday have a mission vessel with a Christian crew at his command (*p.*314).

Marsh (1987:99) was also critical of the whaling captains who, he said, "often kept the women as playthings," while the men and older boys were out hunting for food for the whaling crews. It was his opinion that the captains lured families "with promises of high wages," but "more often than not, [they] were later abandoned on some Arctic island with no payment and usually ill-equipped to face life without tools or weapons." He concedes, however, that not all whalers were that "unscrupulous," and that "some of them taught the Eskimos how to hunt whales, and some of them sold whaling guns to the Eskimos before they sailed away for other parts."

In the west, Peck's counterpart, Isaac Stringer, (who arrived at Herschel Island in 1893), was similarly appalled at the abuse of alcohol, and exerted great efforts to get the whalers to enforce "their own prohibition" (Francis, 1984:78). He had them sign a petition agreeing to suspend the liquor traffic, but this was ineffectual. Stringer's successor, Charles Whittaker, "complained a few years later

that 'as soon as the ships came in, all the natives got drunk, and they all stay that way until the ships leave again, the women as bad as the men'" (Francis, 1984:77-78).²

It is probably safe to assume that the relationship between whalers and missionaries, and, to a lesser extent, between traders and missionaries, was characterized by ambivalence. The Christians had to depend upon those they criticized, and, for their part, the whalers and traders were willing, though unrepentant, helpmates to their critics. The whaling captains at Herschel Island "each agreed to subscribe some money to pay for the mission" and provided Stringer with temporary facilities for Church services even though, as Francis (1984:97) says, he "meant to pry into their affairs."

Stringer had come to Herschel Island "because stories of drunkenness and debauchery in the whaling fleet had reached the outside world and the Anglican Church missionary Society had decided to include the tiny island in its northern mission field." He was, says Francis (*pp.* 97-98), "not the first missionary to intercede between the Inuit and the whalers." Forty years earlier, in 1857, the Scottish whaling master, William Penny, had invited the Moravian brotherhood to send one of their missionaries to his shore station in Cumberland Sound on Baffin Island. Nothing came of this initiative; for, as the missionary concluded, the Inuit were "resistant to his teachings, a fault he blamed on the influence of the whalers."

² It is worth noting that Francis (1984:79-80) suggests that "the lurid details of debauchery at Herschel Island may have been greatly exaggerated" and that "well intentioned" missionaries "might have overreacted "to some of the excesses of the arctic frontier."

He was withdrawn and the Anglican Church succeeded in establishing a permanent mission in the Sound only in 1894 when, "at the invitation of the whalers," Reverend E.J. Peck was dispatched to Blacklead Island.

Competition for converts

Catholics and Anglicans were the main denominations with arctic ministries, but the Pentecostals were not far behind, and have succeeded in attracting a large number of converts from the mainstream churches. As Abrahamson pointed out in 1963 (p.19): "Since the Pentecostal church does not demand an exclusive membership there is a degree of overlap, formal members of the Anglican Church attending Pentecostal services." Choque (1987b:11) comments that there was no ecumenical spirit among the missionaries, rather, "the immediate objective of the missionary apostolate was to convert the pagans³ and outwit the other denominations..." This unseemly competition for souls sometimes "led to feverish rushes to open new districts, like the race down the Mackenzie in 1858-59 between Archdeacon James Hunter of Rupert's Land and oblate Henri Grollier" (Zaslow, 1971:64). As Stringer's biographer, Peake, wrote (1966:18): "There was the ever-present threat of competition from the black-robed Oblates who, it was felt, would lose no opportunity to steal a march on the hated Protestants and

³ The first task the missionaries faced was to convince the Eskimos that they were "pagans." As Lewis (1904:234-235) observed: "The great difficulty in dealing with Eskimos, as with all people, is to overcome the first obstacle, and convince the people that they are sinners who stand in need of a Saviour" He quotes Peck, who wrote in his diary: "Often when I speak of man's lost, fallen state to the Eskimos they make remarks which show that they -- if any people under heaven -- ought not to be placed in the list of sinners. Some remark, when I mention the various sins to which they are addicted, 'But I do not steal,' 'I do not commit adultery,' etc. etc..." Deviance is, after all, a matter of definition and the definition the missionaries applied was taken directly from their experience with sinners in the only world they knew.

claim the Eskimos for their own."⁴ Such fears led to dubious conversions. In 1919, for instance, two Roman Catholic missionaries went to establish a mission in Pond Inlet expecting to find "only pagans," ripe for the converting. Instead, they found "about 50 Anglican Inuit hastily baptized the previous year in the kitchen of the trading post by Bishop Anderson, visitor on board the *M.S. Nascopie*" (Choque, 1987b:8). In July 1952, Catholic missionary Joseph Buliard wrote (in Choque, 1987a:189): "Protestantism harms our ministry. It marks the Eskimos so superficially that they are anti-Catholic and to so little depth that their life style remains pagan. It is indeed much easier to convert an old shaman than an arrogant Protestant."

Although the Anglicans had the support of the powerful Hudson's Bay Company, which provided transportation and other assistance, the Oblates were more "zealous and energetic than their opponents and were able to devote years to contacting new bands, or to spend forty and even fifty years at a single station" (Zaslow, 1971:65). They also outnumbered the Anglicans and, "since they were pledged to poverty, their missions also required far less money or supplies to sustain them than did those of the Protestant Churches."

Competition between the two denominations did not abate with the passing years. In his biography of Buliard, Choque (1987a:77-78) relates the story of

⁴ Fleming (1929:2) notes, however, an instance in 1915 in which "a gentleman's agreement" was struck between an Oblate and an Anglican over who would have Chesterfield Inlet where a Roman Catholic mission had been established in 1912. The Anglican, Fleming, agreed to stay away from Chesterfield if the Oblates would "not establish in Baffinland." This "agreement" was, however, later denied by the Roman church.

Buliard visiting Back River in 1943 where the people had been baptized Protestant, some without instruction. They were hostile towards Buliard and told him they had no intention of changing faiths. According to Choque, the missionary cried in his frustration and lamented the fact that the Inuit were attached "to certain Protestant books to which they attribute some magical influence." And, from Baker Lake in 1945, Buliard wrote to Bishop Turquetil, then retired and living in Washington, D.C., that "Baker Lake is a Protestant stronghold vehemently roused against us with every conversion" (in Choque, 1987a:105). Tactics employed, he claimed, were "spying, false rumours, untrue statements, [and] petty rivalry." If he visited a "red" family (*i.e.*, a Protestant family so named by the red roofs of the Anglican mission or red-edged prayer-books), "immediately the minister sent in his tracks a man he trusted to neutralize the poison of the Catholic doctrine..." As an example of the hostility of Anglicans to Catholics, Choque (1987a:169) reproduced a letter in his Buliard biography from the Garry Lake Codex written by the Anglican missionary at Baker Lake to a Roman Catholic convert in 1950:

Why after having believed for such a long time, do you not believe any more? I truly regret your leaving. At least, send back your Prayer Book and the Bible. Do not give them over to the Bearded Ones (the priests), since they will burn them and those who burn the Bible must not be followed. We pray to God alone; they pray to Mary and Joseph. Please, come back to us. There is still time.

As Choque comments: "Today's ecumenism would hardly tolerate such mutual antagonism, but, during the 1940s, open hostility between the preachers of the same Gospel of Love was a common occurrence, at least in the Eskimo missions."

The Oblates swept the Mackenzie delta,⁵ but a feature in most villages throughout the rest of the Arctic is both a Roman Catholic and an Anglican mission, although one of them might have virtually no local converts. This situation is an enduring legacy of the competitive spirit of the Christian messengers. The positions of the two churches eventually stabilized, with the Anglicans entrenched along Hudson and James Bays, and the Oblates holding the Mackenzie Delta.

The Inuit were aware of the struggle for their loyalties and, as they did with competition among fur traders, some at least tried to turn it to their advantage. As Choque (1987a:117) notes: "The Inuit aware of this mutual antagonism often played off one against the other! If the Catholic priest refused some favour to X..., he immediately threatened to go with his whole family to pray with the minister." It was, he says, "a well played comedy to get material benefits," by which he probably means the gifts of food which the missionaries often provided from their own stores.

The easy success of the Christian missionaries has been noted, but conversions were undoubtedly superficial. Baptisms were hastily performed as a form of one-up-manship in the competition between the two churches. Vallee (1967a:178) refers to criticisms from non-native informants in Baker Lake that many converts were "bread and butter" or "ammunition" Christians although there

⁵ Stefansson reported that in 1907 there were few professed Christians among the Mackenzie Inuit, but when he returned the following year he "found every man, woman and child converted" (cited in Francis, 1984:100).

was, he says, "no evidence that these Eskimos received favoured treatment in the material sense because of their conversion." Nevertheless, the HBC's support stood the Anglicans in good stead, as Inuit were relying more and more upon trade goods for survival. Some HBC employees even "went so far as to threaten to cut off trade with natives who visited the Catholic priests" (Coates, 1984:59). Coates claims that the Roman Catholic priests were obstructed in every way which "ironically served to bring the Catholics closer to their native communicants." The Oblates, pledged to poverty, eked a living from the land along with their Inuit parishioners, while the Anglican clergy was a relatively impoverished sector of the colonial establishment.

A common enemy

Although they viewed themselves as competitors for Eskimo souls, Catholics and Anglicans had an enemy in common, the angagok, whose role they were unabashedly usurping. Perhaps in a spirit of grandiosity, and in spite of evidence that they were greatly frustrated by their interference, the Christian emissaries appear to have construed the situation to make it appear that it was the angagoks who were on the offensive. Lewis (1904:240) writes: "We are not surprised that the course of the Gospel did not run altogether smoothly among the Eskimos when the conjurors began to find out, like the silversmiths of Ephesus in former days, that their craft was in danger." And Fleming (1965:67) noted:

An angekok [sic] has nearly always attained his position by virtue of his force of character and his ability to control the people. Being human, he enjoys the prestige of his position, and in the 'teacher' who sets forth a different way of life he recognizes a rival, if not a foe.

It was Francis' opinion (1984:98-99) that Stringer "recognized that the Inuk holy man would have to be discredited before converts could be made." Stringer's "chance" came when the shaman was unable to heal a case of pneumonia. Stringer "managed to nurse him back to health" and "won new respect for his mysterious powers." As Stringer's wife, Sadie, declared many years later: "It proved to be a turning point of our career on the island."

The missionaries were relentless in their opposition to pre-contact Inuit religious practices. As Peck observed in 1879 (in Lewis, 1904:105): "Many of the Eskimos seem to have lost all faith in their conjurors, although they are not yet willing to part with their charms." The Christians appear to have measured their progress by the absence of shamanistic paraphernalia. Peck added: "I have told them plainly that they cannot have Jesus and their idols also, so that they must leave them if they wish to be saved." And, describing the effect of the missionaries on the Inuit of South Baffin Island in the opening decades of the twentieth century, Marsh (1987:88) writes:

Over the years there arose discernible and marked distinctions in the dress of the people: the *angegoks* still wore belts, amulets, and charms, while the Christians, who no longer feared the spirits, abandoned all taboos and outward forms for the appeasement of the spirits.

It was a difficult battle and victory was never definitive. Choque's description (1987a:88-89) of Buliard's trials in the battle against shamanism is instructive.

Having exerted all his efforts to convert the heathen Inuit:

Bishop Lacroix had hardly left for Repulse Bay when something happened which darkened the atmosphere and caused Father Buliard's heart to feel an indescribable pain. That evening, as usual, the children were at his

house enjoying themselves, dancing, jumping, laughing, but no adult showed up. What was going on? He was quite aware of the activities of certain older Inuit and of their strange practices. Picking up his mittens, he dived out through the narrow door of the igloo; approaching one of the neighbouring snowhouses, he heard ominous and diabolical sounds. He was no longer in doubt, they were invoking their *tumraq*, the devil. His blood boiling, he murmured a short prayer, and entered Satan's lair!! An old Eskimo woman was lying on caribou skins; in front of her, the sorcerer, sweating, growling, his face as ugly as sin, was making his incantations. The sudden entry of the priest stopped everything. Father Buliard traced a broad sign of the Cross and scolded the Eskimos for their unforgivable behaviour.

It was Fleming's contention that the shamans sometimes tried to insinuate themselves as interpreters and helpers to the missionaries, the better to undermine them, but he also noted that some angagoks were honest and "cordial" (1965:173). One he met at Foxe Channel, for instance, thanked him for coming and assured him they would supply him with food:

He then said that he considered me a good man, for he had heard much about "the teachers" and knew that they were friends of the Eskimo. On the other hand, while the laws they had heard last night were doubtless good laws for the white man, the Eskimo had different laws. He and his people were followers of the *old way* and would continue therein.

The shamans proved unequal to the Christians who, as Vallee (1967a:25) observed, "had spectacular success," converting whole camps "at one stroke."

D'Anglure (1984:503), writing specifically of Arctic Quebec, notes that:

...the authority of Inuit shamans was menaced by the missionaries, who openly attempted to deprive them of all their powers, defining these as expressions of Satan...It was an unequal struggle, and despite some Shaman's attempts to integrate Christian elements with their shamanism (such as *Piluqtuuti*, who took a biblical lion as his spirit-helper), one after another they submitted to white rule and were baptized.

Although they are now routinely criticized for having destroyed Inuit ideology, the

missionaries marshal evidence of cruelty and hardship perpetrated by the shamans. Marsh (1987:138-143), for instance, provides several examples of the excessive nature of the shaman's penalties for having breached taboo, penalties that, without intervention, meant the deaths of babies of offenders. However, as Marsh (p.143) says:

In spite of these and other tales it should be understood that angakoks [sic] were not always deliberate deceivers nor simply conjuring tricksters; they believed in their powers, which originated in the spirits. Many taboos were created by them for the sake of the people, rather like our laws, whereby certain rules are laid down for the good of the community.

The shaman's power declined as that of the missionaries soared. Vallee (1967a:175) noted...

...evidence that the shamanistic cult in the Baker Lake region was degenerating during the first quarter of the present century and that many who claimed shamanistic powers were concerned more to achieve personal goals and to entertain than they were to contribute to the welfare of the camps to which they belonged.

He quotes a passage from Rasmussen in which a Back River Eskimo expressed a negative view in 1923 concerning the shaman's ability to reverse the decline of the caribou:

In those times there were only a few shamans, but they were very skillful. Now we have numbers of them, but their art is of a small order and only few sensible people believe in their power. They do nothing but talk -- that is all they can do! ...The shamans of our day do not serve an apprenticeship, and they claim that they get their powers from dreams, visions, or sickness!

Vallee (1967a:176) casts, however, some suspicion upon Rasmussen's interpretive skills as well as an explanation he, himself, was given by an Eskimo informant for the decline of traditional religion.

Now that we have fire-arms it is almost as if we no longer need shamans, or taboo, for now it is not so difficult to procure food as in the old days. Then we had to laboriously hunt the caribou at the sacred crossing places, and there the only thing that helped was strictly observed taboos in combination with magic words and amulets. Now we can shoot caribou anywhere with our guns, and the result is that we have lived ourselves out of the old customs...We forget what we no longer have use for.

Attributing altered hunting practices to technological changes is, of course, a glib illustration of the impact -- and the function -- of ideology! It is strong evidence of the success of the Christians.

Co-existence of old and new ideologies

Although conversions were widespread, it is probable that Inuit did not abandon their beliefs as easily as it might have appeared. Stefansson was convinced that "the instant Christians were merely pretending to take up the white man's religion while at heart they held to their traditional beliefs" (cited in Francis, 1984:100). In spite of the fact that, after 1930, most Inuit were baptized and, in arctic Quebec at least, "no shaman dared to proclaim himself as such" (D'Anglure, 1984:503), it appears that, far from being eradicated, shamanism merely went underground. As Vallee noted (1967a:176): "Although today no Eskimo in this region professes openly to be an *angakok* [sic] or to believe in such powers, we have never heard an Eskimo scoff at these imputed powers." In other communities, however, such as Back River and Spence Bay, there were "undercover shamans" who everybody knew about, but did not talk about. Inuit had learned to be covert about their beliefs. Those who complied with this injunction from the missionaries, usually proffered Christianized interpretations, for instance that the *angagoks* "were

possessed by the devil and were thus to be feared" (Vallee, 1967a:176-177).

Brody (1987:207) has noted that some Christian theology has been incorporated into shamanism, and Remie (1982:64) observed that the older people in particular interpreted the new religion "according to traditional religious categories." They also "took recourse to traditional means to remedy illness," a fact which "suggests that they continued to view sickness and death supernaturally" (see also Coates, 1985:159). There is some evidence that the catechists preached a bastardized version of Christianity. It is D'Anglure's belief (1984:503) that the catechists "interpreted the Bible very loosely."

One aspect of the easy, if superficial, conversion to the new ideology was that it was buttressed by what was, to the Inuit, incredible technology. An extreme example of this is reported by Fleming (1965:76) who secured his popularity by passing on knowledge obtained from a Toronto meteorologist that Hailey's Comet was about to appear. The Eskimos, knowing nothing of this science, thought he had supernatural powers. "This incident," he says candidly, "raised me to a level far above the native conjurer and contributed greatly to the willingness of the people to listen to my teaching then and in the years to come." Apparently, he was unaware of the irony of using conjury to fight conjury.

To partake in the spin-offs of such wonders, the Inuit aligned themselves with the seemingly powerful missionaries, and even if they could not completely abandon their shamanistic belief, as Vallee (1967a:182) noted, they eschewed those practices associated with it which the missionaries abhorred. As he writes,

"...one reason that so many Eskimos have abandoned much of their traditional culture and refrain from passing it on to their children is that they are fearful of objects or practices which had even the remotest connection with the *angakok*."

The missionaries' talking chiefs

Although the missionaries made learning the language a priority, Inuit catechists (lay readers) were used extensively by both Anglicans and Catholics and, by the 1930s, the Anglicans had even ordained a few Eskimo ministers (Coates, 1985:160). There are still no Inuit Roman Catholic priests, which may be due to more rigid standards for ordination. Choque (1987a:226) writes of an Inuk adopted by Buliard who instructed him and encouraged him to request permission to become a priest. Refused because of his inadequate education, he was not even accepted as a lay brother.⁶

The catechists travelled with the missionaries and must be credited with much of the success of their conversion programs. Fleming (1965:157) writes of his plan to have the Eskimos teach each other Christianity. He appointed "mentors" among the camp groups to instruct in his absence and, after rising in the church hierarchy to archdeacon status, he sought volunteers from among his old students at Lake Harbour to help the missionaries in Baker Lake and Eskimo Point [Arviat]. Marsh (1987:88-89) used a similar tactic, writing that "...those

⁶ Walter Porter of Gjoa Haven was another well known Roman Catholic catechist who never was ordained. As Choque writes (1987b:16): "He taught catechism and led religious services; authorized to distribute Holy Communion, earnest and zealous, he became the prototype of the native catechist such as the school of Pelly Bay, founded in 1968 by the Oblates of Hudson Bay, desired to form." Also, married couples were used as catechists and sent to other areas where they were "accredited before the Government to register marriages," but remained only lay persons.

young men who in earlier days had eagerly listened to the message in the small mission house took the service every Sunday." Further, these same men were the "skilled hunters in the community...men to whom the people looked to provide food." He doesn't explain the coincidence, but notes merely that "they became leaders not only in material things, but also in things spiritual."

It would be interesting to know to what extent the catechists were drawn from the ranks of isumaitoq (lay leaders). Balikci(1964:100) thought that the catechist in most camps was "the local leader and boat captain," which "undoubtedly increased his prestige in the group," but he may have been generalizing from the situation on the east coast of Hudson Bay. More advisedly perhaps, D'Anglure (1984:503) says only that the catechists were "often chosen for their strong personalities." It was his observation that the catechists "somewhat resembled new shamans with authority from the Whites."

According to Vallee (1967a:184), the catechist acted as a "watchdog," being allowed to preach, and also telling people how to behave in and out of "chapel." Vallee notes that some people resented the catechist's intrusion into their private affairs, although this same behaviour would be tolerated from the missionary.

The missionaries also functioned as minor traders

It seems that everyone who went north was also an inpromptu trader, and the missionaries were no exception. The Moravians operated small stores at their Labrador missions which carried "only essential goods," but were, Graburn says (1969:80-81), looked upon as competitors by the HBC which was "fearful of losing

some potentially rich profits to the Christian traders." He considers that it was the incursion of the Moravians into Ungava that prompted the HBC to establish a trading post in Chimo in 1830, "on the exact spot the Moravians had noted as being suitable for a mission building."

There is not much data concerning the financial arrangements made for the missionaries in the NWT, but Fleming took trade goods (cartridges, knives, cotton materials and blankets) with him to trade. He writes (1965:53-54) that the Eskimos "would bring in a number of skins" to trade, and mentions "one incident when a man asked much more than usual." A woman intervened, telling the man he should know better: "He knew how small the ship was that brought the teachers. How could they with such a little ship be expected to pay more than the captain of the great whaler? The others all exclaimed, 'Yes! That's right!'"

Like the Moravians, some Oblate missionaries also opened small stores. At Pelly Bay, for instance, where there was no trading post, the missionary ran a store "where items like tea, tobacco, ammunition, textiles, wood and metal tools could be procured in modest amounts in exchange for fox pelts and services rendered to the mission" (Remie, 1982:22). Prices in this store were lower than those at the HBC stores in other communities and "though trade with the mission was only marginal to that with the H.B.C, in terms of trading volume, H.B.C traders nevertheless considered the mission's trading post a threat to their market position." Pelly Bay was a Roman Catholic stronghold, but most of the traders in the area were Anglicans, which probably explains both their antagonism *and* the

Oblate's efforts to capture a portion of the Eskimo trade. The Oblates considered that the Anglicans treated their converts unfairly, under-valuing their fox pelts and denying them credit (Remie, *p.*22).

Abrahamson (1963:10) notes that when the HBC closed its post in Letty Harbour (western Arctic) in 1937, the Roman Catholic mission at Paulatuk took over trading. It was not, however, "run on commercial lines," and closed "after operating at a loss for several years." In some places (*e.g.*, Chesterfield Inlet and Pelly Bay), the Oblates, like the Hudson's Bay Company traders, also endeavoured to develop handicraft production and, later, were instrumental in promoting the co-operative movement (Choque, 1987b:19). Indeed, one Roman Catholic missionary, Andrew Goussaert, who not coincidentally had spent many years in Pelly Bay, eventually became the chief executive officer of Arctic Co-operatives Limited (as a married layman).

The Oblates, with no families, lived like the Inuit, although it is probable that some of the work of erecting the Catholic missions was, as with those of the Anglicans, accomplished by volunteer labour.⁷ None of the missionaries were wealthy. They had to rely upon funding from their missionary societies, making their way as best they could. As in southern parishes, the northern Anglican parishioners were expected to contribute what they could to support their church and missionary family. Fleming writes (1965:299-300) of an occasion as Bishop when he had difficulty raising funds for the northern missions. He sent word to

⁷ Arbess (1966:39) noted that when he was in George River the village was planning to construct a chapel with voluntary labour, and materials provided by the cooperative.

the missionary at Baker Lake to minimize expenses and, as he reports:

This request he passed on to the Eskimo, asking their co-operation...These people so recently pagan went down on their knees and prayed God to bless their hunting and then they sallied forth. They had good success, and upon their return told the H.B.C post manager that certain skins were for the work of the "teacher" in their midst...in their poverty to make sacrificial gifts...

It was common for missionaries and other outsiders to look for helpers from among the Inuit, but Fleming writes (1965:60) that he and his colleague resisted having helpers since: "The Eskimo had no idea of being anybody's servant and it was not our purpose to make him one." They did, however, take a young boy as a companion, considering also "that he had the potential qualities of a forceful Christian leader." They also later hired a young orphan girl to do small chores, paying her "according to the agreed standard," which is not specified. Stringer had a fifteen year old boy help him with household chores and the Eskimo language, for which he was paid with elementary schooling.

Invasion of the teachers undermines indigenous practices

In spite of their universal conversion, the northern people did not wholeheartedly receive the missionaries. In a few isolated instances, the Christians met with the full brunt of Inuit hostility as when the first Roman Catholic priests were murdered near Bloody Falls in 1913 by the Copper Eskimos (Damas, 1984b:409), two of whom were convicted in an Edmonton court. Anglican missionary, Isaac Stringer, was challenged by the Kittigazuit Inuit, albeit with less malevolent intention. In his case, the people were so welcoming of the message he brought, that they resented his having taken so long to enlighten them. As Peake (1966:19)

writes:

If their visitor attached such importance to his religion...why had he delayed so long in coming to them? As one old man remarked: "It is the white people's fault that we did not know [about the Christian faith] before. We have seen them a long time now and they have never taught us.

In general, however, the Christian invasion proceeded peaceably enough. The Inuit called the missionaries "teachers," which they were, and their teaching was not confined to matters of religion. The missionaries set out quite deliberately to reform the Eskimo lifestyle, the Oblates' agenda being more covert than that of the Anglicans. As Coates (1985:160) puts it, the missionaries were motivated by "paternalism and general disapproval of Inuit society" to reform the community. Stringer referred to the natives as "Huskies" and Peck, calling them "heathens," referred often to their lack of cleanliness. He gave prizes at Christmas for attendance and hygiene "as one does appreciate cleanliness among a people of this naturally filthy type" (in Lewis, 1904:246).⁸

The missionaries generally disapproved of Inuit and spared no effort to civilize them. They restricted polygamy, sent children away from the "heathen" environment to "civilizing" residential schools, and condemned infanticide, wife exchange, and hunting on Sundays. Although they learned the language and

⁸ It was common practice to separate services for Inuit and non-Inuit. Florence Hirst, a nurse at St. Luke's Mission in Pangnirtung from 1928-38 recorded the following passage in her journal (vol 1, 1935-36): "We had a lovely communion service for the white people in the a.m., the native communion being in the p.m."

taught the Inuit how to write in syllabics,⁹ like the whalers before them, the missionaries also replaced Eskimo names with European names, the Anglicans using names from the Bible -- Moses, Mary, Elizabeth, David -- and the Oblates bestowing French names -- Dolorosa, Mia Pia, Guillaume. As they had done with the names given them by the whalers, Inuit used their missionary names in dealing with the whites (Vallee, 1967a:68) but, for relations within their ethnic group, Inuit names were favoured.

The missionaries deliberately attempted to undermine many Inuit practices, a project facilitated by the fact that, until the mid-forties, they were in complete control of education. As Oswalt (1979:286) notes: "The pattern was for missionaries to learn the Eskimo language, then to translate religious texts, and next to open schools." Government grants for Indian schools were already a provision of the Indian treaties "and missionaries working beyond the treaty limits began to apply for the same aid" (Zaslow, 1971:74). As Zaslow points out, the grants were "modest," \$150 to \$300 a year for day schools and \$72 per pupil per annum for residential schools.

At first, the missionaries visited Inuit in their camps where they held informal schooling sessions. Later, town Inuit came to the missions for this purpose, and the children of those who chose to remain on the land were shipped

⁹ Syllabics is a writing system using symbols to represent sounds. It was devised by the Rev. James Evans for the Indians and taught to the Eskimos in the eastern and central Arctic by the missionaries. Inuit had no written form of their language, and syllabics, which is still in use, can be learned in a matter of days or weeks. In Labrador, Inuit were taught by the Moravians to write using Roman characters (DIAND, 1986:24).

to live-in schools in larger centres. Coates (1985:194) describes the residential schools as "a strict assimilationist programme" inflicted at a young age.¹⁰

Nonetheless, they persisted into the late 1950s when, "largely in response to native protests," they fell from favour.

The missionaries are repeatedly castigated for having provided an inadequate academic education (Oswalt [1979:287] calls it "rudimentary and inadequate," and Jenness [1964:48] refers to the mission schools as "religious kindergartens") but, as Vallee (1967a:154) points out, before Inuit settled in towns, a single missionary had to service an area covering several thousands of square miles; they had only crude facilities and teaching aids and "the teaching role was never regarded by the hinterland missionaries as a major one except, of course, for the teaching of religion." Marsh (1987:31) describes the typical mission school curriculum:

Simple hygiene, how to add, subtract and do small sums in arithmetic, all of which would help in trading, were the basics given to every child. To read and write in their own language helped them to read their Bibles and prayer books as well as to communicate with people far off, and some history and general knowledge of the world gave the children and adults a bit of background of a life apart from their own.

Clearly, this was a curriculum designed to support economic, ideological and political practices of the capitalist mode of production. It was Jenness' view (1964:43) that the education provided by the missionaries was of a poor quality because the Canadian government believed Eskimos would always be fur trappers

¹⁰ Vallee (1967a:153) noted that in Baker Lake, the missionaries had instituted "a kind of correspondence course arrangement" with adults and children taking homework to the camps and having it checked by the missionary when they came into the settlement to trade.

and there was, therefore, no point educating them.

Vallee (1967a:154) observed that as well as being a teacher, the missionary was also "doctor, dentist, welfare officer, mediator, and spiritual advisor." Having defeated the shaman, the missionary assumed his role as healer. the Anglicans established a crude hospital on Blacklead Island, and opened more elaborate hospitals in Aklavik and Pangnirtung in the early 1900s. A hospital was built by the Oblates in Chesterfield Inlet in 1931. The situation in the Arctic thus mimicked, to a lesser extent, the situation in the province of Quebec where until the 1950s, the church controlled education, health care and many social services.

In spite of the fact that the missionaries received some government assistance for providing schooling, there was no control over curricula. It was not until the 1950s that the state intervened to ensure that natives were taught according to the standard Canadian curriculum (Coates, 1985:194), and the missionaries gradually "lost control of the programme," although they continued "to participate in administration and teaching."

Although, generally, children were of the same denomination as their parents and camps were homogeneous, there were cases in which conversion divided communities and even families along religious lines.¹¹ Fleming (1965:110) notes that:

...as one man or one woman took the step and came forward to be baptized, it often wrought unhappiness in the family group, a husband avowing the new allegiance, the wife holding back; a son or daughter

¹¹ Abrahamson (1963:19) found that 6 of the 69 families in Tuktoyaktuk were of "mixed religious affiliation."

following in 'the new way,' the parents staying in the old.

The denominational war between Catholics and Anglicans provided yet another, important axis of schism among Inuit. As Vallee (1967a:92) noted in Baker Lake in 1959, "it is nowadays customary to seek mates from one's own religious group." Since the Catholics were a minority, their "field of choice" was, he says, narrowed "significantly." In latter years, the insurgence of fundamentalists created yet another line of cleavage, between "born again" and conventional Christians.

As Zaslow (1971:74) pointed out: "In their health, relief, and educational activities, the northern missions were moving into the welfare field as allies and precursors of the federal government's Department of Indians [sic] Affairs." Indeed, as Coates (1985:158) concludes: "That the government acted at all was due, in part, to the constant appeals of northern missionaries..." They importuned federal officials to intervene on behalf of the native people to relieve the cyclical starvation that, along with introduced diseases to which they had no immunity, were decimating whole camps. The state *did* step in, but as we shall see below, for not wholly altruistic reasons.

The state steps in to play "a game of bluff"¹²

The state's interest in the Arctic was directed more to the extraction of resources and the assertion of sovereignty than the well-being of the people who lived there. Intermittent Northwest Mounted Police voyages to the Yukon, Hudson Bay, and the Beaufort Sea began in 1897, but their purpose was to assert Canadian

¹² Steele (1936:107-108).

sovereignty and to expand scientific knowledge of the North. Some ice observation and meteorological stations were set up but, until the twentieth century, the Arctic was a vast and unorganized territory of little interest to the rest of Canada. The territory was divided into four "districts" in 1895 -- Ungava, Yukon, Mackenzie, and Franklin -- which signified, says Francis (1986:197), "the beginning, however half-hearted, of Canadian administration in the Arctic."

Canada's "ownership" of the Arctic territories has always been unclear. Rupert's Land was designated as "the land area that drained into Hudson Bay and Strait, and into the waters off the Arctic coast" (Ross, 1984:34), and an act of the British Parliament gave the Hudson's Bay Company commercial monopoly over it in 1670. In 1870, Rupert's Land was transferred from Britain to Canada but, "sovereignty over the regions farther north -- Baffin Island and the rest of the huge, complex archipelago," remained with the British. In 1880, Britain transferred *all* the arctic territories to Canada but, as Ross says, "the description of their limits was hopelessly vague, perhaps intentionally, and was therefore open to more than one interpretation."

The assertion of sovereignty in the North

Real involvement by Canada in the Arctic regions was sparked by the presence of foreign whalers and a belated recognition that Canadian sovereignty was being challenged. Foreigners had, since the sixteenth century, been claiming portions of the Canadian Arctic with impunity. It was a convention for European explorers to plant flags symbolizing territorial claims for their homelands, and the whalers who

invaded in the nineteenth century were similarly unimpeded. Britain may have formally ceded Rupert's Land to Canada, but unsupported by a Canadian presence, this was clearly only a formality.

It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century, when, alarmed by intensified efforts on the part of American and Norwegian explorers to register claims to arctic territories, Canada decided to wave a flag on its own behalf (Coates, 1985:141). More cause for alarm was the settlement of the Alaska/Canada boundary in 1903 which "effectively cut off the northern half of British Columbia from direct access to the sea" (Ross, 1984:35). Americans were perceived as the most immediate threat, and in 1903, Senator Edwards wrote the following memo -- which begins in a deceptively casual manner -- to Prime Minister Laurier:

In looking up the matter a short time ago, I was surprised to find the extent to which the Americans have been whaling in Hudson Bay and the many years they have been at it. Their aggressive and grasping nature is such that we need not be surprised if shortly they take the position that Hudson Bay is an open sea, and further, that they may lay claim to islands and territory in the North land, said to be rich in coal and a variety of minerals. It seems to me that we should lose no time in asserting our rights...If the Americans are permitted to skirt our Western possessions, for Heaven's sake do not allow them to skirt us all around. They are south of us for the entire width of our country; they block our natural and best possible outlet to the Atlantic; they skirt us for hundreds of miles on the Pacific and control the entrance to a vast portion of our territory, and the next move if we do not look sharply after our interest, will be to surround us on the North (Edwards to Laurier 28 Oct 1903, in Ross, 1984:35-36).

The flames were further fanned by reports of the disreputable behaviour of whalers in the Arctic, especially in the Mackenzie where liquor and licentiousness were the norm.

Prime Minister Laurier's inclination was to avoid antagonizing the United States by making a "direct assertion of Canada's claim" but, nonetheless "to quietly assume jurisdiction in all directions" (as he put it, in Ross, 1984:37). This he hoped to accomplish by a series of Canadian Arctic patrols. Accordingly, the Eastern Arctic Expedition was dispatched in 1903 to set up a police post near Cape Fullerton in Hudson Bay, a wintering-over area for whalers. A patrol was sent to Herschel Island at the same time. The Eastern Arctic Expedition was a joint Northwest Mounted Police and Geological Survey of Canada team led by geologist A.P. Low, and its main purpose was to assert a Canadian presence through a six-man police detachment (Francis, 1986:200). Zaslow (1971:271) refers to these patrols as "ceremonial flag-waving and licence-collecting expeditions." The western Arctic post was manned by only two officers of the Northwest Mounted Police, "installed in a sod hut on Herschel Island in 1903, to maintain law and order, to collect customs fees on trade goods imported from the United States, and to control the liquor trade with the Inuit."¹³ What Jenness (1964:20) was to later dub "a military occupation" had begun.

A peaceful conquest

In an official history of the force, *Policing the Arctic*, author Steele writes of "the conquest" of the Arctic by the Northwest Mounted Police. It was, he says (1936:9)

¹³ As Francis (1984:102) tells the story, the first thing Fitzgerald, the inspector in charge of the Herschel Island detachment, saw upon arrival was a drunken Eskimo. Even though it was not illegal for Inuit to possess liquor, Fitzgerald reported that "as all the natives were waiting to see what we were to do with the first man that had liquor, I had to give him some imprisonment, otherwise it would be no warning to the others."

a "peacefully, adventurous conquest" and, further, "the gradual subjection of almost half a continent" was achieved by a single body of men who perform not only the duties of police, but of all administration..." As Vallee (1967a:100) observed much later, "theoretically, the police function is that of law enforcement, but traditionally this has been one of the least significant aspects of the role of the R.C.M.P in the Arctic," where, like the missionaries, they played several roles: "administrators, registrars, census takers, ambulance operators, allocators of relief, mailmen, and rescuers."

Given vague terms of reference and unclear authority, it was not easy for the police to fulfil their multi-faceted responsibilities. The instructions to Major J.D. Moodie of the Northwest Mounted Police who was appointed Acting Commissioner of the Unorganized Northeastern Territories were as follows (in Ross, 1984, *appendix K*, p.252):

It is not the wish of the Government that any harsh or hurried enforcement of the laws of Canada shall be made. Your first duty will be to impress upon the captains of whaling and trading vessels, and the natives, the fact that after considerable notice and warning the laws will be enforced as in other parts of Canada.

The police appear to have been often frustrated in their attempts to carry out their duties in unusual circumstances. The whalers were known, for instance, not to report all their trade goods, and they also claimed that they were not trading tobacco (upon which a high duty had been levied). But, reported Fitzgerald from Herschel, "they must trade it all the same, as the natives continue to smoke it."

The police objected to the fact that the whalers were taking unlimited

number of whales, and were worried that musk-ox stocks were being depleted. They also protested what they perceived to be an unequal exchange between Inuit and sailors. One hundred primers for a rifle (worth \$1.08/1,000 U.S. at the time) were, for instance, considered by the sailors to be "fair exchange for a musk-ox robe" (from a report by Moodie of the 1904-05 eastern Arctic patrol, in Ross, 1984:33). Moodie, it will be remembered, quickly terminated musk-ox hide trade (Ross, 1984:75).

The paternalistic attitude displayed towards the natives by the police is in sharp contrast to the treatment given them by whalers. In a meeting on board the *Neptune*, the Eskimos were informed by Major Moodie that they were Canadian subjects and given gifts. In his memoirs, Dr. Borden, physician aboard Comer's whaling ship the *Era*, referred to Moodie's speech as "the powwow at Government House" (in Ross, 1984:75-76). A clay pipe and tobacco was given to each of the 25 natives and, through an interpreter, Major Moodie:

...told the natives that there was a big chief over them all who had many tribes of different colours and how this big chief, who was King Edward VII, had the welfare of all his peoples at heart. King Edward wanted them all to do what was right and good, and had sent the Major as his personal representative or in other words, the king could not come himself so 'I was to act for him!' The major wanted them to do what was right and good and to settle all quarrels but he would punish all offenders.

As for maintaining law and order among the Eskimos, most observers agreed that there was then virtually no crime in the Arctic. The police, however, appear to have entertained a somewhat different view. In his official history of the RCMP, Steele (who had never been in the North), writes (1936:221) that "a principal

problem" was "to stop all this Eskimo murder, and generally to teach the natives respect for human life." He quotes one Superintendent Jennings who considered that "these natives hold life very cheaply," and he referred to blood feuds (essentially over women) and "wholesale slaughter" aided by the introduction of firearms. This might be an exaggerated reference to the murder of two central Arctic explorers in 1912 and/or the two priests on the *Coppermine* (see Morrison, 1986:248-250). Although Inuit were generally easily subdued, there was, as we have seen, a prevailing view among outsiders that they were bloodthirsty and thieving.

Even though Major Moodie was referred to in the popular press as the "Governor of Hudson Bay,"¹⁴ he was merely a police officer who possessed no real authority to enforce the new regulations. Nor did his western counterpart, Fitzgerald, who said of the booze-running American whalers: "I cannot say anything to them as it would not do to let them know that I cannot punish them...If they once found out that I could only make a report, I am afraid plenty of liquor would come ashore." As Steele admits (1936:107-108), it was "a game of bluff."

Captain Comer, for one, was not inclined to comply with the wishes of Moodie, considering that the larger police ship *Neptune* was a threat to his

¹⁴ Captain Comer referred to Major Moodie as "governor of all this country from Fort Churchill north" (Ross, 1984:72). As Ross points out, (pp. 72-73), however, his real title was superintendent commanding 'M' Division of the Royal North-West Mounted Police at Fullerton Harbour, with additional administrative powers as "Acting Commissioner of the unorganized Northeastern Territories."

interests in more ways than one in that the Eskimos now had another crew to be provided for (Ross, 1984:63). They kept the crew of the *Netpune*, "almost three times as large as that of the *Era*," supplied with clothing and meat, and the police even operated trap lines for themselves. Furthermore, Comer reported that the police were trading with the Eskimos, sending sleds "to Chesterfield Inlet and Baker Lake more than once to trade with Eskimos of those regions." Even the police became traders!

In spite of problems enforcing Canadian authority over the whaling industry (which was, in any case, breathing its last), the Canadian patrols continued. Between 1904 and 1911, the Eastern Arctic Patrol, led by Captain Bernier, made several voyages, "collecting duties and licence fees from whalers, charting unmarked coastlines, monitoring the activities of traders and fishermen in the North, and annexing to Canada the unclaimed islands that he visited" (Francis, 1986:202).

Patrols were discontinued after 1911 and the Canadian Arctic Expedition, a more scientific venture, was launched by the Geological Survey under the leadership of Vilhjalmur Stefansson who became, says Francis, "a tireless promoter of the economic potential" of the Arctic (1986:205,208). Activity in the North lapsed during World War I, but resumed afterwards, on a larger scale than before. The Eastern Arctic Patrol was revived in 1922 and the RCMP established a number of posts which were to become "a symbol of Canada's sovereignty over the North" (DIAND, 1986:25). Airfields and weather stations were constructed at

strategic points during World War II and, in the early 1950s, the United States and Canada cooperated in constructing the Distant Early Warning System (the DEW Line), a radar line from Eastern Canada to Alaska to act as a deterrent to Russian invasion.

A relatively ineffectual northern presence

By the mid-twentieth century, police detachments dotted the northern landscape alongside the HBC and mission establishments, providing tangible evidence of Canadian ownership. Like the missionaries, the police extended their influence through long patrols to outlying camps and other communities where, among other legal duties, they registered births and deaths. Morrison (1986:255) thinks it probable that by 1925 there were no Inuit in the eastern Arctic left unvisited by the RCMP.

The first attempt to enumerate the Eskimo population was made in 1911, a project which utilized the services of post managers, missionaries, policemen and others, all of whom journeyed to the camps to get information (Ross, 1975:111). Starting in 1941, police assigned four digit numbers to Inuit, inscribed on thin fibre discs of the approximate size of a quarter and designed to be worn around the neck. The "disc list," as it was called, also organized Inuit into nuclear families, using the Eskimo name of the male head as the "family name," although the concept of surnaming was foreign to Inuit. The disc list was upgraded in 1945 with the addition of a "district designation" (the Arctic had by then been divided into 12 districts), a move to facilitate administration of the family allowance

program (Roberts, 1975). Disc numbers were later used to identify carvings made for sale in the South (like a social insurance number), but were discontinued in 1971 in the NWT when Inuit were persuaded to adopt surnames.

Like the traders, the police encouraged the Inuit to stay on the land. Unlike the missionaries, some officers appear to have had some degree of tolerance of Inuit customs. Morrison (1986:257) quotes Major Moodie who wrote in 1904: "All superstitions have to be handled gently and it is worse than useless to attempt to upset old customs in a day." Morrison adds, however, that benign tolerance was soon replaced with "the occasional derogatory reference" to Inuit who were described by Inspector French in 1919 as "born thieves and liars," any one of which "would sell his soul to possess a rifle."

The arctic police are, typically, portrayed as naive and ineffectual. Ross, who considered that Inuit-whaler relations were based upon mutual respect, is scornful of that first contact of the police with Inuit at Fullerton Harbour in 1903. As he says (1984:76) of Moodie's meeting with the Inuit at which gifts were given:

Here were a people who had maintained intimate ties with foreign whalers for more than forty years being treated as simple, helpless, credulous savages. Here were men who possessed whaleboats, darting guns, shoulder guns, and all the sophisticated paraphernalia employed in the pursuit of bowhead whales, who hunted with telescopes and powerful repeating rifles, and who normally wore American trousers, shirts, jackets, hats and sunglasses. Here were women who used manufactured domestic implements and containers, who made up clothes on sewing machines, who attended shipboard dances in imported dresses, and who bore children sired by whalers. To these people an officious, uniformed stranger was distributing underwear as if it were a priceless treasure and lecturing them on morals and their allegiance to a big white chief. When Moodie suggested that the Eskimos might wish to travel 500 miles to Churchill to send joyful messages of thanks to the king, no one responded.

Coates (1985:141) remarks that: "The Canadians approached their declaration of ownership with typical paternalism, thinking the Inuit intellectually incapable of comprehending their real message." Paternalism persisted as the state later undertook a program "to help the Eskimo to help himself" (Vallee, 1967a:40).

Administration from Ottawa: The Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources

Little interest in the Arctic's inhabitants was shown until after World War II, although during the depression of the 1930s, Canada had provided them with ammunition so they could go out and hunt (Jenness, 1964:53). Jenness cites a 1935 report to the effect that Ottawa's Department of the Interior was concerned that relief measures might encourage "indolence" among the Inuit or weaken "their sense of self-dependence." As mentioned previously, game regulations had been enacted in the first decades of the twentieth century, but these were not to benefit the native population, but to help secure the HBC monopoly.

The first major sign of a new kind of government intervention in the North occurred when Inuit were included in Canada's Family Allowance Act passed in 1944. They were to be paid in kind not money since there was no cash used in the Arctic at that time, and payment was contingent upon having children enrolled in school, a requirement which meant that Inuit either had to "settle" at the posts or send their children to residential schools.

In 1953, after the war, the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources (NANR) was established and "a further rationalization of related government services led," says Coates (1985:198) to its becoming, in 1961, the

Department of Northern Affairs and Northern Development. "This latter move seemed," he says, "to put the wolves in with the chickens, in that the department's responsibilities to defend native interests were often directly at odds with the priorities of would-be developers." The focus was on national resources, not the inhabitants who continued to have ambiguous status within the Canadian state. Eskimos had signed no treaties with Canada, but they were being administered under the Indian Act of 1924. As Coates (1985:154) says: "After a lengthy and ludicrous debate over whether or not Inuit were Indians (and therefore under the Indian Act), the Supreme Court of Canada ruled, in 1939, that they were indeed Indians." It was, perhaps, a moot point for, at this time, as Morrison (1986:254-255) points out, the "sole contact" Inuit had with government "consisted of annual or semi-annual visits from the police."

Building "roads to resources"¹⁵

Interest in the North reached new heights during the reign of Prime Minister Diefenbaker (1957-1963). The thrust of his "New National Policy," was to provide access for private enterprise to northern resources (Coates, 1985:199). Visions of untapped wealth had lingered from the days of Stefansson's poorly conceived Canadian Arctic Expedition (1913-18), and the emphasis of Diefenbaker's New National Policy, as developed by Alvin Hamilton, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, was firmly on resource development to be facilitated by roads, railways, communication systems, *etc.* As Coates (1985:200) puts it:

¹⁵ Coates (1985:200).

The government's financial commitment was evident in its Territorial Roads and 'Roads to Resources' programmes, support for scientific investigations, improvements to northern communication, subsidies for a railway to Pine Point on Great Slave Lake and other efforts to open up the north. Private investors received ample encouragement; new oil and gas regulations, for example, opened millions of acres in the Yukon and Northwest Territories for exploration.

The message from Hamilton was that the North was "a new world to conquer" and, echoing Stefansson, he added: "It is like a great vault holding in its recesses, treasures to maintain and increase the material living standards which our countries take for granted" (in Coates, 1985:199). This dream, which continues to excite some, has yet to be realized. There may be resources in the Arctic, but the obstacles to their extraction are costly and enormous.

Social programs for Inuit, a repercussion of new state interest in the Arctic

Although the focus was on resource development, NANR also undertook to extend to the North social services offered in the South. Morrison (1986:258) refers to the provision of mother's allowances and the old-age pension to arctic inhabitants as "the coming of the welfare state" and says this event "is often given as a watershed" even though these provisions were made for *all* Canadians and not as a specific program for Inuit. There was a great influx of civil servants into the Arctic during the fifties, with Yellowknife becoming the NWT administrative centre, Aklavik the western, and Frobisher Bay the eastern administrative centres. Schooling was taken over from the missions, and federal day schools were built in "communities" which were centred around the trading/mission/police posts. Curricula were made consistent with those in schools all over Canada, in

deference to the universalist approach to education favoured by industrial societies; for, in Vallee's words (1967a:152): "The goal of easy circulation in Canadian society presupposes at least a basic formal education along lines already laid down for the great majority of the population."

The federal schools were intended to serve both settlement and land families, but this meant that the latter had to board with settlement families, which resulted in fewer land children being educated, exacerbating the differences between town and camp Inuit. Vallee (1967a:155) noted in 1958-59 that in Baker Lake the going rate for boarders was \$45 per month each. This arrangement was a welcome source of cash, but the Northern Health Service was in some cases opposed to boarding because of the overcrowded tents, shacks and igloos and unsanitary conditions which Vallee (p.156) felt were "no worse and usually better than living conditions in land habitations." Local community hostels, newly constructed or utilizing abandoned buildings, were tried for a while, but the Inuit Vallee talked with in Baker Lake were generally unsupportive of the hostel arrangement.

Social practices introduced in the schools were, like the curriculum, decidedly European. Instruction in etiquette was included along with training in hygiene (toothbrushes, combs, *etc.*, were distributed). Students were also trained in habits of punctuality and attendance, which would stand them in good stead as employees and which has been carried to an extreme in the contemporary lifestyle. As Vallee noted (1967a:162):

The need to conform to time-scheduling at school is altering the orientation to time among the Eskimo population. In the past, except for the few Eskimos who worked for Kabloona agencies, there was no situation requiring the rigid scheduling of activities, but now there is pressure on parents and children alike to adjust their daily lives to school requirements. This involves not only the matter of rising and retiring at fixed hours, but also the arranging of meals to fit into the school schedule.

Vallee also remarked that in Baker Lake students were keen to learn, and discipline problems were non-existent: They were, as he said (*p. 163*) 'strongly motivated to conform to the demands of the school system.' Inuit uncritically accepted the European milieu established in the schools, but there was little concession to Inuit practices from the other side. Sometimes absences were tolerated when an older male student went hunting, or when land children had to return to their families while it was still possible to travel by dog sled but, as Vallee (1967a:165) noted:

...for the most part, the day school is a purely Canadian agency, an envelope of kabloona society and culture in which the child is sealed off from the traditional Eskimo milieu. If the child were put on board a rocket each morning and whisked within minutes to some school in the South, then whisked back to Baker Lake again in the afternoon, the contrast between his school milieu and that of his home would not be much greater than it is at present.

Adult Inuit considered that the education offered in the schools consisted mainly of learning English, a skill which was "highly valued because it enables the bilingual person to cope with the new situation in the Arctic" (Vallee, *p. 167*). As Vallee says:

The facts are plain: anyone can see that the Eskimos who had the best habitations, the most secure sources of income, the largest and latest model outboard motors and canoes, the respect of the Kabloona, and plenty to eat are those who can either speak English or who at least can comprehend

it sufficiently to communicate with the powerful Kabloona.

The other visible repercussion of the new state interest in the Arctic was in the area of health care. Nursing stations were built, and the testing for tuberculosis carried out by itinerant medical staff resulted in a large number of Inuit being evacuated to southern hospitals.¹⁶

A definitive blow struck to the indigenous mode of production

Ottawa's interest in the North waned with the defeat of the Conservatives to the Liberals in 1963 (Coates, 1985:201) but, as I discuss in the next chapter, by this time the definitive blow had been struck to the indigenous mode of production. To avail themselves of the many new services, Inuit who had been nomadic for centuries finally "settled." Some stayed in the camps which now functioned as satellites of the expanding towns, but people who had previously ranged over thousands of miles began in the main to trace a restricted area, never venturing too far from what had become the nerve centre of their existence, the "community" built around the headquarters of the trader, missionary and policeman.

As Kemp (1984:474) says: "Slowly attachments were made to the available services, amenities, and occasional wage labor." Since most Inuit were no longer able to live off the land, the state took up the slack by attempting to develop

¹⁶ Improved health care and an attendant sharp decrease in infant mortality resulted in burgeoning population statistics. The population of the Yukon and the NWT more than doubled between 1951 and 1976. The Yukon went from 9,000 to almost 22,000, and the Northwest Territories from 16,000 to more than 42,000, figures which include Indians, Metis and Inuit (Coates, 1985:212).

small local industries based upon renewable resource exploitation such as fishing. The most successful were those based upon handicrafts, but this was realized only after much research and experimentation, beginning with a series of area economic surveys in the 1960s, the subject of chapter seven. The transformative effects resulting from contact with the trader/missionary/police alliance carrying economic, ideological and political practices are the subject of the next chapter.

Map 5 Place Names in the Canadian Arctic Including Labrador.

Chapter Six

Economic, Ideological and Political Transformation

In only a few decades, the combined force of trader, missionary and police succeeded in delivering the capitalist mode of production to the Inuit. By the end of the 1950s, the pre-contact economy and ideology had been largely replaced and, although an organized polity and ethnic consciousness were not part of the indigenous mode of production, the groundwork for both was laid with centralization. In the new administrative centres, Inuit were "governed" by non-natives. There was no settler population against which to counterpose ethnic identity, but the same end was achieved when people were amalgamated according to priorities other than their own. In the new "communities," the Eskimos had the opportunity to become aware of the differences between themselves and outsiders, and the lesson they learned was that power is tied to ethnic group affiliation.

By the end of the 1950s, the majority of Inuit were hunting, fishing and gathering as well as trapping for trade goods to enable them to hunt and to supplement subsistence supplies. Changes in the means of production had become so pervasive that no-one would have thought of going without manufactured items. Subsistence now required the means to purchase trade goods but, opportunities being rare, earned income was slight. There was some

opportunity for wage employment in the new administrative centres, but Inuit were suited for only unskilled labour. If they were at the post when the annual supply ship arrived, they might be hired to transport freight to the store, mission or police detachment, and a few found employment as guides, handymen or cooks.

In the sphere of ideology, the missionaries had, as we have seen, remarkable success in converting Inuit to Christianity. Although understanding was clearly superficial and shamanism not entirely laid to rest, Christian denomination -- Anglican or Catholic -- became, as I shall later discuss, a dominant axis of affiliation for Inuit.

Centralization: Prerequisite for political, economic and ideological transformation

The process of centralization had begun with the whalers who first intervened to interrupt the pattern of seasonal migration. Desirous of obtaining foreign goods, many Inuit began to spend sustained periods in semi-permanent camps at the whaling harbours. In the second decade of the twentieth century, traders opened posts in some of those same harbours where they were later joined by the missionaries and police and, in the early sixties, by northern service officers, recruits sent by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to manage the northern communities.

The majority of people remained on the land, but some Eskimos began to cluster at the posts, making short trips out on the land to hunt. Their range of movement was steadily narrowing. Following the migratory routes of wildlife, they had previously roamed over thousands of miles, but, as townsmen, they hunted in

a restricted area, an unprecedented number of hunters working from a fixed point. The predictable result was the exhaustion of wildlife resources within the immediate area, resulting in an increasingly sedentary population and prevalent welfare. Only a few years after coaxing Inuit into the settlements, civil servants were encouraging them to return to the land. As Vallee (1967a:141) reported, there were several people in camps around Baker Lake in the late 1950s who were marginal hunters and trappers, but who were discouraged from living at the settlement by the RCMP and the northern service officer because there was no work for them [and, presumably, because they would have added to the welfare load].

The increasing availability of such services as welfare, schooling and medical care, provided strong inducement for more and more Inuit to "settle" in the administrative centres which, until recently, had no legal status as municipalities, but were referred to as "communities" or "settlements." Eventually, "the 700 or so groups of Inuit scattered across the north...relocated into about 40 permanent settlements" (DIAND, 1986:48). In the 1950s, many camp populations had been decimated through evacuation of tuberculosis patients to southern sanatoria and, in order to survive, those remaining moved into the closest posts. Declining fur prices were also a factor in relocation. In some cases, whole camps were airlifted into the settlements. Seven hundred people from Cumberland Sound were, for instance, moved to Pangnirtung, and the Padlimiut were moved to Eskimo Point (Marsh, 1987:187). The population of Baker Lake swelled from 90

in 1956, to 165 in 1959, which Vallee (1967a:18) says was "partly a spontaneous adjustment to the fluctuations in available wildlife resources and partly a government-sponsored relocation." Some Inuit were re-located solely in the interest of establishing Canadian sovereignty.

Disease introduced from the outside world was pervasive in the new towns and had a devastating effect on Inuit. People used to die from starvation which, as Marsh (1987:187) says, was always known to the Eskimo, "but it usually affected only a few in specific areas." Now, even the dogs were diseased and dying.

Although the mass migration of people from the camps was later encouraged, there was at first some ambivalence about this on the part of both natives and non-natives. Some natives were needed at the posts to perform menial jobs, but most were encouraged (and perhaps preferred) to remain in the camps where they trapped for exchange. Education was considered essential, and attendance at school was coerced by tying it to family allowance payments, but there were equally strong inducements to keep people from congregating at the posts. The value of Inuit now was as trappers and it was in the traders' interests to keep an optimal number of people out on the land to harvest resources. Eskimo trappers ran trap lines, sometimes for hundreds of miles, and travelled into the posts to trade or when they needed some essential item such as ammunition.

The missionaries also encouraged people to stay in the camps, presumably to avoid contamination by itinerant whites. And, even though it made their

administrative tasks more difficult, the police also promoted camp life, since the lack of employment in town would escalate the need for welfare.¹ It was not practical for the trader to take his business to the camps, but the missionaries and police continued to make periodic rounds, making auxiliary contact when the Inuit came in, usually annually, to trade their pelts for such items as boats, guns, tools, tea, flour and sugar.

As for the Inuit, Vallee (1967a:140) remarked ambivalence among them concerning the desirability of land or settlement living. As he observed:

Among those who are not whole-heartedly drawn to settlement living, but who are not doing particularly well on the land, the prevailing feeling may be expressed in this way: "If we could be guaranteed a good catch of caribou, a profitable fox yield, and a regular catch of fish, we should like to remain in the camps, visiting the settlement occasionally to see friends and relatives, shop, go to a movie or dance, and attend the chapel.

Vallee likens them to farmers who want the amenities of towns but, given the choice, would prefer to be able to live off the land.

By the fifties, there was, however, little choice, and the posts became the nucleus of towns into which most Inuit moved permanently. The sites for these settlements had not been selected with a view to supporting human populations of several hundred people. As Usher notes (1971:15): "Of the approximately 50 population centres (excluding defence and meteorological stations), over three quarters were established for the purposes of the fur trade." Nonetheless, they became hometowns for all Inuit.

¹ Vallee (1967a:46) reported that "one of the most pressing problems faced by officers of the Department of Northern Affairs and the RCMP is to discourage land people from remaining at the settlement" where "opportunities for wage employment are so very limited..."

As the twentieth century moved into its sixth decade, Inuit had one foot in both worlds, definitively locked into new relationships, but attempting to mesh these with non-capitalist practices. It was no longer a case of exploitation *between* two modes of production, but of a change *within* the pre-contact mode of production, signalled by new relationships.

Production in the early to mid-twentieth century

In the towns there were more opportunities for permanent employment than had been available previously to Inuit. At first, there were literally only two or three positions available in most centres, and these were mainly reimbursed in kind (with food, education, housing), but as services increased and as the trading post populations swelled, employment, usually part-time, became a fact of life for many. Wage labour and welfare, with intermittent hunting and fishing became what Oswalt (1979:290) calls "the adaptive economic mode."

As Vallee (1967a:77) noted in Baker Lake in the late fifties and early sixties, "able-bodied adult males are expected to bring in cash income instead of caribou" and "this income is supplemented in several families by the earnings of wives and daughters who work as domestics for the Kabloona." For many years, out of a permanent town population of about 220 adult Inuit, 14 males and 2 female heads of households were employed full time, and 8 males and 8 female individuals were casually employed as domestics, interpreters, chore boys, dog-team and canoe operators *etc.*, by 4 or 5 white people (Vallee, 1967a:44). In addition, many people came from the camps to the settlement at ship-time where

they would be employed for several days (four to eight) unloading the ships and storing freight. As was the case when their employers were whalers, Vallee noted that:

The kinds of services which Kabloona require of Eskimos are, apart from the menial, manual, and domestic chores, those in which the Eskimos are expert and in which the Kabloona are relatively unskilled: the handling of dog teams and canoes, negotiating difficult streams and terrain, the gutting of fish, building of temporary shelters on the land and so on.

Like the whalers before them, the traders, missionaries and police reinforced "typically Eskimo skills" which, as Vallee points out, meant that Inuit who were most suited to life on the land were enticed into settlements, while those who were less successful on the land and could have benefitted from settlement employment were overlooked. As he observed (1967a:44-45): "Kabloona tend to regard a man's incompetence at and lack of motivation for land living as evidence that he will not make a good employee at the settlement."

As more people moved into the settlements, jobs became even more scarce and, given their declining ability to support themselves, the state endeavoured to develop economic programs for Inuit. In 1958, thirteen males were moved from Baker Lake to Rankin Inlet to work in a nickel mine. They were employed at seventy-five cents an hour, but Vallee (1967a:56) reported that they did not like working in the mine, nor having to work fixed hours and every week-day. When the mine closed a few years later, the displaced workers were stranded away from home with no prospects. A beluga processing plant at Churchill and reindeer herding in the Mackenzie were also tried, but with indifferent results. The

Hudson's Bay Company had been attempting for years to develop a handicraft industry, but although their efforts did not bear fruit at the time, they were a step in the right direction; for, handicraft production proved to be the most stable foundation for an Inuit economy, for reasons which will be discussed in Part III.

The HBC initiated various other economic ventures. Copland (1985:151) notes, for instance, that the Company used to ship hundreds of barrels of pickled salmon from Chimo, but had to stop in 1932 because of quick-freezing and the high cost of imported salt and barrels. Stopping meant, he said, that "the main source of wages was lost." There were also efforts made to develop internal trade. Copland (1985:214-215) writes of buying a thousand caribou skins from interior Inuit in Bathurst Inlet, to be shipped to Churchill for trade to the eastern Arctic. This arrangement was terminated when "one company official had the mistaken idea that this would encourage the needless slaughter of caribou."

Apart from such efforts to develop a broad economic base, individual HBC managers employed Inuit at ship-time to help unload, and they always had a post servant (they were called that) who travelled with the manager, conducted the trade and performed handyman jobs around the posts. Like the native catechists, the post servants appear to have been useful in beating out the competition. Copland (1985:54), who was manager of Repulse Bay in 1925, candidly admits that he hired a man to help him compete with the nearby Révillon Freres post:

I never regretted my decision to engage Keedluk who was honest, hard-working and fiercely loyal to the Company. He was just what I needed to strengthen my hand against a strong rival in my first assignment as a post manager.

Women were also employed for domestic duties, sometimes becoming the concubines or wives of the managers, and giving birth to mixed blood children.

As for the state as employer, although it was anticipated that Inuit would be hired to work on government projects, this rarely happened. During the war, military bases were constructed at strategic northern sites by Americans, but although Inuit may have received some spin-off benefits, as Coates (1985:184-185) points out, construction used imported materials and labour. The DEW line project employed some Inuit, but Oswalt (1979:294) estimates that by 1960, only about 600 male Canadian Eskimos had steady jobs. And yet, as income from trapping declined, the necessity of a cash income became more and more urgent.

As Vallee (1967a:41) remarked:

Whatever the resource potential, the fact remains that in order to obtain most of the goods they require to subsist, the Eskimos in this region [Baker Lake] must have a source of cash income. In the unlikely event of a sensational revival in the fur trade, a good part of this income would be derived from trapping, but there appears to be little hope that the fur trade can play more than the minor role it now has in the total economy of the region.

He points out further (p.42) that, in 1958-59, some people even earned more from six or seven days unloading boats "than they earned from trapping during the entire year." He provided (p.43) the following data on sources of cash income to Eskimos (app. 85 families) of the Baker Lake region between July 1958 and July 1959 (the figures are totals for the entire community):

Source of Cash Income, Eskimos of Baker Lake Region,
July, 1958 to July, 1959 (from Vallee, 1967a:43):

Wages (including permanent and casual)	\$32,000
Family Allowances	11,000
Cash value of rations to employees of missions, RCMP, HBC, DNA & DOT	8,500
Boarding out of school children and others	8,000
Cash value of relief issues	7,285
Cash value of fox and caribou skins	6,500
Pensions (disability & old age)	4,000
Handicrafts	<u>700</u>
Total Cash Income	\$77,985

As Vallee points out, \$32,285 of this came from government allowances etc., and \$45,700 from the sale of goods and services by hunters, employees *etc.*

Transformation of the means of production

Changes in the means of production which were begun in the whaling period were drastically accelerated during the first decades of the twentieth century. The main Inuit work now was trapping, which required steel traps. Weapons for subsistence hunting were increasingly imported as was clothing, since pelts were now being traded instead of worn.² A major change in domestic implements and the skills to make and use them occurred when Inuit who moved into the fledgling towns left behind the snowhouses and skin tents which had served their ancestors for thousands of years. The snowhouse is still used by some for overnighting on short hunting trips, but the awkward, difficult to make and heavy to transport skin tents

² Fur clothing has continued to be used, to a certain extent, for travelling on the land and, warmer and lighter than its imported counterparts, Eskimo footwear was slow to change.

were enthusiastically replaced with canvas.³

The first housing for Inuit in the settlements was unbelievably crude. Those few who were employed as aides by the white establishment were usually provided with accommodation, at first similar in quality to that of their employers although the gap in relative quality soon widened.⁴ The rest had to fend for themselves. Until the early 1960s, this meant sub-standard shacks constructed from packing materials and scrap lumber discarded by the non-native population, sometimes incorporating a canvas tent. Banked with snow blocks in winter, these structures were flimsy, over-crowded, poorly ventilated and conducive to the spread of disease. They were also inadequate protection against the weather.

In the early 1960s, the state undertook a staged program of house construction. The first stage involved the construction of the so-called "box-car," an unimaginative pre-fabricated structure about 16 by 16 feet. These have been replaced with progressively grander dwellings, and most Inuit are now living in three bedroom houses which are comparable to accommodation provided for itinerant whites in the fifties and sixties.

An important consequence of the adoption of these housing arrangements was the westernization of everyday life. It was quickly perceived that Inuit "did not know how to live in a house" and civil servants organized programs to teach

³ In Baker Lake, Vallee (1967a:19-20) noted in 1960 that 14 Eskimo households inhabited wooden dwellings and 20 spent the winter in snowhouses and the summer in tents.

⁴ Vallee (1967a:19-20) noted that in Baker Lake "the vast majority of Eskimo dwellings, whether wooden or not...are far below even the minimum standards of housing among the Kabloona."

them how to houseclean, arrange furniture, cook, *etc.*, all of which led to a remarkable homogeneity of household arrangements. Tables and chairs were a notable novelty, used for everything but eating.

Domestic implements used in the indigenous mode of production became obsolete in the new houses. The soapstone kudlik which burned animal fat for light and heat in iglus was no longer necessary as the new shelters were heated with oil brought in by the annual barge, and containers made of animal hides were replaced with manufactured pails and pots. All the replacements had the double effect of releasing more wildlife resources for trading *and* obviating the skills of both males and females. It is interesting to note that although Inuit did not unthinkingly abandon old tools and implements, these did not persist without modification. The woman's half-moon shaped knife, the ulu, is, for instance, still used, but the blade is made of steel cut from saw blades, and the handle of wood. It is the design and function of pre-contact artifacts which has persisted, while the raw materials, hence the method of manufacture, has been altered. This is of great moment; for, it is in the harvesting and production of materials that social arrangements of production are expressed.

No longer as essential as formerly for clothing, shelter or the manufacture of domestic implements and weapons, there was a new use for wildlife resources as a commodity to exchange for substitute materials. The use of firearms meant a more efficient exploitation of wildlife, and by the early twentieth century, virtually every hunter owned a gun. As Brody (1987:189) observes: "Old men and women

on the Belcher Islands recall the occasion on which they first had dealings with a southerner, but in 1972 not even the oldest islanders could remember a time when they were without a gun." The police had restricted whalers from slaughtering musk-oxen, but the widespread adoption of firearms meant that Inuit themselves became the worst offenders, putting unprecedented pressure on both the musk-oxen and the caribou populations.

Although firearms were a fact of life for twentieth century Inuit, it is important to note that traditional hunting implements were not entirely abandoned, but continued to be used as what Vallee (1967a:35) called "adjuncts to the rifle." Ammunition was always a scarce commodity and Vallee noted that it "was carefully husbanded and used only when the situation made it inconvenient to employ the traditional weapons." As supplies became more plentiful in subsequent years, however, the importance of traditional weapons decreased and they were used mostly as a novelty. By mid-century, no serious hunter would rely upon the harpoon to secure his food. Even when they *were* used, the heads were likely to be made of steel rather than ivory or flint.

Not only did Inuit use new materials to modify old means of production, they proved equally skilful at modifying new means of production to suit their needs. Balikci (1964:56) gives the example of automatic rifles tipped with harpoon points. Triggered by an iron indicator, they were placed on top of the seal's breathing hole which the hunter checked periodically to recover the catch.

Effects of alterations in means of production reverberate through all

aspects of the lifestyle. Because feed was easier to obtain with the new weapons, more dogs could be maintained. During the time Jenness spent among the Copper Eskimo (1914-16), for instance, the norm was teams of five, six or more as compared to one, two or three in the pre-contact period (Damas, 1984b:409; see also Vallee, 1967a:37). It was a vicious cycle; for, the more dogs one had, the more feed could be obtained but, the more dogs one had, the more feed was required.

Of greatest consequence, dependence upon firearms required proximity to a trading post to ensure a supply of ammunition and repairs to or replacement of the gun. Vallee (1967a:36) considered that:

The growing reliance on the rifle and ammunition edged the Eskimos into a dependence on the traders, so that when the latter sought to satisfy the market demand for fox, the Eskimos in most parts of the region were constrained to supply the demand and to commit themselves to trapping.

This, of course, created a need for steel traps which further reinforced dependence upon the trader.

Trapping was an expensive pursuit and often necessitated extension of credit. Usher (1970 I:17) found that in the late sixties, a complete trapping outfit (gas, traps, boats, guns, ammunition) would have cost thousands of dollars which, being beyond the means of most trappers, could be obtained only on credit. Involvement in credit arrangements with suppliers is, of course, the basis of independent commodity production. Debt is an individual responsibility and indebtedness had inevitable ramifications for Inuit. As Usher (p.18) noted: "Due to the necessity of maintaining a high credit rating, the trapper is unable to act as

a free agent in an open market, and is forced to accept less than optimum payment for his produce."

Dependency was further exacerbated by the need to realize income from fur as soon as possible. Usher (1970 I:19) notes that the credit available from traders or government agencies was often insufficient, "normally in the hundreds of dollars (or even less), where very often the need is in the thousands of dollars."

Social relations of production in the mid-twentieth century

In general, both trapping and subsistence hunting became more individual and less cooperative due to the acquisition of firearms. The repercussions of these changes were a weakening of the hunting group in favour of a smaller kinship group, especially the nuclear family, as well as an ascendancy of the individual/competitive dynamic over the communal/cooperative dynamic. As discussed later in this section, a growing disparity in wealth both fed into and was the result of *intra*-ethnic distinctions.

For those Inuit who stayed on the land, the camp remained the unit of production and "to some extent," consumption as Vallee (1967a:71-72) noted in Baker Lake in the late fifties, although this was clearly breaking up. Country food was shared as always, but Vallee remarked that some food items (he specifies baking soda, flour, lard, tea and sugar) were "regarded as the exclusive possession of each household," as were tobacco, clothing and cash or credit income. From this he inferred that the nuclear family was beginning to emerge as the main economic unit, a process which was even more pronounced in the towns, and in

those cases in which Inuit entered into an employee relationship with non-natives.

Mary-Rousseliere (1984:444) points out that the authority structure in the camps was not drastically changed: "The Hudson's Bay Company Manager assumed authority on the regional level," but the situation in the camps was not "profoundly modified, since they retained the same composition and authority structure." Vallee also noted (1967a:201-202) that authority continued to be based upon familial roles with parents exercising authority over their children and older brothers over younger. As in the past:

In camps which are not complete kinship units, leadership is taken by some person who by common consent is a successful hunter and who knows best the terrain in the vicinity, provided that the person is not conspicuously younger than the other men, although he does not have to be the oldest of the group.

As he emphasizes (p.202), this authority was always informal, based upon consultation. There was no over-arching polity and the *isumaitoq* or "camp boss" as he came to be referred to by the non-natives, could speak for his camp only and never for people to whom he was not affiliated by kinship or camp membership. The *isumaitoq's* authority was more visible after the coming of Europeans as were, perhaps, his credentials; for, in some areas, the camp boss was also the owner of a large boat -- a whaleboat or a *Petherhead*, introduced into the eastern Arctic by the HBC -- and controlled its use. Private ownership of this coveted item was recognized and deferred to.

The situation in the towns was different. Ideas of personal property became entrenched and authority lines unclear in a population composed of

unrelated people from various camps who resisted integration. Camp identities tended to prevail, and a phenomenon of the seventies was the splintering of communities (e.g. Povungnituk), through the movement of camp groups back to their old sites.

Nunamiut and kabloonamiut

Willmott (1961), who did research in Inukjuak, first remarked the differences between settlement and camp people, but it was Vallee (1962) who pointed the way to "a systematic classification by describing the sociocultural differences between groups of Eskimo households and by analyzing how people in these different groupings relate to the Kabloona and to one another" (Vallee, 1967a:135).

The distinction between land and settlement Eskimos was, Vallee says, made by the Inuit themselves who referred to the former as *nunamiut* (people of the land) and the latter as *kabloonamiut* (people of the white man, specifically, those who live in the town and are employed by the white man). This distinction was, however, somewhat blurred. In one sense, Vallee notes, the terms were analagous to our "urban" and "rural" designations, but in its most general sense kabloonamiut was used to distinguish "those Eskimos who are at ease with the Kabloona and who are more conspicuously imitative of Kabloona ways than are the majority of Eskimos." Kabloonamiut were, then, more acculturated Eskimos, choosing, as Vallee says (1967a:137), "to follow certain Kabloona-like customs where they could just as well follow traditional ones." The criteria which defined

the two categories were, he points out, continuous rather than dichotomous variables, defining only in terms of more or less.⁵

Vallee stresses (*pp.*141-142) that the kabloonamiut are not to be regarded simply as "the White Man's Eskimo," analogous to the "white man's negro;" for, they were valued *because* of their Eskimo qualities. Although they rejected a way of life based upon dependence on the land, some of the best travellers, hunters and fishermen were kabloonamiut, and some of the kabloonamiut women excelled at the traditional feminine crafts. Indeed, as he pointed out (*p.*143), sometimes settlement Eskimos were more successful in the harvesting of wildlife than were their camp colleagues, because they had better equipment.

Although the nunamiut category included the most skilful hunters and trappers, esteemed by both natives and non-natives, the settlement Eskimos considered nunamiut to be "backward and behind the times, in the same way as some city people might refer to those from remote regions of the countryside as 'hicks'" (Vallee, 1967a:139). Vallee's conclusion was that, previously synonymous, status and performance were now being differentiated. As he noted :

New criteria of evaluation are entering the social scene: the mastery of such skills as those required to mix easily with the Kabloona, and command of the English language in particular; ability to perform work which is highly valued by the Kabloona, such as the operation, maintenance, and repair of machinery; criteria such as these are becoming as significant as the more traditional ones in determining how people are evaluated.

He adds that "it is still true to say that the individual and family who are

⁵ He developed a definition of the variables which divided the population "into a rough gradation in terms of whether they are very much Kabloonamiut or very much Nunamiut, with marginal grades in between" (1967a:137).

consistently successful in the quest of subsistence on the land are regarded with admiration and respect."

Prestige was clearly the result of being attached to a powerful non-native in what Paine (1971) called a "patron-client" relationship, not hereditary but tending to favour families. As Vallee (1967a:143) noted: "No less than five household heads of the leading Kabloonamiut are the offspring of parents who were themselves linked with some Kabloona person, such as missionary, H.B.C. Manager, and R.C.M.P., in a patron-client relationship." As he concluded, it is not that the role was hereditary, but that "the acculturation process has been mediated through these patrons or sponsors," and now "the clients themselves are the mediators between the Kabloona society and the Nunamiut." Functioning as "stylistic and behavioural models," the kabloonamiut were, he said, "carrying the Euro-Canadian culture to the Nunamiut" (p.141). They were also "becoming key figures in the network of interaction between the Kabloona [white people] and the Nunamiut."

Dubbed "talking chiefs," the kabloonamiut were treated by the non-native group as spokesmen for all Eskimos. They took turns chairing the Eskimo Council meetings, for instance, although they were only figureheads, the real power being vested in the northern service officer (Vallee, 1967a:145-146). Kabloonamiut were consulted by non-native officials in such matters as how to

allocate new Eskimo houses and garbage disposal.⁶ As Vallee put it (1967a:146), "They are taking on the role of representatives of the whole Eskimo community *vis-à-vis* the Kabloona," a role which, not incidentally, put them at odds with traditional authority which never extended beyond one's own family or hunting group.

Can the kabloonamiut, through any stretch of the imagination, be considered a "class?" Vallee (1967a:144) considered that they constituted a distinct stratum in the community, "more linked with one another by kinship and affinal ties than they are with Nunamiut" and that "interaction based on shared membership in kinship groups and on in-law relationships tends to set off the Kabloonamiut from the other Eskimos." These new status groupings were also, he considered, being perpetuated by marriage practices; for, settlement Inuit tended to "arrange and encourage" marriage of their children with other settlement Inuit rather than land Inuit, a practice which, he predicted, would "serve to crystallize the now rather amorphous stratum of Kabloonamiut, setting it off as an even more distinctive grouping than it is at present." But further than that, Vallee (1967a:25) considered that those Inuit who were hired and looked after by the non-native population formed "the forerunner of a 'class' of people who are not dependent on the land for their subsistence." He considered he was witnessing "the emergence of a socio-economic class system among the Eskimos of the Baker

⁶ The councils were a feeble concession to power on the part of the non-natives who ran the communities. Vallee (1967a:207) considered that the Eskimo councils were "primarily educational" in that they allowed the people to learn something of the white man's way of life.

Lake region" (1962:13). By "class," he meant status groupings based upon an unequal distribution of wealth and unequal access to facilities and resources that have an economic value.

The kabloonamiut *might* have constituted a weberian status group, but is there any evidence of an emerging class distinction in the sense of differential ownership of, and control over the means of production and work, and the disposition of surplus value? Without arguing from any specific definition of class, clearly these status groupings do not fulfil the marxist prerequisites of exploitation of the labour power of one group to produce value for another group, but they may, I think, be considered forerunners of such by virtue of the fact that they indicate a growing disparity in relative wealth and power, measured not in cash, but in ownership of, or access to such valued means of production as boats and guns, what Vallee (1967a:45) called "prized possessions." He noted that, out of 30 canoes and boats, 21 were owned by people living in the settlement who also had 40 per cent of the dogs (although they were more necessary for those living on the land).

Disparity in relative wealth

Although no Eskimo was wealthy by national standards, there was a growing disparity in relative wealth between settlement and land people, and among settlement people who, although privileged *vis-à-vis* the camp people, were not uniformly so. Certain groups of Inuit became wealthier than others by virtue of being in closer proximity to a trading post and more productive hunting areas.

Marsh (1987:105) considered, for instance, that "the Padlimiut and the inland people were reasonably wealthy, because it was nothing for a family to come in with two hundred foxes at the end of the year."

Vallee (1967a:43) noted an unequal distribution of wealth in Baker Lake in 1958-59, with the 15 families living in the settlement receiving half of the total income, and the other half being divided among the 70 or so households in the settlement and on the land. Also, only 4 households were receiving income over \$3,000; 6 received between \$2,000 and \$3,000; 9 between \$1,000 and \$2,000; 26 between \$500 and \$1,000 and 38 took in less than \$500. The relatively better off situation of people living in the western Arctic is evident from figures compiled by Usher (1970 II:100) concerning sources of income for the four year period from 1963-67 (a few years later than Vallee's data). Over the four-year period, the mean income per family in Sachs Harbour during this period from all sources was \$6,484.

In the pre-contact situation, some Inuit had possessed more dogs and better equipment than others, but on the whole, unless beset by grievous misfortune, there was a degree of homogeneity in their fortunes which had, by the mid-twentieth century, been interfered with, laying the foundation for class distinctions.

Inuit as a whole were regarded as a sub-class in the Canadian context. The invading population was a mix -- peasant priests from Belgium, middle class Anglicans from England, working class Maritimers *etc.*, -- but Inuit were regarded

as inferior to the lowest of these. In the *intra*-ethnic context, however, there was a new distinction taking hold, that between town and camp people, with the latter continuing traditional practices and enjoying fewer privileges than the former who were patronized by the non-native population. As Vallee (1967a:140) noted, the people who remained on the land wanted their children to attend school, apparently in the expectation that this would enable them to have a better life. There continued to be an absence of power relations among the camp people, but this was no longer the case in the posts among those who, by virtue of being attached to the non-native representative of an outside agency -- trading company, mission, or state -- enjoyed privilege and power heretofore unknown.

Disposition of surplus

There were no restrictions in the indigenous mode of production -- economic, ideological or political -- working against the accumulation of wealth. As Coates (1985:148) points out, "numerous commentators - traders, missionaries and police officers - noted that the Inuit approached commercial opportunities in a different fashion from other natives." Inuit appeared to have a more commercial nature and to be "interested in property accumulation." In the Mackenzie Delta, for instance, the 1920 fur boom resulted in unprecedented prosperity and, as Usher (1970 I:28, citing the *Toronto Star Weekly* 19 February, 1927) noted:

Although much of their money was dissipated on ephemeral luxuries, the Eskimos began to invest considerable sums in capital equipment. Gas powered whaleboats and schooners were the most popular items. In 1924 the Eskimo fleet at Aklavik consisted of 39 schooners (19 of which had auxilliary power), 28 whale boats and two other vessels. This was estimated to have represented an investment of \$128,000, which had all been made in

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the previous five years.

Settlement families were in an advantageous position regarding the opportunities to obtain income, hence possessions. Many of them were employed full time and they also received income from boarding school children from the camps. As Vallee (1967a:44) noted: "Although no Eskimo family in this area may be regarded as wealthy by Kabloona standards, by the standards of the Eskimos about fifteen settlement families are regarded as well-off and five of these as exceedingly well-off." He also noted (1967a:139-140) a feeling of relative deprivation taking hold and evidence that some land people resented the relative wealth of the settlement people. As he put it, "the felt needs of the Eskimos on the land increase in proportion as the level of income and standard of living of settlement Eskimos increase." In Baker Lake, as in other arctic communities, by the middle years of the twentieth century, there was a definite gap in relative wealth, a gap which, as Vallee (1967a:44) put it, was "quite wide by any standards."

Important, too, is the fact that although most Inuit continued to perform subsistence work, some became employees whose work was directed by others and whose means of production were owned by others. Some relied upon whaleboats owned by the camp bosses, and many trappers used traps borrowed from the HBC. Inuit employees regularly performed services that benefitted other people and facilitated an accumulation of wealth for the owners of their labour power. As in the days of the whalers, a few Inuit even became bosses themselves,

although this was more a matter of expediency than an indicator of participation in power relations.⁷

There was also a marked development of notions of private property at this time. Fleming (1965:164-165) remarked that "The whole effort of the H.B.C. was to re-direct the thinking of the native." The HBC had to *teach* the Inuit to become trappers instead of hunters, and with this went a whole new attitude towards work and the products of labour. Although food continued to be shared, the benefits of employment (equipment, food) tended to be regarded as personal property. Also, cash was not in general use among Inuit at this time, but its equivalent, credit at the HBC post, was not subject to the same rules of sharing which applied to caribou and other wildlife products, says Vallee (1967a:72) who noted that credit was "primarily a household possession, secondarily an individual possession." The informal rule was that an individual coming into possession of money used it to benefit close relatives, especially those in his own household. Vallee considered that this practice was instituted and encouraged by the northern service officer and the RCMP "through whom the bulk of Eskimo funds are channelled." They actively discouraged Inuit from spending their money on "self-indulgent objects," and took steps to see that it was spent on the family's basic needs, such as powdered milk (1967a:73). The fact that Inuit were paid

⁷ Vallee (1967a:204) discusses the case of a school janitor who eventually assumed a supervisory role over others, a position he assumed reluctantly as it went against the grain for him to tell others what to do. At a meeting where he was asked to talk on the subject of Eskimo participation on a Resident's Committee, he talked with seeming irrelevance of his back ailment and said finally, "If it were not for my sore back, I would be working too and not just telling men what to do and watching them."

through "chits" which could be traded at the HBC store, rather than cash, made it possible to monitor expenditures.

Thus, trader and state cooperated in redirecting the future of Eskimo labour in a manner consistent with the Euro-Canadian model. They were not, however, immediately successful in replacing pre-contact attitudes and practices towards property. Indeed, the less restrictive attitude of the Eskimo sometimes benefitted the white people. As Marsh (1987:115) noted:

Eskimos hold all things as common property. You may borrow from an Eskimo anything he owns, provided he's not using it. It's this sort of idea the white men like, that we can use everything belonging to the Eskimos. Many of us act accordingly and borrow at will, but we don't accept, on the other hand, that anything of the white man's that the Eskimo wants can be his. If you want to take his cache of meat because you're hungry or have to feed your dogs, it's quite all right with the Eskimo who owns it, as long as you tell him. If you take it and fail to say anything about it when you next meet him, however, then you've stolen.

In general, however, the unit of consumption among Inuit was increasingly, like the unit of production, the nuclear family. As Vallee noted (1967a:75-76):

Despite the constant visiting among relatives in the settlement it is still true to say that the elementary family there is becoming increasingly independent and relatively isolated. Economic independence of the household from other households is the rule there, due largely to the almost complete dependence on money income.

Even food sharing appears to have been more restricted than previously. Balikci (1964:73) remarked the "general abandonment" of traditional food sharing among the Pelly Bay people in 1959. Fish, seals killed with rifles, and caribou were considered individual property although, in case of need, he said (p.68), "short circuits of gift-giving appear." It was his observation that the nuclear family had

become the economic unit in "the fields of food acquisition, distribution, and consumption," and he noted (p.69) that "money and imported goods are never shared outside the household, even between the nearest relatives." Fathers and sons buy their own ammunition and adults own their clothes, but anyone might buy tea and flour used by the whole family. Similarly, in Baker Lake, Vallee (1967a:72) observed a growing tendency to restrict sharing to one's kin. Also, in the camps, there was limited sharing and "less mutual aid" between people who were not closely related, but sharing was "more widespread" when hot weather and insects made it difficult to preserve surplus food. At other times, "the produce of fishing and hunting are the possessions of those households whose members procure the game" and it is only shared if other households are in dire need, or if there is "an exceptionally large kill." Significantly, "the fox yield is regarded," he noted, "as the possession of the person in whose traps the fox is found, and the income from trapping as part of the household pool of funds."

Similarly, Usher (1965:28) observed in Sachs Harbour (western Arctic): "The idea of communal ownership or even shared ownership of property between two families (except father and son) is now generally alien to them." He noted that "the introduction of a trapping economy replaces a primitive communal way of life with a more individualistic outlook;" for, as "relations between people and property change," so do "interpersonal relationships." The Sachs Harbour people were, he considered, already at "the highly individualistic end."

In line with changing attitudes towards property, it is not surprising to note

that there was an increasing occurrence of theft, as remarked by Vallee in Baker Lake in 1959. In the pre-contact period, of course, theft was virtually unknown. As Vallee noted (1967a:194-195), the Eskimos claimed that "traditionally theft was so rare that they had no special way of dealing with it...If someone took something which did not belong to him, it was assumed that he must be in dire need and that he would replace it quietly whenever he could do so."

To summarize alterations in social relations of production at this time: In spite of emerging socio-economic differences, *kabloonamiut* and *nunamiut* could still be lumped together as a sub-class *vis-à-vis* other Canadians; for, although there were growing disparities in wealth and power, and a marked tendency to private property controlled by the nuclear family, Inuit were not, at this time, in an exploitative relation with each other. The *kabloonamiut* were closer to incorporation into the Canadian working class than were the camp people, but there were not two polarized classes within the Inuit group, nor were any Inuit even remotely close to approaching incorporation into middle or ruling Canadian classes. Those few who attained the status of "bosses" were in no way to be compared even with middle management strata. They were, rather, "gang bosses" who enjoyed a few perks for their help in organizing crews to work for the non-native establishment. This constituted a definitive separation, on the basis of ethnicity/race, of Inuit and other Canadians, a division which became entrenched during subsequent years of state activity in arctic Canada, and which had an inexorable effect on Inuit identity.

Collective Identity

Inuit did not perceive themselves to be a distinct ethnic group, nor were they *officially* recognized as such until the 1970s when the necessity of signing treaties with them made definition of the category urgent. Following the 1939 ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada, they had been treated as Indians and administered under the Indian act. But, in the late sixties, Vallee (1967a:217) detected "a trend towards the emergence of something which can be called an Eskimo social system in the Canadian Arctic, a social system which transcends local camps and communities and links widely separated people in a consciousness of kind." This consciousness of kind, that can probably be termed a fledgling ethnic solidarity, was, he noted, lacking in traditional times and weakened by the lack of economic interdependence among Eskimo communities.

They had never thought of themselves as a unified population, but Eskimos were treated as a distinct kind of people by outsiders who entered into economic relationships with them. Former affiliations, loosely based upon extended family groups, were considered inconsequential, and many Inuit found themselves shepherded into artificial communities formed around trading posts where their productive activity was governed by outsiders who assumed authority. There is strong evidence that camp identities persisted and that Inuit solidarity was tenuous at best, but still, the forces of collectivization were difficult to resist and in spite of the differences -- people of the seal, the inland people, *etc.*, -- which had previously been acknowledged, Inuit eventually came to be treated and to perceive

themselves to be a unity distinct from "others."⁸

Even those who remained in the camps were affected; for, the emergence of the camp as a satellite of the post resulted in a new kind of collective identification. Those trading into Port Harrison (Inukjuak), for example, were referred to as "the Port Harrison Eskimos."⁹ In time, this became a salient distinction for Inuit as well, giving rise to inter-community rivalry. But these were not "natural" groupings. They were, rather, boundaries imposed for trading and administrative purposes and *the criterion for such affiliation was which post was being traded into*. As in the past, local production groups formed the basis of group affiliation (*intra-ethnic divisions*), but now, organization was based upon external criteria.

Functioning for a time as satellites of the posts upon which they depended for trade, education, welfare and medical services, the camps as self sustaining units eventually disappeared. But, in the towns composed of mixed camp populations, it took a few generations of intermarriage before any integration was achieved. In Spence Bay, for instance, where Dorset and Netsilik Inuit had been assembled by the HBC, initial friction was greatly reduced in later years through intermarriage. The tension between population fractions was most marked in the

⁸ Graburn (1969:134-135) noted that in Sugluk in the middle and late thirties, the two major groups set their tents and igloos apart and married within their own groups. There were two *isumaitoqs* and no "one over-all leader." When game was plentiful, there would be social cooperation, but in troubled times, "it was up to each group to look after its own."

⁹ In this case, naming has since reverted to Inuit usage. The adoption of Inuit names in northern Quebec (Nunavik) means that the people of this community are once again known as *Inukjalingmiut*, the people of Inukjuak.

western Arctic where Alaskan immigrants largely replaced the original inhabitants.

Corporal Wall of the Pearce Point RCMP Detachment observed (in Usher, 1970

1:30) that relations between the two groups were cool:

The natives in the western half of the Baillie Island district, especially those at Tuktukaktok [sic] are not so prosperous as the natives in the eastern half of the district. This may be due to the fact that they are all Canadian-born Eskimos and have not had the advantages of the schools that the Alaskan natives had, who form the majority of the native population in the Cape Parry district. The Tuktukkaktok [sic] natives follow more the old mode of living, and do not care to associate with the Alaskan natives and blame them for the shortage of game.

It is interesting to note that the Alaskan Eskimos were, as Usher observes,

...interested in producing a cash crop in order to amass wealth beyond the daily needs of shelter and food, and were willing and able to employ superior technology, greater commercial sophistication and increased geographical mobility to do so.

The immigrants were resented by the original inhabitants of the Delta "and the distinction between the two groups on this basis persisted for at least fifty years after the initial immigration" and persists, Usher noted, "in modified form."

Although power was definitively concentrated in the hands of a non-native elite, this group was neither homogeneous *vis-à-vis* the Canadian class structure nor, with the exception of the missionaries, stable. The non-native population was transient and, even when in residence in the Arctic, invariably remained, as Vallee (1967a:97) pointed out for Baker Lake, "oriented to groups and relationships outside..." Furthermore, residential segregation of Inuit and whites was the norm. As Vallee noted (1967a:214):

In every Arctic settlement there is some measure of spontaneous segregation in residence and sociability between Kabloona and Eskimo, but

as we have seen, in a few settlements, such as Rankin Inlet and Great Whale River [where there were large white populations] this spontaneous segregation is reinforced by company rules about fraternization.

Eskimo houses were constructed either on the fringe of the settlement which, as Vallee (1967a:20) puts it, emphasized their "marginality," or in "zones allotted to the Kabloona institutions which they serve, emphasizing the dependency of these inhabitants on one or the other institution and its agents." There was little social mixing, with kabloona feeling freer to "crash" Eskimo social events than vice versa.

It should be kept in mind that the non-native element in the North was not a settler population, although some white trappers did come to stay and a small number, probably less than a dozen, from the whaling ships in the 1890s remained in the Arctic to earn their living from trapping. Also, in the mid-1920s, there was "an influx of white trappers to the coast" (Usher, 1970 I:31).

Vallee (1967a:125) refers to the relationship between whites and Eskimos as an "informal pattern of segregation," referred to by some authors as a *caste* rather than a *social class* situation. Although, as he mentions, there were some instances in which segregation was rigidly enforced (as in Rankin Inlet where the mining company refused to let its employees visit the Eskimo village or attend Eskimo dances), and although kabloona generally acted superior to Eskimos who were, in turn submissive, there were, he says "other patterns of interaction which would not be tolerated in a caste system." Inuit visited the homes of whites, for instance, and Vallee cites the example of an Eskimo Anglican priest who conducted services in Rankin for both Inuit and white, "something which would

not be tolerated in a caste system" (p.126). The "crucial test" is, however, marriage across status lines and, typically, there was only one such example in Baker Lake when Vallee was there. In this case, as in most others, the husband was non-Eskimo and the wife was accepted by and considered to be part of the white community.¹⁰ Intermarriage may have been rare, but interbreeding was not, giving rise to a significant mixed blood population which, it is commonly thought, has been the main force behind political developments in the eighties. Although intermarriage is becoming more common, residential segregation remains the rule. Vallee (1967a:126) concludes rather optimistically that:

Social and economic position happen to coincide with ethnic group membership in most Arctic communities, but those members of the disadvantaged ethnic group who improve their social and economic position gain thereby a measure of social acceptance as equals.

The key words here are "a measure," as the relationship between whites and their Eskimo employees (domestics and handymen) was, as Paine pointed out and Vallee agreed, best characterized as a patron-client relationship in which the employer and his wife took a paternalistic interest in the employee and his family. As Vallee observed, the non-Eskimo community considered itself to be socializers and some, such as the missionaries, teachers, nurses, northern service officers and police, were there explicitly "to teach the Eskimos some or all of the skills,

¹⁰ Marriages of native women to non-natives have become increasingly common, and it is not at all unusual now for non-native women to marry Inuit. Liaisons between Inuit women and traders used to be discouraged, an extension of the HBC's rules concerning staff involved in the Indian trade. As Glyndwr Williams (1983:21) notes: "three of the most insistent Company prohibitions concerned relations with Indian women, private trading, and excessive consumption of alcohol." It seems that fraternization with native women was proscribed as it might lead to illicit trading.

attitudes, and standards of behaviour which are regarded as desirable by their institutions."

Eskimos were, Vallee said (1967a:132-133), treated like children and, like parents, the non-native "socializers" complained of "the Eskimos' poor spending habits, lack of order and neatness in dwellings, lack of planning for the future and so forth." Even the traders attempted to play a socializing role. In 1931, the Hudson's Bay Company published *The Eskimo Book of Knowledge* which contained a history of the British Empire and rules by which Eskimos should live. A brief extract: "In the third part of this *Book of Knowledge* will be shown to you the means whereby you may gain greater possessions in trade for the benefit of your children and yourselves" (cited in Crowe, 1974:168).

Not only were Inuit dominated economically and politically, they were also dominated ideologically, and this had important consequences for organization. Although he is undoubtedly unaware of the irony of his observation, the Anglican missionary, Marsh, wrote (1987:100): "When I arrived in Eskimo Point in 1926, the HBC trader was firmly entrenched," but "much of the old Eskimo life-style remained intact, however, especially the values, beliefs and ideals." He and his colleagues soon changed that. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Roman Catholics and Anglicans did not succeed in eradicating the pre-contact belief system, but they quickly drove it underground (Vallee, 1967a:28-29). Affiliation with one or the other of the two dominant European churches became an important axis of alignment for Inuit and, although somewhat weakened by

subsequent pan-Eskimo political movements, denomination is still a potent line of cleavage among them.

Language is an important indicator of ethnicity, and Vallee (1967a:28) noted that most Inuit adults were monoglots, and even for those who were not, such as children or those in hospital, Eskimo (Inuktituk) was the language used in the home. He hastened to add:

Lest this give the impression that the Eskimo 'culture' is still a vital concern, let us point out that in two crucial features of the way of life there has occurred an abrupt break with traditions: in religion and in the 'secular' modes of expression -- folklore, music, song and dance.

The result was that "many Eskimos [had] become ashamed of a large part of their own oral and musical tradition." In summary, Vallee's "general impression [was] of a people who devalue their own folk tradition, assuming that the powerful Kabloona do not approve it" (p.30). He likens the impact of this state of affairs to a massive conversion in southern Canada to Buddhism and Chinese literary and musical traditions.

It is interesting to note the extent to which religious denomination, or what Vallee (1967a:212) calls "congregational bonds," became, along with relations with the non-natives, a distinct line of affiliation in the settlements. It would appear to override camp identity were it not that, usually, whole camps were converted to one or the other denomination. Indeed, religious denomination is still the only force unifying various camp groups in the towns. Anglicans and Roman Catholics were segregated, and Anglicans were favoured by the Hudson's Bay Company and the federal government employees. Catholic missionary, Jospeh Buliard, is for

example, reported to have resented the fact that Inuit labour was imported from Baker Lake to work for the whites at Siuradjuar (Choque, 1987a:224). He understood the reason for this: "And yet, yes," says Choque, "he understood quite well, knowing the motive, always present, never admitted openly, of favouritism toward the little group living under the influence of the trading post or the Protestant steeple."

It was perceived that religious affiliation translated into power relations, vicarious though they were. For although they were the numerical majority in the new arctic communities, Inuit were an effective minority. Power was concentrated in the hands of a few (usually only four or five) white people who, although transient and not necessarily homogeneous themselves, were, with the possible exception of the Roman Catholic missionaries, united in treating the Inuit as inferior beings. The clergy were, by the way, the only consistent outsiders to whom Inuit related. For them, living in the Arctic was their life's work; for most others it represented a few years' adventure. Some HBC factors also stayed for long periods in one post, although they were less involved in people's lives.

Eskimo-Indian relations

As for Eskimo relations with Indians at this time, the usual hostility was ameliorated by the presence of whites. Sometimes, this was the result of deliberate intervention by the whites. Fleming (1965:193) remarked that the Nascopie Indians and the Eskimos at Fort Chimo kept "strictly aloof from one another," the Eskimos pitching their tents near the rivers, while the Indians had

theirs on the other side of the settlement. Another arctic bishop, Donald Marsh (1987:96) also noted that even into the 1930s, north of Churchill, an area inhabited by Chipewyans and Cree: "No Eskimo would stay overnight in the trees for fear of the Indians. Only in daylight would he venture there to pull out the timber he needed for tent poles and other uses, always returning to the Barrens before dusk."

Marsh (1987:97) also describes a game based upon a legend and played by Eskimo children "even in these days of relaxed relations" in which "all the players but one draw up in a line, the first in line being the Eskimo mother, the others being her children. The odd one is the 'Indian,' who has to catch the children one by one, while the mother has to try to prevent him from doing so." He also reported that Eskimo girls were sometimes taken or bought by Indians because it was thought that they would grow up to be better sewers than Indian women. Also, the Padlimiut Eskimos were able to speak a rudimentary form of the Indian language, but "not one of them will demean himself by speaking it." Marsh also noted that "marriages or any other alliances between the two cultures" were not favourably regarded by Eskimos anywhere -- "east, west, or in northern Quebec" (pp.97-98). In some cases, Eskimo/Indian hostility prevented trading from reaching the Inuit sooner. As Bromley (1986:19) observed,

...even in the late 1850's, traders at Fort McPherson discouraged the establishment of regular trade with the Inuit because of the 'deadly enmity' between them and the Indians who also traded at the fort. Bernard Ross, Chief Trader at Fort Simpson, recommended that a post be opened along the Anderson River exclusively for the Eskimo of that area...He cautioned that the outfit should start with only 'tobacco, knives, ironwork and traps,'

and that guns and ammunition should not be sold for several years.

The post was opened in 1861, but abandoned in 1866 because of poor location and low fur returns.

The Hudson's Bay Company considered that the animosity between Inuit and northern Indians was a factor in its difficulty making trade contacts with the Inuit and settling up posts on the east coast of Hudson Bay (Francis and Morantz, 1985:139; Ross, 1975:31). There was, for instance, a great deal of hostility between the Indians north of the Fort George River and the Inuit. The Hudson's Bay Company might have resented Indian/Inuit hostilities which they viewed as a deterrent to trade, but Francis and Morantz (1985:77) consider that the Company's support of "Esquimaux hunts" by Indians was contradictory: "On the one hand all the postmasters in James Bay were ordered to discourage the sorties in whatever ways they could...Yet on the other hand it was common for the 'hunters' to be outfitted at the company posts with ammunition and other items they needed for the trip north."¹¹ In their effort to develop trade with Inuit, the HBC offered rewards to Indians to bring Eskimos to Fort George and also hired an Inuk who had worked at the Churchill River post to make contact with Inuit in that area. They met with some success in 1840 when an Inuk named Moses brought 30 Inuit families from the Cape Smith and Belcher Island area to trade at Fort George. It is interesting to note that Inuit were familiar with the Company's

¹¹ Indians were favoured by the traders in other ways as well, being given credit denied to Inuit (Francis and Morantz, 1985:146).

trade items, which Francis and Morantz (1985:140) think means that they had overcome their mutual hostility enough to engage in some trading. They point out that by mid-century, all the traders "agreed that 'Esquimaux hunts' were immoral and detrimental to the trade and were doing their best to discourage them." The raids persisted, however, "for the rest of the century."

Inuit resistance

By the end of the 1960s, the capitalist mode of production had been effectively delivered to the Inuit through the combined force of missionary, police and trader. Inuit were dominated economically (by the trappers), politically (by the police who placed them under state authority in towns), and ideologically (by Roman Catholic or Anglicans). Why did they not resist? Resistance can be subjective or structural and, as we have seen, there was little structural resistance to transformation. As for subjective forms, Vallee (1967a:143) considered that the *kabloonamiut* were, rather, "actively oriented to the new way of life," eagerly pursuing English lessons and adopting western lifestyles, dress, and eating habits. He noted (1967a:210) that:

Compared with many other indigenous groups which have been subjected to pressures of change from an overpowering industrial society, the Eskimos are remarkable for the absence among them of individuals and factions with profound material and emotional vested interests in the *status quo*. The tradition-bearers, especially of the grandparental generation, have been edged into cultural backwaters. Most of the older people we encountered are resigned to the changes and do not actively combat them. As for the middle-aged adults, with few exceptions they are not passing on the distinctive traditions of their localities.

Like most observers, Vallee (pp.31-32) considered that the pragmatic, present-

oriented ("existentialist") attitude of Inuit inhibited resistance. They did not, as he points out, "have a profound vested interest in their old way of life" nor did they have a "clearly formulated hostility" to the newcomers. There were, however, a few isolated incidents of Inuit hostility directed to the invaders, feeble indicators that Inuit were not all that passive. Although they were adaptable and eager to please, some resentment is retrospectively discernible. Honigmann (1971:191), for instance, remarked resentment over lost freedom as early as 1944 in Inuvik, a community hit early and hard by western influence. This resentment, he noted, contributed to "a closer native solidarity" and, indeed, it erupted in the eighties as a major rallying force.

In spite of a general lack of resistance to westernization, in the late fifties, Vallee (1967a:218-219) noted the beginning of a pan-Eskimo movement and no evidence of Inuit being assimilated into mainstream Canada. The spokesmen of this movement were the products of settlement living or lengthy stays in hospitals, residential schools *etc.*, *etc.*: "In cultural terms they are closer to the Kabloona than to the traditional Eskimo. However, for many of them, identification with the Eskimo reference group is quite strong." It was, Vallee thought, "possible that they could inspire or act as spokesmen for protest movements as the Eskimos gain more insight into their predicaments." Interestingly, he noted that "the assumption of such a role by the Eskimos who are most acculturated to Kabloona ways is likely to occur if they feel socially rebuffed by the Kabloona or if they view themselves as victims of discrimination." This was, as we shall see later, a

prophetic insight.

Changed relationships within the indigenous mode of production

Intra-ethnic relations have been discussed throughout this chapter, but there are a few points to be highlighted. First, *intra*-ethnic trade continued as always, with the proximity of some groups to the posts providing an advantage which some Inuit were able to capitalize upon. As D'Anglure (1984:500) writes:

One of the most striking effects of the early trading posts on the edge of the thin boreal forest was that the inhabitants of the southern and intermediate zones, traditionally less advantaged with regard to large game, suddenly found themselves favored by the proximity of commercial establishments and by the ease of access to standing timber because of the normalization of relations with the Indians. These Inuit tried to become commercial intermediaries for more northern Inuit or to offer various kinds of services to the Whites at the trading posts.

An interesting phenomenon in relation to *intra*-group barter was the emergence of the interested individual or entrepreneur. As noted in chapter five, for instance, the Padlimiut, who traded into Fort Churchill and controlled access to their territory, traded used weapons to others for higher prices than would be required to buy new ones. Similarly, Marsh (1987:106) writes of an Eskimo trader at Perry River who ordered cases of goods by copying the name from the case and by-passing the post. He also mentions an "Eskimo traveling salesman," an Inuk from Ennadai Lake who trapped foxes in the fall, taking them to the post to exchange for easily transportable goods such as tea, cartridges and cloth goods which he then traded to his fellow Inuit at exorbitant prices. He might, for instance, charge \$30 for a pound of tea or the equivalent of one fox. He would work several camps, trading the pelts he had received for more goods and "at the end of the

winter he had quite a profit, which enabled him to last through spring and summer in greater affluence than any of his neighbours."

Secondly, population shifts were significant as new alliances superseded kinship groupings. This was especially true in the western Arctic following the fur trade boom of the 1920s (Usher, 1970 I:32). The original inhabitants of the Mackenzie Delta remained between Herschel and Baillie, hunting and trapping on the coast while the Alaskans dominated the Delta. As the Delta became more crowded, the Alaskans pushed to the coast and, significantly, at the same time, what Usher calls "a small but important group" of half-breeds, offspring of Inuit women and whalers, had "reached adulthood and were playing an increasing role in the economy."

By the 1930s, there were three Eskimo groups in the western Arctic: the Delta people (mainly of Alaskan stock), the Tuktoyaktuk-Herschel people (mainly old stock), and the people around Baillie Island and Cape Parry to the east (Usher, 1970 I:33). the latter group was particularly successful in both land and sea hunting and had also been in extensive contact with whalers, traders, and explorers. According to Usher:

From this group ultimately came the majority and the most successful of the Eskimos who extended the trapping frontier in the late 1920s. These easterners were already the best white fox trappers -- in a good winter, some got 200 or 300 foxes, perhaps more. Trapping was no longer a sideline; it was their way of life, to which all other activities were adjusted. They were keen traders, and many had obtained large schooners with auxiliary power.

The transformative effects of the missionary/trader/police triad were pervasive. By

the middle years of the twentieth century, the capitalist mode of production was still playing the double role of buttressing and undermining the indigenous mode of production, but the balance was definitely tipping in favour of the latter process. Although Inuit were encouraged by trader, missionary and police to stay on the land to hunt, the increased pressure to produce and more effective means of production resulted in a declining resource base and increased efforts to maximize a surplus.

By the mid-twentieth century, all elements of the indigenous mode of production were dominated by capital. In the economic sphere, Inuit had moved from subsistence hunting to become trappers and, to a lesser extent, employees. Since they were valued as white fox hunters, they were subjected to fluctuating prices and five-year harvesting cycles, which meant regular periods of starvation and death. They had no control over the market, and were no longer able to satisfy their own needs. Inuit had at this time entered what appears to be an irreversible state of dependence upon outside institutions. In the political sphere, extended families and camp groups were mainly amalgamated into "communities" which were organized and governed by agents of outside capitalist institutions, and in which a new ethnic identity was being forged. Finally, on the ideological level, Inuit were deferring to western religious beliefs and had aligned themselves with the two competing denominations, Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism.

The traders had an enormous impact on Inuit who quickly developed a taste for foreign goods. As Oswalt (1979:282) says:

They [traders] not only controlled access to foreign products but determined what was acceptable in exchange. In some areas traders were the earliest foreign residents in Eskimo villages, and thus they came to represent the greater world of whites...their complete or virtual monopolies much of the time allowed them to fix prices with impunity, stock inventories of their own choosing, and extend or withhold credit as they saw fit.

Generally, the traders have been criticized for exploiting the natives, but some argue that they took great risks for which they suffered losses. Although this is a typically suspect argument made by capital, it does appear that unequal exchange was somewhat mitigated by the practice of selling such increasingly necessary equipment as boats and rifles for close to cost price. As Copland (1985:67) notes: "It was Company policy to sell capital equipment, such as boats and rifles, close to cost price." In Repulse Bay, for instance, a whaleboat went for \$500 or 50 white fox skins in 1925 (Copland, 1985:67). A debatable point is whether it was more important to the traders that the Inuit be equipped for hunting than it was to the Inuit.

Traders are also given credit in some quarters for having reinforced the Inuit economy. As Oswalt (1979:285) says: "What is sometimes forgotten in the criticism of traders is that their success, and profits, depended largely on the vitality of the Eskimo economy, and because of this traders encouraged hunting, fishing, and trapping activities." Of course, it might be equally well argued that, through the pressure to produce commodities for trade, they had an undermining effect on the Inuit economy, playing out the double role assigned them in the contact drama.

Supported by missionary and mountie, the fur trade changed Inuit life

forever, creating an economic relationship of dependency from which it is unlikely they can ever escape. It was no longer a case of exploitation *between* modes of production, but of new relationships having *penetrated* the indigenous mode. The package had been delivered, and it was becoming harder and harder to sustain pre-contact practices. Dependence upon imported weapons and other material goods necessitated the commodification of the products of the hunt. The breakdown of the camps as units of production meant dependence upon the substitute organization provided by the Canadian state, church and business community. Although shamanism died hard, Inuit took up the new ideology with gusto.

Some natives had become rich during the boom, especially those living in the good trapping areas of the western Arctic. As Coates (1985:151) says, however, by its end, "cash-poor and with limited access to southern supplies, the Inuit could not maintain the goods and equipment they had purchased." But "there was," he adds (p.152), "no turning back:"

...the fur trade boom reinforced the importance of commercial exchange to the Inuit. Changes in settlement patterns and harvesting pursuits hereafter were designed to provide access to a trading post and a supply of manufactured goods.

Inuit, it is clear, were now organized around both ethnic and economic factors. The interesting thing is that emerging socio-economic differences were the result of an *alliance* with outsiders, the townspeople being patronized by the non-native population and thereby participating in greater material wealth and power than the land people. Transformation involves the creation of new economic *and* political skills (such as how to deal with the welfare state and its agencies --

schools, nursing stations) as well as lifestyle skills (how to live in a western house) and financial skills (how to use cash). Decision-making skills are altered (from a consensus to a majority). The division of labour is also affected, with the woman's role in providing clothing for the household becoming increasingly peripheral in the face of the availability of manufactured replacements. Parents are displaced as teachers of the young, and authority is vested in an acculturated group of Inuit who enjoy greater wealth and prestige as a result of their affinity with the non-native population.

The way was now paved for class distinctions. But the fledgling distinctions -- between kabloonamiut and nunamiut -- did not involve any degree of *incorporation* into the prevailing class structure. Because they were a devalued ethnic group, and because they were not needed as labour, Inuit were not incorporated into the working or middle classes.

Arguments in chapter one that social change proceeds from class alliances between groups in different modes of production (or, for dependency theorists, nations) coming into contact seem to hold for the Inuit case. I shall be arguing that the dominant mode of production actually *created* the classes required so that such an alliance, hence transformation, could take place. The talking chiefs of the fur trade became, as I shall show in later chapters, a putative ruling class. The question is whether the alliance is more than temporary expediency, or whether it can proceed to incorporation. And that is where ethnicity plays the pivotal role; for, as used by the dominated groups, it is the factor operating *against*

incorporation and *for* resistance. In other words, racial/ethnic affiliation both undermines and reinforces existing relationships. This is, of course, true only for those cases in which a mode of production coincides with an ethnically distinguished group and does not hold when transformation occurs without there being any ethnic component as in the transformation of feudalism to capitalism. But, perhaps even then, there are crosscutting axes of alliance (town and country, for instance)

To sum up, trapping for exchange was added to, but did not totally replace subsistence hunting and gathering activities. Inuit became producers of furs and consumers of imported goods, *i.e.*, linked into market relations. Exploitation at this time resulted from unequal exchange, the *mechanism* of the transfer of surplus value generated through commodity production/sale. Merchant capital realized profits through buying cheap and selling dear. Also, with the missionaries providing legitimation, the fur trade undermined the traditional power structure by changing criteria of leadership, favoured individual over collective production relations, and altered property relations from communal to private, since the trappers "owned" the furs which they sold to the traders and the proceeds of this transaction were, significantly, free from traditional constraints to share beyond the family household. It also transformed the religion from shamanism to Christianity.

What this adds up to is that merchant capital simultaneously reinforced and *undermined* the non-capitalist mode of production, the balance being weighted in

the direction of undermining. The relations of production were not totally altered, and the subsistence mode of production continued to be reproduced and to cover a large part of the cost of reproduction of the workers, *but* the extent to which the non-capitalist mode was becoming dysfunctional can be measured by the extent of the dilemma experienced by Inuit when the fur trade collapsed in the 1950s.

I turn now to a discussion of the history and effects of the cooperative movement, instituted for Inuit by the Canadian state and resulting in what I consider to be an irreversible movement into capitalism.

PART III

From Talking Chiefs to a Native Co-operative Elite

Let it be known

*I would sit down here and see
the changes that take place in the Inuit ways.
The life that stood still years ago
now goes forward in many ways.
I see them go beyond their ways
with hopes of finding a place
Where they will pass their time
in such a way to help their race.
I do not foresee how their
future will be awhile away.*

(Alootook Ipellie, 1980)

A momentous occasion in Inuit history was the April 1959 incorporation of the George River Co-operative. Twenty Inuit became members of this first arctic co-op by virtue of having each purchased a \$1.00 share entitling them to one vote at the annual general meeting.

Although in western society, co-ops function as a alternative to profit-making, the Eskimo cooperative provided the definitive link between the indigenous and the capitalist modes of production. Like all transitional entities, it is a contradictory structure, embodying elements of what went before and what came after. But, before entering into a discussion of the role played by the co-op in the transformation of Inuit relationships, it is necessary to tell the story of the movement in more detail than has been provided for those earlier agents of change: whalers, missionaries, traders and police. My interest is not in the organizations *per se*, but in the effect they have on practices and relationships.

Using letters, reports, minutes and other documents, and drawing upon my own 10 years of involvement in the movement, I shall highlight the main events of the last 30 years, crucial years for an understanding of the movement of Inuit towards class relations and claims for nationhood. Since this is a story which has never been pulled together before, it is necessary to devote several chapters to that task before analyzing the transformative effects of the co-operative. Far from being a digression, the history of the arctic co-op movement is a vital contribution of the thesis; for, as Boas (1936:137) said: "To understand a phenomenon we have to know not only what it is, but also how it came into being."

Chapter Seven

The Little Colombo Plan:¹ The State Makes Its Presence Felt

The symbiotic influence of missionaries, traders and police began to be supplanted in the late fifties with an invigorated state presence. Social programs were extended to the North, improved housing was made available, and schools were built, but the most significant area of state involvement was economic. Given the declining ability of Inuit to sustain themselves from the land, efforts were made by civil servants in the late fifties to stimulate local economies based upon a more efficient exploitation of renewable resources and the creation of wage labour. D'Anglure (1984:506) considers that 1960...

...can be taken as marking the end of a way of life centered on hunting, fishing, and the fur trade, the end of snowhouses for permanent winter occupation, the end of summers spent in traditional hunting camps, and also the end of missionary predominance in schooling and health care.

Centralization and the extension of medical, educational and other services to the North did not, however, result in any appreciable level of employment for Inuit. One Dr. P.S.K. Murty (cited in Jenness, 1964:105) calculated that at the end of December 1960 the Eskimo population totalled 10,751, of which 5,329 constituted "a possible labour force." Of these, 307 or approximately 6% were "intermittently employed on such jobs as stevedoring, freighting supplies and carpentering, for

¹ Expression from Jenness (1964:109).

periods lasting from a few days to a few weeks..."

There were no sources of income for Inuit other than highly unreliable trapping, and centralized populations dependent upon the sale of fur were mercilessly subject to the forces of supply and demand. Even when supply was good and prices high, the lack of steady sources of cash income created hardship because people now required bought equipment to trap commercially. Most had only poor equipment and seemed condemned to an impoverished life since there were no promising bases for a replacement economy. As early as 1949, an ex-fur trader, James Cantley, had been sent to tour the North to determine what prospects existed for economic development. His pessimistic report was that "he could discern in the Arctic no important natural product that could be exploited for the benefit of the Eskimos, within any foreseeable future except the white fox, and, in the Mackenzie Delta, the muskrat" (Jenness, 1964:81).

For many years, state transfer payments generally exceeded the combined income from trapping and casual labour. As Cantley reported, Inuit in the eastern Arctic were earning 40 per cent of their income through the sale of furs and casual labour while the rest was supplied by government (Jenness, 1964:106). Although the prospects of reversing this situation seemed bleak, the federal Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources entertained an idealistic policy for northern development which, as enunciated by the deputy minister of that department, entailed: "The political growth to self-government; the economic transformation of an under-developed area; and the social adjustment of people

unadapted to our modern life" (Robertson, 1960:355). These were, he said, "basically the problems of the colonial power in bringing subject peoples and subject lands to a state of maturity, prosperity, and political equality."

Attempts to reverse under-development

In 1953, Cabinet reactivated an old interdepartmental committee, the advisory committee on northern development, to coordinate the efforts of various departments (Jenness, 1964:92). And in 1955 the annual report of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources stressed the need for a sound economic base in the North which, it specified, meant "a diversified economy not based on white fox trapping alone; new occupations are needed...[and] better health and more education" (in Jenness, 1964:96). The obstacles to achieving this were acknowledged to be severe: a small population, unilingual and untrained, in an enormous area with inadequate communications facilities. At the time, communications consisted of bush planes and the shortwave radio systems of the Catholic missions and the Hudson's Bay Company.

Cantley foresaw no stability in the white fox market, and had suggested that there were only two ways to raise the low living standards of the Eskimos: the development of "petty industries" and handicrafts and/or larger government subsidies and "doles" (Jenness, 1964:98). Several unsuccessful attempts were made to develop small industries (see Crowe, 1974:188-191): pigs were sent to Great Whale River, and chickens and sheep to Fort Chimo (they were eaten by dogs). Attempts were made to spin and weave the hair of huskies and musk-oxen. Cattle

were cross-bred with a Tibetan yak in the hope of developing a hardy specimen which could survive in arctic conditions. Blueberries were harvested, and seal, whale and fish products were canned at Rankin Inlet. A tannery was opened in Aklavik, but closed after a year. Until 1963, The Hudson's Bay Company operated a white whale fishery at Pangnirtung, and a canoe factory existed for a while at Great Whale River. None of these activities proved worthy of continuance.

Some success was finally achieved in 1958 with the exporting of char to restaurants in Montreal and Toronto, and this appears to have provided a significant stimulus to the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources (NANR), which quickly inaugurated a plan to combat Inuit poverty. Beginning in 1958, experts were deployed in strategic areas to conduct a series of area economic surveys. As Jenness (1964:109) reported:

Eagerly the department went into action, not on the char alone, but over a much wider field, attacking in the beginning those arctic districts where distress seemed greatest, and employing methods and principles that had been evolved in building up under-developed regions in other parts of the world. In the first summer season it sent in experts to assess the natural resources, and in the second it sent in other experts to help the Eskimos develop such resources as seemed capable of exploitation.

Fifteen area economic surveys were completed between 1958 and 1967, the first in Ungava Bay, a severely depressed region which appeared to have exploitable resources. A succinct statement of the goal of the area economic surveys is reproduced in the prefaces to each: "To determine the basis for local economic and social progress in the northern areas." Specifically, the surveys teams were

directed to assess the renewable resource base, come to some conclusions concerning their present and potential exploitation, investigate and explain social and economic factors which affected resource utilization and "to recommend ways and means whereby the standard of living of the local people may be improved." Jenness (1964:109-110) dubbed the scheme a "little Colombo" plan, "but with this difference, that the experts were permanent employees of the Canadian government, and their surveillance was more intense than would have been possible had they been working in a foreign land."

The investigations of the team of four survey officers led them to gloomy conclusions concerning the ability of the Inuit to develop a self-sustaining economy. To a man, they felt the writing was on the wall. Lamenting that it would be "at least 20 years before even a satisfactory *minimum* amount of research" could be accomplished, Don Snowden, first chief of the Industrial division (NANR), wrote in the preface of the western Ungava survey (Currie, 1968:1-2): "Already, there are important indications that our failure to carry out this essential research soon can result in a growing segment of the Arctic's population having to depend heavily on various forms of social assistance, particularly direct relief."

There was a fear in the bureaucracy that Inuit would have to be looked after by the state forever, and the hope was that more efficient exploitation of renewable resources would prevent this. In general, the Eskimos' under-exploitation of the renewable resource base was attributed to a lack of equipment

and, in some cases, inefficient methods of preservation. All of the survey officers commented at length on the poor condition of the capital goods owned by the Eskimos which, as Currie noted "is particularly true in respect of boats" (1968:79). These were, of course, problems with conceivable solutions.

After the surveys were completed, NANR engaged projects officers to implement those recommendations which seemed feasible. These fell into three major categories: improved harvesting of renewable resources, expansion of capital investment (airfield, radio, telephone, education and health services)² and planning for non-renewable resource exploitation. Predictably, the first category was considered the domain of the Inuit, while potentially more profitable non-renewable resource exploitation was reserved for others. The only anticipated involvement of Inuit in non-renewable resource exploitation was as the hired help. As Snowden put it (in Currie, 1968:5): "Vast deposits of iron, ore and other minerals have been discovered in the Ungava area. These have been surveyed and staked, and will undoubtedly give employment to Eskimo when mining operations are begun."

Apparently, it was inconceivable that Inuit could be assisted to exploit the non-renewable resource base for their own benefit. It was, however, considered that they might benefit from the harvesting of some of "the minor mineral resources such as mica and soapstone" (Currie, 1968:79). Asbestos, beryl,

² It was anticipated that the installation of such services would provide seasonal wage employment, on the job training and a concomitant "economic decline" when the construction phase was completed (Anders, 1966:100).

graphite, pyrite, coal, garnets *etc., etc.*, could also be harvested by Inuit who, it was recommended, should be given adult education courses in basic prospecting.³

In addition to minor mineral mining, it was recommended that Inuit could benefit from tourism, eiderdown harvesting, handicraft programs, commercial fishing and group trapping. Snowden, whose division had overall responsibility for resource development, advised in a 1983 interview, perhaps sardonically, that resource development had been examined "in the broadest terms possible, and included whatever raw material was available. In most areas this was limited to stone, bone, animal skins, and the human skills to make something from them" (cited in Goetz, 1986:41). The recommended organizational structure to facilitate such activities was the co-op. As one economic survey officer so auspiciously declared (Currie, 1968:75): "The Eskimo must begin to think outside his tent in terms of his community and outside the community in terms of the region in which he lives." Apparently, the co-operative was to help him achieve this, although there was still no well-developed plan for the Inuit or the land they occupied.

The lack of a coherent plan

It is useful here to consider briefly the broader goals and philosophy that informed Canada's northern development policy. Canadians knew hardly anything about the Arctic before the Second World War, and it was only in 1953 that a federal

³ Considered a necessity by all involved, recommendations for education were typically included in the area economic survey reports. As Jenness (1964:119) declared: "Ours is a mechanical age, fast becoming an electronic one that will have little use for illiterate and unskilled labour." Like others, he considered that the "key" to "our Eskimo unemployment problem, as of unemployment in many other parts of the world, is education and training."

department was established to look after Inuit affairs although this mandate was somewhat peripheral to its mandate to develop resources. During the second reading of the Bill to create the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources (December 8, 1953), Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent is reported to have remarked, "apparently we have administered these vast territories of the North in an almost continuous state of absence of mind" (in Sprudz, 1984:166). Explorer and author Diamond Jenness, who was critical of Canada's northern involvement, produced a series of technical papers comparing the state administrations of Eskimo populations in Alaska, Canada, Labrador and Greenland (Jenness, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1967). The striking thing that emerges from his comparative analysis is the purposeful, although contrary, attitudes of the United States and Denmark regarding their native populations, and the unclear intentions of Canada towards her Inuit.

The Americans, who "insisted that there be no effort to preserve any features of aboriginal life and no separation of Eskimo and white education," considered that Inuit were equal to other Americans and enacted measures to assimilate them.⁴ The Danes, on the other hand, believed that the Greenland Eskimos were inferior and there was, therefore, no point wasting time and money trying to assimilate them. Efforts were directed towards providing a simple life for

⁴ Exploitation by outside traders was prevented but, instead of control by missionary and trader (the situation in Canada), Alaskan natives were under the control of the state which had, Jenness observed, a stifling effect on Native initiative. Assimilation was hampered by racial conflict and, in 1905, the non-native population succeeded in forcing a separation of education.

them in their own land and, until 1953, Greenland was isolated from all outside contact in the interest of paternal rule, with the state controlling missions and trade.⁵

Although Denmark and the United States operated from opposing assumptions as to the nature and potential of their native populations, the effect of their educational and resource harvesting policies was the development of a more integrated population than exists in arctic Canada which was haphazardly administered.⁶ Denmark started a century earlier, and both Greenland and Alaska were more resource-rich than arctic Canada but, it appears nonetheless that the greatest deficiency in Canadian arctic development has been the lack of a coherent plan. As Jenness said (1964:20):

Presumably [Canada] had no plans, since otherwise she would have devised some more constructive method of exercising her authority and carrying out her responsibilities than the setting up of police posts, after the manner of a military occupation.

Considered more of a hindrance than an asset in northern resource exploitation, the well-being of Inuit has been low on the list of state priorities. Clearly, the main objective of economic development efforts in the late fifties and early sixties was to reduce welfare spending on Eskimos. There appears to have been considerable concern that the Canadian state might have to look after these

⁵ Greenlanders received Home Rule May 1, 1979, giving them jurisdiction over education, religion, social services and communication, but not foreign affairs and defence. Greenland is still part of Denmark.

⁶ In Labrador, where the Moravians were the dominant influence, a more unequivocal position was taken towards Eskimos. Like Greenlanders, the Eskimos of Labrador were considered a lower order of human beings (Jenness, 1965).

people indefinitely. As Jenness (1968:25) wrote: "Destitution and hunger stalked the Arctic, and Ottawa could see no remedy except unending relief."

In keeping with development theories of the time, bureaucrats who worked out a strategy to improve the standard of living among Inuit were impelled by evolutionist logic to impose their own standards and convictions upon Inuit and to disregard the dilemma of a disrupted and dislocated population. With few exceptions, the area survey reports are replete with references to the inappropriateness of Inuit culture. Usher (1982:431) considers the bureaucrats believed that "the traditional way of life was fast dying, and that the only avenue for Native people was to forsake the traditional ways and to take up those of the modern world." It was taken quite for granted that the more westernized Inuit became, the better off they would be. As Anders, author of the *Northern Foxe Basin Area Economic Survey* so candidly reported (1965:121), improvement of the material standard of living was the goal and:

To reach that end, traditional Eskimo culture is an inferior -- in the sense of less efficient -- means than what we refer to as Western European Culture. The historical evidence is quite sufficient that (a) traditional Eskimo culture is similar to that of Western Europe many thousands of years ago and (b) that Western civilization made possible the material standard of living that is now considered desirable for the Eskimo precisely because it developed beyond that stage...[and] for that reason, further studies of the social framework of traditional Eskimo society would be a waste of effort as far as the stated purpose of development policy is concerned.

It was Anders' view (p.117) that the nuclear family would have to become the social and economic unit, and that Inuit would have to abandon ties to burial sites,

cease their seasonal migrations, learn to speak English and take proper care of their equipment. As he put it (*pp.*118-119):

...any attempt to preserve primitive traditional culture as observed at one specific point in its evolution must in the long run work against the interests of the whole group and so only compound the problem at a later date, which makes it preferable to put up with some disorientation here and now.

Jenness reports (1964:93) a personal communication from "a high official in the Department of Resources and Development" who, when asked what plans his department had for the welfare of the Eskimos, said that those in the southern regions were to be educated so that they could be assimilated, those living farther north where natural resources were abundant were to be encouraged to live off the land, and any others were to be moved to areas where game was more plentiful. Jenness (*pp.*93-94) considered that this program was a revival of a policy which Canada had applied to Indians two centuries before and that its advocate was:

...perpetuating [Canada's] racial problems by rejecting the Eskimos as equal partners with the whites in developing Canada's northlands, and by segregating them, not in carefully surveyed reservations adjacent to white settlements (as the Indians had been segregated) but in remote regions, for the moment not exploitable by white men, where he expected them to support themselves without becoming a drag-chain on the rest of Canada. Unconsciously he was advocating a form of apartheid, the creation of a Canadian Bantustan.

For his part, Jenness (*p.*110) was pessimistic about the potential of northern development, declaring that "char, nor salmon, nor any other fish or mammal in the Arctic," can withstand "the drain of large-scale commercial exploitation" and

"beyond the tree-line there are no other exploitable resources except perhaps oil and minerals, which the Eskimos themselves are unable to develop because they lack both the knowledge and the capital..." *His* suggestion was that if the Eskimos were to continue living in the North, Canada should subsidize them to "occupy" the land, just as it does the police and the military or, failing that, enable those who wish to do so to emigrate to the South. "We do not," he wrote (p.89):

...subsidize our farmers to help them cling to the dust-bowls that have ceased to yield rewarding crops. Why then should we subsidize our Eskimos to keep them in barren arctic regions where without our subsidies many of them would die of starvation?...should they not be allowed, even encouraged, to stay among us if they wished, and helped to earn in the south the livelihood that the underdevelopment of the north, and nature herself, deny them today in their homeland?

The picture that emerges of Canadian intentions in the North is one of extreme ambivalence. Americans had forthrightly declared that the traditional culture must be suppressed in the interest of assimilating Alaskans. The Danes took the equally unambiguous stance that Greenlanders could never be assimilated and should, therefore, be helped to become better Eskimos. Canadians have wavered somewhere between these two ideals, believing on the one hand that the culture was doomed and that the people *must* be assimilated and, on the other, that they should be helped to live off the land in ways which would not cause undue violence to the traditional culture and the illusion of the "noble savage."

It is hardly surprising that the economic development vehicle selected was the cooperative. Perfectly suited to Canadian ambiguity, it allowed Inuit *and* the

state to keep one foot in both worlds. Capitalizing, literally, on traditional activities and values, cooperatives were a felicitous form, accommodating Canadian ambivalence by both "modernizing" Inuit, and enmeshing them in a wage economy while, at the same time, enabling them to retain roots in the past through the promotion of principles of egalitarianism and the buttressing of non-capitalist practices. In the language of this thesis, cooperatives at once both *undermined* and *reinforced* the indigenous mode of production. With the co-operative, the process begun upon contact with earlier agents was made explicit. There may have been no coherent plan, but there *was* an implicit logic.

As Gabriel Gagnon concluded (1974:99):

On peut donc affirmer en conclusion que le système coopératif, même lorsqu'il se développe dans un contexte favorable, ne préside pas à la naissance d'un nouveau type de société, mais sert plutôt à faciliter le passage de classes encore marginales au mode de production dominant, soit capitaliste, soit socialiste.

It is interesting to note, as well, that in spite of the co-op's avowed avoidance of ethnic distinctions, the arctic co-ops were definitely *Eskimo* co-ops and mostly uninvolved in the mainstream co-op movement. Thus, they promoted not only capitalist practices, but a hiving off of ethnic identity. As a past president of Canadian Arctic Co-operatives Limited summed up so succinctly in lay language: "We're all aware that the co-op is the best vehicle for joining the two activities of culture and money" (Tapardjuk, in Arctic Co-operatives Limited/FCNQ, 1980b:14). As I shall later discuss, the intersection of class and ethnicity is complete in that one institution. Before turning to that story, however, a short

discussion of the special status accorded to Eskimo co-operatives by the Canadian state is needed to put the arctic co-op movement in context.

Co-ops in Canada

The main objective of co-operatives is to provide services to members, rather than to make profits. They are built upon six fundamental principles: 1) open and voluntary membership, which means that there shall be no social, political or religious discrimination, 2) democratic control based on one member, one vote and elected officers, 3) limited interest on shares, if any, 4) the return of savings to members in a way that avoids one member gaining at the expense of others and allows for a choice as to whether savings (surpluses) will be used for development, to provide common services, or returned to members in the form of a patronage dividend, 5) co-operative education and 6) cooperation among co-operatives at local, national and international levels (paraphrased from Arctic Co-operatives Limited/NWTCBDF, 1990:4).⁷

A somewhat more metaphysical definition was provided by M.M. Coady, a leading figure in the Canadian Antigonish co-op movement, who wrote (in Co-operative Union of Canada [CUC], 1969:8): "Economic co-operation is a technique by which men have discovered how to carry on business without taking any toll from their fellows. It is thus the ultimate in justice."

Cooperatives can be accommodated in socialist or capitalist polities. In

⁷ These six principles have been approved by the International Co-operative Alliance, and adopted at the 23rd ICA Congress in Vienna, September 1966.

metropolitan areas of southern Canada, co-ops appear as a marginal economic strategy. In satellite areas, they are viewed, in the words of Case and Taylor (1979:256), as "an attempt to transcend capitalism without confronting it in an open conflict." It is not surprising that co-ops are more popular in the prairies and in Quebec and the Maritimes than in Ontario, the heart of Canadian capitalism.

Cooperatives in Canada are incorporated under provincial jurisdiction which has meant, according to Sprudz (1975:1): "a definite diversity across Canada regarding the place, the role and the status co-operatives may be able to attain for themselves in their communities." Where cooperatives are valued, manpower and resources are allocated, and there is likely to be a stronger movement. Sprudz also points out that: "The overwhelming majority of native co-operatives incorporated have been located on the prairies..." and this is likely due to the fact that during the 1950s, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta "created special provincial staff units of co-operative specialists to plan and carry out co-operative development programs among the native people" (1975:3). The Northwest Territories did not enact its co-operative associations ordinance until February 3, 1959, the year that the first Eskimo co-operative was incorporated at George River in Arctic Quebec. The Government of the Northwest Territories would later have to be pushed to enact enabling legislation so that the NWT cooperatives could federate.

A federal co-operative act was passed only in 1970. It had unanimous

support from all political parties but, for some reason, it took 60 years to be passed into law (CUC, 1971:2). In an effort to demonstrate federal support for cooperatives, promotional literature from CUC makes much use of a remark by Prime Minister Pearson (from Hansard, May 30, 1960, in CUC, 1969:1):

...in the circumstances which Canada faces today, and has faced now for a good many years, a mixed economic system is the most appropriate form of economic organization for the development of our country; a mixed economic system composed of a public sector, a co-operative sector, and a private enterprise sector.

In the same pamphlet (p.2) it was pointed out that, "in early days," governments in Canada (presumably federal and provincial although it could refer to successive federal governments) "helped co-operatives to organize, particularly among farmers and fishermen." But, as Sprudz, longtime co-op development officer with the federal government and instrumental in the Arctic co-op movement, pointed out (1984:165): "Cooperatives in Canada south of the 60th parallel, first established over a century ago, owe very little to the federal Government for their existence."

Not to enter into that debate here but, clearly, the federal government played a much larger role in organizing co-ops for Inuit than it did anywhere else in Canada. Usually, a co-op results from people joining forces and resources to further a common goal,⁸ *but* the arctic co-operatives were put into place by federal bureaucrats as a key feature of the development program adopted in the 1950s. Inuit knew nothing about co-operatives, nor did they possess any capital

⁸ Elsewhere in Canada, co-ops were often promoted as alternatives to unions.

resources with which to start any kind of business. The Canadian government provided both the idea and the means even though, as Sprudz (1975:9) puts it, "if a co-operative is imposed prematurely on a group by outsiders, it may lose its attractiveness as their own tool and the result might be nothing but a 'convenience vehicle' which will be a source of difficulties for a long time to come."

Learning by doing

Efforts were made by civil servants to explain the concept to Inuit, but this was virtually impossible since they had no experience of business. The result was that co-ops were implemented before the people understood their operation and implications. The optimistic belief was that the Inuit would learn by doing and, in the meantime, they were wooed by promises of lower prices than were available at the Hudson's Bay stores and cash dividends at the end of the year, promises the under-capitalized co-ops have been mostly unable to keep.

Although many Inuit do use the co-op as a "convenience vehicle," the movement is not without its native supporters. As Joseph Annanack from George River said at the Frobisher Bay Co-operative Conference in 1963 (in Sprudz, 1984:168):

The co-operative idea came from the white people....We could take the idea and it works well. As we were working along at the beginning, we never thought of this, but everyone realised now that the people can do something and that's why every year it's getting better.

This transfer of western practice to Inuit was dubbed "the project approach," or the "persuasive education approach" (Sprudz, 1978:180).

Financing arrangements for Arctic co-operatives were also a departure from the norm. As Sprudz advises (1978:183-184):

The financing of the newly established Arctic co-operatives was another area in which the traditional co-operative way was not considered the only way. Instead of relying on the ability of the membership to provide at least a substantial part of the needed working capital through shares and members' loans, debt financing was made available to those co-operatives which wanted it (there were some which did not!).

The impoverished Inuit were unable to raise share capital among themselves and banks were unwilling to lend money to such risky ventures. The state had, however, set up the Eskimo Loan Fund (ELF) in 1953, six years before incorporation of the first cooperative. Although the impetus for ELF was the lack of banking facilities in the North, it appears that the institution of co-ops for Inuit was being contemplated at this time, as the Treasury Board Submission specifically provides for loans to individuals *or* co-operatives. ELF was set up to provide loans to Inuit applicants at low rates of interest, an unusual situation which requires some explanation here, because of its heavy implications for ethnic identity, to specify just one effect.

Eskimo Loan Fund: The state plays banker for the Inuit

ELF, originally capitalized at \$50,000, now has \$7 million available as loan capital for Inuit enterprises, although no longer at subsidized interest rates. The fund also provides bank loan guarantees up to \$100,000.

Originally, ELF was restricted to making loans to individual Eskimos or groups to purchase "boats, fishing and hunting equipment, gasoline and petroleum

products, food and camping supplies, equipment or materials to be used in Eskimo handicrafts and other industries, or for the making of repairs or the payment of wages" (Treasury Board, 1953:1). RCMP officers, who were acting as administrators in the North, were empowered to make loans up to \$500 to individuals or up to \$10,000 "for the purpose of assisting co-operative projects of Eskimos."⁹ The RCMP was to supervise loans in the field and "to ensure that payments on the loans are made as rapidly as possible consistent with the economic success of the Eskimos to whom the loans were made" (p.2). Inuit were required to "furnish" the police with "all information relating to their business which such members may require." Eskimos accepting loans from Canada had unusual limitations imposed upon them:

It shall be a condition of the loan that if the Eskimo obtains goods and supplies purchased with loan monies at a place where there are no trading posts, he shall agree to dispose of his furs, skins and other Eskimo products in accordance with the directions of a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or such other person designated by the Minister and apply the proceeds of the sale thereof on account of the loan (p.2).

As an aside, it is interesting to note the transformation of roles for *non*-Inuit actors: the police are now acting as loan officers, missionaries as agents of economic development and, as for the traders, they found themselves competing for business with state sponsored and supported co-operatives.

ELF has been the focus of protest on two counts, one having to do with

⁹ This is interesting; for, ELF was set up 6 years before incorporation of the first co-op for Eskimos. The implication is that DIAND was laying the groundwork at this early stage, although there is no reference to formalized co-ops.

the interest rate and the other with its ethnic implications. Although it was set up with a subsidized interest rate, the rate was tied to the prime lending rates of the major chartered banks in 1971.¹⁰ It remains at market rate, a move prompted by a desire to establish comparability with the rate being charged by the Indian Economic Development Fund. There was considerable protest of the higher rates, but the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development [IAND] could, at his discretion, waive interest payments. ELF was also attacked -- mainly by the Government of the Northwest Territories -- as an "ethnic loan fund." Some private business people in the North also objected to the favourable treatment being given Inuit. A 1978 letter to the Commissioner of the NWT, with a copy to IAND, from an Inuk co-owner (with her non-native husband) of a hotel in one Arctic community complained that the co-op, which was financed by government, was opening a transient centre that would put her hotel out of business: "I do not see any sense at all to pay tax and the tax money I pay to keep the Co-op going which is threatening to put me out of business" (Moss-Davies, 1978).¹¹ The letter was responded to by Ewan Cotterill, deputy minister (DIAND, 1979a), who pointed to the difficulty the state was having in supporting special status for co-ops:

¹⁰ Personal communication from Hardy Zeltins (DIAND, 19/01/91).

¹¹ Moss-Davies had received money from ELF for her own business and was not complaining that co-ops were favoured by ELF but, rather, that they were, in general, "Government-funded programs."

Government officials, in their role as administrators of public loan and grant funds, are sometimes faced with the need to make decisions on applications for funding from two or more groups from the same settlement for projects or services which are similar in nature, and analysis may indicate that the market for the product or service is not large enough to support more than one viable operation. In some cases, support of a co-operative's endeavours provokes a charge of discrimination against the private businessman and personal initiative. On the other hand, approval of an application from the non-cooperative sector can bring charges that the community-controlled co-operative is being confined to low-growth, low profit operations....government officials responsible for public loans and grant funds available for economic development have been directed to include, as part of the process of evaluating applications for funding, a careful assessment of the impact an approval would have on existing business and community services.

The deputy minister concluded his letter with an attempt to position DIAND securely on the proverbial fence: "While our support for co-operatives remains unequivocal, let me assure you that this does not diminish the priority we attach to the promotion and strengthening of northern based private businesses such as yours."

Although the GNWT attacked ELF as an ethnic loan fund, it nonetheless attempted to secure control of the fund. In 1971, two advisory boards were established: The Northwest Territories Eskimo Loan Fund Advisory Board (which gave jurisdiction of three quarters of the fund to the NWT), and The Federal Eskimo Loan Fund Advisory Board (which administered the balance of the fund for the rest of Canada). In 1976, the federal government recommended that the Northwest Territories' portion be transferred to Yellowknife, but this move was blocked by Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, a national Inuit Association established in 1971, which objected to a federal program being transferred before land claims

were settled. The federal government retained control, but this might have been a reflection of a renewed interest in co-operatives in the late 1970s, rather than a concession to Inuit Tapirisat.

It is now the state's intention to get out of the loan business, and the institution of the Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy (CAEDS) in 1979 is a step in that direction (Zeltins, DIAND, 1991). CAEDS exists to coordinate federal economic development programs for aboriginal people, involving them in the design and delivery of such programs.¹² In addition, aboriginal capital corporations, such as the Kativik Investment Fund and the Northwest Territories Cooperative Business Development Fund (NWTCBDF), are being set up and, once they are in place, DIAND will withdraw loans in that area. Zeltins says: "The power and the money are reverting to Natives." The money continues to come, however, from the state which, as I later discuss, effectively curtails power.

ELF was a departure from usual practice, but it was considered a means justified by the end, one of the unconventional ways in which Canada strove to ensure the economic success of arctic co-ops. By 1977, as Sprudz noted (1978:184), "the equity funds of the Arctic co-operatives were estimated to be over

¹² The following organizations are members of CAEDS: Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, Labrador Inuit Development Corporation, Makivik Corporation, Qikiqtaaluk Corporation, Sikku Investment Corporation, Kitikmeot Development Corporation, Inuvialuit Development Corporation, Arctic Co-operatives Limited, Atii Training Incorporated, Pauktuutit, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Industry, Science and Technology Canada and Employment and Immigration Canada.

\$4 million. That would not have been achieved by going the traditional way, or if the initial funds had been provided as grants." Funding was only one way in which Inuit co-operatives differed from mainstream movements. Inuit co-ops have long been distinguished by hands-on state involvement in funding and management.

Inuit co-operatives: An arctic adaptation

In spite of the fact that the co-op principles of one member/one vote and refunds to members of any surpluses¹³ were incorporated intact into the Eskimo co-operative movement, the co-operative concept was seriously mutilated in its arctic adaptation. Since it was the vehicle by which the state exported capitalism to the Inuit, it is pointless to examine the Inuit co-op as an alternate economic form (which always has an element of protest). Indeed, the arctic co-operatives have never been part of the mainstream co-op movement although the Cooperative Union of Canada (CUC) obviously had some initial interest in becoming involved in their development.

The first formal contact between the northern co-op movement and the mainstream movement appears to have been made at the first arctic co-op conference held in Frobisher Bay in 1963 (Sprudz, 1984:171). The CUC president, a delegate to the conference, later played a role in organizing Canadian

¹³ Profits, properly termed savings in a cooperative system, are returned to the owners in the form of patronage dividends which are defined by Ingersoll (1963:10) as: "The share of the net savings of a co-operative which are returned to the members and/or non-members with the amount paid calculated in proportion to the business done with the co-operative." Although the word "profit" is used by some co-operatives and appears in some provincial legislation, it is, he says, "incompatible with the principles of their operation." "Savings" is defined as the "excess of revenue of a co-operative over the expenses during a fiscal period."

Arctic Cooperatives (CAP), the central marketing agency for Inuit handicrafts which resulted from the conference. According to a report of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development's Cooperative Development Section on the Frobisher Bay Conference (1966a:9):

The publicity the conference gained through the various forms of news media...attracted the attention of the major national co-operative and credit union centrals in Canada, and since 1963 the Co-operative Union of Canada and Le Conseil de la Coopération du Québec have provided considerable technical assistance both in the operations of existing co-operatives and in education and development work for co-operatives in new areas.

Initially, the mainstream co-op associations did some work on contract for DIAND, providing "qualified development officers to extend the reach" of the Department (*p.10*). In Quebec, Le Conseil de la Coopération du Québec (CCQ) and the Minister of Richesses Naturelles formed Le Comité Régional de la Coopération du Grand Nord Québécois to assist the Inuit co-ops. Its objective was, simply, to promote cooperatives among the Eskimos, and its first members included personnel from the Caisses Populaires du Québec, Le Conseil de la Coopération du Québec and the Ministère des richesses naturelles, along with André Steinman (Catholic missionary and director of the Povungnituk co-op in northern Quebec) and two Inuit, Charlie Sheeguapik and Tamusi Tuluga, president and manager respectively of the co-op.

The Povungnituk co-op was not the first to be incorporated in arctic Quebec, but it became the focus of attention for Quebec bureaucrats and co-op officials because of its early output of soapstone sculpture and because of the

effects of the missionary and others. Richesses Naturelles provided a sales manager (Thérèse LeVallée) for the Povungnituk co-op's Quebec City marketing office and CCQ lent two of its auditors to the Quebec co-ops which are required by law to provide an annual audit.

The Cooperative Union of Canada had been formed in 1909, and it later instituted a division called Co-operatives Everywhere which was committed to developing co-operatives in underdeveloped communities in Canada and elsewhere. Voluntary contributions were collected from co-ops in developed areas in Canada to help co-ops in arctic communities (Fort Chimo, Frobisher Bay, Cape Dorset, *etc.*) and, in 1967, CUC presented a brief to the Minister of DIAND, Arthur Laing, entitled *Co-operatives for People of Native Ancestry* which contained the astonishing argument (p.2) that:

The native people confront a situation with which they are not equipped to cope. They feel neglected and repressed, many are confused and resentful, withdrawn and suspicious. This is the kind of situation which invites disaster for a country; disobedience, immorality, delinquency, lawlessness, insurrection. Only lack of good communications, scarcity of leadership and the innate patience of the native people has spared Canada serious trouble until now.

The brief pointed to the problems of alcoholism, idle youth and "frustrated, unused resources" and promoted co-ops as a way to overcome the potential threat of native insurrection: "It is a power tool, but one which is not inconsistent with native cultural concepts." Purporting to understand Inuit aspirations, the authors of the brief informed the minister that: "Native people want action and progress but they do not want to be the victims of exploitation on the one hand or to be

expected to aggrandize themselves individually on the other."

They also argued (p.13) that native co-ops lacked the management skills and security necessary to obtain loans and that "with hardly any exceptions, capital from outside sources will be required;" for, "if the rate of growth is geared to the ability of the people themselves to find the money for the necessary investment, it may be so slow that they will lose interest in the project." Apparently ignoring the Eskimo Loan Fund which had been established to make "soft loans," the CUC asked for \$50,000 to be set aside for 1968-69 to finance the development of co-ops, this fund to be administered by CUC (p.16).

One reason for the lack of a strong link between the mainstream co-op movement and the arctic co-ops was undoubtedly the latter's enmeshment with the bureaucracy. As CUC pointed out in its brief to Laing (p.7):

In Canada our work assumed an emphasis which was unforeseen, in that we have become associated with various government agencies in the development of co-operatives in Indian and Eskimo communities....It will likely take a few years yet and the careful attention of all groups to evolve a modus operandi through which the official agencies of government and the informal structures of the co-operative movement can collaborate with certainty and confidence.

In a telling comment, the CUC put its finger on the crux of the dilemma,

...historically it has proven very difficult if not indeed impossible, for official government agencies to create co-operatives which are truly democratic, free standing and self perpetuating. On the other hand, with reference to the need of the native communities in Canada, the co-operative movement lacks the strength which the task demands.

The co-operative is, in ways I shall later discuss, a contradictory institution, but its arctic adaptation is nothing short of a bastardized form or, as Sprudz would have

it, "a convenience vehicle," but for the state, not the users. Although the CUC tried to promote itself as a partner with the Canadian state in developing Eskimo co-ops, the northern movement followed a separate path. The CUC brief (p.8) acknowledged that government was needed only because of its "experience and resources which are comparatively very great," and frankly detailed the handicaps of government personnel in developing co-ops. Although it promoted itself as intercessor, it was left entirely to the state to sponsor Eskimo co-operatives.

In later years there have been some efforts to re-connect with the mainstream movement. Representatives from CUC and CCQ were, for instance, invited to the 1980 cooperative conference and, in 1989, an employee of La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec was elected to the executive committee of the CCQ, at which time he observed:

We have had a seat on the board of directors of CCQ in the past, but FCNQ's new representation on the executive committee is an indication that the member co-ops of CCQ recognise the importance of the co-op movement among native people in the north (Savage, in FCNQ, 1989:20).

This realignment with CCQ appears to be a strategy to achieve greater clout for the arctic co-ops. As Savage added: "I would now like to see more intensive efforts at lobbying government to give co-operatives the support they deserve." In the same vein, it was announced in an article in *Rencontre*, a publication of the Quebec government, that: "It now appears that the Inuit and Attikameks want to join the Desjardins movement," the powerful Quebec co-operative (Government of Quebec, 1989:14). But, I am getting ahead of my story. I now return to the

history of the arctic co-operative movement.

Chapter Eight

The State Organizes Cooperatives for Eskimos

As discussed in the last chapter, while the way was paved for private enterprise to develop the potentially profitable non-renewable resource base in the Arctic, Inuit were organized into cooperatives based on commercial fishing, handicraft programs and, in some cases, retail stores.

A great deal was expected of these cooperative ventures. As Arbess (1966:47) says: "The official policy was that the Eskimo people should, with all deliberate haste, have control over these organizations in all of their aspects, and should regain their self sufficiency." This was a phrase used rather ambiguously by civil servants to mean that the aboriginal people should exploit renewable resources more vigorously than formerly in order to generate a profit which would eliminate the need of state assistance. They were, it might be added, expected to do this with little hope of generating internal exchange, and in the face of a massive deficit of social capital overhead facilities. The Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources [NANR] would make money, equipment and expertise available, but the idea from the beginning was that the Inuit would assume management, and ownership, of all projects as soon as possible.

In 1952, acting upon the recommendations of the first area economic survey, a party of civil servants visited George River, in the Ungava, to establish the first Eskimo cooperative. Based upon commercial fishing and logging, it got

started with a \$12,500 loan from ELF (Godt, in Iglauer, 1979:11). The minister of NANR reported (in *Financial Post* July 2, 1977) that it did \$30,000 business in its first year of operation. Four years later, a resident of the area, Josepi Annanack, described the arrival of the bureaucrats and subsequent developments (in Iglauer, 1979:105):

When the people of the government came to the George River with this new idea, we could hardly understand, and didn't realize how good it was. Before, we were mostly short of food. There was not enough game and we hardly got anything. We had to go ninety miles by dog team to Fort Chimo for government relief. We thought we should go to another place so we could live better. When the white people brought in this new idea, we decided to wait and try. Now we make money at home and feel much better.

The George River Cooperative was formed only three days after the civil servants arrived and a few months later a second co-op was established at Port Burwell, a community of only 23 people (DIAND, 1966a:4-5). Burwell was the site of the first Eskimo co-operative store, eliminating the need for residents to travel 120 miles to a small HBC outpost run by Inuk Willi Imudluk at George River, a trip that took 4 or 5 days by dog sled (Iglauer, 1979:69). Incorporation of co-ops in Povungnituk, Cape Dorset, Coppermine and Grise Fiord followed soon after.

The same process was applied all across the Arctic until cooperatives had been established in virtually every village. After the area economic surveys were completed, projects were developed by NANR's cooperative projects officers who assisted the people to set up co-ops and trained them to manage the projects: handicrafts, logging, fishing, sealing *etc.* The so-called "project approach" as

described by Alex Sprudz, supervisor of arctic cooperatives for NANR (1978:180), involved presenting plans to the community "for acceptance or rejection." If accepted, NANR organized and took financial responsibility for the experimental stage of the project, and once "viability" was "reasonably proven," the people were "given the opportunity to decide what to do with the activity...to carry it on their own or to abandon it." As Arbess (1966:20) says: "The ideal role [of the co-op officer] was to be one of guidance with a view to eventually doing himself out of a job by developing native self-sufficiency."

In some cases, as Sprudz says (1984:180), the co-ops took over, "reorganised and expanded" activities which had been carried out by other agencies, such as the production and marketing of arts and crafts which, before co-operatives had been established, was organized on a small scale by the Quebec Handicrafts Guild, the missions and the Hudson's Bay Company. But, says Sprudz:

Most of the business carried out by the co-operatives ...is newly created, an addition to the local economy. These are activities in which Northern people have not had any previous experience nor any control -- such as the operation of fisheries and fish plants, retail stores, tourism camps, restaurants, hotels, print (graphic) shops, industrialised garment production and municipal services.

With the exception of retail stores and some graphics projects, few of the ventures he specifies have achieved significant success. The most successful project has been the production and marketing of soapstone carving. All the projects, including arts and crafts, faced unusual problems, chief of which were the distance

from markets, language barriers and financing. Snowden, chief of the Industrial Division of the Department of Indian Affairs, described the beginning of the arts and crafts projects (1975:5):

...we were working in an area extremely remote from what would become the major market and from many sources of supply. At the beginning of the program there was very little of the kind of infra-structure support required -- no land transport, irregular shipping based on a short season, poor and irregular air services, and bad communications by radio or by post. All of these factors meant great delays in getting arts and crafts supplies thousands of miles from industrial centres in southern cities to the small isolated Arctic communities. The situation held equally true of the movement of finished goods from the far north to markets and distribution centres in southern Canada. Not only did the remoteness, isolation, and stage of development of Arctic Canada cause delays, however, they added substantially to the costs of production and, consequently, the price that had to be obtained in the markets of the south for Inuit arts and crafts.

He reported further that a major problem was that Inuit were unfamiliar with business and lacked development capital. "Indeed," he said, "there was very often not enough money to meet even the simple requirements of people who relied heavily, not on the local store, but on their environment to provide them with food, shelter, transport and tools and implements" (*pp.6-7*).

Since Inuit were mainly unilingual, education was considered an absolute necessity. In George River, for instance, site of the first co-op, a six-week summer school was held in a tent to teach Inuit English, arithmetic, reading and writing (Arbess, 1966:20). Also of great consequence was the shortage of buildings in the Arctic which could be used for storage or working, and the equipment necessary for handicraft production.

In spite of these difficulties, the bureaucracy considered that positive results

were being obtained just a few years after co-ops got underway. As summed up in a report from the co-operative development section of NANR (DIAND, 1966a:1): "The benefit to the economy of the north is not great in the overall picture, but in the small settlements where the co-operatives exist the story is entirely different and the living standard of the people has risen tremendously." Jenness (1964:110) reported that the char fishery at George River had lowered government relief from \$40,000 in 1957 to only \$40 in 1960, a salient measure of success, given the state's desire to avoid having to support Inuit indefinitely.

By 1966, twenty-two arctic co-ops had been incorporated, and their combined cash turnover exceeded \$1 million. In 1978, the first arctic co-op surpassed \$2 million in sales. The following table is reproduced from a co-op promotional release in 1979 (by La Fédération des Coopératives, Canadian Arctic Co-operatives Federation Limited and Canadian Arctic Producers):

	<u>No. of Co-ops</u>	<u>Total Sales</u>	<u>Local Assets</u>	<u>Income Generated</u>
1959	2	15,000	20,000	6,000
1965	20	1,200,000	925,000	260,000
1968	35	2,400,000	2,200,000	1,100,000
1978	52	24,000,000	15,000,000	6,500,000

By 1982, the northern cooperative movement, formally begun with the sale of two fish to Stanley Annanack in George River in 1959, had grown to an annual level

of business of more than \$32 million. The co-operatives soon became the largest non-government employers of native people, and an important social movement in the North.

In 1990, there were 46 active Eskimo cooperatives, members of two centralized administrative bodies. Twelve Arctic Quebec co-ops, including one mixed Indian and Eskimo, are members of the Montreal based La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec, while cooperatives in the Northwest Territories are members of Arctic Co-operatives Limited, now based in Winnipeg. Virtually *all* of the Inuit population is involved in one way or another with a local co-operative.

Arctic co-operatives are multi-purpose, but the most successful producer activity continues to be the production of soapstone carvings for export. This product, which has no local market, is the only commodity produced by Inuit that has had an impact on the southern market. Its significance to the co-op movement is expressed by a member of the Arctic Bay co-op which relied solely upon the sale of carvings (in Cowan, 1976:109-111).

As you know, we only sell carvings, which are things that white people want to buy. We sell nothing that the local people might want. Carvings are the only means this co-op has of making money. If the people slow down, or get tired of carving and stop altogether, then the co-op runs out of money. When people come up from the south (even if they are well educated and know a lot), and give us little talks or courses, telling us that if we learn we will be able to grow, it doesn't help the co-op to grow. Only the carvings really matter, not education or talks.

He went on to say that the people were tired of making carvings and he thought

that things would be better if they had a retail store. Still, "people are able to buy tea for their carvings, and will be able to continue to buy things..." Most co-ops were able to secure a more diversified base but, the production and sale of stone carvings remained for many years the mainstay of their cash flow, particularly when the bottom fell out of the sealskin market due to the animal rights lobby. By the early seventies, scarcely ten years after incorporation of the first co-operative, the production and sale of carvings had become a thriving business involving an extensive network of players: carvers, co-ops, distribution agencies, advisors, dealers, promoters, collectors, academics and the federal, Quebec and Northwest Territories governments. A multi-million dollar industry was built on the production of carvings from locally quarried stone popularly known as "soapstone," technically known as steatite. In spite of attempts to develop an economy based upon the harvesting of renewable resources, it was a non-renewable resource, rock, which proved to be most amenable to development by Inuit, perhaps because no-one else wanted it. Because it is so central to the co-op story, I shall take a step back here to chronicle the beginning of the soapstone industry.

Beginning of the handicraft industry: "That for which nature has fitted them"¹

Handicrafts had been exchanged in barter with explorers, whalers and, beginning in the 1930s, missionaries encouraged production of art by recovering patients in

¹ Expression from the 1927-28 Annual Report of the Department of the Interior (in Goetz, 1987:3).

mission hospitals (the Roman Catholics in Chesterfield Inlet, for instance, and the Anglicans in Pangnirtung). Handicrafts had been repeatedly touted as a solution for the Inuit and Goetz (1987:3) considers that "the official attitude toward handicraft development" of the early bureaucracy was expressed in the 1927-28 annual report of the Department of the Interior: "Serious study is being given to the problems of providing convenient opportunities for the natives to develop themselves by practicing the handicrafts for which nature has fitted them."

As for the Northwest Territories, with pressure from Major David McKeand, officer in charge of the annual Eastern Arctic Patrol, the Northwest Territories Council began to take an interest in handicraft development in the late thirties (Goetz, 1987:3). It was McKeand's conviction that this was "an opportune time to initiate the natives in making handicrafts which will be readily marketable and profitable to him [sic] physically, mentally and financially" (in Goetz, 1987:3). But the war put plans for handicraft development on hold.

Individual Hudson's Bay Company managers had also encouraged the people to carve when trapping was poor and had organized a small carving industry in Lake Harbour in the 1940s where "the presence of United States military personnel created a temporary and inflated market for souvenirs..." (Goetz, 1987:4). But it was not until 1949 when the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in Montreal became interested that the industry took off.

A national non-profit organization incorporated in 1906 to develop, promote and market arts and crafts, the guild had been collecting Eskimo work

since 1910, "every now and then when anything drifted [its] way" (in Swinton, 1972:124). In 1930, the guild (then known as the Women's Art Association), had helped to arrange an exhibition of Eskimo handicrafts, including carvings collected by Jenness and Stefansson, at the McCord Museum in Montreal, an event that was written up in the *New York Times* (Swinton, 1972:125).

As a signal of its new interest, in 1939 the guild changed the name of its Indian Committee to the Indian and Eskimo Committee and began to actively encourage Inuit work (Watt, 1980:11). Jenness, a member of the committee, had been urging the guild since the late thirties to help develop handicraft among the Eskimos. Major McKeand, also a member, was also urging the guild to find an outlet for Eskimo crafts and, in 1941, he distributed leaflets designed to inspire white women living in the Arctic (wives of missionaries and HBC factors, for instance) to encourage handicrafts (Swinton, 1972:125). The leaflets were re-distributed in 1947, but never achieved noticeable results. It was not until November 1948 when a young Canadian artist, James Houston, came to the Indian and Eskimo Committee with some carvings purchased on a visit to the east coast of Hudson Bay, that efforts began to pay off. Virginia Watt, long-time Director of Quebec Guild, reports (1980:12):

Mr. Houston felt very strongly that the latent skills of the Eskimos could be brought forth if there was someone on the spot to encourage them...[He] asked for the co-operation of the Guild through the Hudson's Bay Company whose stores would perhaps be able to arrange to supply food in return for pieces of good craft work.

Houston was, says Watt, "the right man at the right time." Deciding that it would

"sponsor Mr. Houston in his effort to promote the production of crafts in and around Port Harrison [Inukjuak] and Povungnituk," the guild contacted the Hudson's Bay Company with a proposal that it accept a deposit of \$1,100 which Houston could use for a test-purchase of carvings. It was proposed that the Company "provide the Eskimos with trade goods in exchange for their handicraft articles on a price exchange basis" to be arranged by Mr. Houston who "would select the articles he wanted from the Eskimos, tell them what he would give in exchange, and have the exchange made at the Company's stores" (letter from the Quebec Handicrafts Guild to the HBC in Watt, 1987c:19). Interestingly, as explained in this letter:

Mr. Houston felt that this arrangement might assist the Company to some extent in that the Eskimos would not, during the summer months, have to be advanced as much credit as in the past to enable them to live, as they would be able to obtain stores in exchange for their handicrafts.

Not only were carving projects expected to ease the burden of welfare for the state, but they were also expected to reduce accounts receivable for the Hudson's Bay Company!

The HBC agreed with the guild's proposal, but expressed a negative view of the potential of Inuit handicrafts (see Watt, 1987c:19-20). A letter from the HBC to the Guild read in part (p.20):

As you may know, the Company has always encouraged the development of handicrafts among the Eskimos and Indians, and is keenly interested in providing them with this supplemental means of livelihood. Through the years, much energy and money has been spent on these projects, but the results were often disappointing.

Undaunted, the guild concluded its arrangement with the HBC whereby Houston would issue chits which the post manager would honour as cash up to the amount which the guild had deposited. It was a timely intervention. as 1948-49 was a bad year for Inuit. Prices for skins had sharply declined and people who survived that period -- many did not -- recall the starvation and death that ravaged camps.

In November 1949, only a year after it had first met with Houston, the Quebec Handicrafts Guild put its first test purchase of carvings on sale in its Montreal shop. The first commercial exposure of Inuit art, it sold out in three days, providing the impetus to what has, 40 years later, grown to a multi-million dollar market.

Houston had been sent to Inukjuaq in June 1949, and only a month later, the federal Department of Mines and Resources, Northwest Territories Administration based in Ottawa began to show a renewed interest in handicraft production in the North. Apparently Houston's activities in the North had been reported to them by an RCMP inspector. Watt (1988a:27) reports that "the matter interested them considerably," since the department had decided to "expand handicraft work for the Eskimo." She considers that the message was that "no future move or decision was to be made by the Guild without the Department's prior knowledge and/or involvement." At the department's suggestion, a grant of \$8,000 was provided to the guild to pay for an instructor to the Arctic ("preferably Mr. Houston") and to produce "a simple book of instructions to Eskimos on handicrafts," as well as covering "any incidental out-of-

pocket expenses incurred by the Guild."

The guild was to cooperate with the bureaucrats in the selection of areas in which handicraft could be encouraged. A major concern to the Northwest Territories Administration was polio victims and they asked for the instructor to go to Chesterfield Inlet to instruct the Roman Catholic missionaries who would then carry on after he left. The guild was to market production and "to take full responsibility for either profits or losses on the goods it purchases" (Deputy Commissioner of the NWT Administration, in Watt, 1988a:28). In what was to become a repetitive refrain in bureaucratic communications, the deputy commissioner's letter added: "Naturally, we hope that the project will become self sufficient as soon as possible..."

Houston early noted what was to become an important function of carving: "a form of relief." As he wrote to the Guild in 1950 (in Watt, 1988b:23):

Handicrafts are to the Eskimo child his first step into industry, and he should be encouraged as much as possible. The children's small stone carvings and sewn articles improve rapidly when they are purchased, even for a small price, and they thus start to contribute to the needs of the family. This is a sound method of distributing relief, when it is needed, and requires a form of trade; rather than a giving, which the Eskimo does not readily understand.

Houston proposed that he collaborate with RCMP officers, who were in charge of distributing relief, to destroy work by children deemed unsaleable. This was to be "unknown to the Eskimo" and the amount paid was "to be absorbed as local Eskimo relief."

"The independent lamb" and "the bureaucratic lion"²

Although, as Watt points out (1988b:24), the HBC and the Guild cooperated easily, there were tensions between the federal bureaucracy and the Guild. As she put it:

The independent 'lamb' could not bring itself to lie down with the bureaucratic 'lion.' The government saw the development of arts and crafts as an industry which would become self-sufficient. The Guild's view was to develop a means of self-help which would augment welfare when hunting was poor.

Government grants enabled Houston to continue purchasing on behalf of the guild for several years, but the necessity of paying in advance for carvings which might take several months to arrive in the South greatly strained the resources of an organization run by volunteers. As Watt (1980:14) reports: "In 1953, the Guild could no longer continue to purchase the entire production from the Eastern Arctic." An arrangement was made with the HBC to buy directly from the Eskimo, and the guild, which intended to continue in the business, would purchase its inventory from the HBC. It was in 1953 also that the federal government had assumed direct responsibility for Inuit, establishing the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources and discontinuing grants to the Guild. James Houston and his wife, Alma, became civil servants.

While credit is given the HBC, the federal government and the Quebec Handicrafts Guild (especially their employee, Houston), there were other, unsung, heroes who played a role in developing the carving industry, many of them

² Watt (1988b:24).

Catholic missionaries. Just as priests were the instigators of cooperatives in Nova Scotia, so were they in the Canadian Arctic. Several encouraged carving and, in some cases, were the driving force behind the cooperative movement which eventually took over and greatly expanded the soapstone industry. André Steinmann, French-speaking Catholic missionary in Povungnituk, helped form the Povungnituk Sculptors' Society, and missionary Hans Van de Velde encouraged the production of handicraft in Pelly Bay. Another missionary, Henri Tardy, has written about the Holman Co-operative and the role he played in its formation (1979-80:54):

The villagers of Holman were in dire need of money. Tuberculosis was increasing. The igloo dwelling was inadequate. Trapping was poor, the white fox fur ridiculously low in price. There was no commercial value to seal pelts and fish nets were most expensive. To secure the necessities of life, I used to encourage our occasional visitor to buy a piece of local handicraft. I prompted an aged Eskimo to fashion some traditional lamps out of limestone. This soon became a work of art. Out of these meagre beginnings, the Holman Eskimo Co-operative was born...As I was searching for a way of tanning seal skins, I met Paul Godt, a co-op specialist employed by the government, who insisted we should organize a co-operative society. Six of us, pooling ten dollars each, formed our co-op. It was 1961. We borrowed money from the Eskimo Loan Fund, thus permitting us to pay for sealskin rugs and sculptures.

The involvement of the Catholic missionaries in the arctic co-ops had unforeseen repercussions, especially in northern Quebec where institutions are informally characterized as to ethnic and religious affiliation. The HBC continued to be viewed as English, Anglican, and allied with the powerful federal government, whereas the co-op became identified with the French, the Roman Catholics and the weaker Quebec government in spite of the fact that it was a *federally*

sponsored movement (thereby providing the first competition to the HBC since the whalers). The arctic Quebec co-op movement was led by Povungnituk and, as Vallee noted (1967b:37) the non-native promoters of the co-op, many of them associated with the provincial government, gathered at the Roman Catholic mission while in Povungnituk and spoke French among themselves.³

The carving industry and the cooperative

The success achieved by the guild and the HBC in developing soapstone carving for export-marketing was capitalized upon by the fledgling co-ops and, in most cases, quickly developed into at least a break-even industry involving most adult members of a community. In spite of the many warnings that a sound economy could not be based on the production of art, soapstone carvings provided the cooperatives with their only commercially successful activity, one which carried the movement for many years.

Handicrafts had been originally viewed as merely a way to augment income, and its tremendous success took people by surprise. Even after it had shown signs of becoming the basis of an Eskimo economy, Jenness (1964:114) warned that:

The art trade is beset with so many uncertainties, so many pit-falls, that beautiful prints and attractive soapstone carvings are not a safe base on which to build a people's economy; and they can never become such a

³ It is interesting to note Vallee's comment (1964:48) "... co-op leaders assumed the right to define what is or is not "good for the community as a whole," putting it into a state of potential conflict with the church. This latent conflict became manifest in Povungnituk when the missionary who had been instrumental in setting up the co-op was fired by the co-op and eventually ousted from the community.

base, indeed, though they may lighten the poverty of a few individuals and support to a small extent a base that is already established.

The production of arts and crafts has fed an international market and remains a significant source of income for Inuit, doubly surprising because of the failure of the mass marketing of Canadian Indian arts.⁴ Canada's goal, it will be recalled, was to eliminate the need for social assistance, and the commercial success of soapstone carving proved, to everyone's surprise, to be a felicitous solution to dependence upon a boom and bust fur cycle. As Johnny Pov, an Inuk from Povungnituk said: "Carvings rescued all the people from the wretched situation they were in. If they had to rely only on the trading of fox skins, they would undoubtedly still be poor today" (in Myers, 1977c:13).

Furthermore, like the cooperative itself, carving was valued because it linked Inuit into a money economy while also enabling them to preserve past practices. In ways to be more fully elaborated in a later chapter, it was an activity which, like the cooperative, both undermined and reinforced the indigenous mode of production. Houston's references to handicrafts projects as "the first steps into industry" should disabuse anyone from thinking of them as anything other than that, although their aesthetic and nationalistic properties soon began to excite the

⁴ After many attempts, the federal government eventually abandoned its efforts to mass market Indian art. Ironically, having no coherent plan, and having botched her efforts to "develop" Indians, Canada became a model for native development by virtue of the success achieved by the Eskimo art producing co-operatives. The head of the Alaska Native Foundation was reported in the *Anchorage Daily News* (Jones, 1981) to have a chart by his desk listing objectives including: "Do it small and well, as did the Canadians." Jones' article goes on to refer to "the world-famous Canadian Eskimo art co-ops, which market millions of dollars' worth of original prints and soapstone sculpture every year."

bureaucracy.

After a slow start, bureaucrats had quickly developed high expectations concerning the economic potential of arts and crafts. In 1964, in his first speech to the new Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, then Minister of NANR, Arthur Laing, said (in Bureau of Management Consultants [BMC], 1979:22):

One of the most important consequences of Eskimo artistic activity is its effect upon Eskimo incomes. Some communities are supported to a great extent through the sale of Eskimo arts and crafts. This activity has become an industry in itself, the economic potential of which has not yet been fully realized.

Laing also referred to the use of Eskimo art as a national symbol: "On a broader plane, Eskimo art has become identified with Canada on an international scale" (in BMC, 1979:23).

The remarkable thing is the untoward interest the Canadian state has lavished upon Inuit handicraft. Graburn (1986) considers that Inuit arts and crafts products appeared at an opportune time to become a central feature of Canadian identity, but, hampered by an inability to directly control commerce, political manipulation was the arena of last resort. As the report on the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council by the federal government's Bureau of Management Consultants [BMC] retrospectively declared (1979:10):

From the documentation available, we deduce that the development of northern co-operatives, the marketing of Inuit art and protecting the image of Arctic hunter turned-artist, were seen as a potential political problem as early as 1960. The difficulty was how to control the marketing, pricing, quality and quantity of Inuit prints -- as well as other developing crafts -- without direct government control.

The HBC was then selling approximately 95 per cent of all production, and "quality was determined by what the local buyer thought would sell in the southern market" (BMC, p.10).

A struggle between the state and the Hudson's Bay Company

The hands-on role being taken by bureaucrats in the nurturing of Inuit art created a minor conundrum for Canada which had long been protecting the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company. NANR had hired James Houston from the Guild and bureaucrats had become involved in the marketing of arts and crafts as part of the effort to develop co-operative industries in the North. In the beginning, this was done in cooperation with the HBC, but conflict developed at the end of the fifties over the marketing of stonecut prints from Cape Dorset (perceived to be truly a "fine art") which NANR's Industrial Division had decided it would market itself. It seems that the HBC was welcome to Canada's natural resources, but the line was drawn at limited edition Eskimo prints which, surprisingly, excited the interest of high-placed bureaucrats who risked reprimands to cut the Company out of this activity. It is hard to understand how it was that employees of the *Industrial* division could imagine that they could do a better job, but one assumes that they were acting under advice from Houston, now an employee of the division.

An early policy paper on stonecut prints created a furor within the department. F.A.G. Carter, assistant director administration, outlined the intent of the policy paper in a memo to the director, Ben Sivertz (DIAND, 1959a:1):

The basic approach taken is that the Government should have complete control over the marketing of these prints until such time as a cooperative can be developed. While this will place extra work on the Branch, I think it is the proper course to follow if we are to ensure that these prints are treated as a true art form. If any private company handles the marketing, I cannot see how there would be any hope of keeping the artistic level high.

Carter also expressed concern in this memo that although Eskimo carvings had been remarkably successful, in terms of revenue and popular appeal, their future was uncertain:

These are generally being sold as fine art and I think very many, in fact perhaps a high proportion, of the samples now for sale can hardly be considered as fine art...I think to some extent these carvings are being sold on the basis of the promotion that has been given them and not on the basis of their real value.

The Carter memo serves to explain the untoward interest the state took in stone cut prints. The expressed desire was to keep them "at a high artistic level" (p.2) and it was thought that expert advice would be required "to sort out the stone cuts to ensure that only the best are used." He added:

I assume this will involve a good many problems in dealing with the Eskimos who have produced sub-standard products. I cannot see any private company doing this and I can see great difficulties even for ourselves. Will we rely on the judgement of one man or will we have samples of the best arts submitted, for example, to the National Gallery for advice whether they are really good?

He acknowledged, however, that if the volume of prints and reproductions increased, they would be "getting out of the art field and into a commercial production which could probably best be handled by a private company." He advised keeping a careful record of costs so that before a co-op was set up they would have "a pretty clear idea" of whether it would succeed financially. It

appeared that he, at least, did not intend to eliminate the HBC nor the Canadian Handicrafts Guild from selling stonecut prints, but all outlets would have to apply to the Northern Administration Branch of NANR for permission to purchase and sell. Artists would also be required to sign over reproduction rights to the Branch: "If the Eskimo artist agrees, a contract form will be drawn up, assigning to the Northern Administration Branch all rights of property, possession and copyright in all stone-cut prints produced by him for a period of twelve months from the date of the signing."

In a pointed memo to the chief of the arctic division written April 3, 1959, the deputy minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources declared himself "very disturbed" that a previous memo on the subject written by the chief made "no reference at all to the Hudson's Bay Company, except to suggest that the policy 'will not be at all well received' by them" (DIAND, 1959b). He refers to an understanding between the federal government and the HBC and to a meeting the previous January 13 at which there was discussion concerning "the losses that the company [HBC] had sustained thus far" and "their desire to participate in the marketing of the first successful item to come out of the Craft Centre" [at Cape Dorset]. The deputy minister considered that the Department's move into marketing would constitute "a double breach of faith with the Hudson's Bay Company" and was concerned as to how they were going "to deal with the Hudson's Bay Company so that some tincture at least of faith will be left with us..."

In a responding memo of justification, Sivertz (*DLAND*, 1959c) pointed out that the Government and the HBC were joint owners of the prints, the HBC having paid for the artists' labour and NANR everything else. He proposed a solution (*p.2*):

It is urgent to resolve this anomaly, and the solution which we have proposed is that the wage orders be written against the Department. (Funds are available). Consequently, the whole ownership would be with the Government. If this seems reasonable, we can still discuss the method of handling and marketing through the HBC and other channels.

Admitting to error in his previous memo, in which it was stated that they "wished to send a message to Houston telling him that we would handle and market all stonecut prints," Sivertz acknowledged that they had gone too far in implying "a total exclusion of the HBC rather than a mere clarification of ownership." In a damning statement he continues:

Our handling and marketing did not mean that we would necessarily do the job ourselves, but that we would take responsibility for allocating the markets on the basis of the artists' long term interests, rather than on short-term commercial grounds as the Company⁵ has been doing. We had, of course, no intention of sending Houston the message until we had brought the policy paper to the attention of the HBC, with a full explanation of our action. We propose not to send the message until we have had the opportunity for oral discussion with the Company.

Sivertz did not think that the suggestions proposed would be "well received by the Company,"(*p.3*), but noted that the department would "have an open mind" if the HBC should "have any valid objections which we have not considered." He declared himself in accord with the minister's desire to keep "faith" with the

⁵ When Company is capitalized, it refers specifically to the HBC.

Company, but exhibited a stubborn refusal to bend over backwards. NANR had no "financial responsibility with the Company" and the HBC "has already made more money out of stone prints than they have paid in wage orders." Apparently the Company had been selling them directly (and to retailers as well), without consulting with NANR on policy nor even informing them of their action:

We do not mean to exclude the Company in future, but we do mean to enter into negotiations with them on the clear assumption that no one owes anyone anything, and we must work out the best regime from the viewpoint of the Eskimos concerned and the never-to-occur again opportunity to aid in preserving the Eskimo art forms.

The state's involvement in the marketing of prints to the point of risking the ire of the Great Company which it had historically been at pains to mollify has to be understood in the context of Canada's need for some national icons. It was perceived by the people involved, Houston and others, that Inuit prints were a significant art form, one which had to be carefully nurtured and protected, to the greater glory of Canada. The Hudson's Bay Company, which was selling prints to Kresge's, was not considered the institution to accomplish this (see Goetz, 1986:56).

It was, however, inappropriate for bureaucrats to be marketing the products of a government project. "Legal opinion was sought and arrangements were quickly made to form a cooperative in Cape Dorset" (Goetz, 1986:56). The formation of this co-op was clearly a move to legitimate government involvement and to retain state control over the prints. Once incorporated, the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative, using money from the Eskimo loan fund, purchased the

state's inventory of prints and they were launched at Montreal's Museum of Fine Arts in February 1960. This highly successful marketing venture reinforced the idea that the marketing of prints must be tightly controlled. Nineteen years later, in its *Evaluation of the Canadian Eskimo Art Council*, the Bureau of Management Consultants (1979:27-28) concluded: "The Federal policy to control the development of Inuit art without directly appearing to do so was based upon a genuine fear this unique art form could be destroyed in an open market situation."

This was, however, the hidden agenda. The overt agenda was involvement in marketing, not as a move against the Hudson's Bay Company but, rather, in fulfilment of NANR's mandate to develop local industries for Inuit. The production of arts and crafts had quickly proven to be the only foundation upon which an economy could be built; their usefulness in promoting a Canadian identity was doubly serendipitous.

NANR bureaucrats won the exchange within their own department concerning the marketing of stone cut prints. The department not only marketed the first graphics collection, but maintained control of Inuit graphics through the 1959 establishment of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, about which I say more in a later chapter. Although its formal role was to act as advisor to the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, the council continued until it was terminated in the fall of 1989 to monitor production and control marketing of Inuit graphics through a "seal of approval."

The development of the cooperatives and Inuit art, as I stated earlier, were

sympiotic. The importance of the art projects to the co-op movement and the state's plans for industrial development is evidenced by the fact that they were major topics of discussion at the three co-op conferences: Frobisher Bay (1963), Povungnituk (1966) and George River (1980). Twin themes at all three were Inuit empowerment and art production. It is clear that Inuit came to see the source of their power as residing in their art, the only economic base upon which they could build. It is something they do that no-one else does, and the only thing they produce which has any market value to the outside world.

**From Talking Chiefs to a Native Corporate Elite:
The Birth of Class and Nationalism Among Canadian Inuit**

by

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Chapter Nine

Canadian Arctic Producers: A Business of Which There are Few Parallels"¹

This part of the story focusses on actions and initiatives undertaken in the South which are important for an understanding of what happened in the North. As pointed out in previous chapters, Eskimo co-operatives did not start from the ground up, but were conceived in bureaucrats' offices in Ottawa and put into place somewhat summarily. Church and state co-operated in nurturing the fledgling co-ops, but it is unlikely that they could or would have achieved the successes highlighted in the previous chapter had it not been for second-tier development initiated in southern Canada by non-Inuit.

Because there is no model to refer to, and because there has been virtually no analysis of the cooperative movement in the Arctic, it is necessary to go into considerable detail before coming to conclusions concerning the effect this movement has had on relationships within the indigenous mode of production. Also, it is no longer possible to generalize to the same extent as previously, given the salient split between the Northwest Territories and northern Quebec. In this chapter, I shall document the history and some of the priorities and problems of the movement in the Northwest Territories where the main actors were the federal government, Canadian Arctic Producers, the Government of the Northwest

¹ This expression is from Canadian Arctic Producers (1969f).

Territories and Canadian Arctic Cooperatives Limited. In a later chapter, I shall discuss the situation in Quebec where La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec was the main actor, the Government of Quebec a peripheral figure after an enthusiastic beginning, and the emergent Inuit associations a later, but significant, factor.

The first central marketing agency is formed

Only four years after the deputy minister's irate memo to his staff condemning their efforts to cut the HBC out of the marketing of prints, plans were underway in Ottawa to establish a central marketing agency for Eskimo art products.

Canadian Arctic Producers (CAP) was established July 12, 1965 in compliance with a recommendation of the first arctic co-op conference, including Indian and non-native co-ops, held in Frobisher Bay in 1963. Ostensibly, the idea for CAP came from the Inuit co-op members but, like the co-ops themselves, CAP was another state project, perhaps a way of legitimating state involvement in marketing the increasingly popular Eskimo arts and crafts.

At the time of the Frobisher conference, there were 16 Eskimo cooperatives across the Arctic with five hundred paid-up members, representing one out of five Inuit in the North. Total co-op business, in Quebec and the N.W.T., amounted to \$360,000 (fish, fur and handicrafts), of which \$135,000 had been paid to members (DIAND 1963; March 15:1).

The Frobisher Conference was the first major gathering of Inuit from across the Arctic, and there were also several non-native people present:

government representatives (including Walter Dinsdale, then minister of Northern Affairs), anthropologists (Frank Vallee and John Honigmann), officials from the Co-operative Union of Canada and Le Conseil de la Coopération du Québec, as well as several media people, including Edith Iglauer from the *New Yorker* magazine. The proceedings were filmed by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Although he was undoubtedly unaware of the extent to which Inuit would eventually use the co-op as a power base, Don Snowden, chief of the industrial division of the Department of Northern Affairs and chairman of the conference, told reporter Iglauer (1979:93) that one of the reasons for the meeting was:

...to find out whether there is an articulate body of opinion yet among the Eskimos in the North. Their cooperative meetings are teaching them not only how to speak but how to assume responsibility and make group decisions among themselves, and I want to know if they are now capable of expressing what is happening to them as a group. If they aren't, we're doing something wrong...

He mentioned seeing Eskimos at Ottawa conferences organized by the churches, HBC and RCMP who were "anxious and depressed about the big changes among their people, but no matter how hard they tried, they were unable to talk about their own communities and their real problems." Snowden had high ideals for the co-operative movement:

The most encouraging thing I've seen lately is that the Eskimos are showing signs of learning how to tell us when we're wrong, and I hope we get some really loaded questions about the white man's role in the North...I don't believe that the government is infallible, and the coops make it possible for the Eskimos to give us hell.

Although this was unlikely to happen on that particular occasion, it appears that

there was some genuine effort on the part of some bureaucrats to develop an Eskimo "voice" and leaders from among the native population. It is not clear, however, whether they were to be merely an updated version of the talking chiefs, or whether there was some thought of enabling them to exercise legitimate power. It must be remembered that at this time most Inuit had not even had personal contact with outsiders, let alone any experience with business or politics. Although this will be dealt with more fully in chapter 15, I would merely point out here that many of the Inuit people involved in the co-op did, in fact, come to exercise some, albeit limited, decision-making power in their businesses and in their communities. As Crowe wrote (1974:191):

Because of the link with the old ways and the old economy, because of the small scale and local control, co-ops have offered native people a chance to deal with modern business matters in a partly native style, using their own language. Many of the present community leaders and other prominent native people, particularly among the Inuit, received valuable experience during the early days of co-op development.

The Eskimo delegates to the Frobisher Conference were, however, mainly concerned with practical problems, raising concerns about the marketing of their arts and crafts, particularly problems of having to crate and ship carvings for sale at great distances from the point of production.² It was a non-native civil

² It was typical for Inuit to ask for help with concrete problems at meetings which bureaucrats had convened to deal with policies and issues. In 1964, for instance, the Carruthers Commission on self government for the N.W.T. held a meeting in Spence Bay to explain the three levels of government in Canada and the NWT aspirations for self government. At the end, when they invited comments and questions, they were asked if they knew how to fix an outboard motor and how to go about getting a replacement mattress for one that had been destroyed by fire. This kind of response, also remarked by Snowden (in Iglaue, 1979:93) reflects the great distance between the Eskimo and non-Eskimo worlds and should not be interpreted, as it sometimes is, as the inability of Inuit to address issues.

servant, Ewan Cotterill (area administrator at Coppermine and later to become an assistant deputy minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development), who formally brought the idea of a central marketing agency before the meeting but: "Both the Eskimo delegates and the government representatives at the conference had repeatedly mentioned the need for a central marketing outlet in the South..." (Iglauer, 1979:129). Delegate after delegate talked about the problems involved in dealing with markets which were hundreds of miles away: breakage, delays in payment and an inability to collect accounts receivable or to open new markets. Paulosie Napartuk from Great Whale River reported, for instance, that carvings stayed too long in his community before being sent out for sale and asked if someone could "arrange a market for the carving outside?" And, as Cotterill explained (DIAND, 1963c, March 16:6):

The people of Coppermine were producing more and better carvings than ever before. However, if all the money of the co-operative was tied up in carvings in the store, they would have no money to buy more carvings and the carvers would lose interest in producing more. They would therefore like to get together with other co-operatives to set up an agency in the south to handle the marketing of all their arts and crafts.

Paulosie Sivuak from Povungnituk in Northern Quebec said that this was the most important question to be discussed at the conference, and a committee was formed from the conference delegates to frame a specific proposal concerning a central marketing agency. Its members were: Kamingoak of Coppermine, Sivuak of Povungnituk, Oshawetuk of Cape Dorset, Angnutok of Fort Chimo, Paul Godt, supervisor of co-ops for the federal government and Alex Laidlaw, president of the Cooperative Union of Canada (Iglauer, 1979:129). The committee met on

Sunday afternoon and "the first business on Monday morning was a report on their meeting." Snowden was delighted with the committee's recommendation that a central marketing agency be established with eastern and western warehouses and sales offices, and that shipping costs be pooled, "so that Grise Fiord Eskimos would pay no more to export their goods than Eskimos closer to the South."

There was unanimous agreement on the concept but, following Inuit practice of consensual decision-making, delegates insisted that *they* could not make a decision binding on all Inuit but would have to return to their communities to seek a consensus (p. 130).

While it makes an interesting story, the idea of a central marketing agency for Eskimo products was far from being a spontaneous recommendation arising from the conference. Snowden revealed (in Iglauer, 1979:130) that one of NANR's objectives for the conference was:

...to determine whether it would be possible for the Eskimos eventually to have a marketing agency of their own. We thought it would seem like a farfetched idea to them, and the most we hoped to do was to familiarize them with the thought.

The industrial division had been thinking about *and* costing such an operation for two years (DIAND, 1963c, March 18:1). This was, of course, a time when the industrial division was being challenged in its efforts to control marketing of the limited edition prints produced in Cape Dorset. The federating of arctic co-ops to achieve greater power had been an agenda topic, but at the conference's close, the chairman reported that the recommendation concerning the formation of a central agency was a move in this direction. At his suggestion, talk about second-

tier development was postponed for another conference.

Although the delegates had stressed their inability to make a binding decision for all Inuit co-ops, CAP, at first based in Ottawa, was incorporated in 1965 with complete disregard of the decision taken in Frobisher to seek a consensus. This should not be taken as a deliberate slight to Inuit practices but, rather, evidence that bureaucrats never did believe that Inuit could, should or would make their own decisions.

It was at this point, too, that a French/English split became manifest. This was not a language or an ethnic split among Inuit but a case of differences between the Quebec provincial government and the federal government in Ottawa. CAP had been set up to market products from *all* the co-ops, but using a building supplied by the Conseil de la Coopération du Québec and staff provided by the Quebec government, the first northern Quebec co-op in Povungnituk, opened a sales office in Quebec city in 1967. The Povungnituk sales office was to become the nucleus of La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec which ensured that Inuit of the Northwest Territories and Quebec pursued separate destinies.

Canadian Arctic Producers: A bureaucratic project with problems of capitalization

Inuit played no role in the formation or direction of the new marketing agency. Phalen, president of CUC and a CAP director, made a latter day admission (in CAP/CACFL, 1979b:3) which reveals the extent to which CAP was a bureaucratic project:

When C.A.P was started it was felt that northern cooperatives hadn't developed far enough to start building second tier co-operative development on them. It was decided to ask the Cooperative Union of Canada (CUC) to establish a legal organization. They set up C.A.P as a limited corporation with CUC as its custodian. CUC had control of the shares. There were only 5 shares at the beginning.

Although this was later to change, the CUC was closely involved with CAP at the beginning, having been established as a private company under the sponsorship of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Cooperative Union of Canada" (CAP, 1972a:1). Many of CAP's first board meetings were held at CUC headquarters and the president of CUC was a director of CAP for many years.

CUC's willingness to join forces with the federal government was, as has previously been indicated, born of necessity. Only the federal government had the necessary money and, as was the case with the co-ops, financing of CAP was a problem from the beginning. Predictably, in spite of having established good contacts which brought about steadily increasing sales, CAP soon encountered the same cash flow problems the Canadian Guild of Crafts had faced earlier. Since CAP had no working capital, it was obliged to collect accounts before it could reimburse the producer co-ops. The unsatisfactory system was for the artist to bring work to the local cooperative which shipped it to CAP on consignment. After CAP sold it and collected the money, it would be sent to the co-op which would, finally, pay the carver. This process could take several months, causing great difficulties for Inuit who were barely making ends meet. The cooperatives tried to help by extending credit while the carver waited for payment, but this was

a crippling burden for under-financed enterprises. As one government appointed director to CAP's board explained (Yates, n.d:2): "The system immobilized the working capital of co-operatives for extended periods of time and served to restrict, and in some cases stop, local production."

The situation was even worse when CAP returned merchandise that was considered unsaleable. Lokken, who did a 1968 report for NANR on CAP, recommended (1968:9) that CAP "be organized as a legal entity and that consideration be given to forming it with Producer members as a non-profit, marketing limited liability company." Although he considered it should eventually be self-supporting, initial financing would be through government guaranteed loans or donations. "The main concern," he wrote, "is to enable the sales marketing organization to make a substantial cash payment to the producing associations as soon as the goods are received."³

The long wait producers experienced before being paid for their products resulted in some southern retailers finding it profitable to travel North to buy directly. Carvers were only too willing to sell their work for ready cash. As noted (CAP, 1969f:26):

Retailers are, in ever-increasing numbers, trading direct with suppliers in the field, and C.A.P. is receiving the residue of this trade at inflated prices. The problem is not new -- it has merely grown with the passage of time...The retailer cannot be condemned for his initiative; no more so can

³ Lokken (1968:10) also recommended that CAP undertake to handle Indian handicrafts, then being marketed by Indian Affairs and Northern Development. CAP appears to have been regarded as a marketing vehicle for several government-sponsored projects. In the late sixties it was, for instance, asked by Indian Affairs to distribute tinned arctic char from Rankin Inlet which it undertook to do.

the producers for accepting his ready cash. For the producer 'A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.' Even though he ships to C.A.P., and in due course may receive more for his trouble, he may wait as long as two to four months before being reimbursed.

The problem got worse. There are now several wholesalers competing with the co-op marketing agencies as well as Inuit making deals directly with retailers.

Although this hurts the co-op system, it has proven impossible to stop.

Capitalization was a problem at every level, the individual carver, the co-op and the marketing agency. It was a problem present from the inception of the marketing agency. CAP's November 4, 1965 minutes (1965b) recorded a brief discussion of the need for capital to enable the co-ops to produce in quantity, but it was felt that any attempt at general policy would be "premature" and that "a way of meeting the need in each particular case could probably be found."

The federal government becomes CAP's banker

In the beginning, CAP's operations were financed through a 10% commission on sales, which was considerably less than what it actually cost. The difference between revenue and expenses (approximately 20%) was made up by an annual grant from DIAND (Yates, *p.2*).⁴ Raising its margin structure would have been one solution for CAP, but this was thwarted by the difficulty in pricing art and crafts. Prices could not be standardized for one-of-a-kind productions, and

⁴ CAP received other help from DIAND. The expenses of government directors on CAP's boards were paid, and free legal consultation with government lawyers was provided (CAP, 1970b;1971a). In return, DIAND officials were allowed to buy goods at wholesale prices from CAP and used the company as a showcase for visiting dignitaries and press to such an extent that "catering to visitors [was] considered to be an essential part of the Company's overall promotion and public relations program" (CAP, 1970a:14).

discrepancies in prices paid and received were a constant headache. The general manager was repeatedly instructed to produce papers on the pricing structure. The major problem was the great distance between point of purchase and point of sale. The base price was established in the field and, in spite of several pricing seminars held in Ottawa, it proved difficult for local purchasers to accurately estimate appropriate prices.

Accounts receivable was another nagging problem for CAP, mentioned throughout the minutes. In general, CAP was bearing the burden of financing sales of carvings for the co-ops. Various solutions were suggested, including purchasing goods outright from the co-ops, "but only saleable articles," or making a 50% pre-payment as had been recommended at a second co-op conference held in Povungnituk in 1966 (CAP, 1966a). This latter solution was rejected by CAP's board because it was felt that at this early stage payment should be more directly related to sales, given the impossibility of CAP's controlling quality and quantity of production. The decision was that CAP would instead "seek the means" to pay for merchandise when it was sold and management was directed to explore the possibility of loans from regular banks as well as the Industrial Development Bank. One director (Staples) also volunteered to contact the Ontario Co-op Credit Society and the Saskatchewan Co-op credit society to explore the possibility of a loan with or without a government guarantee. At the end of 1966 (CAP, 1966b), he reported that these bodies agreed to help, but only if DIAND would provide a guarantee. The manager was directed to request a guarantee from

DIAND for a line of credit up to \$200,000 to finance accounts receivable.

CAP's financial problems did not go away and on May 14, 1968, following a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the Government of the Northwest Territories would be approached for capital financing needs which, by the end of the year, were estimated to be \$600,000 basic capital and \$300,000 for peak periods in order to function effectively. Proffered justification for GNWT financing was the return to the North that would result. Indeed, although government grants to CAP were high over the years, as consultant Stager pointed out several years later (in Sprudz, 1984:181), the co-ops had provided employment to "some 2,000 native people." It will be remembered that a goal for the state was to reduce welfare spending in the North.

CAP's need for capital became increasingly urgent and, by May of 1969, the situation was considered serious enough that it was resolved at a meeting (CAP, 1969b) that the chairman write a letter to the minister of IAND (then Jean Chrétien) pointing out the problems faced by CAP and the need for assurance of the year's budget and an indication of support for the long-term financial program. A government guarantee was given for the balance of that year (CAP, 1969d), but it was clear that some long-term measures would have to be taken. The federal government eventually became CAP's banker, but only after normal channels were closed because of the organization's lack of invested capital.

The state assumes outright but temporary ownership of CAP

In what was thought to be a final effort to overcome the cash flow problem, the

government of Canada bought CAP in 1970 for \$1,000 (DIAND, 1971:2).

Working capital was provided by the state's investment of \$400,000 in redeemable preferred shares. In addition, a loan up to \$250,000 was approved so that CAP could build new headquarters. This infusion of working capital permitted CAP to transfer funds to the co-ops immediately upon receipt of consignments rather than waiting until they were sold, and to assume responsibility for all transportation costs. CAP hoped to be able to honour a thirty-day payment period "and only in a time of heavy receipts (such as sealift)" did it "anticipate the necessity of extending the period to sixty days" (CAP, 1970a:12).

The state had controlling interest in the re-organized and refinanced CAP and its 400,000 preferred shares were issued in the name of its trustees: Sylvain Cloutier (deputy minister in the Department of National Defense) and commissioner Stuart Hodgson of the Northwest Territories. It also subscribed for four common shares in the names of James Houston, Walter Porter, Magpah, and Barry Yates (DIAND) and two Inuit, Walter Porter and Magpah, all of whom then became new directors of CAP.

This new state assistance was not without conditions which would later have grave repercussions. CAP's by-laws were to be "agreeable to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development" (CAP, 1970a:2) and, as long as there were any preferred shares outstanding, the majority of shareholders were to be appointed by the federal government. The "appointees" -- this was to become a derogatory epithet as used by Inuit resentful of state control -- were to include

representatives from the federal and territorial governments and the northern co-operatives and might "also include a lawyer, a banker and a businessman" (p.3). An important provision of the agreement with Canada was that control would be transferred to the northern co-operatives as soon as they were able to buy back the government's shares. It was anticipated that "after 1972, C.A.P. [would] use profits and private financial institutions to finance further growth, to begin to repay the loans made to it by the Government, and to redeem the preferred shares held by the Government" (CAP, 1970a:3). CUC, which was still involved with CAP, agreed to the state's seizing control of the organization, but only on condition that northern representation on the board be increased and control of CAP revert to the North as soon as possible.

Another condition of the refinancing program was that CAP's total costs and profits not exceed 35% of sales. In other words, the co-ops were not to pay more than this for CAP's services since, as stated in the *Longrange Operating Plan* (CAP, 1970a:14): "It is not the purpose of CAP to maximize profits but rather to optimize the dollar return to suppliers." Although goods would now be bought outright rather than being received on consignment, CAP retained the right to reject shipments, "when the circumstances indicate that acceptance would be detrimental to the company as a whole" (p.16). It was further stipulated that CAP would "not seek a monopoly position with suppliers" [co-ops] although, in what seems to be a contradictory provision, it was to have "the right of first refusal as well as normal business guarantees from suppliers."

For a while, the re-organization appeared to be paying off. It was noted in 1971 (DIAND, 1971:2) that:

Since its capitalization in April 1970 CAP has operated without a government subsidy and has consistently shown a profit. This is a remarkable achievement considering that until capitalization CAP was financed by means of a 10% commission paid by the producers on consignment sales and a Government subsidy to make up the 25% difference between CAP's operating expenses and its revenue from commissions.

Given that the system had just received an infusion of \$650,000 and that the producers were now paying more than triple what they had been for CAP's services, it is hardly remarkable. The TB submission continued: "Today the producers carry the full cost of the marketing service. Their products now bear a 35% mark-up on selling price consistent with the practice of the trade as opposed to the 10% before capitalization."

It appears that buying back control from the state was never a serious objective. It was calculated that it "would cost the producers almost a million dollars" to redeem the state's equity and an argument was mounted only a year after re-capitalization to the effect that:

...it would be difficult to persuade Northern Indians and Eskimos that they should invest this amount of money, especially since they are already in a position to exercise their influence through CAP's Board of Directors on which they are represented (DIAND, 1971:3).

The other side of the argument was that transfer of ownership was assuming "even greater importance" than previously since there was a danger that CAP might not "capture the loyalty of its producers" who might be "tempted" to sell for "quick money" to itinerant dealers. It was perceived that CAP's advantage in the market

rested upon its retaining "a marketing strategy on a large and almost monopolistic scale." It was also argued that, in the long run, the main advantage to producers would be ownership of CAP and that failure to maintain CAP's position would not only "injure the economic interests of the northern craftsmen, but also jeopardize the government's investment."

It was recommended (DIAND, 1971:4) that incentives be provided by (1) permitting transfer of control when only 51% of the shares were owned by the producers (replacing the original provision that as long as there were any preferred shares outstanding, a majority of directors would be appointed by the state) (2) permitting the allocation of patronage dividends as a first charge against profits, and (3) making an incentive grant tied to the rate of redemption of the preferred shares. The Treasury Board submission was approved in January 1972. In February, the minister of IAND, Jean Chrétien, presided at the opening of CAP's new headquarters where he announced that in order to hasten producer takeover of CAP, the government was relinquishing its right to dividends on its shares as a first charge against profits (*Financial Post*, 1972).

In subsequent years, CAP made heroic efforts to issue patronage dividends to its suppliers in spite of the fact that its working capital requirements could have been at least partially alleviated through retention of all its earnings. Declaring a dividend was good policy since it enabled the co-ops to purchase common shares in CAP and also enabled CAP to avoid large income tax payments. It was also hoped that dividend payments would help secure the loyalty of the northern

producers, many of whom were continuing to by-pass CAP to sell directly to entrepreneurs. CAP succeeded in developing a sophisticated marketing strategy which elevated Inuit handicraft to the status of art, but it has always been bedevilled by a lack of producer loyalty.

Controlling the Producers

CAP was perceived in the North and in the South as an elitist, state-controlled organization. It enjoyed a good relationship with dealers and the professional art community but, to its jeopardy, not with producers. The company appears to have relied on DIAND and GNWT field officers to deal with the producers, eschewing any direct involvement itself, although it was noted as early as 1969 that:

It is increasingly evident that C.A.P., simply functioning as a sales agent for Northern producers, with no responsibility for production, quality, quantity or price, is labouring under a severe handicap, perhaps a fatal one" (CAP, 1969f:22).

The market was tightening, and it was becoming ever more apparent that "the appendage of an Eskimo product label, to any item from the North, no longer aroused the curiosity of the prospective buyer." CAP had, for instance, developed a market for Eskimo-designed garments but was "as competent to guarantee delivery as it was to predict quality." The reason: "Such vital decisions rest with others -- far removed from the realities of the market place, secure in their isolation and impervious to the urgency of the need; not only of the market, but also of the people whose economy depends upon it."

CAP's grudge was directed not to Eskimo producers, but to government field officers: "Apparently, the concept that as it is 'Eskimo-made,' it will sell, is

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still an object of faith in the creed of many field officers" (p.23). CAP had no control over production, but was obligated to sell whatever was produced which included improperly sized garments made from "inappropriate materials" and badly sewn (p.23). Similarly, CAP's lack of control over pricing and the lack of standardization were identified as serious problems. Prices were erratic and it was recommended that DIAND and CAP:

...come to terms on this matter, and endeavour to attain a greater degree of co-ordination in standardizing material costs, labour costs, and prime mark-ups; that as far as possible, a uniform price structure may be maintained for manufactured products in the field.

The production/marketing split was one focus of the *Longrange Operating Plan* (CAP, 1970a) out of which grew a product development committee comprised of representatives from CAP and the government of the Northwest Territories. The plan emphasized the necessity of correlating production with market demand (p.4) and included a provision that CAP would test market new products "*which may originate with either CAP or the producer.*" It was also stressed that the orientation of the arts and crafts industry would be changed from *production* (North) to *marketing* (South) which is explained as follows: "This means the market must provide the prime focus for the industry and market requirements must be fundamental to decisions on what to produce and how, when, where to produce ...". There was a caveat: The northern producers were not to be "sacrificed to southern consumers," but the producers would best be served "by an efficient industry, one that directs their efforts into producing products that will sell..." (pp.4-5). CAP was determined to succeed, regardless of what priorities and

problems the producers might face. Inuit were looked upon as merely a body of workers to be told what to do and how, a point I'll make more of in chapter 15.

Product Development was made a "top priority" in the *Longrange Operating Plan* (CAP, 1970a). Product ideas could "be generated at all levels of the system but were to be funnelled to the joint CAP/GNWT product development group. This group, "*under government control*" (emphasis added) was to be responsible "for introducing new products to the producers, training in production methods and techniques, production organization, quality standards, and so on (p.10)."⁵ Guidelines for product development were specified (pp:10-11). "Heavy emphasis" was to be placed on the employment opportunities a product could provide and:

This must include an assessment of the type of employment and its suitability to specific producer groups, the skills and work habits required, the permanency of employment which would result, the potential number of people that could find employment, the level of remuneration a producer could attain, and whether it would require "home" or "shop" work. The potential hourly remuneration should not be overly stressed. Rather the overall family income that could result in relation to existing alternatives for the producer should be the criteria.

Also, products requiring a high input of southern raw materials or major marketing costs were to be subordinated to those with value added in the North, and CAP was not restricted to arts and crafts but could "seek new product or service opportunities wherever they exist." In spite of what appears to be built-in

⁵ The product development committee had its finger in many pies. In 1972, it explored the potential of developing a Japanese market with the assistance of Industry, Trade and Commerce, examined a proposal for rug-hooking and silkscreening (CAP, 1972b), requested that the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council sponsor an exhibition/competition for crafts, and sent an Eskimo to train in fine metal work at Ottawa's Algonquin College.

support for northern priorities, it was asserted that "of greatest importance is the market acceptability and the resultant assessment of viability either in terms of employment potential or profitability." Which was it to be?

CAP's continuing financial woes quickly banished initial euphoria after the 1970 re-financing coup. As an example, the dollar volume of carvings and sculpture was down in 1975 (CAP, 1975a:1) and this was deemed to be "of serious and disturbing significance reflecting the resistance of the market place to high priced mediocrity." Alarm was expressed (p.3) at higher prices and "overall diminishing quality of both sculptures and carvings" which CAP attempted to alleviate with a "quality" seminar -- paid for by DIAND -- for representatives from the six largest producing communities. Still, "the Company's management had to resort all through the year to radical depreciations of incoming shipments." This was a severe and crippling blow to the co-ops, "since, in most cases," carvings and sculptures had already been paid for by the shareholder cooperatives. CAP's having paid \$192,344.83 less than their asking price translated into "an equivalent loss of income for them" (p.4).

A brief was presented to the federal government's Canadian Eskimo Arts Council by CAP November 14, 1976 out of concern that "should this trend continue unchecked, the market for and the reputation of Inuit art could well suffer beyond any possible short term redemption" (CAP, 1976b:4). It was "earnestly hoped that governments [would] see fit to act on this matter with all due celerity since procrastination on their part would be tantamount to allowing

the destruction of a system, the existence of which they have contributed to."

During the first nine months of 1976, CAP's purchases from suppliers continued to decline and this was attributed in part to depleted stocks of smaller carvings: "The most common dealers' complaint concerned the lack of supply of small carvings, since they consistently sell well (CAP, 1976c:1). New products were thought to be the answer "to offset losses caused by a decline in merchandise receipts from the North" (p.2). Stationery items produced in the South (including playing cards), ivory jewellery, wallhangings from Pangnirtung and publications were promoted. In 1977, tote bags and wallhangings from Gjoa Haven and stuffed toys from Clyde River, both projects of the product development committee, were introduced. The sales situation looked particularly gloomy when, as a result of its disappointing May 1976 sale, Christie's auction house in Montreal announced that it would not handle Eskimo prints again (CAP, 1976c:5).

By 1977, CAP was again in a cash flow squeeze (CAP, 1977:2). Rising prices at the retail level in 1976-1977 had resulted in a decline in volume of carvings sold. In addition, producer demands for higher prices meant that "the company was forced to operate at a reduced margin." The 28 per cent average achieved in 1977 was down 1 per cent from 1976. Sales in 1979, the year CAP was converted from a corporation to a co-op, exceeded 2.5 million, the highest level ever achieved by the company. This was all the more remarkable, given that Cape Dorset had begun marketing its own graphics (CAP, 1979a:1). But in 1980, CAP reported that "upward pressure on prices sought by member cooperatives"

had continued to plague the company during the year: "While works of superior quality are able to withstand a reasonable degree of movement in this respect, the average and mediocre pieces cannot" (CAP, 1980b:9).

Furthermore, CAP had "found it increasingly necessary to declare certain incoming carvings to be of no commercial value because of poor craftsmanship" (p.10). These were either returned to the co-op or, "as is usually the case, destroyed, with the coop absorbing the loss." CAP devalued and destroyed almost \$100,000 of inventory in 1979 but, nevertheless, inventory levels increased from \$1,200,383 to \$1,565,013 at the end of 1980, a 30 per cent increase "in spite of a respectable sales increase" (CAP, 1980b:13). CAP warned that working capital was seriously strained and that it would have to borrow heavily to finance inventory, or stop buying, or revert to accepting shipments only on consignment. None of these was desirable and "the only realistic long term solution," it was concluded, "is increased equity in the form of shares held by the federal government, or the Inuit Development Corporation or any other body that has the financial resources and is acceptable to existing shareholders."

CAP's fatal flaw

Apart from its chronic cash flow problems, CAP's problems were clearly attributable to a failure to bring the producers on side. There were some early efforts to mollify producers and some last ditch efforts to convince them of the efficacy of supporting CAP by refusing to deal with the private traders, but these have not succeeded in winning widespread producer support for CAP. The

breaking away of Cape Dorset, which opened its own marketing agency in 1978, is the most extreme example of producer dissatisfaction with "their" marketing agency.

As one move in its pitch for producer loyalty, CAP had opened a retail outlet for Eskimo arts and crafts in Frobisher Bay in December 1968 with a white manager and an Eskimo clerk (CAP, 1969f:13). The plan was to open retail outlets across the North. It was acknowledged that the profit potential was not great, but the northern retail outlets were expected to:

...provide a base of operations in the north and give the Company a meaningful stake in selected communities. They can provide a valuable training ground for [the] Company and possibly, supplier personnel. *Finally, they show the Company to the suppliers, proving that it is a real and meaningful operation* (emphasis added).

Apart from competition from dealers who were, in increasing numbers, going directly to the producers, CAP also had to contend with the ever-present HBC. It was reported in CAP's 1978 *Annual Report* (CAP, 1978a:2-3) that:

The Hudson's Bay Company has become much more active in terms of buying carvings and are also making inroads into C.A.P.'s market. In some communities the local cooperatives are at a serious disadvantage since prices paid to artists are bid up to unrealistic levels because of the aggressive buying behaviour of the Bay. In some cases it has become impossible for C.A.P. to match the prices with the result that a great deal of production is going to the Bay to be sold outside that part of the system that is owned and controlled by the artists and their cooperatives. The efforts of the Bay in this respect have not been restricted to carving communities, since we have also learned that they have approached at least one of the printmaking communities to sell their graphics for purposes of wholesaling. Additionally, we have witnessed this new thrust on the part of the Bay in the southern marketplace as well where they have been actively soliciting orders from C.A.P.'s own customers. The implications of this aggressive posture on the part of the Bay are ominous considering the vastly superior financial resources available to that organization.

Competition from the HBC created a dilemma for co-ops in the NWT and in Quebec to the extent that they were, a few years' later, prepared to cooperate in combatting a mutual enemy. As stated in CAP's 1978 *Annual Report* (pp.15-16):

The implications of long term market fragmentation with the accompanying risk of being unable to maintain the existing level of market acceptance and price levels must be weighed carefully against short term monetary gains which might be available through dealing outside of the framework which built up the market in the first place and which suppliers/shareholders own.

Although there were still differences between the NWT and Quebec movements, they shared the conviction that they were there first, and that competition from the HBC and dealers was unfair since they did not mount exhibitions, produce catalogues, pay dividends to shareholders, pay for costly annual meetings or provide an education/development service to the North. The argument was that the "entrepreneurs" were capitalizing on the groundwork laid by the co-ops. The entrepreneurs, on the other hand, considered that the co-ops were subsidized by government and that it was unfair that they should reap all the benefits. They wanted a share of the pie.

There were some unsuccessful efforts to convince the federal government to legislate against other buyers, including the Hudson's Bay Company, but the co-ops were left to woo producers on their own. There were, of course, many reasons for Inuit disenchantment with CAP. It had been set up without their approval or involvement; it was oriented to the market and to the South and, furthermore, the western Arctic co-ops felt that they were being ignored by CAP. As if all that were not enough, CAP had been set up as a limited *corporation*, a

bone of contention for committed northern and southern co-operators alike. Its conversion to a co-op was to become a rallying point for the northern producers. Although there were powerful forces arrayed against them, the pro-cooperative group finally did succeed in having CAP converted from a corporation to a co-op but, before I detail the manner in which this was accomplished and its implications, I must introduce two other actors: La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec and the Canadian Arctic Co-operatives Federation Limited.

Chapter Ten

Quebec Pursues a Separate Destiny

The first Arctic co-op federation

The usual process is for co-ops to federate to achieve economics of scale and a united voice. The first federation of arctic cooperatives was formed in Quebec in 1967 as a result of the second co-op conference, held in Povungnituk, in northern Quebec, the year before. La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec quickly became an all-encompassing organization, with considerable influence over Quebec Inuit but, although it *almost* succeeded in becoming a political force, it failed to legitimate its power.

At the time of the Povungnituk conference there were twenty-two established co-ops and six others in the formative stage. Delegates to the conference included representatives from the federal government, the Quebec government, the Cooperative Union of Canada, Le Conseil de la coopération du Québec and La Fédération des caisses populaires Desjardins, along with representatives from the United States government in Alaska and nine members of the media.

There were obvious conflicts at this second co-op conference, and although several delegates expressed a wish to keep politics, religion and race out of discussions, it proved especially difficult to ignore the differences between Quebec and the Northwest Territories. Political differences in the South were, in fact,

quite deliberately transposed to the North. Aurèl St. Amant, representing Le Conseil de la coopération du Québec (CCQ) which had recently taken an interest in the Povungnituk co-op, presented what appears to have been a joint CCQ and DIAND proposal for the establishment of two arctic co-operative marketing agencies, a second-tier structure. Reading from a memorandum prepared by J.W. Evans of DIAND (DIAND, 1966b:67-68), St. Amant noted that divergences of language and productive activities between east and west as well as the north/south communication lines made formation of one "National Central" impractical. Another reason was that Canadian Eskimos were not homogenous and there could be no certainty of a dialogue among them. Furthermore:

The solution proffered by the co-operative movement should respect the political structure of the country and give the Eskimo the opportunity to integrate himself into his country through the normal channel which is that of a province.

The recommendation was that two federations ("Centrals") be established, one for NWT co-ops and one for those in arctic Quebec. The NWT federation would be "under the jurisdiction of the Co-operative Union of Canada while the northern Quebec one would be under the jurisdiction of Le Conseil de la coopération du Québec" (DIAND, 1966b:68).

Ralph Staples of CUC (and also a CAP director) spoke against the proposal, saying there "was no logical reason" why Inuit should be divided and that "C.C.Q. (French) and C.U.C. (English) work together very closely. At least there had been no difficulty until we struck the problem of a marketing agency for the

north" (p.70). It was his view that separate organizations "could not be effectively co-ordinated."¹ George Koneak, an Inuk employed by DIAND in Fort Chimo, noted that no Eskimos had been involved in the meetings held by CUC, CCQ, the Quebec government and DIAND. He said further (p.71) that he would have wanted:

...Eskimo representatives to hear proposals and then go home and explain to their people what they had heard. Then, when this conference was held, the delegates would have been more informed to make a decision."

Inuit delegates were particularly concerned to keep religion, race and politics out of the discussions. Canadian Arctic Producers had been set up with the purpose of marketing arts and crafts from *all* the co-operatives whether in the Northwest Territories or Quebec but, while a few Arctic Quebec co-ops did sell through CAP for a time, the Povungnituk Sculptor's Society, set up to market products from that one community when the HBC suddenly stopped buying, maintained a hostile independence from CAP. Alert to the dangers of divisiveness, the Povungnituk conference closed with a resolution calling for the creation of *one* federation which would absorb CAP and the Povungnituk sales office and be known as "Canadian Arctic Co-operatives Limited" (DIAND, 1966b:annex C). Although details had to be worked out, the committee that worked on the resolution (five delegates from the west and five from the east) considered that there would be a need for three

¹ Although the idea for separate French and English federations was presented as a recommendation of the two governments and CUC and CCQ, it appears that CUC did not agree with the proposal entirely. At one point, Staples said that he had met with the CCQ president and that it was his understanding that they both felt "French and English Canadian differences should be avoided" (DIAND, 1966b:70).

southern Canadian branches of the federation serving three northern districts -- Mackenzie (Edmonton), Eastern Arctic (Toronto), Northern Quebec (Montreal). The newly created organization would market production from all arctic co-operatives, purchase supplies, provide education and training, and co-ordinate co-op activities. The most urgent need was for a marketing service and the delegates asked that this begin immediately.

It did not, however, happen exactly as envisioned. CAP continued as a marketing agency serving the Northwest Territories, while the Povungnituk Sculptors' Society's sales office in Quebec, established in 1958, became the nucleus of a federation serving only arctic Quebec co-ops. It should be noted that the Povungnituk Sculptors' Society was an exclusive organization. Only the "best" carvers were invited to participate, a dubious foundation for a cooperative movement although an apt prefiguring of the dilemma faced by co-ops which try to be egalitarian in a competitive market situation.

It was not until 1972 that a sister federation was formed in the Northwest Territories. Ten years later, the NWT federation amalgamated with CAP which had been restructured as a co-op in 1979, and some efforts at cooperative marketing between Quebec and the NWT were instituted. The situation in the North now reflects the "proffered" provincial solution favoured by CCQ, DIAND, Quebec and, perhaps, CUC. The economic structure, the co-op, has grown up around ethnic divisions which have no historical relevance for Inuit who had been separated only by geography and who had recognized only local territorial hunting

group boundaries. The divisions imposed upon them by the co-op movement echoed the English/French split in southern Canada, and a political structure is being shaped around that split, land claims tribunals dealing with NWT and Quebec Inuit as if they were discrete populations.

Idealistic goals

Five co-ops in arctic Quebec were the founding members of La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec (FCNQ), which had highly idealistic founding objectives (FCNQ, 1967:3). They included the training of Eskimo and Indian replacements for non-native managers, and the development of a viable economy in Nouveau-Québec, defined as "the provision of minimum incomes of \$5,000 to at least sixty per cent of the families of Nouveau-Québec." It was further specified that the economy would be built on exports. To carry out its mission, FCNQ sought financial assistance from Quebec and Ottawa, requesting that the two governments turn over to them the money they had previously been spending on "advisory personnel and supporting systems placed in the field."

Like the federal government, FCNQ's goal was to reduce social assistance spending on Inuit, but with the difference that this was considered to be the only way they could become self-determining. It was recognized that Inuit lacked the capital to effect the necessary economic development but, rather than welfare hand-outs, FCNQ sought grants and loans, thereby attempting to put the co-ops on an even footing with non-native Canadian businesses. The over-all goal was self-determination, the key to which was the training of Indians and Eskimos to

run their own business, an objective which, a quarter of a century later, is no closer to realization than it was upon incorporation. Inuit manage the northern co-ops, but have not been able to assume management functions in FCNQ, for reasons which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The establishment of FCNQ was only indirectly the result of the Povungnituk conference. Peter Murdoch, general manager of FCNQ since its inception in 1967, visited Povungnituk a few months after the community had hosted the second co-op conference.² Murdoch, a Newfoundlander, had been manager of the Hudson's Bay Post there from 1955 to 1957, during which time he and Roman Catholic missionary André Steinmann laid the groundwork for a cooperative. They encouraged Inuit to pool a percentage of the money they received for carvings sold to the HBC and the pooled funds were used to purchase hunting equipment which could be used by the whole group. In an article in the Quebec government's magazine *Rencontre* (Frechet, 1987:5), Murdoch is quoted as saying that: "Within two years, they had worked a genuine miracle paying off their debts (\$25,000) and accumulating credit of \$40,000."

When Murdoch visited Povungnituk in 1966, the Inuit residents talked to him about the conference and its recommendation of a federation and asked him if he would become involved. Povungnituk naturally took the lead in such matters since it was the most powerful co-op, and its Sculptors' Society, with a sales office

² Then an employee of DIAND, he was accompanying author Farley Mowat on a cross-arctic tour.

in Quebec city, had succeeded in attracting the attention and assistance of the Conseil de la coopération du Québec and the Quebec government. It was with the help of these latter two agencies and La Fédération des caisses populaires Desjardins that FCNQ was incorporated under Quebec provincial law in May 1967 with Murdoch as general manager.³

Quebec had numerous strong motives for involving itself with Inuit in its northern regions. This handful of people, about 3,000, occupied over 50% of the territory of the province, the ownership and control of which was becoming a bone of contention between Quebec and the federal government. In addition, the co-op was providing competition to an anglo-Canadian company (HBC) in the local communities. These concrete motivations were further buttressed by strong ideological support for the co-op movement throughout the province. Before continuing with a discussion of Quebec's involvement in the Inuit co-op movement, however, I want first to talk more about FCNQ which, unlike CAP, was an umbrella organization with a global effect: economic, social and, ultimately, political.

Economic effect of FCNQ

In Quebec, as elsewhere, the most urgent need was for an organized marketing service but, in addition, FCNQ immediately instituted a broad range of development services to its member co-operatives: bookkeeping, retail store

³ The new federation began operations in the Quebec City marketing office of the society, but soon set up headquarters in Lévis, a small town across the river which was home of the first Canadian credit union.

development, education, tourism, production services and general coordination of all co-op activities. Later, it set up a travel agency, a construction service and a petroleum products distribution service.

It is commonly believed that there is an over-reliance by all co-ops on state assistance and, certainly, in the beginning, most received assistance in the form of buildings and equipment as well as technical advice and training, and most, if not all, continued to receive grants, contributions, bank loan guarantees and favourable loans from governments. An important FCNQ goal was financial self-sufficiency for the whole arctic Quebec co-op system in the belief that he who pays the piper calls the tune. In the first few years after incorporation, it received only a small grant from DIAND (\$37,000 per annum), the amount previously spent in the region for government activities taken over by FCNQ.⁴ A measure of FCNQ's success in eliminating state funding is that in 1969 DIAND provided 57.3% of its budget (in contracts and loans), but in 1976, this amount was only 5%, which meant that the co-ops were paying 95% of FCNQ's operating expenses from their own revenues.

Combined federal and provincial support to arctic Quebec co-ops from 1963 to 1978 inclusive was \$7,242,000 of which the federal government provided 42% and the provincial government 58%. Most of Quebec's input was in the

⁴ FCNQ had asked for the money DIAND would have spent providing services to the co-ops. Accordingly, the federal government's co-op development officer was withdrawn and a service contract signed with FCNQ in 1968 for \$37,000 to provide technical, managerial and advisory assistance in development and expansion of resource harvesting and arts and crafts programs, as well as accounting services and training of local staff and managers. But this was eventually terminated and the relationship with the federal government, never amicable, was severed.

form of loans, while the federal government's input was mainly in the form of grants. There was, however, *no* federal assistance provided in 1964 and 1965, a mere \$10,000 in 1966 and nothing in 1967 and 1968. This situation reflected a basic disagreement between co-op personnel and DIAND project officers as to how co-op affairs should be run. DIAND was persuaded to resume assistance in 1969 and, in 1978, federal inputs took a giant leap from a \$150,000 loan the year before (to stave off bankruptcy), to \$646,500. This was the beginning of a five-year plan to rationalize state financing of arctic co-operatives which resulted from a study of co-ops done in 1978 by the federal government's bureau of management consultants (BMC). The BMC concluded that state intervention in the arctic co-op system was necessary; for, as a result of growth and a continuing inability to raise private funds, the co-ops, in Quebec and the NWT, were desperately in need of working capital.

To everyone's surprise, the BMC held the Quebec system up as the model for what *should* have been done across the Arctic. But the Quebec co-op movement was a bitter disappointment to the federal government in that it foiled state attempts to be in control of northern development. CAP was a state project; FCNQ was a threat. Historically, FCNQ management has taken a decidedly adversarial position towards the bureaucracy. As author Boyce Richardson observed in a series of articles on northern Quebec in 1971 (July 5):

Mr. Murdoch [General Manager FCNQ]...believes the co-ops are in competition, but not with the Bay. That is straightforward, and they can meet it. He believes they are in competition with the government, which

can afford to pay higher wages than the co-op can meet, and which has the capacity to employ many people delivering water, oil, clearing garbage, making repairs, putting in houses, putting up buildings, until a whole community is engaged not in producing wealth but in supporting itself...."If we pay \$1.40 an hour, and the government can offer \$1.90, then they are competing with us."

The BMC group recommended a self-development program for co-ops to be funded by a mix of contributions and loans, with the idea that at the end of the five-year period, the co-operatives would, finally, be self sufficient.

Given FCNQ's goal of financial independence, this assistance could have been considered regressive since, in the early seventies, the affiliated Arctic Quebec co-ops had boasted of diminishing state support and increasing self-sufficiency.

The goal of financial independence has, perhaps, been somewhat modified in light of a growing recognition that state assistance to native co-ops compares unfavourably with assistance provided to Canadian industry. There is still a relative lack of social capital facilities in the North which puts business at a disadvantage. Services remain more costly in the North than in the South, and retail stores must be resupplied by expensive air freight or once yearly marine transportation. The subsidized postal rate to the North was to be increased in January 1990 with, according to FCNQ (1989:4), "disastrous consequences for Northern communities." The high cost of air transport means that the co-ops must finance huge inventories of bulky staples (flour, sugar, tinned goods) and equipment (canoes, motors, ski-doo's) which are ordered for a year ahead and

have to be paid for in advance of sales.

Inventory build-up of carvings and declining quality were problems for FCNQ as they were for CAP and, in 1978, the two agencies made a joint request to the minister of IAND for a grant to enable them to write off that portion of inventory deemed unmarketable. The grant was not forthcoming and, by 1982, in spite of its successes and the new infusion of federal funds, FCNQ was in a state of financial crisis. Carving sales had declined 41%; petroleum operations had been taken over in four communities without proper financing, and there were problems guaranteeing a loan for sealift. FCNQ met with Makivik,⁵ the Quebec government, the federal government and the National Bank in the spring of 1983, but none of these were willing or able to provide financial assistance. FCNQ's executive committee refused the bank's condition of a trust deed (FCNQ, 1984).

As the committee reported to FCNQ's board in 1984:

In the end the Federation had to work out its own financing agreement with the bank and some help from the Federal government by producing its own cash flow and sticking to it for the next few years. Hence the restrictions to purchases of carvings and new purchasing methods in order for the Inuit to be able to continue production no matter how small it might seem to provide some form of income. Restrictions of purchasing for co-op store merchandise was also made which affected all the co-ops financially.

Both Quebec and the federal government had responded to FCNQ's appeal for

⁵ Makivik is the native development corporation set up to channel monies paid to northern Quebec Inuit to settle their land claims. It will be discussed in Part IV.

funds with a study.⁶ The federal government study, done by J.K. Stager from the University of British Columbia was completed in 1982, and the Maheu-Noiseaux Report commissioned by Quebec was released in 1984. With assistance from DIAND, the federation recovered from the early eighties funding crisis, but it had to deal with new attention being focused upon it as a result of its appeal to the Quebec government. The executive committee, all Inuit, spent two weeks in the fall of 1984 going over the Maheu-Noiseaux Report (there was no Inuktitut translation provided), and there was considerable anti-Quebec feeling evident in the committee's report to the board in November that year (FCNQ, 1984:Part 3:2). In response to rumours that the Quebec government intended to tax Inuit carvers, the president, Paulosie Kasadluak, and the secretary, Harry Tulugak, had gone to Quebec. They were informed, they said, that although it isn't being enforced, the law was that Inuit carvers should pay tax and that a provincial sales tax should be charged on store sales. Kasadluak and Tulugak discussed the tax issue with the Quebec co-ops and the comments they received were reported to the directors' meeting:

⁶ Quebec had done several such studies of FCNQ, one resulting in a letter from Raymond Audet, a director of the La Fédération des Caisses Populaires Desjardins (June 26, 1969) asking for Peter Murdoch's resignation. The general manager was, Audet said, assuming too much power and hadn't familiarized himself with the co-op system: "Prior to the few occasions on which you consulted us, the decision had already been taken or else, after consultation, you did not heed at all our opinion" (p.6). The Inuit rallied around Murdoch, claiming that Steinmann (the missionary in Pov) was behind it and, indeed, within a short time, there was a complete and open rift between Murdoch and Steinmann and the Quebec government, as well as between FCNQ and CCQ. In 1984, FCNQ did some fence-mending with CCQ. Murdoch told me (telephone 21/06/84) that FCNQ's auditor, Aurél St. Amant, was in Quebec city meeting with the CCQ. "We're now back in CCQ," he added.

They felt that the Quebec government has to inquire on the cost of living in Nouveau-Quebec and make comparisons with the cost of living down south. The members felt that the Quebec government tax representatives should travel North and meet with the co-op members instead of trying to get the Federation Executive Committee to do their job of informing the people for them. The people also felt that by intending to tax the co-ops and their members, the Quebec government was trying to outmanoeuvre the proposed Inuit Self-government by leaving it no money to operate with (pp.4-5).

Relations between Quebec and FCNQ have never been stable even though, in recent years, they have cooperated on some cultural exchanges and exhibitions in Europe. In general, relations have wavered between outright hostility and a wary collaboration. Indeed, FCNQ management has deliberately attempted to play federal and provincial bureaucrats off against each other, playing the game of nationalism in which Inuit are pawns.

Being caught between Ottawa and Quebec provided an advantage for FCNQ, as did its operating philosophy which made it more adaptable than CAP. Unlike CAP, FCNQ aimed for a diversified operation from the beginning and, most important, control of producer activities. The shrewd strategy in Quebec was to capture as much of the economic action as possible, whereas CAP wanted only to deal with the art.

Art as commodity and fetish

In Quebec as in the NWT, the carving program is the major single source of personal income for Inuit. Carving was underway in several arctic Quebec communities before FCNQ came on the scene, especially those on the west coast of Hudson Bay where James Houston had visited in the late forties. Until FCNQ

was established, some relied on Canadian Arctic Producers for a marketing service, while output from Povungnituk was marketed through its Quebec City sales office. FCNQ quickly took over all marketing in northern Quebec and established carving projects in new co-ops such as Ivujivik and Sugluk. For many years, the sale of arts and crafts carried most of the burden of financing the federation and other co-op operations. But because so much depended upon it, efforts were focused more on quantity than quality, in contrast to CAP which, concerned only with marketing, focused on the development of "fine art," rather than a commercial product.

Eventually, as a result of diversification, carving became a smaller portion of total co-op operations in arctic Quebec than was the case in the NWT. In the mid-seventies, retail store sales began to generate more revenue for the system than carving and FCNQ continued to exert efforts to diversify, even setting up a finance company using surpluses from the co-ops' insurance funds.⁷ According to Murdoch (personal communication 21/06/84 at FCNQ), since claims had been only 25 per cent of premiums, the surplus was put into preferred shares and also used as a retirement fund. Murdoch confided that the real reason for the finance company was to decrease accounts receivable at the co-ops. The co-ops approved loan applications (but FCNQ could veto them), and a budget was worked out with the applicant.

⁷ At one point, FCNQ even acted as a welfare organization, establishing a voluntary tax on purchases made at the co-ops which was used as a form of insurance that could be called upon in cases of need, such as fire or when a hunter lacked equipment.

Early in the 1980s, the Government of Quebec transferred petroleum product sales previously handled by Shell Oil to FCNQ at a nominal price. This move resulted in higher profits than could be realized on other activities. By 1987, FCNQ had negotiated the purchase of Shell installations in several northern Quebec communities, using loans from the *Caisses Populaires Desjardins*, guaranteed by the *Société Québécoise de Développement des Coopératives*.

In spite of diversification, the emphasis at FCNQ remained on the turnover of carvings. To this end, an American subsidiary and showroom was incorporated in White Plains, New York in 1981 (it closed in 1988 for financial reasons). A second showroom, opened in Toronto early in 1982, became the headquarters for Tuttavik, a combined marketing operation of the NWT and Quebec co-ops, an alliance which only became possible after the NWT co-ops took over ownership of CAP and succeeded in effecting its amalgamation with Arctic Co-operatives Limited, the Northwest Territories co-op federation.

The development of art in northern Quebec continues to be only one facet of a complete range of economic development services, albeit more important because of the cultural content not present in other projects. Since store sales have assumed a major part of the financial burden and since, in the late 1980s, the supply and distribution of petroleum products amounted to over 40% of FCNQ sales, it might be speculated that arts and crafts projects will be phased out, especially in light of deteriorating quality. This is unlikely, however, given that handicraft production is one of the few ways in which Inuit can earn money to

spend in the co-op retail stores or to purchase other services. The producer/consumer linkage is vital and must, as FCNQ has always insisted, be maintained in a healthy system. It is possible also that, like the state, FCNQ will also want to retain "art" marketing for non-commercial reasons of status.

In summary, FCNQ has always been aware that power is economically based and it has managed to avoid the dependency the NWT co-op system has had on governments, receiving assistance without becoming excessively beholden. Indeed, there have been times that it has even bitten the hand(s) that fed it. FCNQ's main political strategy has been to play the Quebec provincial government off against the federal government, a game which it has played with varying degrees of success.

The Quebec-Ottawa squeeze

Quebec's interest in the Eskimo co-ops must be seen as part of a belated strategy to assert provincial sovereignty; for, as Richardson⁸ wrote (July 8, 1971):

As late as 1939 the Quebec government was denying all responsibility for the Eskimos, in fact, it was Duplessis who forced a case to the Supreme Court in a successful effort to prove that Eskimos were Indians within the meaning of the British North America Act, and therefore a federal responsibility.

The territory known as Nouveau-Quebec constitutes more than half of the province of Quebec (300,000 square miles), but is not clearly demarcated from the

⁸ Boyce Richardson's series of in-depth articles on the political situation in northern Quebec appeared in the *Montreal Star* during the summer of 1971, shortly after the northern Quebec co-ops and community councils, led by FCNQ, had requested that Quebec grant them regional government status.

rest of the province. Eskimos inhabit the coast, and Indians the interior, with some overlapping residence in Fort George and Great Whale River. Previously, Quebec's only involvement in the northern part of the province had been in scientific research. In the meantime, the federal government was providing health care, education, policing and resource development (limited though it was),⁹ services which would normally be provincial responsibilities.

It was only in the sixties that Quebec became serious about its northern regions. After a visit to Fort Chimo, René Lévesque (minister of Quebec's ministère des richesses naturelles and a Quebec nationalist destined to become a separatist premier) declared that it was urgent that Quebec assert its presence and "d'y appliquer à l'égard des autochtones une politique radicalement différente de celle que pratiquait le gouvernement fédéral" (Corporation des enseignants du Québec [CEQ], 1973:11). Laval University in Quebec City was given a grant to establish a Centre d'études nordiques and a new department of richesses naturelles, La Direction générale du Nouveau-Québec (DGNQ) was established April 8, 1963 to administer the human and natural resources of northern, or as it was called "New" Quebec. The long term objective "était toutefois d'en arriver à constituer une véritable administration locale, assumée par la population autochtone." DNGQ's goal was to set up municipalities in the North similar to those in the Quebec Laurentien district.

Not coincidentally, the involvement of Quebec in the Povungnituk co-op

⁹ The first area economic survey conducted by NANR was in Ungava in northern Quebec.

coincided with Premier Lesage's 1962 announcement that Quebec planned to take over what were then federal responsibilities in its Eskimo regions. Lesage (who had been minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for the federal government) directed René Lévesque to take an active role in the arctic Quebec co-op movement, and close links were forged with the Povungnituk Sculptor's Society, soon to become a co-op. Thérèse LeVallée, an employee of L'Office Provincial du Film, received permission directly from Lesage to work full time marketing Povungnituk arts and crafts. It was at this time as well that Senator Cyrille Vaillancourt and Raymond Audet of the Desjardins co-operative movement became involved, providing an accounting service for the fledgling co-op and establishing a Caisse Populaire in the community.

It may be that the Quebec government perceived some economic advantage in securing the cooperation of Inuit. Eric Gourdeau, head of DGNQ, announced a few months after the formation of that department that since the Eskimos, like the Indians, were psychologically and biologically the best adapted to the environmental conditions in Nouveau Quebec: "Ils constituent donc le groupe idéal sur lequel devraient s'appuyer les réalisations techniques et économiques capables de mettre à profit d'une façon valable et durable les richesses matérielles que renferme le Nouveau-Québec" (Government of Quebec, 1963:2).

A press release issued by the Povungnituk Society's Quebec office in February 1963 made Quebec's intentions for the community crystal clear: "Le village de Povungnituk peut être considéré comme le village type de tous les

villages esquimaux comme il peut devenir aussi le prototype de ce que peut faire la coopération chez les Esquimaux" (p.3). As Vallee wrote (1967b:11): "It is hoped that conspicuous success in this community will allay suspicion in others and muster support and loyalty for the province on the part of Eskimos everywhere in New Québec."

DIAND was still actively involved in northern Quebec and both governments were vying for Inuit favour (Beaulieu, 1980:16). In his short history of government intervention in northern-Quebec, Beaulieu concedes that it was only after the beginning of the "Quiet Revolution" that the Quebec government took any interest in the territory they were now referring to as Nouveau-Québec: "One third of Quebec's territory was completely subject to federal influence and Québec, intent on becoming "maitre chez lui," was fully aware of this."

It might be supposed that with FCNQ determined to create a self-sufficient economy managed by Quebec Inuit for their own benefit, and with Quebec determined to assist in these goals as well as in the preservation of the Inuit language, there would be a close ethno/economic relationship in the Quebec movement. This is, indeed, the case. Although Inuit are still not directing the co-op movement at the highest levels, and the Quebec co-ops remain without political clout, they actively promoted issues of Inuit nationalism. It is no coincidence that Lesage's goals for the cooperative movement initially coincided with those of FCNQ, given the involvement of Quebec bureaucrats and the francophone Roman Catholic missionary André Steinman.

One of the first measures taken by the Lesage government was negotiating for the replacement of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police by the Sûreté du Québec at Great Whale River and Fort Chimo in 1961. In the next two years, Quebec provincial administrators were posted in these two villages. The new Direction Générale du Nouveau-Québec, created with rather broad powers, had immediately sent agents to take their places alongside the federal agents at Wakeham Bay, Povungnituk and Inukjuak. Provincial social service benefits were offered to the Inuit and schools were established in which the first few years of instruction were given in Inuktitut, with French being phased in thereafter. Within a few years, the Quebec government had duplicated all the federal government services.

The federal government's official position was that services would be transferred to the provincial government as they were ready to provide them, and as the Inuit were ready to receive them. But, in February 1964, the federal and Quebec governments agreed that the transfer of responsibility for Nouveau-Québec would be completed by April 1970. A representative from the federal government (Bud Neville) and a representative from the Quebec government (Benoit Robitaille) visited the communities in northern Quebec to discuss the transfer with the people. They met, however, with considerable opposition. Both the Inuit and the Indians insisted that they wanted to remain under federal jurisdiction.

In 1971, a Canadian Press report quoted Jean Chrétien's spokesman who

said: "Negotiations between Ottawa and Quebec over the transfer of responsibility for about 3,000 Eskimos in Arctic Quebec are 'at a standstill.'" He stressed that the federal position was that "there will be no transfer without consultation with the Eskimos," and that "there could be no final decision until an Eskimo organization [ITC] now being formed feels ready to take its own position on any transfer and can sit at the negotiation table as an equal partner with Ottawa and Quebec."

There was to be no smooth transfer. The federal government held on for several more years, even opening a regional office in Quebec City (northern Quebec had previously been administered from an Ottawa office). Inuit made their reluctance to be administered by Quebec quite plain. As D'Anglure observed (1984:685), the Inuit distrusted the Quebec government which they called "the little government."

Inuit opposition to Quebec

Part of the anti-French sentiment in northern Quebec is undoubtedly a fall-out from the failure of Révillon Frères, the french trading company. As Richardson noted (July 8, 1971): "The Bay, according to stories I was told by old men along the Hudson Bay coast, were not particularly generous with the hunters who had dealt with Réveillon [sic] Frères....And this has gone into the folk memory as the time when "the French let us down.'" Like Vallee (1967b) and others, Richardson considers that:

What has been established is a sort of Eskimo attachment to a cultural pattern which arose from the attitudes of the English-speaking federal government, Protestant missions and the Hudson's Bay Company, as opposed to the Quebec presence, which has been recent, Catholic, French and never really part of the establishment of government and para-government powers.

So strong was the anti-French sentiment in Nouveau-Quebec that Inukjuak, to the south of Povungnituk, resisted for many years the idea of a cooperative which they considered part of a French Catholic conspiracy (see Myers, 1977a:15).

Unofficial verbatim notes (by Caleb J. Laurence) taken at a public meeting called by Neville and Robitaille in Great Whale River February 19, 1970 to discuss the transfer quote Inuk Silas Cookie as saying:

We who live in Quebec have for a long time had two governments and understand this is not good having two governments looking after one people and now we wish to have one government. We would like those who come to help us to be from the Ottawa government. Not that there is any great dislike for the government of Quebec, but we doubt their ability to look after us in the same way... (-- this our land for a long time is not making progress --) ...while the Eskimo who are not in Quebec are making great progress...[also] pupils who have been studying for a long time should not have to change their courses (p.2).

It is interesting to note that while Inuit had mounted no resistance to learning English (in fact, many saw it as a desirable acquisition), they were alarmed at the prospect of having to learn French. The Canadian Press report mentioned earlier (July 6, 1971) noted that the Commons northern development committee had reported to Parliament that "it found 'backlash' among some arctic Quebec Eskimos over the teaching of French in the provincial schools." (The article also makes the quaint observation that: "*Traditionally*, Arctic Quebec Eskimos are

Anglicans and have spoken only their own language and English," emphasis added). The committee is also reported to have observed "that if the Eskimos are to take part in any economic growth in their area, they would require a knowledge of French," and "it urged the Quebec government to improve its public relations with the Eskimo people."

Willing as they were to remain under federal jurisdiction, Inuit appear to have perceived a threat to their own cultural sovereignty insisting, it seems for the first time, that "we must take our own land in our own hands" (Cookie, in Laurence, 1970:2) Perhaps they (and the Indians) preferred the federal government as an interim authority until they could take over. As Joe Kumarluk, an Inuk, said at the 1970 meeting with Neville and Robitaille (*p.3*): "Until we understand more fully, we will be happier with the federal government being in charge."

Chrétien for the federal government and Allard for the provincial government had sent a joint letter to the Quebec Eskimos January 27, 1970 in which it was pointed out that the greatest advantage to them of the transfer was the opportunity it would provide for them "to participate fully in the social, economic and political life of the province" (an English translation from Inuktitut by Laurence, 1970:8). "It is not possible," they pointed out, "for the Eskimo people to realize the fullness of this opportunity as long as they are set aside and dealt with as a separate group within the province." The two governments had agreed to recognize religious preferences, language and cultural heritage and that

"Inuit and Indians would be consulted and [their] views sought on all of these matters."

It was also proposed in the Chrétien/Allard letter that, rather than continuing with "expensive and confusing" duplicate services, Inuit would have one set of services looked after by one administrator in each community with one school principal, and that these would be jointly administered and paid for by the two governments. This was to be "an interim measure" that "would allow the Government of Quebec more time to understand how the federal programs work, so that when the transfer takes place that government will be thoroughly familiar with them."

The Eskimos and Indians gave Neville and Robitaille a hard time. Their response at the Great Whale River meeting showed evidence of both prejudice and a new awareness of current events. Joe Kumarluk said (in Laurence, 1970:10):

I'm not here to subdivide the northern country. I'm merely saying that the Indian and Eskimo people in the north who live in this land should have deeds to their land and after this is settled then decide which government should provide services here.

It is interesting to note that this was an occasion, perhaps the first, which united Indians and Eskimos (at least in Great Whale River). Both were entitled to vote in federal, but not in provincial elections and, as David Mast, a Cree Indian, said (in Laurence, p.14): "Because we are not represented in the provincial government we do not have much to say as to what is to be done because we are

not recognized."

Joe Kumariuk (p.23) brought up the fact that Quebec wanted to separate from Canada and said that northern Quebec did not want to go along with this. Robitaille admitted that there were:

...some in Quebec who are not satisfied with the government in Ottawa. But it is a very small minority, who do not want to be part of Canada. But this is not only in Quebec. In British Columbia also some people want to be part of the United States and not part of Canada.

Apart from the larger political issues, the native people were concerned about the concrete results of a transfer to provincial jurisdiction. Indians and Eskimos feared they would lose federal government jobs, pensions and social welfare, and that their children would have to be educated in French.¹⁰ As Josie Tookalook, a DGNQ employee, said, "we worry that people who can't talk French won't get a job" (in Laurence, p.30). Silas Cookie shrewdly recognized that "The reason the Quebec government is so interested is because they want the land and the wealth contained in it" (p.27). He also expressed the fear that Quebec was too poor and wouldn't have the funds required to provide assistance to the northern people.

Neville told Silas he was mistaken and that DGNQ was "working for the people" (p.28). He reminded him that Quebec was paying widows' allowances: "How many widows give back their cheques?" But Noah Sheshamush (Cree) responded with: "...we all know that we pay taxes and these taxes are used for these things. So we are not getting these things from the Quebec government for

¹⁰ These fears were deliberately played upon by federal field staff opposed to the transfer. Perhaps they were afraid they would lose their own jobs.

free." The native people had come a long way since Captain Moodie brought them greetings from the monarch and distributed free underwear. Robitaille was now hard pressed to convince the Great Whale River people that their taxes did not cover the cost of the assistance they received. He presented figures to prove this, but Kumarluk's rejoinder was: "This is help given to all Canadians under Canadian law."

As in Great Whale River, throughout Arctic Quebec Inuit allegiance remained stubbornly attached to the federal system. Quebec's attempts at establishing services had the effect only of reinforcing anti-French sentiment. The issue was one of some contention for several years, but has been resolved, formally at least, under the provisions of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement which was signed in 1975 between the native population and the governments of Quebec and Canada. Under the agreement, Inuit are now in charge of providing services to their own communities. A regional government (Kativik) and an economic development agency (Makivik) have been set up, creating a new conflict between Makivik and the co-operatives whose roles are perceived by some to overlap. Three arctic Quebec communities -- Povungnituk, Sugluk and Ivujivik -- representing one third of the population, took a stand against the agreement, refusing to participate in the terms of the settlement. They have been supported in this by FCNQ which views Makivik as a rival for hegemony in northern Quebec. But I shall have more to say about this conflict in Part IV. The important point here is that although, previously, divisions between

Quebec and NWT Inuit were no greater than those dictated by geography, Quebec's intervention in the co-op movement succeeded in creating divisiveness among Inuit, both locally and nationally.

Competition between NWT and Quebec co-ops

The federal/provincial split in southern Canada was, as we have seen, deliberately transposed to arctic Quebec where it was supported by FCNQ management and the missionary in Povungnituk as well as by Quebec bureaucrats and the CCQ.

Not only was the Quebec movement anti-English and anti-federal government, it was also anti-Anglican, the three being viewed as a package. This is clearly revealed in an incident in 1959 described in a candid memo from Ben Sivertz, director of DIAND, to the deputy minister (DIAND, 1959d). Col. George Cavey of Birks Ottawa, one of the first major retailers of Inuit art, made arrangements to purchase carvings from Povungnituk when the supply from the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian Handicrafts Guild was insufficient. Cavey provided assistance with free packing materials and air transportation and deposited substantial advances in the Povungnituk Society's bank account. The tenor of the memo is that Cavey was altruistic beyond the call of profits. Indeed, the colonel was asked by Steinmann to become a member of the society's advisory board. Apparently motivated only by altruism, Cavey conceived the idea of providing Canadian churches with carvings to enable them to conduct sales and raise funds for arctic mission work: "Birks would make little or nothing out of these arrangements" and "although Col. Cavey has made it clear that he is not an

Anglican, he made arrangements with the Rector of an Anglican Church in Ottawa for a sale in September" (p.2).

Eugene Henry, another member of the Povungnituk Society's advisory board and its business manager, vetoed Cavey's plans "on the grounds that the R.C. Church would not contribute carvings to sales which would solely benefit Anglican Missions." Presumably, however, Birks was *buying* the carvings from the North and, presumably, they were not the property of the Catholic mission. Sivertz confides in his memo to the deputy minister that Henry had dictated a confidential note (no further details are given) in which "he acknowledged that Birks might make an argument along these lines: the Catholic Church is making its money on the north and therefore the Anglican Church might make it in the south." Sivertz expresses alarm since:

We understood that this was to be a co-operative at Povungnetuk in which no church would take a part beyond advice to the Eskimos concerned and some assistance in getting the charter for them. We were not aware of any profits going to the R.C. Church. Unless Mr. Henry has inadvertently misrepresented the situation (which may well be) we might expect real trouble from the Anglican Church to which most of the carvers belong.

Cavey looked to DIAND for advice, but Sivertz wrote: "We have repeatedly declined to comment..., saying that it was a matter between Birks and the churches concerned." Cavey finally abandoned his plans for church sales. Sivertz comments further (p.3) that members of the Catholic Church had told them of "their plans for a network of Government co-operatives similar to the one at Povungnetuk," adding:

We cannot help feeling, however, that if there are possibilities of denominational problems arising in the marketing of Eskimo carving, we should encourage secular co-operatives among the Eskimos and so inform the church authorities.

The remarkable thing about this memo is that it was based on little more than gossip -- "some members of the RC church told us" -- and Henry's entirely unsubstantiated allegation. It is evidence of the entangled loyalties Inuit were being forced to adopt. Church and state were wrangling for dominion over Inuit, sometimes allied (Catholics and Quebec), and sometimes at loggerheads (Catholics and the federal government). These conflicts were embodied in the agencies which came to represent the co-ops: CAP and FCNQ. Cap was a handmaiden of the federal government, but although FCNQ was intended to do the bidding of the Quebec government, its domination by Murdoch prevented this. Strenuous but futile, efforts were exerted for several years to purge FCNQ of anglophones, but the co-op federation has proven to be equal to most challenges, fending off attacks from all quarters -- Ottawa, Quebec and, eventually, the North. Partly, this is due to the single-minded conviction of the general manager and his ability to manipulate a situation in which there are many vested interests. He has managed to play governments off against each other and his facility in Inuktitut and his ability to organize Inuit enabled him to dominate the arctic Quebec movement. He is, however, merely playing a role, the terms and conditions of which are not of his making nor entirely under his control as is clear from the chinks in co-op hegemony made by the new Inuit organizations resulting from land

claims negotiations. FCNQ is an economic structure with a strong ideological appeal, which its staff has used to advantage but, although it exerted political influence for awhile, it failed to legitimate activity in this domain. FCNQ operated for many years as an "underground government,"¹¹ eventually to be challenged by legitimate political entities created by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

FCNQ fails to legitimate its power

It was an early objective of FCNQ to expel the federal government's projects officers from arctic Quebec and to have the northern projects run entirely by Inuit. It should be noted that, like the federal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories, Quebec tried, although with less success, to assume a hands-on role in the production and marketing of Inuit art. It made few inroads because FCNQ kept tight control on production and, also, DIAND took certain measures which prevented Quebec from succeeding, some of which have been mentioned. CAP, it will be remembered, had to rely upon government field officers to organize production.

FCNQ's linking of production and sales was a shrewd economic strategy, but it also accounted for its success in organizing the arctic Quebec population to the point that it *could* function as an "underground government." In its simplest equation, carving inventories at FCNQ's distribution centre were used to finance

¹¹ I believe this expression was first used by Thomas Sulluk (in Nortext, 1980a:5), who referred to "those co-ops in Quebec" as being "like an underground government."

the purchase of supplies for northern co-op retail stores. Also, northern Quebec co-ops have always had a more overt ideological content than those in the NWT. No doubt this stems from the involvement of Steinman and the use made of the movement by the province of Quebec to further its own nationalist aspirations. Murdoch and Steinman, friends at first, promoted the co-op as an evolutionary form, the natural successor to camp organization and the logical vehicle to bring Inuit into a state of equal participation in the modern world. As Murdoch told Frechet (1987:6): "The idea was that the Inuit would gradually take charge of their economic system, then their territory, their education and, finally, their political system." Co-ops were touted as a way for Inuit "to catch up with the twentieth century" and, at the same time, to regain their self-sufficiency. This was a message with great emotional appeal for people just beginning to realize and regret its loss.

FCNQ failed, however, to legitimate its power. Until the late seventies, it was the only organized voice Inuit had, but the federal government never treated it as a spokesman for Inuit. Instead, bureaucrats promoted the relatively powerless community councils, token bodies at best. Steered by federal government field staff, the councils made decisions about loose dogs and garbage disposal, but were uninvolved in the larger issues of game management, education, land and resource use, or government. In 1971, seeing an opportunity, FCNQ instigated a coalition of the community councils and the co-ops to lobby the Quebec government for regional government status in Arctic Quebec. At a press

conference following a joint meeting of councils and co-ops in Quebec city organized by FCNQ, it was announced that the Inuit wanted to work with Quebec to achieve regional government, to be part of the normal political structure of that province. Josepie Padlayat from Sugluk, a trainee at FCNQ and much involved in the regional government movement, said (in Richardson, July 8, 1971):

If we are limited to operating co-ops only we won't be able to progress. I am hopeful we can obtain real power to give us real control over our economy. But these things won't happen if we just stand still. Things will not get better this way. If we keep acting like a child who is much loved and given things to stop him from crying by the government, then we can't expect to have certain legitimate powers. No wonder that at present we even sleep in houses that belong to the government.

Perceiving the necessity of making a political connection if it were to succeed in controlling the destiny of the arctic Quebec population, the co-ops, under Murdoch's guidance, had forged a close alliance with the community councils, collecting a voluntary tax on co-op sales for the work of the councils. In a letter to IAND minister Jean Chrétien (FCNQ, 1971b:3), Murdoch pointed out that in 1970, the co-ops collected \$10,000 - \$15,000 in Arctic Quebec which was turned over to the councils. "Previously," he wrote, "the Community [councils] were totally dependent for money, and hence, for status and authority, on your Department." He probably didn't need to point out to Mr. Chrétien that in southern Canada: "The economic sector finances the government sector, and each depends on the other for support to ensure its own longevity and rate of efficient expansion." Expecting, it seems, to receive a pat on the back for the co-ops' collecting of a voluntary tax to support the community councils, he rather naively

pointed out that:

With this new development, basic concepts, *for the first time*, of normal political-economic interdependencies were meaningfully introduced in local Eskimo communities. And this introduction was accomplished *on the initiatives of the co-ops* (emphasis in original).

The letter was essentially a complaint that the state was giving authority to a newly formed state-funded "Eskimo Association" [the reference must be to Inuit Tapirisat of Canada just then being formed] to decide whether or not FCNQ should get its \$37,000 grant from DIAND that year. He seems not to have been aware that, ideology to the contrary, there *was* a rationale for keeping political and economic power separate in northern Quebec.

Although the regional government movement succeeded in stimulating debate and attracting media attention to the cause of Inuit self determination, it did not happen. With the cooperation of renegade "animateurs" working for Quebec's Direction générale du Nouveau-Québec, a bill was drafted and translated, but it was never presented to Quebec's National Assembly. Also, after the Quebec meeting and press conference, Inuit prohibited federation staff from attending the follow-up meeting of the community councils and co-ops held in Inukjuak. Presumably this was a response to widespread suspicions that FCNQ, specifically Murdoch, was manipulating Inuit.

The Inukjuak meeting was, however, attended by provincial and federal officials, and it is not coincidental that it resulted in the formation of an entirely new organization, the Northern Quebec Inuit Association (NQIA). Inuit from

Inukjuak and Fort Chimo (federal employees) were recruited as leaders for the new association and provided with funds from the federal government to travel to all northern Quebec communities to enlist Inuit as members. Many Inuit were confused and angry at this turn of events, but it was quite beyond their control. Once again, they were to learn by doing. As Richardson wrote in (July 8, 1971):

The Eskimos have been entirely confused by all this. There is no doubt they pulled back from the regional government proposal because they began to feel that it had been pushed forward by Peter Murdoch ("it did not come from the people," as they say)...on the one hand accusations are flying about Murdoch and the co-op movement manipulating the Eskimos on behalf of the Quebec government; and on the other, it is flatly stated by many people that the Inuit [sic] Association has been manipulated by the federal civil service.

The federal government's initial reaction to the regional government proposal had been to urge Inuit to join the provincial Indian Association of Quebec, a move that would have been welcomed by Quebec Indians (then pressing their own territorial claims within Quebec) since inclusion of Inuit would have extended their claim to include most of Quebec's territory. As Richardson put it (July 8):

To further complicate matters, the Indians of Quebec Association has shoved its oars into these waters: they have for some time been trying to get Quebec Eskimos into their association and the Eskimos have been represented at quite a number of recent Indian association meetings.

When the Inuit refused to join with the Indians, federal government officials conceived the notion of providing them with their own, Eskimo, association, thereby forestalling Quebec's take-over of the North. Upon reflection, it seems clear that the regional government proposal failed because of federal government opposition, but also because of Inuit indecisiveness which allowed them to be used

as pawns in the ongoing Quebec/Ottawa struggle. Quebec *could* have tipped the scale, but appears to have been immobilized. The province was at this time actively pressing *its* territorial claims against the federal government and negotiating a take-over of the northern regions from Ottawa. Given the opposition of Inuit to this take-over, it could be supposed that Quebec would not welcome an Inuit request to be included in the provincial polity. Perhaps it all happened too quickly, or as I shall discuss later, perhaps Quebec was unwilling to make drastic moves at a time when it was hatching a massive resource development scheme in James Bay, a scheme which would require federal support.

The failure of Inuit to unite on the issue has been cited by co-op advisors as the factor *most* responsible for failure of the regional government movement and, in one sense, this is true. Their lack of unity and organization permitted them to be organized in ways which furthered the state's project. There were, I think, two reasons for their lack of organized resistance. In the first place, as Williamson (1977:175) says: "...there was very little sense of relationship with the whole of Eskimo society." In the second place, although they were attracted by the idea of "being in charge," they were understandably unable to conceive of themselves as being responsible for carrying on. Although they were ideologically prepared, they lacked the security which comes from experience and economic stability. Uneasy in towns which had a history of only 10 to 20 years and possessing only weak links (through FCNQ) to outside support systems, Inuit were

afraid of losing the state services they had grown to rely upon. They *said* they needed more time to talk about it and to arrive at a consensus (the traditional mode of decision-making), but there was no time. Predictably, land and energy concerns forced the issue. While the Inuit were trying to make up their collective mind whether to continue lobbying for regional government status or to go along with the government's proposal to set up "their own" Inuit association, the world moved on. It was a decisive moment for the co-op. It had failed to legitimate its power.

Chapter Eleven

The Federal Government as Promoter and Gatekeeper of Inuit Art

Now that the main actors in the co-operative movement have been introduced, it is time to pick up an important thread in this story; namely, the involvement of federal bureaucrats in Inuit art. It might be supposed that DIAND's involvement in art would end with the establishment of the co-op marketing agencies, but that was not the case. It continued to play a role, albeit altered, as the co-ops gradually took charge of their own affairs.

Relegated to a marginal role in marketing, DIAND continued to exert influence through the awarding of grants and loans and through the federally-sponsored Canadian Eskimo Arts Council. The council, which grew out of the ad hoc committee set up to advise Cape Dorset on its 1959 print collection, advised on venues of sale and manner of presentation. Continuing, until 1989, to approve prints for sale, it enabled NANR to exercise some control over marketing, but not directly.

The Canadian Eskimo Art Council (CEAC) was at first directly involved in marketing Cape Dorset prints, but after the establishment of CAP and FCNQ, its role was reduced to selecting prints to be included in annual collections from Dorset and other printmaking cooperatives: Pangnirtung, Baker Lake, Povungnituk and Holman Island. Approved print editions were blind-stamped with the council's chop which was a mark of approval, guaranteeing, as Goetz puts

it (1987:18) that they were "quality-controlled original works of art created by Inuit." In the process of fulfilling this function, the council made many enemies. It was perceived to favour Dorset,¹ and Povungnituk in northern Quebec resented and rejected its advice and eventually withdrew completely from involvement with it.

A short history of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council

It was James Houston who suggested to NANR, in 1956 when the Cape Dorset Crafts Centre was established but not yet incorporated as a co-op, that an Ottawa committee be established to assess the quality of crafts being produced. People were invited to serve on such a committee, but they never met. It was only in 1960 when the first prints were ready for sale that an ad hoc committee chaired by Don Snowden (chief of the industrial division, NANR)² assembled to discuss pricing and distribution. This led to formation of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Committee which first met September 15, 1961 under the chairmanship of Dr. Evan Turner, director of Montreal's Museum of Fine Arts. The committee was to be similar to the National Industrial Design Council. Goetz (1986:60) writes:

¹ CEAC was identified by the Quebec cooperative movement as being an arm of Canadian Arctic Producers. The Council used to meet at CAP and space was provided at CAP (paid for by DIAND) for the council's secretariat.

² The fact that this committee was chaired by the civil servant in charge of developing a native economy is quite remarkable, given that he had no expertise in art. In later years, he was reappointed to the council as were several other non-art experts, including the general manager of Arctic Co-operatives Limited, former Roman Catholic missionary, Andrew Goussaert. The muddled terms of reference for the CEAC were evident from the beginning. It cannot be assumed that these were "concerned, impartial and expert advisors" as the Bureau of Management Consultants (1979:7) noted they were intended to be.

Snowden explained that the ad hoc committee of which he had been chairman was now dissolved. It was the view of the Department that an independent committee operating on a permanent basis could play a useful role in advising Eskimo Cooperatives and the Department on various aspects of Inuit art on which it was desirable that professional administrators not pass judgement (see also BMC, 1979:10).

The real reason was probably, as Goetz suggests, that DIAND could not "be seen to be entering the marketplace directly in a very high profile area." The committee quickly took on what she calls "an aggressive stance," criticizing "the distribution and marketing practices in place and accusing the Department of interference in their work."

It had originally been intended that CEAC would continue to play a direct role in promotion and marketing, but this became unworkable once CAP was incorporated in 1965. Still, it was envisioned that the committee would play an important role in advising the co-ops on marketing and promotion. In later years, The Eskimo Arts Council, the committee renamed, tried hard to dissociate itself from marketing (which was becoming a can of worms), but it was effectively making the ultimate marketing decision of what could or could not be sold by awarding or withholding its seal of approval on prints presented by the co-op-owned printmaking shops. The evaluation report on CEAC by the federal government's Bureau of Management Consultants (1979:28) pointed out that: "Successive Councils were convinced that quality and marketability were corollaries..." Noting that CEAC tried to "dissociate" itself from marketing problems in spite of some members being appointed on the basis of marketing expertise, the BMC (p.17) quoted from a cabinet memorandum from the minister

of Northern Affairs, Arthur Laing, (Nov 5, 1964):

The Council would use its knowledge and experience to further the well-being of the various Eskimo Communities in the Canadian North by maintaining the quality of the arts and crafts being released to the local and international art market; by advising on marketing and promotion of Eskimo arts; and by considering programs for future development of native arts of the Arctic. The Council would, of course, work in close co-operation with marketing experts in the Department of Northern Affairs.

Nonetheless, in 1968-69, CEAC's members were advised by the chair: "We must keep the art market in our minds all the time. Council members are involved and enmeshed in the art market" (BMC, 1979:22). This was a prelude to recommending to the minister the establishing of arts and crafts warehousing and display centres in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, Paris and New York.

As we saw in chapter 8, DIAND officials struggled to keep control over the marketing of stone cut prints, even at the risk of alienating the HBC with which bureaucrats had previously cooperated in the marketing of Inuit art. The following observation made by the Bureau of Management Consultants (1979:9) helps explain the bureaucracy's interest and why it continued even after the organization of the co-op distribution agencies:

It became apparent at the beginning of the study that successive Ministers and Councils were genuinely concerned with developing and nurturing a unique 'national' art form, which, in some elusive way, was tied in with a developing Canadian consciousness and identity. (It is no accident that the concept of Canadian sovereignty in the North was developed during the same period as Inuit art). Thus it should come as no surprise that many things were *expected* of Council, which were never specifically stated...

CEAC served as a buffer between the bureaucracy and the co-ops as well as to legitimate the art form, but this is only retrospectively discernible, since there was

no clearly formulated policy. In an April 14, 1959 memorandum for the deputy minister concerning "Marketing of Eskimo Stone Cuts," the chief of the Arctic Division (Sivertz) refers to "the present confused situation which has occurred through the rapid emergence of this new activity before the administrative arrangements could be designed to meet it" (DIAND, 1959c:3). There appears to have been a genuine desire to do "the right thing." As reported in CEAC Minutes (April 18, 1963, in BMC, 1979:17), it was considered:

...critically important...at this stage to avoid the pitfalls which have overtaken other forms of primitive art in this country and elsewhere. The main requirement is constant quality control such as can only be given by an independent and disinterested group of experts.

Although the council was savagely criticized over the years of its existence, its role in establishing a sophisticated and successful marketing strategy for Inuit art is undisputed. Marketing practices advocated by CEAC were utilized to advantage by Canadian Arctic Producers which focused on selling "fine art" to top galleries worldwide. Although getting into the top galleries sometimes meant selling on consignment, adding a heavier financing load to the already overburdened co-op operation, it was considered worthwhile to do so in terms of enhanced prices and prestige. Alma Houston, who became CAP's art director and who was, for many years also a member of CEAC, told me (interview 1980):

There is nothing unusual about the standard we set for the marketing of Eskimo art. The only *unusual* thing was that we took this approach with *native* art. We decided at the beginning that we would handle it in the same way the best art anywhere is handled. These were the standards that were common in the art world. We'd go to Florida, for instance, even before CAP was started, and set up exhibitions in the best places, the Tampa Art Museum for instance. These were cultural exhibitions, not

selling exhibitions, and we'd have the support of the most influential people. They'd invite five hundred people or so to a fancy reception. Among all the people invited, there would usually be at least one dealer who would ask me if they could handle Eskimo art. I would go and look at their gallery and we would talk about the possibility of their selling Eskimo work. We were aiming to get into the top galleries, places where people like Mrs. Vanderbilt would go to shop.

Alma Houston attributes the high standards set for Inuit art to the Eskimo Art

Committee:

They set the standards...Allan Jarvis (former Director of the National Gallery), Paul Arthur, Evan Turner and Jim [Houston] were members....The [Cape Dorset] co-op asked for John Robertson and Cathy Harrison...a group of knowledgeable people to come together in an informal way to advise on prints....So from the beginning we had sophistication.

It is generally agreed that CAP was instrumental in making Inuit art an elitist product and one could be even more specific than that in attributing this result to the overlapping influence of the two Houstons, first in DIAND's industrial division, then in CAP and the Canadian Eskimo Art Council. Credit should go as well to the earlier efforts of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in Quebec which had insisted that Inuit work be treated as fine art rather than as a craft or souvenir item as usually happens with ethnic handiwork. Alice Lighthall, the director of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, had warned government personnel against commercializing Eskimo art as they had done with Indian art, and the *Montreal Star* (March 26, 1963, in Watt 1987b:20) reported a comment by Dr. Evan Turner, CEAC chair: "Eskimo art, far from falling off, is of 'astonishing' quality -- but corruption, like Arctic frost-bite, is an ever-present menace." As Watt (1987b:20) noted, there was a general fear that "we would be clumsy and destroy it."

The guild was, itself, not immune from attack. According to a newspaper report (March 1, 1958, in Watt 1987a:18), Professor George Swinton remarked that: "Aided by 'misguided' missionaries and 'pretentious' directors of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Northern Affairs Officers were "adopting policies that will exterminate the Eskimo in five years, let alone his art." Swinton is also reported to have said that artists were being told what to make and not to carve legends "because it was contrary to what the missionaries wanted."

A warning of a rather different sort was sounded five years later by James Houston (*Montreal Star*, January 18, 1963, in Watt 1987a:18) who was concerned at the high prices being paid for Inuit prints which, at \$100 each, were more than Picasso would receive. Ironically, considering the great effort expended to protect and promote the art, Houston was afraid that it was *too* successful. It was pouring hundreds of thousands of dollars into the economy, but, said Houston, if the buyers "encourage the Eskimo to make thousands of prints and carvings, they'll get them, with resultant deterioration in quality." The article continued:

Underlining his point, [Houston] said that only three or four Canadian artists live on painting. The rest teach. Nobody expects a Canadian artist to be able to buy a car out of the proceeds of painting -- but an Eskimo is expected to buy his rifle from his art. "It's asking a lot to expect people to be that productive," he said. "The Florentines lived off art. Who else?"

While it received credit for its role in making Inuit art a success, CEAC's gate-keeping function was also heavily criticized as a vestige of colonialism.

CEAC: The target of criticism

Noting in 1979 that it was "now apparent that there were misgivings about

Council's self-declared authorities and its extraordinary influence as the major authority on Inuit graphic art," the BMC stressed (p.25) that: "The key to understanding the historical role of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council is accepting that its mandates and frames of reference came after the fact."

The council had been formed to advise printmaking co-ops on annual graphics collections but, in 1974, it was reorganized as an advisory council to the minister on matters of quality control, promotion, instruction and protection of Eskimo art. CEAC was not "theoretically" a regulatory agency but "it became one," observed the BMC (1979:30). It had no formal power to impose sanctions, but effectively accomplished this through withholding its seal of approval and the leverage it exerted on funding from DIAND for workshops, advisors and catalogues. As the BMC noted (1979:31):

It must be stressed that, at no time, did the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council have specific authority to pass binding judgements on the quality of Inuit art and either withhold or permit works of art to be sold. Nor did it have any legal right to attempt to establish a closed market, control editions, prices, outlets, vet publications, or otherwise impose sanctions against the sale or distribution of Inuit art or prints.

It could be concluded that the CEAC was a front for the bureaucracy which used it to keep the co-ops and their distribution agencies toeing the line and to ensure that the state continued to monitor the sale of Eskimo prints. Nonetheless, and in spite of the several criticisms it noted, the Bureau of Management Consultants credited CEAC with the promotional and marketing success of Inuit art, at least with regards to prints, and recommended that its influence be extended to *all* Eskimo arts and crafts. As the consultants pointed out (1979:37), CAP and La

Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec (which generally disregarded advice from CEAC) were both utilizing "the same basic distribution concept developed and refined by the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council in its first years of operation;" namely, "the public art gallery system and selected dealers to handle Inuit prints." BMC gave CEAC full credit for the success of Inuit prints (1979:58):

Many criticisms can be levelled at the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council: its paternalism, communication difficulties, its self-declared authorities and art-market aesthetics. Yet, over the period studied, it handled Inuit prints (as well as encouraging other art forms) with a success unparalleled in 20th century art.

And they add: "It also contributed something else of inestimable value: an enriched consciousness and identity." This is, however, rather difficult to credit, given CEAC's lack of involvement in or understanding of what Goetz (1986:61) refers to as "northern economic hardships" and its lack of success in establishing any northern links.³

DIAND's industrial division and, later, the Inuit Art Section, were the powers behind CEAC. The division considered it deserved credit itself for promoting Inuit art at a high level; for, not only did its bureaucrats intervene to prevent the sale of the early Dorset prints through the Hudson's Bay Company department stores but, as Goetz points out (1986:50), they organized several

³ As Goetz points out (1986:61): "The naiveté of this first committee in matters of northern economic hardships is evident in a letter of the Chairman, Evan Turner, to members of the committee and departmental officials. He stated his concern that greatly increased income through art would have grave implications in Cape Dorset, that a major change of income would endanger the source of conviction behind the art." This must, she says, have seemed "strange thinking" to "an administration concerned with keeping a group of people from dying of starvation and disease."

successful exhibitions. The presentation of the first annual print collection at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts involved a formal dinner attended by several dignitaries including the minister and: "This precedent set the tone for subsequent years and exhibits became a vehicle for public appearances and speech-making by Ministers of the Department." Goetz concludes (1986:51) that "promotional exhibits directly related to development and marketing were the primary consideration of the Department at the time."

CEAC and Quebec: The marketing of Eskimo art becomes a political issue

A short digression is appropriate here to explain an extraordinary event having to do with CEAC and the Quebec printmaking community of Povungnituk. Spurred by the success of the Cape Dorset printmaking project, the Povungnituk Sculptors' Society began printmaking in 1961 under the guidance of Gordon Yearsley. Considered upstarts by what could be referred to as the Eskimo print establishment (comprised of bureaucrats and members of CEAC), a large proportion of their second year print production was rejected by CEAC causing a French-English incident which involved the premier of Quebec. As Goetz observed (1987:18):

In just three months, forty-eight images were produced.... Those involved with Cape Dorset's successful beginnings were afraid that the haste with which the Povungnituk prints were produced and marketed would have adverse effects on collector acceptance of Inuit prints in general.

Povungnituk's response to the rejection of its prints by CEAC, was to refuse to acknowledge the council's presumed authority and to arrange for the Quebec premier to issue a press release complaining of discrimination against the Quebec

co-op. A confidential memo from the director to the acting administrator of the Arctic (March 13, 1964, DIAND 1964b) expressed...

...discouragement at the misinformation which is being passed to that community [Povungnituk] in connection with the work of the Canadian Eskimo Art Committee. It is beyond us why someone immediately got on the radio to Povungnituk to describe with apparent malice what the Committee had done. The Committee had NOT rejected any of the Povungnituk prints; it did, however, believe that, in the long-term interests of the market for Povungnituk prints, not all 85 of them should be placed on the market this year. The Committee's first suggestion was placing about 57. On being told this, Mr. Tinkl [art advisor to the project] angrily telephoned Quebec and seemingly misrepresented the situation.

According to the information in this memo, Tinkl was eventually conciliated by committee member M.F. Feheley, and agreed to three or four adjustments in selection. Feheley is also reported to have urged Tinkl to solicit sales manager Thérèse LeVallée's cooperation, but when Tinkl called her, he was informed that "things had gone too far to stop" (in memo to the minister, DIAND, 1964a:2). She also "implied that, at a meeting to be held today, Friday, January 31, Quebec would probably take over the marketing of all graphic art produced within the province" (DIAND, 1964a:3). At the time this memo was written, the results of that meeting were unknown, but the director considered that if it turned out as LeVallée predicted: "The consequences could be serious in the extreme. There is no reason to believe that Quebec would stop at the marketing of graphic art." This view seems extreme to us now, but is in keeping with the national importance attached to Inuit art. As noted in the director's memo to the minister (p.2):

While we shall never know the extent to which the events which followed are attributable to the upset emotions of Mr. Tinkl or Miss LeVallee, the fact is that Miss LeVallee immediately telephoned Mr. Levesque.

Somewhere along the line, we are given to understand that the Committee's decisions on the technical merit of certain stencils became associated with English domination.

When Povungnituk decided to go ahead and sell its prints (at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto), CEAC issued a press release (February 6, 1964) headed "Work by Eskimos of the Povungnituk region will go on the market this year without the sanction of the Canadian Eskimo Art Committee." This was to indicate that prints not bearing the seal of approval, were of dubious value.

This was not the first, nor the last, time that Quebec-Ottawa tensions were exploited by the Quebec co-op movement. In 1963, Steinman had requested a five-month extension of Tinkl's contract with DIAND, saying that he had talked with Premier Lesage in Montreal and, if the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs would not fund an advisor to POV, the Quebec government would (DIAND, 1963a). Although DIAND did not want to, it was decided that "at the present time, it may be wise to continue operation of this art society outside the sponsorship of Quebec."

There was a lot at stake here; namely, federal control of the marketing of Inuit art. In his March 13, 1964 memo (DIAND, 1964b:2), the director lamented the "break up of what all agreed was a sound print marketing system."

Povungnituk was selling carvings, he said, in discount houses, souvenir shops, Kresge's *etc.*, and: "Already the image of Povungnituk carvings is suffering from the kind of reputation that stems simply from their places of sale." The fear was that "this same reputation" would begin "to attach to all Eskimo art..." There was

also a fear that Quebec would take over the marketing of car and other products as well. As noted in an earlier memo for the deputy minister to the minister (January 31, 1964a):

Now it would seem that there is a real possibility that Eskimo arts and crafts, and other Eskimo products, may become a political instrument. The damage to the entire Eskimo economy can well be imagined...Until the intentions of Quebec are clear, it is difficult for us to make specific recommendations in the matter of Eskimo art. The stakes seem far too high, both in financial and psychological terms, simply to write off Eskimo art, or reduce it to the level of a cheap craft.

There was clearly a generalized feeling that Povungnituk carvers had received poor advice. Even Yearsley, who worked for the co-op, reported at a meeting in Montreal, February 16, 1962 (DIAND, 1962a:1) that "he felt that the carvers at Povungnetuk had been subjected to 'outside' influences and as a result their carvings had been highly stylised." Purchasing at this time was done by Eskimos, but earlier influences had been the Hudson's Bay Company managers, especially Peter Murdoch, who was to become general manager of La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec, as well as Father Steinman, neither of whom, it was agreed, had "an eye for art."

It is difficult now to credit the seriousness with which this situation was treated by both levels of government and other agencies. Yet another actor came on the scene in 1963 when Stuart Williams of the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada wrote to Dr. Evan Turner, CEAC chair and director of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, about "the growing concern on the part of many persons interested in the preservation of native Canadian art that a considerable quantity

of Eskimo sculpture coming out of the Arctic during the past two years is lacking in quality of workmanship" (Indian-Eskimo Association, 1963:1). It was Williams' view that: "In some communities, Eskimos are producing carvings on a quantitative basis, rather than qualitative, simply because their total output is accepted without question for sale in the south." He was referring, obviously, to Povungnituk which was then producing 50% of the carvings being sold. He added: "This, in opposition to such communities where sound advice from whites, has resulted in self-imposed standards of quality," obviously a reference to Cape Dorset where the Houstons and their successor, Terry Ryan, worked closely with DIAND and CEAC to exert quality control.

Another problem raised by Williams was the increasing numbers of "questionable" retail outlets "handling small carvings of dubious quality." He called for a fact finding group to be sponsored by the Indian-Eskimo Association to "prepare a detailed study of the quality control and marketing practises presently in effect," and to "serve as the basis for a proposed course of action." In conclusion, he refers to "the enormity of the problem" and wonders how "effective any one group can be in proposing a marketing and quality control program which can be put into effect to the satisfaction of the majority of native and white groups concerned."

Attempts at quality control

Perhaps it was in response to Williams' letter as well as other calls to "do something about the carvings" that R.A.J. Phillips wrote a draft memo on Eskimo

art a few months later (DIAND, 1963d), in which it was pointed out (p.2) that
CEAC:

...would like to take some positive measures which would contribute to the maintenance of standards in sculpture. Obviously it cannot treat carvings in the same way as prints, simply because of the difficulties of collection. It could, however, if it had the resources, do more about keeping in touch with carving areas, and talking to carvers about their standards and their aspirations in relation to markets and other commercial considerations.

CEAC submitted a plan to the minister in 1968 in which it proposed to establish "quality control over the selection and distribution of Inuit sculpture" but, like many other CEAC recommendations concerning quality, it "went unanswered" (BMC, 1979:32). The council never had much impact on carving standards "although concerns for maintenance of quality, overproduction, marketing and the threat of imitations were noted consistently" (Goetz, 1986:63).

There are obvious reasons why CEAC succeeded in controlling prints, but not carvings. The sheer volume of carvings and the wide range in quality (from souvenir to fine art) were significant constraints. CEAC's most successful impact on sculpture resulted from *Sculpture of the Inuit: Masterworks of the Canadian Arctic*, an exhibition it organized in 1971. Alma Houston was quoted in a *Business Quarterly* article (Cutler, 1972:82) to the effect that CAP had been inundated with requests for dealerships in Europe and the United States as a result of the exhibition. This exhibition was also the impetus behind DIAND's establishing an Inuit Art Section in 1973 to monitor the art. As the authors of the BMC evaluation concluded (1979:42): "The *Masterworks* exhibition was the great triumph of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council."

CEAC also played a role in copyright protection, acting as a watchdog and bringing cases of infringement to the attention of DIAND which then took action through its legal advisors. A great many fake carvings appeared on the market in the late sixties, and a lawyer was engaged to clarify copyright regulations. The council assumed that, since it was charged with protecting the image of Inuit art, it had the authority to decide on requests for reproductions. It "began to act *as if* it were the agent of the individual printmaker, notwithstanding the fact that technically the artists were represented by either the Fédération or Canadian Arctic Producers, or their cooperative" (BMC, 1979:54). It should be said, however, that CEAC's assumption of the role of copyright watchdog probably prevented indiscriminate use, and abuse, of Inuit imagery, thus sustaining it as a high level art.⁴ The opening up of the copyright situation after CEAC's termination in 1989 has resulted in such unfortunate practices as the reproduction of classic Inuit print images on T-shirts.

Perhaps the greatest, but unsigned, role played by CEAC was in legitimating the art. It was only in 1986 that the National Gallery of Canada made a decision to collect Inuit work, thereby rescuing it from the status of

⁴ Goetz (1986:57) noted an incident which illustrates the extreme caution with which CEAC treated requests for reproduction rights. The council refused permission to the Museum of Modern Art, New York, to reproduce on Christmas cards prints it had purchased from the 1959 collection, causing a museum official to write to Snowden: "In the entire history of the Museum of Modern Art this is the first time that any artist or owner has not willingly consented to our reproduction of a painting or print in our collection."

ethnography and elevating it to the ranks of contemporary Canadian art.⁵ CEAC was instrumental in effecting this change of attitude. Members lobbied gallery officials, appointed a gallery curator to the Council in 1983, arranged donations of top quality Inuit work, and persuaded DIAND to fund a curator of Inuit art for the gallery. As the CEAC chairperson told me in 1984 (Watt, July 22): "It will cost them no money but they have already deliberated for two years; they're afraid of making a mistake." Finally, they opted in favour of "an offer they couldn't refuse;" namely, two significant donations arranged by CEAC.

In spite of its undisputed success in nurturing and protecting the image of Inuit fine art, CEAC's flaw was that, like CAP, it was a bureaucratic project which lacked the support or understanding of its Inuit constituents.

CEAC's fatal flaw: Lack of an Inuit connection

Before the informal arts committee was officially constituted as the Canadian Eskimo Art Council, the Minister of Northern Affairs requested that the Eskimos be canvassed to determine whether there is "a genuine comprehension of what the Committee is doing" and "a general willingness...to accept the standards of the proposed Council, even when they may mean immediate financial frustration." As the director, R.A.J. Phillips, explained (DIAND, 1963d:3-4):

Naturally, no-one is expecting Eskimo artists to give up their artistic integrity, and to accept, sight unseen, what might seem to them be arbitrary decisions of a group of distant experts. Naturally, any co-operative and any individual Eskimo Artist will have the right to disagree with the advice of

⁵ The National Gallery of Canada had collected some early works, but stopped after assembling a meagre collection. The Gallery's attitude was that Inuit art was an ethnographic phenomenon, best left to the Canadian Museum of Civilization to collect.

the Council.

Phillips' memo was attached to a draft memo to Eskimos explaining the committee. It reads in part (p.2):

The Minister of Northern Affairs wants to know whether you think it a good idea to have such a group of expert white men to advise Eskimos on their art and how to sell it. If most Eskimo artists think this is a bad idea, there will be no Committee. If they think it is a good idea, then the Committee would hope that Eskimo artists would work with the Committee. Sometimes this might mean the Committee would say that the work of an Eskimo artist was bad.

In an outright appeal to the collective conscience, he added:

The committee might therefore ask the Eskimo artist not to sell a particular print or carving, because if white men see bad work by the Eskimos, they will not buy Eskimo art any longer, and all Eskimos will suffer.

In spite of the paternalistic tone of this message, it seems there was a genuine interest on the part of bureaucrats to bring Inuit on side. It is interesting to note, however, that only a few years later Inuit were not even consulted about setting up Canadian Arctic Producers, supposedly "their" marketing agency.

It seems likely, as Barry Gunn, area administrator for DIAND in Baker Lake, noted in his response to this memo, that Inuit did not really understand what was being proposed "being more concerned with immediate and pressing economic problems" (in Goetz, 1986:62). The response of the area administrator in Povungnituk was hardly a surprise (DIAND, 1964c):

The Povungnituk Co-operative Eskimos are especially cautious in their attitude towards new developments which involve any kind of control. This stems from their previous experience with certain controversial

personalities,⁶ and more recently with tentative attempts by other individuals to obtain appointments as "sole marketing agents" and so forth. They are reluctant to allow full control of their marketing affairs to pass into the hands of people who might be, or who might become, anything but objective, or who are in any way prejudiced in favour of those groups of Eskimos producing objets d'art, handicrafts, etc., and, obviously this is a sound business principle. At the same time, they appreciate the need for expert guidance, and help in selling their wares (p.1).

He referred to the Eskimos' bewilderment over the rejection of so many of their prints by the committee, but, most significant, he writes that "the fact should not be overlooked...that Mlle LeVallee's connection with the Povungnituk

Co-operative is directly related to the Provincial Government's plans to participate in the economic and cultural development of Quebec Eskimos." This might, he thought, lead to rejection of CEAC by Povungnituk Eskimos.

Inuit had demanded to be represented on the Canadian Eskimo Art Council in May 1973, during the "Week of the Inuit" meetings organized in conjunction with the opening of the *Masterworks* exhibition in Ottawa.

Subsequently, there were Inuit appointments to the council of twelve (sometimes two, but usually one), but this was regarded as tokenism by everyone including, apparently, members of CEAC. An extract from CEAC's minutes, September 27, 1963 (in BMC, 1979:12): "The Committee further noted that Eskimo Art is essentially a primitive art, and therefore felt that, as such, the Eskimo society could not be a competent judge of the aesthetic quality of its own art." And, as late as 1982, a member said at the Curator's Conference, Ottawa, September

⁶ This is probably a reference to Gordon Yearsley, art advisor *cum* co-op manager who clashed with Steinman and who might have been the first white person to be fired by Inuit.

1982: "Inuit are not interested enough, mature enough or ready enough to be involved in the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council" (Myers, 1982b).

Whether this attitude would have changed was not put to the test as seven years later, in 1989, the Council was terminated by the minister who had been ignoring its recommendations for several years. A degree of bureaucratic control over the art died with CEAC, but the department was also operating an Inuit Art Section which existed to provide copyright protection, promote the art through exhibitions, provide funding for exhibitions and art development projects *etc., etc.* In the same year that CEAC was terminated, DIAND devolved its hands-on role in development of Inuit art to the Inuit Art Foundation which received arms-length funding from the department to provide a professional development service to Inuit artists and to promote their art. The section dispersed its large collection to other agencies and its main function now is documentation.

The 1973 "Week of the Inuit," an event jointly sponsored by CEAC and DIAND, marked, I believe, the first public confrontation of Inuit and non-Inuit. The meeting was taken over by angry artists who went so far as to challenge CEAC's chair. This was, of course, a time when NWT Inuit were trying to wrest control of Canadian Arctic Producers away from the federal and territorial bureaucrats. It is time, now, to return to that arena of conflict.

Chapter Twelve

The Northwest Territories Cooperatives Federate; Inuit Producers Gain Control of CAP, and Dorset Defects

As in Quebec, handicraft production in the NWT cooperative system became the locus of Inuit power. Unlike the situation in Quebec, control of arts and crafts, hence the cooperatives, was vested in Canadian Arctic Producers, a creation of DIAND. The wresting away of control of CAP from the bureaucracy was one giant step towards autonomy for Inuit in the Northwest Territories, accomplished through the formation of a co-op federation which was in immediate competition with CAP and, by implication, the federal bureaucracy. At first, the new federation had the support of the NWT government, itself in a power struggle with Ottawa, but, as happened in Quebec, the NWT co-ops soon had to learn to tread a fine line between two bureaucracies.

A Northwest Territories federation is formed

Although delegates to the first co-op conference, Frobisher Bay 1963, had talked about establishing eastern and western branches of a central marketing agency, this did not happen. Canadian Arctic Producers, established in 1965, provided a marketing service for Northwest Territories co-ops and a few arctic Quebec co-ops out of its Ottawa headquarters until 1967 when the Quebec federation was incorporated. All delegates to the second co-op conference, Povungnituk 1966, had agreed with the principle of forming federations, but Northwest Territories' co-ops were prevented from doing so by the lack of enabling legislation in the

NWT. Also, as Sprudz writes (1984:175):

...the transfer of responsibility to the direct Territorial authority¹ had a disruptive impact on co-operative development in the NWT for several years. Changed attitudes and approaches to the Arctic problems, and new people often without knowledge, experience or even understanding of co-operatives, brought into responsible positions, resulted in a break in continuity and inadequate development assistance.

A "leading" member of the territorial council was quoted in Yellowknife's only newspaper, *News of the North*, (September 19, 1968, in Sprudz, 1984:175) as follows:

The function of government here is not to develop the North, it is simply to regulate the development of the North in the public interest. It isn't government's place to subsidise co-operatives at the expense of free enterprise. These people do not need paternalism and the worst place this shows up is in the co-operatives. In the North there is some pretty insidious socialism going on, and if I had my way, it would be on its way.

It is not clear how representative this view was, although Sprudz, an arctic co-op historian by dint of long experience as a co-op officer, considers "it gives an idea of the prevailing environment for co-operative development." In 1971, only a few years later, however, the territorial department of industry and development reported to the NWT Council that "the co-operative movement, which has been and is one of the better motivators for the objectives of territorial government, costs us very little in total costs and yet is a very important programme" (in Sprudz, 1984:176). And in June of that year, the GNWT

¹ The Northwest Territories was administered from Ottawa until 1967 when the government seat was moved to Yellowknife.

enacted legislation which paved the way for federation.² In February 1972, delegates from 28 NWT co-ops met in Churchill at the invitation of the GNWT to discuss forming a federation.

The delegates were reported to have been hesitant in spite of films, slides and speeches designed to convince them of the "usefulness" of a federation in coping with typical co-op problems: supplies, lost items, and the high cost of freight (CACFL, 1974c:5). They were informed of how other co-ops had "improved through this unity," but the delegates "felt that the conference was going too fast with not enough information and not enough time to consider the pros and cons of having a Federation." In any case, following Inuit practice, the conference delegates felt that they could not make a decision binding on all Inuit, but would have to consult with their co-op boards at home.

Although "delegates were told by government representatives that it was completely up to the people at the conference to vote for or against the formation of a federation," there appears to have been considerable pressure on them to make a fast decision. GNWT representatives reminded people that the conference was costing between \$35,000 and \$40,000 "and that it might be a while before they could hold another [one]." They were also reminded "that they had to think of the future, now, so that instead of saying 'where are the co-ops in 1980' they would say 'where is their Federation' (CACFL, 1974c:7). That did it: "With

² Although the federal government had prepared legislation to permit federation in 1968, the territorial government did not enact it until four years later, a fact which Sprudz (1984:176) takes as evidence of its ill will towards co-ops.

that statement, the delegates agreed..." and a vote was held that day with some delegates phoning their home boards for authority to vote. Again, a decision was thrust upon Inuit, this time by the Government of the Northwest Territories rather than the federal government.

The conference agreed to form an NWT cooperative federation with headquarters in Yellowknife. Its first objectives, as explained by GNWT representative L. Morrison, were (CACFL, 1974c:7): to provide marketing and purchasing services, education, staff training and co-operative services; enter into a management agreement with its members; audit and inspect their books, and make representations to governments and other agencies on behalf of itself and its members. The new federation was to be called the Canadian Arctic Co-operative Federation Limited (CACFL), and Andrew Goussaert, the Catholic missionary in Pelly Bay, was its first president. The next few days of the meeting were devoted to the first general meeting of the new federation.

Typically, CACFL was started with inadequate financing (Sprudz, 1984:176). To enable the federation to begin operations, the GNWT agreed to provide \$75,000 a year over a three-year period. The agreement stipulated, however, that there would be government representation on the board of directors, and that no dividends would be paid.

Colin Gontier was hired as general manager in April 1972 and, hoping to avoid some of the unity problems CAP was dealing with, he quickly hired several university students (paid for by the GNWT) to travel to the co-ops to discuss

CACFL and find out what the co-ops wanted. The co-ops' main concern was for a purchasing service for community retail stores, "some way to bring the price of freight down," and "technical education and marketing" (CACFL, 1974c:9).

Another issue discussed by Gontier and the students on their fact-finding mission was the DC-4 aircraft owned by the Pelly Bay co-operative which had neither a Hudson's Bay retail store on site nor an annual sea-lift due to hazardous ice conditions. Pelly Bay was the only co-op ever to make such a bold move as to buy and operate its own plane, and it was offered for sale to the new federation (led, it will be remembered, by the Pelly Bay missionary). The ownership of this plane was, as we shall later see, to become a bone of great contention for the commissioner of the NWT.

CACFL is perceived as a threat to CAP

Ideally, the arts and crafts marketing agency, would have been part of CACFL from the beginning, but CAP continued to operate separately for some years, adopting an adversarial attitude towards CACFL. It is perhaps not surprising that CAP did not join forces with CACFL, given that the latter was a project of the GNWT. CAP, of course, was a federal government project, and the animosity between the two co-op organizations reflected, at least in part, the historic hostility between the two levels of government regarding Inuit affairs.

CAP's aloofness became difficult to sustain, however, given its deteriorating image in the field. At the June 1, 1972 meeting of its board, only months after the founding of CACFL, the GNWT appointee, Ballantyne, stressed

the importance of CAP's improving its image in the field. There was, he said, "added urgency" now that CACFL was in the picture, "one of whose eventual objectives was the marketing of northern arts and crafts" (CAP, 1972c). He also pointed out that the GNWT was turning over to the co-ops "more and more" government craft projects. These were "currently locked into marketing through CAP," but "there might be a danger of substantial business being lost to CAP with whom many producers did not identify."

CACFL's response to CAP's monopoly of NWT arts and crafts marketing was two-fold. First, it focussed on providing *other services* to the co-ops such as store development, accounting, and education. The program began with management training, a bilingual newsletter and on-site counselling "to expand co-operative philosophy and practices" (CACFL, 1974c:9). CACFL staff travelled to the co-ops where they helped with bookkeeping, pricing, management problems and talked up co-ops, and the Donner Foundation provided a \$25,000 grant for three years to pay for one education officer. Secondly, CACFL took the innovative step of opening retail stores to sell Eskimo arts and crafts. These stores were at first located only north of the 60th parallel so as not to interfere with CAP's marketing network, but they were later expanded south of the divide, although not without opposition.

Northern Images stores, devoted entirely to Inuit arts and crafts, were opened in Yellowknife (1972), Churchill (1973), Inuvik (1975), and Whitehorse (1978). All the stores bought their merchandise from CAP as well as directly from

the co-ops. They also bought from the GNWT which, until 1981, was involved in marketing as an adjunct to its arts and crafts development projects.

Retailing is an attractive option for co-op distribution agencies since it means that a higher percentage of the final sale price returns to the producer co-ops and, ultimately, the producers, an effective means of beating out the competition. As Sabine told a 1978 meeting on Eskimo art: "CACFL's concern has been to get more dollars back to the top line because the artists are going to get it somewhere, even by going outside the system" (Myers, 1978:55). Over the years, FCNQ and CAP had given serious consideration to the idea of retailing, but rejected it for fear that dealers would consider it unfair competition.³

Northern Images stores were relatively successful, "giving a return on investment of approximately 20%" according to Ted Sabine (1980). The bank financed the opening of the Northern Images store in Whitehorse, a new situation for co-op ventures which, typically, had to resort to government financing.

In spite of their differences, the new federation and CAP had one basis for alliance in that both were involved in some level of competition with the Government of the Northwest Territories. CAP had complained often of the interference of the GNWT which was initiating and controlling production projects, as well as marketing output.⁴ CACFL's new purchasing service for the

³ But in the mid-eighties, La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec opened a retail operation in Montreal called Images Boréales. It closed in 1991.

⁴ An example of competition between CAP and the GNWT is the sale of garments from projects organized by the latter. The GNWT was selling to CAP, a wholesaler, at the same price it was charging dealers (CAP, 1978a:15). Sometimes, the GNWT would offer an inadequate discount

NWT co-ops soon brought it into open conflict with the GNWT.

CACFL's controversial purchasing service

Since CAP was handling marketing, CACFL's first efforts after incorporation were directed towards purchasing for the northern retail stores. Taking a different tack from La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec which set up its own purchasing service, CACFL entered into an agreement with the Central Institutional Co-operative Purchasing Agency Ltd., (CIC), a non-profit organization with a twelve- year history in Arctic resupply. Some NWT co-ops had been buying through CIC before CACFL came on the scene. Funding from the Eskimo Loan Fund (ELF) could not be obtained, but CACFL's purchasing division became operational in January 1973, with financial assistance from CIC.

In a controversial move, CACFL also accepted the Pelly Bay co-op's offer to buy the DC-4 at cost, intending, where feasible, to fly in its own freight to the co-ops.⁵ The DC-4 was to become a major issue between CACFL and the GNWT. CACFL maintained that owning its own plane enabled it to provide better and cheaper service to the co-ops (the savings to Repulse Bay in freight costs were estimated at \$6,000 in 1973), while territorial bureaucrats claimed that it was poor management practice for CACFL to operate a plane, and used it as a lever against the federation. Their desire to ground the DC-4 was undoubtedly a

of 10% (CAP, 1978c, appendix).

⁵ The original plane owned by the Koomiut Co-operative Association Limited in Pelly Bay was destroyed October 1972 in an accident but, a month later, CACFL bought a replacement under a co-ownership agreement with pilot Willie Laserich. Financing was arranged through ICI (CACFL, 1973a:27).

major factor in the withholding of loans and demands for tighter controls on CACFL management. Owning a plane was, however, of great symbolic significance to Inuit who considered the ability of the white man to fly to be a magical power. It was also a very concrete source of power. As the president of CACFL said in 1973 (CACFL, 1973b:4): "With the operation we are opening a wide field of trade between our Co-operatives and of total participation by our people in a field from which we have been all but totally excluded in the past."

CACFL faced enormous obstacles keeping the DC-4 in the air. Since it was required to operate under a private licence, it could not, for instance, charter the aircraft, even to its own member co-ops. It was required to legally *own* all the freight destined for the co-ops, an impossible burden given its lack of operating capital. But, undaunted by opposition and other problems, the federation also purchased a small Cessna. On-the-job training grants from Canada Manpower in 1973 enabled four Inuit to receive training as aircraft engineer helpers and loadmasters, but CACFL's dream of having a native crew flying freight in to their co-ops in a plane they owned was not to be realized. In 1973, the general manager advised that training of northerners as pilots had been "suspended indefinitely," and laid the blame squarely on the shoulders of the GNWT (CACFL, 1973a:27).

Open war between CACFL and the GNWT

Like the co-ops, CACFL's "basic and most serious problem," according to its general manager, was "the inadequacy of operating funds" (CACFL, 1973a:22).

CACFL had applied to ELF for a million dollar loan in June 1973 when it was, in the words of general manager Colin Gontier, "technically bankrupt" (reported in Myron, 1974). Subsequently, CACFL's president, Andrew Goussaert, deemed the loan application to have been "a big mistake" (CACFL, 1973a:21), since it provoked near fatal interference from the GNWT.

CACFL staff had not expected any difficulty in obtaining the loan from government which was, ostensibly, in full support of the Eskimo co-operative movement. But, less than a year after it had presided over its birth, the GNWT turned on CACFL, ordering an audit and an investigation (CACFL, 1973a:23-24). The auditors who conducted the investigation, the highly respected firm of Price, Waterhouse and Company, concluded that CACFL needed "substantial permanent capital rather than long term financing" due to the low equity positions and limited working capital of the co-ops which made it impossible for them to pay their debts with CACFL promptly (*pp.*24-25). Noting that "it might well be that the long term solution is for direct government assistance to these co-operatives," they also suggested that greater government representation on the board of CACFL "could well be a significant requirement."

Several confrontations ensued between GNWT officials and CACFL staff, the upshot being that the former promised to support CACFL's loan application provided certain conditions were met, including that no new retail outlets be established "in the immediate time perspective," that the GNWT "appoint a

controller to operate within the managerial structure of the Federation," that an officer of the GNWT co-sign all cheques and, most regressive, that CACFL "cease providing financial cover to individual co-ops with respect to purchases of goods made in the South" (CACFL, 1973a:25-26). CACFL considered that it had no choice but to accept the GNWT's conditions, but a new loan application submitted to the GNWT was subsequently rejected along with a request for short term financing. As the general manager reported: "It was therefore necessary to shut down the [purchasing] Division, discontinue employment of the staff, terminate the agreement with C.I.C and vacate rented premises."⁶ In April 1974, the GNWT appointed a controller to CACFL and, after a study of the purchasing division, a new loan application was worked out with territorial government personnel and forwarded to Ottawa.

Why was the GNWT being so obstructive? Apart from its opposition to CACFL's ownership of aircraft and it's having opened retail stores (a move objected to by private sector dealers), there appears to have been some animosity between the general manager of CACFL and Stuart Hodgson, commissioner of the NWT. Myron (1974) reports that Hodgson addressed CACFL's 1974 annual general meeting, with anger:

Mr. Hodgson disagreed with the federation's annual report and called it a "one man show." Most of the report was authored by Mr. Gontier. When he [Hodgson] rose to speak he was evidently angry. "What do the board of directors have to say about the co-op" the commissioner asked. "Not a word in the report is from them. This report is the opinion of one man."

⁶ CACFL had opened an office in Winnipeg in 1973 to serve the Keewatin region.

With that the commissioner threw down a government financial statement of the federation that was written in Eskimo.

Myron also reported that: "The delegates gathered at the meeting were angry and disappointed and they were not afraid to show their emotions."

The commissioner's full address to the annual general meeting of CACFL was reproduced in a special edition of *Northern Lights* (CACFL, 1974a:3-5).

Stating that he had "listened very carefully" to twenty-one people from "about eighteen different communities," the commissioner singled out "two issues with a number of side issues." In his words, the big issues were "a million dollar loan" and the second one was that "either we get the DC-4 back into operation or the world is going to come to an end as we know it." He told the co-op delegates bluntly that they were "very, very confused" and then established his authority to speak so frankly:

I joined my first co-op twenty-five years ago and I know the value that a co-op can bring to a community -- to a group of people whether they live in the Arctic or whether they live anywhere else in the world...I, too, know what it's like to be poor. I, too, know what it's like to starve and I, too, know what it's like to be alone, all by yourself. It's because of that, I can't forget that, that I move heaven and earth and practically drive myself into the ground trying to help you people in the communities.

He also established the GNWT's authority to tell the co-ops what to do:

We've given millions, we've given buildings, we've given staff, we've given equipment. *True* a lot of it has been foolishly wasted -- some by us -- some by Government people, but that's how you learn. It's like taking a gun. You can't expect to shoot a cariboo with the first shot. You have to learn how to use it. The same thing applies with money and with the idea of the co-op.

And more to the point:

Do you ever wonder why the Government never owned an airplane? You're just asking for a million dollars. To look after the interest of all of these people all over the Northwest Territories, the Government has a hundred and fifty million dollars. We don't own an airplane although I visit everywhere and the reason we don't is we can't afford it. The plain truth is, you can't afford it either. And when you would realise that and admit that, then you will find the situation is much easier to get down and try to make this Federation work the way it should work...if you want my advice and I'm going to give it to you whether you want it or not, the first thing you should do is get rid of that thing. Do you think that the Government's going to let you starve in Pelly Bay or let you starve anywhere else?

As for the million dollars, he was equally candid: "There isn't a chance that you can get a million dollars..." Instead, the GNWT would give \$75,000 annually for five years matched by the Government of Canada -- \$75,000 as a gift and a loan of \$382,000:

So what are you getting out of this? You're getting \$1,132,000 of which (\$382,000.00) that's all you have to pay back -- and you're feeling sorry for yourself? I'm amazed. I'm amazed. There's not another group of people in Canada that could get something like that...

His parting words, no doubt with unintended irony, were:

We didn't need to create this Federation. It didn't need to be done any more than we had to [sic] the liquor board or the housing corporation or the power commission but they were done to give you a chance to try running these things...

Inuit and their supporters talk back

In a scathing attack on the GNWT, also reproduced in the *Northern Lights* special edition (CACFL, 1974a), councillor Lena Pedersen, a Greenland Eskimo living in the central Arctic, focussed on the GNWT's attack on CACFL, declaring it an attack on the people:

The vast majority of these co-op members are Eskimos and it makes me very angry as an Eskimo myself, to be told that we are like children. We

are too stupid and too emotional to handle our own affairs, and that only the so-called experts in Economic Development know what is best for us.

Continuing, she asked:

Do you think that it feels good to be told by the Commissioner in his refusal talk at the recent Co-op Annual Meeting, that we thought that he would really let us starve? *Is that all this Government is offering to the Eskimo people of the N.W.T., the opportunity not to starve?* To be told that no other group of people in Canada could get what we are getting, when we know very well that the Federal Government in their regional Economic Development programs, give outright grants to many private industries in the south that far exceed the amount asked for by the Co-ops as a *loan* not as a gift. Instead, the delegates were told they could have a small loan and a large grant over five years which in total comes to more than the loan applied for. The delegates did not ask for gifts and they do not want gifts. They want to look after their own affairs in the manner of their own choice.

Pedersen claimed that the government's refusal was based upon a "suspect" report by a "Government so-called expert" which was obviously "prepared primarily as an argument for the Government to regain control over an organization which is doing too good a job without Government control." As for the commissioner's views on CACFL's aircraft, she said: "The statement that the Government could not afford to own an aircraft, and therefore the Federation of Co-ops should not, is another statement which insults our intelligence and treats us like children."

The GNWT's attitude also drew heavy response from the press. An editorial in *News of the North* (June 12, 1974) equated CACFL's "dilemma" with "the dilemma of whether Eskimo people can ever expect to see their cooperative movement stand on its own feet." The GNWT's refusal to back CACFL's request for a million dollar loan from ELF was attributed to bureaucratic opposition to the Northern Images Yellowknife store. After a discussion of what he considered

to be an unfounded attack by the GNWT, the editor concluded, as had Pedersen: "It looks as if the Canadian Arctic Co-operative Federation is being attacked because it is doing too good a job." It was his view that: "It would be a dreadful and irrevocable mistake to retreat from full support of the Eskimo co-operative movement now, when only full support will make success possible."

In spite of the well reported protests and accusations, CACFL had no choice but to accept the GNWT's proffered \$382,000 loan and that year's grant of \$150,000 (from the GNWT and DIAND). To management's regret: "Both these monies came with a lot of conditions which are directly opposed to the owners' wishes as well as prior promises by both governments in respect to the working of the Federation" (CACFL, 1974c:10). Hoping to break the stalemate, Gontier resigned his position as general manager of CACFL at the end of March 1975. An article in the December issue of *Northern Lights* (CACFL, 1974c:3) credits him for being willing to sacrifice himself for the greater good of the federation:

It is greatly to the credit of Colin that he is willing to sacrifice his own position so that the Federation may progress. In his letter of resignation he refers to the present problem as a log-jam. One log must go so that the others are free to move. Colin feels that he is that log.

Why didn't DIAND intervene on behalf of CACFL? The federation's assistant general manager, Paul Nind, was quoted as saying: "The federal government is willing to invest \$40 million in an exploration venture with Pan Arctic and they can't invest \$1 million in people" (in Myron, 1974). Ottawa's inertia can only be understood with a brief digression into relations between the federal and NWT governments at the time, which centred upon who was to control arts and crafts

and which erupted in a conflict between CAP and the GNWT.

Arts and crafts become a "can of worms" for the GNWT

Until 1967, the Northwest Territories was governed out of Ottawa. The Government of the Northwest Territories took up northern residence at that time and, in 1970, the minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development charged it with the development of arts and crafts as an industry to encompass all areas north of the 60th parallel. The GNWT's assumption of a leading role in the development of Inuit art had inevitable repercussions for Canadian Arctic Producers as well as for the co-operative federation.

CAP's fears that it would be upstaged by the GNWT were not without foundation. At a November 1969 meeting of CAP, some three years before the formation of CACFL, Ballantyne (GNWT representative on CAP's board), described the operating structure of CAP as "tenuous" and declared that "the present system of voluntary co-operation between the producers and CAP must change and be reorganized with built-in specific links" (CAP, 1969e). He announced that, henceforth, the GNWT would be "closely involved in decisions regarding production..." Suggesting that the whole picture should be examined at three levels -- producer, co-ops and marketing -- he further advised that GNWT officials were concerned with quality control, liaison (50% of the producers were, he said, "in competition with CAP"), CAP's present physical location in Ottawa and "the need for an efficient central marketing agency." The question to be asked was: "Is CAP the best agency to handle all types of production?" Pointing

out that "to date, CAP has been the link between the producer and the market," he stressed that the "role of CAP is to contribute to the local economy and the employment of people" and "everything else is subordinate to that aim." It was his view that CAP must ultimately be owned by the producers and that "the objectives of ownership should be set out now, rather than waiting for the establishing of a federation." The GNWT had, he said, only one objective, "to produce a market for an industry."

The growing conflict between the GNWT and CAP was evident at CAP's June 23-24, 1970 board meeting when it became clear that the GNWT had an interest in using Eskimo art as a strategy to develop tourism in the territories. Commissioner Hodgson, who was present for part of the meeting, emphasized that "it was important that articles should be available for purchase in the local communities for sale to visitors at prices lower than southern retail prices," which advice did not sit well with CAP, ever-concerned that good material not be diverted from its showroom. Another move to control seemed evident at the same meeting when Ballantyne "stressed the need for closer liaison between CAP and GNWT" and requested that the general manager of CAP advise the territorial government in advance of any trips planned by his staff to the Northwest Territories.

The situation between CAP and the GNWT became explosive in August 1971, just a year before incorporation of CACFL when, at a meeting of the executive committee called by Barry Yates (the federal government's

representative on CAP's board), CAP's general manager, Eric Mitchell, reported that "quite apart from certain communication problems with some Regional Staff [GNWT], it had come to his attention that certain individuals in charge of N.W.T. government projects were selling direct to CAP's competitors at prices lower than those quoted to CAP" (CAP, 1971c). Ballantyne promised to investigate and to remind his staff of their "standing instructions regarding sales from Government projects." Comments were parried concerning CAP's problems getting orders from certain producers and Ballantyne's complaints about CAP's pricing practices, backed by "the opinions held by some of his better qualified arts and crafts supervisors." It was agreed that "CAP should make deliberate efforts to improve its image," not only with producers, but also with the regional staffs of the territorial government.

It is probably not coincidental that only a year later, the GNWT put pressure on the NWT co-ops to form a federation and the ill will between the GNWT and DIAND-dominated CAP also explains why the GNWT wanted to control the new federation, hence the co-ops.

Skiping several years of struggle between the GNWT and Ottawa over who would control the co-ops, in 1978, the new general manager of CAP, Richard Leitch, presented a brief outline concerning the need for greater coordination among CAP, CACFL "and particularly" the GNWT in regard to the marketing of arts and crafts (CAP, 1978c). It was suggested that a spokesman from the GNWT be invited to attend CAP's next board meeting to explain the government's

objectives in this area. Accordingly, it was agreed to hold CAP's next meeting in Yellowknife so that it could meet with CACFL and have a senior GNWT representative attend.

As we saw in chapter 12, a major reason for Ottawa wanting to control Inuit art was its importance as a national icon. But why was the GNWT so interested? It appears that arts and crafts were considered an essential building block for a tourist industry, and a way for the new government to assert itself against Ottawa. It is evident that the GNWT has never had a consistent policy with regard to Inuit arts and crafts. Early councillors viewed arts and crafts development as a diversion from the real economic development needed in the territories. A 1971 news release containing excerpts from various GNWT news releases on the subject makes the attitude of some of the early councillors quite clear (GNWT, 1971). During three hours of "lively" debate of a sessional paper on arts and crafts policies, the following views were proffered by councillors: "Take the emphasis off this artsy-crafty stuff and get into real business. We're in too deep already and we're wasting our time" (David Scarle, Yellowknife lawyer). Noting that if government wants to alleviate poverty it must get into areas where private industry has already established, Nick Sibbeston (later to become government leader), said: "I think the Government is fooling people when it states it's helping them. The Government is promoting arts and crafts and missing out on the everyday stuff." And Bryan Pearson (from Frobisher Bay), "noting that many arts and crafts projects in the NWT had turned sour," reminded Council that

the GNWT took over the program from Ottawa: "What happened is that we inherited a can of worms. Now we have to find someone to take them from us."

The territorial council agreed with the recommendation that "only those arts and crafts projects of direct benefit to indigenous people be established or supported by Government funds," but "took the opportunity to criticize what it considered a lack of attention to more beneficial forms of industry" (GNWT, 1971). A motion was passed calling on Chrétien (then minister of IAND) to establish an economic task force to study the prospects of development in the NWT. There was, said Bryan Pearson the originator of the motion, "an obvious need to broaden the economic base of the NWT through the introduction and development of industries."

The establishment of a federation of NWT co-ops merely moved the battle from Ottawa and CAP to Yellowknife. It can be surmised that the GNWT embraced the idea of a federation of co-ops which would relieve it of some of the burdens it had inherited from Ottawa. But although the GNWT was largely responsible for setting up CACFL and professed to support the concept of Eskimo-run co-ops, it also wanted to maintain hands-on involvement. It was a new government, bound to make mistakes, but in doing so, it engendered bad relations with both Ottawa and the co-op system. "The N.W.T. Government moved North in 1967," as Councillor Lena Pedersen said, "to get closer to the people," but "it has achieved *only* to get closer *in miles* to some communities. It is still as far as or further removed from the people as it every [sic] was" (CACFL,

1974a). Most jobs created were in Yellowknife and, although capital facilities for education had improved throughout the territories, programs and curricula were, according to Pedersen, being rammed "down the throats of the public without adequate consultation with parents, and with apparent inability to do much, because of union affiliation, about correcting bad situations even when it is clearly the fault of their own staff that a bad situation has developed." In conclusion she stated:

We do not want to be forever controlled by the Government, whose record of achievement is far less than the record of the Co-ops. We do not want to be told things when we know that they are in fact inaccurate. We do not want to be told that we are incapable of handling our own affairs. We are not children and we are thoroughly fed up with the paternalistic attitude of this Government.

Where was Ottawa? Visiting Yellowknife the day after CACFL's calamitous 1974 annual general meeting, Chrétien told the federation that the liberals feel that "the co-ops are the best thing that ever happened to the Eskimo settlements," but as reported in *News of the North* (Myron, 1974), "he did little more than re-confirm the \$382,000 loan."

CACFL struggles from crisis to crisis, winning some and losing others

Weakened by a lack of financial resources and having to do battle on two fronts -- with DIAND and CAP in Ottawa and the GNWT in Yellowknife -- CACFL was hard pressed to keep the loyalty of its members. The reason for this is that the whole system was weak. The co-ops were under-capitalized and, in a crisis, pitted themselves against the federation which was a convenient scapegoat. In one matter, however, CACFL had the support of Inuit. Its desire to take over art

marketing from CAP became a rallying force for NWT Inuit who saw it as a way of regaining control over their destiny from the government in Ottawa.

A private consulting company recommended in 1976 that the federal government provide a \$6 million re-capitalization of CACFL and, in February 1976, delegates to the first CACFL co-op managers' conference petitioned the federal government for \$6 million to enable it to re-open its purchasing service and "get back into the air transportation business" (*News of the North*, Feb 11, 1976:16). In a burst of eloquence, they declared that:

The time has come for the Government of Canada to decide if it truly wants to aid the people of the North towards its goal of professed economic independence and liberty. If the Federal Government truly wants to realize this goal, it will assist our Federation in its financial requirements. To do otherwise will be to condemn our people to a lifetime of economic bondage; hewers of wood and drawers of water to the multinational corporations from the south.

If this support were not forthcoming, the managers declared (p.17) that they would "have no recourse other than to recommend to our Boards of Directors the withdrawal of support and shares from the Federation." In the same appeal, they protested the high cost of freight into the northern settlements, pointing out that the GNWT subsidized liquor but not "milk, fruit and other very important basic dietary foods." They asked for either a subsidy or a supplementary pension for older people whose purchasing power "in comparison to persons in the south is at least halved."

The petition, signed by 25 managers (CACFL had 32 members), was presented February 13, 1976 to Judd Buchanan, Minister of IAND, during a visit

to Yellowknife. The revitalized interest of the federal government in co-ops following the Bureau of Management Consultants' study that year resulted in a new flow of federal assistance to the co-ops and the federation (which will not be detailed here) and, in 1985, CACFL, by then amalgamated with CAP and renamed Arctic Co-operatives Limited, relocated from Yellowknife to Winnipeg, succumbing to tax inducements offered by the Government of Manitoba and, it may be speculated, a desire to be out of the GNWT's neighbourhood.

There was another front on which the NWT federation had to do battle; for, like CAP, and unlike FCNQ its sister federation in Quebec, CACFL had severe unity problems. Although the necessity of bringing the co-ops on side was recognized from the beginning, the federation was so busy battling the Yellowknife bureaucracy and coping with a weak financial base that it had limited manpower or energy available to promote good relations with its member co-ops. CACFL was bedevilled, as were the co-ops, by the fact that it was a government project and not the result of a demand from the co-ops or the people, although it did eventually serve as a vehicle for Inuit resistance.

Unity problems in CACFL

The president of CACFL, former Roman Catholic missionary Andrew Goussaert, provided liberal doses of co-op/Christian ideology.⁷ As in Quebec, where a missionary also played a key role in the development of co-ops and the federation, the co-op in the NWT was promoted as the way to salvation. In his first annual

⁷ He was succeeded in 1990 by Terry Thompson, also a former Catholic priest.

report to members (CACFL, 1973b:7), Goussaert made this appeal:

Our country is big and rich, let us gear ourselves to take a fair share and to better our living. Only through co-operation do we stand a chance against the business-minded and capital supported southerners invading our country as pioneers in search of a fortune.

CACFL and CAP newsletters and bulletins usually carried inspirational messages such as "keep your fears to yourself...share your courage with others" (CACFL, 1975b:7). The president, who sometimes signed himself "Father A. Goussaert," often sprinkled his messages with Christian pitches and appeals to the people to join together to defeat their common enemies and to support CACFL:

We want to co-operate amongst ourselves to build up services and business institutions owned by all of us and filling the needs of our people. We want to build in order to share with the community at large, with people all over the world. We want to take active part in modern society, transforming it, making it more human. This seems to be going in direct opposition of all what [sic] modern society seems to offer. Let us not falter -- this is my wish and my prayer. On Christmas, may we get inspiration and courage from Jesus Christ, who set the example (CACFL, 1975b:12).

It appears that many NWT co-ops were afraid that the centralization of services through the federation gave CACFL too much control. Predictably, there was a lot of misunderstanding about how a federation worked. CACFL charged the co-ops a seven per cent fee on all invoices for services which, it was pointed out (CACFL, 1978:16) was more than made up for by the volume discounts achieved by CACFL. The seven per cent was to enable CACFL to operate, and if there was any surplus at the end of the year, the annual general meeting decided whether to return it to the co-ops as dividends or shares. Nonetheless, this fee was resented by some co-ops, especially on large orders when it added up to a

substantial amount.⁸

In spite of its battles with the GNWT, some of the co-ops thought CACFL was run by government because it had been organized by the GNWT and because of the government appointees on its board. At the 1978 presidents' conference in Yellowknife, CACFL president Louis Tapardjuk said (CACFL, 1978:19):

Some of you think CACFL is run by the Government. The only way CACFL is associated with the Government is that they get some of their funding from Government...Many say that the Federation is in danger because it is run by the Government. Every year C.A.C.F.L. gets funding for yearly resupply. Everybody must understand, we borrow money from the Bank and not the Government for the sealift.

Tapardjuk also referred to the fact that there were six appointed and only five elected delegates on the board, and Goussaert explained that this imbalance was the result of a financial arrangement in 1974: "The Government thought we weren't smart enough so this resulted in the appointed members to the Board of Directors" (p.19). The matter of appointees to the board was becoming as big an issue as was opposition from CAP which was also battling the GNWT and attempting to secure the loyalty of its producers, the same people who were members of CACFL.

A major move in resolving CACFL/CAP differences occurred in 1979 when CAP was finally converted from a corporation to a co-op. There had been pressure almost from the beginning to have it converted to a co-op. As early as February 1968, Phalen (CUC president and appointee to CAP's board) was asked

⁸ As a point of reference, in Quebec, FCNQ charged the co-ops a sliding rate: 6 per cc. on store sales, 8 1/2 on tourism, 22 1/2 on prints and carvings (CACFL, 1978:18).

to prepare for the next meeting a proposal for the conversion of CAP into a cooperative (CAP, 1968b). Because of illness, his paper entitled "The Transfer of Canadian Arctic Producers Limited to a Cooperative" was not presented until June 21, 1968. Phalen's argument was that since CAP was to serve co-operatives, it would seem to make sense that it be, itself, part of the cooperative structure which, among other things, would mean symmetry in internal financial arrangements. But, the decision to make this change was not taken until the 1975 annual general meeting when Inuit shareholders controlled majority shares. CAP's conversion to a co-op was a surprisingly divisive issue, with feelings running strong on both sides.

Inuit gain control of CAP and convert it to a co-op

The northern people gained control of the majority of shares of CAP in November 1975, and were able, for the first time in its ten years of existence, to elect more representatives to the board than the Government of Canada. In that year also, the annual general meeting voted to convert CAP from a corporation to a co-op in line with the wishes of the North. In 1977, CAP applied for continuation as an association under the Canada Cooperative Associations Act effective January 1, 1977, and DIAND drafted by-laws with special attention being given to the taxation aspects of the conversion (CAP,1976a:1051). The conversion was completed in 1979.

At the time of conversion, DIAND retained three seats on a board of thirteen, and CACFL committed itself to redeeming the government's preferred

shares. It should be noted that, in 1978, for the first time, CAP's board had an Inuk chairman, thirty-five year old William Noah from Baker Lake (he was also president of his co-op, a carver and a printmaker). As Jim Houston remarked, this was probably the first time that an Inuk had been elected chairman of the board of a Canadian corporation (CAP, 1978b). CAP was not, however, to remain a corporation much longer.

CAP's management vigorously opposed the conversion, producing a video on the issue entitled *Company or Co-operative -- A Decision for Inuit* which showed the advantages of remaining a corporation. It was shown at CAP's 1975 annual general meeting, but failed to dissuade delegates from voting in favour of CAP's becoming a co-op. The delegate from Cape Dorset (Iyola Kingwatsiak) was the only voice in favour of CAP's remaining a corporation and "although attempts were made to sway Dorset from the position it was realized this could not be done without Dorset consulting with the membership again" (Page, 1976:53). Rankin Inlet voted with Cape Dorset against CAP's conversion, and the federal government (represented by Barry Yates) voted its shares in support of the majority.

There appears to have been a lack of understanding by Inuit of the issues involved. At the 1979 annual general meeting, during which CAP's fate was to be finally determined, Louis Tapardjuk, president of ACL, asked "for a description of the principle on which the number of delegates is based" in the new by-laws being discussed (CAP, 1979b:4). As explained in CAP's 1979 Annual Report (1979a:2),

when CAP was a corporation, the number of shares held by each co-op "determined their relative position in the voting." This changed upon conversion to the co-operative principle of one vote per shareholder, but:

...provision was made to recognize the fact that some co-operatives supported C.A.P. and therefore had more at stake in the firm than did others. This was accomplished through granting in addition to the original one vote per shareholder, one extra delegate vote for each \$50,000 worth of business done in the preceding year with C.A.P. to a maximum of five delegate votes.⁹

When informed that "it was on the basis of volume of business," Tapardjuk responded that "he didn't understand this principle, as in the northern cooperatives the rule was one vote for one member regardless of shares or volume of business" (CAP, 1979b:4). The government delegate on the new board, Gunther Abrahamson, "responded that he had obtained the best legal advice possible on how to organize the new structure so as to respond to the fears of those cooperatives who do a much greater share of business with CAP than most others and whose investment in CAP is the greatest" (p.5). A telling moment occurred in NWT co-op history when Tapardjuk "asked for an expression of feelings on this matter of voting structure from the delegates present" -- but never got it. Instead, as explained in the minutes:

Mr. Abrahamson asked for the floor as the person who will be the government delegate under the new structure. He explained that over 5 years ago CAP's shareholders voted to convert CAP to a cooperative, but the government and others felt that such a move was premature until at

⁹ This is not unusual. Clement (1986:122) notes that the 1967 restructuring of the United Maritimes Fishermen's Co-op provided for one voting delegate per 20 fishermen from each local plus one delegate per \$200,000 business. The principle of one member, one vote may be considered an ideal.

least the time that the northern cooperatives owned the majority of shares in CAP. In 1975 the cooperatives owned the majority of the shares, and they voted again to convert CAP to a cooperative. The cooperatives at Cape Dorset and Rankin Inlet voted against the motion, but they agreed to respect the wishes of the majority of the shareholders. "We felt we had to compromise somewhere to take care of the fears of those who have most to lose if CAP fails and those who feared CAP turning into a cooperative. I urge you to accept the proposed by-laws. Government has only three Directors. Co-operatives and others have 9. I think that is excellent progress."

Abrahamson, who was entitled to appoint three of CAP's 12 directors or 25 per cent of the board, then moved acceptance of the new by-laws "after further discussion, if any." Terry Phalen rejoined with: "I'll accept the government delegate's motion," and Louis Tapardjuk seconded it! The motion to convert CAP to Canadian Arctic Producers Co-operative Limited was then proposed by Tapardjuk. As stated in his report to the meeting (CAP, 1979b:President's Report 1978:2): "This in itself will not make CAP a better marketing organization, but the organization will be more easily recognized as part of the northern co-operative system."

It was a defeat for CAF management which had worked hard to prevent the conversion, even hiring lawyers to provide support for their position. They were unprepared for the opposition mounted by Inuit. Indeed, it is interesting to note the paternalistic attitude towards Inuit even as late as 1979. During a discussion concerning moving Northern Images South at the January 1979 joint CAP and CACFL board meeting, James Houston, then a government appointee on CAP's board, declared that: "For the Inuit to market in the south would be like a Toronto banker coming to the Baffin to hunt seals," to which CACFL

president Louis Tapardjuk replied:

C.A.P. obtained the necessary expertise by hiring experts. We can hire it too. Money can buy anything. A banker from Toronto would solve his difficulty in contending with the strange environment of the Baffin by hiring a northerner to hunt seals for him (CAP/CACFL, 1979b:7).

Dorset defects

The reduction in power for the big producers was undoubtedly a factor contributing to the defection of the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative (WBEC) which, it will be remembered, voted against CAP's becoming a cooperative. In 1978 WBEC, the most financially and artistically successful co-op, set up its own Toronto-based marketing organization known as Dorset Fine Arts to handle its coveted graphics. A factor in this move was dissatisfaction with the way prints were being handled by CAF management, but Dorset continued to send most of its carvings to CAP. The departure of Dorset graphics caused "a substantial loss of sales volume" to CAP, but over-all sales that year were only six per cent below budget (\$2,500,000) and five per cent below 1977 levels (CAP, 1978a:2,4).

While on one level, WBEC's defection was a vote of non-confidence in CAP, a deeper reason was the feeling that prosperous co-ops should not have to subsidize the operation of weaker associations. The West Baffin co-op had established links with southern promoters and collectors and decided that its interests were best served by separating the sale of its highly regarded graphic art.

Taken at face value, the WBEC defection is a refutation of the "all for one and one for all" philosophy of co-ops, a rejection of the structure which, ideally, links co-ops in expanding spheres of influence. But the rationale proffered by

WBEC's general manager was that it was an attempt to harness individual talent to the greater benefit of the local collective. Through the system of patronage dividends, shares in the co-op are concentrated in the hands of the most successful carvers, and removing shares would mean financial jeopardy for the co-op. The argument was made that eliminating middleman (CAP) costs for sales resulted in increased returns to artists and forestalled *their* possible defection.

CAP loses ground to entrepreneurs and others

As the seventies were the boom years for Inuit art, the eighties were to be marked by inventory problems which created difficulties in servicing debt. CAP's chronic shortage of working capital had been mitigated over the years through heavy reliance on commercial sources of short-term funding which rendered it vulnerable to increases in interest rates. While with one hand it struggled to control inventory levels by imposing quotas on northern purchases and depreciating prices, with the other, CAP had to compete with the growing number of competitors who were visiting arctic communities with cash in hand to buy the best. As noted in CAP's 1979 *Annual Report* (CAP, 1979a:13):

The activities of competing buyers at the source continue to adversely affect the supply situation both in terms of reducing stock available to C.A.P. and in terms of creating unrealistic price level expectations among producers which do not necessarily truly reflect market conditions. It also tends to disrupt the market in terms of a loss of control as to the number and location of suitable outlets since dealers who might not meet C.A.P.'s standards in this regard may go elsewhere to buy.

Apart from competition from "free traders," the buying activities of the Hudson's Bay Company continued to pose a threat to CAP, forcing prices up at point of

purchase. Even government employees were becoming buyers and sellers of Inuit art, in spite of GNWT directives against this practice. As for the GNWT, it had agreed to sell all production from its projects through CAP, but did not always do so.

Some of the free traders, reminiscent of the practice of tripping in the heyday of the fur trade, succeeded in setting up large scale distributions, but most were discouraged by the enormous problems in securing supply -- breakage, poor quality, *etc.*, -- which they were ill- prepared to cope with. The incursion of free traders was facilitated by the beleaguered co-ops who felt no particular loyalty to CAP. CAP's only line of defense has been to try to convince shareholders of the drawbacks of "independent marketing" in a number of sources, mainly its publication *Co-op North* and its annual reports. The 1977 report (p.27) advised, for instance, that independent marketing decreased co-op revenues because:

Demands by dealers for selective shipments of the highest quality, smaller and more frequent shipments with its related problems of bookkeeping, freight, customs and routings, dissatisfied customers, returned shipments and the ever recurring problem of accounts for collection, have all entailed more work for its management with little increase in revenue. In addition they have discovered that the free market, in most instances, cares little about promoting the image or reputation of either the community or the artist. It is in these respects the advantages of C.A.P. are recognized.

Countering the image problem which had bedevilled it since the beginning was an uphill struggle for CAP. At its annual general meeting in 1975, Audrea Van Duffelen, the delegate from Holman (one of CAP's largest shareholders) referred to it as "that big monster in the south who gobbles up Inuit artwork without much apparent interest in the human being back in the North" (Page, 1976:52).

Part of this image may have been due to financing problems, but committed co-operators would have borne with this (if the communal dynamic outweighed the competitive dynamic). There is no doubt that CAP's difficulties in its relations with the northern co-ops stemmed from the fact that it was put into place without Inuit being involved. The rather naive assumption appears to have been that the Inuit would, simply, cooperate. It took a while for CAP to realize the extent of the problem and longer to devise effective strategies to resolve it. CAP's general manager reported in 1968 (CAP, 1968d) that he and another director had made a successful trip to Baffin Island and he thought it would result in a better understanding of what CAP is doing. In the fall of that year he reported making two radio recordings in Yellowknife "to counteract the adverse publicity [concerning CAP] which had been put out" (CAP, 1968e). In that year also, CAP's "senior officials" visited the major production centres and: "In the course of many interviews held with the Eskimos, it became evident that in several settlements, they had no knowledge of C.A.P., or its activities" (CAP, 1969f:33). It was resolved that there was a "need for regular personal contact" to, among other reasons, "meet with, and communicate with, the Eskimo people in general, for they should be aware of what we are about, and of the integral part they play in this great exercise." This refreshingly candid report continues (p.34):

Many misconceptions and misunderstandings of C.A.P.'s role persists [sic] -- not only with the Eskimo people, but with the Department's Administrators in the field. In some areas, the situation is quite intolerable. Prejudice and arrogance of the first magnitude, have replaced industry and co-operation. Private and public condemnation of the organization has become a popular pastime for members of both the federal and territorial governments. This

Although the formation of ACL, the joint management co-operative, meant that "for a time," there were *three* separate corporate entities, constituents were enjoined "to think of them as one federation providing a complete service to its member co-ops" (CAP/CACFL, 1981b:7). The board of ACL was composed of fourteen directors, twelve members (elected representatives of districts) and two non-members appointed by DIAND and the GNWT. Guidelines stipulated that the position of chief executive officer, appointed by the board, would "be a salaried one and will normally be filled by a person of native descent." The board was, however, empowered to "waive this requirement and appoint a non-native when, in its considered judgement, there is no native person available to carry out the duties" (CAP/CACFL, 1981b:8). The new chief executive officer was CACFL president Andrew Goussaert.

The road to amalgamation was not a smooth one, since not all the co-ops were in favour of this move. The member co-ops which did the most business with CAP, specifically, Baker Lake and Cape Dorset, "had questions" (CAP, 1980a:8). Terry Ryan of the West Baffin Eskimo co-op and a government appointee to CAP's board, said that Cape Dorset "was not against amalgamation but that it did not know what amalgamation meant." He added that "speaking against amalgamation, is like speaking against motherhood or fine weather." He admitted that he "was not personally in favour of one Board representing such a large organization as would result from amalgamation." An Inuk director, Alan Maktak, spoke in favour of amalgamation and accused CAP of "not thinking about

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The serious dimension of the problem was becoming all too clear.

In 1970, CAP attempted to protect its marketing monopoly by establishing a policy of the "Right of First Refusal" which was defined as follows: "Where CAP makes a financial commitment to a producer, the producer in turn will give CAP a priority on its production" (CAP, 1970b). The board instructed the general manager to conclude written marketing agreements with each supplier cooperative, the agreement to take the form of a letter to be approved by the territorial Government and CAP's working committee of directors. Thus began a series of futile attempts to secure, through legal means, the loyalty of the co-ops.

CAP's problems were exacerbated by a lack of local support for the co-ops. CACFL's newsletter, *Northern Lights*, was used as a vehicle to convince people to support their co-ops with such features as "Why Cooperate?" (1975a:15). The answer:

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In 1971, Terry Ryan, the manager of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative, suggested (CAP, 1971d:928) that there was "a real need for CAP to have an Eskimo representative in the field whose task it would be to improve CAP's image in the North." It was agreed to hire an Eskimo for six months in a public relations

capacity, and Joanassie Salamonie, a successful artist from Cape Dorset, was suggested for the position of what might be considered CAP's "talking chief" (CAP, 1972b:940).

CAP had started involving Inuit in southern operations in 1965, but in minor roles such as that of warehouse helper (CAP, 1965a). There was some discussion concerning possible programs of training over a long period to enable the native leaders to take positions as managers, directors *etc.*, and the possibilities of young native women with grade ten to twelve, or commercial certificates, being employed in office work, but this was apparently to be at the discretion of DIAND. In CAP's 1969-70 *Support Contract Proposal* (CAP, 1969f:36), it was emphasized that "one of the most important aspects of training and development concerns our Eskimo staff" and:

The importance of maintaining this training program cannot be stressed too strongly, yet the Department has been less than fully cooperative in meeting our requests for Eskimo people. The two, who are currently on our payroll, arrived merely by accident; and our requests for specific and non-specific individuals have met with little success.

It was anticipated that "in time, some individuals will emerge who can assume positions of real responsibility within the Company," but this did not happen for a long time.

In spite of its many efforts to bring Inuit on side, CAP continued to be beat out by the competition. In 1978, it was reported that the inventory problem would not improve because of:

...increased pressure on prices and the temptation on the part of suppliers to consider only the short term wherein they by-pass their own

organization, C.A.P. to deal through other agents who do not perform the many functions such as accounting and marketing that C.A.P. does...by dealing through such intermediaries they are ignoring the need for appropriate promotional effort to sustain long term market viability (CAP, 1978a:13).

CAP's arbitrary adjusting of carving prices was a major bone of contention for the co-ops and, in a 1977 bid to win over the producers, CAP had paid the asking price rather than, as had been the practice, depreciating or returning shipments. The hope was for producer loyalty, but the result was decreased profits.

In an open letter from the presidents of CACFL and CAP (CAP/CACFL, 1981a), reference is made to "the lack of understanding on the part of non-members" which is attributed to "an apparent conflict between efficiency and democracy." Alex Laidlaw (CUC president) was quoted at length to the effect that it is a dilemma for co-ops to keep the two in balance, but that efficiency at the sacrifice of democratic involvement is a "death warrant" (p.2):

Look back over the history of co-operatives in this country in the past 75 or so years and you will find two stories repeated over and over again. One tells about a co-operative organized with everything going for it, need, capital and reasonably good management, but lacking members who knew what it was all about or who had any sense of commitment to a cause. Many hundreds of such co-operatives have come and gone, and they didn't leave even a ripple to tell where they sank. But there is the other kind: the co-operatives started with little or nothing except dedicated and well informed members, and these have lived through every conceivable adversity or set-back you can imagine. For me, the lesson is this: not mere efficiency but the human element is, in the long run, the backbone of a co-operative system.

CAP had not managed to secure "the human element" and, defeated on the co-op conversion issue, it was not likely to withstand pressure to amalgamate with CACFL which, in 1978 initiated yet another challenge to CAP's dominance;

namely, the moving of its retailing chain, Northern Images, south. Previously, the chain had been confined to operating north of the 60th parallel.

Northern Images moves south

The possibility of opening a southern Northern Images store had been discussed at CACFL's 1978 annual general meeting and the joint CAP/CACFL committee was asked to make a recommendation. It reported (CAP, 1978c) that: "The Committee foresees that extending Northern Images south of the 60th parallel would hurt the operations of C.A.P. by competing." But since Northern Images, a retail operation, could afford to pay more to the producers, it was recommended that it be extended south and that it purchase at least 50% of its inventory from CAP. The Committee pronounced itself "convinced" that Northern Images would do well in the South, and that it would benefit the membership. There was, however, a predictable negative response to this proposal from CAP directors who wanted to protect southern business from what they perceived to be government subsidized competition. One director said that "if Northern Images moved south of the 60th parallel and is subsidized by the government, the business reaction would be unfavourable since business tends to be against government subsidized competition" (CAP, 1978d:2). But CACFL president, Louis Tapardjuk, maintained that Northern Images is "a viable business" and, in any case:

...the main concern was Inuit shareholders. Since there was not much opportunity in the North for economic activity, there could be greater opportunity for more independence for native people if the organization could be made stronger. He felt that if Northern Images had to purchase 100% of their inventory from C.A.P. they would do so but that this would be a good vehicle for Inuit to gain some measure of power.

CAP was opposed to the move on the grounds that it would alienate some of its wholesalers, but it also feared losing out on volume and quality of inventory. Staff felt that Northern Images (in the North) was already creaming off the most saleable carvings which were being shipped from the co-ops directly to Northern Images stores:

While we are not suggesting that carvings should come first to C.A.P. only to be shipped back north, there is a danger here that C.A.P.'s supply of smaller carvings, which provide good turnover and which southern retailers need, could be seriously depleted (CAP, 1978d:annex).

But the Inuit on the board held their ground in arguing that Northern Images should be supported as a way to make the co-ops stronger and to increase returns to producers.

CACFL was on a roll. Northern Images Edmonton opened in September 1981, provoking an outcry from dealers who argued that since CACFL had government funding, Northern Images could be construed as the government competing with them, an argument which conveniently ignored the fact that dealers had been benefitting for years from subsidized production and promotion. In spite of the opposition to Northern Images' southward extension, there can be no question that, from the producers' point of view, it made sense. As Raymond Ningeachak said (CAP/CACFL, 1979b:7): "Inuit should be able to sell their own goods instead of leaving it to others." Art was clearly being perceived as a locus of Inuit power.

Chapter Thirteen

Convergence: CAP & CACFL Amalgamate and Quebec and the NWT Shake Hands

The late seventies were watershed years for the arctic co-op movement. In spite of opposition from CAP management, beleaguered CAP was on its way to becoming a co-op so that it could be swallowed up by CACFL, and Northern Images was expanding south. Dominated for over a decade by the bureaucracy, the NWT co-op movement had assumed a dynamic of its own, one which eventually led to a limited degree of cooperation with the Quebec movement. Once CAP/CACFL was run by Inuit, FCNQ honoured its promise to cooperate with the NWT co-ops, first in the area of purchasing for the northern retail stores and, later, in a joint marketing venture known as Tuttavik ("a point of convergence").

The struggle to amalgamate

The amalgamation of CACFL and CAP was discussed in 1978 at the same general meeting that voted to move Northern Images to the South. The manager of CACFL, Ted Sabine, thinks that the first mention of amalgamation occurred at the second board meeting of CACFL in 1973 (Sabine, 1980). It was certainly discussed at virtually every meeting involving NWT Inuit afterwards. Formal lines of communication between the two organizations were established only in 1978 when it was agreed, at a CACFL board meeting, that CACFL and CAP "should establish a joint committee of Inuit directors with a view to strengthening the

relationship between CACFL and CAP and to examine long-term ownership relations" (CAP, 1978b). The committee met October 6, 1978 and reported to CAP's October board meeting (in CAP, 1978d:appendix) its conclusion that the answer to the problem of the marketing of native arts and crafts was the amalgamation of CAP and CACFL: "The shareholders own both organizations [but], with the present system, it is very difficult for the shareholders to have power which they would have if the two organizations were amalgamated."

CACFL's reasons for promoting amalgamation were explained by Ted Sabine in an interview with *Co-op North*, a joint CACFL and CAP publication (Sabine, 1980:5). He considered that having two organizations was a waste of resources, giving as an example the high cost of separate board meetings which involved bringing directors from 37 co-ops to Yellowknife or to Ottawa by air.¹ Also, CAP's poor image in the North was, he said, a continuing obstacle: "I think that somewhere along the way CAP has lost the heart of the membership. I see some member co-ops in effect trying to cheat CAP by putting on excessive mark-ups." CAP, he said, needed CACFL so that it "could gain back credibility with the membership." Sabine anticipated initial "antagonism from the private sector," much as there had been when CACFL first opened its retailing chain, Northern Images, but thought that this would eventually dissipate. Concerning the benefits to producers that would result from amalgamation, he considered that:

Since this new organization would be a co-operative, we can say that

¹ At that time, it was costing \$80,000 annually for directors' travel.

situation must not be allowed to continue, as not only does it confuse the minds of the Eskimo people and affect their industry and economy, but it has a destructive, demoralizing influence on the staff of C.A.P., who have laboured hard to increase the annual returns to the North, to the point it now approaches -- a million dollars.

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In an interview with *Co-op North*, CAP's general manager, said: "If I had to go on record today I guess I would be against it..." (Leitch, 1980:4). The reasons he gave were the opposition of dealers if CAP got involved in retailing through Northern Images, the southern expansion of which was inextricably linked to discussions of amalgamation, and, perhaps most significant:

...some of CAP's major members -- northern co-ops which don't have a lot to do with the federation, for whatever reason (just as some co-ops don't have a lot to do with CAP) -- have also indicated that they would be opposed to an amalgamation. If it were forced through, we might possibly have three or four major co-ops which would not go along willingly with the idea and the question in my mind is, to what degree does that give them a reason to band together and pull out of CAP. At least one of those co-ops has indicated they would stop supporting CAP if there was an amalgamation (p.2).

Leitch also said he was afraid dealers might start "thinking about forming their own wholesaling organization" and "giving some northern producing co-ops the opportunity to perhaps do the same thing."² He added: "We are talking about amalgamation being used to pull everyone together, but it could work in a divisive way." It could indeed.

The law firm of Cooper, Johnson *et. al.*, had been hired to investigate the ability of CACFL to amalgamate with CAP, under the Cooperatives Associations Ordinance of the Northwest Territories. As it turned out, it was not legally possible for CAP, a federally incorporated co-operative, to amalgamate with

² The dealers *did* start thinking about forming their own wholesaling organization, but not until 1987 when, as a result of growing complaints of lack of quality in carvings and lack of attention from CAP to dealers, the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council hosted a meeting at which a fine art organization to be run by dealers was discussed. Of course, Cape Dorset had by then succeeded in setting up its own marketing division, which some saw as a model.

CACFL, a territorially incorporated co-op, and various alternatives for a merger were reviewed by Cooper *et al.*, who recommended that "the best way of proceeding would be to have the Federation acquire all of the shares in CAP from the various shareholder members of CAP and to issue to such shareholder members further shares in the Federation" (Cooper, Johnson, *et al.*, 1979:8).

Consultant Barry Roberts was hired by the two boards to research methods by which amalgamation could be effected, and the idea of a joint management co-operative was one of four options he presented. This option was not a true amalgamation, but "a degree of merger achieved by the two organizations using a single board of directors and adopting identical by-laws" (*News of the North*, 1980b:12).

CACFL and CAP signed a management agreement with Arctic Cooperatives Limited (ACL) which was set up as a management co-op.³ One objective of ACL, a co-operative without share capital, was to seek changes in legislation to permit full amalgamation and, as was pointed out in a *Co-op North* (CAP/CACFL, 1981b:7):

It is the intent of the joint boards that this management co-op will have as one of its prime functions the integration of the management and other components of the two existing organizations in an efficient and cost-effective manner that will permit a full amalgamation by 1983, if the required changes in legislation have occurred by then.

³ Roberts had received legal advice that it would be "faster and cheaper" to incorporate the management group as "a business corporation rather than as a co-operative," but even though this would provide "more flexibility both in terms of its initial organization and subsequent operation than a co-operative would," it was Roberts' view that "most co-op members and organizations would prefer that the management group was a co-op within the co-operative system" (Roberts, 1980:3).

Although the formation of ACL, the joint management co-operative, meant that "for a time," there were *three* separate corporate entities, constituents were enjoined "to think of them as one federation providing a complete service to its member co-ops" (CAP/CACFL, 1981b:7). The board of ACL was composed of fourteen directors, twelve members (elected representatives of districts) and two non-members appointed by DIAND and the GNWT. Guidelines stipulated that the position of chief executive officer, appointed by the board, would "be a salaried one and will normally be filled by a person of native descent." The board was, however, empowered to "waive this requirement and appoint a non-native when, in its considered judgement, there is no native person available to carry out the duties" (CAP/CACFL, 1981b:8). The new chief executive officer was CACFL president Andrew Goussaert.

The road to amalgamation was not a smooth one, since not all the co-ops were in favour of this move. The member co-ops which did the most business with CAP, specifically, Baker Lake and Cape Dorset, "had questions" (CAP, 1980a:8). Terry Ryan of the West Baffin Eskimo co-op and a government appointee to CAP's board, said that Cape Dorset "was not against amalgamation but that it did not know what amalgamation meant." He added that "speaking against amalgamation, is like speaking against motherhood or fine weather." He admitted that he "was not personally in favour of one Board representing such a large organization as would result from amalgamation." An Inuk director, Alan Maktak, spoke in favour of amalgamation and accused CAP of "not thinking about

what the Inuit might learn and said that the CACFL thinks more about Inuit training" (p.9). He thought that if there were two organizations working for the Inuit separately they would eventually be fighting together.

Government appointee Gunther Abrahamson "appealed for patience with CAP" and "reminded delegates that all the experts had said that Inuit art wouldn't last, yet it has grown for twenty years and one of the reasons was because CAP knew what it was doing. Inuit prints alone had been worth \$10 million to the people who produced them" (p.10). Strictly speaking, the decision could not be made by the co-ops; for, as Abrahamson also reminded the delegates: "Under the Government's loan agreement with CAP the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs could agree or disagree with amalgamation," although the government "would not want to stand in the way of the Inuit" (p.11).

The conflict over amalgamation, like the conflict over conversion of CAP to a co-operative, represented a struggle on the part of Inuit to run their own affairs. It was a struggle compromised by the interference of bureaucrats and CAP management who, concerned to maintain the successful marketing structure they had developed for Inuit art, resisted the Inuit take-over being actively promoted by CACFL. In 1980, CACFL president Louis Tapardjuk sent a letter to co-op presidents and managers on the amalgamation question in which he expressed concern about the marketing of arts and crafts:

From my observations and study over the past few years, I am convinced that we must take immediate action, to strengthen our marketing system, or risk the loss of any kind of organized marketing, within the next few years (Tapardjuk, 1980).

He expressed the strong belief that amalgamation was the only solution and that: "We, the Inuit and Dene people of the Northwest Territories, must realize that most southern art galleries do not agree with, or support, our Co-operative system of marketing our art and handicraft work." He enclosed with his letter two form letters, for and against amalgamation, asking that one be signed and returned. These letters did not authorize decision-making, but were intended merely to canvas the opinion of the presidents and managers.

DIAND still had to be brought on side and, in December of 1980, Goussaert, chairman of the amalgamation steering committee, sent a letter to John Munro, Minister of IAND to inform him that CAP and CACFL "had recommended the formation of a management co-operative to bring the two co-operative organizations under the direction of one board of directors" (CACFL, 1980d). Reminding the minister of the support provided the co-ops by the federal government, he requested his "personal assistance and the assistance of [his] department to clear all legal matters preventing the true amalgamation of both organizations in the very near future."

Unity the goal

The objectives of the combined organization were set out in reports by the amalgamation steering committee to the joint boards of directors and included a wide range of development services (marketing all products, tourism, transportation, *etc.*), as well as cooperation with the southern cooperative movement, FCNQ, and the native development corporations which were being set

up as the result of land claims settlements. The new organization would also seek "to share in the proceeds of any NWT land claims settlement so as to ensure a source of funding for future development" (CACFL, 1981a:appendix 1:1-2).

"Education, promotion and information programs," it was stressed, were essential "to avoid the dangers from centralization," and it was recommended, that co-ops be run by local, *i.e.*, Eskimo, managers as soon as possible (appendix 2:1-2).

While it was acknowledged that "NWT co-ops should remain entities by themselves," there was a warning: "Member co-ops that are going on a 'gravy trip' are showing grave irresponsibility and endangering the existence of co-ops in the NWT and should be told immediately that unless changes follow, no further assistance will be given to them."

It was also decided that the three entities -- CAP, CACFL and ACL -- should form one federation as soon as possible. Unity was a clear goal, and Tapardjuk was delegated to contact other native organizations in the interests of "promoting unification of native organizations" (appendix 2:5):

All our efforts should be geared towards unification if we want to give our people a chance. The coming years are going to be crucial with the growing influx of people into the north. If we are divided, we will have less chance to control the development. From there we can see the great importance of a united front for all the native organizations; IDC [the Inuit Development Corporation], Dene Nation and others should pool all resources to have them work in the most efficient way to create a better society for all, protected from exploitation.

The opening of a Northern Images store in Edmonton was part of the amalgamation movement and was included in the steering committee's report; for, taken in opposition to CAP, the dealers and the Professional Art Dealers'

Association, it was a demonstration of the right of Inuit to make decisions in their own interest.

The steering committee discussed other areas of decision making which it considered the domain of the co-ops. Noting, for instance, that soapstone supply was a problem, it was decided "that the new federation makes [sic] it clear to all concerned that it considers the mining, distribution and inter-settlement trade of carving stone to be a responsibility of the co-operative movement" (appendix 2:7). The new mood was clearly towards having co-ops directed by their members. As the presidents of CAP and CACFL explained in their open letter (appendix 3:1-7):

Put very simply, a co-operative is an organization which permits its customers (members) to direct its management. The northern co-op movement, then, can be described as all of those people in the many native co-operatives throughout the Arctic who believe there is a way for them to play an important part in their social and economic development by establishing and operating efficient and democratic co-operative enterprises.

After the January 1981 meeting of the steering committee, Goussaert again wrote the minister of IAND, this time to ask for the "withdrawal" of all appointed Board members on CAP and CACFL in order that "a fully elected Board" could direct the operations of both organizations:

This might be a very good time to consider relaxation of these government conditions. Appropriate means are available to protect government interests, be it through an advisory board consisting of government employees and management or through submission of minutes and reports. It certainly would be an expression of trust and confidence in the northern people (CACFL, 1981b).

In the meantime, the Inuit presidents of CAP and CACFL were busy trying to

quell dissenting voices. In the open letter from Louis Tapardjuk (CACFL president) and Senator Willie Adams (CAP president), published in *Co-op North* February 1981, northerners were informed that on December 10, 1980 CAP and CACFL had signed a memorandum of agreement "recommending to our memberships the formation of a management co-operative that would serve as a stepping stone on the way to a full amalgamation of our two organizations by 1983." This move was, they said, "the culmination of years of effort by many members who have a deeply felt need for a single organization throughout the Northwest Territories that can represent their hopes and interests in a strong, united co-operative movement" (CAP/CACFL, 1981a).

The Tapardjuk/Adams letter attempted to address concerns of all interested parties: managers and staff, member co-ops, native development corporations, governments, dealers in native arts and crafts and "our sister co-operatives in the south." The presidents apparently considered they were accountable to several different constituencies, including the staff of CAP and CACFL whose insecurities and resistances were acknowledged and whose "welfare and security" were considered a top priority.

The co-ops opposed to amalgamation, which included the relatively wealthy and powerful West Baffin Eskimo Co-op in Cape Dorset, were assured that the new federation would do nothing to change their "earning power or to endanger [their] assets." They would continue to receive returns based on the amount of business they did with CAP and their shares in CAP would not be touched but

merely transferred to the new federation at the same \$1 value they had always had. They were, therefore, asked "to put small doubts aside in the interests of native unity."

The newly established native development corporations were given the clear message that co-ops were there first and would continue to "serve the native people of the NWT." As a co-op director is reported to have said: "The co-ops were the first native development corporations." It was acknowledged, however, that there was room for newcomers and the participation of the development corporations was welcome in the task of helping Inuit to "regain their rightful places in a society of their own making." Talks had begun between the presidents of CACFL and the Inuit Development Corporation, and it was agreed that after amalgamation the directors of the two organizations would meet in joint session. "We look forward to that moment, just as we look forward to every opportunity that becomes available for us to work together with all of the native development corporations for the benefit of our peoples," Tapardjuk and Adams wrote.

As for governments, they were thanked for financial and technical assistance and it was hoped that, "as a very important part of the northern economy, we will continue to receive support in the same way as that received by many institutions across the country." Addressing a criticism typically directed at co-ops, the presidents wrote:

We note that some people regard this support as evidence that the co-operative movement is a government-subsidized commercial enterprise. We also note the views of officials who no longer resist co-operativism, claiming that it is "better than welfare." We point out that, because of its

principles, the northern co-operative movement willingly collaborates with governments in carrying out educational, training and social tasks that would otherwise be the responsibility of government. We see little or no evidence of any other northern business being willing to do the same.

In an impassioned defense of the co-op movement, they added:

Because of this, we deny the contention that we are an organization subsidized by government. Rather, we see ourselves as a democratic organization which has opted to work with governments (and with all others who are willing) to bring to our people many of their basic needs, an improved standard of living, new education and skills, job opportunities and the chance to manage their own affairs. The co-operative movement is the single largest employer of native people in the north. Its member co-ops are the focal point of many communities. Its achievements are a source of pride for its members. We ask you to recognize its worth.

Dealers were told that the new organization would have "little, if any, effect on [their] operations, unless it be in terms of improvements in our services." The presidents had "a special word" for dealers opposed to Northern Images expanding south. Maintaining that they had the right to expand, they assured them they had no intention of jeopardizing the gains made by dealers who had made efforts over the past 25 years:

Yet we are constantly aware, as producers, that much needs to be done if we are to grow as a movement and if our individual members are to receive the returns they expect from their labours. We see areas of the country where retail outlets for northern arts and crafts have not been set up; we see a few centres where the best efforts of retailers have not been able to take full advantage of the marketing opportunities available; we see enormous potential for retail sales in centres outside of Canada.

And to their sister co-ops, they promised they would turn for help, citing Dr.

Laidlaw's remarks that:

...the development of co-operatives for the native peoples has, by and large, fallen to government and receives only minimal support from the well-established co-operative organizations -- for every co-op leader who

has taken the trouble to journey North to look at arctic co-operatives, perhaps a hundred have gone to faraway countries to study other co-operative systems at first hand.

Inuit have their way

In spite of opposition from all sources, the pro-amalgamation forces succeeded in effecting a full, legal amalgamation of CAP and CACFL in 1982. In 1985, after several financially bad years, the new organization, known as Arctic Co-operatives Limited, re-located to Winnipeg.

The net result of struggles in the Northwest Territories and Quebec was, then, two central agencies -- Arctic Co-operatives Limited (ACL) and La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec (FCNQ) -- which, in the normal course of events could be expected to consolidate in third-tier development, a confederation. But although some small moves were made in this direction -- joint purchasing and marketing efforts, for instance -- it is unlikely that this will occur without a further battle, the only logical proponents of which would be Inuit seeking unity across provincial lines.

One impetus to such unity may be sparked by the necessity of dealing with mutual problems, chief of which in the eighties are the alarming inroads being made by entrepreneurs who are a serious threat to the arts and crafts marketing monopoly long shared by the co-ops and the Hudson's Bay Company.

Quebec and NWT relations

Although not invaded to the same extent as the NWT -- because it controlled a smaller territory and there were fewer "stars" to attract entrepreneurs -- FCNQ

was also being affected by an increasingly fragmented market. Inventories were growing and DIAND had rejected FCNQ's recommendation (presented at a 1978 meeting) to write them off. At that meeting of the major agencies involved in Inuit art marketing, FCNQ also proposed an amalgamation of the marketing operations of the co-ops in the Northwest Territories and Arctic Quebec. The brief presented at the meeting stated:

It is our conviction that competition in the development of Eskimo art is not in the people's interest -- an amalgamated marketing agency is proposed as the only dignified solution to what has become a situation fraught with confusion, inefficiency and vested interests (Myers, 1978:30).

This suggestion was a surprise, coming from isolationist Quebec which had insisted on pursuing a separate destiny, but it was not a bolt out of the blue. A recommendation of the second co-op conference had been for federations, and then confederations at a national level, following the customary pattern of integration in co-operative movements. Presumably, what FCNQ was proposing would have been a step in this direction. The proposal was not favourably received by CAP which was then resisting a take-over by CACFL.

Relations had always been strained between CAP and FCNQ. After the Povungnituk Conference in 1966, a CAP director (Ralph Staples) reported to the board that there had been a request that CAP and the Povungnituk Sales Office be coordinated (CAP, 1966c). Staples planned to go to Quebec the following week to pursue this suggestion, but he might have known that Quebec would not be interested in cooperating with the NWT since it was at that same conference that Aurèl St. Amant from the Caisse Populaire Desjardins had declared that the

destiny of Quebec's Inuit rested with the province of Quebec. This should have been a signal to Staples but, in 1967, he reported (CAP, 1967a) that he considered correspondence with Daneau of CCQ and a meeting with Peter Murdoch (FCNQ general manager) to be encouraging contacts. By fall of that year, CAP's minutes (1967c) reported, under the heading "Quebec Sales Organization," that "no new information was available and a wait-and-see policy was agreed upon."

It seems that CAP was at first genuinely interested in providing assistance to the Quebec co-ops, in spite of the fact that the decision of the arctic Quebec co-ops to market through the Povungnituk sales office would reduce CAP's annual sales by approximately \$160,000. Of course, there was hope that CAP would eventually succeed in subsuming the sales office. In CAP's minutes of January 1968 (CAP, 1968a), it was reported that the chairman had been asked to meet with Daneau and Murdoch to discuss the desirability of having one marketing outlet rather than two. "In this situation," it was noted, "it is important to isolate marketing aspects and discuss them in a practical light." This is probably an oblique reference to political differences.

Either in the spirit of altruism or in the hope of making inroads, when Evans (DIAND) reported to CAP in May 1968 (CAP, 1968d) that FCNQ's board had cut back Povungnituk's production by sixty per cent (presumably because of low sales) and that this would affect income in the community, it was agreed that CUC officers "should contact Daneau [of the CCQ] and seek his advice on how CAP might offer assistance, indicating that CAP is willing to discuss the matter

with FCNQ." Evans had already enquired whether there was any way CAP could help FCNQ overcome "the situation in which it now found itself."

These overtures were rejected and, in October 1968, the new chair of CAP (CUC president Alex Laidlaw) was asked to pursue the question of coordination in an informal way with Daneau of the CCQ (CAP, 1968e) This meeting had not materialized by March 1969 (as reported in CAP, 1969a) although Phalen reported that it had been set up to occur during the CUC congress in Winnipeg. The minutes of July 11, 1969 make, however, no mention of such a meeting having taken place, only an agreement that "the door should be kept open for discussion with the Quebec group regarding marketing" (CAP, 1969a).

The 1968 study of CAP by L.E. Lokken, commissioned by DIAND, had strongly recommended that CAP amalgamate with FCNQ after achieving independence from CUC.⁴ "It would seem desirable," he wrote (p.9) "that there should be only one sales agency handling carvings and handicrafts for the north." The reasons he gave were better quality control, standardized pricing and elimination of competition. But FCNQ remained aloof. At a meeting of representatives from the Quebec government, DIAND and FCNQ in June 1969, Evans (DIAND) "requested to know whether there was a possibility of the Federation and CAP working together as one unit instead of as in the present wherein they are more or less competing with each other." Peter Murdoch's

⁴ CAP was, he noted(p.1), "not a legal entity in its own right," but "a non-profit organization operated under the Co-operative Union of Canada."

reply was that FCNQ's first board of directors had said they would be willing to have further discussions on this "when the board of directors of CAP were Native peoples (FCNQ, 1969:2).

In the years following, there were a few isolated encounters such as a lunch involving members of both boards "to discuss matters of common interest" (CAP, 1971a). All of the overtures came from CAP and they were invariably rejected by FCNQ.

Moves towards unity

In years to come, there was no pretense, even, at civility between the two organizations. Eventually, however, the competition from free traders, tightening markets, increasing inventories at both CAP and FCNQ, rejuvenated competition from the HBC, ever-increasing frustrations in dealing with the GNWT, and mounting pressure from Inuit in both regions, forced some cooperation in the area of marketing. Once CAP was owned and controlled by native people and the process of amalgamation with CACFL was underway, FCNQ had no real reason not to cooperate.

In the late seventies, prompted by mutual problems of declining sales and increasing inventories, FCNQ and CAP held several joint meetings to develop a proposal for the federal government. Representatives from both organizations met with the Minister of IAND, Judd Buchanan, in 1978 to present those proposals, but nothing ever came of this initiative. Another small step towards cooperation occurred later that year in 1978 when FCNQ made space available in

its Montreal headquarters for a small ACL purchasing office to supply retail stores in the eastern Arctic.

In spite of CAP's previous pursuit of cooperation with FCNQ, when the Tuttavik Proposal was presented by FCNQ in 1978, it provoked undisguised hostility. CAP had argued in 1969 (1969f:25) that the only efficient way to develop markets and combat the "free traders" was through "a central marketing authority," but they now declared themselves in favour of free enterprise. Tuttavik, they maintained, was a proposal for a monopoly that was against everything a democratic country such as Canada supported, a position which can only be interpreted as hypocritical, given the ongoing efforts of CAP, abetted by the federal government, to secure a monopoly position for itself.

The irrationality of this position was revealed the last day of the meeting which was, at FCNQ's suggestion, devoted to "a logical exercise" to link in theory at least, the producer and consumer. After a day discussing history, contingencies, production and marketing priorities *etc.*, it was agreed that the ideal structure to meet all the needs of all the players would be *one* centralized institution linking producers to the market.

While Tuttavik was regarded with suspicion by non-natives -- who were clearly frightened that FCNQ would assume control of CAP and all the fine art in the NWT -- it received spontaneous and virtually unanimous agreement in principle from Inuit. Their accord was based upon a desire for unity -- some were beginning to perceive this as the basis for political power within Canada -- and a

desire to preserve an activity that was important to them. As Kasadluak, president of FCNQ said (Myers, 1978:68), Tuttavik "was not designed to save the sculpture in little pieces but to preserve an atmosphere in which [it] can continue to be." The vice-president, Matiusie Amarualik, said at the same meeting (p.83): "We do not want the Government to act as our fathers."

The rejection of the Tuttavik proposal by the non-native establishment can be explained rather simply. The debate was clearly between those who wanted the system strengthened in order that the market for the commodity, craft as well as art, would continue to flourish for the benefit of a majority of Inuit and those whose first commitment was to "fine art." The first group would include FCNQ and most Inuit in Quebec and the NWT. The second group, although a numerical minority, included non-natives influential in the fine art establishment and unimpressed with FCNQ's art savvy.

But Tuttavik did not die, in spite of the opposition. Talking it up among themselves, Inuit kept the flame alive. Paulosie Kasadluak attended the NWT co-ops' presidents' conference in Yellowknife in March 1978 and, in his opening address, told delegates (CACFL, 1978:2, 7): "All co-ops should work together" and "We must find a way of supporting our own Co-operatives; we can't always rely on Government grants." At this meeting, he distributed FCNQ's Tuttavik proposal that one marketing agency be formed to market products from both NWT and Quebec (p.10). CACFL president Goussaert endorsed the plan saying "that it was in line with what Co-operatives were wanting during 66-67" and that

"retail stores would fit in well with this plan."

In April 1978, DIAND commissioned "A Preliminary Analysis of the Tuttavik Proposal," by J.A. Barnhill who had been the chief author of the BMC study of the arctic co-op system. Referring to the co-op study, Barnhill reiterated that there is a need for improvement in the performance of FCNQ, CACFL and CAP and concluded that Tuttavik was consistent with the recommendations of the Povungnituk conference and consisted a revival of CUC's 1968 plan for a confederation of arctic co-op federations. He considered (*p.i*) that:

In terms of strategy, the Tuttavik proposal is progressive and consistent with prevalent strategies being carried out by major companies across North America, notably the merging and consolidating of their operations, upgrading their products and services and aligning distribution channels more precisely with their market(s).

The Barnhill analysis ended with a recommendation that a more extensive marketing study be undertaken. This had been DIAND's interest all along, but FCNQ had refused to cooperate with such a study until it was tied in with the Tuttavik proposal.⁵ Barnhill also recommended that FCNQ receive \$20,000 to develop the Tuttavik proposal with NWT Inuit.

No concrete moves towards Quebec/NWT cooperation occurred, however, until the 1980 Pan Arctic Conference in George River where it was resolved that CAP and CACFL should amalgamate and that, within three months, the two co-op federations should meet "to discuss their respective marketing systems and the need for a unified effort through a marketing agency such as Tuttavik"

⁵ The market study, conducted by C.Kennedy May and Associates, was completed in 1983 with indifferent results.

(CACFL, 1980c:4). This meeting was to take place even if CACFL and CAP failed to amalgamate.

As an interim step, ACL and FCNQ agreed to a joint marketing arrangement for carvings and prints. Both federations began marketing mixed Quebec/NWT stock, and Northern Images stores carried arctic Quebec products. FCNQ had set up a Toronto showroom which, in 1986, became the headquarters for a combined marketing operation called Tuttavik. With a board composed of directors from both ACL and FCNQ, Tuttavik is a financial venture, not part and parcel of the Inuit unity movement. Indeed, it is my opinion that ACL and FCNQ management supported Tuttavik as a sop to incipient nationalistic aspirations among their respective Inuit constituencies and, far from encouraging unity among Inuit, each organization is interested in holding onto its power base. In doing so, they may have weakened the co-op movement without, however, stemming the drive for native rights. I shall have more to say about this in the following chapters in which I analyze the effect of the cooperatives on Inuit relationships.

Challenges old and new facing the co-ops

The biggest threat to the arctic co-op movement at this time is a lack of member unity which is resulting in the sacrifice of long-term goals for short-term gains. Although the co-op is owned by its members, producers often by-pass it, selling carvings for quick cash increasingly available from "free traders" who invade the northern communities. Some retail and some wholesale; either way, they are challenging the supremacy, perhaps even the survival, of the arctic co-ops.

From the beginning, CAP has beseeched co-ops and producers to support its marketing vision. A similar refrain has been heard in Quebec where the co-ops and the federation argue that, without them, the Eskimo art phenomenon would not have happened. Both CAP and FCNQ consider that they have entitlement because they have invested money, time and effort to develop and maintain a continuing market for Inuit art and crafts. They are, they say, concerned with long-range goals, and it is the investment they have made in exhibitions, promotional materials and expensive and lengthy educational meetings that accounts for the commercial success of Inuit art which is now being ripped off by "private traders" or, as they are often called, "pirates." As CAP's general manager put it (DIAND, 1979b):

The various entrepreneurs who bid up carving prices at their source...don't have that much at stake in the long run. Because they don't engage in those activities that can assure the long-term success of Inuit art, as CAP does, they can afford to pay higher prices than CAP.

At a meeting in Frobisher Bay in 1979 (reported in CAP/CACFL, 1979a:l), he used the example of the Iqaluit co-op which was selling carvings through a new wholesaler based in Toronto, to point out that the private dealer paid only for the carvings he sold, while CAP paid within 30 days for every carving it received. "This meant that co-ops who sold privately have to carry the burden of their own inventory, while CAP carries the inventory of its member co-ops." The same issue of *Co-op North* contained a long article entitled "What CAP does" (p.10) and a

chart (p.6) showing "Where the Money goes."⁶

The competition from dealers is becoming more acute. In 1989, an exchange of letters was carried in *Inuit Art Quarterly* (Inuit Art Foundation, 1989a;1989b) between George Swinton and Paul Hallett, president of Nunavut Fine Arts Limited, a private Toronto retail gallery, now closed. In response to Swinton's criticism that his gallery was harming the co-ops by creaming off the more saleable items, Hallett replied:

We prefer to view this as being selective in our buying. We would not be in business long if we filled our gallery with airport gift shop craft items. Indeed, the co-ops' indiscriminant buying policy has done little to raise the reputation of Inuit art in the long term.

As for the argument that he and other "free traders" were exploiting Inuit, Hallett responded that they represent "another option" and that "the virtual monopoly on Inuit art held by the co-ops and the Hudson's Bay Company for so long had its own exploitive aspects." From his perspective, and that of others, government-supported co-ops were unfair competition to private enterprise.

Having succeeded beyond anyone's expectations in developing the market, the co-ops are having difficulty maintaining their dominance. The acting supervisor of co-ops for the GNWT warned delegates to the third co-op conference in George River: "Co-operatives presently control the arts and crafts industry in the north but it can be quickly lost if unity in the co-operative system is lost" (ACL/FCNQ, 1980a:79). Isolated and cash-poor, it is, however, often

⁶ Revenue from a carving retailing for \$450 was broken down as follows: \$100 to artist; \$50 to co-op; \$75 to CAP and \$225 to retailer.

difficult for co-ops and/or producers to turn away buyers on the spot with cash in hand. The problems of initial under-capitalization and lack of producer loyalty to co-ops and second-tier development are coming home to roost.

The co-op and the Hudson's Bay Company

The envigorated marketing thrust of the HBC may be an even more serious challenge to the co-ops whose early success can be at least partially attributed to the HBC's varying but often indifferent attitude towards the marketing of Inuit arts and crafts. The Company's early interest was in fur, and it became involved in handicraft only as a means to keep Inuit producing. Although it collaborated with the Canadian Handicrafts Guild and Houston, there is no evidence that the HBC was disturbed when the responsibility for arts and crafts was wrested away by eager bureaucrats. Once the co-ops were in place, local posts continued to purchase only sporadically, apparently not considering the co-ops a serious threat. Ironically, however, the HBC's lack of a consistent buying policy enabled the co-ops, which bought everything produced, to gain a strong foothold.

The co-ops were perceived as more of a threat when they began opening retail stores in direct competition with the HBC posts. The HBC's response was to use the purchase of carvings as a pawn in the competition for retail business.⁷ With its greater purchasing power, the HBC has, historically, been able to undercut co-op prices although, as the co-ops achieved strength through

⁷ For several years FCNQ tried, unsuccessfully, to prevent the HBC from buying carvings, even asking the Minister of IAND to prevent the HBC from using the Eskimo art tag (registered by the state). FCNQ's argument, which failed to move the minister, was that quality control was impossible unless production was channelled through one outlet.

centralization, they have been able to compete more effectively.

Since co-ops are owned by their users, it might be supposed that they would be supported by them, but Inuit continue to support the HBC which represents security. The HBC has never released its figures, but it is generally estimated that Inuit divide their buying equally between HBC and co-op in those communities where the two co-exist, which is almost everywhere.

Inuit loyalty to the HBC stems from their appreciation of its having been around to avert famine and death in hard times. Also, some Inuit realize the advantage in having more than one source of consumer goods and more than one buyer for their carvings. The situation in many northern communities is that Inuit play the co-op off against the Hudson's Bay Company, making it difficult for the co-op to control prices or inventory. It was pointed out in the NWT co-op publication *Northern Lights* (CACFL, 1974b:3), that the HBC "and many other private companies" pay managers a yearly bonus based on sales. Therefore, "the higher the prices the more profit the store makes and the more money the manager earns as his bonus." This practice, the article says, is "generally not acceptable according to the business ethics (morals/principles) of co-operation" because:

The very idea of a co-op is to obtain goods and services at the lowest *actual cost* -- no fancy prices, hidden costs or gimmicks. If the manager is receiving a bonus on sales, then the members must pay more for their goods. It also means that each dollar the member spends in his *own* store buys him less merchandise.

Also, co-ops operate some services in the community, Inuit were told, such as post

offices and airline agencies that bring little or no profit. If higher sales were the objective, the manager would not "want to waste time and energy on these." This is, of course, the difference between co-ops and profit-making enterprises. The clash of the two philosophies was acutely felt in small communities.

It is interesting to note that, in the early days, the co-ops sometimes bought carvings from the HBC. CAP's general manager reported (CAP, 1967b) that the HBC will sell any quantity of Eskimo carvings to CAP at any time at HBC cost prices which, he noted, are lower than CAP cost prices" from the co-ops. Also, when FCNQ took over some co-op sales from CAP in 1967, it was mentioned that purchases from the HBC might "help take up some of the slack."

Apart from competition from the HBC and dealers, the NWT co-ops have had to compete with government employees buying and selling Eskimo products. "Subsidized buyers," Terry Ryan called them at the Airport-Hilton Meeting (Myers, 1978:57), adding that "dealers at least have to spend their own money to get north." The non-native managers of the co-op distribution agencies blame Inuit for such problems. As CAP's general manager put the case (CAP/CACFL, 1979a:2):

People in the North and south often ask how long will Inuit art survive? Different people have different ideas on this question, but the key to whether Inuit art will survive and grow lies in the support that artists and members give their own co-ops and CAP. Without that support and co-operation, if each artist and co-op goes its own way, then there will be no united effort and it will be every person for himself with everyone being the worse off.

The non-native managers may blame the Inuit, but Louis Tapardjuk, CACFL

president, put the blame on "the southern interests" (1979:1):

In my personal view, if C.A.P., C.A.C.F.L. and Government of N.W.T. had worked and established the market in coherency, we wouldn't be faced with these kinds of problems...Despite their good wills the southern interest had been the major problem in the development of sound lasting market. Because the native people have not been able to get what they want, out of mere frustration and politics, some co-operatives have opted out of the established marketing agency, and the Government of the Northwest Territories has not been any help for the interest of long term market of arts and crafts.

From the beginning, territorial bureaucrats had been reluctant to relinquish hands-on involvement in Inuit arts and crafts. Its policies have been frustratingly inconsistent. Although, in recent years it had been pursuing a policy of privatization, turning over some projects to the co-ops and closing others, it recently tabled (February 21, 1990) a new arts and crafts strategy which appears to be a regressive hands-on developmental approach based on shaky premises.

A new and serious challenge to the cooperative movement is coming from the development corporations which resulted from land claims negotiations. This threat was faced first in Quebec where the first treaty ever between Inuit and Canada, The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, was signed in 1975. Makivik, a development corporation created to channel the compensation monies, caused enormous dissension within the formerly unified Quebec co-op movement. FCNQ, which correctly perceives Makivik to be a legitimate threat to its non-mandated power, has supported three dissident co-ops in attempting to thwart Makivik although, in latter years, FCNQ has spearheaded a unity movement and the dissidents have tempered their opposition somewhat.

Part IV of this thesis deals with the political movement among Inuit, the rise to power of development corporations and the threat they pose to co-op hegemony. The real threat is lack of member loyalty, the classic problem in co-op movements. Although the original idea had been to have conferences of all the co-ops every three years, the third co-op conference was not held until 1980, 14 years after the second. Conference III, officially the culmination of the twentieth anniversary celebrations of the arctic co-op movement, was prompted by fears for the future of the movement. As Raymond Ningiutsiak said (ACL/FCNQ, 1980a:14): "The future of the co-op is now upon us and we have to decide how and in what direction we want to take our co-ops from here."

Although a certain financial success had been achieved (the number of active co-ops had doubled and the volume of business had increased well over tenfold to \$27 million annually), the emergence of political organizations and their offshoots, development corporations such as Makivik in arctic Quebec, were perceived as threatening by the co-ops which, prior to the mid seventies, had been the only organized voice Inuit had. As Paulosie Napartuk, president of FCNQ for many years and delegate to all three co-operative conferences told the third co-op conference (ACL/FCNQ, 1980a:12):

Considering what has taken place in the past and the common effort that was apparent in the past, considering the division and the diversity of organizations operating in the north now, it is very easy to see a conflict. And these conflicts are not being put down to any one thing. It is either conflict over land or other matters that are basic and very important to the north...We cannot afford to be divided. We cannot afford to have efforts that are distracting to each other. At this meeting we should consider how we are going to recover and what direction the co-op movement is going to

run. I do not encourage you to wait for any government to take the initiative.

Although politics dominated discussion, at this as at previous conferences, art and marketing were interwoven themes. Several delegates expressed their fear that the lack of unity would have negative repercussions on the marketing of sculpture.

Before discussing the clash of co-ops and native development corporations and what this augurs for the future of the co-op movement, in the final chapters of this section of the thesis I analyze the transformation of work, material culture and relationships effected by the co-operative movement.

Chapter Fourteen

The Effect of the Co-operative on Production and Means of Production: Inuit Hunters Become Producers of Arts and Crafts

In chapter six, I analyzed relationship changes which resulted from the combined effect of trader, missionary and police, and concluded that the undermining effect of the capitalist mode of production on the indigenous mode of production outweighed its buttressing effect. In all instances -- economic, political, ideological -- the IMP was being dominated by capital.

Trapping and casual labour had been added to subsistence hunting. Extended families, which had formerly been autonomous economic/social/political units, were being absorbed into communities where they could more easily be administered by the state and where the nuclear family was the unit of consumption and, increasingly, production. Shamanism, the ideology of hunters and gatherers, had been overshadowed by the god of Christian capitalists and the rules of property. It was, I concluded in chapter six, no longer a case of exploitation *between* modes of production, but of new relationships having penetrated the indigenous mode to the extent that pre-contact practices could no longer be sustained. Inuit did not beseech the souls of the animals to stick their legs in steel traps; nor the spirits of the ships to bring goods that they could help unload to earn money to buy traps. Such ideological practices would not have been congruent with new capitalist economic practices. Deference to anglophone bureaucrats and their Inuit intermediaries replaced deference to the most

they possessed no advantage in town living, hence the distinction noted by Vallee between nunamiut (people of the land) and kabloonamiut (more or less acculturated Inuit who could make their way in the white-dominated community).

The scene was set for a definitive move into capitalism and this was, indeed, an effect of the cooperative movement which, for the first time, cast Inuit as owners (but not capitalists). *All* Inuit were, in theory anyhow, still equal. The cooperative in capitalist societies is, however, as I have argued elsewhere (Myers, 1982a) an inherently contradictory form: producers are treated as equal in principle but, since their products are for exchange in a money market, they are unequal in practice, a dichotomy exacerbated by a lack of internal exchange. Because the dominant mode of production is capitalist, the tendency towards egalitarianism in the subordinate mode is definitively sacrificed to individual competition.

Although the co-op is, in name, communal, in *effect* it is capitalist. While, in name, Inuit cooperators exercise equal power (one member, one vote), in effect, the clout they wield and the benefits they reap are disproportionate to the point where, as I shall later discuss, there are strong, *i.e.*, wealthy, and weak co-ops, and, a relatively recent phenomenon, stronger and weaker producers, the former succeeding, as in Cape Dorset, in accruing relatively greater personal benefits. The co-op institutionalized inequality, transforming the role of talking chiefs to what, with thanks to Wallace Clement (1975), we might call a "native cooperative elite."

Following the format of this thesis, before summing up the over-all effect of the cooperative, I shall discuss its effect on the work done by Inuit, the means of production required, and the social relations engendered by production, as well as the results of labour and its disposition. Finally, in chapter 16, I discuss *inter-* and *intra-*ethnic relations and how these affected or were affected by production. The analysis is becoming increasingly complex as we are now dealing with multi-faceted and compounding effects, virtually impossible to capture adequately in linear discussion. This chapter deals with the effect of the co-operative on work done by Inuit and changes in the means of production.

Production: A mix of old and new

Although subsistence activities persisted to a certain extent, as they do still, production took on an entirely different character at this time. The co-op greatly enhanced opportunities for wage employment, becoming second only to the state in terms of jobs provided. It also succeeded in developing Inuit as simple commodity producers -- of stone sculpture mainly -- to a point far surpassing the trader's success in commodifying fur.

It is of considerable significance that the successful product was both stone and art, neither of which conflicts with products produced by non-natives. The Quebec co-ops attempted, for a while, to provide an alternative to selling furs through the HBC, but it was difficult to compete with the company which established the standards (prices were determined at the HBC auction), and the co-ops eventually resorted to selling through that auction themselves. Not

surprisingly, Inuit fur producers found that it was more expedient to sell to the local HBC rather than the co-op, since prices were higher and more consistent. Only those committed to co-op goals were willing to make short-term sacrifices.

Stone carving came into its own as the fur trade was declining. Rather than a cause and effect situation, it was a happy coincidence; for, people would not have embraced stone carving so enthusiastically if the fur trade were not so unreliable, and it was because the fur trade could realize more profits elsewhere that the state pushed the stone carving industry for Inuit. Rea (1968:179) made the point that, as in the development of other northern industries -- fishing, forestry, agriculture and manufacturing -- the fur trade did not decline because of an inability to develop further (*i.e.*, an exhaustion of necessary natural resources), but because private business concluded that it was no longer a profitable venture. Rea attributes the decline of the arctic fur trade in the late fifties to competition from southern fur farms and the fact that Inuit were unable to conceive of the principle of maximizing profit, but were content to satisfy immediate needs.

Inuit continued to trap, however, and there is some evidence that efforts were made to juggle carving activities with the harvesting of wild fur.¹ At

¹ Usher (1965:75-78) provided a breakdown of the annual cycle of economic activity for Banks Islanders where: "Trapping is the basis of the economic system, and other hunting activities may be seen as necessary for the perpetuation of trapping." Activity depends, he said, "upon the importance of various game species at different times of the year." In early July, the ice is almost broken up and open water seal hunting begins. This is also the time that some Inuit might find summer employment with the Department of Transport. In early September, snow begins to fall and the lake freezes. Activities now include cutting ice, mending or making traps, harnesses, toboggans and other equipment and getting the dogs ready. In October, special trips are made to hunt caribou and November 1 marks the opening of the trapping season which will last to mid-April. Usher reports that a man might spend 35 per cent of his time actually on the line and, in some instances, this could be as high as 50 or 60 per cent.

FCNQ's 1980 annual general meeting (1980b:159), the delegate from Ivujivik, Simon Luuku, informed the sales manager who wanted to know why FCNQ wasn't "getting more pelts" that: "Since the Sales Budget for carvings is down from last year, the people are working for more fur, both seal and fox. They are working particularly hard on their trap lines because there is a good fox population." And the delegate from Inukjuak, Lucassie Echalook, said that the hunters there "were not getting as much seal as they used to" and that it was being "used mostly for food," but: "Fox pelt purchases are on the increase and the coop has a prize programme for the hunter who has the most fur sales to the coop." He advised that a factor in the quantity of pelt harvesting was "that so much attention has been directed to doing more carving."

Although trapping had been a lifesaver for starving Inuit, it did not provide a sound economic base. It was pointed out at the regional conference held in Yellowknife in 1965 (DIAND, 1965:7) that Coppermine, with a population of 660, had a good return in 1964 on furs, the average monthly income per family being \$115. This was attributed to the harvesting of approximately 8,000 sealskins, but it was expected that there would be a drastic reduction in income in 1965 due to a drop in average price from \$12.00 to \$4.00. The lower prices did "not make it economical for hunters to travel long distances to obtain seals." This, it was noted, was a problem for "the entire Arctic" and "the problem will remain as long as the economy is based on the export of raw fur."

The answer was to encourage Inuit to participate in a mixed economy

utilizing resources at hand which no-one else could or would exploit: commercial fishing and other renewable resource harvesting, stone carving, and tourism.

Towards a mixed economy

The 1965 regional conference provides a good overview of the state of the economy and the kinds of plans and solutions being pursued five years after the first co-ops had been established. To a large extent, the solutions proffered at this conference prefigured the approach taken by the co-ops. An economic plan was worked out for the communities administered from Yellowknife: Coppermine, Holman Island, Spence Bay, Cambridge Bay, Pelly Bay and Gjoa Haven. Coppermine, it was recommended, could "gain maximum advantage from existing resources," by processing and manufacturing furs "into marketable products." Accordingly, it was proposed that a tannery be established for seal, caribou and ground squirrels, the latter an abundant resource not being used, and that a factory be set up to turn the tanned skins into clothing, luggage, *etc.* It was also proposed that a bakery and a taxidermy shop be established to handle trophy fish caught by some 500 fishing tourists, and that the tourist industry be expanded. It was then providing up to \$12,000/year to Eskimos who worked as guides and helpers. Efforts were being made to attract more tourists to the village, efforts which involved commodifying the Eskimo lifestyle (p.8):

The Anglican Mission, and the Roman Catholic Mission at Coppermine have each donated a building to be used as guest home, dining hall, and museum...It is also planned to recreate an Old Time Copper Eskimo Village, complete with caribou skin tents, and traditional utensils...Traditional Drum Dances will be a feature.

It was anticipated that the various projects would employ up to 40 people full time, more than half of them women, and provide seasonal employment for many more. Anticipated gross income would exceed 1/4 million dollars.

Holman Island, with a population of 190, had that year realized an average monthly income of \$190, due to a sealskin harvest of 5,000 skins. The co-op had initiated printmaking, and was having some success producing sealskin tapestries, all under the direction of missionary Henri Tardy. It was anticipated that a tannery at Coppermine would benefit production in Holman by eliminating delays and costs in shipping skins south to be tanned (p.9).

Spence Bay, with 200 Eskimos in 43 families and another 100 based in surrounding hunting and sealing camps, was a relatively undeveloped community, but (p.11):

When the housing program begins to affect the Spence Bay area in 1968-69, it is expected that many of the people will elect to move into the settlement to take advantage of the rental housing scheme. At present there is no economic life, outside of the harvesting and trading of raw fur and skins, to absorb the anticipated flux.

There were ten Eskimos with full time jobs, two of them earning less than \$1,000 annually on contract. Construction programs had provided \$15,000-\$20,000 casual wages that year, and handicraft production utilizing sealskin and caribou antler under DIAND's welfare program was "spotty and lacking in direction and facilities for production and display."

Proposals were to employ Eskimos part-time in water delivery and sewage and garbage pick-up, and for a crafts officer to develop handicraft which would

use abundant sealskin resources and caribou antler. It was intended "that this expanded program be kept initially within the aegis of the Department, with the hope that as understanding and marketable talent develops a Co-op will be formed to take it over" (p.12). A survey of char in the area was also to be undertaken with a view to initiating a commercial fishing operation. It was proposed that a small co-op be established to market fish locally, "since more and more people will be moving into the settlement and away from the prime hunting and fishing areas." It was also envisioned that tourist development would be an option for the Spence Bay area.

Comparative figures are available for Spence Bay in *An Evaluation of the Spence Bay Craft Project* (Policy Consulting Associates Ltd., 1976:11). By 1976, some 10 years after the regional conference, there were 435 people in the community with 35 full-time and 10 part-time jobs, most of them with the state or the co-op. The average wage was, however, "substantially" under \$4,000 per annum.

Cambridge Bay, with the largest white population and instalation in 1965, including a Dew Line base, and 420 Eskimos, had an established co-op operating char and trout fisheries and providing seasonal employment to several Inuit. Some welfare handicraft work was organized by the co-op and 30 to 40 Eskimos had full time employment with the government agencies stationed there. It was proposed at the regional conference that a bakery be opened by the Cambridge co-op, along with a laundry/dry cleaning facility to cater to the Dew Line market,

and an industrial complex that "would be one way of giving the Eskimo an opportunity to be an employer instead of always an employee," and that one man be trained in taxidermy (DIAND, 1965:17).

In Pelly Bay, the most isolated and underdeveloped community of the region, the Catholic mission was running an emergency store and developing handicraft using walrus ivory and caribou antler which had achieved unexpected success, in spite of difficulties securing materials and finding markets. It was proposed that the potential for a char fishery and a tourist operation be explored. It was also proposed that a co-op development officer visit the community (p.19):

The Roman Catholic missionary at Pelly² is most anxious to place the selling and production into the hands of the people themselves, and no time should be lost in offering him the assistance and advice of a qualified person. The problem will not be one of starting right from scratch, as the groundwork has been laid, the people are actively interested in the production of marketable carvings, and they have already seen something of the benefits to be gained from the organization work already done.

Gjoa Haven, with 169 Eskimos and another 100 trading into the community, did not have as plentiful a renewable resource base as did other areas. The Catholic mission had a service contract with the federal government to provide water and collect garbage, and several Eskimos were employed to use equipment owned by the mission. Also, the missionary coordinated a small domestic fishery using mission equipment, with most of the fish being purchased by locals who received a welfare payment form for the purpose. It was proposed at the regional

² It was this missionary, Andrew Goussaert, who would later become the chief executive officer of Arctic Cooperatives Limited, the central distribution agency for cooperatives in the NWT.

conference (p.21), that a co-op be set up to take over water and garbage services (with the missionary's agreement) and the fishery as well as to organize tourism on the Back River. As noted: "There have been tourists, apparently in growing numbers, visiting the Back River area in the summers, but local people have so far been unable to retain any tourist money within their community" (p.22).

It will be noted that, with the exception of Coppermine, most hopes for economic development were based on commercial fishing and a tourist industry. But a number of factors prevented the viability of commercial fishing for Inuit; namely, the lack of storage facilities, difficulties in shipping to the South, and a dwindling harvest. On the subject of the exploitation of biological resources, Jenness (1968:27) had this to say:

Canada's northern waters are too cold and barren to attract the shoals of cod which have banished famine from Greenland and brought its inhabitants a steady income; and nowhere in her Arctic has man discovered other fish or mammals plentiful enough to abolish hunger for more than a few weeks, or to pay for the food, clothing, guns and other goods which the Eskimos must import if they are to survive.

The George River Co-op in Quebec had been founded on the premise of a char industry,³ but (Arbess, 1966:67) reported that catches of arctic char were dwindling in absolute numbers and average weight over the years. In 1962, 23,000 pounds had been shipped out, but in 1964, only 12,000 pounds. Furthermore, he

³ It was expected that the George River cooperative, which is within the tree line, would also develop a logging industry but, as Arbess (1966:68) wrote: "There exists the potential exploitation of the small stands of timber found in the region for the manufacturing of wood products such as boats, which has already begun, and furniture, which is projected into the future. But the size of the stands of merchantable timber would cause the rapid disappearance of this resource under systematic exploitation [citing Evans, 1964], even if markets existed."

concluded: "This has nothing to do with the time spent harvesting since lower production has been a common occurrence all over the eastern Arctic wherever a char industry has been established for a few seasons."

As for tourism, it is interesting to note that while there were efforts by the regional administrator in Yellowknife (Peter Murdoch, who later became general manager of FCNQ) to develop this industry for the benefit of Inuit, tourism in the Northwest Territories is the domain of private operators and the focus of the territorial government's economic development program. The department in charge of handicraft production is called, aptly, the Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

The arctic Quebec co-ops attempted to capture some of the tourist market, with several co-ops establishing hunting and fishing camps. FCNQ's tourism department later initiated some dog team and art appreciation and sightseeing tours which were not particularly successful. In 1983, FCNQ tourism projects generated a 16 per cent profit, but it was reported to the directors' meeting (FCNQ, 1983) that the 9 1/2% FCNQ was taking as its commission on the projects was too low to cover the expenses of its tourism department.

Significantly, the successful tourist operations in both the NWT and Quebec are privately owned and operated, mainly by non-natives, although a few Inuit have managed to establish private camps, usually as a break-away from the co-op. Some Quebec co-ops operate hotels and restaurants in the northern communities, but on the whole, the area has not been opened up to tourists to nearly the extent

it has in the NWT.

Although much effort on the part of government project officers and co-op personnel went into thinking up industries for the Inuit, successes were hard come by. As the report on the Spence Bay craft project (Policy Consulting Associates Ltd., 1976:10) pointed out: "Not only is the resource base generally slender or non existent, but the transportation charges are astronomic." Referring specifically to the textile industry, PCA concluded that it is virtually impossible to establish viable enterprises in the North:

Commerce in Canada's North must be put into perspective. A textile based industry would compete with textile companies in Southern Canada which often employ immigrant labour and pay, in general, the lowest wages permitted by Canadian laws. These Companies are much closer than Northern enterprises to sources of raw materials; they can take advantage of a variety of inexpensive modes of transport; they are close to...major markets in Canada and the USA; they do not have to combat temperatures of -60° and vagaries of wind and snow. No sophisticated study of costs is required to formulate the general conclusion that, in strictly economic terms, the North is a ridiculous place to locate industry.

The authors of this report considered that for any industry to survive in the North -- apart, for reasons not given, from the special case of oil -- it would have to be subsidized.

Production organized by the co-operatives

The decline in income from fur and the resulting hardship this created for Inuit led, as we have seen, to a state constructed co-op system, but although the co-ops had aspired to a broad economic base, the only successful commodity Inuit have been able to produce is arts and crafts, specifically stone sculpture, although in one community, Cape Dorset, limited edition prints also became important. The

co-ops attempted, however, to be multi-purpose, with activities falling into two categories. The first involved the provision of goods and services locally -- oil and gas sales, restaurant and hotel operations, general stores, recreation facilities (movies and poolrooms), the sale of country food, and construction programs. The second category of activity involved production for export: commercial fishing, the collection of eiderdown (and, formerly, cleaning),⁴ tourist programs and the production of arts and crafts.

Because of the small and scattered market which prohibits internal exchange and the lack of linkage between production and consumption, expansion in the first area remains limited. Commercial production is for export, except in the case of country food which accounts for only a small percentage of total local sales. As far as expansion in the second area is concerned, although efforts are being expended to develop exportable products, most have failed because of the high cost of production anywhere in the North. Many things have been suggested and tried: food processing, component assembly, saw mills, logging operations and tanneries. Ruffing (1979:36) makes the salient point (with specific reference to the Navajo Nation) that North American natives cannot compete with "Asian sweatshops" and "are one of the latest victims of the new international division of labour."

⁴ Eiderdown is an expensive commodity on the world market and, although in Quebec equipment to clean it was purchased from Denmark and located in Payne Bay, the cost of labour to clean it made it too expensive to wholesale. Also, the equipment frequently broke down and could not be repaired locally. Given the costs and difficulties in meeting schedules, FCNQ began, after a few years, to sell unclean down, providing employment elsewhere.

In spite of efforts to diversify, most co-op revenue continues to be derived from consumer rather than producer activities.⁵ The most successful area of production is handicraft which has taken over from fur as the significant trading commodity. But Inuit complain of being relegated to marginal status and say that they are not content to be shunted into yet more handicraft projects. It is significant that Inuit politicians recognize that arts and crafts will never be sufficient to bridge the gap between development and underdevelopment, in spite of the state's interest in keeping them carving. As the non-Inuit manager of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative in Cape Dorset said at a meeting held to discuss Eskimo art in 1978 (in Myers, 1978:48):

Due to the government's failure to develop alternative industry in the north, there is an inordinate pressure on talent in the north to make up for the lack of development. Craft projects seem to be considered the magic solution to everything.

It is not surprising that arctic co-operatives are popularly identified with the arts and crafts programs since this is virtually the only significant area of production, and surpluses from carving and printmaking support non-productive and non-profitable projects. The arts and crafts programs, carving especially, have been expected to carry the whole burden of northern development for Inuit and, as I have argued, it also, not coincidentally, provides legitimation for the state.

Part-time producers of arts and crafts

With the assistance of the federal government, the Eskimo co-ops turned

⁵ Beaulieu (1980:42) estimated that, in 1977-78, 76 per cent of the total business done by northern Quebec co-ops resulted from consumer activities, while only 24 per cent came from production.

handicraft production into a multi-million dollar industry, but it was not full time work for very many people. There are approximately 2,000 regular part-time producers throughout the Arctic, and many others who supplement income with occasional carving. It is interesting to note that according to the GNWT (1990:2), "arts and crafts is one of the few territorial industries that has almost balanced participation among men and women."

It is difficult to accurately determine the impact of the carving industry. The GNWT estimated in 1990 (*p.* 5) that 10 per cent of the potential Northwest territories' labour force (3,570 aboriginal people: Inuit, Metis and Indian) earn a full or supplementary income from arts and crafts. It was also estimated that this industry contributes \$22.5 million annually to the NWT economy, most of which, while only "a small percentage of the Gross Domestic Product," is exported, thus helping "to counteract our [NWT] trade imbalance" with the rest of Canada (1990:5).

Although carving is a significant activity in at least one-third of the 46 active Inuit co-ops, the information on income generated by arts and crafts released by the GNWT in February 1990, indicates that the average producer earns about \$3,780 a year (GNWT, 1990:5). A survey of 46 families in one Baffin Island community, Pond Inlet, yielded the following income breakdown: wage income 62 per cent; family allowance, pension and social assistance 30 per cent, and carving 8 per cent. It will be recalled that a major objective for the federal state was the elimination of welfare payments to Inuit. The Government of the

Northwest Territories has the same ambition. With reference to the statistics above, territorial bureaucrats wrote (GNWT, 1990:5): "This information shows us that while it is difficult to support a family on the income from arts and crafts, these activities hold great potential to replace social assistance. That's an impact that everyone wants to see!"

Eskimo stone art succeeded for two related reasons. Using a resource, stone, that no-one else wanted to or could use, it did not threaten other sectors of the economy and the state was, therefore, willing to fund it. Also, it was launched at a time which corresponded with an increasing world-wide interest in ethnic arts, after the war when Canada was perceiving the need for a national icon (Graburn, 1986). Also, as we saw in chapter eight, to realize their objectives for Inuit art, bureaucrats were even willing to risk antagonizing the Hudson's Bay Company, an example of how the state acts in the long, rather than the short-term interests of capitalism.

Inuit eagerly co-operated with the carving programs because it provided an alternative to dependence upon wildlife, and because it fit into their customary lifestyle. They could carve according to their own schedule, in the town or on the land. They obtained their own raw materials, utilizing a customary division of labour, and they did not need to learn a new skill or a new language in order to succeed. As the Inuk president of the Canadian Arctic Co-operative Federation Limited told the third co-operative conference in George River: "Arts and crafts is our largest industry which does not require skill or knowledge that is developed

by southern training or educational institutions" (ACL/FCNQ, 1980a:9). James Houston had conveyed a similar message to the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in a 1951 letter (in Watt, 1988c:39):

When we look at the development of handicrafts as adult and child education, we see, perhaps, the only present method of a closer relationship with the Eskimo, which asks the best of him and is the first step into industry, and at the same time directly aids his economy. Handicrafts are done in the camps and in no way disturb his present way of life as a hunter. It does not tend to draw him into the white settlement in large groups, where the scarcity of game would not support him.

What does it mean for Inuit to be in a situation where the only commodity they can produce is labour-intensive, non-standardized handicraft marketed in a system which deplores the commodification of art? Handicraft programs are invariably touted as the cure for a failing Inuit economy. As we have seen, there was no serious attempt on the part of the state to involve Inuit in mainstream development. They were to be the guides, the haulers of water, and hewers of wood.

Although they are ostensibly owned by the people, the co-ops have not been able to challenge this scenario significantly. The co-ops have made only weak links to mainstream economic development. In the NWT, plans are underway to establish a banking service in arctic communities and to provide a cable television service. In Quebec, the petroleum products project provides jobs for Inuit and profits to support other activities. But, still, carving is an important source of income and the major productive activity available to the majority of Canadian Inuit. A high percentage of adult Inuit have some carving proficiency,

vestige of a past in which each family unit was required to provide for itself.

Anyone can make a carving and have a reasonable hope -- it used to be virtually 100 per cent certain -- of selling it to either the local co-op or HBC store, or to one of the increasing numbers of free traders.⁶

According to Shouldice (1983:24), whose conclusions were based on research specifically in the Keewatin area:

Carvers who are unemployed and do not have a source of income will carve to obtain immediate cash (if a buyer can be found). They will produce a carving and sell it as soon as possible for the best price they can obtain. Some individuals who are employed regularly are still productive carvers in their spare time and will supplement their income with carving in a similar fashion. In this respect, carvers are no different to other Inuit producers. Trappers, for example, will sell their furs locally for immediate cash rather than take a small percentage and take a risk on getting a better price at southern auctions. Men who are employed will still trap to obtain immediate extra cash needs. As long as the Season is productive they will trap; if it becomes unproductive they will not/cannot afford to continue and will seek other employment. Carvers also operate within the context of their financial situation, which influences their ability to sell on consignment or wait for better local prices.

There is a growing disparity in income levels among carvers, with some being able to command high prices for larger works which enables them to purchase better and more expensive equipment (snowmobiles, ATVs, boats, *etc.*). In general, however, there is a *direct* relation between production and consumption with Inuit more interested in satisfying immediate needs (which are escalating), than in accumulating wealth. Simiunie Sivuarapik of Povungnituk reported that in 1974

⁶ Historically, the co-ops have bought virtually everything produced, an egalitarian practice which increasingly clashed with the prerogatives of the market, resulting in problems of over-production, quality and pricing. Inventory problems for co-op distribution centres have ranged from nagging to acute, while quality and pricing have been erratic, with the latter tending to ever-higher levels.

top carvers were making six to seven thousand dollars a year which they supplemented with hunting and fishing: "Therefore, most carving is done on a part-time basis, with an average income from carving being about \$1,000 a year" (in Northern Quebec Inuit Association, 1974:46).

It is impossible to estimate individual income of carvers, many of whom deliberately do not keep records since it would mean a reduction in welfare benefits, and output varies during the year and from year to year. Smith (1980:429) was told by informants in Inukjuak in 1978-79 that some carvers could make more than \$10,000/year which, he calculated, would "suggest that a full-time carver would earn about 50 per cent more per unit work time." In comparison, foraging income, the sale of pelts and country food, accounted for only five per cent of total income.

In 1991, carvers might earn anywhere up to \$50 an hour⁷ and, unlike their southern counterparts, do not bear the risk or expense of selling their own productions. But they must provide their own tools and harvest their own materials. Inuit consider this to be the most onerous part of the work of carving since it means having to buy and maintain expensive equipment (snowmobiles, boats and motors), and travelling many miles by land or water to hack soapstone out of the frozen ground. The most primitive, non-technological mining methods are employed, although federal and territorial bureaucrats are attempting to

⁷ Smith (1980:592) estimated that the mean earning rate for carving in one community during the period for which he collected data (1978-79) was \$8.40/hour, but his estimate was based on very limited data ranging from \$3.75 to \$10.50/hour.

develop more sophisticated methods. Blasting is shunned because it creates hair-line fractures which may not be visible until the carving breaks while it is being worked (Shouldice, 1983:31).

According to Shouldice (1983:25), productiveness varies according to "personal priorities." Older people tire easily and cannot spend long periods of time carving; some women have to spend most of their time looking after children, and there are seasonal variations with some preferring to trap rather than carve in winter: "Generally you find older men carving during the winter as they no longer go out on the land." It is interesting to note Shouldice's observation (p.25) that: "Most carvers prefer seasonal labour to carving because of the amount of money which can be made at a short-term job."

Inuit are forthright about the fact that they produce art for money. There is no dissimulation concerning its value as a commodity that can be exchanged for other commodities. As carver Paulosie Kasadluak said (in Myers, 1978:67):

When I first became involved in the co-op I was aware of carving as a background to life in the north. It was something people did. But I was not aware of it as a *force*, something that extended outside our daily lives. As I became involved with the Federation, it was with the understanding of *business*. I was interested in the economic development end. But I became more and more aware that our sculpture was having a big effect on everything that was happening in the north and of the use of sculpture as a means of livelihood and also as a means of expressing ourselves as Inuit. I have to think of sculpture in terms of dollars and economic benefit to the people. When I think of a commitment to art, apart from the money, I feel there is a lot of misunderstanding about the meaning of art.

There has always been a direct relation between carving production and consumption, with Inuit making carvings to satisfy immediate needs. As Brody

noted (1977:175), when a carver needs \$30, he makes a \$30 carving. Carvers sometimes produce very large works for which they might receive several thousand dollars, enabling them to purchase expensive equipment such as ski-doo's and boats.⁸ Most Inuit carvers produce what are referred to by some as "gas money" carvings. As an Inuk in Wakeham Bay admits (in NQIA, 1974:21):

Before I buy or collect a piece of soapstone, I look at it very carefully to see what I could make out of it. You try to figure out something that will take the least amount of cutting and carving.

Similarly, an informant told Shouldice (1983:28):

...a lot of people make the same carvings over and over again because they are easy to make and the market will accept them. "Some do not take their time any more and the 'ordinary carvers' are after a fast buck.

The informant carved musk-ox because they sell and as buyers got to know his name he made \$5,000 to \$6,000 in five months. But Shouldice says:

He feels that the style has to change because the market has been exhausted. He would like to see an inventory of the existing subject matter to see what can be produced that is unique, claiming that "carvings which are different sell well." Irniq further states that often an "artist looks at the stone and asks what a buyer might want to see in the carving."

Carving is, however, also considered an important cultural activity. As Shouldice says, it is "a preferred form of occupation" since "it allows the individual to pursue other interests." He concluded (1983:28) that "all active artists would like to be able to make a living from carving but that is impossible."

Carving is a valued skill. Since it, like hunting, enables one to provide

⁸ This practice has been modified somewhat as a result of the imposition of quotas on size and price by the cooperatives in an effort to alleviate over-production problems.

subsistence for one's family, good carvers are respected although not exalted. As Arngna'Naaq of Baker Lake told Shouldice (1983:30), there are artists who are "world famous" but "you wouldn't know it by looking at them." In the Keewatin, Shouldice (p.33) concluded that:

Carving, although a worthwhile pursuit for most of those involved, has not become a traditional activity in the same manner as trapping was incorporated into the culture. It is not an activity which most men participate in regardless of age or employment situation and is not seen as an alternate lifestyle to wage employment.

This is, of course, a generalization, and there is some evidence that younger, more acculturated Inuit are *choosing* an artistic career. At an artists' seminar sponsored by the Inuit Art Foundation (Ottawa, December 1989), Manasie Akpaliapik from Arctic Bay (then living and working in Toronto) said (IAF, 1990:11):

In my hometown, the attitude is that you have to be an old person to carve. They say, "Oh, you're carving. Can't you get a job?" I can get other jobs but I *want* to do this. I'm happy with this.

Some younger carvers are emerging, but carving remains the domain of an older generation. As Shouldice concludes, again with reference to the Keewatin (1983:35):

Carving has become an activity which permits a generation of monolingual, older Inuit to participate in the wage earning economy. In the process of social change this has performed the necessary function of providing cash for a group of individuals who necessarily would/could not enter the job market.

Making carvings is merely one adaptive strategy among others.

Co-op employees

Co-ops also provide opportunities for wage earning. Before they came on the

scene, there were only a few full-time jobs and some part-time and seasonal employment in the communities. There is not a lot of data available, but on the east coast of Hudson Bay after 1956 the increasing importance of wage income is evidenced by the fact that earnings from employment is reported to have "equalled or exceeded the income from native products" (Anders, 1966:94).

Arbess (1966:28) found that for 17 productive households in George River for the year ending March 31, 1963, the average income was approximately \$1,730.00 from all sources: arctic char fishing, logging and milling, family allowances, trapping, relief, employment, co-op dividends and miscellaneous wages. This represented a three-fold increase over one decade, but Inuit unemployment remains very high. In 1974, Paulosie Napartuk of Great Whale River (in NQIA, 1974:39) gave the following figures:

Forty-two Inuit have full-time jobs. Seven work for the federal government, ten work for the Quebec government, three for Hydro-Quebec, and three more for the Fire Department, six for the Hudson's Bay Company, seven for the Co-op, and one for the Ministry of Transport.

And in Povungnituk, Simiunie Sivuarapik reported (in NQIA, 1974:46): "About 50 Inuit have full-time jobs, and almost half of these are employed at the Inuit-run co-op; the rest are mostly employed by the federal and Quebec governments." In Salluit, Padli Illisituk reported (in NQIA, 1974:52) that: "Twenty-one Inuit have full-time jobs, and it is not enough...We feel especially irritated when we see white people coming in here to do jobs that could be done by the Inuit." And, in Fort Chimo, with a population of 850 of which 600 were Inuit, approximately 150 Inuit had full-time jobs. Smith (1980:593) found that there were approximately 67 full-

time equivalent jobs in Inukjuak during his 1978-79 fieldwork, and that wage income accounted for an estimated 54 per cent of the earned monetary income of the village. The following table is reproduced from his 1980 thesis (p.593):

Table G.13. Estimation of average hourly wage for Inukjuamiut men^a

Type of job	No. full-time equivalents	Hourly wage
Co-op clerk	10	\$4.38
Co-op pool hall mgr.	1	6.25
HBCo clerk	2	4.44
Ship unloading	0.5	4.00
Drivers & mechanics	5	6.87
Driver's assistants	4	3.50
Community Council office	2	6.36
DINA construction crew	2.5	7.00
CSNQ construction crew	2	7.50
Other construction	2.5	6.50
CSNQ culture instructors	0.5	4.16
Maintenance shop	2	4.25
Total and mean	34	\$5.33 ^b

a) Source: field notes and Table G.12. Data in this table is only for jobs where earning rates were known fairly accurately (34 of the estimated total of 55 full-time equivalent positions for men).

b) Mean weighted according to the number of full-time equivalent jobs at each hourly rate. Unweighted mean = \$5.43/hr.

The situation in Inukjuak was similar to that in most other communities. The co-operatives quickly became the largest employers of Inuit, although wage rates were well below those offered by state agencies. Many of the jobs provided by the co-ops were menial -- guides, store clerks, water delivery, *etc.*, -- but, for the first time, Inuit were also hired as managers. This was particularly true in arctic

Quebec where, after 1967, the year the co-ops federated, only native people were recruited for local managerial positions. Previously, Inuit had functioned as gang bosses, really go-betweens, but the co-op institutionalized the exercising of authority by one Inuk over another.

Co-op managers decided whether or not to issue credit, how much to pay for carvings and furs, who to hire and who to fire, how much to pay in wages and what items to stock in the stores. Although analogous to the non-native HBC manager, the authority of the co-op manager was, however, considerably curtailed by the staffs of the federations, as I have discussed. The manager's authority was also limited by his accountability to a local board of directors.

The co-op structure makes the annual general meeting the highest authority, but these meetings were run by non-native employees of the two distribution agencies: Canadian Arctic Co-operatives and La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec. In Quebec, there was a genuine effort to make the meetings educational (consequently, they lasted two and three weeks), but still, FCNQ personnel were mostly able to steer the meeting to pre-arranged resolutions, although this became more difficult as Inuit gained experience and confidence.

Welfare recipients

State transfer payments remain an important source of income for Inuit, taking up the slack between what is needed and what is obtained from the mix of wages, simple commodity production, and subsistence activities. In the western Ungava,

Currie (1968:51) noted a typical economic adaptation: while trapping was the main source of income for one Ungava camp in 1962, family allowance payments were "an important source of income" which "guarantees the necessities of life," also, "all families are on relief at least part of the year." As he pointed out, people do what is expedient: "When people need store goods such as clothing and ammunition, the sons go to Fort Chimo and try and get work to earn enough for their immediate needs. All the men go to work when the ships come to Fort Chimo." He could have added, when there are no jobs and no food, a visit is paid to the RCMP or welfare officer.

When welfare was first introduced to Inuit, there was no stigma attached to it since it was an expectation that those who had a surplus shared with those who did not. An informant told Shouldice (1983:22) for instance that: "If you were out hunting and did not get anything others would share with you. It was not an act which required thanks or discussion or any formal exchange. It meant the other person had a surplus and shared." It was, therefore, as Shouldice says, natural that the government representative who had the cash needed by Inuit since they were living in communities would share his surplus: "In this way social assistance was a form of sharing." Shouldice found, however, that this attitude was changing, and he cited Pirjuaq from Baker Lake (1983:22):

I would prefer to be self sufficient and independent rather than having to rely on welfare. I feel this very strongly. It is better to have only a little money than to depend on social assistance. The welfare officers and administration fail to understand that, instead of granting financial benefits so readily, employment alternatives should either be found or created.

As Nutaraluk Iyaituk, a highly skilled carver in Ivujivik who has been mostly able to support himself and his family from carving, told me in May 1985 (Myers, 1987:9):

One of the biggest problems that I have seen is that the provincial government started issuing welfare cheques to people who didn't really need it. They were healthy. They weren't old, but it got in the way and they stopped producing good carving, because they would rather wait for a cheque that they didn't have to work for. It poses a problem to the development of our cooperative. I used to say to the people, the carvers, "You shouldn't accept these welfare cheques because you don't work for them. You haven't earned them. You're healthy and you are not old. They were meant for older people, people who are widowed, or handicapped.

It had been noted at the 1965 regional conference in Yellowknife attended by the area administrators and some Inuit that "it would be desirable to involve the local people in the administration of social assistance," and that:

In some cases, persons receiving social assistance are better off than employed persons or persons who are making their living by hunting and trapping. It was agreed that this was so, not because too much assistance is being given, but rather that the general living standard is below that which is considered minimal under our social assistance program. It was agreed though that it would be illogical to consider reduction in social assistance, but that emphasis should be placed on economic development to bring up the general standard of the total population (DIAND, 1965:2).

A measure of their success is that, 20 years later, Nutaraluk was wondering whether he might not be better off receiving welfare:

I see that my kids have less than the ones who receive welfare. Their houses are paid for. Their rents are paid for. Their telephone bills are paid. And here, because I'm a carver, we have to suffer and be left behind in the quality of life by these people who do nothing. Before, people were willing to work for what they got, but their attitude has been changed by money being available to them without the need to work for it.

Inuit are now involved in administering welfare, attitudes are aligning more with

western views of social assistance, and global amounts dispensed are not declining. Social assistance has become part of the northern economy and Inuit have learned to work the system, just as their southern counterparts do, managing to avoid reporting carving income in order to thwart the welfare officer's strategy of deducting earned wages. As Nutaraluk told me: "the welfare office came up with a new policy to deduct any income a person made from carving from welfare payments. I feel that this system discourages people from carving and I find it very unacceptable."

Although the state was committed to reducing welfare expenditures on Inuit, the hunter support program (part of the James Bay and Northern Quebec settlement) is, according to Nutaraluk (and others), little more than a disguised welfare program. As Nutaraluk says:

This Hunter Support Program is eating away at the culture of the past. It's difficult now to find anybody who's willing to finance his own hunting trip. If they have to go a great distance, they'd rather wait for money from the Hunter Support Program. It's not a way of life. You can't call anybody a hunter if he waits and refuses to go hunting until he gets paid. People still take trips close to the village to do ice jigging, but if they have to go hunting for walrus their supplies are financed by the Hunter Support Program and they are paid for every day they are out. They waste a lot of animals because, in order to get paid more, they stay out much longer than they would really need to. They kill too much, much more than the village requires so that they can get paid. I can't understand why this program was introduced today. It should have been introduced a long time ago when our parents were poor and in need of help. People even starved to death in those days. It's an insult; it's destroying our culture. People used to help other people by sharing their catch and going out on long trips not only for themselves but for the entire village. I feel that people should be independent, but there is now too much dependency on southern money, even for hunting. Sure, there are people who need help, the widows and the old people, but we get more than enough for them. It's now the way of life for Inuit to be paid to go hunting.

He points, of course, to an essential contradiction: subsistence practices continue, but the terms and conditions under which they are carried out are wholly transformed.

Changes in the means of production

The material changes noted in previous chapters became more entrenched but, in addition, a major change occurred under the aegis of the co-op in that Inuit were, theoretically at least, now in the position of selling manufactured and imported items to themselves. Furthermore, as owners of the co-op, they were entitled to share in any profits. So little understood or appreciated was this concept, however, that Inuit were just as likely to make their purchases at the HBC as at the co-op. They did not identify the co-op as being "theirs," but looked upon it mainly as a way to earn the cash needed to buy the equipment and supplies that were now viewed as necessities. The delegate from Dorset was cited in the minutes of the Frobisher Bay Conference (DIAND, 1963c:2):

...before they got the co-operative started at Cape Dorset they suffered as far as life was concerned. His people did not even have ammunition to last very long. Now they had plenty of ammunition. Also, they did not have lumber to make kayaks, but now they had plenty of lumber to make kayaks but they mostly used outboard motors today...A lot of people did not know how to carve, but in the long run a lot of people learned how to carve, even himself...After they started making carvings, the price was not very high. As they got better, the prices got better. That is why the people can buy better canoes and ammunition and other things.

At the beginning of the 1960s, equipment was, as previously noted, universally in poor shape. Currie (1968:62) found that all the families in a camp near Payne Bay in northern Quebec used one old Peterhead boat which had been bought

second-hand from the HBC over 50 years before.⁹ There was also one kayak, six char nets and six guns along with thirty-five sled dogs. In Payne Bay itself, Currie counted 12 dog teams comprising 100 dogs which were used for winter transport, on the trap lines, on caribou hunts, on seal hunts at the floe edge and for inter-community travel. There was, however, a chronic shortage of dog food which, he suggested, could be solved through the "better harvesting of such resources as seals." In another camp at Finger Lake, Currie found the equipment in extremely poor condition: "The bottom of their Peterhead was in terrible shape and not safe -- In the past they used to rent their Peterhead to prospecting parties and government officials, but it is no longer in condition for this." The Fenimore Mining Company had left a wooden barge with a motor and mechanical equipment and mining gear, but all of this was in bad condition.

At Sachs Harbour, an exceptionally good trapping area in the western arctic, Usher reported (1965:84) that 17 trappers owned 8,500 traps, or an average of 500 traps each (the range was from 300 to 900). It was considered that 300 to 400 traps were needed "to depend on white fox as a major and adequate source of income." He points out, however, that "in most other settlements, very few men have this many traps."

As for firearms, virtually every arctic family owned guns by mid- century.

⁹ Peterheads had, as Currie (1968:60) noted, "provided the principal means of sea transportation since early in the century." It should be noted, that Peterheads were usually communal property. In Payne Bay, as Currie says (p.1): "The Peterheads are used by all the people to go on hunting trips throughout the coastal area and to transport families to and from summer camps."

Currie counted about 30 guns in Payne Bay: "A few rifles are in good condition, but the balance are old and rusty pieces which will soon have to be replaced."

Usher reported (1965:84) that the average per family in Sachs was four.

The harvesting of wildlife continued to be a preoccupation with Inuit although the consensus was that resources were in decline, presumably through more efficient hunting with firearms. As Currie noted (1968:35):

Rousseau estimates that during the 19th century, there were 350,000 head of caribou in the Ungava-Labrador area, but by the 1950's he estimated the numbers had dropped to 3,500 head...Rousseau believes that the main factor contributing to the sharp decline was the introduction of fire-arms which allowed the annual uncontrolled kill to increase to a figure dangerously close to the maximum sustainable yield.

Anders (1965:34) observed that "caribou are hunted more and more for meat alone and the need for skins is steadily decreasing as more manufactured garments are bought." And Usher reported (1965:63-64) that the utilization of musk-ox by Eskimos had led to its "near extermination."

The poor state of equipment was, of course, a constraint upon hunting. And restricted hunting resulted in a shortage of both human and dog food. Clothing and manufacturing materials were easily substituted, but country food was not so easily replaced, especially for animals. The maintenance of dogs for transportation and on traplines and seal hunts required extensive harvesting of feed, and as Inuit were more and more distracted from subsistence activities, the shortage of dog food became a chronic problem to which there were, conceivably, two solutions: more efficient harvesting of such wildlife resources as seals, or abandonment of live transportation in favour of mechanized forms. The now

ubiquitous snowmobile is evidence of the success of option two.

Mechanized travel becomes a necessity

One area economic survey author (Anders, 1965:81) did not consider snow machines a reasonable alternative to dogs. But all of the problems attached to motorized travel -- the cost (in 1965, it was \$900-\$1100), the unreliability on long trips, the need for maintenance, and the difficult travelling conditions -- did not prevent it from becoming, like the canoe, a necessity. In August 1966, Anders (1966:65, 82) estimated that about one in every three families in Cumberland Sound owned a snowmobile and that "on the average an Eskimo must buy one new ski-doo track every year." But in spite of the expense and other disadvantages, Inuit quickly came to consider motorized transport a necessity.

Anders (1965:81) considered that its purchase was "motivated in most cases by status much more than by economic considerations" and that "it must be considered as an outrageously expensive toy rather than as an alternative or supplementary means of transportation to the dog team for hunting or trapping." He deplored the inadequate maintenance provided by Inuit owners, its use on "unsuitable ground, *i.e.*, shingle beaches or slushy ice" and "its excessive use for unnecessary joy-rides up and down the settlement main street." Lastly, Inuit "unfamiliarity with the engine" often led "to the vehicle being distrusted for longer trips for which it would otherwise be eminently suitable."

Instead of having to provide food, the owner of a snowmobile had to provide cash to buy gas and oil and, in 1966, gas was \$.98/gallon, compared with

\$.23 in southern Canada. Because of this cash requirement, dog teams continued to be used, especially in outlying camps, but komatik runners were likely to be made of sawed timber with steel runners (Anders, 1965:81). These materials were "sometimes recovered from the white men's waste," but usually bought, representing an outlay of about \$300 in 1965. Rope was available at the HBC and the co-op stores, but Anders observed that Eskimos preferred thongs made from walrus or square flipper hide since they were more durable.

For summer travel, the canoe with kicker (outboard motor) was also becoming a necessity for travel between camps, for seal and walrus hunting and for transporting soapstone supplies. Usher reported (1965:86) that in Sachs Harbour most families owned boats and outboard motors and that "of far greater importance in recent years" were small, open boats used primarily for seal hunting (p.87). Although canoes with outboards were vital equipment, not every hunter had one and: "The men who had no boats suffered both from the fact that they were not able to go sealing as often as the others, and that when boat owners would take them, they were charged a percentage of their take for this privilege"(pp.87-88).

It was Anders' view (1965:82-83) that while the canoe might have increased Eskimo mobility it should not be used in seal hunting as it took, at a conservative estimate, 20 to 30 shots to secure a single seal, a waste of money, given the consumption of gas required as well. Also, given the size of the canoe, only half a walrus carcass could be landed and the wasted half would have made good dog

food.

Both canoes and dog teams were rented to non-Inuit visitors. Anders reported that the charge for a sled and driver in 1965 in the Hall Beach and Igloolik area was about \$12 a day. This practice put a strain on already poor equipment, hastening its demise. Inuits have always been criticized for not providing proper maintenance for their equipment. As Anders wrote (1965:99):

Though it has been explained by cultural anthropologist and sociologist in terms of Eskimo intellectual culture, that attitude can, by our standards, only be called appalling. Tools, guns, outboard motors were frequently seen left lying around unprotected and consequently often badly rusted. Clothing is often allowed to deteriorate much faster than necessary. In short, the idea of maintenance seems to be unknown. Considering the low level of income and the fact that the items subject to most abuse are usually store bought, it seems most important to try to rectify this attitude before even attempting any development programs.

Maintenance was, of course, an alien concept to nomadic people who did not accumulate goods, but worked on the principle of replacement.

Tools for a cottage industry

New work necessitates new tools. The cottage industry production of handicrafts requires simple tools and equipment -- hacksaws, files, sandpaper -- and these are purchased by individuals at the HBC or the co-op. Tools are considered private property and many artisans fashion their own or modify manufactured items.

Although some aspects of carving can be simplified with motorized equipment, it is generally not used for fear of damaging its reputation of handcraftedness. Some of the younger carvers are, however, using more technically sophisticated tools.

As Manasie Akpaliapik explains (IAF, 1990:11):

Sometimes people tell me I'm not using the kind of tools Inuit used in the past. [They say] I'm using advanced tools and that is destroying the art. I don't think so. The way I see it, it's how you come up with the piece, not what kind of tools you use.

And a Labrador carver, Gilbert Hay says (Inuit Art Foundation, 1990:7):

Myself, even with 15 years of stone-carving experience, I am still in need of technical information. I'd like to know what kind of tools might be available, how to use these tools, if they would advance my present technique.

The *Arts and Crafts Strategy Paper* released by the Government of the Northwest Territories in February 1990 advises (p.12) that although "small tools and equipment could increase the quantity and variety of arts and crafts produced in the N.W.T. as well as the income potential of producers," their purchase is "beyond the reach of the average producer." And not only do they lack money to buy equipment but, the GNWT strategy paper concludes, Inuit also "lack awareness of available technology." The use of new technology is promoted in this strategy paper.

Printmakers use more sophisticated materials and equipment -- lithography presses, for instance -- with impunity since it is clearly understood by the consumer that printmaking is an imported technique; whereas, stone carving is promoted as being an extension of such "traditional" practices as carving tools and stone lamps and other domestic implements. Similarly, imported materials are used for handicraft production -- duffle cloth, wool, tanned hides, *etc.* It is the high cost of transporting these materials to and from the Arctic that has prevented handicraft programs from being a financial success.

The pursuit of rock

The raw material used in carving, rock, is a resource no one else has use for and Inuit exercise ingenuity in quarrying it. The natural cycle of movement across the land was further modified to include purposeful exploration for good stone quarries. The pursuit of rock rather than wildlife became a goal, and new techniques had to be learned to procure it.¹⁰

It is one thing to quarry the stone, quite another to transport it home. Often, it is quarried in summer, and another trip made in winter to bring it back over the ice. Given the long distances to be covered, motorized snow vehicles became increasingly important, necessitating cash or credit for gasoline. At first plentiful, the procurement of stone has become an increasingly serious problem for carvers and, even though they have petitioned the various levels of government for assistance, very little has been available, which is surprising given the status of Inuit art as a "national treasure." In 1979, for instance, CAP reported (1979a:13) that:

The availability of suitable stone supplies has caused problems over the years and in some communities was of greater concern in 1979. Unless there is a coordinated effort in 1980 to secure stone there is a very real possibility that this year will see shortages develop in a number of key Baffin communities with a resultant decrease in carving production.

There were efforts made to send soapstone from the South, from Quebec mines for instance, but, invariably, Inuit profess themselves unable to work with imported

¹⁰ For a while, some carving continued to be executed in ivory, but this was difficult to obtain and harder to work which meant a longer wait for reimbursement and not necessarily a higher purchase price. Moreover, ivory carvings have been banned in the U.S.

stone, because it is different from what they are used to. Also, there is some feeling on the part of the distribution agencies that if the knowledge that imported stone was being used got out, it would have a detrimental effect on the market. Any time it was used, it was done secretly, although this is changing.

Some stone was moved from one community to another. Belcher Islands sold stone to Great Whale River, but this was terminated after a short time out of fear of using up the supply. There is an interesting, confidential memorandum on the subject of Eskimos marketing raw stone, written by the northern administrator at Povungnituk (J.D. Furneaux) to the Administrator of the Arctic (DIAND, 1961a). Furneaux reports that he had asked the non-native manager of the co-op, Gordon Yearsley, whether the POV Eskimos had sufficient stone for their own needs "and whether a surplus existed which would enable them to benefit from its sale to other Eskimo communities where the stone is not now available." Yearsley said he would pass on this suggestion to the co-op, and Furneaux gathered, he said, "that the Co-operative could supply about five tons of stone, delivered to a suitable point for collection, with good anchorage for a ship, at 7 cents per lb." However, he also gathered that "Father Steinmann would not be in favour of encouraging stone mining and marketing by the Eskimos, as it is not a traditional Eskimo occupation."

In 1981, the president of Arctic Co-operatives Limited wrote to Commissioner Parker of the NWT (ACL, 1981) stating: "There is an urgent need for an organized system to insure [sic] that carving materials are available to our

communities at a reasonable cost." His complaint was that in spite of the GNWT's policy for the supply of carving stone, the co-op managers had been informed that there "would be no further assistance for co-operatives to procure soapstone." At that time, five NWT communities, including Dorset, had no stone. The Kimik Co-op in Lake Harbour had agreed to sell stone to these communities. And ACL, with help from DIAND, initiated the Aberdeen Bay Pilot Project to identify, quarry and arrange the inter-settlement distribution of carvingstone expecting that the GNWT's department of Economic Development and Tourism would help implement the plan. The proposal was rejected, but the response from the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism (GNWT, 1981) indicated that this was because it exceeded their three- year funding commitment and entailed a duplication of effort. The Department was, he said, "in fact, investing considerable energy in assisting people to maintain a supply of carving stone." He pointed out that "plans were made to find and develop quarries for each community possible." A geologist had worked in the Pangnirtung area and "the current lack of stone at Pangnirtung is apparently due to the inability of the Co-operative to purchase stone because of its poor cash position." ACL was invited to rework its proposal but, this time, they were cautioned "to consult with people in this Department at the headquarters and regional levels."

Lyall's letter had expressed concern that carvingstone be made available to carvers "at a reasonable cost" and the GNWT minister parried with:

People in some communities have been paying much higher prices than others. Some have been obtaining stone free of charge. As labour and fuel

costs increase and quarries close to settlements become exhausted, the cost of stone is bound to rise.

He pointed out, also, that prices paid for carvings over the past 10 or 15 years had been rising "dramatically," and:

To a good carver, a cost of one or two dollars a pound for stone still allows him the possibility of a handsome profit on his work. It is the poorer carvers who tend to waste a lot of stone in the process of making a carving who do not get much for the finished piece. It is they who are most seriously hurt by rising stone prices. These same carvers tend to consume large amounts of material that could be put to better use by the more expert artists. My point is, that while the price of stone will increase, the fact is not necessarily all bad if it leads carvers to improving the quality of their work and making better use of the stone that is available.

It appears that tensions between ACL and GNWT at the time were an impediment to achieving their common objective of getting carvingstone to carvers. The 1990 GNWT strategy paper makes the supply of raw material and equipment a priority (p.14):

Assistance will be provided to arts and crafts producers to improve their access to raw materials and equipment. One priority will be improving the supply of carving stone through efficient community quarrying operations and financial support where required. Programs will be developed to provide freight subsidies and material distribution centres on a cost effective basis.

In a controversial move during the fall of 1990, however, the Government of the Northwest Territories imported several tons of very soft Brazilian soapstone into Eskimo villages. The co-ops announced that they would purchase only one in every ten carvings made from the new stone, which had not been test marketed, and Inuit are complaining that they dislike the soft stone and that they would have preferred the money to be spent on helping them quarry local stone. The

reluctance of various levels of government to provide effective assistance to Inuit in the procurement of carvingstone needs to be examined. It undoubtedly has to do with federal and provincial control over non-renewable resources.

Living cum work space

Although work space and shelter do not, properly speaking, constitute a means of production, I believe it is appropriate here to note some features of the Inuit situation. For the most part, carvers work in their own homes which, for many, are still inadequate for even everyday life, as has been noted by several observers. Until the 1970s, shelter was unbelievably rudimentary. Currie (1968:50) described a Payne Bay area camp:

The camp consists of two dwellings: one, a shack with a lean-to and a small shed nearby, all in very bad condition; the other a crowded tent. This is the summer camp. The families all move inland to Diana Lake in the winter where they live in tents with snow piled around for protection. One family moved to the Gyr Falcon Islands in the winter of 1962 and lived there in a tent until break-up. The housing is typical of Western Ungava and it is totally unsatisfactory.

Basing his conclusions on the minimum of 50 square feet per occupant suggested by the Department of National Health and Welfare, Usher (1965:44) declared that 75 per cent of the homes in Sachs were adequate, but only 15 per cent in Coppermine, 20 per cent at Holman, 17 per cent at Cape Perry and 44 per cent at Tuktoyaktuk. As reported in the Western Ungava Area Economic Survey (Currie, 1968:54), housing in Hopes Advance Bay was dismal:

The community is housed in 6 shacks all in very poor condition. Most of the shacks are divided by a half partition into two compartments, a living room and a porch. They have one window at the end and one on each side. Wooden bunks line the sides of the living area. Bed furnishings

consist of blankets thrown over caribou skins. Heat is supplied by a small wood stove which stands in the centre of the room, and in which the people burn crisp grey moss. During the visit of the survey, the weather was cold with chill winds blowing off Ungava Bay. When the fire went low in these shacks, the inside temperature dropped immediately, proving the total inadequacy of the insulation.

Ice blocks were used for water in winter and there was is still a very poor system for sewage disposal, with the so-called "honey-bucket" being used for human waste. The situation in Payne Bay in 1968 was described as follows (Currie, 1968:57):

Sewage and garbage disposal methods in the settlement are rudimentary. During the summer dry garbage from the Hudson's Bay Company post is dumped in Kanik Cove below the high tide mark. This refuse is carried away on the next high tide. During the winter, dry garbage is dumped on the ice offshore where it lies until carried away with break-up in the spring. Waste water is carried from the buildings by drains or in buckets. Wet garbage and ordure is disposed of in the same manner as the dry garbage.

The instalation of a white community did not bring a better solution for waste disposal, but it did mean that electric power came to the North. DIAND provided power plants to supply schools, the HBC, nursing stations, staff houses, *etc.*, and freezers were provided in communities where commercial fishing was thought to be a possibility. It was not until the mid-seventies that electric power was generally available to Inuit.

The housing situation is somewhat improved, with most Inuit living in three bedroom bungalows. But their quarters are also often used as stone carving workshops, exposing inhabitants to the health hazards created by the dust. There is a growing awareness of the problems resulting from carving soapstone which contains many impurities, including talc and asbestos, and many carvers try to

work outside when they can. This is difficult, given the low temperatures and, in the high Arctic, lack of daylight for half of the year. Some construct crude "carving shacks" out of packing boxes in which they crouch for shelter from the wind at the cost of subjecting themselves to a high concentration of stone dust. Some carve without protection, tolerating the conditions as best they can.

Following are some comments made at the artists' seminar (IAF, 1990:5-6):

I wear a mask when I carve, but even then, the stuff gets into my mouth and my lungs. In my community most people work outside in wintertime and it is very cold. Most of us have bad lungs. The cold weather frosts your lungs and we get sick from being outside for three or four hours. When the weather is bad, you have to go inside, breathing dust, and it gets into the house. It's not good for the little kids. We'd like to have a building where we can carve in wintertime (Omalluq Oshutsiaq, Cape Dorset).

When I carve, I wait for the wind to blow the dust away from my face. I had a mask to stop the talc from the stone; a lot of dust comes up from the stone. But when it is 35° below, my breath freezes in it and I can't use it...At home, a few years ago, we had a building that we worked in to keep warm, but someone from the health department came and closed it down. Let's take a picture of a person who carves in the North, in the cold weather -- like right now when we don't see the sun anymore. Still, the people are trying to do their carving outside. They have 60-watt light [bulb]. I would like to see a movie camera come around to the North and take a picture of this. I remember my in-law who was carving outside in 35° below temperatures. He would carve for awhile and then take his mitts off and put his hands inside his pants to keep them warm! I really want to see some movies of carvers, in 40° below zero, with snow blowing, and then the southern people would understand how serious we are (Uriash Puqignak, Gjoa Haven).

Workshop activities such as printmaking are conducted in co-op owned buildings, utilizing co-op-owned equipment. Printmakers tend to look upon themselves as employees, reporting for a regular work-day, taking coffee breaks and regular vacations. They have no involvement in the marketing of their work.

The cost of heating these workshops is as onerous for the co-ops as are heating costs for Inuit householders. Fuel in the Arctic has always been disproportionately expensive compared to the rest of Canada. As Usher reported for Banks Island (1965:45), a house in the Arctic required twice as much fuel as it would in southern Canada and fuel cost almost four times more than it did in the South, making northern heating costs approximately eight times that of a similar structure elsewhere in Canada.

Even though there are printshops provided in five communities, some graphic work gets done in homes as well. Simon Tookoome, a well known graphic artist from Baker Lake says (IAF, 1990:5): "Since 1970 I've been doing drawings on the floor of my house because I can't afford easel or table. My hands get cold, so in the summer or fall I carve stone." Graphics are particularly difficult to work on in already crowded quarters since the work cannot be left out, but must be packed away when other activities intervene. Also, it is difficult to keep it clean, and there is the ever-present hazard of toxic inks and other chemicals being inhaled and being accessible to children.

Inuit are frustrated at their lack of ability to secure art facilities and resource materials. As Uriash Puqignak said at the artists' seminar (IAF, 1990:6): "We are the ordinary Eskimo, ordinary people. We don't sit in an office. We don't have an education. How to say to our government: 'We need this building for the person who is trying to support his family?'" Although Inuit in some communities are attempting to establish carving "studios," out of abandoned

buildings belonging to government, or Eskimo houses that have been superseded by newer models, they are extremely expensive to heat, lack ventilation and are subject to closure by government officials who consider them substandard. The Inuit think they are better than what they have.

Conclusion

The net result of technological transformations which resulted from and supported altered production practices has been a greatly heightened requirement for cash as the costs of imported necessities creeps ever higher. Usher (1965:89, 104) estimated that a hunting and trapping outfit cost about \$1200 (or almost one-third of the average family's income) in 1964-65, and that operating and depreciation costs were about \$1200. Maintenance costs had to be added and, on top of this, they had to pay for fuel and imported groceries and, if they had any dogs, feed would cost another thousand dollars. Inuit were, then, caught in a cycle: the more imported equipment they needed, the more cash they needed, the more equipment they needed to obtain it. A second result of technological transformation, subject of the next chapter, was the enhanced prestige commanded by those who were able to successfully work this cycle, obtaining the cash and equipment they needed to survive in the new mixed economy.

Chapter fifteen

From Talking Chiefs to a Native Cooperative Elite: The Movement Towards Class Relations

The co-op: A definitive link between the indigenous and the capitalist modes of production

As a collective organization, the co-op may be presumed to have fostered the communal over the individual dynamic, but it is more accurately cast as the definitive link between the indigenous and the capitalist modes of production. Control over one's own means of production was, for the most part, retained, but the kind and quantity of work one could do was dictated by market forces mediated through the local co-ops and, to a lesser extent, the Hudson's Bay Company. Also, the co-op and the simple commodity production it spawned accentuated the trend towards ascendancy of the nuclear family as the economic unit. Kin continued to hunt together and to share the proceeds of the hunt, but wages paid in cash or kind were reserved for the benefit of one's immediate family. Similarly, the work of, and the income from carving and other handicraft activity was limited to the immediate family. The *procuring* of stone, an increasingly onerous task as easily accessible sites are exhausted, remains a cooperative activity in that labour and means of transportation are shared, but this is more a matter of expediency than a reflection of communal ideology. Only a few people in the settlement might, for instance, own a boat suitable for a lengthy voyage to a promising quarry.

A major changed relationship resulting from involvement in the co-op movement was the formalization of the authority of some Inuit over other Inuit. Previously, they had been made into "talking chiefs" and gang bosses to facilitate the work of whalers, missionaries, police, or traders, but informal power was now institutionalized, with Inuit becoming managers of the co-op's business and employees. In the Northwest Territories, top level management, the position of general manager, for instance, has mainly been denied Inuit, but in Quebec, these positions were denied *non-Inuit* after 1967. It is, however, arguable where *real* power resides, as I shall later discuss.

Although the co-op is promoted as culturally compatible, there are several glaring incompatibilities. As I shall later argue, these were of such a degree as to render it a contradictory, rather than a culturally compatible institution. For instance, although the one member/one vote principle would appear to be the means of perpetuating Inuit egalitarianism, this was effectively nullified through the vesting of decision-making in an elected board of directors (thus distancing the membership from decisions). Everyday decisions are, of course, made by managerial staff and, although checks exist, the informal exercise of power remains, as in the capitalist mode of production, relatively unchecked and dependent upon economic factors.

An important consideration in an examination of the co-op's effect on relationships within the indigenous mode of production has to do with the production and disposition of a surplus. As simple commodity producers, Inuit

artisans sell their products to the co-op or the HBC which then add a mark-up before sending them to an outside distribution agency. The co-op's mark-up is, theoretically, just to cover its expenses, and the mark-up added by its own distribution agency -- Canadian Arctic Producers, Arctic Co-operatives Limited or La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec -- is also supposed to cover expenses. Furthermore, should a surplus accrue at either of the two points of sale, it is, theoretically, to be used for development services which will eventually benefit the members in the form of improved services, or dividends paid according to business done with the co-op. The rationale is that the more the co-op benefits, the more the member benefits. Incidentally, this is another factor nullifying the egalitarianism principle, since those members doing the most business with the co-op are also the greatest benefactors. But, a major bone of contention among Inuit cooperators, and one which has resulted in a marked lack of loyalty to the co-op, is the almost non-existent payment of dividends. The more money the co-ops and their distribution agencies make, the more they need -- to pay for expansion -- and it has only been due to pressure from members that some of the larger co-ops have been declaring dividends in recent years.

In spite of the scarcity of dividend pay-outs, the co-op has contributed to a growing disparity in relative wealth among Inuit by rewarding talent although, in an ideal co-op, talent is to be exploited for the benefit of all. Communal ideals are, however, dysfunctional in the context of the capitalist mode of production in which rewards are commensurate with the demand which exists for one's work.

Hence, "better" carvers, *i.e.*, those whose work is in demand at high prices, are paid higher prices by the co-op, enabling them to accumulate wealth beyond the discharge of debts relating to immediate needs. Generally, such a surplus is used to upgrade capital equipment -- boats, motors, all-terrain-vehicles -- which facilitates the procurement of raw materials, hence, production, hence sales, hence accumulation, hence prestige, hence power. The "better," *i.e.*, the wealthier carvers in Cape Dorset, succeeded in effecting a structural change in the co-op and, in Quebec, where the co-op had stronger ideological support than in the NWT, talented individuals are resisting the pressure to support mediocrity.

As a transitional, linking institution, co-ops are inherently contradictory. With reference to Inuit, traditional consensual decision-making was replaced with elections and instituted authority for managers. Selling rather than sharing of country food was encouraged. Individual control over labour was replaced with scheduling, and employer/employee relations and private property with the collective use of resources. In other words, the co-op has fostered the ascendancy of the individual/competitive ethic/dynamic over the cooperative/communal ethic/dynamic, to the point, I shall argue, that we can begin to talk about a class structure in which some Inuit, owning and controlling unprecedented wealth and resources are in the position of directing the fortunes of other Inuit, in spite of a structure which purports to support equality. The Eskimo co-op, it must be concluded, is an ideological construct, riddled with contradictions that produce divisions rather than unity.

The nuclear family replaces the extended family

Arbess' research was carried out in George River, site of the first co-op, shortly after the co-op was established, and it was his conviction (1966:34,35,40) that the co-op had strengthened the extended family. He considered that this resulted from the necessity of pooling funds to purchase equipment which was beyond the means of single family heads. As he pointed out: "Purchases are not made on the basis of economic rationality, *i.e.*, by groups of young men of different kinship ties who happened to have the wherewithall, but within the framework of kinship."

Collectively owned equipment necessitated some decision as to when and by whom it could be used, and further support for Arbess' conviction that the co-op had the effect of strengthening the extended family is that the use of such equipment was also worked out within the kinship group: "A boat is considered 'owned' by the senior kin member, usually the father, or an elder brother, who has command over its allocation even though he may have been only a minor contributor to its purchase."

'Ownership' in this case translates into 'control over the use of,' and may be considered an extension of the deference to experience which characterized authority relations in the indigenous mode of production. Furthermore, as Arbess points out (*pp.*32-33), previously, members of an extended family might have been scattered in different camps; whereas, in the settlements, "they are together for much of the year which greatly increases the frequency of interaction among extended family members."

On Banks Island, however, Usher (1965:24) considered that, around the same time, "the effective unit of production and consumption in many Eskimo groups is the nuclear family." And in 1980, Beaulieu, analyzing the Arctic Quebec situation, concluded (p.14) that although traditionally the extended family was the basis of the social structure, centralization disrupted this pattern to the point that the average native family was now comprised of six people, of whom only three were over the age of twenty.

The only way to reconcile these apparently contradictory observations is with reference to my earlier contention that the co-op is an inherently contradictory institution, perpetuating and strengthening at the same time as it undermines non-capitalist practices. The organizing of "joint purchasing groups" (Arbess, 1966:32) was deliberately encouraged as a means of facilitating production -- this was in the co-op's interest just as it was in the HBC's interest to extend credit for a hunting kit -- but, as I shall demonstrate later in this chapter, the co-op *also* had the effect of weakening communal bonds. Indeed, Arbess himself provides some of the data for such a conclusion, pointing out, for instance (1966:47-48) that the co-op cut across kinship bonds and established new lines of authority. Not to enter too deeply into the kinship argument here, but it should be pointed out that in George River, where Arbess did his fieldwork, Inuit were all closely related, and that any effort by the co-op to organize a collective would, coincidentally, also have the effect of "strengthening" the extended family. Arbess is, therefore, correct in his assumption (p.32) that "joint purchasing groups" tended

to be members of a single extended family" but, I think, mistaken in his conclusion that "there has been a shift towards the increasing importance of the extended family." While this may have been true for George River at that time, it is not a conclusion amenable to generalization.

A more accurate conclusion is that while some co-op practices capitalized on previous relationships, extending, modifying and reinforcing them, other practices weakened those relationships. Contrary to ideology, the balance was adjusted according to priorities which had nothing to do with cultural concerns or personal needs.

Cooperative and competitive labour

Arbess (1966:42) noted that "in traditional times," a work group consisted of two hunting partners (an inaccurate generalization, as we have seen), and that "the contemporary work group is at times six to eight men, perhaps members of two or more extended families." In Banks Island, however, Usher (1965:47-48) noted that trappers went out "in pairs or singly" and that "trapping partnerships (or the lack of them), appear to be by individual preference and mutual arrangement" and usually involved close relatives and endured over several years.¹

For caribou hunting (prior to the trapping season), Usher (1965:62-63,67) noted that men usually went in pairs and, similarly, a pair would hunt seals from open canoes in summer, while in spring, seals would be hunted at the floe edge singly or in parties. It was noted in the Baffin Island Area Economic Survey

¹ As will be discussed later, Usher also noted (1965:48) that each person took his own dogteam and set his own traps and that there was "no sharing of the proceeds of mutual effort."

(Anders, 1966:66) that "during spring, many of the natives who own dogs hunt alone" but, if a ski-doo is used, two men would probably cooperate as "it is extremely difficult to manage a ski-doo when travelling through rough ice."

Again, it is difficult to know what to make of this seemingly contradictory evidence. Arbess' inference that people invariably hunted in diads is not accurate; for, as we have seen, depending upon circumstances, the number might be much greater. Previously, people who lived and travelled together formed an economic unit, hunting together and sharing the spoils. With the advent of other kinds of work -- whaling, domestic, custodial *etc.*, -- came the notion of personal reward for individual efforts. It is, I believe, correct to assume that non-capitalist working relations were sustained by non-capitalist activities, such as subsistence hunting, but involvement in other kinds of work led to new relationships. An employee was hired and rewarded for singular action, and the proceeds of his/her work were for his/her use, or that of the immediate family.

This phenomenon was encouraged by bureaucrats whose job it was to organize Inuit. A recommendation of the North Foxe Basin Area Economic Survey (Anders, 1965:125) was, for instance, the development of "a higher degree of functional specialization of activities" and increasing "monetarization of the local economy." Along with this, however, was recommended the organization of collective seal hunts and the discouraging of individual walrus hunting by canoe.

It is interesting to note that carving, the most successful enterprise developed by the co-op, involved both communal and individual practices.

Obtaining stone -- which necessitated increasingly long trips and expensive equipment -- was treated much as any other kind of harvesting activity. Groups would plan and execute a mutual quarrying expedition, but individuals would select certain pieces of rock for themselves. As Nutaraluk Iyaituk, a sculptor from Ivujivik, told me (Myers, 1987:8): "I prefer to get my own stone for a number of reasons. For one thing, I know the type of stone that I want to work with." Sometimes, the co-op pays gangs to bring back a large quantity of stone which it sells to carvers but, in the main, people prefer to mine their own and appear to be exerting increasingly independent efforts to obtain it. In 1991, Uriash Pukignark from Gjoa Haven told me (Mitchell, 1991b:12) that he charts a plane to go for whale bone to last him most of the year. Not very many carvers could afford to do that at this time.

The actual working of the stone became an individual, and to an extent unrealized, often a family task, the husband doing the rough work and the wife the sanding and polishing. Many women carve, and it is presumed that they also do their own finishing work. The income from carving, at first in the form of credit at the HBC or co-op, and later in cash, is, of course, retained by the individual and used to benefit the immediate family.

Similarly, wages earned as employees are considered personal property and any departure from this is so exceptional as to be remarked upon. Johnny Pov wrote of his colleague, Joe Talirunili (in Myers, 1977b:7) that he was a good man who always shared his food with everyone and: "When he was unable to hunt for

food, he still shared what he had with us. He used to give me twenty dollars when he had no food to give."

Employment for individuals, both menial and managerial, rose dramatically with the inception of the co-op, which quickly became a major employer of Inuit. It was considered that management training and experience provided by the co-ops would educate "the northern peoples in the ways of local government" (Sprudz, 1975:16, citing the *Report of the Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories*). Ironically, however, in the NWT, the highest managerial positions have been mainly reserved for non-natives. Even in 1991, more than 30 years after the first co-op was incorporated, virtually all of the co-op managers in the NWT are transient whites and for many years government appointees to CACFL's and CAP's boards wielded disproportionate power. As Tapardjuk said (in Myers, 1978:66): "We have a goal, an objective set out by our membership and we try to follow it but, unfortunately, most goals are made by the appointees."

New community-based leadership

At the local level, the co-operative was the first institution to organize leadership "on a community-wide basis" (Arbess, 1966:38), but Inuit did not find it easy to tell other Inuit what to do. Furthermore, the new bosses were not often those who had previously been accorded superior rank. As Vallee remarked (1966:47, emphasis added):

In almost all of the communities where co-operatives have been established, you will find a small nucleus of native people who become

converted to the co-operative ideology. They are typically young adults between the age of 25 to 40 years, *people who would not have been leaders in traditional times*. These are people whose skills are suited to the present. They are flexible and they try to learn the ropes of modern life.

Originally, as Vallee notes (1964:46), co-ops sought out those with "power or influence in the traditional system," such as camp bosses or catechists, but within a few years of their inception the trend was "towards the replacement by election of these people by younger adults. This created a problem; for, as Peter Inukpuk from Inukjuag put it (in NQIA, 1974:11):

In our life it is still enormously insulting for a younger person to presume to give information to an older person. Many white people often think that as more young people like myself receive a white education, that somehow the information we receive as a result of our contact with white culture will seep into our home communities. In fact, this doesn't happen. The implications of this problem are even more serious when one realizes that change never happens in our communities *unless* our old people are agreed and understand the issues.²

A frequent criticism of co-ops is poor management, and considerable effort and money went into upgrading management skills. In the interim, advisory and technical assistance was provided by government co-op officers. As Sprudz

² Arbess (1966:47) pointed out that leadership before contact was "personal" or "particularistic," whereas the newer kind is more "impersonal," based upon rationalism. Interestingly, the first Eskimo co-op president ever elected was chosen on the basis of "traditional particularistic criteria." He was a good hunter, a senior member of the dominant kin group and he owned a Peterhead and was an Anglican layreader (Arbess, 1966:49). His leadership style meant that he invariably deferred to non-Inuit. *But*, in the next election, he was defeated by a younger man who, Arbess says (p.50) was, "in a traditional sense, one of the least successful Eskimos at George River." He was a poor provider who had no prestige possessions. He was, however, "willing and eager to speak out at meetings." He was assertive, even to the point of giving orders to bureaucrats. As Arbess says (p.51): "He was a capable organizer on a community-wide scale and was willing to allocate men and resources beyond his own kin group." It did not take long, therefore, to effect a radical change in what Arbess refers to as "the ideology of leadership," only the space of one election. From then on, leaders were chosen on the basis of competence to function in the new milieu, which required rational, universalistic criteria.

(1975:9) wrote:

To understand the novelty of the situation, at least for several years at the beginning of the program, one has to remember that practically none of the native people had had any previous experience in the external decision making process. Their formal education was minimal, if any, and their cultural background had given them only limited experience with domestic authority, as exercised among the kinship group.

The co-op introduced new criteria of leadership. Previously, Inuit had sorted themselves into better and best hunters, but the co-op valued other skills, such as the ability to speak English and get along with bureaucrats. To quote Sprudz (p.10): "As to the selection of staff, it was in most cases governed simply by the availability of someone with a passable knowledge of English and mathematics who then had to be nurtured to some level of effectiveness."

FCNQ mounted an extensive educational service for the Quebec co-ops -- courses, manuals, newsletters, on-site instruction and an in-service leadership training program which attempted to involve people in management at all levels of the co-ops and distribution agency. The heads of the various services -- coordination, production, auditing, sales, purchasing -- were responsible for training and, in 1970, a separate Inuit education department was established. A major problem preventing Inuit from assuming management positions in FCNQ was, however, that they did not want to relocate to the South. Few lasted for more than a year or so.

Much time was spent in the Quebec system instructing Inuit on appropriate lines of authority, the niceties of hiring and firing, for instance, and how to conduct proper meetings and, always, the exercising of these new roles was

complicated by the fact of kinship and interpersonal relationships with those with whom one worked. Corporate management styles designed for a fragmented society in which working and personal roles are separate, do not sit well in isolated settlements with a high degree of co-sanguinity. Twenty years after the first co-op was established, people were still reporting difficulties in exercising authority over friends, neighbours and relatives.³

Lines of authority: Assymetrical relations between Inuit and non-Inuit

As in any context, the few Inuit who became managers in the co-op system operated under certain constraints. They were accountable to a board of directors, for instance, and these lines of authority were difficult for Inuit to understand. The subject was raised at the March 1978 co-op presidents' conference (CACFL, 1978:11) at which it was pointed out (in response to a query as to who has the right to hire and fire, the board or the manager?) that "some Co-operatives are fighting over power." The presidents were advised to:

Talk to your Manager and make him understand that he has full power but he must consult with his Board of Directors before he takes action. Managers may become confused if they do not fully understand the wishes of their Board of Directors. Some managers hold a lot of power. It should be clearly understood that the General Manager is an employee who reports to [the] Board of Directors. Some managers try to direct the affairs of [the] Board of Directors. This must stop.

During the ensuing discussion, it was pointed out that the board of directors "must

³ The bulk of the minutes of the co-op presidents' conference held in Yellowknife, March 1978 (CACFL, 1978) are concerned with the respective roles of the board of directors and the manager of the co-op, who is responsible for what, and the necessity of firing the manager if he doesn't do a good job.

be aware of what is going on and not rely solely on General Manager"⁴ and "if Board of Directors wants to be kept informed and General Manager does not provide the answers, fire him if he is incompetent."

CACFL president Louis Tapardjuk pointed out, however, that "due to our culture" directors tend to make decisions "based on emotion," giving "many managers another chance." His advice was: "Rather than dealing with problem through emotions Board of Directors must face the facts. If manager has had several chances why should he have another chance?"

A special word needs to be said about a key managerial position in the co-ops, that of purchase manager in charge of buying carvings and other products for the co-op and setting prices since the commodities he purchases are not standardized. In cases where Inuit fill the position, they are in the difficult position of having to make decisions affecting relatives and friends. As Louis Tapardjuk said: "We have to face reality. HBC managers are strangers in the settlement. The Purchase Managers are relatives. They cannot turn people away" (in Myers, 1978:26). The pressures inherent in this position are pointed up in a comment made by carver Aliva Tulugak (in Myers, 1985b) about Lucassie Echeluk, long-time purchase manager of the Povungnituk cooperative in Arctic Quebec. The comment was made in the context of a discussion concerning the declining sales of carving which some Inuit considered resulted from the co-op's having to buy mediocre work:

⁴ The participles were left out of the original text.

I used to watch Lucassie price carvings and he used to be hard on people sometimes when he thought that they were not trying their best. When he left, the purchase manager that replaced him had a very soft character. He was afraid to tell people what he thought was wrong and that's when the carvers went ahead and started to do some poor quality. They knew that he would accept them without any comment...but Lucassie cared for the co-op movement and for the people, that their market not collapse. He was sometimes very tough on people who he thought were not giving their best efforts.

The purchase manager was under pressure from outside as well; for, the control exerted over Inuit work by outsiders was mediated through this position. If the purchase manager paid too much for a carving or bought unsaleable work, he was castigated, sometimes publicly, and if he didn't improve, fired. The following is a verbatim excerpt from an address by FCNQ's sales manager to the 1980 annual general meeting (FCNQ, 1980b:161). I quote at length because it is typical of the communications passed from the distribution agencies to the co-ops and carvers:

Very few businesses anywhere can claim an increase of 30% in sales of a product. It is an excellent result but if at the same time, the inventory increases another 34% over and above that, it presents serious financial problems. I have been selling sculptures for 18 years. I know what a good carving is and I know the Eskimos know what a good carving is. The managers know what a good carving is, but sometimes they just seem to be buying just because it is made by an Eskimo so we have the problem of over production of poor carvings at very high prices.

I do not want to be negative but if the trend to belting out rocks with a few chips and scratches continues, the market will be ruined the inventories will break the co-ops. I can show you a piece for which the co-op paid \$600. and we cannot sell it even at \$200. That kind of pricing does not help the co-op. It only helps the man who made it. A few junky pieces can give everything else a bad name.

People have to realize that living down South is getting harder. There is not as much money to throw around on items that are not essential. This small ivory carving is beautiful but because the artist was paid \$650.- we are supposed to sell it for \$1,300.- and the gallery that buys it would have to

retail it at \$2,600. You can buy a good used car for that. Before the purchasing manager makes that kind of decision, maybe he should consult with someone else. It involves tying up all of the co-ops money.

We must understand that carvings are a luxury item, not a necessity like food and clothes. Whitemen might seem stupid sometimes but they are not that foolish. They will not buy just anything. They spend their hard-earned money carefully.

Pricing is only part of this big inventory problem. The quality has also slipped down. The people are not taking care to work well. They should have more pride in their work.

I honestly think that more control should be exerted over the purchase manager sometimes. It is a very difficult job, but it must be done more consistently.

The sales manager's concern was selling carvings, and erratic pricing in the North and the purchase of unsaleable work was preventing him from doing that: "When someone brings in junk..." he said (*p.* 163), "they should be laughed right out of the coops." One of the directors, Simon Luuku, ventured: "We appreciate the problem but maybe we should also consider the problem from the artist's point of view, especially someone who lives mostly by carving and has a difficult time." The sales managers' response: "The coop is a business not a welfare agency."

This is, admittedly, a blatant example of how the needs of the system began to take precedence over the needs of the people it was supposed to serve, but it is not extreme. The production and marketing of stone sculpture became the locus of a power struggle between the co-ops and their distribution agencies in both Quebec and the NWT. The major work for Inuit was now carving and subsistence hunting, but from the beginning they were told how and what to carve. In 1951, Houston produced a booklet (requested and paid for by DIAND) providing

guidelines, with drawings of examples of carvings that would sell and including such items as book-ends and cribbage boards. It is generally assumed that the practical Inuit welcomed this kind of guidance since their interest in carving was to earn money, but there is evidence that control over subject matter and style has long been resented. In a letter written in 1953 by Thomassie Qumak of Povungnituk to Peter Murdoch (former HBC manager, but then with DIAND), the writer complains:

Only the small inexpensive carvings are wanted. It is not like it was when you were here. Some of the carvers are angry because the good carvings have such little value. They cannot make good ones now because they have to hurry so much when carving.

It is interesting to note his further comment: "During the fall many big carvings were made, those that were unpleasant and repulsive were bought for a high price." The writer was, then, complaining about two things -- that they had to make *more* carvings to sell for *less* money and that the carvers' value judgements, to the extent that these can be generalized, were very different from those of the purchaser, who would at that time, been a non-native Hudson's Bay Company employee. The resentment is growing. In 1989, Manasie Akpaliapik said (in IAF, 1990:9):

I think what's happening in small communities is that the merchants have too much control. Lots of times the Hudson's Bay Company and co-op managers might not know about art at all. They might be good at paperwork and managing, but a lot of times they tell people what to carve: "We need 10 polar bears."

Control by the merchants

An examination of CAP's minutes yields abundant evidence of wrangles over

quality and pricing, of utmost importance in a cooperative system committed to purchasing the whole range of production and which could only, with difficulty, impose a selective buying policy. Ideally, the co-op would encourage higher standards *and* exert efforts to market everything produced. In effect, though, unless kept in fine balance, the viability of the operation was placed in jeopardy by non-selective buying.

There were many discussions concerning feed-back to the co-ops, a difficult task given distances and language barriers and the time lag between the time the work was made and when it was received and sold in the South.⁵ CAP considered the problem to be mainly one of communication and endlessly examined ways of improving this. Many such discussions ended with a resolution to have CAP staff travel more frequently in the North.

Later, as we saw, the product development committee funded by the federal government, and the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council were established to deal with problems of quality, the latter with specific reference to prints. Quality, especially in printmaking, was also dealt with through resident advisors and workshops. Terry Ryan followed Jim Houston in Cape Dorset where the highly successful printmaking program is generally attributed to the ongoing involvement of expert advisors. Other advisors were less enduring, staying for a year or so, or merely keeping in touch from a distance.

As the years passed, there was less and less interest at CAP in softening

⁵ Now overcome to some extent through the use of video-phones.

7

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the blow when it devalued or rejected shipments. In 1980, CAP took an unequivocal position (CAP, 1980b:11):

It is obvious that there are a number of people who should be engaged in pursuits other than carving since to hope to sell such works simply because they are done by Inuit artisans is naive and unrealistic. C.A.P. will continue to exercise its discretion in judging what will or what won't reach the marketplace and at what price, since the assessment process is an integral one in fulfilling our role as marketing agent. While it would undoubtedly endear us to our suppliers in the short term to pay whatever is being asked, we would quickly be out of business as buyers would go elsewhere rather than paying unreasonably high prices.⁶

Eventually, as we have seen, CAP ran into serious problems returning carvings to the co-ops. The staff felt they had no choice, but this practice seriously eroded producer loyalty to CAP. By the late seventies and early eighties inventory problems were seriously out of control, at both distribution agencies.

In Quebec, as we have seen, FCNQ was having its own problems with supply and quality. Although production and sales were under one roof there, it was, as in the NWT, up to the Eskimos to produce what the sales department could sell rather than the other way around. At the March 1980 annual general meeting, the general manager declared categorically: "The women will not be able to make what they want but will be told what is needed in standard and in special craft." He added:

We will make a trip through the north to each co-op. Before, we will find out what's selling in standard and in special crafts and that's all that will be made. We'll place orders with the co-ops to fill. If they want to continue with their sewing shops, they will be told exactly how much it will cost and they will make their own decision as to whether or not to continue... our

⁶ CAP devalued inventory by almost \$100,000 in 1979.

major problem now is the control of inventory. We have to emphasize this and increase sales. If we had unlimited money, people could do whatever they want...We will make sure that the people who want to sew, can sew. But this year we have to put the emphasis where our biggest problems are. We can re-examine this next year and change it if necessary.

FCNQ tried many ways to control inventory and quality: Inuit mediators, meetings, carving quality control committees, newsletters and radio programs. Workshops and resident advisors, favoured in the NWT, were the least favoured methods in Quebec. Although FCNQ resisted returning work to the North, quotas eventually had to be imposed and mark-ups reduced. In 1982, a meeting of directors from the Povungnituk, Inukjuak, Ivujivik, and Akulivik co-ops was informed, for instance, that purchases were to be cut back by 50 per cent through the strategy of paying a maximum of \$35 for any work. It was realized that this would inevitably result in the making of smaller carvings, even though the \$35 could be considered an advance payment against sales, with the artists getting a supplementary payment when and if the work sold (Peter Murdoch, personal communication, telephone Nov 8/82).

Inuit had no choice but to cooperate if they wanted to sell their work, and their perception of what the buyer wanted became, for many, a guiding principle. Josie Papialuk told me (Myers, 1980a) that he drew the wind because he thought it would make his pictures look better and people might want them. Alassie Audlak also told me (Myers, March 1980a) that she made her prints the way she did because she thought that was the way people would like them. There have been many comments in this vein and far fewer that indicate resistance. In a

recently published profile of David Ruben Piqtoukun, an artist working in the South, (Holmes, 1989:20) the author reports that Piqtoukun told the artists at a February 1988 workshop in Iqaluit "to be professional about their work." As he puts it: "He told them to take pride in their art -- do not carve what the Co-op store or the white man wanted them to carve, but carve what was in their imagination."

The foregoing discussion renders the following statement taken from the 1971 treasury board submission concerning incentives to redeem government equity in CAP (DIAND, 1971:89) somewhat ironic:

The role of CAP is not only of major importance to the northern economy and preservation of native culture, but it also provides an opportunity for native peoples to participate in decisions affecting them. In giving effect to the guidelines enunciated by the Government relating to the domestic control of northern enterprises, Canadian Arctic Producers Limited can be used to demonstrate the feasibility of a viable industry controlled by natives.

Not only were Inuit told what to make, but CAP made little effort to involve them at a high level. The co-ops were treated as CAP's "suppliers" and the Inuit assumed control, as we have seen, only after a long struggle. The co-ops and their Inuit "owners" never did and still do not control the industry; the marketing agencies are the tail trying to wag the dog.

Theoretical and real power

In 1985, Aliva Tulugak of Povungnituk told me that he agreed with Paulosie Sivuak, his townsman who I had previously interviewed, that:

...when the co-op here [Pov] was alone in developing its business they were very successful because the people who really cared were in control; they

cared about the quality; whereas he [Sivuac] said that when the Federation started and the other villages joined the control of the people was sort of transferred to the managers down south. That's what he felt was the turning point (Myers, 1985b).

Although the philosophy has always been that the southern distribution agencies must keep pace with the northern suppliers, in reality, the interests of the two groups have been diverging from the beginning. Both CAP and FCNQ were set up with good intentions, but both had priorities -- some born of the necessity of doing business in the mainstream economy -- which took precedence over the priorities of the northerners. It should be pointed out that this was not due to malintention, but to the logic of a situation in which activity in one mode of production was feeding activity in another, dominant, mode.

Many co-op members, even presidents, felt so distanced from the workings of their federations that the relationship could be characterized as one of opposition. In Quebec, delegates at meetings were often reminded that they "owned" FCNQ and that they should be supporting, rather than obstructing its objectives. In the NWT, the coop federation had an even more difficult time attempting to secure the loyalty and support of its members. In 1978, president Louis Tapardjuk made a comment to the co-op presidents that revealed the wide gap between the co-ops and CACFL: "Some of you think CACFL is run by the Government. The only way CACFL is associated with the Government is that they get some of their funding from the Government" (CACFL, 1978:19). He explained further:

Many say that the Federation is in danger because it is run by the

Government. Every year C.A.C.F.L. gets funding for yearly resupply. Everybody must understand, we borrow money from the Bank and not the Government for the sealift.

The discussion that followed focussed on the six government appointed and five elected delegates to CACFL's board of directors, long a sore point with the co-ops and the basis of a movement which eventually succeeded in getting rid of the appointees.

In the NWT there was, as we have seen, intense disloyalty to CAP from the beginning which was viewed, in the North and South alike, as a state-initiated and sponsored institution. ACL came on the scene later and attempted to secure the loyalty of Inuit producers by itself opposing CAP. The result was a three way struggle, with some co-ops (*e.g.*, Cape Dorset) favouring CAP, and others, ACL. Their amalgamation in 1982 ended this unproductive rivalry, but did not succeed in solidifying identification of the co-ops with ACL.

There were problems even after amalgamation. Inuit did not understand some of the practices of the federation, and the one they cared most about was the one that affected them most, pricing. The lack of co-op/federation bonding provided the fertile ground in which entrepreneurs germinated. Because they did not see the distribution agency as "theirs," the co-op either for that matter, carvers went where the money was.

Various methods were attempted in the NWT and Quebec to secure

loyalty,⁷ but, as we shall see in a later chapter, these have not succeeded in fostering greater cohesion. A major problem of the arctic co-ops, as in all co-op movements, is lack of member loyalty in times of crisis. At the pan-Arctic conference in George River (ACL/FCNQ, 1980a:44-45) Louis Tapardjuk said:

What I'm afraid of is co-operatives who don't support CAP or the federation. They're hurting the co-operative movement itself when they try to go out on their own, because they're too concerned about monetary return to the producers. So that in the long run we can say that they're just trying to market: They simply don't see the future.

At the 1978 meeting of key players at the Airport-Hilton in Montreal, the system came under heavy attack. Cape Dorset was arguing that the only way to get "more money back to the producer" was to "by-pass the wholesaler" -- an interesting idea, given that the producer "*owned*" the wholesaler (Myers, 1978:54). The general manager of the Dorset Co-op advised: "This can only be done with artists of stature. It doesn't serve the purpose for carvers *per se*." ACL, CAP and FCNQ argued that they were responsible for individual success, and the general manager of FCNQ asked Av Isaacs, a prominent Toronto art dealer, whether he would say "that the Eskimo artist, under the present system has a better deal than the southern artist?" (p.53). Isaacs' reply: "Yes, in that he sells everything he does but no in that he obtains a relatively low return."

Dorset's general manager had earlier stated (p.8) that artists needed the

⁷ In 1984, FCNQ offered contests as inducements to co-op personnel (to work harder), members (to buy more), carvers (to carve better) and sewers (to sew better). To run over a two year period from 1985-86, prizes included money, European holidays for husband and wife, ski-doos, TVs, radios and merchandise vouchers to a total cost of \$92,000 to be spread over three years (Myers, 1984a).

support of a system "but now that the job has been done, a number of people have graduated beyond that need," and Isaacs agreed that it was the same in the south: "An artist can always go on to another gallery." But FCNQ's advice was (p.55): "We can't forget that this is the system that has made Eskimo art valuable. Tune the system but don't throw it out."

Who owns the co-ops?

As Clement (1988:137) has noted:

Co-operatives tend to evolve a structure including management which has economic ownership involving direction of production and responsibility for disposing of products...Co-op members typically have possession of their immediate labour process...

He distinguishes between "legal (or judicial) and real (or active) ownership (1986:62). Legal ownership may be passive or nominal, giving the owner only the right to "derive revenue from dividends;" or it may "serve as a basis for real ownership which includes control over the rights to direct labour and the products of labour." Inuit co-op members exercised the first kind of ownership, although the ideology was that they were to be active owners, and there are persistent complaints that the co-op doesn't pay dividends and that things aren't cheaper in the co-op stores.⁸ These issues are brought up again and again. At the 1978 co-op presidents' conference in Yellowknife, Louis Tapardjuk told the complainers (CACFL, 1978:8):

It should be important to all of you that you own something that you can call your own. Many of you have not gone to school. If you know your

⁸ Sometimes, the complaints force dividend payments.

mathematics you can operate a business, but what about your grandparents? They did not have the required education. Only through the Co-operative movement can we run our own business and control our own affairs -- it is not controlled by the number of shares. Everyone is equal in the Co-op movement. It is established to help our own people. It is up to the group to help keep our identity and not to think about money alone.

But, as Clement (1986:65) pointed out with reference to east coast fishing co-ops:

Fishers may own a share in a co-operative without having control of it -- that is, their formal ownership entitles them only to dividends based on patronage and a vote in deciding the directors -- while managers of co-operatives may have the real economic control of the co-operative without having any shares (formal ownership) or even being members.

It was clear that Inuit did not really understand how co-operatives operated.

Thinking they owned it, some could not understand why their credit was limited at the co-op, and they also did not perceive any conflict of interest in starting their own businesses -- ski-doo shops, tourist camps, grocery stores and small manufacturing plants -- often with government assistance, and sometimes in direct competition with the co-op. FCNQ's general manager reported to the 1984 board of directors meeting (in Myers, 1984a):

Many of the Inuit and some Kablunait [whites] are setting up businesses for themselves and, in many cases, want to operate entirely for their own profit and separate from the existing organizations. Some people have jobs and many of them get very high wages while most of the people have no jobs and have to rely on welfare. I think it is time that all the Inuit really work and plan for an organized development which will involve most of the people. If they don't, the Inuit of Nouveau-Quebec will find that a small minority of the people will get most of the wealth and all of the power.

Co-ops are considered a way to ensure broad-based ownership rather than fostering individual accumulation. As explained in an article by Braid (1962:25):

It is of importance to note that much of the gains made from cooperative

enterprise are channelled back into production in the form of increased ownership of shares in the enterprises. In fact the cooperative system lends itself admirably to the deduction of a percentage of returns to producers and the application of these deductions to capital growth. In the case of consumer stores, too, patron-members are urged not to withdraw all their dividends or refunds, but to increase their equity in the society and so assist in the expansion and improvement of services. It is thus that capital accumulation and its efficient utilization takes place automatically. What has just been said strongly suggests that co-operatives can be an effective means of distributing ownership more widely among the people.

As with all purportedly communal programs, however, ideals are often thwarted by personal desires, "the level of consumption to which individuals aspire," as Girvan expressed it (1973). For a co-op to succeed, the level of consumption must be held in check, a philosophy which is sometimes not palatable to people scrounging for their living. In such conditions, competition rather than cooperation becomes the norm. At the 1978 presidents' conference, Goussaert said (CACFL, 1978:9):

There appears to be some confusion about co-operatives. Co-ops are people -- only as strong as its members. It is a way of living and an alternative to socialism and capitalism. A way of living that is good in small settlements. Nothing wrong with individuals operating a small business but in communities of 300-400 people, if you have 10-12 people wanting to start businesses -- imagine the fighting.

He also said (p.12) that "some people have the impression that co-ops should sell cheaper than anywhere else." This was, he added, "a very wrong impression. If we do not use the right mark ups we are penalizing our co-op members. The people who are profitting are the non-members. Any profits left over will be returned as savings to its members."

It was Clement's conclusion (1988:137) that "...co-ops contain within them

the main classes of capitalism." He considers that co-ops are "particularly complex because they involve individual ownership internally but corporate ownership externally" (p.136). As he explains, members have personal ownership of "their means of realizing their labour," but at the same time they are "corporate owners of an overall cooperative which in turn acts as an employer toward production workers and sells on a capitalist market." The net result of this complexity is class conflict. As Clement puts it (1988:147) "To the extent co-op management believes itself "outside" capital/labour conflict, they are living an illusion."

The disposition of surplus

The introduction of cash to the northern economy resulted in a growing disparity in relative wealth. Food was shared; cash was not. Although the co-op at first, like the HBC, operated on an account system, by the mid-sixties, cash was in demand and neither agency could control where or how it was spent. As noted in the Baffin Island East Coast Area Economic Survey (Anders, 1966:62):

At the beginning of the century, the leader of the camp, who was usually the oldest Eskimo with the most experience, would obtain the necessary provisions by trading the skins that he had collected from the hunters in his camp. He would then return to distribute the goods to his people. With the introduction of cash, the money did not go into a community pool but was collected by the individual hunter...[and used to]...buy better hunting equipment...canoe, outboard motor...radio or record player...thus the number of possessions now varies greatly between hunters in the same camp. As it is today, the skin of either the ringed or harp seal belongs to the person who kills it. The common sharing of food has not changed, however, and if the skin is not to be sold as in the case of most bearded seals, it may also be shared.

A recent publication of Pauktuutit, the Inuit Women's Association, contains some interesting information on updated sharing practices (1989:16):

As money became a more common feature in Inuit communities, people were not sure how the money, or the things that it purchased, was to be shared. Within a household, food, natural resources and social assistance vouchers are all shared by members of that household. Money from labour or trapping remains with the earner and they can spend it as they see fit although some contribution to the household is expected.

Equipment and "significant amounts of replaceable goods, such as gasoline or dog food," are being lent rather than given "with specific agreements being made as to when they will be returned." Also, such agreements are likely to be between close relatives or good friends.

Inuit producers are being subsumed into the dominant class structure in which rewards are more closely matched with talent and productivity and used at the discretion of the individual. The corollary is that the labour expended to earn these rewards is shared, not with fellow labourers, but with those who control and organize it, who now *own* a portion of Inuit labour power. The Inuit producer is no longer entirely free.

In a co-op system, any surplus remaining after a non-discretionary allocation to a general reserve fund to provide financial stability, is supposed to be returned to the members according to how much business they conduct with it during the year. The co-op is, therefore, not an egalitarian system with regard to rewards, although it attempts to be with regard to decision-making (one member/one vote). In practice, though, dividends are seldom declared by the under-capitalized co-ops and, instead, surpluses are reabsorbed to carry on the business, presumably to the potential benefit of *all* members. There is, however, a significant groundswell of resentment among those producers who know that they

are contributing the lion's share. The case of the Cape Dorset co-op is instructive; for, the same attitudes are becoming prevalent across the Arctic, although some committed co-operators such as Aliva Tulugak, co-op employee in Povungnituk, believe that provision has to be made for the less talented. He told me in 1985: "the way I see it, you can't completely shut off the poorer carvers...but the problem we have is trying to motivate the talented artists to work within the system" (in Myers, 1985b).

However, just as earlier, in an extreme situation, it became each person for himself (to the extent of eating children and spouse) so, in a case of declining sales, carvers start thinking of their own needs. Tulugak understands this and justifies it with reference to "stark reality:"

I do know that the sharing of food continues [with the stone] but as everywhere you have lazy hunters or good hunters. The good hunters always have meat available for themselves and other people. It's the same with the carvers. It's the lazy ones that are the main problem...In the past the lazy hunters were made aware of their responsibility. You can't expect other people to feed you all the time if you're not sick; you have to go out to try to support your family too. That's one area I think we've neglected with carvings. We're being too soft. We've become too southernized to deal with our people. Whereas [before] it was the harsh reality. Suppose this hunter who has been supporting you decides to move, what are you going to do if you're still lazy? You'll starve; whereas, with the carvers, it was "the mob" controlling the destiny of the carvings. The people dictated what they wanted and here we are ending up with a big problem.

It may also have had something to do with the inevitable inability of non-capitalist practices to reproduce themselves in the contact situation. This is structural -- old options are no longer available and irreversible commitments have been made to new practices -- but there is, as well, a subjective element. When queried about

the possibility of "ever going back," Tulugak said:

I don't feel worried because I know that people survived when there were no carvings...the majority of them could still live off the land if they had to. Because the food costs so much at the stores, we have to supplement our way of life with country food...But we've gone too far to turn back. People are used to seeing their children get sick and being healed by southern medicine; whereas, before there was no alternative but to accept the fact that if the child got sick enough to die he was going to die. We don't have those experiences anymore. It would be too demoralizing to live off the land away from the villages and see our children die because of a lack of medicine.

He is still talking about "stark reality" -- survival. The way to survive in a situation of dominance is to identify with/join your oppressors (the Patty Hearst phenomenon). If you are a carver, your interests and practices will align with those of producers in the dominant mode of production. This is a determined process, not a subliminal effect.

Equal or individual reward?

The "inherent principle of co-operation is to reward the industry of members in an equitable manner" (Braid, 1962:25). The problem is how to do this in a discriminating market or, more generally, in the capitalist mode of production?

One inevitable effect of the production of stone carving for export was a growing disparity in relative wealth. The work from some artisans was more in demand than that of others and, inevitably, some became wealthier than others. The "reserved artist program" at CAP, for instance, had the effect of enhancing individual reputations of artists as well as providing them with greater financial

returns.⁹

The . . . system not only resulted in some artists accumulating greater wealth -- prices for their work were directly proportionate to the success of their promotion -- but, eventually, it also resulted in the structural change in the Arctic co-op movement caused by Cape Dorset's defection from CAP in 1978. As Terry Ryan, general manager of the Dorset co-op, said (in Myers, 1978:7-8): "...we should keep in mind that this is 1978, not 1948. We have marketing bodies which have been serving the purpose but, in Cape Dorset we have artists of note who know that they are..." As manager of the co-op, he did not, he said, want to see "talent that has been developed over the years, slipping through our fingers," and: "If the top artists could find a ready market, we'd be unhappy because we need a percentage of the income from their work to support the whole effort."

Certainly, there were committed co-operators among Inuit. As Vallee (1964:46) noted:

In each Arctic co-operative for which I have information there is a core of Eskimo people who espouse the ideology of the movement, who evidently understand its implications, and who join with the whites in seeking converts and maintaining support once this has been achieved.

Nonetheless, the lack of commitment to a communal ideal is clear in the lack of carver support of co-ops, and co-op support of distribution agencies. Carvers go where the money is, and co-ops often consider their interests opposed to those of

⁹ Financing inventories for solo exhibitions was a cash flow strain. In 1971, a list of 20 artists whose work could be exhibited in this way had been prepared, and an estimate of their collective annual production was set at \$60,000. There was talk of applying to ELF for financing inventory or a bank loan, but only after all other venues of free or low interest rate money had been investigated.

the distribution agencies, particularly the stronger co-ops like Cape Dorset which resent having to carry weaker members. Similarly, successful carvers are increasingly resentful of having to carry those who do mediocre work.

Many attempts have been made to reconcile the weak and the strong, the money-makers and the non-productive. A supplementary payment plan was put into place in Quebec, for instance, but delays in receiving extra payments made the plan unpopular. At first, the plan only provided for extra payments when work was under-priced, but a new system was put into place in 1984 which penalized as well as reimbursed carvers.¹⁰ In a situation in which a carver was underpaid, 50 per cent of the extra received would go to reduce his account (Myers, 1984a). At an FCNQ meeting, a carver from Ivujivik said he would use himself as an example because he is one of the "better carvers" and:

I find it sort of disheartening making large carvings knowing that I will only get \$200 and not knowing how much the salesman will sell it for and having to wait a long time for an extra payment. I have bills up north to pay. The sales staff are collecting my work until January [for a show]. I would like at least to know when and if I will get money. This prevents me from carving more large carvings.

In Quebec, where carving was treated more as a commodity than art, the star system was eschewed, although a few sold more than others and managed to accumulate relatively greater wealth. It appeared as if the co-op ideal was stronger in Quebec, but when inventories were up and sales down and FCNQ responded by imposing a maximum payment of \$35 on carvings, the better carvers

¹⁰ An example would be a carving for which the carver was paid \$550. If it wholesaled for \$375, to retail for \$750, the carver would have been overpaid by \$362.50, and this would be entered as a debit on his account.

rebelled. During interviews I did for the National Film Board in 1985, several artists expressed bitterness at being penalized because of people doing poor work that didn't sell. They thought that only the better carvers should be allowed to produce.

The fear of co-op management is always that the talented artists will break away from the co-op and deal directly with the galleries. Indeed, a younger generation of carvers is attempting to do just that. The defection of Cape Dorset must be viewed as an overt example of the break-up of the communal ideal in which all share equally regardless of contribution. As the general manager of the West Baffin Co-op said (in Myers, 1978:56):

A small group of people made the Cape Dorset co-op successful. They gave a lot of income to see the co-op grow and to carrying other artists who are not as well known in the market-place. There is a need for the co-op to be concerned with aiding and abetting other talent within the community but they question whether they should be expected to support others outside the community. The inequities *within* the community already pose a burden on talent. Another role of the co-op is to see that talent is well represented in the marketplace. This is a changing scene. Artists are being requested to do things beyond the guise of the co-op and there is, therefore, pressure on the co-op to see that the revenue for their talent is increased. A small group has been carrying an inordinate burden. Many people are riding on the back of a small number and the point of toleration is being stretched to the limit. The artists are aware that they are carrying a load.

At that meeting, it was recognized that the talented artists, the sale of whose work was supporting mediocre talents, wanted a greater share of the pie. In Cape Dorset they are getting it, but in most other communities, the status quo remains unchanged.

Conclusion: Creation of a local elite

To sum up, then, under the hegemony of the co-op, production relations shifted to favour the nuclear over the extended family group as the unit of production and consumption. Stone carvers owned their tools and controlled the fruits of their labour, but they relinquished control over what they could make. They continued, however, to control the manner in which they worked, incorporating carving into a cycle of activities which included subsistence hunting and gathering, wage labour, simple commodity production and social assistance.

The co-op also commodified labour and institutionalized lines of authority. Deference to leaders of the hunt was replaced with the exercise of authority, albeit reluctant, of co-op managers. Final authority rested, however, with non-Inuit managers of the federations who established priorities which governed the workings of the co-ops and the possibilities for carvers and employees alike. Inuit have not yet succeeded in overcoming this domination.¹¹

Although food continued to be shared, private ownership became the norm and disparities in relative wealth reached new heights. Some Inuit began to wield what I shall argue was class based power.

A point made by Ruffing (1979:28) with reference to the Navajo nation is appropriate here: "The reservation system," she says, "paradoxically preserved

¹¹ Whenever bureaucrats or disgruntled former FCNQ employees attempted, as they often did, to challenge FCNQ management, they were thwarted by the Inuit rallying around the general manager. Inuit have, however, become critical of the general manager, almost forcing him out of office at the 1980 annual general meeting. Pointing to the fact that Inuit were running the development corporations and other agencies, delegates complained that they were being prevented from running their co-ops and federation.

traditional activities while undermining their self-sufficient nature." This appears to have been an inevitable consequence of production (furs, carvings) which was increasingly for external exchange rather than internal consumption. A transfer of value from North to South took place through unequal exchange measured in labour time, *i.e.*, carvings embodying hours of labour, often of more than one person, were exchanged for machine made goods, and unequal trade measured in terms of value. The HBC exchanged rifles for a pile of furs as high as the rifle barrel, netting them a disproportionately large mark-up. However, when the fur market collapsed, profits had to be secured through higher mark-ups in retail trade

Although there is great inequity in the volume of goods exported and the volume of goods imported, because of the high prices obtained for even trivial carvings, the transfer of value perpetrated through their exchange may not be as severe as that occasioned by the fur trade. Ruffing (*p.29*) talks about the transfer of value that takes place (through unequal exchange) when Navajo hand-made products are exchanged for machine-made products. As Amin (1974:54) argues: "...the hour of total labour (direct and indirect) of the more advanced country (characterized by a higher organic composition) obtains more products on the international market than the hour of total labour of the less developed one" because the organic composition of capital is different (machinery embodies labour).

It is interesting to note that some Inuit carvers, quite unversed in economic

theory, have wondered why "toys sold in the co-op store, that are made in a few minutes on a machine and break in a few days cost as much as [we] get for a carving that took three hours to make by hand and will last forever."¹² Unlike payment for other kinds of labour, payment for arts and crafts, even in the capitalist mode of production, are not related to *labour time*. But even co-op wages were not comparable to those of western institutions such as the HBC, since they were based upon a standard of living consistent with the Eskimo culture, but not competitive (see Ruffing, 1979:36).

Ruffing (p.29) also makes the point that Navajo capital accumulation in traditional activities is inhibited not only by unequal exchange and unequal trade, but also by the practice of credit saturation. Traders encourage people to shop at their posts, advancing credit "just equal to their clients future income in both cash and kind." Also, "customers are encouraged to consume as much of their future income as possible in order to minimize the amount of cash they have to spend elsewhere." In the case of Inuit, the extension of credit in the expectation that money earned at the co-op will be spent at the co-op was an effort to keep members captive. In 1984, an innovative measure to achieve this (while seeming to be in the members' best interests) was the setting up of a loan fund, a decision of FCNQ's general meeting held in Payne Bay where it was resolved that the fund would be set up to "allow co-op members to borrow money for purchases of

¹² This point was raised to the author at a meeting with carvers in Wakeham Bay February 25, 1979 (in Myers, 1979;1982a:46).

expensive items at the co-ops" (Myers, 1984a). The procedures for lending involved drawing up a budget for the borrower. These strategies work best, of course, under conditions of geographic isolation and a lack of alternatives.

The lack of linkage between marketing and production activities is a crucial factor. The former is controlled by non-Inuit and is the recipient of investment capital; whereas, there is a lack of investment in -- and often a lack of management of -- the latter activity, "condemning it to even lower levels of productivity" (see Ruffing, 1979:30). Another factor hampering productivity, hence accumulation, was noted by Arbess (1966:32,35) who wrote about the "attitudinal change" necessitated by co-operatives' maximization of production. When Inuit were involved in subsistence activities, their attitude was geared towards producing just enough to live on. But, when arctic char [for instance] was expected to provide the economic base, "there was no such thing as 'just enough.'" They were now expected to produce beyond their own needs, a lesson which didn't take. Arbess considered that attitudinal changes towards production were only likely if a crisis threatened the existing standard of living, or if there was a rise in the level of aspiration, *e.g.*, if people started desiring more and bigger boats.

The inevitable result of all this is the creation of a local elite whose interests are allied with outside, capitalist interests (Ruffing, 1979:36). As we shall see at the conclusion of Part IV of this thesis, from uninstitutionalized notions of rank -- *kabloonamiut* and *nunamiut* -- the practice of a substantial faction of Inuit is now aligned with the dominating capitalist class.

Usher noted in 1965 (p.29), that both Copper and western Eskimos lived in Sachs Harbour, and the western Inuit looked down on the Copper Eskimo who were "thought to be more primitive, less sophisticated and less clean...but the divisions do not appear to run deep as there is no lack of social intercourse between the two groups." He specified that they hunted and trapped together and intermarried. There were no class distinctions. In 1980, however, the following statement was made by Peter Ittinuar, Inuk Minister of Parliament (House of Commons, 1980:18:22-23):

Do you have a sense of when you would be giving these directions to communities? I think the need is now, according to the phone calls and letters I have from people in the communities. These are from the lower class of people there. The local government system you "have given to the people," as you say, has imposed a class system, or a sub-class system in communities which is really quite undesirable sociologically and politically as well. Do you intend to do something about this in the near future, say in the next year?

The casual use of the word *class* here cannot be taken as an indicator of structured relationships, but in the concluding section of the thesis, I make an argument that it is indeed and, as I shall show in the next chapter, the imposition of a class structure is integrally related to ethnic positioning.

Chapter Sixteen

Nationalism and the Articulation of Capitalist and Indigenous Practices

A fragmented race stands on guard for Canada and Quebec

In 1964 (p.175), Jenness had this to say about the Inuit:

...they may disappear as a separate people, as several Indian tribes have disappeared before them: but surely it is preferable that they should succumb struggling for a better life in southern Canada than rotting away in the Arctic on government doles. It is only their distinctive race and culture that will disappear, and these are already vanishing.

It is difficult to know how prevalent his view was, but assimilation appears to have been the operating philosophy of the northern affairs bureaucracy. Inuit were, by the mid-twentieth century no longer a "pure" race; Jenness, for one, considered that inbreeding with whalers and, in the west, with trappers meant that no full-blooded Eskimo existed by the mid-1950s. In 1964 (p.128), he called them "a fragmented race" lacking "a sense of history" and inheriting "no pride of ancestry." They lacked as well, he said, "all cohesion outside their family groups" and were unable to "comprehend the structure of a nation or understand the fires of nationalism."

Ironically, however, as we have seen, Inuit played a role in asserting Canadian sovereignty, by virtue of their occupying the Arctic. In some cases, they even consented to being relocated in the interest of establishing a Canadian presence and, as reported in a federal government publication, *Looking North: Canada's Arctic Commitment* (DIAND, 1989g:76): "An important element of the

Canadian military presence in the North is the Canadian Rangers...composed primarily of Indians, Métis and Inuit." In 1985, there were 36 Ranger patrols throughout NWT and Labrador with about 700 members, constituting "Canada's only permanent military presence in the High Arctic" (Marsden, 1985). Their job is to report sightings of submarines and strange aircraft to Yellowknife headquarters "which would then dispatch a reconnaissance aircraft." As stated in the DIAND publication: "The rangers demonstrate visible proof of a Canadian presence in sparsely settled northern coastal and isolated areas of Canada."

Also, as we have seen, soapstone carving, the only successful industry developed for Inuit quickly became an icon of Canadian nationalism. And, irony of ironies, to a large extent, their growing consciousness of nation is a response to Canada's intensified efforts to assert authority over the Arctic and its inhabitants.

A number of factors had coalesced to cause Canada to play an active role in the North, notably the second world war and published accounts of what was happening in the Arctic which "reflected little credit on its administration" (Sprudz, 1984:166). The ambition of the bureaucrats who attempted to make up for years of neglect was to build "up a region where race lines are unknown and where the North will be run by its own people standing on their own feet and doing the job better than we from the South could do it" (Robertson, 1961:13).¹ The opposite happened and, although Inuit have achieved some degree of control

¹ This can stand as a twin objective with the other bureaucratic aspiration that "Eskimo people with all deliberate haste, have control over [their] organizations in all of their aspects, and should regain their self-sufficiency" (Arbess, 1966:47).

over their own affairs, this has been hard won in an ongoing battle in which lines have been drawn according to ethnic affiliation.

The co-op movement also institutionalized *intra*-ethnic inequalities by making bosses, managers and directors out of some and employees, customers and petty commodity producers out of others. To quote Vallee (1964:46), co-ops:

...denied the assymetrical shape into which almost all Eskimo-White relationships have been fashioned: missionary-catechist; RCMP constable-special Eskimo constable; Hudson's Bay manager-post servant, etc. In the case of the cooperative, there is a self-conscious public denial that this ethnic imbalance exists or should exist and the Eskimo is defined as someone who has as much say as anyone else. All this goes on against a background of a real imbalance between White and Eskimo in relevant skills, power, and role.

Although it cut across kinship lines and denominational affiliation, the cooperative did not succeed in breaking down ethnic/racial discrimination. Indeed, it entrenched the asymmetry of Inuit/white relations even in Quebec where Inuit have been given overt authority in, for instance, an all-native annual general meeting. But, the co-op also sparked the beginning of a pan-Eskimo movement which, according to some observers, was evident at the first co-op conference in Frobisher Bay in 1963, just four years after the first co-op was incorporated at George River. This was the first occasion in history on which Eskimos from all across the Canadian Arctic had assembled, for any purpose, and Sprudz (1984:171) reported that there was "...the detectable birth of a Panarctic feeling..." It was not long after this that the Quebec co-ops started being referred to as "an underground government," assuming informal powers which, as I have discussed,

they failed to legitimate.²

Inuit living in Quebec also got caught up in that province's nationalist movement. They resisted being used by Quebec to further its claims against Canada (*i.e.*, to assert provincial sovereignty in northern Quebec), preferring to cast their lot with the more powerful federal bureaucracy, and they also talked at this time of taking their own land in their own hands (see Chapter 10). Opposition to the Quebec takeover of the northern part of the province resulted in a limited alignment of Inuit and Indians, both used as pawns by the Quebec government attempting to exert leverage on the Canadian state. As I have discussed, one of the urgent recommendations of the second co-op conference was that a federation be set up to serve all arctic co-ops, but without waiting to work this out in concert with the NWT, La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec was put into place with the hands-on assistance of the Quebec government and personnel from the Desjardins movement and Le Conseil de la coopération du Québec. Their undisguised intention was to win the support and loyalty of Inuit for the province of Quebec.

The birth of a pan-Eskimo movement

The net effect of being *treated* as a discrete group, of one kind or another, is a

² Arbess noted as early as 1966 (p.60) that "the cooperative leadership has expanded its activities beyond the merely economic, so that it now functions as a kind of community and local government." He gives the example of the co-op exerting pressure to stop a man from making illegal brew, an incident he considers "illustrates the acceptance, on the part of the community members, of the legitimacy of the political function of the cooperative." He concludes: "the cooperative has become the political voice of the George River community in all things relating to the community as a whole."

perception that one is, indeed, a member of such a group. In other words, a sense of "us" and "them" is born. Jenness may have been correct in his assertion that there was no sense of nation among Inuit; they were just "Inuit," the people. But then outsiders came and gathered them together and treated them as being of a kind, of a *different* kind. The birth of a pan-Arctic movement surely did occur in Frobisher Bay in 1963, the first occasion in history that Inuit saw themselves being treated as a collective.

By the third arctic Co-op Conference at George River in 1980, coinciding with the twentieth anniversary of the co-op there and the birth of the movement, the pan-Arctic movement had attained adolescence. That conference was referred to as the *Pan-Arctic Conference* and the relationship of Inuit with the rest of Canada was a major concern of the meeting. Walter Rudnicki, an invited private consultant, told delegates that they had to weigh decisions more carefully now than ever because they had the choice of two roads to travel (ACL/FCNQ, 1980a:19): "The first was that defined by land claims agreements, the second a more difficult road of constitutional reform and self-government." He warned them (ACL/FCNQ 1980b:38):

The first road leads to assimilation, which almost everybody in Canada expects to happen because there are only a few thousand Inuit in a country of twenty-five million. Assimilation means that in one or two generations there will be no more Inuit, no more Inuit language, or an Inuit way of understanding the world, or Inuit way of living.

He also told them that it was no secret that "most government programs are designed to move native people more quickly along the road to

assimilation." Jenness, the early, prominent and outspoken advocate of assimilation, took the extreme position that although the state had the resources to develop the Arctic, it would be a waste of the taxpayers money, since Canada did not need uneconomical northern industrial plants for its "progress" or "security" (1964:168). His solution was to bring Eskimos south, settling them in "colonies" of six or seven families on the outskirts of a city (p.176).

The second road, according to Rudnicki, was the "formation of a native province." As he told the George River conference (ACL/FCNQ, 1980a:22-23):

This second road would not be an easy one to travel. There are many in Canada who would not be in favour of it. At the same time native people are greatly divided among themselves and might not agree to a kind of unity which could save them from assimilation.

Co-ops promoted as a second road

Co-ops were promoted from the beginning as the route to independence, economic as well as cultural. As Vallee noted (1967b:42), a favourite saying at co-op meetings in Povungnituk in 1960 was: "The Cooperative will not make you rich, but it will make you independent." Furthermore, as Sprudz wrote (1975:15): "The cooperatives have been schools in democracy and in responsibilities, and the training ground for technical knowledge, entrepreneurship and also for leadership." He quotes the *Report of the Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories* (vol. 1, pp.57, 190):

Most cooperatives have been formed in unorganized communities or those in the early stages of organization, and their operation is closely linked to that of the community advisory council. For this reason, in addition to their important economic role, co-operatives are strong forces in the education of the northern peoples in the ways of local government...The cooperative

helps to establish equality of the native, and at the same time may provide him with a comparatively easy means of transition from the traditional northern socio-economic units of the band and the camp to the somewhat more heterogeneous communities which will characterize northern living for some time.

But, as I have discussed, co-op ambitions went far beyond that, especially in

Quebec. As Beaulieu says (1980:48):

Par la sensibilisation, l'information et l'éducation, elles ont force leurs membres à penser et à agir en termes d'indépendance, d'autodétermination et d'autonomie. Très tôt, elles ont été amenées à demander l'établissement d'un *gouvernement régional* du Nouveau-Québec qui serait administré par les autochtones eux-mêmes. Ainsi, les qualités traditionnelles de responsabilité et de solidarité familiale ont atteint le niveau de la communauté et une nouvelle définition du nationalisme autochtone est apparue.

As he points out, the co-ops did not confine their role to a strictly economic one, but "le mouvement entend poursuivre son action sociale et politique sur tout l'ensemble du territoire nordique québécois."³ As Vallee (1964:47) pointed out, strong co-ops were viewed "not simply as an economic instrument but as the chief, all-inclusive unit of community organization." They not only transcended "the

³ The success of co-ops depends upon their becoming an umbrella organization, but this brings them into conflict with established political structures, both mainstream and native. At an NWT co-op presidents' conference (CACFL, 1979a:3-4) Herb Norwegian pointed out: "For thousands of years the Dene and Inuit have been living here and they had their own system of governing themselves. The Dene had chiefs and band councils. This was the government of the grassroots level. By setting up Board of Directors you are going around, or bypassing the traditional structure of the Dene. This is what the Territorial and the Federal Government are doing. The co-ops are saying they are a people's organization and the Dene Nation is the same thing. By bypassing the Chiefs and Band Councils the co-ops are contradicting themselves. There should be a better relationship between the two organizations and the Chiefs and Band Councils should be recognized as the governing body of the people." Pointing out that the Dene nation was divided according to the five main language groups and that the co-ops, whose "principles are pretty well along the same line as the Dene Nation" should "work within the framework of the Chiefs and Band Councils" and "the concept of the Dene Nation should be recognized by the co-op movement," he concluded that "Between the 25 communities and the co-op federation I think there is room for co-operation. We can work together closer than we have in the past, but these things have got to be recognized."

traditional familial and camp groupings," but also usurped "some of the functions of such bodies as community councils, originally set up under the auspices of government administrators as a first step towards local government."

The co-op fostered what Sprudz (1975:17) referred to as "a new stratification of the communities and the North itself." This process was begun when Inuit were brought together into new conglomerations -- "communities" -- and furthered when they were organized into co-ops which superseded kinship *and* denominational affiliation, although in Quebec the co-op was initially identified with the French Catholics who had started the Povungnituk co-op. As the northern administrator in Povungnituk wrote to the Quebec regional administrator (DIAND, 1963b:4):

There is a good measure of pure hypocrisy in the attitude of some of these anti-co-operative people, especially where their church is concerned. The Anglican mission, and the late Senior Catechist, old Johnny Inuppa, of Port Harrison (he died earlier this year), have done little to help advance these people. The Anglican missionary has admitted to me that he is convinced that the Povungnituk Co-operative Society is nothing more or less than a device of Father Steinmann's to convert people to Roman Catholicism. Nothing could be further from the truth. This same missionary has informed me that he would like to see the Cape Smith group return to Cape Smith and live off the land in the old way.

The Cape Smith people living in Povungnituk would not even allow one of the co-op Eskimos to collect their children for school.⁴

⁴ The Cape Smith people had moved in to Povungnituk during the TB surveys in the mid-fifties when many of their people had been evacuated to southern sanatoria. In 1975, they moved back to their old camp grounds which they renamed Akulivik.

The co-ops reinforced ethnic identification

Although co-ops, generally, are not to be identified with a race, political position or creed, in the Arctic, the co-op is always modified with an ethnic adjective. It is the *Eskimo* co-op movement, in spite of early efforts by the Cooperative Union of Canada to include Inuit in its constituency. In Quebec, the exclusive nature of the co-op was not challenged although, over the years, a few local non-Inuit residents have joined up, and in one case at least, held office. In the NWT, more non-natives are involved in the co-op, and the notes provided to the co-op presidents' conference (CACFL, 1980b) point out that:

Anyone who wants to can become a member. Membership is decided by each one without looking at color of their skin, their religion, their nationality, who's political party they belong and if they are male or female. All they need to do is ask to become members and accept the responsibilities which go with becoming members.

It is interesting to note that the co-op succeeded, albeit in an inconclusive fashion, in effecting some limited cooperation between Indian and Eskimo. Several Indian and Dené co-ops are members of ACL, and in Great Whale River, two separate co-ops, one mixed and a second Eskimo, amalgamated in 1967. It might be noted, however, that Indians played a subordinate role in the new Indian-Eskimo Association. It was still an *Eskimo* co-op movement as evidenced by the fact that projects and language of communication all favoured Inuit.

Co-ops very deliberately played upon notions of Inuit power, but they also reinforced Inuit identity in a negative sense. They were touted as a means whereby Inuit could "gain control of their affairs," but although the people did

progress from employment as handymen and guides to managers and directors (but not in *all* co-ops), they continue to be patronized by non-native bureaucrats and distribution agency managers who consider that they know better and have used various means to guide, steer, and sometimes over-ride Inuit decisions. Non-natives who oppose the co-op -- and there has been opposition from the beginning -- do so on the grounds that Inuit are inferior and cannot run businesses and, if they do succeed, they should not be competing with non-native businesses, since they receive state assistance.

Discrimination has ranged from subtle to glaring. Until recently, for instance, the local club in Great Whale River, a "bordertown" with a large French and English population, refused to serve alcoholic beverages to Inuit, having enacted a by-law to exclude them.⁵ Denigrated or exalted, the message, and the structured reality, was that Inuit were different from non-Inuit.

Having given birth to pan-Eskimo sentiment, the asymmetrical relations which developed between the co-ops and the non-native dominated distribution agencies, had an undermining effect on ethnic identity. The reality runs counter to the ideology. FCNQ's general manager had boasted to Neely (1976:95) that "Eskimos who had been sweeping floors and emptying trash baskets did not have

⁵ Richardson (July 5, 1971:31) reported an incident in which Elijah Menarik, an Inuit employee of CBC Northern Service was refused a drink. "The reason for the refusal was a frankly admitted racial discrimination: Because he is an Eskimo." Some Inuit were, however, admitted as members. An employee of the Quebec government was okay because they "decided that he had assumed sufficient of the white culture to be able to conduct himself in a respectable manner." The same evening that Menarik was denied a drink, the Eskimo wife of a white man was served because, as her husband explained, "She is no longer legally an Eskimo." Menarik is married to a white woman.

any idea they could compete in the white man's world," [but] "now they are *employing* the white man!" When FCNQ was established, Inuit were, indeed, put into positions of control, but real power remained vested in the hands of the general manager who had announced his intention of preventing this by resigning after ten years, but who, when the time came, was unable to relinquish power. In 1980, when the annual general meeting held at Ivujivik, tried unsuccessfully to force his resignation, he and another FCNQ employee, Georges Filotas (formerly a northern community "animateur" with the Quebec government), wrote in part to the meeting:

...we have decided that we, your employees, have to make up our minds about our own futures. We do not want to waste our lives on something which will not advance. We do not want to spend our days arguing with the people who employ us. We want to work with our employers in order to reach an objective which they set. If we do not agree with this objective, we should not be working with you and thereby wasting your money (Murdoch/Filotas, 1980).

They accused Inuit of failing to "act on their own decisions or else they will make new decisions which break all their previous ones -- such as agreeing to withdraw from their Federation or selling their carvings directly to the south or setting up tourist camps in opposition to the co-op." The adversarial relationship of the federation and the co-ops is clear in Murdoch and Filotas' further declaration:

It seems to us that the people will accept the Executive Committee, the General Meeting or the Directors as belonging to the co-ops but the working part of the Federation is seen as not belonging to the people but as being more like the Hudson's Bay Company or a mail order house. The Federation is seen as a convenience rather than a component. It is no wonder that there has not been in the twelve years of its existence, one Eskimo willing to stay at the Federation to learn what he needs to know in order to run the place. The people see the Federation as an enemy who

keeps trying to tell the people what to do.

What was happening here was a real conflict between the Eskimo way and the white way. The Murdoch/Filotas letter denigrated such practices as consensual decision making, accusing Inuit of deferring a decision if one person disagreed, or else giving in to that person "although the co-op law states that decisions will be made by a majority vote." Ironically, the letter raised the rhetorical question: "Are the people really saying they want to stop being Eskimos?" So, yes, the Inuit were employing white men, but the message was that this was at the white man's suffrance; for, wrote Murdoch and Filotas:

It is our way that, as long as we accept to work for and accept the money which the people pay us, we will do what our bosses, the Inuit, ask us to do. If they ask us to do something and then make it impossible for us to do it, then we can no longer continue to work for them. If they ask us to do things which we know are destructive to them, then we can no longer work for them.⁶

Although it was a close call, Inuit did not succeed at that time in wresting control out of FCNQ's hands. The white people were in charge and Inuit deferred to them *mainly* out of fear that they would not be able to get money from the state unless they had a white manager (see Simard, 1972:14). This fear was openly exploited by FCNQ management to stifle any signs of rebellion. Inuit were told that if they dismissed their "employees," government funding would be jeopardized and the whole business would collapse.

⁶ Murdoch managed to retain his position as general manager, but I attended a directors' meeting at FCNQ in November 1984 at which the vice-president, Matiusi Amarualik, who had been at Ivujivik, commented to me when the manager was out of the meeting room for the morning: "You can see we have grown a little older since the days in Lévis when we depended upon Peter so much. Now the meeting can carry on without him."

The lack of managerial control by Inuit of the FCNQ (a few were taken on as trainees but never as managers), meant that any challenge to kabloona authority was quickly squelched. This is contrary to what, ideally, might be expected in the arctic cooperative movement. Vallee remarked (1966:48) that he was "an enthusiastic supporter" of the co-operative movement,

...not so much because of the economic value of the co-operative, although this is considerable, but more because of its social and psychological value in helping people work away from the disheartening, demoralizing status they had in the past, when they looked for their signals from government officials, traders, police and missionaries.

Expectations apart, all that had changed with the institution of the co-op was that the people giving the signals were different.

Resistance: "a nativistic brake"

The Honigmanns (1970) discovered "an ethnic heterogeneity" in Inuvik in 1967 which they considered to be the result of long term non-native residents, some of them born there (p.10). They concluded that at this time the town was stratified by income, occupation and housing, with a clear division between natives and "white northerners" except in a few cases of intermarriage: "Over 150 years of fairly intense acculturation and immigration in the Western Arctic have promoted a considerable degree of cultural assimilation on the part of the native people to Euro canadian culture, but contact has not acted as a melting pot" (p.13). Instead, the native people had developed a local subculture, a frontier culture with new forms of recreational, artistic and religious expression, mostly derived from Euro-Canadian models. To a certain extent, the native lifestyle was

"contracultural," in that it deliberately ignored or flouted conventions of the dominant culture although this was, admittedly, "minor" and people were "ambivalent about some of their non-normative behaviour" (p.14).

The Honigmanns considered that the native communities' "scoffing" at "the legal basis of power held by the dominant society" was a "nativistic brake" which served to control "further assimilation" and which provided "a symbol of native group identity" (p.15). They took as evidence of acculturation the fact that one third of the community *owned* their homes (pp.86,89), used modern furnishings and attended one of three churches (with the Pentecostals being more influential). They also participated in elections, adopted European childrearing practices, including explanations of where babies come from (the hospital or found on the trail; pp.83,93,137-144).

There may have been isolated pockets of resistance, but in the main, Inuit have cooperated with the forces of assimilation. As D'Anglure (1984:686) noted: "A generation of 'modernized' educated Inuit rejected the traditional image of Inuit life represented by their parents or grandparents." But, auspiciously, the disparity in wealth between wage earners and others continued to grow, and *intra*-ethnic relations began to assume a rather different character, becoming competitive (as people identified with their co-ops) and cohesive (as people joined forces to battle a common enemy). As unlikely as it sounds, the most effective locus of resistance is artmaking which has affirmed Inuit identity both *intra*- and *inter*-culturally.

In the mid-eighties, Edmund Carpenter, long a critic of the commercial soapstone work marketed as "Eskimo art," made a scathing denouncement at a Robert Flaherty exhibit in the U.S. (Carpenter, n.d:14):

By far the most effective propaganda on the North comes from Ottawa: well-organized, heavily financed and, when challenged, mean. Consider just one minor feature: the new stone carvings, an art form totally alien to traditional Eskimo art, in fact, diametrically opposed to it. This new art was designed by whites, produced for whites and marketed by whites. It's not the art of a free people.

"Fake art," he considered, "is just one more exploitation." It was a felicitous way of linking Inuit into a money economy, since it enabled them to preserve past practices, which meant that some of the cost of production could be allocated to the indigenous mode of production. Although I would agree with Carpenter that it is not the art of a free people, it has become, to a certain extent, a focus for Inuit nationalism, just as it was a focus for Canadian nationalism. Since it is the only successful economic activity Inuit have, it is only logical that it would also be the site of power and resistance. Apart from its importance as a major source of income, Inuit have come to value it as a form of collective expression. As FCNQ president, Paulosie Kasadluak, said (in Myers, 1978:67): "I became more and more aware that our sculpture was having a big effect on everything that was happening in the north and of the use of sculpture as a means of livelihood and also as a means of expressing ourselves as Inuit."

Consistent with the whole process of contact which I have been describing, the soapstone industry both reinforced and undermined Inuit identity. It undermined it by involving Inuit in a market economy, encouraging them to

produce for a dominant culture which set the terms and conditions of production. Its reinforcing effect stems from the opportunities afforded for collective expression in artmaking activities, even though, as Simard (1972:8) puts it:

S'il est exact que la condition de l'homme est de s'exprimer dans sa production, les Esquimaux se voyaient surtout comme des chasseurs de phoques et de caribous. La sculpture ne suffit pas plus à permettre aux gens du nord d'exprimer leur identité culturelle que les danses carrées ne suffiraient aux canadiens-français

Some have commented on the puzzling lack of social commentary in Inuit art, but it is not really so puzzling. Since the producers want to *sell* their work, they carve what is safe. Also, as a non-literate culture, carving is, for them, a way of remembering their history. As Labrador Inuk Gilbert Hay said (IAF, 1990:11): "Any culture tries to hold onto what it's losing." The potential Inuit art has for resistance derives from the fact that it is the only leverage they have with the dominant culture. The only thing they possess, besides land, that outsiders want, is their stone carvings.⁷ It may not yet be the art of a free people -- but it has that potential.

To summarize, co-op ideology promotes the idea that Inuit can be independent and equal partners in the Canadian economy and polity, but the effect has been to create an organization subservient to the federations which

⁷ An investment newsletter (Starks and Shulman 1981:8) advised: "Today, Inuit society is threatened, and it seems doubtful that true Inuit culture will survive the onslaught of our own modern society. When the traditional Inuit way of life disappears, we will see a parallel decline in the quality of Inuit art (already there is a strong demand for native art produced before and during the 1960s). We will also see a decline in supply, and these two factors mean that prices for fine-quality work are almost certain to increase." The message: Collect now before the Inuit are decimated.

were not established and are not yet effectively controlled by Inuit. Lacking resources and numbers, the one source of power open to Inuit was organization. The co-op organized them, but in such a way that any clout they might exert was harnessed for outside interests: the state (which hoped to eliminate welfare spending and keep Inuit out of the way of large scale resource exploitation, as well as using them and their art to promote a national Canadian identity); the Church (which desired converts for local denominational hegemony) and the market (which wanted the one thing Inuit do that no-one else does, stone carvings).

Inevitably, however, people do not remain passive. In the late seventies and early eighties Inuit began to recognize their plight and to resist in small but meaningful ways, attempting to recapture past practices: living off the land; reclaiming old camp sites; reverting to Inuit names (in 1982 Zebedee Nungak announced at a curator's conference in Ottawa that up to 50 per cent of Nouveau-Quebec people will change names, calling it a "face-lift"); setting up museums; recording elders' memories; attempting to repatriate artifacts; reviving dog teams and other pre-contact practices and placing new emphasis on the retention of the Inuktitut language.⁸ Some resistance was mounted within the co-op movement as

⁸ There have been various attempts to accommodate the Inuktitut language. FCNQ always translated manuals, letters, minutes *etc.*, and provided courses in co-op management with instruction given in Inuktitut. Programs of language instruction have been instituted in the schools, with the support and involvement of the older generation, and there have been efforts to train Inuit teachers. But all of this has achieved indifferent results and, at this time, it is estimated that at least 60 per cent of the younger Inuit prefer to read English. Few people in the western Arctic speak Inuktitut. In August 1991, the federal government and the GNWT signed a "cooperation agreement" to support and strengthen both aboriginal and French languages in the NWT. The GNWT had amended its official languages act in 1990 to give Inuktitut, Dogrib, Slavey, Chipewyan, Gwich'in and Cree the same official status as English and French.

well. In the NWT, Inuit (with the help of some non-Inuit) fought to kick appointees off their board and to make CAP a co-op. They also fought to move the retail chain, Northern Images, south on the premise that "Inuit should be able to sell their own goods instead of leaving it to others" (see chapter 12). In Quebec, the co-op has been less overtly successful in providing a vehicle for resistance, although it has continued to thwart the designs of the Quebec bureaucracy. By the time of the third co-op conference, Inuit were well aware of their inferior status in the rest of Canada and of their limited resources to reverse this situation. As one Inuk president of FCNQ said: "If all native people were to go to Montreal it would only be enough to fill the Forum, one building. This is an example of how few we are in numbers" (ACL/FCNQ, 1980a:12).

In spite of a latter day reputation of being peaceful, Inuit had never been *passive* people. When the whaling ships appeared as a threat, the shamans attempted to neutralize their power through various shamanic practices. New weapons were called for, however, to combat threats from twentieth century capitalism. Only a few decades after the ships, another kind of ideology was being employed, one which cunningly utilized co-op propaganda. The belief that co-ops had always been part of Inuit life became part of the mythology promoted by those committed to the movement. As Paulosie Napartuk, president of FCNQ said (ACL/FCNQ, 1980a:12):

I have to state that Inuit existed before 1959 [year of the first co-op] and even though there were no co-ops organized the Inuit were cooperating long before the formation of these co-ops. And as another example, most things were shared and even a seal was shared among the whole camp,

even ptarmigan, so this shows that Inuit were cooperating long before the formation of these actual co-ops.

Not everyone was converted, however, and there remains a strong body of opposition to co-ops on the part of people who may well realize that, although it is true that Inuit did cooperate in the past and share their resources, that the co-op does not exactly perpetuate those practices. The pre-contact practice of food sharing has, for instance, been commodified. In 1979, the RCMP confiscated game birds which were being sold at the Great Whale River co-op. According to FCNQ's general manager:

Since the establishment of the cooperative about eighteen years ago, the cooperative has been selling birds and fish which were bought from hunters and sold mainly to the local people who worked for salaried employment in the community. This practice enabled those who are employed in the community to continue to have access to their traditional food (FCNQ, 1979:1).

It is particularly telling that Inuit co-ops are aloof from the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), a formalized resistance movement which began, according to Robert Peterson (1984:724) with the Fifth Thule Expedition, "the first step toward direct contacts between the Greenland Inuit and the other Inuit west of Davis Strait."⁹ ICC, established in June 1977 at an organizing meeting in Barrow,

⁹ In the 1950s, the governments of Denmark, Canada and the United States, sponsored Greenland-Canadian and Alaskan-Canadian contacts, but it was only in the 1970s that Canadian Eskimos began "to establish voluntary organizations, which soon became both cultural and political channels for the articulation of their wishes" (Petersen, 1984:724). Canadian Inuit were, however, known to Greenlanders: "The periodical *Aruagaqdluit*, published in Greenlandic since 1861, included several narratives from Northwest Passage expeditions and also described contacts between the Church of Greenland and the Labrador Mission" (Petersen, 1984:724). Language was one of the first areas of concern of ICC, and all three countries prepared new Eskimo orthographies (The Inuit language Commission of Canada developed an orthography utilizing a syllabic and a Latin alphabet in 1976 [Petersen, 1984:724]). And all three countries are participating in developing programs to preserve language.

Alaska, grew out of a November 1973 Arctic Peoples' conference held in Denmark as a result of a conference in May of that year in France on oil and gas activities in the Arctic. As Petersen says (1984:727): "The ICC inherited the desire expressed by the Arctic Peoples' Conference that the Eskimo people participate on an equal basis in the planning of development projects in the Arctic."

It is not surprising that the co-op movement made no effort to have any influence in the ICC. The co-op, especially in Quebec, has been consistently isolationist, insisting it is the only "legitimate"¹⁰ umbrella organization for Inuit. This attitude clearly derives from the aspirations of non-native managers who, far from promoting Inuit unity and independence, have been mainly interested in protecting their own power base. Their attitude is not very different from the paternalism of missionary and bureaucrat. Any nationalist pitches made by the co-ops were to further its own economic aims and self perpetuation, which could only be achieved by keeping the "people" under control. It was left to Inuit to challenge white dominance, which they have begun to do.

Challenging white domination

An interesting and unusual mimeograph entitled *Katitseeeyet Final Report* (1979) from an Inuit group studying the causes of suicide in Frobisher Bay (endemic across the Arctic), contains a dialogue entitled "Talking to Ourselves:"

¹⁰ The word "legitimate" is used often in the co-op movement which currently refers to itself as the "only legitimate distribution agency for Inuit art." The Quebec movement also considered itself the only legitimate voice for Inuit, even after the establishment of political and cultural associations.

Q: What should be done [about suicide]?

A: It's easy to see that for 20 years (and today) Frobisher Bay has been controlled by southerners. Every important decision that affects the life of INUIT is made by southerners.

Q: If INUIT were making the decisions would Frobisher Bay be a healthier place?

A: We think so but there would have to be changes made in the organizations in this place. We don't think INUIT would *want* to be big government administrators, judges, RCMP Inspectors, principals and all that.

All these jobs are in organizations that were invented by southerners. INUIT will make the decisions when they can do so in their *own* way.

Q: When will this happen?

A: When the INUIT say 'Stop. That's enough.' Also, when the southerners decide to give up their power. Hopefully, those two things will happen at the same time.

Ironically, the committee wondered: "Are we racists for suggesting that INUIT should 'take charge' in Frobisher Bay?"

Among their recommendations: more control for local government ("is the village council just another 'southern' organization moving north?") and to have "INUKTITUT be considered a language of government so that no INUK [the capitalization is theirs] fails to get his rights under the government by reason of language."

Several years earlier, in February 1970, at the public meeting in Great Whale River to discuss the proposed transfer of the administration of Eskimo people from the federal government to the provincial government, Silas Cookie,

spokesman for Inuit *and* Indians,¹¹ told government officials what Inuit wanted (in Laurence, 1970:2-3):

The Eskimo want to work and use what they want and make it the way they want to have it because they are in their own land. This is not the land of the white man. So the Eskimo have to be the boss in their own land, and also the Indians. You white men you have your own bosses in your own land we, we are our own bosses in our own land. What we want to have, it must be done by the government. The Eskimo do not only have to be told what they are to do. What you don't really understand we will try to fight about it with our mouth...First of all, we must take our own land in our own hands...The Eskimo land should not be run by the white man, but should be run by the Eskimos....The white man, they are only in our country because they are thinking about money...It looks like the Eskimo land is not born yet...when the white man is in the Eskimo land he believes he is a boss only -- a king.

It is interesting to note that Cookie's demand that Inuit be allowed to use what they want and make it the way they want, because they are owners of the land, meshes with the class criteria established by Eric Olin Wright who argues that it is control over the physical means of production, labour power, and investments and resource allocation that determine class relations. Cookie apparently perceived the real basis of Inuit oppression. His townsman, Joe Kumarluk said at the same meeting (in Laurence, 1970:10):

The first and main concern here is the land, as to what right or deed we have to the land -- who has the legal right to it. We must get this land question straightened out first. Then we can decide which of the two

¹¹ It was rare for Indians and Inuit to cooperate, and surprising that Silas Cookie would be appointed spokesman for both groups. According to Richardson (July 10, 1971), in Great Whale River that year, there were 580 Eskimos and 320 Cree who "live side by side in the same housing, managed by their housing association, on which the two groups are represented on a pro rata basis. But they do not really mix. Only 10 or 15 of the native people understand both languages, the children play together and have done for many years, probably for generations, but only a handful have ever come out of the experience speaking the language of the other group." He could have added that Indians and Eskimos almost never intermarry.

governments will provide services here...It does not matter that the Prime Minister of Canada is presently considering the land question. The fact is that the Eskimo people were not consulted first concerning the land question as to what they wanted to do in their land.

They were *not* to be consulted, either, and, in spite of their protestations in Great Whale River, decisions continued to be made for them by non-Inuit. And looming on the horizon was a move by the Quebec government which would nip in the bud the incipient nationalism expressed by Silas Cookie and his friends. As Beaulieu (1980:17) put it: "Au moment même où le nationalisme autochtone atteint son apogée, le gouvernement du Québec rend public son projet de développement de la baie de James." This development is the subject of Part IV of this thesis. As we shall see, there was an inevitable backlash to the land claims movement which has, finally, fanned the fires of Inuit nationalism.

Analysis: "More than a ripple but hardly a tidal wave"¹²

Class and ethnicity intersect definitively in the co-op, a state initiative to organize and use Inuit -- for sovereignty, legitimation, and the furthering of Canada's own national interests. Inuit art, the only successful basis of an "Inuit economy" was also, but not coincidentally, a building block for Canadian nationalism *and* a pawn in the ongoing Quebec-Ottawa struggle. The Church helped by doing the groundwork.

It is only through this awareness that one can make sense of the astonishing degree to which politicians and bureaucrats, at a high level, became involved with

¹² This phrase is taken from Vallee (1966:46).

Inuit art and the otherwise puzzling fact that the co-op -- a people movement -- did not succeed in freeing Inuit. As Vallee (1964:45) observed: "When we consider that there are only about 12,000 Eskimos in the Canadian Arctic, the establishment of so many cooperatives among them represents a social movement of outstanding significance for community organization in the Arctic." It *could* have been a social movement of great import, but it would not have been in the state's interest to create co-operatives which are truly democratic, free-standing and self-perpetuating.

Far from freeing people, the co-op's hidden agenda was to incorporate them into the capitalist mode of production. After only a decade of co-op hegemony, Inuit were straddling two worlds, definitively locked into new relationships, but attempting to mesh these with non-capitalist practices. It was no longer a case of exploitation *between* two modes but of change *within* the pre-contact mode, signalled by new relationships between Inuit and Inuit, and Inuit and others. As Arbess (1966:47) put it:

Now, the cooperative was an organization of a radically new kind for it was community-wide and cut across kin lines. It required assertive leaders who would allocate men and resources and make decisions binding across the community. It required that leadership be vested in formal offices having a defined status with role rights and responsibilities, regardless of the person occupying the office at any given time.

"Authority," was, he said, "vested in the leadership position" and "a man had to lead in the interests of the community, not those of his kin" and "conversely, members of the community had to accept a leader's authority regardless of his kinship affiliations." And, "furthermore, decisions which were binding for all were

to be made by a small fraction of the community's members, i.e., by the 5 elected cooperative board members."

Relationships within the indigenous mode were approaching what we would call "class relations," in the sense of differential ownership and control over the means of production and work and the disposition of surplus value, although not in the sense of the exploitation of the labour power of one group to produce value for another, *intra-ethnic* faction, although there was a transfer of surplus value to the dominant capitalist class.

The co-op is riddled with contradictions, purporting to make men free, but locking them definitively into class relations; purporting to work for the collectivity while promoting the individual, purporting to support communality and cooperation while fostering ideals of private ownership and competition.¹³

Although carvers own and control their tools,¹⁴ the ownership and control of carving materials, mainly soapstone, is problematic since access is difficult and collective efforts are expended to procure it, with the co-op and the bureaucracy assisting in this effort. Similarly, although Inuit carvers control their immediate labour process, their labour power is, as we have seen, directed from outside, with employees possessing little control over how and when they perform their work

¹³ This is especially evident with reference to carving activities, as individuals are promoted in solo exhibitions and receive rewards based on merit.

¹⁴ They were restricted, however, as to the kind of tools they could use. While there was an ever-growing reliance on new tools and mechanical equipment for hunting and domestic use, this was not permitted in carving. Motorized drills *etc.*, were disallowed in order to preserve the marketing cachet of hand-hewn rock. Some young acculturated artists are, however, defying this restriction.

and carvers having no control over quantity and price. Carvers retain more of the simple commodity producer's freedom as to when and how they carve, but not over *what* they carve as they are subject to strictures from the distribution agencies as to size and subject matter.¹⁵ Monetary returns are considered private property to be used at the discretion of the individual.

Articulation of capitalist and indigenous practices

It is mainly with reference to stone carvers that the articulation of capitalist and non-capitalist practices can be enunciated. Value created in the simple commodity process, which depends upon non-capitalist producers foraging for stone and family labour is transferred to the capitalist mode of production. Since that portion of value retained by the co-op facilitates the process, there is, therefore, a total transfer of value as there is with transactions conducted through the HBC, in spite of ideological disclaimers that business conducted through the co-op means that money "stays in Eskimo hands."

In the absence of opportunities for internal exchange, co-ops encouraged export production and import consumption.¹⁶ The transfer of value, as has been

¹⁵ It will be remembered that CAP went so far as to decide in 1970 that the market was to provide the primary focus for the industry "and that market requirements must be fundamental to decisions on what to produce and how, when, where to produce it." Further, it was ultimately the *state* which was controlling the producers, since Inuit could decide what to make only after consultation with CAP's Product Development Committee, paid for by the state and chaired by a bureaucrat.

¹⁶ Although the co-ops, like the churches before them, made some effort to promote inter-community trade, production is, for the most part, for export. Country food and soapstone were the items most likely to be traded within the North. A Report to the Quebec Regional Administrator from the Northern Administrator in Povungnituk (DIAND, 1963b:2) made mention of some trading of soapstone: "Since the tour by some of the Co-operative Eskimos, around other northern Quebec settlements, the Co-operative Society has been active in securing orders.

discussed, is effected through unequal trade in which a labour intensive commodity is exchanged for quick, machine manufactures. Granted, this inequality is somewhat mitigated by the fortuitous establishment of Inuit products as "art," which means higher prices all along the line.

Although most Inuit remained poor, the co-op clearly fostered a gap in relative wealth. Better carvers were provided the opportunity to outstrip their peers, and regular employment was a boon to others. This translated into possession of coveted means of production: boats, ski-doo's *etc.* Theoretically, all Inuit are equal owners of the co-op, but as Wright suggests, it is vital to distinguish between active and passive ownership. Some had more decision-making power than others and the shareholders, typically, did not identify with the co-op, but looked upon it in much the same way as they did the HBC.¹⁷ Disposition of surpluses earned by the co-op were decided by the annual general meeting, but this, as I have shown, was dominated by a co-op elite, and steered by bureaucrats in the NWT and non-native federation staff in Quebec and the NWT. Most members felt powerless to affect decisions made on their behalf. Similarly, carvers

Arrangements had been made to trade material surpluses between Povungnituk and other settlements, and the POV co-op is shipping out 4,700 lbs of soapstone on the Fort Albany, to the Eskimos at Sugluk." Also, a letter from Yearsley (Pov art advisor) to Col. Cavey of Birks (1961) advised: "We are here [Port Harrison] to dig stone and buy carvings. A number of carvers and myself have made the trip because we cannot meet our orders for carvings. We have been successful in obtaining stone that will help to increase our production. We hope to buy carvings in the camps as we make our way up the coast [presumably to help meet their orders]."

¹⁷ Crucial to the success of a co-op movement is the support provided by its constituents. In some communities (Povungnituk and Inukjuak in northern Quebec, for instance), virtually every Inuk is a member of the co-op. In others, such as the communities on the east coast of Hudson's Bay, participation is much less, as few as 35 per cent in Fort Chimo, for instance (see Beaulieu, 1980:32 for a chart showing comparative co-op membership in northern Quebec).

resented the mark-up placed on their work by co-op, distribution agency and dealers. The narrowing of decision making ability is the beginning of proletarianization.

There is a widening gap between co-ops and distribution agencies with the co-ops functioning as little more than satellites of the federations. Several Inuit are critical of the direction the co-op movement has taken (see Myers, 1985b interviews).

What are we to conclude concerning the co-op? To repeat Gagnon's remark (1974:99), we have to conclude that co-ops do not give birth to a new society, but serve, rather, to facilitate the involvement of a marginal class into the dominant mode of production, be it capitalist or socialist. Furthermore, as he says:

Le système coopératif y est alors apparu comme le meilleur moyen pour la classe politique dominante de faire passer la masse paysanne au mode de production capitaliste de façon à lui soutirer le surplus nécessaire à l'entretien d'une administration de plus en plus coûteuse.

Gagnon also points out that in most countries, the co-op movement was directly inspired by the state in spite of the contradiction between cooperative and state ideology. Although co-ops have the potential, he says, to become social movements, this is defused/neutralized by the state.

In the end, the Eskimo co-op, a contradictory institution, has been unable to reproduce itself; its underground political power crumbled in the face of formalized Eskimo politics. The most telling contradiction is probably that between production priced with no relation to time and labour and consumption

priced according to time and labour. But the co-ops have not given up. It is worth keeping an eye on the Quebec movement where there is a clear realization of the fundamental importance of establishing a sound economic base in order to exercise ethnic clout. Without such a base, the co-op is castrated, as it was in the NWT where the state continued to control the movement even after appointees were banished from the board. In 1986, the NWT Co-operative Business Development Fund (NCBDF) was established, owned by ACL, but using money from the state to provide loans and financial services to NWT co-ops. The board of the fund is comprised of five native and five non-native directors, including Gunther Abrahamson, formerly with DIAND and long an appointee to the boards of CAP and CACFL. A statement by people connected with FCNQ (Filotas, Langlois, Michaud, Simard, 1984:5) is instructive:

Une idée claire inspire le mouvement coopératif depuis l'origine: à l'époque actuelle, c'est dans *l'autonomie économique* que se fonde l'autonomie culturelle et politique. Les Inuit doivent prendre la mesure de leur taille s'ils veulent être maîtres d'eux-mêmes.

It seems unlikely that the Quebec movement will ever succeed in making a political link, the real purpose of any co-op anywhere. Like many others, Vallee (1966:46) noted the value of co-ops beyond the economic:

The point is this: on the big economic scene, the co-operatives create more than a ripple but hardly a tidal wave. Cottage industry, wildlife harvesting, and art production are economically feasible activities here and there, and are best handled co-operatively, but in many places these are not economically feasible activities, in view of the steadily rising level of wants among native peoples. Although there is only limited economic value in far northern co-operatives, I believe they are still worth heavy support for their social and psychological value. Native peoples have had others making too many decisions for them. They have become socially

and psychologically, as well as economically, dependent.

As I have argued throughout this section, however, the co-ops have, generally, achieved more economic success than they have in liberating or unifying people.

As Alex MacDonald, leader in the Maritime co-op movement, told the George River Conference (ACL/FCNQ, 1980a:16-17):

The leaders of the Antigonish movement looked on cooperatives as stepping stones to something much larger. They believed that people would not stop simply at organising lobster factories, consumer stores, but they would go on to acquire or achieve control over the larger economic system, to achieve impact on the political system, the education system, etc. I could say today that we did not achieve that purpose fully and that would be I think to you a message, or even a warning.

Can we really believe that the organizers of the Eskimo co-op wanted Inuit to have an impact on the political system? The "critical point" in the Quebec co-op movement occurred when the co-ops tried but failed to negotiate a form of regional government. It failed to reproduce its hegemony. The buttressing/undermining process was tilted in favour of the latter, since its own survival in the capitalist mode of production was at stake. Reproduction of the co-op itself was in jeopardy if Inuit producers were allowed to work, and use what they want, and make it the way they want. But the Inuit had an ace in the hole. The land still belonged -- legally -- to them. That was next on the state agenda.

PART IV

Land Claims and Development Corporations

*It has been said that the land belongs
to the white people, but we say it is
our land. We, the Inuit, were born on
this land and we have grown up here.
That is why we say it is our land.
Now, it amazes us to learn that it
belongs to the government.*

(Nutaraq Kooneeloosie, 1977:5)

Land claims settlements are the penultimate act in the contact drama. When Canada finally realized the importance of its arctic regions for energy, resources and claims to sovereignty, it hastened to negotiate a transfer of ownership from the native inhabitants. Dispossessing Inuit of their land, making them into

shareholders and exacerbating disparities in wealth and power, the state's incursion into the North succeeded, I shall argue, in institutionalizing power differentials among the Inuit to the point of class distinctions.

Land claim settlements created a new entity, the native development corporations, which have, in Jull's words (1985:11), been referred to as "Trojan horses bringing the destructive American business and capitalist culture into the heart of old societies and threatening them." The first native development corporations were created in Alaska, and Berger's Alaska Native Review Commission heard much criticism of them, as well as their native leaders who were called "sell-outs and worse" (Jull, 1985:11). History was repeated with the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. As we shall see, the state created a new category of leader who, willingly enough, helped deliver capitalist practices in return for power, tempered, as they were to find out, by their inferior ethnic status in Canada. Regretting that they had given so much for so little, these facilitators eventually led an attack against the state but, as with their Alaskan cousins, disenchantment came too late.

Chapter Seventeen

Native Land Claims in Canada: A Push By the State to Promote Non-Renewable Resource Exploitation

When Canada took over Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1870 and the North-West Territory the following year, it accepted the responsibility of compensating Indians for land taken by non-natives for settlement (see Daniel, 1980:1-2). Several treaties had already been signed with Indians, prompted by the necessity of maintaining peace while settling the west, rather than a respect for human rights. Since settlement was not a factor in the arctic territories, it had not been necessary to sign treaties with the Inuit. This changed, however, in 1973, when the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development acknowledged the state's obligation to "negotiate settlements with native groups in those areas of Canada where any native rights based on traditional use and occupancy had not been extinguished by treaty or superseded by law" (Leslie, in Daniel, 1980:vi-vii).¹ Since then, Canada has recognized two types of land claims: specific claims which are based on allegations that the government has not fulfilled specific obligations proceeding from signed treaties or the Indian Act, and comprehensive claims which are based on use and occupancy of the land. Inuit had no basis for specific claims, but they *were* entitled to negotiate on the basis of use and occupancy of

¹ A 1969 white paper and a speech by Prime Minister Trudeau had "rejected the concept of claims based on aboriginal rights" (Daniel, 1980:220). The 1973 about-face was prompted by the Nishga Indians' aboriginal title claim which, although denied, was so narrowly lost that "the judgement gave greater credence to aboriginal rights claims" (Daniel, 1980:221).

the vast arctic territory.

The first settlement of a comprehensive claim put forward by Inuit occurred only a few years later. In November 1975, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement was signed by the state and several other parties, including representatives of the 4,000 Inuit and 6,000 Cree of that region. Other claims soon followed. In February 1976, Inuit Tapirisat, the national organization for Inuit founded in 1971, submitted an agreement-in-principle to the government of Canada on behalf of all NWT Inuit. The final agreement was to be negotiated no later than 18 months after signing of the agreement-in-principle, which called for immediate establishment of a new territory to be called "Nunavut" (our land), which would contain a majority of Inuit. In March 1977, the Labrador Inuit Association, representing approximately 3,500 Inuit and Native Settlers submitted a statement of claim against the federal government and, in May, a claim was submitted by COPE (Committee of Original People's Entitlement) representing the Inuvialuit of the western Arctic.

Called by different names, the agreements being negotiated are latter-day treaties containing varying provisions for hunting, trapping and fishing rights, burial grounds, settlement privileges, soapstone rights, resource revenue sharing, real property interest and the right to rents thereof, control over education, language, social welfare facilities, policing and game management. Of import for the transformation of a hitherto incipient nationalism into a more formalized movement, all of these claims necessitate the establishment of eligibility criteria,

the definition of who is or is not Inuit, and hence entitled to benefits under the agreements. This has led to the phenomenon of Inuit carrying cards certifying that they are, indeed, Inuit.²

To a large extent, the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) has served as a model for Canadian claims.³ Following the Alaska model, political power ensuing from Canadian agreements is mediated through boards and councils, and compensation packages are mediated through native corporations.⁴ Native development corporations established under Canadian agreements operate profit-making businesses such as construction, commercial fishing and airlines. As Thomas Berger (1985b:2) pointed out with reference to Alaskan native corporations, instead of conveying the land to "tribal entities," which the United States considered "an impediment to assimilation," village and regional corporations were established to obtain title to the land. Therefore:

² For the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, *Inuit* were defined as those born in Quebec or "ordinarily resident in the territory" or "persons of Inuit ancestry" or "adopted children of the above, legitimate or illegitimate" (DIAND, 1980). In the Labrador case, *Inuit* were defined as those having two Inuit parents and *Native Settlers* as being white men who settled in Labrador prior to 1940 and their children, or the child of a Native Settler married to an Inuk. Labrador Inuit carry a green card signifying that they are "full-blooded" Inuit. *Inuvialuit* refers to a Canadian citizen with at least one quarter Inuvialuit blood, born in the western Arctic region or having lived there for at least 10 years who is alive and accepted as a member of an Inuvialuit community corporation.

³ The Alaskan Native Claims Settlement Act is generally considered the most generous settlement of aboriginal claims ever made, involving 44 million acres of natural resources and \$962.5 million tax-free dollars (Berger, 1985b:2).

⁴ The 1971 Settlement between the United States and Alaskan natives (Eskimos, Indians and Aleuts) established 13 native corporations which hold title to the land and its resources. Two hundred village corporations were established, with each Alaskan native receiving 100 shares in his/her local corporation (Berger, 1985a:2).

The land that ANCSA conveyed does not belong to Alaska Natives, it belongs to these corporations...But these corporate structures put the land at risk. For Native land is now a corporate asset. Alaska Natives fear that, through corporate failure, corporate takeovers, and state taxation, they could lose their land.

In Canada, Inuit have varying degrees of control over the land, but no land claim settlement allows for its unconditional disposition. In other words, Inuit beneficiaries of land claim agreements do not own land, but have conditional use of and access to it. Dispossessed of land and resources, they have also lost the potential of generating internal capital.

I shall have more to say about the native development corporation and the role it has played in engendering class relations but, first, I want to stress that the impetus for land claim settlements originated, not with the Inuit, but with the state. Just as, previously, the Canadian state was committed to a policy of not proceeding with northern treaties [Indian] until the land was required for settlement (Daniel, 1980:11), there was no movement on Inuit comprehensive claims until the state perceived a need for the land, in this case for exploitation of resources and energy rather than settlement. As we shall see, the minister's 1973 speech acknowledging rights based on use and occupancy was not the result of a national raising of consciousness, nor was it an accident of history. Just as the Alaskan settlement was put into motion to enable the United States to build the Alaska oil pipeline, the Canadian state facilitated land claim settlements with Inuit to pave the way for massive exploitation of the supposedly resource-rich Arctic. It is not intended that Inuit will necessarily benefit from this exploitation. An

information sheet from DIAND (1989c:1) is remarkably candid in this regard:

It is expected that the negotiated settlements will provide the aboriginal groups with land, money, wildlife harvesting rights, participation in environmental and wildlife management, and some subsurface rights as well as, or instead of, a share of revenues from non-renewable resources.

Oil had been discovered in the North in the sixties and the oil industry was champing at the gate. As Daniel (1980:220) writes, with understatement or irony: "Comprehensive Claims have received the greatest public attention since 1969, due in part to their somewhat symbiotic relationship with major resource development projects in Northern Canada." Settlement of claims would enable the state to control resource development, but the trick was to reconcile this with the native peoples' assumed prerogative to hunt, fish and trap where they wished. Before contact, Inuit recognized no "ownership" of the land. It, like the air, was there for all to use. They were, therefore, as Kooneeloosie says (1977:5), "amazed" to learn that it belonged to the government.

At issue is control over the land, economic and political. As Berger wrote (1985b:7):

After visiting sixty villages, I know the depth of feeling about the land that exists among the native peoples of rural Alaska. Throughout the state, they know that under ANCSA their aboriginal rights were extinguished and that many uncontrolled and perhaps uncontrollable forces now threaten their way of life.

In Canada, as in Alaska, aboriginal people are beginning to clamour for, as Berger says (*pp.* 7-8), "a form of landholding that reflects their own cultural imperatives and ensures that their ancestral lands will remain in their possession and under their governance." That clamour can be called an ethno-regional drive for

collective rights or a "soft" nationalism which is, however, not yet perceived as particularly threatening by the Canadian state, troubled as it is with Quebec (and Indian) insurrection. But, soft though it may be, Inuit nationalism *has* impeded the smooth settlement of comprehensive claims. Predictably, as Daniel puts it (1980:225): "The most difficult issues have proven to be those related to demands for future political and administrative structures which would permit native people sufficient degrees of 'participation,' 'self-determination,' or 'autonomy.'" The Inuit Committee on National Issues was established in 1979 "to push for the entrenchment of the right to aboriginal self-government in Canada's constitution" (DIAND, 1986:63). That has not happened, but *A Northern Political and Economic Framework* adopted in 1988, included as a goal the "development of fully responsible northern governments through the transfer of certain federal programs to the territorial governments" (DIAND, 1988c). This is not synonymous with Inuit control, but an information sheet released by DIAND in February 1989 (1989a:1-2) states further:

The federal government believes the aboriginal peoples, while enjoying all rights of Canadian citizens, should have institutions of self-government that meet their unique requirements. This belief reflects a recognition that self-government in various forms is a basic element of our democratic system.

I shall not speculate at all on the possibility of self-government for aboriginal people, or the form it might take, but introduce the concept merely as a prelude to a discussion of Inuit nationalism about which I shall have a great deal more to say in later chapters. Here, I want to briefly delineate the major comprehensive claims being pressed by Inuit, establishing the context in which their consequences

for transformed relationships can be analyzed. First, I shall devote some space to a cursory examination of non-renewable resource development in the Canadian Arctic where, as in Alaska, it provided the push to settle native claims.

Non-renewable resource development: The dream

Fired by the 1968 discovery of oil and gas at Prudhoe Bay in Alaska, Canadian politicians eagerly revived Stefansson's and Diefenbaker's dreams of tapping the Arctic's supposed storehouse of riches. Brody (1977:217-218) quotes from notes for a speech by Jean Chrétien, then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, to the opening of the fifty-first Northwest Territories Council in 1973:

What of the future? The potential of the north is surely limitless. At the risk of being mistaken for a Texan, I would like to explore with you some of the potential: I think of the many trillions of cubic feet of natural gas already discovered in the Arctic islands and in the Mackenzie delta after a few short years of exploration activity. This represents only the tip of the iceberg of what lies undiscovered. Half of Canada's conventional oil and gas reserves are estimated to lie north of [latitude] 60. I think of the mountain of rich ore at Mary River with reserves of 128 million tons -- uneconomic today but not tomorrow. I think of the lead-zinc deposits at Arvik on Little Cornwallis Island, at Strathcona Sound and the Bathurst-Norsemines deposit at Hack River. I think of the many rivers and lakes of northern Canada which contain nearly 50 per cent of Canada's fresh water supply and very substantial hydro-electric potential. On the Mackenzie River, to give but one example, preliminary studies indicate an installed capacity of approximately 14,000 mW is possible -- this is approximately three times the capacity of Churchill Falls and would represent 45 per cent of current total Canadian hydro capacity.

As for the people who lived there, in February 1974, Chrétien told Inuit Tapirisat and COPE (in Farris, 1974:32): "In any case, you have the rights you need -- you can hunt, after all. I'm blamed because people say you have too many rights." He

asked what must be assumed to be a rhetorical question (p.34): "How then, do we relate development to the Inuit? For one thing, don't ever ask me to freeze development in the North -- it's impossible." Instead, he told the Inuit that they "have to think how your people can benefit from development. You shouldn't let development happen and not be a part of it."

There had been extensive exploration for gas and oil in the Arctic in the late-sixties and early-seventies by international oil companies and, in a special issue of *Northern Perspectives* on Canada's Energy Crisis (sub-headed "a bizarre case of bungling"), the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee (CARC, 1976) reproduced condensed versions of a series of major articles⁵ in the *Toronto Star* by David Crane who claimed that "the Trudeau government grossly miscalculated Canada's energy resources" and "exercised power, not in Canada's interest, but in the interests of the U.S. and the oil and gas industry" (Crane, 1976:1). As he also pointed out (p.12): "...the problems of northern native peoples would not be allowed to stand in the way."

Believing in 1968 that the Arctic was rich in oil, the Trudeau government exerted every effort to increase Canadian oil and gas exports to the United States yet, in 1974, Ottawa was "forced to impose export controls on oil because the country faced the prospect of shortages" (Crane, p.2). The year 1968, it will be

⁵ CARC endorsed Crane's articles which were based on his experience as a journalist in Washington, and on material from *The National Interest* by Edgar Dosman. According to CARC (1976): "Crane compiled the most significant reporting on northern development to appear in the Canadian press in many years."

remembered, was also a year of sovereignty crisis in Canada, being the year that an American oil company sent the *Manhattan*, an oil tanker, through the Northwest Passage without asking Canada's leave. The *Manhattan's* mission was to test the feasibility of moving Alaskan oil to the American east coast in tankers (Crane, 1976:3). Canada was alarmed, especially since the tanker was accompanied by an American government ice-breaker, but dared not risk a serious confrontation lest the United States cease buying oil (Crane:4). When the incident was repeated in 1970 with a second voyage by the *Manhattan*, Prime Minister Trudeau dealt with the American challenge to Canadian sovereignty by enacting the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act which gave Canada jurisdiction in northern waters for 100 miles offshore to deal with pollution, a move which was less overtly assertive towards the United States than a declaration of sovereignty would have been (Crane:5). The United States (Nixon was president) retaliated by cutting back on oil imports, and the crisis ended only when Humble Oil, owners of the *Manhattan*, abandoned the project, declaring that "the time was not yet ripe for the use of tankers in the North" (Crane:6). Canada then concentrated on beefing up energy exports to the United States and it was in this climate that the idea of shipping the newly discovered Alaskan oil across the Mackenzie Valley was conceived. By August 1970, the Canadian cabinet "had given approval in principle to oil and gas pipelines along the Mackenzie Valley" (Crane:7). The project "was billed as the largest engineering venture ever to be undertaken by man" (Gamble, 1986:21).

Canada's oil and gas reserves were *not* unlimited and, in October 1974, the Energy Board "reported that Canada would become a net importer of oil by 1977 (Crane:18)." In May 1975, it "reported that Canada would be facing natural gas shortages within the decade." The Trudeau government had seriously miscalculated Canada's oil and gas reserves, but in spite of warnings, Ottawa pressed on, refusing to let reason or native rights stand in the way. As Crane (p.12) charges:

The government strategy, summed up in meetings of the Task Force on Northern Oil Development, was to get pipelines built as quickly as possible, before native groups could organize effectively. In the meantime, it was hoped pipeline jobs for native peoples would divide native organizations -- even though most jobs would last only a short time...and the social impact of such a massive project would devastate the culture, traditional livelihood and communities of the northern people.

The United States government had frozen Alaskan land allotments after oil and gas discoveries at Prudhoe Bay until native claims were settled (Crane:13), but Canada's strategy was to push construction of a pipeline *before* settlement of land claims. The tide turned when Trudeau was re-elected with a minority government in 1972 and was forced to appoint Thomas Berger to hold a special inquiry into the environmental and social impact of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline. Only months later, the Cree and Inuit of northern Quebec succeeded in obtaining an injunction, albeit short-lived, to halt construction on the James Bay hydro-electric development project.

The energy crisis and consequent domestic shortages provided the context in which Dome Petroleum got federal permission in 1974 to drill for oil in the

Beaufort Sea, in spite of its having long been protected because of environmental concerns. Beaufort is the most hazardous offshore region in the world and drilling activity there, it is generally agreed, could cause great environmental damage.

Striking oil in 1979, Dome announced that it would be in production by 1985. As was pointed out by CARC (1980:1):

When Dome struck oil in 1979, Canada's oil supply outlook had deteriorated further. Domestic reserves had fallen for the tenth year in a row. World oil prices had just doubled and the international oil market, in the wake of the Iranian revolution, was in turmoil.

Canada was willing to take the risk. The Inuvialuit of the western Arctic were, however, opposed to the Beaufort project and, in 1975, asked for assistance from the North Slope Borough (Alaska) in fighting it. The Borough called upon Alaska's senator, Ted Stevens, a member of the United States/Canadian Inter-parliamentary Union, and the result of his intervention was that Dome was forced, in 1977, to halt drilling for one year (Brower and Stotts, 1984:327).⁶

The push intensified, and the first crude oil produced in the High Arctic was at Bent Horn Oil Fields, north of Beaufort, from which Panarctic Oils (45 per cent owned by Canada) shipped oil south by tanker in the summer of 1985.⁷ The

⁶ In 1983, the Dene and Métis were given funding of \$1.5 million to assist them to enter into an equal partnership with Esso in the Norman Wells Oilfield Expansion and Pipeline Project (DIAND, 1983:1). DIAND minister, John Munro, said on this occasion (DIAND, 1983:2): "I have high hopes that this joint venture will blaze the trail for similar partnerships between other native groups and companies having the same vision that Esso Resources and the native people of the Mackenzie Valley are demonstrating today." The move had serious implications for a future land settlement since the native people were, in effect, giving prior approval for resource development.

⁷ In 1984, the federal government announced the Northern Oil and Gas Action Program, under which funding was provided to the Yukon and NWT governments to ensure that they "will have the information necessary to make decisions related to oil and gas industry proposals in the Beaufort Sea area (DIAND, 1984a:1).

Bent Horn project was jointly announced by David Crombie, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, and Tagak Curley, the Inuk Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources for the Government of the Northwest Territories (DIAND, 1985). A comment by a "well-placed federal official" was reported by Dennis Patterson, NWT government leader: "This project is a Trojan Horse for arctic oil development" (GNWT, 1984:15).

Apart from the race to develop oil and gas, various mining activities in the North were also initiated. The richest uranium in the world had been discovered at Port Radium in 1932, and gold in Yellowknife in 1933. A nickel mine operated at Rankin Inlet from 1957 to 1962, hiring some Inuit, including imported labour. In the sixties and seventies, there was mining activity in the Baker Lake Region where uranium deposits were discovered in 1978 on the Upper Thelon River. Lead, zinc and silver were discovered at Nanisivik on Strathcona Island and the state provided roads, a wharf, an airport, and townsite assistance at a cost of \$16.7 million, in return for which it obtained an 18 per cent interest in the mine and the usual promises of native employment. The project was approved with "virtually no social or environment research by the government," and when he announced government support for the project:

Chrétien stated the government's primary objective was to ensure jobs for Baffin Island natives and to give them a voice in planning a project. Yet there has been little involvement of local people in the planning and they were not sure they wanted to become miners (Crane, 1976:19-20).

The Kiggavik uranium mine near Baker Lake continues to be controversial. In the late-seventies, worried that intensive exploration by aircraft would disturb the

caribou calving grounds and water crossings, the people of Baker Lake, with the assistance of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, took the matter to court (Arima, 1984:461). The judgement was a disappointment to native rights activists; for, while it acknowledged aboriginal rights to hunt, fish and use the land, it distinguished between those rights and *property* rights.⁸ The judge's conclusion was that mining exploration was not interfering with Inuit rights to use the land as they wanted. A positive aspect of this judgement was that although Inuit were not successful in obtaining an injunction against six mining companies and the Canadian government to stop mining exploration, it was, as Arima points out, "the first case in Canada to discuss Inuit aboriginal rights."

Opposition to the mine continues. A January 1989 letter from Tagak Curley to Lucien Bouchard, Minister of the Environment, states: "The people of Keewatin are being asked to assume the risks inherent in an open-pit uranium mine, but have had no input into the Terms of Reference" (Curley, 1989).

Much more could be written on the subject of non-renewable resource development, but the point I wish to make is, I think, clear. Resource development was the primary objective of the state and the native people were treated more or less as impediments. Land claims were not entered into in good faith, but as a necessary legal obstacle to be disposed of. The GNWT was particularly aggressive in countering proposals from native groups that

⁸ The ruling was that although Inuit had rights over approximately 30,000 square miles, such rights could not be considered property rights since Charles II of England had granted those to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670 (Arima, 1984:461, citing Inuit Tapirisat of Canada).

development be postponed until land claims were settled (see GNWT, 1976:43).

A 1979 GNWT press release quotes the member from Inuvik, also head of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism:

...we will go to hell in a basket unless we start hustling, unless we start taking advantage of the opportunities that exist in the territories, develop the resources that exist in the territories...too much resistance to development will discourage the developer, who would not hesitate to invest elsewhere.

In 1981, Dome Petroleum Limited, Esso Resources Canada Limited and Gulf Canada Resources Inc., prepared *A discussion paper for presentation to the Task Force on Beaufort Sea Development* which gives this advice to Canada:

There will be a number of issues that cannot be resolved in a few months; policies relating to land claims, for example. Perhaps the time has come to develop a new approach to the settlement of comprehensive aboriginal claims, particularly in view of the possible implications of Section 33 of the proposed Constitution Act. In any event, issues such as this should be separated and should be dealt with through tentative guidelines in the same way that Mr. Munro outlined to the Standing Committee his priorities for constitutional development for the Territorial Governments. These issues should not delay the EARP hearings *nor impede resource development in the North* (Dome *et al.*, 1981:4, emphasis added).

DIAND was told that it should have an assistant deputy minister present a policy statement at the EARP hearings to include "a commitment of the government and DIAND to the development of the resources of the North." In conclusion it was stated that:

The petroleum industry considers the issue of a decisive federal policy statement, as described earlier in this submission, as essential, and a very first step towards the development of the hydrocarbon resources of the north. It urges the federal government to present such a statement as early as possible (p.8).

The oil group also recommended that the northern people receive their "share in

the benefits of the development out of the government revenues" (p.4) and urged the government to recognize "the scale of the Beaufort Sea Development relative to the capacity of the Canadian economy" and "allow a reasonable and practical level of Canadian content, compatible with the rate of development" (pp.5-6).

In 1986, responding to mounting pressures to settle land claims, divide the NWT, devolve responsibilities to the territorial government, and pave the way for mega oil and gas projects, DIAND conducted a comprehensive review of federal northern development policy. Approved in June 1987, the *Northern Political and Economic Framework* acknowledged that land claims settlements were important, for non-natives, since such:

...settlements will be significant in paving the way for devolution, in resolving the questions of aboriginal title to Crown lands and in creating a climate of certainty for business and industry regarding the legal and regulatory regimes in the territories (DIAND, 1989h:2).

I turn now to a brief discussion of the history of the status of Inuit claims, both settled and pending.

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement: First modern land claim settlement in Canada

Although Canada was responsible for obtaining title to land formerly governed by the Hudson's Bay Company, the Quebec Boundaries Extension Act of 1912 had extended Quebec's boundaries to Hudson Strait (they had been extended to James Bay in 1898). This meant that Quebec was responsible for obtaining title from the aboriginal people in that area, although agreements with them would have to be ratified by Canada. In 1971, however, as a solution to the province's troubled

economy, Quebec announced that a massive hydro-electric project would be mounted in James Bay. No claim had been negotiated with the native people in the area, Cree Indian and Inuit, even though, together, the two could claim aboriginal rights over two-thirds of the area of Quebec.

The Cree obtained an injunction on November 15, 1973 to stop construction of the project and, although the injunction was overturned by the Quebec Superior Court only a week later, it did succeed in prompting negotiation on the question of land claim. An agreement-in-principle was reached by November 1974, and the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQ) was signed November 11, 1975, becoming law two years later.

The JBNQ Agreement was rather more than a settlement between the aboriginal people and the state, as is evidenced by its signatories: the Government of Quebec, the Société d'énergie de la Baie James, the Société de développement de la Baie James, the Commission hydro-électrique de Québec, the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec, the James Bay Cree, the Northern Quebec Inuit Association, the Inuit of Quebec, the Inuit of Port Burwell, and the Government of Canada.⁹ Clearly, there were a number of interests at stake in James Bay.

The Northern Quebec Inuit Association (NQIA), chief signatory for the Inuit, had been formed in 1972 at the instigation of federal bureaucrats,

⁹ The Naskapi Band was later involved, signing an amendment to JBNQ, the Northeastern Quebec Agreement, on January 31, 1978.

specifically to facilitate negotiations on the matter of land entitlement.¹⁰ First efforts had been to persuade Quebec Inuit to join the provincial Indian Association, but Inuit had rejected this proposition. It will be remembered that, in 1971, the year Quebec had announced the James Bay project, the community councils, prompted by FCNQ (La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec), were lobbying for regional government.¹¹ While arctic Quebec Inuit were still trying to make up their minds whether to continue lobbying for regional government status or to go along with the government's proposal to set up "their own," Inuit, association, the decision was made for them. Like the co-operative, NQIA was put into place, presumably with the idea that, once again, Inuit would learn by doing. The state funded a willing group of Inuit and NQIA became a *fait accompli* with headquarters, operating funds and a mission: settlement of Inuit aboriginal title in Quebec.

New institutions are created by the JBNQ

The JBNQ Agreement is complex, but, in return for surrendering their rights with respect to land, Inuit and Cree received financial compensation (\$90 million to

¹⁰ Core funding for NQIA was provided by the Secretary of State (Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, 1974b:33).

¹¹ A press release issued by FCNQ February 23, 1971 announced that on February 19, in Lévis, Quebec (headquarters of FCNQ) "after a week of intense discussion among eleven delegates from Eskimo Community Councils, the political future of Quebec Eskimos was decided. The delegates came to a unanimous decision to negotiate with Quebec in the setting up of Provincial legislation which would create Regional Government (commune Régionale) in Nouveau-Québec" (La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec, 1971a). They met with Quebec's Minister of Natural Resources, Gilles Masse, and, at a press conference at Laval University, specified that they were not seeking ownership of the land, but what would amount to a normal relationship between a region and the provincial government.

Inuit), land use and protection, local government, control over education, economic development, and health and social services. A development corporation, Makivik, in which all Quebec Inuit are shareholders, including those born after the agreement was signed, was established to receive and channel compensation monies for the 6,068 Inuit affected by the agreement. A regional government, known as Kativik, was also established with powers similar to those of southern municipalities, but as Makivik president Mary Simon told reporter Gibb-Clark in 1984 (p.3): "... it cannot set its own regulations concerning wildlife management, education or economic development." Simon also complained that they had "no revenue base except for government subsidies" and "our draft budget proposals often get unilaterally cut to priorities (southern) civil servants see in their minds." Services such as education and health and welfare were turned over to the native people under the aegis of the Kativik School Board (analogous to other education boards in the province), and the Kativik Health and Social Services Council.

Economic development was made the responsibility of Makivik Corporation, a non-profit holding company mandated to create profit-making subsidiaries (such as airlines) to benefit its shareholders *and to protect their interests as an ethnic group* (Makivik Corporation, n.d:12; emphasis added). Makivik was, it appears, an attempt, as in many third world countries, to secure development without westernization, in spite of the obvious fact that, as was pointed out in an official statement from the national political organization, Inuit

Tapirisat (1974a:28-29) following a trip to Alaska that:

Corporations are based upon the profit motive, thus forcing natives into non-native aspirations. There is only one real option in the corporate structure: make money or be a failure...Virtually no aspect of the conceptual framework of a corporation has a counterpart in native culture.

As I discuss in the next chapter, Makivik has tended to focus on large-scale, capital-intensive projects, employing more non-natives than Inuit. In its first years of operation, it lost money on most of its ventures.

As a result of the James Bay Agreement, the federal presence in Northern Quebec has been greatly reduced. Local services began to be administered by Inuit and Quebec, using federal subsidies. Canada has, however, continued to play a role in mediating disputes resulting from the agreement, such disputes constituting specific claims. The JBNQ Agreement was, for instance, weak on implementation specifications, and these have not been fully resolved. An Implementation Review in 1982 concluded that the expectations Cree and Inuit had that the JBNQ would enable them "to advance and prosper as full participants in the social and economic life of Quebec and Canada while still preserving their traditional culture and lifestyles" had not, six years after signing, "been met" (DIAND, 1982:102). In 1986, a federal negotiator was appointed to resolve some of the implementation problems and, although DIAND considers that Inuit and Naskapi issues have been more or less dealt with, agreements have yet to be reached with the Cree.

It seems clear that the province of Quebec was the main beneficiary of the JBNQ. Saladin D'Anglure (1984:687) considers that Quebec benefitted by

"gaining a green light for its development projects, much more concrete recognition of its rights in the area, and exclusive political responsibility over the region." Although the politics were complicated, federal support of Quebec's ambitious project was consistent with the policy of encouraging exports to the United States. It will be recalled that until 1973 at least, Trudeau was pushing oil and gas exports south of the border, the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline was being promoted, and Ottawa was labouring under the dubious conception that untold arctic wealth was there for the taking. Hydro-electric energy was just one more commodity to export. Citing Rouland (1978), D'Anglure provides another reason for federal support of JBNQ: "From the government's point of view, the Agreement allowed federal withdrawal from administration, with considerable budgetary savings...while retaining certain responsibilities."

Early in the James Bay struggle, the native people turned to the federal government for assistance. According to a November 11, 1975 statement by Judd Buchanan, Minister IAND (DIAND, 1975:3-4):

In the James Bay matter the Federal responsibility began to emerge from the time it became apparent that the Province of Quebec had serious intention of proceeding with the hydro development project...the main effort was directed toward persuading the provincial government to pay serious attention to the concerns expressed by the native groups in the James Bay area. When this line of persuasion failed to produce satisfactory results and the Indians and Inuit of Quebec sought remedy through the courts, by way of injunction to halt the James Bay Project, the Federal Government provided them with assistance in the form of funding and advice.

An interesting turn of events occurred, as D'Anglure points out (1984:687), when the separatists were elected to power in Quebec in 1976:

The coming to power of a separatist government in Quebec in 1976, led by René Lévesque who in 1961 had been involved at the start of Quebec political interest in northern Quebec, made the Agreement seem to correspond with Quebec nationalism, and set aside the federal control that had dominated the situation in northern Quebec up to that time.

The first modern land claims agreement with Inuit was useful in a number of sectors, but as far as the native people go, its major impact has been divisive.

Apart from complaints pertaining to implementation of the terms of the agreement, the JBNQ engendered a major rift among the Inuit population in northern Quebec. The 1986 community ratification vote was 95.8% in favour of the JBNQ, but only 66.5% of the eligible population voted, including only 15% of the residents of Povungnituk, Sugluk and Ivujivik (DIAND, 1977:5). With the support of La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec, those three communities, which together comprised one third of the population, formed a dissident association, *Inuit Tungavinga Nunami* (ITN) which vigorously opposed the agreement and mounted a legal case predicated on the argument that the powers of attorney which the Northern Quebec Inuit Association had obtained from the Inuit in order to negotiate on their behalf had been misrepresented to them. They believed, they said, that they were merely empowering NQIA to provide assistance to Quebec Cree in their fight to halt construction of the James Bay dam, but NQIA had used these proxies to negotiate settlement of Inuit title.

At first, the dissenting communities refused all benefits and services proceeding from the JBNQ, their position being that Inuit are the rightful owners of the land and must have a "true government," one that "can make laws, be self-

supporting financially, raise taxes and claim royalties from any activities in its territory" (Sivuak, in ACL/FCNQ, 1980b:21). But opposition has waxed and waned. In the late 1980s, ITN decided to revive its litigation against JBNQ, but there are now representatives from two of the dissenting villages -- Sugluk and Ivujivik -- on Makivik's board. Povungnituk has not yet elected a representative to the board, but "discussions are being held to bring them into the Makivik fold" and Makivik's annual general meeting is being held in Povungnituk this year (Makivik, 1992).

The agreement has spawned several additional acts dealing with applications and amendments as well as the historic *Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act* (1984). Even though not implemented to the satisfaction of the Indians (Diamond, 1985:8), the *Cree-Naskapi (Of Quebec) Act* was the first Indian self-government legislation in Canada, replacing the *Indian Act*, except in the matter of determining which beneficiaries are Indians (DIAND, 1989i:1). Under the new act, Indian bands were given the powers previously exercised by the Minister of Northern Affairs and the Governor in Council, although the minister reserved the power "to appoint an administrator to take over the financial affairs of the band if he is of the opinion that the financial situation is in 'serious disorder'" (pp.3-4).

Comprehensive claims in the western Arctic: The Inuvialuit final agreement

The first comprehensive claim agreement in the NWT , the Inuvialuit Final

Agreement (IFA) which affects people in the western Arctic¹², was signed by Canada and COPE (Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement) in June, 1984.¹³ Like the JBNQ, the Inuvialuit Final Agreement has the twin objectives of promoting economic development and preserving Inuvialuit identity. It also contains provisions for protection of the renewable resource base and the arctic environment. Several corporations have been established to administer the benefits proceeding from this agreement: the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC), an umbrella organization to receive funds; six Inuvialuit community corporations to control the IRC; the Inuvialuit Land Corporation, to administer the settlement lands; the Inuvialuit Development Corporation, and the Inuvialuit Investment Corporation, to invest the settlement funds on behalf of the beneficiaries. According to the 1987-88 *Annual Report on the Inuvialuit Claim* (DIAND, 1988a:8): "These corporations were designed as private corporations to permit the Inuvialuit to administer their Settlement benefits on their own behalf, without government involvement or intervention."

In addition, several wildlife management structures have been put into place and, as in the JBNQ, a Hunter Support Program designed to enable Inuit to pursue traditional activities. Hunters are, in effect, paid to stay out on the land to

¹² There are approximately 2,500 Inuvialuit in Sachs Harbour, Holman, Paulatuk, Tuktoyaktuk, Inuvik and Aklavik.

¹³ COPE, formed in 1969, claims to be "the first native organization of any kind in the North which started completely without outside help" (ITC, 1974b:31). It is now an affiliate of ITC.

hunt, thus easing the burden on administrators to provide local employment and reducing welfare payouts. Noting that "several provisions of this agreement are similar" to those in the JBNQ, Crowe (1990:21) points out that:

The Inuvialuit agreement was the first in Canada to include land ownership, both surface and subsurface, in fee simple absolute title, including the beds of water bodies. The land, however, can only be conveyed within the Inuvialuit community or the Government of Canada.

Central and eastern Arctic Inuit obtain the largest comprehensive claim in Canada

The most recent agreement between Canada and Inuit is also the largest. On March 26, 1990, the federal government ratified an agreement-in-principle with the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN).¹⁴ Involving 17,000 Inuit, or 80 per cent of the central and eastern Arctic population, the TFN claim provides for title to app. 350,000 sq km of land (36,257 sq km with sub-surface mineral rights) and access to other lands.¹⁵ Compensation of \$580 million (1989 dollars) will be paid over 14 years, and Inuit will also receive 50 per cent of the first \$2 million of resource royalties received by Canada, and 5 per cent of additional resource royalties within the settlement area. A Nunavut Wildlife Management Board will be established with equal Inuit and public membership, and three national parks are to be set aside. Inuit are to be represented on all boards set up to oversee

¹⁴ The TFN claim had first been presented by Inuit Tapirisat of Canada in February 1976, but TFN replaced ITC as the negotiating body in 1982. TFN suggested in 1989 that a final agreement be signed without an agreement-in-principle, so that "claimants would receive money sooner," but the federal negotiators were opposed to this idea (Nortext, 1989a).

¹⁵ Inuit were not, however, to be allowed to sell land to anyone except the state, although they could lease it (Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, 1989a:5).

land use planning, wildlife and water management and environmental and socio-economic reviews of development proposals (DIAND, 1990a).

Compromising the claim and presuming upon the success achieved in northern Quebec and the western Arctic in achieving signed agreements, "benefits" began flowing from the TFN agreement before ratification of the agreement-in-principle. Indeed, the Inuit Development Corporation was set up and received land claim money before the agreement in principle was even signed, and this it invested in such ventures as real estate and oil development. Nunasi Corporation, a second corporation owned by Inuit, also got underway with a bank debt guaranteed by TFN "so that the people of Nunavut [the territory affected] could make a start in the financial world without waiting until land claims were settled" (Nunasi Corporation, 1989:1). Operating with a heavy debt load and no capital investment, Nunasi hoped to be "a successful vehicle for carrying the Inuit of Nunavut into the mainstream of the Canadian financial world." Nunasi bought an airline with Air Manitoba; a hotel in Baker Lake; 50 per cent of Northern Transportation Company Limited (The Inuvialuit Development Corporation had the other 50 per cent), and opened Amiq Fine Leathers in 1986 in an effort to revive the sealskin market.

An important feature of the TFN Agreement is its demand to divide the Northwest Territories, resulting in a separate territory to be known as Nunavut. This demand stalled the claim for a couple of years after it was submitted in 1976. No progress was made in negotiations until the spring of 1980 when ITC, the first

group negotiating the claim, agreed that the creation of a territory of Nunavut would be dealt with outside the comprehensive claims forum.

The bureaucrats did not, however, entirely succeed in eliminating Nunavut from the claims process. After the December 1989 tentative signing of an agreement-in-principle between Canada and TFN, Paul Quassa, chief negotiator for TFN, was reported in the northern press (Nortext, 1989b:1-2) as saying that although the land and the money were important ("the Inuit will become the largest private landowners in North America"), "the most important clause of the AIP is one that commits the GNWT and TFN to work towards the creation of Nunavut and the division of the NWT." Nunavut is looked upon as an Inuit homeland, and at the time the AIP was signed, TFN president Paul Quassa admitted that it did "not deliver all that Inuit want or need and it requires us to release, subject to certain conditions, our aboriginal title," but "TFN has approved the AIP because we are convinced that a careful weighing of the costs and benefits of the AIP demonstrated that it moved Inuit forward along the path of self-determination" (in Quassa, 1990:5).

In the eighties, the GNWT held plebescites on the question of division, which would necessitate agreement between Inuit (including Inuit in Quebec), Indians, and Metis on how to divide the territory. A memorandum of understanding was achieved between TFN and Makivik in Northern Quebec February 8, 1988 concerning the offshore waters and islands used by Nunavut and Quebec Inuit on the west coast of the Hudson's Bay, the beginning of negotiating

a boundary (which would have been the first *formal* boundary between Inuit determined by Inuit). There was, however, difficulty in achieving agreement with the Dene about where to draw the line on the map. The Dene nation, the most influential native group in the Mackenzie valley, supported division, but Dene president Steven Kakfwi confided to reporter Sheppard (1985:15) that "there is an increasing feeling they (the eastern Inuit) just want to take care of their own."¹⁶

Clearly, TFN's overriding goal is self-government and Nunavut is being considered an ethnic homeland. The December 22, 1989 edition of *Nunatsiaq News* (Nortext, 1989c:1) again quotes Quassa:

The first thing people look at with a land claim deal is how much money and land has been negotiated. But this was not our first priority. What we wanted all along and what we negotiated is a series of management regimes that will eventually give us self-government. That was our first priority.

He is reported further to believe that he outsmarted DIAND which had stated that "it would never negotiate self-government" (which was to be an issue separate from the land claims process). Quassa apparently considered that, since the management boards set up under the agreement are not just advisory, but have decision-making powers, that TFN had, in effect, negotiated self-government. "The decisions made by these management boards," he said, "will affect not only Inuit-owned lands but the whole (Nunavut) territory. Eventually, we will be self governing, and we got it through the back door." The boards have, however, an equal representation of bureaucrats and Inuit, and the appropriate minister,

¹⁶ While Inuit would be a majority in the eastern division, the west would contain what Sheppard (1985:15) calls "a more nervous grouping of Dene Indians, Métis and Inuvialuit with a slight white majority..."

Map of the
Boundary for Division
as set out in the
Plebiscite Direction
and Proclamation, 1992

Map 6

*The Proposed Division of the Northwest Territories which will
Create Nunavut, an Inuit Homeland.*

SCALE
800 KM
Approved by the Chief Plebiscite Officer under the Plebiscite Act

territorial or federal, can override recommendations.

In December 1991, the federal government finally agreed to negotiate a political accord on Nunavut, but this is to remain a parallel process outside the land claim agreement. An accord is expected to be reached in April 1992 for Nunavut, similar to the present Yukon and NWT government, but since Inuit are a majority in the eastern arctic, they will be able to control an elected legislature. Nunavut is, therefore, analogous to Quebec, a homeland for Inuit (of the eastern arctic). The western portion is to be known as Denendeh.

The Government of the Northwest Territories held a plebiscite in April 1982 in which 56% of the electorate voted in favour of dividing the territories (DIAND, 1986:65). The Nunavut Constitutional Forum (comprised of MLA's from Nunavut, the heads of ITC and COPE and Nunavut claims leaders) and the Western Constitutional forum (comprised of Dene and Metis leaders and MLA's) were formed. Their mandate is to negotiate division.

It will be interesting to see what degree of self-governance Inuit will be able to leverage from the state. The press release announcing the signing of the agreement-in-principle (DIAND, 1990a:1)) carefully confirmed federal "commitment to settling comprehensive claims, improving native/government relations and building stronger native and northern economies." No mention was made of self-government although, to Inuit, this was the most important aspect of the agreement. According to the press release, the AIP merely reaffirmed:

...federal and territorial support in principle if northerners agree to divide the NWT and create a separate Nunavut Territory. The land claim

settlement will not create Nunavut but commits the territorial government and TFN to set up a process for achieving a northern consensus on division, outside the claims process.

The release did, however, contain a clause easily overlooked because of its position on the back of page one: "This agreement will also enhance the climate in the territories for economic and political development by removing legal uncertainty on use and disposition of land and resources in the eastern N.W.T."

The debate over self-government for aboriginal peoples in Canada is just heating up, and it remains to be seen how supportive the state will be of Inuit territorial claims. As John Amagoalik, former ITC president, recently wrote (Amagoalik, 1991:22):

Nunavut is obviously the cornerstone of the Inuit claim. Nunavut will not only give us the opportunity to survive as a people, it will give us the voice we need in the building of Canada and as a member of the global village. The millions of dollars the Inuit negotiated will come and go. The preservation of our corner of the world is more important than that.

One obstacle to establishing the boundary of Nunavut is that the Dene and Chipewyan in northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba are disputing the claim. The boundary question is to be settled in a plebiscite early in 1992. Amagoalik (1992a:20) considers that TFN "has been more than accomodating in its dealings with the Dene and Métis on the issue of the boundary," but when negotiations "collapsed," Inuit and bureaucrats decided on the boundary "without their involvement." Consequently, as he suggests: "...it is more than likely that the Dene/Métis may ask their people to vote against the boundary..." and that "the non-aboriginals, and the Dene and Métis, could gang up on the Inuit and prevent

ratification of the boundary between Nunavut and Denendeh. At issue is the cost of two separate administrations in the NWT where before there was one.

Labrador lags behind

What Brantenberg and Brantenberg (1984:696) refer to as "the Native movement" arrived in Labrador in 1972 when NQIA representatives travelled to Nain to enquire whether the Inuit of Labrador wanted to establish a regional association of ITC. The Labrador Inuit Association was established in 1973 as an affiliate member of ITC, but it was not until March 22, 1984 that a framework agreement to cover Labrador Inuit comprehensive land claims negotiations was initialled by the Labrador Inuit Association, Newfoundland, and Canada (DIAND, 1989f). The Labrador claim is on the federal government's "short list" of claims, those most likely to be successfully negotiated, those that are a priority, and those in which a provincial government is willing to become involved (Haysom, 1990:7).¹⁷ But, apart from registering beneficiaries (and, in the process, defining who is or is not a full-blooded Inuk), not much movement has occurred on settlement of the Labrador claim.

The Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) represents approximately 3,500 Inuit

¹⁷ DIAND negotiates only six claims at a time and, since the process takes so long, there is a lengthy wait before a new claimant achieves active negotiating status. Haysom (1990:9) writes: "The experience of the Labrador Inuit confirms that just getting to the negotiating table is a slow process. The fact that a claim can be 'under active negotiation' for almost four years [as was the case with Labrador] without a formal negotiating session ever having been convened must be a daunting prospect to all who are waiting to negotiate, and who find that the settlement of aboriginal land claims is a priority on the national agenda."

and Native Settlers¹⁸ and, because they live south of the sixtieth parallel, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador must be involved in negotiations in order to protect provincial jurisdiction over settlement benefits such as wildlife management and the environment. The necessity of reaching provincial and federal agreement on responsibilities has delayed progress towards settlement, but, in October 1988, Newfoundland agreed to enter into negotiations.

Labrador is a special case in that the push to settle land claims appears to be coming from the people rather than the state, as is the case in northern Quebec and the N.W.T. As Haysom, a lawyer retained by LIA, claims (1990:7):

Clearly, federal land claims policy and claims negotiations elsewhere in Canada have been driven largely by the demand for resources and industrial development. In the absence of such demands -- with the obvious exception of military development -- there has been little pressure from anyone other than the aboriginal people for land claims settlement in Labrador.¹⁹

Labrador is, however, very important to the Department of National Defense (DND), since a land claim settlement is needed to clear the way for international military agreements. The United States has had a military base in Goose Bay since the early 1940s and, in the 1950s, several more were established as part of the Dew Line. In 1981, Canada signed an agreement with Germany allowing training flights at low levels (as low as 50 feet) over the area and, in 1986, a

¹⁸ There are only app. 1300 Inuit in Labrador, but in recognition of the rights of settlers, they have also been included in LIA (ITC, 1974b:34-35).

¹⁹ Conversely, because of the relative unimportance of their territory for resource development, Labrador Inuit, "have-not people in a have-not province" (CARC, 1990:16), have had to fight for recognition by the state.

similar agreement was reached with the Dutch air force. The British and Canadians also conduct low level training over Labrador, and preliminary talks have begun with the Italian Airforce and NATO (Rowell, 1990:11). Enviromental advisor to the LIA, Judy Rowell, claims (p.15) that DND is much less cooperative than the oil and gas industry:

DND is a proponent that has so far been unwilling to consider seriously the concerns of the aboriginal people in Labrador. Because the politics surrounding DND's activities in Labrador are international in scope, the military will not be compelled to respond to local conditions as corporate proponents have and are not about to be reactive to local conditions.

The civil disobedience tactics of the Innu (Indians) in Labrador have resulted, however, in DND's entry into negotiations with LIA over low-level flying. Bill Rompkey, the MP for Labrador who was responsible for the establishment of low-level flying at Goose Bay, considers (1990:16) that the conflict between military training and the native people's lifestyle is "best addressed through the land claims process," the military being, as he says (p.17), "the economic foundation of Goose Bay," an area with no "economic alternative," but, as Rowell writes (p.15):

It is difficult to know what it will take to make the federal and provincial governments acknowledge the potential impact of the ever-increasing intrusion of DND activities in northern Labrador. Attempts at reasonable and responsible discussion with the appropriate government departments have achieved nothing in the way of substantive protection for Labrador Inuit rights and interests while Labrador Inuit continue to witness the erosion of their culture and lifestyle, and fear the threat of prejudice to a just settlement of their aboriginal claims.

The Inuit and Innu charge that DND disregards wildlife conservation and environmental concerns of residents. But DND "wheels out the 'techno-fix' -- sophisticated computer programs and communications networks -- to assuage the

fears of aboriginal residents and environmentalists" (CARC, 1990:2). Retired Brig. Gen. C.D. Young (now Manager of the Goose Bay Management Office, Department of National Defense) advised in an interview (CARC, 1990:18) that the position of the Department is that all hunters have to do is phone in their position and travel plans and they will not fly over them. He acknowledges that "the view of the Innu is that they own the land and there is no requirement for them to tell anyone where they are going on their own land," and adds: "So they do get over-flown, but they needn't."

While awaiting settlement of its land claims, the Labrador Inuit Association has sponsored several affiliates which, along with regular employment for approximately 90 people, are providing housing, health services, communications, fisheries and wildlife management, economic development, legal assistance, alcohol and drug counselling and rehabilitation, and cultural programs (Haysom, 1990:10). As in the central and eastern Arctic, agencies to channel land claims benefits were set up before an agreement was reached. The Labrador Inuit Development Corporation was formed in 1982, and it appears to be doing the kind of groundwork done by the co-ops elsewhere in the Arctic. It has organized commercial caribou hunting which has created more than a hundred seasonal jobs (Hall, 1990:24) and it is also involved in commercial fishing, tourism and the mining of labradorite.

The initial impetus to settle land claims was inspired by the military, but is now being carried by Labrador Inuit as a result, I believe, of the growing pan-

Eskimo movement, and a desire to be identified with and share in some of the benefits available to Inuit elsewhere in Canada. In an address made at the opening of land claims negotiations for Labrador (22 Jan 1989 in CARC,1990:4), IIA William Anderson III said:

For a long time, Labrador Inuit felt that the root of our problems was a lack of understanding. We believed that, once government decision makers understood us and understood the ways in which their system have caused us problems and understood these problems, changes and improvements would then follow. Experience has taught us this is not so.

Like Inuit all over Canada, Labrador Inuit are recognizing that their rights are in conflict with and take second place to state projects, be they military or economic.

Implications for Inuit of land claims settlements

Land claims settlements carry many implications for Inuit, the major one being that in return for a package of benefits they are required to give up all aboriginal rights. In 1986, as a result of opposition from TFN and others, the Minister of Indian Affairs announced a policy change whereby only aboriginal *title* and not *rights* had to be given up in a claims settlement which meant "that rights such as the right to speak Inuktitut and to follow the traditions of customary law and adoption -- rights that make an Inuk truly an Inuk -- are not now rights that have to be given up in a land claims settlement" (TFN, 1989c:4). Also, instead of *extinguishment*, a phrase which means "to get rid of," the aboriginal people were allowed to use "the less offensive" word, *convey*, which means to transfer.

The process is rationalized by DIAND which maintains that: "The settlement of land claims basically involves the exchange of undefined aboriginal

land rights for concrete rights and benefits defined by law" (DIAND, 1986:63).

But there are opposing reactions to this. One view was expressed in *Nunavut Forum* (Nortext, 1991a:3):

Some people say that aboriginal title should not be surrendered or extinguished (ended) no matter what the government offers in return. Others, TFN included, say that because aboriginal title is an "undefined" right, it cannot protect Inuit culture and lifestyles as well as the group of defined rights that Inuit will get in the land claim.

The other view was expressed by Rosemarie Kuptana in the same issue of *Nunavut Forum* (p.8) who questioned...

...the wisdom of trading away aboriginal rights for 'defined' rights, simply because aboriginal rights have yet to be defined in the courts. "How can we know if this is a good trade off if we don't know what we're giving up?"

Regardless of whether it is called *extinguishing* or *conveying*, Inuit are being dispossessed of control over the land and any potential for generating internal capital and, hence, becoming a nation-state. For my purpose here, the most significant implication for Inuit stemming from land claims settlement, is their involvement as shareholders wielding varying degrees of control in the corporate structures set up to channel compensation packages. These corporations combine economic and political power but, before discussing their implications in engendering new class relations among Inuit, I devote a chapter to describing how they work and how they mesh both with existing organizations and the aspirations of Inuit shareholders.

Chapter Eighteen

Development Corporations Challenge the Cooperatives and Complete Relations of Dominance

Development corporations were created to implement the terms of land claims agreements and are to be accountable to and democratically controlled by the Inuit beneficiaries of settlements. But there has been considerable dissatisfaction expressed with both the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and Makivik, the development corporation established for Quebec Inuit. Criticism of the agreement centres on the growing realization that it is not appreciably bettering the lot of the native people, economically or politically, relative to that of other Canadians.

Much of the dissatisfaction with JBNQ expressed by Inuit and Cree has been directed towards the Quebec provincial government. Billy Diamond, Grand Chief of the Crees and one of the major negotiators of JBNQ, was reported to have said (1985:8-9):

To a great extent, Québec has been very reluctant and very slow in meeting its obligations under the Agreement, particularly if there are monetary consequences. This comes not only from the traditional feeling by Québec that natives are a federal responsibility, but also from a reluctance to deal with us on an equal basis.

Diamond's disappointment with Quebec is shared by Inuit. In the same special issue of *Rencontre*, Harry Tulugak, a co-op supporter from the dissenting village of Povungnituk, referred to "repeated denunciations of the Quebec Government's failure to live up to the letter and the spirit of the Agreement by not providing adequate funding" (Tulugak, 1985:18). He considered that the agreement placed

the population of northern Quebec in "a situation of political irresponsibility," referring to "the inexistence under the present setup, of a responsive political process to determine what the priorities are to be and how money is to be spent" (p.19). There is, he said, "under the present setup, no link whatsoever between the availability of funds and the ability of Inuit society to generate its own resources in Northern Quebec".

At the Fourth Inuit Studies Conference held at Concordia University (Montreal) in November that same year, Makivik president Mary Simon advised delegates that, in spite of the creation of such structures as Kativik Regional Government, "Inuit do not exercise adequate self-government," since they lack an adequate revenue base and are dependent on capital from the Quebec government (Nunasi Corporation, 1985:18; Makivik, 1984b). She also said that in the future, Makivik would be making efforts to "get Quebec to amend the agreement and adopt a more equitable and enlightened policy in regards to Inuit participation in the benefits of economic development." At that same conference, Edna McLean, a delegate from Alaska, complained that "the corporate structure [had] turned out to be much more complex and difficult to deal with than anyone dreamed of" and in Alaska they were also trying to "improve or change the institutions created by ANCSA" [Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act].

As for Makivik Corporation, in the special *Rencontre* issue (1985:19), Tulugak (who is secretary of La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec), criticized the new leaders of Arctic Quebec as:

...people who have the necessary knowledge and talent to wrest...ever-increasing sums of money from government. Young Inuit who feel at ease rubbing shoulders with ministers and deputy-ministers, flying around from meeting to meeting with their attaché-cases...The money is good and the work carries a lot of prestige and recognition.

In spite of the requirement to be "democratically controlled by Inuit," Makivik has been run by appointed officers, although this changed in 1989 when its charter was amended by an act of Quebec's National Assembly.¹

The co-ops' resentment of the new style leader stems from the fact that, as Tulugak writes (1985:19): "They set the tone to such an extent that people's attitudes and expectations towards work and salaries have become distorted." From the beginning, Makivik hired away co-op personnel through the double attraction of higher wages and prestige, although it must be assumed that dissatisfaction with the cooperative is also a factor. "Private businesses and the cooperatives just cannot compete," said Tulugak (p.19), "with the government salary-scales and working conditions that lure the best and the brightest away..." Co-op supporters are also highly critical of competition on the economic front from Makivik which was incorporated with the double mandate of making money *and* preserving the Inuit culture.²

¹ All beneficiaries of the JBNQ are eligible for election. Directors are elected for two years by the "respective communities they serve" (Makivik, 1992).

² Co-ops were running hotels and restaurants in some communities (which, according to their means, were rather rudimentary), and one of Makivik's first moves was to open large, expensive hotels (in Fort Chimo, for instance) which provided a higher level of service. After the JBNQ, Makivik's landholding corporation determined on which land tourists could hunt. As FCNQ's tourism development officer told the Fort Chimo co-op manager at the November 1984 directors' meeting when he asked who the competition was: "The landholding corporation which changes its mind from year to year. This year, they might say only they can run the spring hunt on category two land. It's a shame. We have promotion all set to go and tourists etc." This comment

Attempting to make money and preserve culture

Makivik's first focus was on large-scale, capital-intensive enterprise which employed a high proportion of non-natives in part, one assumes, to avoid problems with organized labour, but also because of the lack of trained Inuit labour. As president Mary Simon admitted (in Hornsey and Stiles, 1983:24):

Clearly, one of the criticisms of the James Bay Agreement is that we have hired too many non-Inuit to manage the businesses that we do have...if you want to run something and you need to know how to do it, then you have to have the training or experience to do it.

As Hornsey and Stiles points out, however (p.10): "The great danger and indeed the potential tragedy of this situation, is that Inuit may be relegated to the lowest and most menial jobs in the northern institutions and organizations of the future."

Losses on projects in the early years were replaced in 1989 with a \$2.4 million net profit on subsidiary companies (Makivik, 1988:7).³ The most successful subsidiary is Air Inuit (1985) Ltd. Kigiak Builders Inc. (a construction subsidiary) and Sanak Maintenance Inc., were terminated in 1989, although the profitable fuel division was retained and renamed Halutik Fuel Inc. Makivik also operates a fishing subsidiary (Seaku Fisheries Inc), and a leasing company, Uttuitik Leasing Inc (which owns and manages buildings and equipment formerly

prompted FCNQ president, Paulosie Kasadluak, to observe that "whenever the co-ops succeed in one area, other organizations try to duplicate it" (in Myers, 1984a).

³ As Mary Simon said in her electoral speech in 1982 (Simon, 1982:7): "...we cannot afford to keep losing large amounts of our compensation money which we entrusted to Makivik. After only four years, Makivik has lost \$10.4 millions. No company north or south should be able to, or away with this record."

owned by Sanak and Kigiak). The Kativik Regional Development Corporation has been established to stimulate small business development in northern Quebec. In 1989, members equity grew by \$7 million, the largest increase since 1978, and Makivik itself generated a 10 per cent return on its investment portfolio of approximately \$66 million.

In terms of cultural preservation, Makivik has joined forces with Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and Kativik to facilitate the return of dislocated populations to their homelands. A commitment was secured from DIAND to build houses in Inukjuak so that Quebec Inuit relocated to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay in the 1950s, in the interests of Canadian sovereignty could be returned there (Makivik, 1988:35).

In 1983, Premier René Lévesque offered to grant Inuit a broader autonomy within Quebec's jurisdiction *if* they could strike a common position. Five regional organizations, including Makivik and La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec joined to create an organization called Ujjituijiit which, in 1987, held a referendum to decide how to achieve consensus on self government. A slight margin voted in favour of a working group on self-government to be comprised of elected representatives "and financed by a voluntary tax levied on businesses, institutions and individuals" (Makivik, 1988:27). The voluntary tax is no longer being collected and: "The Ujjituijiit movement has been replaced by the Nunavik Constitutional Committee (NCC), whose mandate is to develop self-government for the residents of Nunavik" (Makivik, 1992). NCC has drafted a

constitution for Nunavik which has been approved in a referendum. As Makivik advises: "The self-government project is a non-ethnic one whereby any and all residents of the region can participate in an eventual Nunavik government," as is the case in the NWT. Residency requirements mean, however, that Inuit have the edge.

On the national scene, Makivik joined with the Quebec Aboriginal Nations in the summer of 1990 to protest the Meech Lake Accord which, while recognizing Quebec as "a distinct society" within Canada does not accord aboriginal nations the same distinction. Inuit have succeeded in having their rights recognized in the new constitution, but it is not clear what those rights are and, like other First Peoples, they are able to exert virtually no impact on the Canadian polity.

Makivik challenges co-op hegemony

In the process of pursuing both its economic and its political objectives, Makivik inevitably clashed with the co-operatives. This clash has resulted in a decline of the Eskimo cooperative, not surprising since, in a capitalist system, co-ops are always at risk of marginalization. This is particularly true of Eskimo co-ops which are a bastardized form of state property.

As a collective institution, the co-op had the potential of assuming a dynamic of its own and achieving some political impact. The prairie grain growers' co-operative movement became, for instance, the basis for populist political organization; the maritime co-operative movement did not. The Eskimo

cooperative succeeded in improving the economic existence of Inuit and in sparking a movement with strong nationalist overtones, but it has so far failed to establish political linkages. As discussed in part III of this thesis, although the Quebec co-op functioned for several years as an "underground government," it failed to achieve a mandate. It was the first and, for a long time, the only collective voice Inuit had, but formal political power was conferred upon Makivik and its subsidiaries which challenged the co-ops' economic mandate as well.

Co-ops perceive the development corporations as a threat and, in Quebec, the conflict has been overt. Before Makivik was established, La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec succeeded in getting Quebec to put Makivik enabling legislation to a parliamentary committee before approval. The result was a change in the original bill allowing FCNQ several seats on Makivik's first provisional board. It appears, however, that FCNQ was not really interested in working with Makivik, whose interests were so opposed to its own. Although FCNQ representatives did attend a few meetings, they soon resigned, complaining that material (budgets, statements *etc.*) was not presented in Inuktitut.

Similarly, in the Northwest Territories, co-ops and development corporations are generally viewed as rivals even though, in an interview with *News of the North* (Benyk, 1980:A9), the chief executive officer of ACL, Andrew Goussaert, said that he did not consider the development corporations a threat, but anticipated that they would provide financial support to the co-ops. In January 1985, Tungavik Federation of Nunavut agreed in principle to give ACL a

one-time \$5 million loan guarantee, stating that:

...the co-ops have been very important to the people of Nunavut over the past 20 years: they have trained many Inuit leaders, provided jobs and services such as marketing crafts and carvings, and are based on local control. Before hamlet and settlement councils were set up, the co-ops gave Inuit in each community their first chance at running their own affairs (Nunasi Corporation, 1985:2).

There was also talk of joint ventures in such projects as the airlifting of supplies to co-ops by Nunasi Central Airlines. Raymond Ningeocheak of Coral Harbour, ACL's representative on TFN's board, was quoted in *Nunasi Report* (1985:2) as saying that Nunasi, TFN and ACL "have agreed that the only way they can be successful is to help each other."

Suluk (in Myers, 1984b) acknowledged, however, that the co-op had helped carvers, "but eventually the bubble had to break. You might as well hear now that things are not so rosy. The modern world has caught up to Inuit. The Noble Savage image has to be broken." Furthermore: "The principles of the co-op are quite nice if they could ever be really followed. But the co-op's mandate is too much like an underground government. It involves itself so much in politics and neglects principles of management and cooperation." And, in the same year that Goussaert said he did not consider development corporations a threat, the first meeting of the Nunavut Constitutional Forum and Western Constitutional Forum was held in Rankin Inlet, and a motion was passed calling for the formation of a Nunavut governing body to direct land claims, political developments *etc.*, (Nortext, 1981:3). The debate leading up to this motion focussed on whether or not the NWT co-op federation should have a seat, and it was reported that Suluk,

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program director for Nunavut land claims, had said that "the fact that co-ops were even considered for membership showed how far land claims staff had gone in trying to accommodate everyone." ACL's countering argument was that, since about 60 per cent of Inuit are members of ACL, it *should* be on the Nunavut governing body.

The Inuit president of Pangnirtung co-op described the discussion as "a very emotional debate as to whether co-ops should have a political voice concerning land claims" (Myers, 1984b). Those who opposed co-op participation "felt that one day the lion and the lamb were going to end up fighting." Similarly, concerning loan guarantees⁴ for co-ops which are discussed, he said, at "every meeting" with great dissension, it was his view (Suluk translating) that: "What is at stake is the co-op socialist ideology and the corporate/capitalist ideology."

Finally, it was agreed that ACL could have a seat, along with ITC, Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Keewatin Inuit Association, Baffin Regional Inuit Association, the Inuit Development Corporation and the Inuit Cultural Institute. There was, however, disagreement from some delegates who complained that "since co-ops had been subsidized by the government for years, the governments own the co-ops." This has been an ongoing refrain from Inuit organizations, and others, even though, as we have seen, state support, financial and otherwise, of co-ops was variable. Besides, the political associations also depend upon the state for capital.

⁴ The co-ops have been given some loan guarantees from the development corporations, but, according to Suluk, not without opposition.

In Quebec, hostilities between FCNQ management and Makivik executives were obvious from the inception of Makivik. FCNQ openly supported the three villages opposing JBNQ, and the effect of this position was so disruptive of the co-op movement that for several years in the mid to late seventies delegates to FCNQ meetings attempted to pass motions that the federation should stay out of politics and, further, that the subject of Makivik should not even be discussed at co-op meetings.

Makivik denied conflict. In response to a January 21, 1980 letter from IAND deputy minister Paul Tellier, president Charlie Watt said (Makivik, 1980:1): "...we have never hired any cooperative personnel, nor would we advocate any practice to undermine the Cooperatives." On the contrary, he advised (p.2) that Makivik was "prepared to work closely with Inuit cooperatives," although: "As long as the Fédération is closely affiliated with an Inuit political group which opposes both the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and Makivik's existence, we rightfully could not finance the Fédération's activities" (p.3). Indeed, opposition between FCNQ and Makivik seemed to be ameliorating in 1980 when it was decided at the George River conference of all the co-ops, that FCNQ and Makivik would cooperate in some activities. This was not to happen, however, and Makivik continues to be perceived as competition. As the general manager of FCNQ told the November 1984 Directors' Meeting (in FCNQ, 1984):

The past several years have been difficult ones for the co-operatives. The southern economy has not been good and this has resulted in a reduced demand for sculpture and furs and, to some extent, has prevented fast development in tourism. Millions of dollars have been used by other

northern organizations to compete with the co-ops and southern businesses have been invited into the northern communities to perform work which could be done by the Inuit.

A motion had been passed at the George River conference to set up a joint FCNQ/Makivik investment review committee and, in 1984, when FCNQ was setting up its loan fund, the president (Paulosie Kasadluak) and secretary (Harry Tulugak) met with Makivik to discuss the corporation's possible involvement. This was the same meeting at which they discussed the future of the retail store Makivik was running at Aupaluk. There had been talk of having a co-op manager train the new manager at Aupaluk, but Makivik had hired a Montreal firm to provide this service. As the executive committee reported to the directors' meeting (in FCNQ, 1984):

One can wonder about the future of Northern Quebec considering the situation of the Great Whale River hotel and restaurant, the store in Aupaluk and the hotel and restaurant in Kuujuaq...where is the economic development of the Inuit in these? Great Whale's hotel and restaurant were contracted to Crawley & McCracken Ltd. The hotel, restaurant and bar in Kuujuaq were contracted to Crawley & McCracken. The training of store management in Aupaluk was contracted to Crawley & McCracken. Who is this Crawley & McCracken firm that they are now being given the reins to a portion of the Nouveau-Quebec economy when we know for a fact that the businesses they are now involved in can be and are run by the Inuit through their cooperatives? Is this what the Inuit want: their economy run by southern companies? Is this proof that the Inuit *cannot* run their own? Why are they being given these businesses through contracts? Who is the benefactor in these cases? We firmly believe that the Inuit in Nouveau-Quebec do run and are willing to run their businesses, and more and more on their own.

In April 1985, Makivik sponsored a northern Quebec economic conference, the purpose of which was explained as follows (Makivik, 1985):

For a long time, government and industry have perceived large scale, non-

renewable resource development as the main, if not sole, form of viable economic development in Northern Québec. This erroneous perception has resulted in numerous conflicts between the proponents of large-scale northern development and Inuit, whose regionally based economies include extensive subsistence activities. We must ensure the creation and stimulation of local and regional economic opportunities for Inuit and at the same time we must also promote, with renewed efforts, native subsistence economies.

The conference, held in Inukjuak April 23 to April 26, had as its first agenda item:

"The Cooperative Movement, with special reference to the carving industry and other traditional Inuit industries." There was, according to a report on this conference by Charlie Patsauq (1985:14) in *Taqralik*, Makivik Corporation's now defunct newsletter, "much criticism levelled at the Federation." One delegate is reported to have said:

The Federation is just not helping the carver who has to struggle to give his children food to live. The Federation is making the situation worse because they sniff at and disdain government assistance. The government has funds available for the Federation and when the Federation refuses such assistance they are turning away funds that could possibly help the man down at the bottom of the economic ladder...The Federation, in refusing government funds, is laying the burden on the shoulders of the local carver. This has got to stop...If the Federation keeps demanding blood, sweat and tears from the hardworking carver, they are bound to be accused of depleting the North's strength by choosing to let the local carver to [sic] provide all capital.

As an aside, this comment points up a fundamental difference in ideologies -- the independence and self sufficiency promoted by the co-ops and the philosophy of the development corporations which consider they are entitled to state subsidies.

Conference delegates agreed that the co-op federation was "out of touch with its members [who] seem to have lost the power to make decisions." It should be noted, however, that the conference was *also* critical of the Kativik Regional

Development Council, for not being supportive of individual business ventures. One delegate said (in Patsauq, 1985:15): "They give so many rules and guidelines as to make a business not worthwhile at all!" And, further, not one word of the "rules, guidelines and prerequisites" are in Inuktitut.

Formal statements on the northern economy that came out of this conference mainly emphasized the need for education/training and jobs. Strong recommendations were also made for improving the co-op's performance. Although it was considered that co-ops should continue to be an important part of the Inuit economy, it was felt, they had "stagnated," *i.e.*, had not responded to new needs of Inuit and had not found new "means to fulfil those needs" (Patsauq, 1985:17). Consequently, people had "lost the feeling of belonging to their co-op" which showed up in non-payment of debts. Suggestions were that co-ops provide a banking service or a financial institution to lend money to people.⁵ Also, "each part of the co-op," it was recommended, "should be financially independent," *i.e.*, "profits from one activity should not be used to pay losses from another activity." It was also recommended that "co-ops should be flexible in accepting government grants, especially when it creates jobs" (p.17). Finally, it was recommended that the co-ops cooperate with other regional organizations since: "There appears to be a serious lack of communication both between the individual members and the co-op federation, and between the federation and other regional organizations."

⁵ FCNQ began providing a loan service in the mid-eighties, and ACL is presently working to establish credit unions in NWT communities.

In spite of financial successes in the eighties, it was perceived by FCNQ management as well that the heart had gone out of the co-op movement. As Georges Filotas, assistant general manager, told the 1984 directors' meeting (in Myers, 1984a): "There are tangible improvements up north, but the co-ops have really come to a standstill." He was referring to peoples' attitudes. On the same date, FCNQ's internal auditor, speaking with me about the upcoming thirtieth anniversary of co-ops said: "We have to find out what's responsible for the poor image of the co-op and try to overcome it." Part of the image problem undoubtedly stemmed from the alternative being offered by Makivik. Previously, competition was with the Hudson's Bay Company -- outsiders -- but now it was with other Inuit.

Makivik is still considered a rival and an upstart by the cooperatives and, indeed, in January 1988, Makivik succeeded in obtaining an agreement with Shell Canada to distribute petroleum products in Fort Chimo (Makivik, 1988:21). There have, however, been some areas of limited cooperation such as a joint venture between Makivik's Kigiak Construction and FCNQ to build houses at Umiujaq.

To a certain extent, Makivik also looks upon the co-ops as rivals. FCNQ recently opened a travel agency and, according to Makivik's 1987-88 Annual Report (1988:25), it was anticipated that: "The near future will prove challenging for Kigaaq [Makivik's travel agency, run in conjunction with Air Inuit] as it will face competition from the newly created travel agency of the F.C.N.Q." Makivik is,

however, clearly the lion, while the co-op is the lamb.

The Makivik/co-op rivalry has divided communities and families as well as challenging co-op hegemony. Inuit had no precedents for managing such rivalries and, in some communities, executives and directors of Makivik have even been, at times, elected to positions of power in the co-ops. In Payne Bay, for instance, the head of the Landholding Corporation, Zebedee Nungak (now vice-president of Makivik), was elected as a director of the co-op.

Unity: A dim hope

In the seventies, FCNQ had been told, by its own members, to stay out of politics. It did not, and in the eighties, it became openly political, involving itself in the unity movement sparked by Levesque's promise of regional government. FCNQ attempted to play a leading role in this movement (about which I have more to say later) although, in private conversation (November 6, 1984) Filotas told me he hoped the unity movement would *not* succeed because "it shuts people up; they don't know how to deal with conflict except by stifling it." As for self government, although co-ops were then collecting a one per cent tax on business to finance Inuit self government, Filotas considered the movement was "all talk and no action."

For its part, Makivik reported (1984a) that it was trying to coordinate efforts with other Inuit groups -- national and international -- and, "as a first step," was formulating a comprehensive economic development program for arctic Quebec (through organization of the 1985 economic conference; establishing

training programs aimed at youth, unilinguals and women; lobbying Quebec to change union and labour laws, and engaging community *animateurs*). It was Makivik's disenchantment with the implementation of JBNQ that provided the motivation to join forces with other Quebec Inuit organizations. Like their Alaskan cousins, Quebec Inuit were unhappy with the agreement at every level. As Makivik president Mary Simon said: "On a lower level, people are unhappy because *they* were supposed to be beneficiaries." But Makivik was, she said, *trying* to create jobs at the community level. This brought it into conflict with the co-ops, but it seems that Makivik was not unduly concerned about potential areas of conflict, perhaps because although the co-ops had developed a surprisingly stable economy (based, mainly, on handicrafts), it was, by southern Canadian standards, doing an inadequate job. Unemployment and welfare were rampant and the under-capitalized co-ops could not do much to combat this. It seems, however, that the co-op was jealously guarding its presumed mandate to control economic development in northern Quebec, even if the development corporations could do it better -- if only because of the vast resources at its command and the state support it receives. Makivik has considerable access to government and private loan money, the former in amounts not often available to co-ops and the latter, almost never available.

Although co-ops were a state initiative, they have never enjoyed unconditional state support. In earlier chapters, I have detailed the stormy relationship between the GNWT and the co-ops which, at times, could be

described as a state of open warfare. In Quebec, conflict was with both the provincial and the federal governments. It must be remembered, however, that development corporations were *also* a state initiative. Warring factions act, of course, as a thwart to any power a unified Inuit population might achieve.

Makivik represents a move into full-scale capitalism which will mean, inevitably, an increasingly marginal status for the co-ops. In the struggle to reproduce itself, the co-op has attempted to secure its foothold through ideological appeals to the "Eskimo way" (see Vallee, 1967b:42). This is, however, an ineffective strategy; for, while the past lifestyle continues to exert a nostalgic tug on all Inuit, this must be balanced against a desire for "progress," as measured against western, capitalist standards. It is, after all, in the nature of contact that one group will be dominated politically, economically *and* ideologically.

Ideological domination

Anthropologist Hugh Brody discusses the case of Panarctic, a consortium which was granted exploration and development rights to oil and gas in the eastern Arctic with the federal government holding a 45 per cent interest (1977:222). He quotes (p.229) from a letter written by the Arctic Bay community council to government agencies, giving their agreement "to let the companies in." Brody focusses on the concluding passage which reveals the fear that Inuit feel towards whites:

...in the present plan Inuit have nothing. Since we have nothing the government could start going against us. If we tried to stop them or they can just forget about us. The government may even start thinking about death or they might split us up. But if our land is going to be worked on,

we should like to know the plans before the activity starts so we can help each other. Also, so the companies will have enough workers on their staff. So we can understand more fully, we would like a letter from the mining company stating the number of workers they want so we can look around for the men.

A more significant passage occurs earlier in the letter: "The people in Arctic Bay do not want to live the old way of life, without a gun, boat, or even a stick."

Without escalating aspirations, "development" could not take place. Neither can it occur without the cooperation of a powerful indigenous group/class of people.

In the case of the Inuit, leaders were nurtured from the very beginning to help the invaders accomplish their purpose. Each wave of outside agents had its version of "talking chiefs" and the state was no exception. The various agreements developed by industry and the state are always signed and/or supported by putative leaders. The shipment of oil by Panarctic in 1985 from Bent Horn was, for instance, supported by Inuit working for the GNWT which was committed to removing all obstacles to resource development. Nellie Cournoyea, outspoken leader of the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement (COPE), who was by then territorial minister of Renewable Resources and who is now government leader for the GNWT and minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, "pointed out that the GNWT and Panarctic are committed to develop and implement compensation arrangements as a safeguard against any possible adverse effects on renewable resource harvesting that may occur in the area." And Tagak Curley, formerly president of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, but by then Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, is quoted as follows:

We, in the territories require revenue from our resources if we are to take full advantage of the potential benefits that can come from them. Thanks to the foresight of the new Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, this prospect is now much closer to reality."

Curley's position is consistent. In 1981 when he was MLA from Keewatin South, he was reported in *News of the North* (20/02/81) to be "indirectly" supporting increased development in the North -- "if only for the sake of employment opportunities for Northerners:"

Curley said he understood the positions of native organizations when they ask people not to support development until land claims are settled but he added that position leads to contradictions. Shall we tell the young Inuit coming out of school that "we cannot support your employment -- your opportunities -- to work in the resource industry and mining companies until land claims are settled?"

The message from the petroleum industry was in the same vein, directed to developing resources at the same time as land claims were being negotiated. A petroleum industry brief entitled *Native People and Long-Term Economic Development: An Industry Perspective* was forwarded to the Minister of Indian Affairs (John Munro) in 1980. Discussion focussed on the possibilities of "full participation of native people in long-term economic development associated with energy development in Canada" (Petroleum Industry Group, 1980:3), but the real thrust came at the very end (p.13-14), in a section entitled "Specific ways government can assist industry in the area of economic development." The first specific thing the government could do to assist industry was spelled out:

Several companies feel that the best way to move beyond the current impasse of land claims negotiations is to open the north for development now and give land claims the stimulus to proceed concurrently...Without energy projects there can be no offers of equity participation by industry to

anyone, few employment and training opportunities and little reason to explore and expand spin-off industry.

In the letter accompanying the brief, the chairman of the petroleum industry group (Hopper, 1980:4) pointed out that the "industry believes it is important that the solution should not unreasonably jeopardize either the native northerner's aspirations in land claims or Canada's stated goal of energy self-sufficiency." How the Department was to accomplish this was not spelled out. Its conflicting responsibilities were to resource development *and* to the people, and it was being heavily criticized at that time by the Dene and Métis for disregarding their rights and wishes. In an article entitled "Serving Notice on the North," Gurston Dacks (a political scientist), quoted a statement which appeared in *News of the North*, attributed to the Dene Nation and the Métis Association of the Northwest Territories:

It's very clear they [the government of Canada] are approaching our Aboriginal Rights negotiations as a public relations stunt so that they can proclaim to the rest of the country that they really are busy doing everything possible to ensure that our rights are uppermost in their minds, while, in fact, our ability to negotiate our rights is undermined by energy developments (in Dacks, 1981:6).

The bitterness of native people is not surprising, given that DIAND, of necessity, was juggling priorities. Dacks (1981:7) refers to DIAND's "internal contradictions" as "a protector of the northern environment and society" and promoter of mega-projects. Its objectives of exploiting resources to benefit Canada as a whole and to protect the interests of northerners, not to mention environmental protection, appear to be irreconcilable.

DIAND: Juggling priorities

Although it is not the place here to enter into an exhaustive analysis of the Indian Affairs bureaucracy, I will draw attention to an important point made by Dacks who considers that "DIAND's present weakness is a legacy." He points out (1981:17) that, in the seventies, DIAND "had the unenviable task of championing native people, an unpopular group in Ottawa." Certainly, the Indian Affairs portfolio has always been considered low status, and this is probably because, as Dacks also points out, "its client group was politically weak." It was also, in the case of Indians, a hostile and unsupportive client group. The paternalistic role DIAND has played in relation to native people which, Dacks observes, was more in the nature of social control than development, brought it the scorn and opposition of its clients. Furthermore, "these attacks were sometimes aimed at policies implemented by DIAND but decided elsewhere."

DIAND has been hovering in an indeterminate state of devolution for two decades. At the time of Dacks' article, it was expected that responsibility for oil and gas would be integrated with the northern responsibilities of Energy, Mines and Resources, with the resulting agency responsible to both ministers, and his prediction was: "In the 1980s, the lines of battle will shift. DIAND will fade from the picture. Its northern role will become vestigial, leaving only its Canada-wide mandate to administer policy dealing with status Indians and Inuit" (*pp.8,9*).

DIAND continues to juggle priorities. The resource companies and the territorial governments want oil and gas development; the native people want land

for hunting and trapping, *and* self-government; other federal departments want national parks and conservation reserves. All the evidence indicates that resource development continues to take precedence. Just one example: The 1988 Northern Oil and Gas Accord between Canada and the NWT gave management of on-shore oil and gas to the territories and established joint federal/territorial legislative jurisdiction over off-shore resources, with revenues to be shared. The accord is, according to the agreement-in-principle: "To achieve the orderly development of oil and gas resources for the benefit of Canada as a whole and the Northwest Territories in particular" (DIAND, 1988h:1). But, the last paragraph in the backgrounder to the Framework for a Northern Accord (DIAND, 1988g:2) reveals both the conflicting mandate of the department *and* its priorities: "The final negotiated agreement must be consistent with the government's commitment to protect the rights and interests of aboriginal people as provided in any final agreements reached with them." With no reconciling links, but one key word, the next sentence reads (emphasis added): "*Ultimately*, the objective is to provide a stable and fair regime for industry necessary to encourage and support timely development of the oil and gas resources for the benefit of the North and Canada as a whole" (see also DIAND, 1989h:2).

The agreement-in-principle deals extensively with the rights of the GNWT and the federal government, but the section entitled "Aboriginal Rights" contains only three clauses which specify that it does not identify, define, abrogate or derogate any aboriginal right nor affect any benefit in the western Arctic

(Inuvialuit) Claims Settlement act. The last clause is vague and clearly a sop to native aspirations: "The Government of the Northwest Territories agrees to develop, with the participation of aboriginal groups, an effective means of protecting aboriginal interests related to oil and gas resource management."

Inuit are still needed to support Canada's claims of Arctic sovereignty. The *Northern Political and Economic Policy Framework* was intended not only to devolve power to the provinces, develop the economy through non-renewable resource exploitation, and settle land claims. It was also intended to provide affirmation of Arctic sovereignty which, in the 1980s, "emerged as one of the most important national interests" (DIAND, 1988h:3):

It is a priority of the federal government, which has undertaken a number of steps to affirm Canada's presence in Arctic waters. These include the introduction of proposals to confirm application of Canadian laws in the offshore, the construction of the Polar Class 8 icebreaker and increased military surveillance and presence. A 1986 report on foreign policy entitled "Canada's International Relations" gave a prominent position to Arctic issues and the circumpolar North...The department has the lead responsibility on a number of specific initiatives which reinforce Arctic sovereignty through peaceful use and occupancy of the North.

Finally (p.4):

The Northern Framework recognizes that the goal of assisting Northerners to develop durable political and economic institutions is fundamental to the country's standing as an Arctic nation and a demonstration of effective occupation and control of Canada's Arctic territories.

The rights of the first people are secondary

Since comprehensive land claims are based on occupancy and use, DIAND's position was that, prior to settlements, Inuit use of the land would have to be documented. But DIAND had originally attempted to make these decisions

unilaterally and needed to be persuaded that Inuit should also participate in the process. At the same time, the department was also persuaded to allocate funds for Inuit research and the mounting of lobbies, and later, to implement some of the provisions of the agreements. Given that the federal government was providing millions of dollars in incentives to the mining, oil and gas industry, this seemed only fair to negotiators.

The documentation of land use became a major component of land claims settlements, and along with this went a growing lobby on the part of Inuit to become involved in land use planning. In 1983, DIAND, the GNWT, and Indian, Dene, Metis and Inuit organizations, including TFN, started work towards an agreement on land use planning. By July of that year, an agreement had been drafted and was signed by COPE (DIAND, 1984b). Containing a provision that Inuvialuit participation would be equal to government participation in coordinating land use planning for the Beaufort Sea region, it listed general principles to guide land use planning which "must be to protect and promote the existing and future well-being of the permanent residents and communities of the N.W.T., *taking into account the interests* of all Canadians" (p.1, emphasis added). It promises "special attention" to the "well-being of the aboriginal peoples and their land interests as they define them," and, in a later clause, specifies that regional and territorial organizations representing aboriginal people will be active participants in the land use planning process along with the federal and Northwest Territories governments (p.2).

This is not the place to enter into a discussion of the intent and credibility of the agreement, but it is worth mentioning that the Dene Nation was dissatisfied and skeptical. In July 1984, the 14th Annual Meeting of the National Assembly of the Dene Nation (held in Fort Rae, NWT) passed a resolution in which it was noted that "involvement in the Agreement may be a waste of Dene resources since Industrial and Government activities have already predetermined Land Use in much of Denendeh," and that "the Dene National Assembly does not believe the Federal Government is demonstrating commitment to the intent and principles of the Agreement."

It is, I believe, naive to think that native people will ever be meaningfully consulted or involved in the exploitation of the Arctic's non-renewable resources, in spite of the ideology that profits made in this exploitation will benefit everyone. The Canadian state has gone to unusual lengths to promote the appearance of equality, but the point of this thesis is that capital's interest is paramount and Inuit are excluded from benefitting on two counts: class position and ethnic status. Exclusion is accomplished peacefully, but the state is capable of draconian action, as in the case of Port Burwell (Killiniq). As told by Dawson (1984), people in that community were advised by telephone after midnight to be ready to evacuate the village that morning, taking only what would "fit in the airplane." They were simply told that the village was no longer viable, but Dawson claims that the real reason was that the Burwell land claims had already been extinguished in the James Bay Agreement, even though the village was located in the NWT. The

Burwell people had been trying to rally support in their fight against the Canada clause of the JBNQ which affected the Belchers and Labrador, and it was, he claims, no coincidence that on the day the village was evacuated, Charlie Watt from Makivik was on his way to meet with the Burwell people to discuss their land claims. Burwell leader, Norman Snowball, testified before the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Indian Affairs February 8, 1977:

We had no idea of the political boundaries in the Northwest Territories and what was Quebec. It has only been since very recent times that we have been aware that these boundaries exist...The surrendering of Port Burwell's rights in all of Canada is completely unacceptable without proper compensation and there has been no compensation..."

As Dawson says: "There would be no land claims in the Northwest Territories for the Killineq Inuit who had, simply, been moved to Quebec where all native claims had been extinguished by law in 1975. There would be no organization of opposition to government plans at Port Burwell," for, "between midnight and the cold hours of morning on February 8, 1978, the village of Port Burwell had ceased to exist."

In a significant departure from usual state practice, DIAND had funded native groups to participate in the Berger hearings on the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline "on an equal footing (so far as that is possible) with the pipeline companies -- to enable them to support, challenge, or seek to modify the project" (Berger, 1976:1). As Berger pointed out (p.2): "The Government of Canada has not funded interventions by groups of concerned citizens coming before commissions and inquiries in the past." The message to Berger's enquiry from the

native people was loud and clear, and it *did* succeed in halting construction of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, but, the Mackenzie Valley cannot be chalked up as a permanent victory for the First People. The GNWT published a response to Berger entitled *You've heard from the radical few about Canada's North...Now hear from the moderate many* in which Berger is called a "positive" racist for proposing "something that has always been abhorrent to Canadians and violates our history...separating people according to race" (GNWT, 1976:6). Claiming that he was not speaking for the majority, the publication states: "No thank you. Most residents of the Northwest Territories don't want their land carved up into native states according to the color of a man's skin" (p.11). State-supported mega-projects continue to override protests from natives and others.

Inuit prospects after land claims settlements

Although I shall have more to say in the next chapter concerning the shifts in relations of production occasioned by state-supported non-renewable resource development projects, I want to make the point here that, although the employment potential for native people is always touted by the state and the multinationals, the native people have not benefitted appreciably from employment on industry projects. As Dr. Colin Irwin reported (1989:12), the university-educated children of non-native Canadians who went north to "help" the Inuit are more likely to find employment in the North than are Inuit because, as Inuk Melanie Paniaq said in the same article: "Education means better chance at jobs." Paniaq observed that while "most professional positions were filled by

non-natives...the simpler, more clerical and domestic positions are filled by Inuit." She was, however, optimistic: "There will be more job opportunities after our claim is settled because there will be more organizations created." And then TFN President, Donat Milortok, is reported to have said: "I urge young people to complete their education so they will have a better chance of getting some of these new jobs."

The propaganda persists that educated Inuit will be employed on projects that will benefit them as well as all Canadians. Measuring success in terms of the western model, Inuit believe, more than ever, that they *need* the white man's education, but the reality is that few pursue higher levels of education. The drop-out rate in the high schools is high, even when the school is located in the village, eliminating the decades-old practice of transporting children away from home for ten months of the year.

Some people have expressed surprise that Inuit show few signs of negotiating a different, a non-western, lifestyle for themselves, but, instead, appear to be wholeheartedly embracing the model of western capitalism. This is, however, a predictable result of the domination of a capitalist mode of production. On one hand, the native people decry the attitude of the latest wave of invaders, industrialists who call "frontier" what they consider to be their "homeland" (Berger, 1976:3), but on the other, they want to share in material wealth and political power. Berger reported that people want to hunt and trap as they always did, but they also want jobs and progress and equal participation in the Canadian polity.

We should not assume that, given a choice, they would opt for the "traditional" way of life (the indigenous mode of production) over wage labour and its attendant institutions (the capitalist mode of production). What the native people *do not* want is to be second-class citizens in the CMP, but, given their denigrated ethnic status, it seems they have little chance of being anything else. It is not in capital's interest to share power or wealth with native people, and this has to do with the logic of capital, and not with rights, obligations, or morality. The universe unfolded as it should, with even Berger, sympathetic as he was to the plight of the aboriginal people, recommending the development of two parallel economies in the North -- industrialization and a native economy based upon a more vigorous exploitation of renewable resources (1977:II:39). What this prescription amounts to is a way of ensuring that the native people will never interfere with progress in the dominant sector. Berger was suggesting what amounts to the re-invention of the co-operative, ignoring the forces which led to the creation of Makivik and, in spite of a lack of internally generated capital, involvement of Inuit in new, class, relations.

The Berger legacy is still being explored by bureaucrats charged with economic development for natives. I quote the Honourable Gordon Wray, Minister of Economic Development and Tourism for the Government of the Northwest Territories at some length (in proceedings of the legislative assembly of the Northwest Territories, February 17, 1989). Wray began the session by commenting that the overall economic performance in the NWT was strong "but

not everyone has benefitted." Specifically, it was, he said, the small native communities which had not: "In these areas average incomes are well below Canadian poverty levels, employment is almost non-existent and social assistance is a fact of life" (*pp.591-592*).

Not only is the gap between rich and poor communities widening, but so, also, is the gap between rich and poor individuals. The example Wray gave was the Kitikmeot region in which 30 per cent of the population earns 75 per cent of the income: "In practical terms, we have two labour forces in the NWT. The non-native labour force is highly educated and mobile. On the other hand, over half of our native population has not finished grade 10." Wray's view of the dilemma of northern development is reminiscent of that of the dual economy apologists:

The problem I think in the past is that we have tended to think of economic development in terms of the big developments, oil, gas, mining as being the answer to our problems where in fact, where oil and gas and mining are certainly very important to our economy, particularly mining and very important to some communities in the NWT, the fact is that for most small native communities, oil, gas and mining is not the answer. We have for some reason overlooked our traditional economy if you want to call it that. The role of arts and crafts, tourism, the commercial development of renewable resources, it somehow seems that this was put into a lower priority or it was felt it was not feasible to develop those areas. In fact, I tend to think that if we are going to develop any kind of economic base in these small native communities, where the bulk of our problems lie, I may add, renewable resources, arts and crafts and tourism will be what forms the backbone of the economy. We are not going to build manufacturing plants...I do not want to delude this House or the general public in the Northwest Territories by thinking that somehow...we are going to be able to wave a magic wand and solve the economic problems of the North. For the most part, a large majority of the people are going to be condemned to a life on welfare, unless they are willing to relocate (*pp.609-611*).

The situation is, he said, similar to the situation in Scotland, Ireland, and Newfoundland where small and scattered communities with no real reason for existence led to massive emigration to larger centres where there were jobs. But the situation in the North is worse since there is nowhere to go, except South, and no way to create the large number of jobs required. As Wray challenges (p.612): "Take any one of our communities. We are not dealing with 10 people unemployed, or 20 people unemployed. We are dealing with communities of young populations of 400, 500, or 600 people." In a display of rare bureaucratic candour, he added:

I do not think that there is an answer to their economic problems, and that has been part of the problem. We have always assumed that there are answers. Everybody has spun their wheels, went off doing studies and looking for answers, and maybe one of the problems is that we have to recognize that, for a lot of our people, there are no answers.

I personally find his perspective both honest and sympathetic. As he says (pp.612-613):

If anybody can come along and tell me how, over the next five years, I can create 600 to 700 jobs in Eskimo Point I would welcome the suggestions. I think that we have to be realistic and say that we are only going to be able to create jobs for a small percentage of our population, because the communities were never meant to be that big and they were never meant to be where they are, to deal with that kind of population...I think we have to be honest with the people of the North and tell them, no we are not going to create the 600, 700 jobs in the communities like Eskimo Point; not because we do not want to, simply because we cannot.

The present predicament of the native people -- dispossessed of their land, unemployed and effectively disregarded in the revamped Canadian constitution -- is the focus of the concluding chapters of this thesis.

Chapter Nineteen

From Hunters and Fishers to Directors and Shareholders: Transformed Relations and Transformed Mode of Production

A composite picture should now be emerging of a transformed lifestyle, if not a mode of production. Inuit can no longer be described as nomadic hunters and gatherers, cooperating within optimum groups to obtain subsistence, with access to appropriate means of production being limited only by their availability in the natural world and human resourcefulness. As I have argued, the indigenous mode of production was not "communal,"¹ but can be described as a balance of cooperative and competitive (collective and individual) practices. Through contact with successive carriers of the capitalist mode of production in which competitive practices were dominant, the balance was inexorably destroyed, and Inuit practices gradually aligned with those in the dominant mode.

Previously, I have not treated land and natural resources -- the forces of production -- as a discrete category since they were non-problematic. In the mid-fifties, when non-native communities were established and Inuit encouraged to settle there, rights to land use began to be restricted. Lots were allocated by DIAND, with choice sites on the beaches going to non-native agents of the HBC, missions, RCMP and co-ops. Inuit could, however, continue to hunt where they wished, enjoying continued full use of both land and resources. The only constraint was the diminishing stock of wildlife as a consequence of concentrated

¹ A truly communal mode of production would comprise egalitarian social relations of production and appropriation of surplus value (Bourgeault, 1988b:82).

populations and more effective harvesting technology. Land claims settlements changed all that.

By the terms of the settlements, hunting is restricted, as is utilization of wildlife and other resources including carvingstone. Both subsistence activities and the simple commodity production of wildlife pelts and handicraft are seriously restricted, although the full impact has yet to be felt.

The lack of correspondence between the forces and relations of production that obtains when one group owns/controls the former, preventing others from making what they want, when they want, with what they want, is what drives the transformation of modes of production. Collective work projects begin to be replaced with individual work goals, and the sharing of surplus is replaced with private property. Far from proceeding in a linear, inevitable fashion, however, the transformation process is tempered by crosscutting relationships premised on ethnic and nationalist perceptions. At times, it is expedient -- for one or the other group, dominated or dominating -- to organize around issues of collective identity. As Bonacich has argued, this becomes a manipulative strategy to facilitate exploitation and enhance the accumulation of wealth when used by capital, but it is also used by the dominated group in an effort to enhance its position, at first through cooperation with advancing capital and, later, to resist it.

From the first days of contact Inuit facilitated rather than resisted encroachment of the capitalist mode of production, gradually incorporating western capitalist practices into the indigenous ensemble of practices, and

reorganizing around new production prerogatives which necessitated new means of production and an altered relationship to them and each other. They have only belatedly and weakly begun to resist, mainly through attempts to revive some indigenous practices in a manner analogous to the North American back-to-the-land movement.

In this chapter, I summarize the present situation of Inuit with respect to production: the means by which work is accomplished, the manner in which producers work, and the disposition of production surplus to individual needs. I conclude with a discussion of the manner in which collective identity is being defined and manipulated, and how this relates to the CMP's agenda of domination in order to enhance the accumulation of wealth.

Production and reproduction in the late twentieth century

Although subsistence activities continue to play an important role in Inuit life, they have increasingly become an adjunct to, rather than the main source of livelihood. The state, the cooperative, the native political organizations, and their economic development corporations are now the major employers, but under very different terms and conditions.² It is interesting to note that employment practices of the Hudson's Bay Company have remained virtually unchanged from its first incursion into the North. A few Inuit are employed at every post in menial positions (as domestics, clerks and janitors) with only one ever having achieved managerial

² There are a few entrepreneurs attempting to establish private businesses in the North, usually with government grants, but this appears to be a negligible movement due to high capital and operating costs.

status.³ Other Inuit are linked with the economic practices of the HBC as simple commodity producers, selling raw pelts or stone carvings to the posts for consumption in the capitalist marketplace.

With the exception of Labrador where there are none, the co-op is the largest employer of aboriginal people in the private sector (ACL, 1990). Like the HBC, the greatest economic benefit the co-op provides to Inuit is through the purchase of cottage industry production, furs and stone carvings, especially the latter. In addition, and unlike the HBC, the co-op has organized producers into co-op-owned workshops (sewing, printmaking and weaving shops) in which materials, equipment and energy are provided as an expense to the co-op. Also unlike the HBC, the co-op has conferred managerial status upon Inuit, particularly in Quebec where, since 1967, all co-op managers have been Inuit residents of the community. In Part III of this thesis, I argued that real decision-making ability resides with non-native distribution agency managers and I shall not belabour the point here. The co-op also differs from the HBC in that it has, as I have also discussed in Part III, organized the delivery of community services: oil and gas sales, tourism, restaurant and hotel operations, movies, poolrooms and construction projects. Thus, a number of Inuit are employed in the provision of services to the native and non-native community. The largest and most widespread economic impact is, however, through the purchase, and re-sale in the

³ Quintin Finlay of the North West Company Inc., believes that Sam Crow at Sanikiluaq in the late-fifties was the only Inuk to ever fill the position of post manager (personal communication 25/01/92).

southern market, of handicraft production.

Although the co-op did not initiate simple commodity production of furs or handicraft (the HBC was there first), it did succeed in establishing the handicraft industry for Inuit. The Hudson's Bay Company, the Quebec Handicraft Guild and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development did the groundwork, but the co-operatives developed it into a million dollar cottage industry.

Indirectly, however, it is the state which is responsible for creating a "class" of simple commodity producers; for, again as I have discussed in Part III, the Eskimo co-operative was on the state agenda as a prelude to industrial development of the North. The state's main requirement was that it fulfil its legal obligations to the native people through the provision of the social welfare benefits available to all Canadians.

The state remains the largest single employer of Inuit but, in addition to the provision of a roster of menial jobs (as caretakers and domestics, clerks, translators, health care workers, court workers, *etc.*), employment is also available as social welfare officers, teachers (sometimes assistants), and police officers. In Quebec, hiring for these positions is now the responsibility of Kativik Regional Government and, in the NWT, it is the responsibility of hamlet councils.

The state has, of course, to achieve ends other than economic. The provision of employment to Inuit and the opportunity to rise in the hierarchy, from special constable status to police officer for instance, helps to legitimate activities in other spheres. Most Inuit have been organized as more or less

independent stone carvers, and some have been organized as less independent workshop employees (paid hourly or by the piece). Fewer still have been conscripted as socializers, assisting in the task of instructing their fellows in capitalist ideology and practice. Socialization into the dominant ideology is necessary to neutralize resistance. Children are taught appropriate practices from an early age, all the more compelling for being delivered in Inuktitut by Inuit teachers, and social control is mobilized at various levels of coercion in the form of social workers, police and courtworkers to compensate for the inevitable deficiencies in socialization. Indeed, the education system in the North has not achieved expected success due to the failure of the state to live up to capital's universal promise of "a job." As mentioned in the previous chapter, the drop-out rate is alarming and, as always happens when socialization fails, the need for social control is staggering. Lawlessness in small communities, many of only a few hundred people, is rampant, and serves as an ironic reversal of the days when Inuit lived, without governors or police, in a state of "natural" law. Although a native police force has been trained, there has been no diminishing role for the state police force which intervenes frequently in a situation which is more and more out of control.

Before leaving this discussion of contemporary production practices of Inuit, I shall mention briefly the continuity -- although increasingly jeopardized -- of subsistence activities which the state supports as a feature of land claims settlements. Some Inuit realize the irony of land claims settlements which,

supposedly, are to pave the way for northern development but which exclude Inuit from meaningful participation. As one Inuk (Mark, 1987) puts it:

La Convention de la Baie James nous confine à jamais dans ces rôles des chasseurs et de pêcheurs. Cela ne nous convient pas, nous voulons participer au développement de notre territoire...La Convention de la Baie James en nous définissant comme des chasseurs nous empêche de nous impliquer dans de nouveaux types d'activités économiques.

The Hunter Support Program and the Community Caribou Hunts sponsored by the Government of the NWT in which the cost of getting to caribou herds for organized community hunts is covered so that the meat can be made available to the community (Bone and Green, 1985:15), accomplish two things. First, they purport to be encouraging or, in the language of this thesis, reinforcing, non-capitalist practices. Secondly, they alleviate the drain on welfare money; for, given the lack of employment opportunities for Inuit, the state is obliged to compensate for the difference between earnings and what is required for reproduction on humanitarian (legitimation) grounds.

In capitalist societies, social welfare is necessary to ensure cheap labour or, as in the case of the Inuit, make up for the fact that their labour is not needed, and to neutralize resistance. This can be looked upon as a state subsidy to industry, or a cost of state legitimation, or as a drain on resources and an impediment to progress. In the CMP, welfare is not necessarily to "help" people, but to further the advancement of the CMP. It will be recalled that the elimination of welfare payments to Inuit was a driving force behind state projects for them. The conundrum is that because there is limited demand for Inuit

labour, the need for welfare is increasingly disproportionate to the benefits of Inuit reproduction. The state's dilemma was eloquently expressed by NWT legislator, Gordon Wray (chapter 18), who acknowledged the reality that there are no jobs for Inuit, nor can they be created. Uneducated, hence unskilled and undisciplined for the workforce, Inuit are of no use to industry, and the simple commodity production of pelts and stone is limited by market demand. As Wray so candidly put it: "There are no answers." An official in his government's Department of Economic Development and Tourism has, however, found what he thinks is an answer. His current plan is to employ Inuit in factories producing souvenirs, imitation carvings *etc.* He has said publicly that "the bottom line is to get more people producing more widgets faster." What is being set in motion here is the proletarianization of Inuit.

In the meantime, what they produce is called "art," important nationally for reasons I have detailed in Part III. Inuit are not at all important as producers of wealth. They *were* important as legal impediments to state/industry development of non-renewable resources. They remain important as guardians of Canadian arctic sovereignty and as a nationalistic symbol in a country which seeks to promote the romance of the original peoples living in harmony with nature.

Contemporary means of production

The only commodity Inuit produce is handicraft. Although the co-ops sometimes pay for gangs to procure carvingstone, which they then sell to carvers, for the most part, people continue to secure their own carving materials. It is generally

considered that the quarrying of stone is part of the work of carving, with serious (as opposed to "gas money") carvers seeking a particular type and size of stone in order to execute a carving they have in mind.

Similarly, carvers purchase their own tools from the local co-op or HBC store, fashioning their own implements when what they need is not available. Some order from catalogues provided by southern distributors. Relatively primitive tools are used, such as files and handsaws, although a few younger carvers are experimenting with power tools and new stone, some imported but some, such as marble, available locally. There is a feeling, nurtured by the wholesalers and dealers, that the use of power tools or other materials (*e.g.*, marble, alabaster) detracts from the quality of Eskimo sculpture, "primitiveness" being of promotional value.⁴ Although there is a new generation of carvers attempting to do contemporary work, Inuit art remains one of the most conservative of art forms, due to the constraints imposed by those who promote and market it. Without a ready market for new products, it is not likely that experimental production will take hold, except among the few who are more interested in artistic expression than conforming to "industry" standards.

Both carving materials and tools are owned by individual carvers, although when the co-op provides materials, even if they must be bought, there is some pressure to sell the finished piece to the co-op rather than the HBC or elsewhere.

⁴ It is interesting to note that the issue of materials is effectively separating art and commodity. While the co-op, which facilitates the production of the commodity, is compelled to dictate what materials are acceptable, a few independent artists who deal directly with galleries use all kinds of stone and tools in their work.

In the case of other forms of handicraft production, such as sewing and limited edition prints, the facilities, tools and materials are owned by the cooperatives which organize these workshop activities. In general, workshop producers are treated as employees with little worker control over the terms and conditions of work. Workshop employees do not bear the risks of simple commodity producers in terms of having to obtain or absorb the cost of wasted materials. They do not provide working space for themselves in already cramped living quarters, and they do not have to market their work. Conversely, they are mostly constrained to accept what the workshop organizers consider a fair price for their labour, usually measured in time rather than output, although this is variable. In Cape Dorset, however, where there is a very successful printmaking program, artists and artisans have, as I have discussed, succeeded in exerting some control over management and in securing a higher return for their work.

Subsistence activities in the late twentieth century rely heavily upon imported weapons and mechanized forms of transportation, with earlier modes such as dog teams and kayaks being used mainly in a recreational manner. The 1985 report prepared by Bone and Green for the Northern Economic Planning Directorate, provides data on the use of the snowmobile in the NWT which they refer to as "a key capital investment for hunters." This report needs to be looked at cautiously since it was based on information from a limited number of informants (only thirteen) in six communities in the Baffin Island Region and the

Mackenzie Valley.⁵

Snow machines are expensive and are usually purchased on credit since Inuit tend not to save or invest money. In the past, most hunters qualified for credit in the expectation that they would be thus enabled to bring the store manager what he needed to realize profits, a good harvest of wildlife pelts. But, as Bone and Green report (1985:9), most of their informants felt that when snowmobiles were first introduced, this changed in that the store manager based his decision as to whether or not to extend credit "on the past trapping performance of the hunter." Today, however, as they point out, a hunter has more sources of capital -- fur sales, carving income, wages and welfare -- and does not have to rely solely on credit from the HBC or Co-op:

In the Mackenzie Valley Region, the most important sources of capital are cash generated from trapping and funds obtained [from] government sources, especially the special ARDA⁶ program; in the Baffin Island Region, it is wage earnings, including income from carving.

Nonetheless, the Arctic environment -- cold weather and rough terrain -- and continuing poor maintenance practices mean that snow machines require replacement approximately every two years (because dependability is important,

⁵ The six communities were: Broughton Island, Cape Dorset, Fort Norman, Fort Rae, Frobisher Bay (Iqaluit) and Norman Wells (the latter two being "only peripherally involved" in a hunting/trapping economy). Only the first two are Inuit communities.

⁶ The Special Arda program for primary producing activities provides "one-time only" capital for the purchase of snowmobiles, sleds, boats, motors and other hunting equipment with the native purchaser providing part of the equity.

those who can afford to, replace them every season),⁷ but Bone and Green concluded from the responses of store managers, trappers and conservation officers, that "a trapper's fur sales are often insufficient to pay for a snowmobile every two years." Of course, as was pointed out to them (p.11), "there are few full-time trappers left and a large number of week-end/special occasion hunters."

Snow machines are considered private property although, as Bone and Green (p.16) report, "Other members of the family form a secondary user group."

Social relations of production and the disposition of surplus

Throughout this thesis, I have been describing movement towards an increasingly individual and competitive production process, a movement from cooperation and shared consumption among members of an extended family (perhaps numbering two dozen) towards the nuclear family as the unit of production and consumption of food produced or money earned. It is now time to analyze relations of production among contemporary Inuit to determine, specifically, whether or not they can be characterized as class relations and, consequently, to make a decision as to what has happened with the indigenous mode of production. Has it remained structurally unaltered, *i.e.*, classless, or has it been transformed by the CMP, the test of which would be the existence of two polarized classes? Or has it become something different?

The test of class relations is whether or not relations of inequality are

⁷ Older machines are kept for short trips or cannibalized for parts. People generally repair their own equipment (with help), ordering parts through the co-op or HBC (Bone and Green, 1985:14).

institutionalized, *i.e.*, whether or not the conditions of inequality are such that they can, and inevitably will, be reproduced. In the CMP, inequality refers to the creation by the working class of a surplus which accrues to the ruling capitalist class. In the case of Inuit who are uninvolved in industrial development, one source of surplus continues to be hunting and gathering. As we have seen, the practice in the indigenous mode of production was to share hunting and gathering surpluses, not out of altruism but as insurance and as the logical outcome of collective labour. Everyone who contributed to the hunt was entitled to a share, regardless of who made the kill.⁸

Anders noted as early as 1966 that sharing practices had broken down with the introduction of cash. Vallee, Usher and Balikci made similar observations. The practice of collective hunting and distribution of the spoils continues to some extent but, as the collective nature of production has been eroded, so, it appears, have the uncoded "rules" of sharing. What happens now is more akin to the practice of equal exchange within the capitalist mode of production, whereby one may perform a service or provide some object to a neighbour but, by an informal reckoning, one is then "owed" a service or object of equal value (which debt may not, as Bourdieu explains, be paid until after a suitable lapse of time or else it would be looked upon as a strictly economic transaction).

Although Bone and Green (1985) acknowledge that the structured

⁸ This practice is analogous to the practice in southern rural areas where groups of neighbours or friends form communal deer hunting parties and divide the kill evenly at the end of the season, regardless of who killed what.

questionnaire approach they used, not to mention the small sample, was inadequate to capture the complexities of sharing practices with regard to food or machinery (their particular interest), they consider that the data they collected indicates "a general weakening of the share ethic especially in the Baffin Island Region" (p.14). They conclude that "this shift over the past ten years or so" [since the mid-seventies] is not limited to larger centres, but "is also present in smaller so-called traditional communities." The range of responses they elicited indicate inconsistent practices with regard to sharing (one report, from Cape Dorset, was that country food is hidden). They were also told that people were exchanging country food for money, goods or services, with "almost all" such exchanges taking place within the extended family (such as an older man promising to share his catch with a nephew if the latter supplied the gas). They conclude that (p.15):

From various comments, sharing of food and other items continues as before, that is, if a friend or relative asks for some meat from a freshly killed animal, it is willingly given. In other cases, the exchange is more along lines of bartering where some financial/equipment support is provided before the hunt/fishing expedition takes place. The arrangement implies that the "backer" will receive some reward, i.e., some of the meat/fish.

Bone and Green speculate that the few wage earners would be in great demand as "backers" for subsistence activities. It is interesting to note their further observation (pp.14-15), that the sharing of caribou has been institutionalized among the Dene in Fort Norman and Fort Rae where caribou meat from hand-organized hunts is stored in community freezers and distributed according to need and demand. The co-ops also buy and sell country food.

With the advent of welfare and other state-sponsored programs, traditional food-sharing practices may continue to lose their rationale as insurance.

Previously, there was no alternative but to rely upon one's neighbours; now, there is an alternative in the form of the local welfare officer. Still in the realm of subsistence activities, the Bone and Green respondents indicated that snowmobiles are never shared outside the immediate family and use, even within the immediate family, is restricted (p.16). A snowmobile is used primarily by the hunter.

Bone and Green found that more people in Baffin than in the Mackenzie were, as they say (p.17) "off the sharing system" and this is hard to explain given the greater degree of acculturation in the Mackenzie and the different ethnic composition. It may indicate a self-conscious revival of past practices (in the same way that dog teams are being revived) in the Mackenzie as compared with the Baffin where traditional practices are less coherent because of an earlier stage of transformation. Or it may be merely a reflection of the small sample canvassed by Bone and Green.

With reference to simple commodity production, tools are privately owned and not shared although, as is the case with subsistence hunting, when stone is collectively quarried, all participating are entitled to share. The compensation received when carvings are sold is, however, retained for use by the carver and his/her immediate family, the members of which usually contribute labour power to each stage of the process. Sharing practices are thus commensurate with the unit of production which is now the nuclear family. Similarly, wages earned in

employment with the co-op, the state, private enterprise, or development corporations *etc.*, are retained for use by the employee.

An interesting question is what happens to surpluses generated within the new corporate structure. In the co-op, surpluses are supposed to be returned to the members in the form of patronage dividends, but as I have discussed, given the severe under-capitalization of the co-ops, this has rarely happened.⁹ The surpluses generated within the co-op system have been small (due to philosophy for one thing), and are needed to finance operations.

The development corporations, on the other hand, exist to make profits which are, theoretically, to benefit Inuit, all of whom are *de facto* shareholders. So far, the development corporations in northern Canada have not been particularly profitable, but when they are, profits are not used to issue a shareholder's dividend. Instead, they are reinvested in subsidiary operations, or invested in money markets, with any gains being added to the heritage fund (referred to as "beneficiaries" equity in annual reports). This is a pool of capital treated in a collective manner, and thus does not lend itself to individual payments to individual Inuit" (Makivik, 1992).¹⁰ Heritage funds are "donated" to "various groups who request money for community activities." In the last two years, Makivik spent approximately \$15 million to build arenas and community centres in

⁹ Although few co-ops have been able to allocate dividends, in 1989, Arctic Cooperatives Limited made record sales of \$37 million and net earnings of \$1.7 million. A patronage dividend to the member co-ops of \$1.395 million was allocated (ACL, 1990).

¹⁰ "The total beneficiaries' equity for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1991 was \$126,934,159" (Makivik, 1992).

all communities in Nunavik.¹¹ As Makivik information officer, S. Hendrie, says: "The point of course is that Makivik is unlike most corporations in that it goes about building arenas and community centres, making donations, *etc.*, for the population, while tending to the bottom line as well."

But more important than the sharing of cash profits is the discrepancy in peoples' abilities to benefit from the terms and conditions under which the new corporations operate. As Davidi Mark put it (1987:5), in the past Inuit shared the fruits of the hunt:

Mais avec la Convention et les nouvelles structures mises en place il y a, d'abord, ceux que les comprennent et qui peuvent s'en servir à leur profit, puis, ceux qui ne les comprennent pas (qui ne parlent pas anglais, par exemple) et qui seront toujours au service des premiers. Il y aura des Inuit riches et des Inuit pauvres.

He referred to the creation of an "élite autochtone qui se servira, à son profit personnel, des nouvelles structures mises en place par la Convention" rather than being elected by democratic vote. The notion of private property and reward for individual effort is now well entrenched. Pre-contact practices have been wholly transformed, and any non-capitalist practices which persist do so with a new rationale. When pre-contact practices are resorted to "for their own sake," it indicates a nostalgic desire to recreate the past, and should not be taken as an indication that pre-contact practices retain their original rationale.

In chapter one, I discussed the major class frameworks and concluded, on the basis of logic and my knowledge and preliminary analysis of the Inuit case,

¹¹ Such "donations" are treated as operating expenses in Makivik's financial statements (Makivik, 1992).

that the class argument posited by Erik Olin Wright was most relevant to the Inuit case. To summarize briefly, Wright argues that, at the concrete level, class relations are determined by the degree of control over the physical means of production, labour power and investments, and resource allocation. And, when decisions along these lines are unclear, actual classes may be identified on the basis of immediate (wages, living conditions, ethnic discrimination) and fundamental interests. This latter proviso makes it possible to immediately identify the majority of Inuit as members of the working class, but this, it seems to me, amounts to an allocation on the basis of descriptive criteria. I would prefer to make an argument based on the more rigorous criteria of control, *i.e.*, power over the disposition of means of production, labour and resources.

Within the present spectrum of Inuit relations, we have producers who also are involved in subsistence activities, who own and control their means of production, who exert some degree of control over their labour and who, theoretically, have control, on a one member one vote basis, over allocation of resources through the co-op. In Wright's language, they are "semi-autonomous." They can, I believe, be considered simple commodity producers, like the co-op itself, an intermediate stage in the transition to fully capitalist relations, although simple commodity production may continue, as Chevalier (1982) says, as a structured feature of the CMP.¹²

¹² It seems that, in Wright's framework, simple commodity production would be considered a mode of production in its own right, in an intermediate position between the indigenous and the capitalist modes, although this is not clear. He writes at times as if simple commodity production is *always* part of the CMP. I prefer Chevalier's argument (1982) that simple commodity production

It is evident that with the introduction of development corporations, the co-op has become a marginalized institution. Its perseverance has been mainly due to its involvement in Inuit art, considered a "national treasure, but, in the past few years, it has lost ground even there to private wholesalers and dealers who are making contractual arrangements directly with artists. When it has lost that *raison d'être*, there will be little rationale left for the co-op, although it may, as happens in non-Inuit Canada, be revived from time to time as a form of resistance to capitalism, a weak form since it is, of necessity, enmeshed in capitalist practices.¹³

It is with reference to the relations spawned and sustained by the development corporations that we can, I think, begin to speak properly of Inuit involvement in class relations. The development corporations are the vehicles which perpetuate an Inuit ruling class,¹⁴ but not one that has a power source of its own. The original capital comes from the state. We can say, therefore, that the state created a ruling class which facilitated industrial development of the

may or may not be part of the CMP. One way or the other, it is a transitional state. Inuit simple commodity production is not now a form of resistance. As facilitated by the co-op, it is state-organized and, in the case of the HBC, it is accommodating private sector needs.

¹³ The co-op's fortunes are also dependent upon state support. ACL announced in 1991 that "growth in 1990 was unparalleled in the thirty year history of the northern co-operatives," but this is undoubtedly due to an infusion of state capital administered through the NWTCBDF established in 1986. The state continues to play banker for the co-ops.

¹⁴ Feldman makes the point (1976:164) that the criterion for class formation is whether the relationship can be perpetuated: "...if the mechanisms for reproduction are weak, economic differences have not yet succeeded in creating a social order based on class. To the extent that they already exist one can say that there is an incipient class system." At this point, the Inuit ruling class is elected, not perpetuated through inheritance nor claim to large accumulated capital. It is the position, not the incumbents that is important, and, as Abele and Stasiulis write (1989:269): "It cannot be assumed that class dynamics and conflict are non-existent just because the language and politics of class are absent, as occurs for many Native and ethnic minority movements..."

North. This dependent "ruling class" assisted state/industry to dispossess all Inuit of their land, and it now controls the capital paid by the state to all Inuit (indirectly) as compensation for dispossession.

Although the development corporations are becoming increasingly important as employers of Inuit, their main significance is that they control resource allocation *and* that their economic control is combined with political control. I suggest, then, that what has occurred is an incorporation of Inuit into the Canadian class structure, but it is an *unequal* incorporation because the capital controlled by the ruling class is not self generated, and because, as I argue in the following chapter, of their inferior ethnic status which acts as a check to its involvement in mainstream industrial development and meaningful involvement at the political level. Political-economic organizations established by land claims settlements have much the same effect as the co-ops in that they are keeping natives out of the way. Inuit can own airlines and operate shrimp fisheries, restaurants and construction projects. They continue to be excluded from hydrocarbon exploitation and constitutional forums.

Although Inuit have long been frustrated by their lack of real involvement in mainstream politics, a phenomenon of the seventies was the creation of native members of the NWT legislative assembly, and MPs in the House of Commons, as well as the appointment of the first Inuk to the Senate. Some Inuit, like Nellie Cournoyea and Tagak Curley, were given portfolios in the territorial government, and Cournoyea is now government leader. We are witnessing the emergence of

what, following Rolf Knight (1978) we might call an "ethnic bourgeoisie." Knight was referring to "an Indian administrative middle-class," but his term captures very well the secondary status of the Inuit ruling class. Diebel (1984) quoted Charlie Watt (who at 39 years of age was Canada's youngest senator), concerning the exclusion of a hard-won native rights clause from the constitutional agreement signed by the federal government and nine provinces in November 1981. Watt noted that "Inuit had been alone among native people in supporting Trudeau's patriation proposal," and added: "What can I say? We've been sold down the drain. It's a hell of a mess...Ten years of fighting gone down the drain."

There was never, as I argued in Part III, a coherent plan for the North, let alone an agenda, but one can be retrospectively reconstructed as it is revealed through an analysis of the many decisions and actions taken -- as initiative and response -- by the state and industry. These decisions and actions are governed by a logic which converts raw material and human labour into concentrated wealth. The development corporation is a logical outcome in that process. It does not function to assist the state in the accumulation of wealth, although it does this indirectly, but to assist the state in achieving legitimation. The development corporation is a poor cousin to the national and multinational corporation. Denied the right and the capital to exploit non-renewable resources, it is certain that it will not impede the state's project of facilitating the accumulation of ever more concentrated wealth.

The development corporation is merely a recasting of the cooperative

solution, involving Inuit in non-competitive economic activity, and thwarting incipient resistance. Inuit wanted equality with other Canadians, but the means have not been at their disposal to compete. They could only be absorbed or defeated. The co-op served the purpose of securing legitimation for state projects and enabling it to meet its legal obligations, as well as inadvertently providing the state with a national icon in the form of "Inuit art," but as a collective organization, it had the potential of mounting an effective, ethnically based resistance to the advance of capital. It is no coincidence that the first agreement between Inuit and state/industry was signed in Quebec where the co-op had begun to realize its potential as an instrument of resistance. I have argued that, just as the co-op was always a sham organization -- not developed *by* the people but *for* them - so, too, is the development corporation a sham. The capital it uses comes from the state and the corporation has only administrative power. Similarly, although Kativik Regional Government has jurisdiction over social services, policing and housing, it is merely administering provincial programs.

Duplicating the essential practice of the CMP, the native development corporation has enabled a few Inuit to become both powerful and wealthy. It has not, however, appreciably bettered the lot of the average Inuk. Although native beneficiaries of land claims agreements become shareholders in the corporations, they do not, as is the typical case in corporations, contribute capital directly, although it could be argued that they do so indirectly, in the form of the money they are legally entitled to receive as compensation for abandoning their rights to

the land and its resources. This capital, coming from the state, by-passes them completely and they have no choice over its disposition. By law, the capital the state pays over goes to (press releases say "is channelled through") the development corporations. Since the land retained under JBNQ can only be sold to the Quebec government, it cannot be considered capital. The corporation is, therefore, like the co-op, a form of state property, funded by state capital. The major difference is that, instead of being constituted as equal members which control hired management through the election of local boards of directors, Inuit are now shareholders, controlled until 1989 by an appointed executive, now elected.

Transformation of the indigenous mode of production

I have been suggesting that the indigenous mode of production contained the seeds of its own destruction, or transformation into another mode of production, in this case, the capitalist mode of production. Can Inuit producers be reclassified as belonging to a new mode of production, one characterized by a ruling and a working class, and with forces and practices of production aligned in such a manner that these classes will be reproduced? In his study of east coast fisheries, Clement (1986:63) concludes:

...to experience proletarianization means that direct producers can retain possession of their means of realizing their labour (and formal ownership of the means of production) yet lose real economic control (over the use to which the means of production will be put and disposing of their products).

Clearly, co-op and HBC activities support a simple commodity producing class, or fraction, which is being reproduced. Simple commodity producers own and

control their physical means of production and they are in charge of their own labour, producing when they want although, in the case of carving, subject to some constraints as to *what* and *how* they will produce.¹⁵ Inuit carvers work more or less in isolation, although there is some effort to organize themselves around mutual concerns.

As Clement (1986:67) puts it: "To the extent that commodity producers are subordinated they are no longer 'independent.'" Losing some of the rights of property, they, are, rather "dependent" commodity producers which only indicates, as he says, "directions or tendencies within a process" [of proletarianization]. The promotion of "dependent commodity production rather than proletarian production," enables, capital to:

...ensure supplies of product yet free itself from the risks of weather, natural disaster, or stock depletion, the need to invest (without guaranteed returns through interest) in the first stages of production, and, most important, the requirement of supervising labour.

Like east coast fishermen, Inuit "may not operate under formal subordination, but capital has achieved real subordination over them through control over the products of their labour and over the sources of capital, equipment, and supplies" (Clement, 1986:73).

Subsistence hunting and gathering, once the main economic activity, still takes place within the extended family, although some individuals go out on short and solitary forays. Subsistence activities have become an "adjunct" to

¹⁵ This is not as much of a constraint as it is with indigenous artists elsewhere who are told exactly what and how much to produce and punished for exercising any discretion at all.

employment and simple commodity production and are sometimes subsidized by the state as an alternative to welfare. As employers, both the co-op and the HBC -- one a collective, and the other owned by private capital -- compel people to sell their labour power, thus relinquishing all control over physical means of production and their own labour power. The co-op, being collectively owned, does not support an institutionalized ruling class, although as I have argued, it *does* support disparities in relative wealth and power. The HBC, recently renamed "The North West Company Inc.," is owned by southern capital, and shifts in relationships and the transfer of value occasioned by HBC employment of Inuit takes place *across* modes of production.

Inuit have many interests in common with the working class, and we can begin to talk about Inuit participation in the ruling class as one effect of the institution of development corporations. There is, within the political structures available to Inuit and the development corporation, an element or "class" which controls labour, means of production, allocation of resources and investments *in alliance* with an outside ruling class although, as I argue in the next chapter, *because* they are Inuit, it is an unequal alliance. All Inuit are shareholders in the development corporations, but a class of people is benefitting disproportionately. They do not *own* the corporations, but they *control* them.

Clearly, the indigenous mode of production has been altered. The question is the relationship of Inuit to the dominant capitalist mode. Subsistence practices continue, but in an altered form. Some simple commodity producers sell directly

to the capitalist market and others are mediated through the co-ops. But, as "citizens," Inuit are shareholders in development corporations they do not control. They have formal ownership only, while others exert real control.¹⁶ Some Inuit are also wage workers, employed by the co-op, capital and the state, and some have become dependent upon state transfer payments. So, while some non-capitalist practices persist, they are dominated by and subject to capitalist practices which involve opposing classes.

To answer another question posited in chapter one: "Is capital homologous?" I would suggest that it is, to purloin a phrase from Foster Carter, a "deformed progeny" because of its strategy of creating an indigenous working class and constraining, as I discuss in the next chapter, its effectiveness by diluting resistance. The indigenous mode of production exists as the result of a particular balance between communal and capitalist practices, which is the meaning of the phrase "contained the seeds of its own destruction." That balance has been tipped, I believe decisively, in favour of the capitalist mode of production.

¹⁶ Poulantzas (1975:169) distinguished between economic ownership or real control of the means of production (ability to assign ends and dispose of products) and possession (or the capacity to put means of production into operation).

Chapter Twenty

A Drive for Ethno-Regional Rights: Resistance and Containment

Paradoxically, while economic activity and the compensation received for it are becoming more individualized, there has developed over the last ten years a definite sense of collective identity which is being expressed in a movement for ethno-regional rights. Rejecting the "two founding nations myth," Inuit Tapirisat of Canada's position is that:

Inuit have certain collective rights under international law because colonization has violated the right of Inuit to govern themselves and their lands. Colonization is recognized by the international community as a serious violation of the right of peoples to self-determination. Inuit are entitled to assert this right of self-determination within Canada and to have it recognized in the Constitution (ITC, 1991:12).

Demanding recognition of "a third order of government, composed of indigenous nations and governments in Canada," ITC is calling for official recognition of aboriginal languages, creation of Nunavut, representation of aboriginal people in constitutional forums and First Ministers conferences and the constitutional entrenchment of "a free-standing right of aboriginal peoples to self-government."

Unlike Canadian Indians, Inuit have no tradition of collective action. Their strong emotional attachment to the land provides, however, a nationalistic rallying point. As Silas Cookie said at the February 1970 meeting in Great Whale River (Laurence, 1970:2):

First of all, we must take our own land in our own hands. After we have a real hold on our land it would be like we start to build our own house. The Eskimo land should not be run by the white man, but should be run by the Eskimos.

The land is the main issue for the state as well. As Cookie put it (p.27): "The reason the Quebec government is so interested is because they want the land and the wealth contained in it." The sentiments expressed by Inuit in Great Whale River in 1970 continue to be heard. The following comments were extracted from an article in a Makivik corporation publication (Jararuse, 1984:23-24):

I'd like to see Inuit able to make their own decisions and make policies and forget white policies. This is why we should form a new government. I think white government policies will destroy Inuit as they already have in many ways.

...it is still not known how the new government will be set, but Inuit will run it our own way.

...Inuit are not trying to be part of the Quebec or federal governments. We must control our own land because if we are controlled by white rules, things will only become worse.

Statements being made by Inuit indicate a desire for more autonomy than is likely to be easily realized. It is not clear what Inuit understand by self-government.

The Nunavut Constitutional Forum, created in 1982 to represent the interests of predominantly Inuit residents, appears to be advocating an Inuit dominated government, in spite of its chairman's 1984 statement that "the Nunavut concept is of an ethnically open government" (GNWT, 1984:7).¹

Inuit and bureaucrats do not, at this time, have a shared understanding of what is meant by "self-government," which some spokespersons seem to be

¹ There would, however, be a residency requirement and, since most residents are Inuit, they would have effective control at this time.

equating with nationhood, a proposition not likely to be tolerated within Canadian federation. A statement from the GNWT (1976:35) makes this clear:

To speak of "our political right to self-determination, to self-government, through institutions of our own choosing" and for recognition "as a People and as a Nation," and at the same time to wistfully claim membership in Confederation is, put quite simply, a contradiction.

To a certain extent, the state is able to tolerate ethno-movements which, ever seeking legitimation, it seeks to contain rather than quash. Containment of Inuit "nationalism" takes the form of involving Inuit in mainstream politics, settling land claims for cash and other benefits, and involving natives in wildlife agreements and other areas of policy making. The key is containment, and if native resistance goes too far, the state responds with coercive measures as it did in Oka in 1990, and as it did in the little-known "Baker Lake Affair" which I discuss below.²

Containment by the state

As MP Thomas Suluk admitted in 1984 (Myers, 1984b): "Where we are now is that we have created so many organizations, all funded by the federal government. We have too many chiefs and not enough Indians." The state's project of containment is assisted by an indigenous ruling class. Just as the premier of Quebec must steer a tricky course between his constituency and international industrialists, so too, must the Inuit "ruling class" chart a course between Inuit

² The Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs announced in August 1988 (DIAND, 1988d:4) that "Canada is the only country in the world that gives constitutional recognition to treaty and aboriginal rights," but this is becoming something of a mockery, considering the armed resistance of the Mohawk at Oka to the take-over of their land for the expansion of a golf course, and threats of violence from the Alberta Lubicon protesting the expropriation of their hunting territory by Shell Oil and other multinationals in collusion with the province of Alberta and the federal state.

demands for rights and non-native interests. These interests are channelled by the state which supports the Inuit ruling class in a position of relative power. The dilemma of a dependent ruling class was poignantly expressed by Thomas Suluk, the only Inuk Minister of Parliament in 1985, who was reported to have said that he "fears he is being swallowed in the swirl of federal and party politics" (in Smith, 1985). "I have been forced to adopt the ways of the dominant society in every sense of the word. I battled my fellow Inuit for the right to speak for them and in so doing I alienated many of them," he said.

As I have argued, the state created an indigenous ruling class to help it accomplish its project of appropriating the forces of production. Although it is provided with some of the trappings of autonomy and equality, the indigenous ruling class is neither autonomous nor equal. One of the ways in which the *appearance* of equality is fostered is through the involvement of Inuit in mainstream political structures which began to happen only in the late-seventies. Many Inuit now hold ministerial posts in the GNWT. On the federal level, although Inuit did not gain the right to vote until 1962, there are now a few Inuit MPs. Vallee, Smith and Cooper (1984:70) examined the reports of the chief electoral officer for Canada for five territorial and five federal elections between 1965 and 1980 and found that:

Despite the great numerical superiority of the Inuit in the Arctic parts of the Northwest Territories, not one had run for federal office before 1979, when Peter Ittinuar won the federal seat of Nunatsiaq,³ defeating two

³ The electoral riding of Nunatsiaq in the eastern Arctic was created in 1976.

other candidates of Inuit origin.

A phenomenon of the eighties was the creation of Inuit senators, and in 1983, the Constitutional Accord on Aboriginal rights was signed on behalf of the Inuit Committee on National issues by Charlie Watt, one of the chief signatories to the JBNQ.

Domination is economic, political, and ideological, and if it is to be effective, Inuit resistance must be manifested in all these areas. But as we have seen, the economic and political structures available to Inuit are state dominated. Until recently, Inuit have also tended to support the dominant ideology. An interesting example is with regard to the sovereignty issue. As we have seen, the need to assert sovereignty is a major factor supporting a Canadian presence in the Arctic. An article entitled "Canadian Sovereignty and the *Polar Sea*" in a now defunct magazine published by Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, *Ookpik: The Bulletin of the Arctic Society* (ITC, 1985) provided a rare Inuit perspective on Canada's sovereignty problems. Although Inuit believed they had been providing "effective use and occupancy" of the Northwest Passage which, frozen for 10 months of the year, is used as "an extension of the land," ITC, nonetheless, issued a press release July 2, 1985 asking that the Canadian government take "an appropriate stand" on the Polar Sea incident "in order to safeguard the interests of Inuit and assert Canadian sovereignty in the north" (p.4). Inuit were, reportedly, frustrated at the "anaemic response" mounted by Canada and, taking matters into their own hands, two Inuit flew with representatives of the Council of Canadians, across the

Beaufort Sea to drop letters of protest aboard the *Polar Sea*.

The irony is that Inuit were now *demanding* that the state do what it had every intention of doing anyhow. Unwittingly, they played a role in legitimating the state's project of laying claim to the Arctic. The ITC press release also legitimized the land claim process. The concern expressed in the 1985 article was that a threat to Canadian sovereignty in the passage would jeopardize Inuit land claims to offshore interests. The editors observe (p.3):

Inuit of the Canadian Arctic are a maritime people: virtually every Inuit community, but one, is situated next to the sea. Their community life, economy and culture are deeply intertwined with the living that they draw from the sea...So it is not surprising that plans to convert the Northwest Passage into a thorough-fare for the year-round shipment of oil and gas have, traditionally, met with suspicion and apprehension -- if not outright protest -- by Inuit.

With unintentional irony, they state further (p.4):

But beyond concerns for the protection of their livelihood and environment, Inuit were concerned, as Canadian citizens, that the failure of their government to take a strong stand on the Polar Sea incident would constitute an "abdication of responsibility" towards themselves and Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

ITC's press release, referred to in the 1985 article (p.4) also made reference to the great sacrifices some Inuit had made in support of Canadian sovereignty in being relocated:

Inuit are no strangers to the question of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. In the 1950s, Inuit from Northern Quebec were relocated a thousand miles further north to Grise Fiord by the federal government in order to reinforce Canada's claim to the High Arctic...those Inuit sacrificed a great deal for Canadian Sovereignty...Inuit have unceasingly supported Canadian claims to sovereignty in the Arctic, and Canada has made full use of Inuit recognition of Canadian sovereignty in asserting jurisdiction over the

Northwest Passage.⁴

The ITC article protests the "use it or lose it" mentality of developers (p.4) which advocates more oil rigs and international shipping agreements as the best means to ensure sovereignty, an attitude which "perplexed Inuit, for it flew in the face of what they believed -- and still believe -- to be a historic Canadian claim to sovereignty based on their own 'effective use and occupancy of the passage.'" The real dilemma for Inuit is that Canadian sovereignty over the North is required so that private enterprise can enhance profits, and that sovereignty has to be internationally recognized. As Joe Clark, then secretary of state for external affairs, noted in a 1987 speech to the Vancouver Board of Trade: "Canada is faced with only one pure sovereignty issue of truly major proportions, the status of international law of the waters of the Arctic Archipelago." Also, as Blondin notes was "highlighted" in a Canadian Institute of International Affairs report: "Peaceful use and occupancy of Canada's North is the strongest expression of Canadian Arctic sovereignty" (Blondin, 1988:6).⁵ This is an aspiration which continues to be supported by Inuit. As Amagoalik recently wrote (Nortext, 1989): "Canadian sovereignty is a big concern for the Inuit of Canada." Canadian sovereignty over

⁴ The resentment of Inuit over this relocation has resulted in demands for compensation and recognition.

⁵ It seems to be difficult for Canada to maintain a strong sovereign position vis à vis the United States. As reported in the *Ottawa Citizen* (September 6, 1990:A12): "The federal cabinet has passed an order exempting the U.S. icebreaker *Polar Sea* from Canadian pollution regulations during a proposed voyage through the Northwest Passage this month."

the Arctic has not only to be recognized, but has legally to be *ceded* by Inuit.

The present drive for self-government may, I think, be viewed as an attempt to recapture some of the rights being extinguished by land claims settlements, trying to take back with one hand what is being given with the other. Indeed, the extinguishment clause in land claims agreements is becoming a focus of opposition for native people and their supporters. An editorial in *Northern Perspectives* (CARC, 1985:8) pointed out the absurdity of sitting down at the constitutional table to entrench and expand aboriginal rights and then moving over to the land claims table to sign them away forever.

Various ministers of IAND have made many public announcements to the effect that the Canadian state fully supports self-government for the aboriginal people. As McKnight said (DIAND, 1988d): "Nothing has a higher priority for me or my department. Establishing self-government is a cornerstone of our policy and the focus of our attention." As I have suggested, however, much hinges on the understanding of the term "self government." There is evidence to suggest that the aboriginal people's understanding of the concept exceeds the boundaries of interpretation which the Canadian state can tolerate, as is clear from an incident which occurred in Baker Lake in the late-seventies, after the land claims process had begun.

Self-Government: The Baker Lake affair, co-optation bordering on coercion

In a nutshell, the Baker Lake Affair involved cancellation by the commissioner of the NWT of a workshop on self-government because of the fear that the

workshop organizers were conveying the idea that "an ethnic state" was a real possibility (deputy commissioner John Parker in a CBC interview reproduced in Stiles, 1979:30). As expressed in a letter from Commissioner Hodgson to members of the Research and Development Division, Department of Local Government (april 22, 1977, in Stiles, 1979:31):

...this Administration does not believe that aboriginal people or any other racial or ethnic group in Canada should have the right to form its own constitutional political jurisdiction or racial political unit, as these are incompatible with our constitution, particularly with universal franchise...As political units along racial lines involve denial of minority political rights, their advocacy or development are not supported by this Government or any of its policies or programs. As aboriginal political self-determination represents an ethnic political unit rather than a geographically defined political unit, this government does not support this basic feature of political self-determination. In Canada, political units are defined geographically, and in any political unit all residents have equal political rights without regard to race, colour or religion.

Stiles, a contracted academic, considered that this memo "had obviously been sanctioned by the highest offices in the country." The section quoted here, dealing with the right of aboriginal people to political self-determination "contained," he charges (*pp.*31-32) "the same careful sophistry used by the Prime Minister to counter Quebec nationalism" and:

...the section continued with a series of quotes from Trudeau, quotes which rejected all notions of self-determination based solely on ethnicity whether it concerned Quebecois or "certain Eskimos who want a nation of Inuit or certain Indians who want a nation."

The Baker Lake Affair prompted a liaison between Inuit Tapirisat leader, John Amagoalik and the leader of the Dene Nation, George Erasmus. Together they accused the Government of maliciously misinterpreting their land claim positions

by equating their demands for political self-determination with ethnic exclusivity" (p.34). Amagoalik stated in a CBC radio interview (April 26, 1977, in Stiles:34) that:

...in seeking the establishment of a new political jurisdiction north of the tree line, his people were attempting only to gain a measure of equality with those in the south of English and French extraction. He denounced accusations that white people would be denied democratic rights in the new territory if Inuit were to impose a required residency requirement, the transient, highly aggressive, non-native minority would dominate northern government.

Erasmus was even more outspoken, saying:

As to any suggestion that the Dene are an "ethnic group," we reject that as being absurd. The Dene are a Nation. Ethnic groups are immigrants that have left their own homeland. The non-Dene minority of the Northwest Territories constitute the true ethnic group of the north -- they have left their homeland and are now living in our homeland.

It is probably not a coincidence that in the spring of 1977 native people were told to remove "all demands of a political nature" from land claim proposals (Stiles:39). In that year, as well, a special commission of inquiry into the political future of the NWT was appointed, headed by former civil servant, Bud Drury (Stiles, 1979:39).

The peremptory cancelling of the Baker Lake workshop was merely a glitch in the peaceful invasion of the state which is being legitimated by the settling of land claims. A speech given by the Minister of IAND (Cadieux) to the Inuit Circumpolar Conference July 24, 1989 (DIAND, 1989d:3-4) put the settlement of land claims at the top of the list of objectives of the Northern Political and Economic Framework, the others being devolution of political power to the North (the decentralization strategy and not to do with conferring political power upon

Inuit); the development of sustainable northern economies and, bound to be included on any such agenda, "confirmation of Canada's sovereignty throughout our northern territories." We are told elsewhere (DIAND, 1989h:1) that the Northern Political and Economic Policy Framework "has as its fundamental goal the strengthening of political and economic institutions in Yukon and the Northwest Territories (N.W.T) within the Canadian federation." There are to be no ethnic states.

"Devolution" of DIAND, which would mean the transfer of "provincial-type responsibilities still held by the federal government" to the GNWT, has long been a goal. But successful devolution could be fatal for native organizations dependent upon state funding such as Inuit Tapirisat, the Native Council of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations, not to mention the native development corporations. Devolution means that native affairs would be parcelled out to other departments, as happened in Quebec and, a likely scenario the natives fear, is that they would receive shorter shrift than they now do from Indian Affairs and Northern Development.⁶

Inuit resistance

After an appearance at the James Bay Court hearing in Quebec city, Thomassie Kudluk from Payne Bay reported:

I started by saying that the Inuit and white people are different. The Inuit

⁶ In 1979, the president of Inuit Tapirisat had strong words to say about the involvement of the NWT government in land claims negotiations. They had, he said, "no right whatsoever" to take part, adding, "It seems to us as if our interests come third after the federal government and the NWT agree on what they're prepared to give us" (ITC, 1979a:5).

live on animals only, which run away from them. The white man lives mostly on vegetables which do not run away. This is one way, I said, we are different. If, I said, the rivers are blocked, the animals I live on will disappear forever. I told him that I was very mad at the proposal to block the rivers without telling me, for this is my land. How would he like it, I asked, if the Inuit were to destroy the small piece of land where the whiteman was growing his food?...

I told him that the Inuit does not destroy the white man's land, and even when he goes there he can't be free to look around where he wants. He can only walk on the roads and sidewalks, but when the white man comes to our country he feels free to roam wherever he likes...Although the Inuit have not resisted until now, this project is too much to ignore, I said. It will destroy so much the Inuit depend on...

Inuit people who talk against the white man will undoubtedly be supported by all the Inuit, for they speak for all the Inuit in the world.

I was going to say to the Big Boss, should the white people live in the light while the Inuit perish? I was going to say this to him. I wanted to talk back and forth to him like men do. I'm still upset about that meeting. (in Northern Quebec Inuit Association, 1974:15).

There are three modes of resistance being exercised by Inuit: (1) non-confrontational, by which I mean efforts to conserve language and folkways (2) confrontational, which includes public protest, a seldom used mode of resistance, but one which has the potential of escalating when other modes fail, and (3) politically organized resistance, in which I include land claim negotiations and regional, national and international pan-Eskimo movements. The latter has been the typical strategy of Inuit leaders in response to a perceived sense of increasing powerlessness. Finally, there is the structural resistance of one mode of production to subsumption by another when capitalist and non-capitalist practices clash and struggle for dominance. This last mode of resistance will be discussed in the concluding chapter of the thesis; here, I deal with the more concrete and

conscious strategies of resistance.

Non-confrontational resistance: In an effort to recapture a feeling of independence and to preserve past practices, there has been a virtually universal back-to-the-land movement among Inuit, beginning in the early to mid-seventies. The "land" has become an icon for the younger generation of town-bred Inuit who try, with varying degrees of success, to revive the use of dog teams, kayaks and skin clothing. Elders, who have one foot in both worlds, are accomplices in this project, exerting efforts to record Inuit oral history and to pass on hunting, domestic and artisanal skills to the young before they are lost forever. As well as summer camping on the land, new communities continue to spring up at old campsites but, significantly, when people go back to the land, they want a store, a school, three bedroom bungalows and medical services because they now *need* those things. It should be noted that back-to-the-land movements are a form of resistance that facilitates capital in that they reduce the costs of maintaining the population, as does the continuing reliance of Inuit on country food. Usher (1982:443) has demonstrated that "country food production contributes hundreds and perhaps thousands of dollars to real per capita income."

Cultural associations are a phenomenon of the late-seventies. The Inuit Cultural Institute (ICI) has undertaken to collect and publish legends and knowledge from elders in an effort to preserve Inuit culture. It is also exercising stewardship over the Eskimo language. A Language Commission has been established to standardize the two writing systems (Roman orthography and the

syllabic system taught by the missionaries). The Torngâsok Cultural Association in Labrador and, in northern Quebec, the Avataq Cultural Institute, have similar objectives. There is also a movement, sponsored by regional cultural associations such as Avataq and ICI, to establish museums in Inuit communities to preserve and exhibit Inuit artifacts.

Language is an important indicator of cultural preservation and, more and more, daily affairs are conducted in English. Inuit in the western Arctic no longer use their mother tongue, and the variety of dialects across thousands of miles makes communication, hence solidarity, difficult. The missionaries and federal school teachers prohibited the speaking of Inuktitut in the schools. William Anderson III, first president of the Labrador Inuit Association, tells of being punished for speaking his mother tongue (1990:4), and suggests an appropriate form of redress:

Twenty-five years ago, the dominant society did not see this as wrong. In recent years, nearly all kablunaks who hear this story agree that *was* wrong. But so far, very, very few have agreed with me that the way in which this wrongdoing should be put right is to make Inuktitut an official language of northern Labrador and the language of instruction in our schools.

Efforts to halt the erosion of Inuktitut pale beside such powerful weapons of acculturation as radio and television, a major innovation in the seventies made possible by the launching of satellite Anik A in 1973. Previously, the only forms of communication were controlled by the missions, the HBC, and the police who kept in touch with headquarters and each other by means of single side-band radio transmitters/receivers. In the mid-fifties, the CBC initiated a short wave

"northern service" broadcast in several languages, including some Inuktitut, which received an indifferent response. In communities of 500 or more, the CBC also set up local radio stations to access regular programming during certain hours. In smaller communities, the Government of the Northwest Territories provides radio and television satellite equipment and, in northern Quebec, Taqramuit Nipingat Inc (TNI) oversees locally owned and operated radio stations. In 1974, NQIA published *The Northerners*, a compilation of statements from Inuit throughout northern Quebec designed to convince people of the need for Inuktitut radio. It is hard to appreciate how restricted sources of information were. As Peter Inukpuk of Inukjuak said (NQIA, 1974:112):

We need information, masses of it. We need it in our own language. We need information about how the white man's culture functions. We need to have that information spread throughout our communities and not held by the same three or four who always attend meetings outside our home communities.

And Paulusie Padlayat of Sugluk pointed out (NQIA, 1984:118):

The only way that information comes to our land is through gossip. We never hear about anything until someone gets off a plane and tells us what will be done next.

Although television has been available in the North for less than a decade, most houses have a set which remains on most of the day as a backdrop to everyday life. At a Canadian Radio and Television Corporation (CRTC) public hearing December 1, 1982, Rosemarie Kuptana, then President of the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) and now President of ITC, said (in Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, 1985b:3):

We might liken the onslaught of southern television and the absence of native television to the neutron bomb. This is a bomb that kills the people, but leaves the buildings standing. Neutron bomb television is the kind of television that destroys the soul of a people, but leaves the shell of a people walking around. This is television in which the traditions, the skills, the culture, the language, count for nothing.

John Amagoalik, then president of ITC, made a similar observation to the annual assembly of ITC in 1980 (in IBC, 1985b:4): "The introduction of television has meant the last refuge of Inuit culture, the home, has been invaded by an outside culture." Soap operas have become an obsession with the adolescent and early twenties population, providing a distorted view of the western lifestyle that has had a noticeable impact on the affective life of this segment of the population. A couple of studies have concluded that extensive southern TV viewing decreases communication between generations and the time spent in traditional activities and "most significantly, the studies suggest that prolonged television viewing leads to a decline in the use of aboriginal languages" (IBC, 1985b:5).

There has been an attempt on the part of Inuit lobby groups (ITC and TNI) to counteract such effects through the development of Inuit content programming. ITC began as early as 1975 to ensure that Inuit would have some control over TV broadcasting. In 1978, ITC was allowed access to the Anik B satellite and, in 1980, *Inukshuk*, the first northern TV network began broadcasting from Frobisher:

The Inukshuk system was frequently used as a pan-northern town hall, a forum where special interest groups (hunters, firefighters, and trappers, among others) could talk to those in other communities who shared their concerns (IBC, 1985a:2).

It is IBC's position that "Inukshuk demonstrated that television could help preserve language and culture."⁷ IBC, a non-profit network, was established in 1981 with representatives of native associations on its board and: "Northern Broadcast history was made at midnight on January 11, 1982, when the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation aired its first program" (IBC, 1985a:3).

IBC's mandate is: "...to provide the more than 25,000 Inuit in Arctic Canada with a broadcasting service designed to strengthen our language, culture and identity" (IBC, 1985b:9). Explicit goals include providing a forum, preserving Inuktitut, providing "a cultural passage between all Inuit groups" and "to be a symbol of Inuit determination to take their own place as active participants in the Canadian nation" and "to provide a vehicle for the free exchange of ideas toward the objective of Inuit cultural survival" (IBC, 1985b:9-10). Debates and discussion concerning Nunavut were aired within weeks, "providing the information that Inuit need to make the decisions that affect their lives, and the lives of their children" (IBC, 1985a:3-4). The summary position of the network was explained as follows (IBC, 1985b:37):

...in all matters regarding the relationship between Inuit culture and broadcasting, there must be assurances for Inuit participation and controls. The ultimate responsibility for the protection and enhancement of Inuit languages and culture rests with Inuit. This is a responsibility that cannot be turned over to a government department, crown agency, or a federal regulatory body.

As IBC expresses it (1985b:44): "What Inuit want from a public broadcasting

⁷ Inukshuk and a second network, Naalakvik II using Anik B, ended in 1981 due to lack of funds and Anik B was put to commercial use.

system is clear...we see in broadcasting, a means of preserving part of ourselves -- our language, our culture, our unique heritage." The dilemma of dependence is pointed up, however, in the acknowledgement that "if Inuit are to succeed, federal authorities must double their efforts to support and encourage the work of Inuit broadcasters." Recognizing that control of the public forum is necessary to cultural survival, IBC can only depend upon the goodwill of the Canadian state:

We know that the bottom line, as always, will be money. But I find it hard to believe that this government, or any government, could deny a request for a service so basic -- the right to a broadcast service in your own language, a right millions of Canadians take for granted (IBC, 1987:11).

IBC produces broadcast material in both Inuktitut and English, and reaches approximately two thirds of all Inuit communities,⁸ but with only five hours of air time per week, it is an ineffective antidote to the same American programming that is eroding southern Canadian culture. In 1985, the network was complaining that prime time was still being "hoarded by the CBC" (IBC, 1985b:13). Further gains were made in January 1992, when TVNC (Television Northern Canada) was inaugurated. TVNC, a full network service to be available an average of twelve hours a day, seven days a week, is described by chairman Pat Lyall as "the largest aboriginal television network in the world" (IBC, 1992:2). A non-profit organization, it will provide "a broadcast network service in mostly aboriginal languages to 94 communities and villiages from the Yukon/Alaska border to the Atlantic coast of Labrador."

⁸ The Inuvialuit Communications Society provides a television service to six western arctic communities.

Another area, related to language retention and the back-to-the-land movement, is the movement to restore Inuit personal and place names. As mentioned previously, many Inuit have moved back to old camp sites which are now known by their Inuit names, rather than the name of an explorer or trader. The Inuit of northern Quebec have succeeded in gaining official replacement of English and French village names with Inuit names, and the whole northern Quebec territory is now officially referred to as Nunavik, which means "a very big place where people live."⁹ The boundaries which divide Inuit have been imposed.

As Saali Peter, an IBC journalist based in Iqaluit notes (1990:11):

Inuit of the Northwest Territories would be ecstatic at the opportunity to reestablish political ties with Northern Quebec. Many Inuit are weary of the artificial barriers forced upon their kinship ties between Labrador, Northern Quebec and the N.W.T. by the James Bay Agreement...Only a half-sized Quebec is likely to secede from Canada, should secession ever occur. That prospect, I am sure, will sour a lot of separatist zeal throughout Quebec. Despite constitutional bungling, native resolve to stay Canadian could very well make Quebecois acutely aware of their parochialism.

As for personal names, many Inuit are electing to be known by their "real," *i.e.*, their Inuit names, rather than their baptismal names and have abandoned the use of the disc numbers, assigned by the RCMP for record-keeping purposes and used for "signing" carvings. The GNWT officially replaced disc numbers in 1971 with a surname, usually the Inuit name of the head of family. This endeavour was called "Project Surname" and can be considered the formalizing of the western nuclear

⁹ It was the Committee of Elders of Avataq Cultural Institute which requested the re-naming of Northern Quebec.

family model.¹⁰ As Kallauk writes (1989:B3), traditionally, "name alone was an integral part of the Inuit culture" and "Inuit identified with each name." If a person was named after his grandfather, he was called father by his own father. When outside practices were imposed, however, these names were arbitrarily designated as surnames.

The significance of a movement to replace the term *Eskimo* with *Inuit* (meaning "the people") is not clear. Although this was one of the first resolutions passed by ITC after its incorporation and it has been adopted as official usage by the federal bureaucracy, many Inuit continue to identify themselves as Eskimos, and the term is used in some legally incorporated co-op names. "Inuit" is also imprecise with respect to western arctic peoples, who should be called *Inuvialuit*. It should be noted, however, that the international organization is known as the Inuit Circumpolar Conference. Also, Inuit Tapirisat identifies itself in the 1992 Ottawa telephone book as "The Eskimo Brotherhood."

The officially multicultural Canadian state has provided assistance to aboriginal peoples in their efforts to preserve their language and culture. A speech by a senior assistant deputy minister of DIAND (DIAND, 1988f:6) included the information that "DIAND has long supported a variety of significant programs to promote and preserve Inuit language and culture -- from development of Inuktitut dictionaries to assistance to the Inuit Broadcasting

¹⁰ For an account of the disc number system, see A. Barry Roberts, "Eskimo Identification and Disc Numbers: A Brief History," June, 1975, prepared for the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

Corporation." But it has stopped short of giving official status to aboriginal languages. In 1990, the NWT Legislative Assembly made history by passing an official language act that recognizes six aboriginal languages as equal to English or French. Aboriginals constitute 60 per cent of the population of the NWT, and the first language of some 40 per cent is their native tongue. The GNWT has been fighting for federal recognition of aboriginal languages within the NWT.

Far from being a harmless "folkway," language is a powerful tool of solidarity. The federal government's cutting of funding to native communications groups in 1990 was interpreted by Inuit politicians as a move "to silence native organizations" (Nortext, 1990:1). Nunatsiaq MP Jack Anawak called the "closing down" of eight aboriginal newspapers and the crippling of seven aboriginal communications groups, "a most ungenerous and intolerant action." The executive director of the Native Communications Society of the Western NWT said: "There is no doubt in my mind that this is a very deliberate act by the federal government to silence the native people in this county..." (Nortext, 1990:2).

Confrontational resistance: In 1974, Elijah Takkiapik from Fort Chimo complained (in NQIA, 1974:64-65):

We want to have freedom with the animals. They steal the raw materials without even consulting with us or giving the Inuit a percentage of what they are taking... Sometimes we joke about setting up a small shack at the airport, so all the white people who get off the plane would be questioned about what their business is here and sometimes we don't think of it as a joke at all.

For the most part, Inuit have employed non-confrontational tactics, unlike Canadian Indians who have become increasingly militant over some of the same

issues Inuit are facing. Although Quebec Cree are vehemently protesting James Bay II, Inuit are being advised by Makivik corporation to negotiate. As reported in *Nunatsiaq News* (Nortext, 1991b:3): "....Senator Charlie Watt from northern Quebec, has persuaded northern Quebec Inuit to negotiate a deal with hydro-Quebec to allow the project to go ahead" even though "this contradicts the ITC's policy of opposing projects that have the potential to cause great environmental damage." As reported in *The Ottawa Citizen* (April 20, 1991:B4), Watt said: "There is no stopping the project and they might as well get the best deal they can." Even ITN, the group that opposed JBNQ, seems resigned this time around. Harry Tulugak, a vigorous opponent of the first agreement was reported in the *Ottawa Citizen* (1990:B4) as saying: "It's time Povungnituk elected someone to the board of Makivik..."

The intrinsically different attitudes of the Canadian Indians and Inuit are evident in their creative expressions. While much contemporary art by Canadian Indians is being used as a vehicle for social commentary, we are not seeing that response from Inuit. Abraham Anghik, a western Arctic artist now living in British Columbia told me in a recent interview (Mitchell, 1991a:23) that Inuit may be making political statements "in a different way," by presenting "a balanced view which includes respect for nature, respect for the elderly and respect for culture and traditions." I take this to mean that Inuit are holding up an idealized version of reality. As Anghik explains:

That, in itself, is as strong a statement as saying we don't want to be screwed around any more. the Indians are saying they want to change the

social order. The Inuit are saying, "This is our view of the world." It's a positive rather than a negative commentary on what's wrong, a positive statement of the way things are and should remain.

He considers that this attitude is due to the fact that "Inuit have always felt comfortable with where they are." As he says, "we have seen the need to co-exist with the people who came up to our land." Peter Ittinuar, MP for Nunatsiak, made a similar comment to the House of Commons October 27, 1980 (in Nortext, 1980b:11): "As far as we are concerned, Inuit are not a conquered people nor have they ever been."

There have, however, been a few scattered incidents of a confrontational nature. In 1979, the Kitikmeot (central Arctic) and Keewatin Inuit Association joined an alliance of Indian and Inuit organizations in the NWT, Manitoba and Ontario, to oppose the Polar Gas Pipeline Proposal. A news release issued by the alliance charged (in ITC News, 1979b:9):

They have come into our communities talking about the benefits their project will have for native people. They have tried to prevent us from seriously examining the implications of their proposal by constantly changing their route and by assuring us that since their project won't be starting for several years, we don't have to worry yet about any social and environmental consequences.

Opposed to all major development before land claims settlements were reached, the alliance demanded that it be full participants in decisions about the Polar Gas pipeline and that the federal government provide money to natives to conduct research into the social and environmental impact of development.

Inuit have also protested the restrictions on land. As Weetaluktuk (in NQIA, 1974:45) observed:

The governments and the D.O.T. just erect their buildings wherever they wish without consulting the Inuit. They claim that they own the land which they are going to use. We have told them to consult us if they are to erect anything fairly large. We first did this with the Quebec school. It's just now that we are starting to worry about our land.

In 1974, Elijah Takkiapik said (in Ittinuar, 1984:69):

We very much dislike white people taking our land for granted. It seems they feel they can destroy our land any time they feel like it without even asking for permission. We want to have freedom of conservation with the animals. They steal the raw materials without even consulting us or giving the Inuit a percentage of what they are taking. We need to get power to control the land.

Nunatsiaq MP Ittinuar quoted Takkiapik in his maiden speech to the House of Commons October 16, 1979, and added: "The desire for control is very real today among the Inuit of Canada." He made a further point:

One point I would like to emphasize is that the Inuit are not generally opposed to development per se. What we are opposed to is the rapid, untimely development which has been externally imposed on us; development which benefits the residents of southern Canada and which benefits even the country of West Germany in the case of uranium mining - or at least they propose such development with the help of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development -- and finally, development which leaves the residents of the Arctic to deal with the social and environmental consequences on their own.

Hunting restrictions have also been a focus for Inuit protest. In 1979, ITC protested the International Whaling Commission's proposed ban on Inuit hunting beluga whales and narwhals. As Tagoona said (ITC, 1979b:8): "Whale hunting is a critical part of the Inuit culture and economy" and "decisions about whale harvesting control and management must be made by Inuit." ITC demanded "full participation in any decision by the International Whaling Commission about whale hunting by Inuit." In a few cases, resistance has been subversive, as when

Keewatin Inuit ignored hunting restrictions in their area (ITC, 1979b:8). A Wildlife Management Board was later put into place.

It is interesting to note that the physical separation of whites and natives in Great Whale River, two towns separated by an airstrip, was not the white man's doing. As Paulosie Napartuk tells it (in NQIA, 1974:40), when the American army came to establish a DEW line post in 1954, they asked an Inuk widow if she knew a good place to build their camp. Her husband had felt strongly "the white people should not come to our country...and she, thinking of what her husband used to say, suggested the place where the white people live now so they wouldn't be close to the Inuit."

A highly publicized incident occurred in August 1976, as a protest of Quebec's Bill 101 regarding language, Inuit in Fort Chimo cut off sewer and water services and demanded that provincial civil servants leave the community. Inuit regarded this move as a violation of JBNQ, but the Department of Justice did not support them in this.

The above are merely isolated instances; for, on the whole Inuit have shied away from militancy. Although the Quebec Inuit joined with the Cree in 1990 to protest James Bay II, they refused, for instance, to support the Indians to the point of banning government delegates from the community and disrupting meetings in July 1991. The Inuit have declared themselves prepared to negotiate, hopeful still that their rights will be respected.

Politically organized resistance: Eskimo politics was born in the seventies

when land claims were assuming some urgency and the first generation of town born and bred Inuit was approaching adulthood. Following the 1969 establishment of The Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement (COPE) in the Western Arctic, Inuit political organizations proliferated across the Arctic. These organizations and the development corporations they spawned provided, as I have argued, a formal, legal alternative to the underground power exercised by the co-operatives.

The National organization, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, non-profit, non-sectarian and non-political, was established in 1971 to provide a voice for all Canadian Inuit on such issues as game laws and education. One of ITC's six objectives is "to help Inuit achieve full participation in Canadian society." ITC has six regional affiliates: COPE; The Baffin Region Inuit Association; The Kitikmeot Inuit Association (Central Arctic); The Keewatin Inuit Association; Makivik Corporation (Northern Quebec) and the Labrador Inuit Association.

Makivik Development Corporation in Quebec was the first designated Inuit organization set up to channel land claim money and, shortly after concluding the deal, the president of Makivik (who is now a Senator) publicly announced his dissatisfaction with its terms and implementation, and orchestrated an anti-French movement in arctic Quebec which, as was reported by the press, was reasonably confrontational, especially in Fort Chimo where there was a large transient francophone labour force.

Thomas Suluk, MP for Nunatsiaq, told a 1984 conference that Inuit had

Map 7: Regional Affiliates of Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (reproduced from ITC, 1981:13)

modified their demands for "home rule within Canadian confederation" because Trudeau [Prime Minister] was against "ethnic governments" (Myers, 1984b). Describing himself as a "moderate," he said they had to quell what he called "internal wrangling in our own organizations." There were some "hard-core radicals who didn't want to have anything to do with the GNWT, but we decided we had to work through the existing political powers in Canada." Their strategy was, said Suluk, to work to gain a majority in the legislative assembly and work for territorial and federal acceptance of Nunavut which is "a catch word for everything relating to self-government." Some people, himself included, considered the process too slow: "The biggest stumbling block at this point is whether to own or not own land or put more emphasis on control." He added: "Some of us are doubting whether a land claim settlement is desirable. Maybe we should just go for managerial rights." As far as Suluk was concerned: "The psychology of ending up owning a small fraction of what you consider to be yours, is hard to swallow."

Suluk candidly admitted that a difficulty in negotiating a good deal for themselves was that "every two or three years we run into internal difficulties concerning who gains control." In response to a question as to whether there was a separatist movement among Inuit, Suluk said there were some sitting as directors [of ITC] but "the moderates have managed to stay in control." He told me after the conference that what they want is "a modified territorial government in which they are the majority," and repeated his thought that maybe Inuit should just go for managerial control: "Our desire for independence may not be worth

pursuing; it might just be a pie-in-the-sky thing. Can anybody be independent?"

The most confrontational act by Inuit occurred in February 1992 when they, along with Ovide Mercredi, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, took the Toronto Constitutional Conference by surprise. Zebedee Nungak held up a map of Quebec which showed the top 2/3 coloured blue to represent native territory and the bottom 1/3 coloured red to represent the portion left to others. The map outraged the Quebecois and the constitutional affairs minister. It was referred to by a Quebec delegate as the "Brockville map," a reference to the stomping of the Quebec flag in 1990 by some Reform Party members in Brockville, Ontario. Nungak told me (personal communication by telephone from Payne Bay, 18/02/92) that he was "now the object of total hatred in French Canada," adding:

We're so unfortunate to be living in a province such as this. They are seven million and that particular distinct society of seven million when it rolls over in its sleep crushes the 7,000 of us. What can we do to them? What terrible thing can we inflict upon them?

Inuit recognize their powerlessness in Canada. As Amagoalik concluded in his column (1992b:9) on the subject: "When it comes to the constitution, the French and the Indians get all of the attention."

Mostly, however, Inuit organizations rely on negotiating even when it is clear, as in Alaska, that the leverage they wield is disproportionately small, and their expectations incompatible with those of the Canadian state and international industrial interests. The organizations making decisions for Inuit are, it will be remembered, the result of state initiatives, and depend upon continuing state support.

The pan-Eskimo movement

Always ethnically fragmented and further fractured by allegiance to foreign institutions, Inuit have come to see that if they are to improve their lot, they must speak with a unified voice. The problem is not so much that they are divided, as that they are disorganized, in spite of having been collectively organized in institutions set up and funded by the state -- the co-op, the development corporation, and various cultural and quasi-political organizations. The lack of counter-balancing indigenous collectivities, analogous, for instance, to the Iroquois confederacy, has severely hampered Inuit resistance.

This situation has changed somewhat in recent years as Inuit attempt to achieve some leverage in the Canadian state through negotiations to have aboriginal rights enshrined in the Canadian constitution. The Canadian constitution was repatriated by Trudeau in 1980, but with no recognition of the rights of the Native Peoples who continue to be administered by the Indian Act which does not confer any legal rights or special status. As Nunatsiag MP, Peter Ittinuar, told the House of Commons October 27, 1980 (in Nortext, 1980b:11): "The Indian Act provides no Constitutional guarantee of aboriginal rights and there is nothing in the BNA Act which recognizes, let alone protects, aboriginal rights." IBC journalist, Saali Peter, said in a recent interview (Peter, 1990:11):

Many northerners still remember how Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau betrayed native rights in the backrooms of November 1981. At that time, Trudeau and the premiers left out native rights altogether in an attempt to repatriate the Constitution...The Meech Lake accord taught Inuit a similar lesson. We have learned that passivity has no place when we are dealing with Ottawa and the provincial governments.

On an international level, Canadian Inuit have joined with their cousins in Alaska and Greenland in a pan-Eskimo movement sponsored by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference established in 1977. The first president of ICC has gone on record (*Tundra Times*, 1982) as saying that the ultimate Eskimo unity would be an Eskimo nation. It seems inevitable that Inuit will become more nationalistic. Perhaps eventually they will want outright separation from Canada, although they will certainly press their claims with considerably less clout than do the Québécois with similar aspirations. The critical factor is their economic dependence upon the state. Predictably, during the early unity meetings in Quebec, concerns were raised about how an Inuit government would provide old age security and family allowances. No-one had the answer (Makivik, 1984a:25).

Frustrations with land claims settlements and their implementation have provided a strong incentive for ethnic mobilization. In Quebec, Makivik and the co-op federation transcended their differences to join in Ujjiituijiiit, the unity movement. Previously, co-ops had been told to mind their own business and stay out of politics and culture, but in 1984 (Myers, 1984b), FCNQ's general manager told the directors' meeting in Montreal:

The Inuit of Nouveau-Quebec have an excellent opportunity during the coming year. The government of Quebec is willing to negotiate on a new approach to government for Inuit and we in the co-op movement must concern ourselves with this process. The co-ops were excluded in the past negotiations because it was said that the co-ops were not to involve themselves with politics. By not involving ourselves, the Inuit cut themselves off from a lot of dialogue. This could have prevented some of the difficulties which they obviously have with the institutions [such as Makivik] as they are now constructed.

Makivik president Mary Simon responded to Lévesque's promise of unity¹¹ by inviting other Inuit organizations (FCNQ and Kativik) to get involved and to revive the idea of regional government which had been promoted earlier by the co-ops. ITN, the dissident movement organized by people in Sugluk, Ivujivik and Povungnituk, also agreed to become involved and to forget about its pending court case for a while to see what happened. A committee was set up and, in 1984, leaders of ITN and Makivik toured northern Quebec to explain self-government:

The trip was different from many similar tours in the past because it carried the message that the Inuit who follow the Northern Quebec Agreement and the Inuit who follow Inuit Tungavingat Nunanimi are finally willing to work together with a common purpose (Makivik, 1984a:20).

FCNQ actively promoted the plan. The idea, Filotas said (personal communication, 1984), was "to get a bill into the National Assembly and get enough of a commitment that if Levesque is ousted, a new government can't dismantle it."

In 1987, an Inuit referendum was won (by a slim majority) by Nunasimajortigut ("responsible government through the citizens"), a new group in favour of having an elected, rather than an appointed, body prepare a constitution for Nunavik. In 1989, 3500 voters from 14 arctic Quebec villages elected 6 members for Parnaitiit, a constituent assembly, to prepare a draft constitution for

¹¹ According to Makivik (1984a:21): "Levesque said that if the Inuit communities in Northern Quebec became united, the Quebec government would grant self-government to the region. The new government would still be under the authority of the provincial government, but Inuit would have more control over their own affairs."

a responsible regional government to be negotiated with the Quebec Government.¹² But, again, in Nunavik as in the NWT, there appears to be several understandings of what regional/self government means. Filotas, Langlois, Michaud and Simard (1984:2-3) cast it in rather idealistic terms:

Elles renvoient l'une et l'autre à quelque chose de plus profond: un même idéal, celui *d'autonomie*, en référence à une même réalité concrète et fondatrice, *la terre*. Pour regagner l'autonomie perdue, laisse-t-on entendre, les Inuit doivent renouer leur rapport privilégié à la Terre-Mère, vivre autant que possible du pays, d'une manière peut-être différente d'autrefois, mais toujours originale et authentique -- "à la manière des Inuit." C'est ce projet qui, dès 1960, a nourri le mouvement coopératif du Nouveau-Québec et, par la suite à compter de 1974, inspiré la négociation de la Convention de la Baie James et du Nord québécois...

But, reminiscent of the Baker Lake affair, Quebec politicians have issued a bit of a warning through reference to political realities which might exclude the "Inuit way" (Chaumel, 1989:17):

It is important to understand that the National Assembly has agreed to the formation of a responsible regional government. Nunavik will not be separated from the rest of Quebec or of Canada. Rather, structures that are more in tune with the North will be developed. "We will recognize their regional government, but it is clear that all discussions will be held within the existing political framework, in compliance with existing structures," noted Raymond Savioe, Minister responsible for Mines and Native Affairs.

Chaumel points out further that responsible government "could prove more

¹² Nunavik was divided into three regions: Hudson Strait, Hudson Bay and Ungava. The expenses of the election campaign and those of the six elected representatives were covered by a voluntary tax levied in the 14 communities (Government of Quebec, 1989:17). Inuit have been mainly opposed to Quebec, but FCNQ has attempted to forge links with the provincial government. It was reported in *Igalaaq* (Nortext, 1980c:5) that Quebec's Inuit might "unanimously abstain from the province's upcoming referendum on sovereignty-association." Watt was quoted as saying "northern Quebec Inuit had no wish for provincial government to represent them in constitutional matters...we want to represent ourselves."

difficult than expected to apply," because of the "different political philosophies" of the candidates who ran in the 1989 election:

The first maintains that the population must be directly associated with the responsible government process by electing those who will prepare the draft constitution which will then be ratified in a referendum. This option was approved in 1987 and led to the election last April 10. This is also the position of the young leader, Harry Tulugak, from Povungnituk, who is usually identified with the "dissident" group who refused to sign the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. Yet the candidates who shared this view, were in the minority before the election. Supporters of the other option believe that the first Inuit constituent assembly should be formed by the leaders of existing organizations, legally created under the Agreement. These organizations (Makivik Corporation, Kativik Regional Government, etc.) are in charge of various sectors of local and regional public administration and manage the indemnities provided under the Agreement. These leaders, who are also elected, maintain that the Nunavik Assembly (an umbrella group of all organizations) already forms a kind of government.

Though this position was rejected in the 1987 referendum, it re-surfaced after the elections because five of the six members elected can be associated with the "organization people." Their leader is Senator Charlie Watt, again president of Makivik Corporation.

In recognition of the symbiotic effect of politics and economics, the unity movement included a study of how much the Quebec government actually spends in northern Quebec, as well as a consumer study "to find out how people spend their money" (Myers, 1985a). It went further. As Filotas told me: "Now, they spend everything they have, but we're going to try to get them to save money instead of buying a third stereo set or a third ski-doo or television set."¹³ They

¹³ It was proposed that a detailed budget be prepared for each household describing the belongings, transportation equipment, clothing, food, furniture, credit, savings, budget, schooling, household production, handicraft etc, fishing hunting, trapping, expenses, revenue.

also intended, he said, to "teach Eskimos their history," with a view to teaching them "to be responsible citizens, in the sense of not being passive."

This movement appears to be stalled. Indeed, it is not clear how much interest there was even at the beginning. In 1984, shortly after the movement was launched, Filotas told me (Myers, 1985a) that he was discouraged because "people are spending more time on day to day affairs and have no time to work on self-government." Businesses in arctic Quebec were then making a one per cent collection for self-government and there was a plan to divide the \$130,000 Hunter Support Program money which Povungnituk had refused, towards the project, but, Filotas said: "Nobody is making a decision; everything is all talk and no action."

It seems there is confusion concerning the goal of unity. The Inuk president of FCNQ reported to the directors' meeting (1984:5) that people "felt that by intending to tax the co-ops and their members, the Quebec government was trying to outmanoeuvre the proposed Inuit self government by leaving it no money to operate with." Filotas thought he was wrong because "in reality, it is unlikely that the department of revenue was involved in a conspiracy with Levesque."

Self-government, or political power, depends, of course, upon control of economic resources. For Inuit, the problem remains that the only capital to which they have access is state capital from land claims settlements and, source apart, this is too small, and its use too restricted, to be considered the basis for economic independence or political power.

Inuit circumpolar conference: A celebration of Inuit unity

A pan-Eskimo movement was formalized in June 1977 with the first Inuit Circumpolar Conference held at Barrow, Alaska and attended by Inuit from Alaska, Canada and Greenland. In 1983, ICC was accepted by the United Nations with non-governmental organization status.

The impetus for ICC came from the North Slope Borough in Alaska. Mayor Eban Hopson invited Alaskan, Canadian and Greenland Inuit leaders to Barrow in 1976 "to initiate an international Inuit community organization devoted to protection of the Arctic environment" (Brower and Stotts, 1984:329).¹⁴ Its focus was the control of the formulation of an international Arctic policy. As Brower and Stotts (1984:320) wrote:

It is, of course, development of Arctic energy resources that has focused attention on Arctic policy. This development unquestionably has been the stimulus for Arctic residents to organize locally and internationally in attempts to maintain the quality of a threatened environment...

Inuit had begun to mobilize around mutual concerns as early as 1973 at an Arctic Peoples' Conference held in Copenhagen in response to a raising of consciousness among Inuit in Alaska,¹⁵ Greenland, and Canada. The focus of the 1973 conference, which became the model for ICC, was the land claims movement in

¹⁴ It is interesting to note Brower and Stotts comment (p.329) that the Inuvialuit (western Arctic) were strong supporters of ICC, but eastern Arctic Inuit, "more under the influence of the Canadian Government, were reluctant to organize and were concerned about possible Canadian government reaction."

¹⁵ Alaskan Inuit did not, however, attend the Copenhagen Conference due to "the press of post-settlement land selection planning and corporate organization" (Brower and Stotts, 1984:326). Peterson (1984:725) considers that the impetus for ICC was an international congress in France in May 1973 which discussed the possibilities of oil and gas activities in the Arctic and passed a resolution demanding recognition of the arctic populations.

Greenland and Denmark, growing out of the home rule movement (Brower and Stotts:326). Moral support took a more concrete form when, in 1975, the North Slope Borough in Alaska was asked to support the Inuvialuit of the western Canadian Arctic in their fight against offshore drilling in the Beaufort Sea by Dome. It was the Beaufort Sea clash which provided the focal point for the international organization of Inuit who "agreed that a single, international coastal zone management regime was required for the entire North American Arctic Coast" (Brower and Stotts:329). The ICC was established, as Petersen (1984:726) says to be "a permanent body for Eskimo cooperation," and delegates to ICC must live in the Eskimo homeland. It was not until 1989 that Siberian Inuit were permitted by the USSR to participate in the ICC (which meets every three years), making it truly an Inuit circumpolar association. The theme of the 1989 meeting was, appropriately enough, *A Celebration of Inuit Unity*.

It is interesting to note that, as Professor Lincoln Bloomfield of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology pointed out, (in Brower and Stotts:334) "transarctic diplomacy" was "pioneered" by a "non-governmental 'transnational' Association of Native peoples" and not by the governments of the six adjacent nations. This makes it the exception among efforts to organize Inuit.

ICC has the potential to provide Inuit with power through numbers (Canada 25,000; Alaska 30,000; Greenland 50,000 and Siberia 3-4,000), as well as through organization, but it is not a radical organization. As Hamilton (writing of the 1983 meeting) said (1984:7):

The mood of this meeting, perhaps the very concept of ICC itself, is one of careful agreement and conciliation among Inuit about the basic steps needed to take their society towards cultural protection -- political outbursts and threats have not been the style of the organization.

A conciliatory stance may, however, prove to be ineffective in accomplishing its aims and, indeed, there appears to be some divisiveness within the group concerning appropriate means to desired ends. Petersen (1984:725) says that from the beginning, in spite of recognition of "their shared Eskimo origins and similarities in the minority-like situations of the Eskimo people...regional differences in cultural heritage and community traditions were manifested, as were differences due to the history of influences from three different majority societies."

A brief from ICC to the Macdonald Commission on Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada presented December 16, 1983 (ICC, 1983:14) offered this assurance: "None of our peoples is looking to merge our variety in a new Arctic state...Rather, we are using our common language and heritage as a basis for cooperation and for renewing our social and cultural values." Eugene Brower of the North Slope Borough declared that "It's not a militant group; it never will be" (Canadian Press, Frobisher Bay in the *Globe & Mail* 1983:3; Ottawa Citizen 1983:10). The CP reporter also remarked "the absence of strident rhetoric, or calls to immediate action," among the assembly.

Hans-Pavia Rosing, President of ICC for several years, has, however, pushed a more aggressively nationalistic message. Petersen (1984:728, citing Hess, 1982:5) says that Pavia-Rosing asserted in April 1982 that the ultimate Eskimo unity would be an Eskimo nation, even though he could not predict when this

might come into being." And he is quoted in a special issue of *Inuit Today*, published by ITC (1984:42), as having said:

I hope through the process of ICC, with the experience we have now, we can someday abolish the borders in the Arctic so we don't have to speak of the Inuit in three countries, but in one. From our point of view, the ICC is a national organization.

He was also quoted in Toronto's *Globe & Mail* (August 2, 1983:3) and the *Ottawa Citizen* (August 2, 1983:10) as saying: "We were colonized" and "This Conference expresses the desire of the Inuit to regain some degree of sovereignty over the Arctic." It was noted, however, that:

Rosing and other Inuit leaders steer clear of any talk of separatism, or of forming a new circumpolar country. "We are loyal citizens of America, or Canada, or Denmark," Mayor Eugene Brower of Alaska's North Slope Borough said in a speech to the assembly.

Pavia-Rosing is, however, from Greenland which has achieved Home Rule. It is logical that he would look ahead to an Inuit nation. Alaskan and Canadian Inuit have yet to achieve regional control over their own affairs, what they and the bureaucrats are calling, with varying inference, "self-government."

Impatience with the mainstream political process prompted ICC to join with the World Council of Indigenous Peoples in 1983 to establish the Alaska Native Review commission which hired Thomas Berger as commissioner. As explained previously, the fear was that in 1991, shares in Alaska native corporations could be sold to non-natives, which means that, potentially, Inuit could have *no* land. Alaskan Inuit holdings are also be subject to taxation in 1991. Native sovereignty issues have raised their heads again. As Berger said (1985a:4):

Although ANCSA is a remarkable achievement, it did not resolve the question of political autonomy for native peoples in Alaska. Thus the issue of sovereignty has arisen...a particular reflection of the world-wide movement of indigenous people for self-rule or self-determination.

Also,

It is clear that Alaska natives want an opportunity to choose forms of landholding reflecting their own cultural imperatives, they want to ensure that their ancestral lands remain in their possession, and they want the means to govern them.

This means is economic as well as political.

The new president of ITC, Rosemarie Kuptana from the western Arctic, told a parliamentary committee¹⁶ in January 1992: "The only remedy to our current situation...is recognition of our equality, of our inherent right to self government" (in Coleman, 1992:1). Using the word "inherent" several times in her address, Kuptana explained that the word connotes "rights that may be unlawfully violated but that can never be extinguished" (p.2). Coleman speculates that "Kuptana may have been attempting to head off any possible argument by the federal government that the creation of Nunavut may extinguish the Inuit right to self-government." As Kuptana said, the Nunavut settlement "does not mean we will have to stop pursuing self-government at the national level." Committee co-chair Dorothy Dobbie's response was; "Trying to define inherent rights in the context of our law is a little like trying to define the wind in terms of sight." The final report of the constitutional committee (February, 1992) did, however, concede that the Native people possess inherent rights.

¹⁶ The special Joint Committee on a Renewed Canada.

The least we can say at this point is that "self-government" is a problematic term. To non-native politicians, it means provincial or regional government; to some Inuit, as to some Québécois, it carries the connotation of a separate state. It is too soon to know what the outcome will be, but one thing is certain and that is that the Inuit, like Canada's other first peoples, are demanding to have input into decisions which affect them.

Not only are Inuit from the world's nation-states organizing, but there is evidence of a new solidarity between Inuit and other aboriginal people in Canada, the result of a growing awareness of their mutual predicament. As Joe Kumarluk predicted in 1970 (in Laurence, 1970:10): "As the Indian and Eskimo are increasing steadily (in numbers) they must stand together for their own land rights." Twenty years later, in March 1990, Cree and Inuit from James Bay paddled a canoe/kayak to Ottawa, Montreal and New York to publicize their mutual desire to stop progress on James Bay II, the Quebec government's current project to supply power to Vermont and New York. As reported in the *Ottawa Citizen* (McIlroy, 1990): "The Inuit and the Cree, at odds for much of the last 10 years but united in their opposition to the project, say they would lose their lifestyle, their traditions and their identity." The Inuit stopped short, however, of outright confrontation. As Chaumel (1990:6) writes:

the Makivik spokespersons...were clear. In spite of the many possible negative consequences of the project, the Inuit see many potential positive effects and want to take advantage of them. "We are saying we are ready to meet the challenge, but we want to know whether Hydro-Québec is prepared to do likewise. We feel a dialogue is needed to ensure that development benefits not only Québec society as a whole but also the Inuit

as a people," concluded Robert Lanari [non-Inuit employee of Makivik]. Quebec's persistence with James Bay II which the native people feel will disrupt wildlife and jeopardize subsistence practices, does not augur well for the continuance of a conciliatory stance by ICC which, in 1983, resolved "to call upon the three nations to recognize the natural subsistence economy, and to regulate and support these economic pursuits as legitimate economic activity" (Hess, 1984:10).¹⁷

Trouble is brewing in the Arctic in much the same way as it was brewing in Quebec 20 years ago. Perhaps recognizing the symptoms, Theriault (1988:4) wrote in *Rencontre*: "The aboriginal nations want to be recognized as a distinct society, just like Quebec." Indeed, when I was in Ivujivik in July 1984, I made a copy of a text posted on the door of Saputik, the town hall:

Sovereignty

Our goal is simply total equality, attained in the only way open to a smaller nation, which has reasonable hopes of attaining it in the presence of a larger one: Self-government. But we are not unaware of the shock wave that separation would set off, coming after a long-lived illusion of eternity, as fostered by the Canadian political system.

René Lévesque, Le Dimanche, November 21, 1976.

René Lévesque was, of course, Quebec's first separatist premier.

¹⁷ It was resolved, at the same time, to ask for an east-west interchange across the "Arctic homeland," eliminating barriers to trade *etc.* (Ipellic, 1984:4).

PART V

Conclusion

The Story Recapitulated and Theoretical Implications

Chapter Twenty-One

The Story Recapitulated and Theoretical Implications

Having reconstructed Inuit relationships before contact with Europeans, I have attempted to trace their gradual transformation through contact with successive waves of outsiders. In this chapter I recapitulate the story and extract some implications for theory.

Before contact

Before contact, Inuit pursued a hunting and gathering existence in which work was divided according to age and gender. The family was the unit of production, the nuclear group being supplemented with other members of the extended family and, sometimes, non-relatives. Damas (1984a:398-399) refers to these groups as varying "aggregations," and they should be distinguished from tribes, a concept which is applied arbitrarily to Inuit groups which appear to have cultural traits in common. For all practical purposes, however, we need not think beyond "bands," the mostly but not exclusively kinship-based groups which came together in optimum hunting conditions, and "hunting groups," smaller aggregates of one or several households. None of these groups was based upon political authority, but deference was accorded the most experienced among them, synonymous, usually, with the oldest hunter in the group, the *isumaitoq*, who guided rather than governed. The focal point of virtually all Inuit activity was reproduction, since their food was "on the hoof."

Although the indigenous mode of production is typically characterized as "primitive communism," I have come to see that sharing, as in capitalist societies, was not selfless. Non-producers, the aged and infirm and, even, infants, were looked after in times of plenty, but abandoned to die in times of scarcity. Nor was property communal. Although the forces of production -- land and water and wildlife -- were not "owned," there was a shared acceptance of territoriality which is best indicated by the fact that Inuit referred to themselves by the use of place names bearing the suffix *miut* as in, Netsilingmiut (the people of the seal).

Also, means of production, including highly valued kayaks and dog teams, were individually owned and controlled. Hunting was, of necessity (given primitive weapons and hunting techniques), a cooperative activity and it was the fruits of this labour that were shared, as a form of insurance and in recognition of the importance of group survival. The practice of exchange, of tangible items as well as such intangibles as assistance, was not foreign to pre-contact Inuit. Anything could be exchanged -- food, women, children, pots, labour. More formalized *intra*-ethnic trade occurred at centres near the boundaries of groups, and *inter*-ethnic trading was conducted with Indians along the northern point of contact although, in general, Indian-Eskimo contacts were unfriendly.

Nor were Inuit strictly egalitarian. There was no institutionalized inequality, but the role of angagok (shaman), I have suggested, had a commercial nature and meant that the incumbent was better positioned than most to accrue benefits. The angagok charged a fee for tutoring initiates in the practice as well

as for the healing and propitiary services he/she performed. There were, as Weyer (1962:433) observes, economic advantages attached to this art. Similarly, the isumaitoq (the secular leader) was likely to possess a greater stock of valuable goods and was accorded deference because of this. Luxury items were both coveted and admired. The positions of angagok and isumaitoq appear to have been only slightly privileged, however, and did not depend upon dispossessing others of the means of production nor the extraction of surplus value from the labour of others (except through an exchange of value).

Although shamans and camp leaders were well-positioned to further their own self-interest, inequality was not institutionalized, but rested upon one individual's ability to influence another. Deference was accorded such persons because of their perceived ability to confer some economic benefit upon the group.

In spite of widespread poverty, there was, however, some disparity in relative wealth. The precondition for accumulation is a surplus and this was virtually non-existent among Inuit except after a successful hunt. Food was, then, as Weyer (1962:188) says, "the most important capital of the Eskimo." It was, he suggests, shared as an "expedient adjustment to irregularities in food supply." Sharing practices, as I have shown in chapter two, were variable and are difficult to codify.

Although there were no classes in the indigenous mode of production, this was mainly due to the small size of the groupings. Lacking a class structure does

not, however, imply a communal state. The collective was, for all intents and purposes, synonymous with the extended family and, not only was loyalty to others of one's kind (Inuit) disregarded during scarcity, but so was loyalty to kin.

Nor was there any ethnic solidarity. Intermarriage was cautious, and intra-family hostility and suspicion were the norm, in a manner similar to the family feud model of the southern United States. I have concluded that the indigenous mode of production is best characterized as a particular balance of communal/collective and competitive/individualistic practices -- on the one hand, free and cooperative labour and, on the other, self-seeking individualism. This balance seems to have been determined by circumstance, and a crisis, such as famine, would temporarily upset it in the direction of competition. Similarly, when conditions were such as to favour an accumulation of wealth, the competitive/individual dynamic achieved greater momentum. The indigenous mode of production contained, then, the essential contradiction which allowed for its transformation *from within*, but as a response to extrinsic factors.

Contact with explorers and early traders

The first point of contact with capitalist practices was with explorers beginning as early as the sixteenth century. I have characterized this contact as accidental and disinterested; for, although the explorers and early traders did introduce some manufactured means of production which had an impact on hunting and domestic practices as well as providing the opportunity for enhanced prestige and trading power, they had little impact upon indigenous socio-economic structures.

The first traders, in some parts of the Arctic as early as the eighteenth century, had a similarly slight impact. In the southern sections of Ungava and Hudson Bay, people were in contact with a trading post, and the Hudson's Bay company sent trading sloops into some regions, mainly to resupply posts, but also to conduct what is considered to have been an insignificant souvenir trade. Only in rare instances (for instance, in southern Ungava and Hudson Bay) were Inuit employed by either the explorers or the early traders. Most remained on the land, trading into the posts, perhaps annually.

It is significant that, from several accounts (*e.g.*, Oswalt, 1979:279), Inuit clearly viewed these early contacts as trading opportunities. They are described as "determined traders" (Ross, 1975:27), and this determination sometimes led to hostilities when they did not get what they wanted. Inuit traded not a surplus, but the clothes off their backs and such hard to replace items as kayaks for such desirable and otherwise unobtainable goods as wood, iron, saws, fishhooks, and needles. Nonetheless, as I have suggested, there might have been some impetus towards production of a surplus, not with a view to trading with explorers (with whom contact was unlikely), but with a view towards expanded trading with each other for imported items which spread in this manner far from the point of the initial transaction.

In summary, I have concluded that the introduction of new means of production, including raw materials, undermined, to a certain extent, pre-contact artisanal practices and hunting but, at the same time, by providing a new outlet

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and new motivation for trade, it reinforced indigenous skills and practices. At this point, European goods *supplemented*, rather than replaced indigenous materials. The balance of communal and capitalistic forces was not appreciably affected and there were no structural changes in the indigenous mode of production, although a tenuous toe-hold had been gained by the capitalist mode of production.

It was not in capital's interest to immediately destroy the indigenous mode of production. Indeed, non-capitalist practices were at first buttressed. Inuit were encouraged to produce as always, but with one difference: there was new pressure exerted to produce a surplus for trading, which pressure can be considered as an undermining influence on the indigenous mode of production. This was the beginning of the reinforcing/undermining process as a response to contact with another mode of production (previously, this process was a response to factors of climate and other such natural phenomena). Although, ultimately, the process would be virtually irreversible, at this time it was, we can assume, reversible. It was a process mediated only by restrictions on maximizing a surplus -- the lack of storage, containers, mechanized travel, efficient weapons, unpredictability of animal routes *etc.* For the most part, Inuit cooperated with, rather than resisted, this initial incursion of capital.

The effect of the explorers and early traders on Inuit identity was minimal, given the infrequent and unsustained nature of contact and the many barriers to communication, including mutual fear and prejudice which sometimes resulted in open hostilities. Contact with Europeans did, however, precipitate some

spontaneous expressions of ethnic solidarity. A sense of "us" and "them" was developing, obviously exacerbated when hostilities erupted in open warfare. Since contact and incipient relationships with Europeans were for purposes of trade, this early impetus to ethnic solidarity can be considered economically motivated, its objective being to obtain European goods.

The second wave of contact: Whalers

Contact with the whalers did rather more than introduce disease and debauchery to the arctic population. The work of both males and females remained relatively unchanged, but there was a significant increase in pressures to maximize a surplus which could be traded with whalers for imported items. A major change in practice was effected in that, as Ross (1975:136) says, people began hunting animals "specifically for exchange," the beginning, as he considers, of the post World War II commercial trapping economy.

Desirable trade goods now were whaleboats and guns which, although they again supplemented rather than replaced indigenous means of production, greatly altered both techniques and relations of production, as well as putting a strain on resources. Whaleboats had the effect of encouraging cooperative hunting, but guns had the opposite effect, making individual activity more productive. The possessor of a whaleboat achieved new authority over others, being referred to, significantly, as a "boss."

Even more significant is the fact that, upon contact with whalers, Inuit hunters sold their labour power for the first time. But, ironically, these first

employees formed a superior stratum in their community; for, with greater access to material wealth, they enjoyed enhanced prestige and bargaining power. There was also some nascent stratification among these first employees as some were designated "gang bosses" whose responsibility it was to organize work crews and distribute rewards.

Since Inuit were hired to do the same work they had always done, hunt, some indigenous practices were reinforced. But, since it was in the whalers' interest (and, indirectly, that of the Inuit) to increase the exploitation of local resources, more efficient means of production were favoured, with a concomitant decline in the skills used to procure materials and fashion implements and weapons.

Sustained interaction with whalers also had a reinforcing/undermining effect on ethnic identity. Many Inuit began to speak foreign languages and, initiating a process which is being reversed only now, many adopted anglicized names. Customary territorial residence and the seasonal hunting cycles were disrupted in the case of those who settled in camps around the whaling harbours, a phenomenon which Ross (1984:220-221) designates as the precursor to twentieth century centralization. While the use of a new language and foreign names can be considered an undermining effect, the breakdown of territorial boundaries can be looked upon as having paved the way for a broader, ethnically-based, affiliation. Also, of course, more sustained interaction with outsiders fostered a growing perception of differences between the groups.

There is some uncertainty concerning the extent to which whalers undermined Inuit practices. Some writers (Coates, 1985:139, for instance), consider whaling was "extremely exploitative," while others (Ross, 1975:136, for instance) argue that whalers treated Inuit as equal partners. Low, however, (in Ross, 1984:220) believed that Inuit could not survive if the whalers withdrew, *i.e.*, that a situation of irreversible dependency had been created. If this were true, and a return to former practices was not possible, it would be a strong indication that the indigenous mode of production had been irreversibly altered. Low's conclusion seems to be based mainly on the widespread use of firearms and the resultant decline in the manufacture and use of indigenous weaponry. There is, however, no great evidence to support the conclusion that Inuit could not have, perhaps with some hardship, revived necessary skills and resumed the indigenous lifestyle. Francis (1984) is of this mind. The argument is, however, somewhat academic, since a new wave of traders, soon to be followed by missionaries and police, moved in to fill the vacuum left by the whalers and further the transformation process.

In relation to whalers, Inuit were, again, willing accomplices. They came to the whalers and exerted efforts to realize personal gain in their trading and employee relations.

Traders, missionaries and police

There were, as I have pointed out, no structural constraints supporting resistance and, in only a few decades, the combined force of trader, missionary and police

succeeded in delivering the capitalist mode of production to the Inuit. By the end of the 1950s, the pre-contact economy and ideology had been largely replaced and Inuit were centralized in "communities" formed around the trading post and mission. Changes in the means of production were pervasive and the main Eskimo work was now trapping, with some subsistence hunting which was becoming a more individualistic pursuit, using guns and whaleboats. There was also some employment, mostly seasonal, although opportunities to earn income were rare. Ideological domination was successfully achieved by the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

There were push/pull factors at work still. People were induced to settle in towns to be near schooling and medical assistance, as well as ammunition supplies for the now necessary firearms, and also for ease of administration, but, at the same time, they were encouraged by missionary, trader and police (albeit for different reasons), to stay on the land to trap, coming into town only when necessary to trade. Inuit trappers, dependent upon manufactured equipment entered a new relationship of dependency with post managers upon whom they relied for debt.

There was a clear movement away from collective practices and towards individualism. The nuclear family became more important as the unit of production and consumption, and there was a marked tendency to think of property as private. Sharing of country food was still being practised, but the proceeds of employment including cash and credit, were regarded as household

possessions. According to Vallee (1967a:72), foxes were considered the property of the person in whose trap they were found, in contrast to earlier practices when game was shared, regardless of whose bullet killed it. Ideas of personal property were even more entrenched among those Inuit living in town.

A significant change resulting from centralization in administrative centres was a growing disparity in wealth. Town Inuit who were employed by the trading companies, church or state, were wealthy in comparison with the camp people. Poor and powerless in relation to the outsiders, there were new *intra*-ethnic distinctions between town (kabloonamiut, "people who are at ease with the white man" as Vallee described them) and camp (nunamiut, "people of the land"). Good hunters, traditionally the highest ranking, were in the nunamiut category, but their prestige paled in the face of the status now accorded town Inuit who benefitted -- in terms of material wealth and power -- from association with kabloonamiut in what Paine (1971) called a patron-client relationship, not hereditary but tending to favour families, a process bolstered by the tendency of settlement Inuit to intermarry.

The kabloonamiut (known popularly as "talking chiefs") were treated by the outsiders as spokespersons for all Inuit, even though, previously, authority among Inuit never extended beyond one's family group. Vallee (1967a) considered that the kabloonamiut were the "forerunner of a 'class' of people who are not dependent on the land for their subsistence." By 'class,' he meant status groupings and, although kabloonamiut were closer to incorporation into the Canadian

working class, than were camp people, kabloonamiut and nunamiut as categories cannot be regarded as polarized classes within the Inuit community.

As for ethnic identity, Vallee (1967a:217) noted a growing "consciousness of kind" which can probably be termed a fledgling ethnic solidarity. It is clear to me that ethnic relations and relations of production are now intermingled as Inuit, for economic, ideological and political reasons, were organized in artificial "communities" which disregarded previous family and hunting group affiliations. Camp identities tended to persist, and solidarity was tenuous, but the forces of collectivization were difficult to resist. Inuit were treated as, and began to perceive themselves to be, a distinct ethnic group.

The Eskimo language continued to be used in the home, but shamanism and Inuit folkways were devalued by converts to Christianity. Conversion was virtually total, and religious denomination became a salient line of cleavage among Inuit. Anglicans were the most powerful church in that they were identified with the Hudson's Bay Company and the federal bureaucracy, and converts to that Church enjoyed more prestige and power than did converts to Roman Catholicism.

There was virtually no resistance from Inuit to this massive onslaught. Again, they were collaborators, willingly abandoning past practices in favour of new. Honigmann (1971:191) noted, however, some instances of resentment in the late sixties leading to "a closer native solidarity." Several years earlier, Vallee (1967a:218-219) had noted the beginning of a pan-Eskimo movement led by

acculturated Inuit. His prophetic insight was that this is a role Inuit are most likely to assume if they "feel socially rebuffed by the Kabloona or if they view themselves as victims of discrimination." This, I have argued, provided the motivation for an ethnic solidarity movement in Quebec, led by leaders who had been courted by the non-native ruling class before they signed the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, but who were then rebuffed, denigrated because of their ethnicity.

At the same time as a pan-Eskimo sentiment was beginning to stir, entrepreneurial activity emerged among those Inuit better positioned in terms of access to a trading post who traded to other Inuit at inflated prices.

To sum up, by the late 1950s, all elements/instances of the indigenous mode of production were dominated by capital which continued, however, to reinforce or buttress some pre-contact practices. Economically, Inuit moved from subsistence hunting to become trappers (of white fox for which they had little other use) and, to a lesser extent, employees. They had no control over the market and were no longer able, by their own means, to satisfy their own needs. Politically, hunting camps were amalgamated by the state into artificial communities in which a new ethnic identity was being forged. Finally, Inuit ideological practices had been driven underground. They now deferred to the religion of capitalism, aligning themselves with the two competing denominations.

It was, I have argued, no longer a case of exploitation *between* modes of production, but of new relationships having *penetrated* the indigenous mode. The

balance had been altered, irreversibly it seems, and Inuit had been fully prepped¹ for capitalist relations of production.

The cooperative movement

The first arctic cooperative was incorporated, as a state initiative, in 1959, providing the definitive link between the capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production. Like all transitional entities, the Eskimo co-op is a contradictory structure, embodying both capitalist and non-capitalist practices.

The cooperatives cast Inuit, for the first time, as owners. All Inuit, in theory, are equal under the cooperative which espouses the one-member, one-vote principle, but because there is virtually no internal exchange, and the co-op depends upon a capitalist market to purchase its products -- mainly arts and crafts -- it cannot *treat* producers as equal. I have concluded that the co-op is communal in name, but capitalist in effect.

And, further, the Eskimo co-operative movement institutionalized inequality, transforming the role of talking chiefs to one of hired executives and elected directors. Although cottage industry arts and crafts provide the largest source of income for Inuit, the co-op also provides jobs, of a menial nature (janitors, clerks, guides) and, for the first time, managerial. Thus, the co-op institutionalized the exercising of authority by one Inuk over another. Managers hire and fire, give or withhold credit, determine what to pay producers, and what items to stock in stores. Managers in the Quebec system, a position reserved

¹ I realize that this is a slang term for "prepared" -- medical personnel speak of prepping patients for surgery -- but, I purposefully use it.

exclusively for Inuit since 1967, have more local authority than Inuit in the NWT system where many managers are non-native but, I have argued, the staff of the Montreal based distribution centre for northern Quebec co-ops, La Fédération des Coopératives du Nouveau-Québec, continues to dominate.

Although Inuit continued to trap and engage in subsistence activities, the co-op provided many more opportunities for wage labour than existed previously. and it also developed the simple commodity production of stone sculpture to a point far surpassing the traders' success in commodifying fur. Its greatest impact was in transforming virtually every adult into a simple commodity producer. Co-ops attempted to be multi-purpose, but arts and crafts have been the most successful production activity, mainly because, I have suggested, it utilizes a resource no-one else wants, rock, but also because of intensive efforts exerted by the federal bureaucracy to promote it. Inuit art has become a national icon.

In spite of greater opportunities for earned income, welfare pay-outs continued to escalate, probably because opportunities for spending increased along with irreversible dependence on imported items. Transformation at the level of consumption occurred along with transformation at the level of production.

Ownership of purchased means of production was personal, but large Peterhead boats were usually communal property (this has changed), used by everyone for hunting trips and family migrations, although under the direction of an individual.

As dependence upon bought goods increased, it became less practical to

keep dog teams which required feeding. The ski-doo became a widespread alternative in spite of its cost, unreliability, and need for maintenance. Similarly, canoes and outboard motors became an attractive alternative to kayaks.

The simple commodity production of carvings necessitated new tools and greater efforts to quarry stone. Because the market values hand-crafted "primitive" work, carving tools remain mainly non-mechanized although imported art forms, such as print-making, utilize modern printing presses and other equipment according to the means and technical expertise available. Stone quarrying is difficult and shortages have become a serious problem.

The net result of imported technology was a greater need for cash to purchase and maintain it. Inuit were trapped. The more manufactured stuffs they needed, the more cash they had to have. And in order to get cash they needed manufactured items. A second effect of the new technology was the enhanced prestige and power of those who succeeded in obtaining the cash and equipment they needed.

The irony, or the paradox, of the Eskimo cooperative is that while, in principle, it is a *collective* organization, in reality it promotes the individual. I have characterized the Eskimo co-op as the definitive link between the indigenous and the capitalist modes of production and, as such, it is a contradictory institution. Not only did it provide greater opportunities for earned income, it also assumed increasing authority over the terms and conditions of the simple commodity production of art since it was the mediator between market and artisan. From the

beginning, Inuit were told how and what to carve. There was, as I have described, some resistance to this, but, in the main, Inuit had no choice but to cooperate if they wanted to sell their work. The co-op also formalized the authority of Inuit over other Inuit, as I have shown, by designating some as managers with the power to make decisions, including hiring and firing.

The disposition of surplus in the co-op system is significant. Any surpluses earned over expenses are to be returned to the users in the form of dividends. The under-capitalized co-ops have, however, rarely been able to pay dividends so, although in theory, those who do most business with the co-op receive greater gains, this has not been a significant factor contributing to a disparity in wealth.

The co-op has, however, contributed to a disparity in wealth through the differential reward of talent in spite of the fact that, in an ideal co-op, talent is exploited for the benefit of all. In practice, the work of "better" carvers commands higher prices, enabling this group to accumulate wealth which they use to upgrade capital equipment, thus facilitating production and providing yet more opportunity for the accumulation of wealth.

An important consideration is that Inuit leaders in the co-op system were chosen on the basis of new skills such as the ability to speak English and help the non-natives accomplish their business. Although Inuit managers have a new, institutionalized, authority, they are constrained by their local boards of directors (also a new role for Inuit) and by the non-native staffs of their distribution agencies.

The philosophy is that the southern distribution agencies must keep pace with the northern suppliers, but, in reality, the priorities of the two often diverge. The distribution agencies are the mediators of the contradictions of the co-op, attempting to further, in an egalitarian manner, the interests of their members in a capitalist economy. This is, I have suggested, an inevitable situation when activity in one mode of production is feeding activity in another, dominant mode. It was the job of the Eskimo development co-op not, as is usually the case, to provide an *alternative* to mainstream capitalism, but rather, to link producers definitively with it. This is not surprising since, as I have shown, the co-op was a state project. In an effort to camouflage its logical contradictions, the Eskimo co-op made full use of ideological practice.

To sum up, under the hegemony of the co-op, production relations shifted to favour the nuclear over the extended family group as the unit of production and consumption. Stone carvers owned their tools and controlled the compensation they received for their work. They also controlled their conditions of work, successfully incorporating carving into a work cycle which included subsistence hunting and gathering, wage labour and social assistance. But the co-op controlled what was made and how it was sold. The co-op also commodified labour and institutionalized lines of authority. Disparities in relative wealth reached new heights, and private ownership became the norm although food sharing practices continued. Food was shared; cash was not.

Co-op ideology promoted the idea that Inuit could be independent, and

equal partners in the Canadian economy, but its effect was to create an organization aligned with state and church and responding to capitalist priorities.

As for ethnic identity, Jenness (1964:128) referred to Inuit as "a fragmented race" lacking "all cohesion outside their family groups." They could not, he added, "comprehend the structure of a nation or understand the fires of nationalism." In cutting across kinship and denominational lines and utilizing ideology to pursue its aims, the co-op fanned an incipient "pan-Eskimeness," but at the same time, in its economic function, it contributed to discrimination through the asymmetrical relation of Inuit and non-Inuit, and institutionalized *intra*-ethnic inequalities by making bosses, managers and directors out of some Inuit and employees and customers out of other, and also by promoting a split between NWT and Quebec Inuit.

A further twist in the development of nationalistic sentiment occurs in the way that Inuit were used -- by the national state in helping to establish authority over the Canadian Arctic, and by the province of Quebec in its bid to achieve greater leverage in the national polity. Inuit resisted being used by Quebec to assert its provincial sovereignty and attempted to cast their lot with the more powerful federal government. Opposition to the Quebec takeover resulted in a new alignment of Indian and Inuit interests.

The only successful economic activity Inuit were involved in was soapstone carving and it also had a buttressing/undermining effect on Inuit identity. Potentially a vehicle for expression and cultural retention, it has failed to fully play

this role, because of the pressure to sell. Social commentary is not often a feature of Inuit art, which Carpenter (n.d:14) describes as "not the art of a free people."

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, an Inuit resistance movement could be detected. This took the form, mainly, of attempting to recapture past practices (dog teams *etc.*) but, also, stronger expressions such as the Inuit takeover of the NWT co-op movement. There has also been a movement towards ethnic solidarity with Inuit from other nations.² The co-op has, significantly, not participated in these larger movements which it perceives to be a threat to its power base.

As early as 1970, some Inuit were talking about taking their land in their own hands. What was likely meant at that time was having a greater say in the running of their own affairs. They wanted, as Silas Cookie (in Laurence, 1970:2) said, "to work and use what they want and make it the way they want."

The co-op, riddled with contradictions, must be viewed as something of an ideological sham, purporting to further the interests of the collectivity while promoting the individual; purporting to support communalism and cooperation while fostering private ownership and competition; purporting to make people free, but locking them definitively into class relations.

It is mainly with reference to stone carvers that the articulation of capitalist and non-capitalist practices is enunciated. Value created in the simple commodity process is transferred to the capitalist mode of production through unequal

² There are only about 109,000 Inuit worldwide.

exchange. Production which is not priced according to time and labour is exchanged for articles of consumption which *are* priced according to time and labour. Also, although most Inuit remained poor, the co-op facilitated the disparity of wealth by providing some with an opportunity to earn more, and by institutionalizing the differential rewarding of merit.

All Inuit are, in theory, owners of the co-op, but some are powerless to affect decisions and critical of the co-op which they do not identify as theirs. The co-op has been unable to reproduce its hegemony. Its underground power was not ratified, and the development corporations created as the result of land claims negotiations have taken its place as the dominant institution. The co-op failed to make a political link.

The state introduces development corporations

In 1973, the Canadian state acknowledged its responsibility to negotiate land settlements with native groups. Comprehensive claims, based on use and occupancy of the land, resulted in the creation of negotiating bodies from among Inuit, but the impetus for their formation came from the state which was anxious to secure rights to natural resources which the multinationals were champing at the gate to develop. The new leaders, a wholly new kind of talking chief, are signing away the land and aboriginal rights of their fellow Inuit in return for limited entitlement to land, and varying amounts of cash channelled through "designated Inuit organizations," called development corporations.

It is interesting to note that the native development corporation is an

umbrella organization, embodying economic and political power. Makivik Corporation in Quebec has, for instance, the double mandate of making money and preserving Inuit culture. The co-op considers Makivik a threat to its economic activity as well as to its political ambitions. There has, however, been some effort in recent years to collaborate with Makivik on the strength of a promise made by the Quebec prime minister (René Lévesque) in 1983 that he would give Inuit regional government if they could strike a common position. Several years later, not much has happened.

Makivik is clearly a serious challenge to co-op hegemony. In a capitalist system, co-ops cannot avoid marginal status. Unable to compete economically or politically, the co-op inevitably falls back on ideological appeals which are, however, ineffectual in anything but the short term.

The land claims process has also sparked a significant resistance movement among Inuit, although not of an order to disrupt state-sponsored mega-projects. In the main, a significant body of Inuit continues to cooperate with the national ruling class, uncritically embracing the model of western capitalism. The domination of the capitalist mode of production is aided and abetted by a native ruling class (which, paradoxically, grew out of the body of post servants *etc.*, which one might assume to be potential affiliates of the working class). This is in spite of the fact that the consequence of the domination of capital is a people dispossessed of their land, unemployed, and disregarded in the Canadian constitution.

The balance of communal and competitive forces that obtained in the indigenous mode of production was disrupted irreversibly as Inuit practices became more aligned with those in the dominant capitalist mode of production. The dispossession of Inuit from the forces of production (land, water and natural resources) was the definitive move in the drama. Inuit have lost any potential that might have existed in 1970 when Silas Cookie declared in Great Whale River that they wanted to make what they want, when they want, with what they want.

Inuit are still hunters and fishers. They are also employees and simple commodity producers selling raw pelts and stone carvings to the HBC, co-op or other agency. The development corporation has provided some employment for Inuit, but more for non-Inuit.³ It has made a number of Inuit powerful and wealthy, their power resting upon control rather than ownership. The development corporation is not likely to create wealth for its Inuit shareholders, as its activity is restricted to renewable resource development, with non-renewable resource development reserved, as always, for the multinationals.

The shareholders of the development corporations have no real control over them and, I have concluded, since they exist on state capital, they are, like the co-op a form of bastardized state property embodying fully capitalist relations (whereas some co-op practices keep it linked with the indigenous mode of production). The test of that is whether or not relations of inequality are

³ The following figures were provided to me by Makivik (1992): Makivik, 60% non-Inuit; Air Inuit, 70% non-Inuit; First Air, 90% non-Inuit; Kigaq, 90% non-Inuit; Seaku, 50% non-Inuit; Halutik Fuel, 70% non-Inuit; Utuutik Leasing, 60% non-Inuit.

institutionalized -- *i.e.*, whether they can be reproduced. In the capitalist mode of production, the working class creates a surplus which benefits the ruling/owning class. Inuit hunters generate a surplus which continues to be shared, but under different conditions. Sharing now resembles the practice of equal exchange in the capitalist mode of production, whereby people exchange objects and services in an informal way and Bone and Green (1985:17) have referred to the fact that some people consider themselves "off the sharing system."

Surpluses created in simple commodity production are retained by the producer for the use of his/her immediate family as are wages, and the surplus earned by the co-op is usually retained to finance expansion, although it is sometimes returned to patrons in the form of a patronage dividend. The development corporations exist to benefit all Inuit, and profits are distributed at the direction of its board in the form of public projects. The development corporations have effected a distribution of power, perpetuating a dependent "ruling class" and controlling the allocation of resources.

Inuit have, I argue, been incorporated into the Canadian class structure, but unequally. The capital controlled by the development corporations is not self generated, but state-dispensed, which precludes involvement in mainstream industrial development except under conditions imposed by the state. Also, Inuit are a denigrated ethnic group which precludes involvement in mainstream political power. Like the co-ops, the native development corporations have the effect of keeping Inuit out of the way of the multinationals.

A stronger sense of nationalism is emerging as a reaction to treatment as a discrete ethnic group (land claims settlements necessitate formal definition of who belongs and who does not belong to this group). The state attempts to contain nationalist movements -- by co-opting leaders and providing some concessions -- but, as we are seeing with reference to the Mohawks in Quebec, coercion will be used when necessary. The containment project continues to be facilitated by the ruling class which was, after all, created by the state to help it accomplish an appropriation of the forces of production.

Inuit resistance has taken three forms: non-confrontational (such as language preservation); confrontational (such as public protests and limited subversive activity), and politically organized modes (such as land claims negotiations and the manipulation of pan-Eskimo sentiment). In the main, however, Inuit have bought into the dominant ideology to the point, even, of supporting one of the state's main objectives, the establishing of sovereignty over the Arctic (to further the primary objective of the accumulation of wealth). I have called this "ironic" since before they began signing land claim agreements, Inuit were sovereigns of the Arctic.

Implications for theory

That, then, is the story. But it is not sufficient to merely describe what happened. In chapter one, I set myself the task of evaluating the two major theories of social change, articulationism and dependency, the point being to determine an appropriate framework for analysis of outcome in a situation of imperialist

contact. There are points of convergence in the two perspectives, especially concerning the role of classes, but I have concluded that the articulationist perspective is more useful for an analysis of social change as the outcome of imperialism. The dependency perspective has not resulted in the development of useful class models; nor has it provided much analytical weaponry, tending, in my view, to be mainly descriptive. Articulationist thinking has, however, provided the superb analytic concept of simultaneous undermining/reinforcing effects which, as I have shown, is useful in understanding changes in the Inuit situation.

My quarrel with the articulationists would be that, in some cases, they try too hard to distinguish an excessive variety of modes of production.⁴ It seems to me that there are only two possibilities: a capitalist and a communal version, with transitional variations. An indigenous, self-contained (uncontaminated by contact) mode of production, such as that sustained by Inuit production practices before contact, contains a balance of forces -- capitalist and communal -- which, upon contact, is altered in one direction or another. Indeed, the capitalist mode of production and the communal mode of production could also be regarded as particular balances of capitalist and communal forces -- with one or the other dominating.

There are, as I observed in chapter one, three concepts at issue in this

⁴ Meillassoux (1972:93) pointed out that Marx's analysis of primitive societies focussed largely on the historical succession of modes of production rather than on their inner workings, and what is needed is an analysis of the type which Marx made of capitalism. As Meillassoux says (p.91): "Man, Marxist anthropologists, unfortunately, seem to have followed Marx in the weakest area of his analysis; the endless reconstruction of a succession of hypothetical pre-capitalist formations."

thesis: *modes of production, class and nationalism*. Both perspectives postulate the process of transformation as being mediated through "classes," a collective rather than an individual reality and a concept which captures relationships among people as they make their own history, although never under circumstances of their own choosing. To quote Eric Olin Wright (1979:88), to talk about class and class struggle is to talk about "a certain *constellation* of motives/consciousness in the actors," rather than individual psychology.

Both articulationists and dependency theorists have posited the alliance of classes as an explanation for social transformation and, indeed, this has been the case for Inuit. Each wave of northern invaders sought facilitators from among the indigenous people to help them accomplish their purposes. At first informal and largely indistinguishable from their peers, the "talking chiefs" phenomenon gradually escalated into a more formal syndrome whereby leaders with class based power are facilitating the state/industrial take-over of the land and resources. As articulationist Taylor wrote (1979:236-237):

Unless imperialism can establish the political dominance of a class or an alliance of classes which can gain ideological support amongst sectors of the population and intervene, via the state, in the combination of modes of production to promote the dominance of the capitalist mode, the reproduction of the capitalist social relations necessary for the enlarged reproduction of the capitalist mode cannot be guaranteed.

Similarly, dependency theorists have argued that the process of dependency is facilitated by a "comprador bourgeoisie."

Bonacich (1980) has pulled together the issues involved in the dependency/articulationist arguments, and developed a workable model of the

possible relationships. Her point is that nationalism both grows out of class relations and prevents alliances from forming across class lines (p.211). As I have demonstrated with reference to Inuit, nationalism is manipulated by both ruling and exploited classes to temper other relationships.

At issue in both articulationism and dependency is the *identification* of classes. Although it is clear that the invasion of the Arctic was facilitated by groups from within the dominated population, their identity as a class is problematic. In chapter one, I referred to the relations of production/relations of exchange controversy which dates from the Dobb/Sweezy debate of the 1950s and is continued in the more recent Frank/Laclau debate. For articulationists, classes are defined by relations of production (labour rather than markets) while, for dependency theorists, it is relations of exchange which are important. Like world systems theorists, the latter equate capitalism with exchange, arguing that it is trade which transforms relations of production (Brenner, 1977:55). In this view, all is, indeed, as Gunder-Frank says, capitalism.

The articulationists counter, however, that to equate capitalism with market relations is an unwarranted gloss which ignores the variability of capital and the persistence of non-capitalist practices. Capital, they point out, might even reinforce some of those practices. As Foster-Carter (1978:51) says:

On the contrary, this capitalism [in articulationism] neither evolves mechanically from what precedes it, nor does it necessarily dissolve it. Indeed, so far from banishing precapitalist forms, it not only co-exists with them but buttresses them, and even on occasions devilishly conjures them up *ex nihilo*.

The articulationist argument, which I have demonstrated with reference to Inuit, is that capital *simultaneously* undermines and buttresses preceding modes and forms (Meillassoux, 1972; Rey, 1972; Bradby, 1975).

The indigenous mode of production persists, then, as long as, and to the extent that it is functional for capital. This is clearly demonstrated in the case of contact between capital and the Inuit indigenous mode of production. Inuit producers were encouraged to stay on the land and hunt. Their labour power was not needed, but they were needed to deliver raw materials, and eventually, the land itself, to capital. Also, as Meillassoux (1972:102) suggests, non-capitalist practices are useful to capital as a form of "social security." The subsistence hunting which continues among Inuit is not merely a form of resistance (as people try to hold on to or recapture the past), but has a role to play in facilitating capital.⁵ As Meillassoux argues, the preservation of non-capitalist practices counteracts the tendency of the rate of profit to fall by allocating some of the costs of the reproduction of labour to "a source exogenous to capital" (1975:8, as summarized by O'Laughlin, 1977:7).

For Rey (1973), however, the destruction/maintenance effect of capital has only to do with the resistance of the non-capitalist mode since capital has only one project, to destroy all other modes of production with which it comes in contact. It seems clear that both factors have been operative in the penetration of the indigenous mode of production by the capitalist mode of production. We have

⁵ Subsistence hunting continues to provide the major source of protein for most Inuit.

seen that an important motivation of the state program was to increase Inuit self sufficiency in order to reduce social assistance pay-outs. This is a good example of the juggling of priorities implicit in the reinforcing/undermining thesis. The goal of contact is subjugation/dominance but, at the same time, some independence is nurtured because of its positive effect on the rate of profit. Similarly, a certain amount of resistance -- such as the back-to-the-land movement and revival of accompanying folkways -- is tolerated and even encouraged as being conducive to peaceful, *i.e.*, cooperative penetration as opposed to one that is coercive and costly (in dollars and legitimation points). The latter is, however, always a possibility if capitalism loses control, as it can when legitimation fails and resistance becomes the *modus operandi* of the dominated.⁶

Rey may be correct in his assumption that violence is an inevitable accompaniment to capitalist penetration. The forces against this are, of course, the alliances the CMP has established *within* the indigenous mode of production which, like the relations between nations as described by Cardoso and Faletto (1979:173) "are made possible through a network of interests and coercions that bind some social groups to others, some classes to others." Ideological hegemony ensures that Inuit do not realize power through numbers, but cooperate with the alliance.

⁶ The armed resistance of Mohawk Indians at Oka during the summer of 1990 is an example of this.

A network of interests

I have attempted to demonstrate the network of interests between the state and a new social group in the indigenous mode of production which I consider a class in both the objectivist (as the effects of structures) and the subjectivist sense (as the result of conscious human agency). The latter is easily demonstrated and needs no elaboration here. The structural argument is harder to make, but important if we are to develop a general theory of social transformation rather than settle for a description of history. Althusser's project was to liberate history from temporality, and to do this, he says, we must conceive of individuals as *agents* of history rather than merely actors (his distinction). In any mode of production, individuals are anonymous and interchangeable (Althusser, 1976:202).

It is important to keep in mind that class formations are not static but, rather, indicative of a process. Also, while the emergence of an Inuit "ruling" class is clear, a working class cannot be said to exist in the full sense of the word, since most Inuit remain subsistence hunters and simple commodity producers. They are isolated and disorganized, and until recently, they lacked structures for political action. These same people are *now*, however, shareholders in the development corporations, a role which has some potential for a coalition of interests. As McAll (1990:114) observes, the irony in the creation of capitalist relations of production is that, while such relations ensure the accrual of surplus value to an appropriating class, "at the same time they create possibilities for class association on the part of the producers, possibilities that have never previously existed to the

same extent."

It is interesting to note that the same group of subsistence hunters, simple commodity producers, and shareholders has the potential of forming a labour pool for capital. What matters is not the individuals, nor their overlap, but the possibilities for new relationships which now exist.

I spent some time in chapter one discussing the post-structuralist concept of individuals and classes (Keat and Urry, 1978; Bourdieu, 1979) which attempts to reconcile the subjectivist/objectivist dichotomy through a reconciliation of structuralism and ethnomethodology. As Keat and Urry (1978:193) posit: "All human action is caused or determined by the patterns of both social relations and individual meanings." Bourdieu (*chap. 1*) argues that it is the element of time which links thought to action, objective to subjective. Human action is, he argues, mediated by the habitus. I will not repeat here Bourdieu's elegant argument concerning the theory of practice and the combined role of conscious human agency and structured disposition, the habitus, but want to stress that while free choice may be a factor, as we have seen in the case of Inuit opposition to the Quebec bureaucracy, what may *appear* to be free action can be a more determined effect (in this case, Inuit were clearly a pawn in the Quebec/Ottawa struggle). The phrase from Marx is apt (*18th Brumaire*, in Althusser, 1976:98): "Men make their own history, but they do not make it out of freely chosen elements under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given by and transmitted from the past."

The concept of class is useful as an attempt to delineate the limits of determination, but, ultimately, what is needed is a theory of human nature which will pin down the hidden structures of conscious action. Taking for granted the existence of these hidden structures (Bourdieu's "habitus" will do for now), we can talk about the collective behaviour of individuals, regardless of its conscious or unconscious nature, which we are terming "class" behaviour.

Perhaps some synthesis of psychoanalysis and sociology will one day result in a more refined version of class, but I believe that Wright's model is at this time, the only useful one we have for linking theory and sociological reality (*i.e.*, observable behaviour). Without analyzing the conscious mind (as Bourdieu does), Wright focuses on observable behaviour and demonstrable effects to distinguish between classes: control over the physical means of production, labour power and investment and resource allocation. As a secondary line of reference, he proffers the criteria of immediate interests (wages, living conditions, ethnic discrimination) and fundamental interests (defined across modes of production). I assume the members of the Inuit bourgeoisie (if we can call them that) do not share fundamental interests with the national bourgeoisie *because* they do not possess capital. But I have suggested that this distinction between immediate and fundamental interests is critical for explaining relations resulting from contact between the capitalist and a non-feudal mode of production. A strict application of Wright's model would have us treating simple commodity producers as a mode of production in an intermediate position between the indigenous mode of

production and the capitalist mode of production (a transitional mode). But this is, I believe, an unnecessarily arbitrary semantic argument, for producers can enjoy any degree of autonomy *within* the CMP (as Chevalier, 1982 argues). Wright may not have entirely escaped evolutionary thinking.

The proposition that capital "creates a world after its own image" should not be simplistically interpreted. The kind of dependent capitalism which results from imperialism is, to use a phrase coined by Foster-Carter, "a deformed progeny." When I began this project, I naively supposed that there was the same potential for resistance as cooperation. As I think is clear from the discussion of the last several chapters, however, there are powerful forces countering resistance, not least of which is what seems to be a universal pull towards the goal of capitalism, the accumulation of wealth. The allure of the capitalist promise results in an easy cooperation, but, as I have attempted to show, it is a denigrated ruling class that is created within the indigenous mode of production. Although this may be a different application of the term than Wright intended, the immediate interests of Inuit -- their universal unemployment, their poverty and, above all else, the fact of their ethnicity -- militate against equal incorporation or, even, co-existence. It is only when this reality is acknowledged, that effective resistance can be mounted. Until then, the actors play a game based on the illusion of equality.

As Wallerstein maintained (1975b:373) "ethno-national consciousness is the constant resort of all those for whom class organization offers the risk of a loss of relative advantage through the normal workings of the market and [as is true for

the Inuit bourgeoisie] class-dominated political bargaining." Bonacich as well, has argued (1972) that racism and nationalism are utilized by the dominated and not just by dominating groups. The use of racism by the state and, in a reactionary way, by Inuit leaders is obvious, but, far from being a spontaneous resistance to capitalist domination, nationalist movements are mounted by particular classes -- dominated and dominating -- to further their *class* interests and, as Bonacich (1980:23) argues, "nationalism at one level tends to provoke counter-nationalism at other levels." The current Indian war which is escalating in Canada might be evidence of a failure of negotiation which can only be dealt with by coercion/violence,⁷ but Inuit resistance continues to be tempered by the promise/hope of negotiation.

Equality -- political, economic and social -- is denied, then, on the basis of ethnic affiliation, leaving no option for the excluded but to form a solidarity based upon the fact of their ethnicity. They are interdependent phenomena. But there is no warrant, I think, to consider that, on the basis of immediate interests, *all* Inuit are part of the exploited working class, national and/or international; for, as we have seen, in relation to their own ethnic group, there is an exploiting group which controls capital. Class distinctions are, therefore, bisecting ethnic relations.

⁷ Even so, Indian unity in the Oka debacle was uncertain, as the "warrior" faction was quickly labelled illegitimate by politicians whose views are promoted in the media. It was not long before other Indians were echoing the same refrain and threatening to throw the warring faction off the reserve. Similarly, when the Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Ovide Mercredi, declared at the February 1992 constitutional conference that the aboriginal people also wanted, like Quebec, distinct society status, the politicians immediately moved to exploit internal tensions by challenging Mercredi's authority to speak for all natives.

The difficulty in achieving ethnic unity seems to me to be powerful evidence that class relations are determinant.⁸ There is a significant group of Inuit which perceives its interests to be better served by alliance with the non-native dominating class, as witnessed, by Makivik's advice to Inuit that they should cooperate with rather than challenge James Bay II.

There is evidence of new, class, relations taking hold *within* the indigenous mode of production. It is not a case of incorporation, but of the transforming of the indigenous mode into another mode, and the question is whether or not it is the same or a different kind of capitalism. Bourgeault (1988b:79) refers to the "peripheral form of capitalism" which resulted from the contact of Indians with merchant capital in the nineteenth century, and this term could be used with reference to Inuit. Foster Carter's reference to "a deformed progeny" is a seductive analogy; for, it does seem that while it shares similarities, capitalism in the "periphery" is different from the dominating mode of production, just as children share many factors of inheritance and influence with their parents and siblings but are, nonetheless, "unique." It is, I believe, a matter of distance. The closer one is, the more differences one notes. The greater the distance, the greater the perception of homology. I have been taking a broad perspective in this thesis, from which vantage point I agree with Gunder-Frank and the world system theorists, that resistances and peculiarities apart, all is, indeed, capitalism

⁸ Perhaps the neo-Marxists are correct in their claim that class concerns will, eventually, override race and ethnic divisions. The prime minister of Canada and the premiers of Ontario and Quebec have much to lose in an all-out ethnic war between the French and the English, although within limits it serves to camouflage their mutual economic interests.

and the "concrete social totality," as Wolpe (1975:241) calls it, is "constituted by the complex articulation of class relations within racial or ethnic groups, as well as the relation of classes across these groups..." To further complicate the matter, there are also the corresponding ideological and political practices to consider.

As Bonacich argues (1980:21), one point that can be made about nationalism is that its emergence *depends* upon the structure of the entire set of relationships -- *i.e.*, it is contingent upon where a group fits within the entire world capitalist system and how others react to it. She goes further, saying that although nationalism calls upon "primordial bonds of affiliation, it both grows out of the class relations generated by the development of class and imperialism and represents efforts to create or prevent alliances across class lines." I believe I have demonstrated this, showing the conditions under which ethnic and racial affiliation are invoked and hinting at the conditions under which it will lead to conflict.

I have come to believe that the argument as to whether class or ethnic relations are primary, is a false one. It is more important to demonstrate their interplay/articulation. As Althusser (1979:III-112) stresses, Marx attacked economism. He quotes from a letter from Engels to J. Bloch (1890) in which Engels argues that production is the determinant factor, but only "'in the last instance': More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted." Ethnic relations are not reducible to, or synonymous with, class relations. It may be that the latter do, ultimately, predominate (although at any given juncture, the opposite may

appear to be the case). As Wright argues (1978:1390), capitalism simultaneously *undermines* and *reproduces* nationalism (just as it simultaneously undermines and reproduces practices in the indigenous mode of production).

With reference to my proposed theory of transformation (*chap. 1:6-8*), I believe I have demonstrated that pre-contact Inuit were involved in practices which fall near the end of the communal extreme on a continuum which has as its two points of reference, the contradictory forces of capitalism and communalism. Contact was with competitive capitalism and Inuit practices were both buttressed and undermined. Although indigenous practices persist to the extent that they facilitate the creation of wealth, they are gradually being replaced with capitalist practices. An indigenous ruling class, an "ethnic bourgeoisie," was created to facilitate this process against which only weak resistance, based on the perception of a shared ethnic identity, has been mounted.

In the case of Inuit, a sense of ethnic identity resulted from contact with successive waves of invaders embodying various instances of the capitalist mode of production. The driving force for the invasion was to obtain resources and, as long as this could be accomplished, it was not in the interests of capital to immediately replace indigenous practices. Indeed, their selective maintenance had a salutary effect on the accumulation of profit. Inevitably, however, indigenous practices were undermined as Inuit joined in the capitalist game, becoming producers and consumers and relinquishing control over the forces and means of production. Still, an articulation of capitalist and non-capitalist practices persists

as, indeed, it does in mainstream capitalism (in the form of bartering, simple commodity production *etc.*).

The indigenous mode of production has been irrevocably transformed. Inuit are now involved in class relations of a capitalist nature and, concomitant with this transformation, is an increasingly conscious recognition of, not to mention the need to face the consequences of, inequality based upon ethnicity. The drive for ethno-regional collective rights is *coincident* with transformed economic relations but, as I suspected, this is not *coincidental*.

Appendix

Some Comments on the Relevant Arctic Literature

The literature on the Canadian Arctic has been difficult to work with for my purposes. The focus of the early ethnographies and explorers' accounts is geography and the exotic customs of the native people. Later accounts, based on fieldwork in the 1950s and 1960s, tend to be community studies containing little analysis and little direct evidence of relationships either *inter* or *intra*-ethnic. The problem is, I believe, that the Inuit have been mainly studied and analyzed within the framework of the old anthropology, rather than being treated as an integral component of Canadian society.

Work in the area has been informed by models of modernization (*e.g.*, Vallee, Smith and Cooper, 1984), culture conflict (*e.g.*, Brody, 1977; 1987), staple theory (*e.g.*, Rea, 1968), colonialism (*e.g.*, Honigmann and Honigmann, 1965; 1970; Paine, 1971), or power relations (*e.g.*, Usher, 1965; 1970).

Oriented to a weberian power/conflict model, Vallee's work (1967a especially) is exceptional in that he focussed attention on the non-native residents in the North and the relationships between Inuit and non-Inuit, an approach which enabled him to detect an internal nascent stratification based on adaptation to the outsiders. Furthermore, the first sociological paper on the arctic co-op system was Vallee's "Notes on the Cooperative Movement and Community Organization in the Canadian Arctic," (1964).

Rare is the study which focusses as I do here on modes of production in the Arctic. A notable exception is Bernard's 1977 article which gives a central place to modes of production, but does not take into account implications for nationalism, an important concern of mine. To my knowledge, there have been no analyses of the kind I offer here, combining an examination of the articulation of modes of production and the transformation of Inuit relationships with an examination of the related development of an ethnic identity and Inuit nationalism.

The Early Contact Period

Since the Inuit language was spoken not written, there is no recorded pre-contact history, and reconstruction of the indigenous community must rely upon the earliest accounts of explorers who first came into contact with them. Although these contacts with Inuit, who can be assumed to have been found in an uncontaminated state, have been substantially documented in a variety of sources, they were not compiled by social scientists, but by adventurers who observed at a distance (from on board ship usually), could not speak the language, and who were hobbled with ethnocentric biases. They noted folkways and what were to them startling departures from European behaviour, but had no way, if it even occurred to them, of documenting relationships. As Trigger (1987:115) says, "native cultures were not viewed as groups of people interacting with each other and with their environments." He was writing specifically of Indian cultures, but

the same can be said of the Inuit which, like Canadian Indian societies, were "assumed to have been stable prior to European intervention, not because native people were uncreative, but because each cultural pattern represented a successful and hence stable adaptation of a people to its natural environment..."

Das (1975:252) concluded that "the literature on the Eskimo is probably the most extensive of that devoted to any people traditionally studied by anthropologists." Oswalt (1969:198ff.) provides a good summary of ethnographic work on the Inuit. Lyon (1824), Parry (1824, 1825) and Rae (1850, 1866) recorded ethnographic data on the Iglulik Eskimo. The Netsilik had been encountered by John Ross in 1829 and George Back in 1834, but not really described until the Norwegian, Roald Amundsen, wintered with them in 1903-05, followed by Rasmussen in 1921-23. The Copper Eskimo were described by Hanbury in 1904 and by Jenness (1922); the Caribou Eskimo by Birket-Smith (1929); South Baffin Inuit by Boas (1888; 1901-7), and the Sadlermiut by Lyon (1825) and Matthiassen (1927). In contrast, the Inuit who inhabited arctic Quebec are poorly known except for Turner's 1882-4 fieldwork in Ungava. E.W. Hawkes (1916) provided the major work on the Labrador Eskimo.

The work of Franz Boas on the Central Eskimo (his field work was conducted in 1883-1884 in Cumberland Sound on Baffin Island) is particularly valuable in that he lived with the Eskimo, learning the language and travelling by boat and dogsled. He writes (1888:255):

Afterwards, when I travelled all over the Sound and visited all the settlements of the country, I saw quite a number of old men and women

who remembered the old time thoroughly, when they were more numerous and no white men visited their land, when they hunted the whale and pursued the deer with bow and arrow only. By their help I filled up the lacunae of my knowledge and learned about the old wanderings of these tribes.

The most useful ethnographic accounts of early contact Inuit are contained in the Reports (which run to ten volumes) of the Fifth Thule Expedition led by Rasmussen which arrived, as Damas (1984:395) puts it, "at the brink of the transition throughout the central Arctic between either aboriginal or whaling periods on the one hand and the advent of trading posts on the other." Trading posts had been established in the Canadian Arctic in the nineteenth century, but they are generally considered to have had a minimal impact upon the way Inuit lived until much later. Rasmussen's point (1931:471) concerning the Back River Eskimo (the Utkukikjalingmiut) would have been true for many Inuit. They were, he writes:

...not entirely ignorant of white men and white men's habits...it was so far to the nearest trading post that with their method of travelling, it often took them about six months to get there and back. Only the young men made these trading journeys, and therefore none of the older men and women of the tribe had seen white men.

One of his colleagues, Birket-Smith (1929:177) made a similar observation concerning the Caribou Eskimo: "At the time of my stay among them, very few travellers had visited their country, the two or three Hudson's Bay posts had been established only a few years before, and many women and children had never seen a white man." In 1908-1918, Vilhjalmur Stefansson and R.M. Anderson made a study of the Copper Eskimo, whose hunting grounds lay between Cape Wise and

the Coppermine and who, it is believed, were the only remaining Eskimo who had not yet come into direct contact with Europeans (Neatby, 1984:384).

Although we may safely assume that Inuit practices were relatively uncontaminated by European influence until after the turn of this century, and that those early ethnographers and explorers found them in a relatively "pure" state, this does not fully compensate for the lack of a pre-contact history. Such a history *did* exist in the heads of the elders, and some of the stories these informants told have been incorporated into the ethnographic accounts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as later reconstructions (e.g., Graburn, 1969). Oral history is still alive, but must be used with caution after contact because of the likelihood of its having been "contaminated" by reconstructed and imported versions of reality.

There are numerous latter day compilations and comparative analyses of information contained in the early ethnographies and, among them, Weyer's *The Eskimos: Their Environment and Folkways* (1962) is both comprehensive and useful.

Oswalt (1979:268) comments that most Eskimo groups were "discovered" by the explorers who were neither historians nor ethnologists but, as he concludes, without the accounts of men like Lyon, Parry, Holm and Kane, "our knowledge of aboriginal Eskimo life would be distressingly bland." Trigger (1987:168) issues, however, a warning that the Europeans who came in contact with the native people had "almost inevitably a deficient understanding of their behaviour." They

might have recorded what they saw accurately, but as he suggests, "the motives that they ascribed to native peoples and their interpretations of what these people were doing are often erroneous and ethnocentric." He, himself, considers that "even factual descriptions of native behaviour are sometimes too brief and too contaminated by European literary conventions to be either trustworthy or useful as anthropological documents." It is such deficiencies, aggravated by a lack of analysis and an unthinkingly evolutionary perspective, that resulted in what I have argued is the erroneous, but widespread, view that pre-contact Inuit lived in a state of "primitive communism."

The whaling period

Oswalt (1979:206) comments that the whalers were not interested in Eskimo customs or "if they were, they didn't write about them." Perhaps for this reason, the impact of whaling on the aboriginal population was long overlooked.

Fortunately, the period has been meticulously researched and documented by Ross (1975). Although his focus was not relationships, the wealth of material he provided has made it possible to analyze transformations that resulted from whaler/Inuit contact with a reassuring degree of completeness and certainty.

Ross mined logbooks and journals "to piece together a development of whaling in the Arctic regions and to assess its impact on the native peoples" (1984:29), but his major work, *Whaling and Eskimos: Hudson Bay 1860-1915*, has remained relatively unknown, probably because it has been available only as a museum publication (now out of print) and perhaps because its scrupulously

academic style sometimes obscures the larger picture. This invaluable work is not intended for casual readers; it is a scholarly production incorporating a staggering amount of detail and a myriad of references.

Ross' student, Daniel Francis, has popularized the era with the 1984 publication of a book which draws heavily upon his mentor's work. And Ross, himself, has written a lengthy introduction to the recently published (1984) journal of Captain George Comer which is really a synthesis of his earlier research and analysis.

Although there are no recorded accounts by Inuit of the period, a recent publication by Eber (1989), *When the Whalers Were Up North: Inuit Memories from the Eastern Arctic*, has redressed somewhat the lack of an Inuit viewpoint. Eber documents some memories of encounters with whalers in the Eastern Arctic, but these are rather skimpy, undoubtedly tainted, and embodied in an unanalytical text.

Contact with traders, police and missionaries

Although contacts during the early decades of the nineteenth century have been substantially treated in a variety of sources -- some first hand accounts, and some reconstructed analyses -- I have imposed a new order on this literature through the extraction of evidence of changed relationships among Inuit, as well as their relationships with agents of the capitalist mode of production.

The work of Vallee (1967a), Graburn (1969) and Usher (1965, 1970) has been particularly useful in documenting changes in lifestyle. In general, this body

of literature contains little analysis, but is characterized by lifestyle descriptions. There is virtually no discussion or documentation of relationships between the Inuit and the outsiders except for Vallee's distinction between *nunamiut* (people who continued to live on the land) and *kabloonamiut* (people at ease with non-natives) which was particularly valuable for an understanding of how early relationships with the newcomers resulted in internal differentiation based on economic/social factors. Regrettably, his pioneering work has not, until now, received any scholarly follow up.

Analysis of the effects of the two missions, Anglican and Roman Catholic, on Inuit is, in particular, a serious lack in the literature. I have been forced to rely on piecemeal evidence gleaned from a wide variety of sources, although a recent publication by Choque (1987) on Roman Catholic missionary Joseph Buliard helped somewhat to redress the general lack of data.

Published material is scant. Lewis, an English gentleman living in London, wrote an early book on the work of the Anglican missionary, Peck (1904), but although it utilized the missionary's diaries, it is a pious account, written by a man with no first-hand experience and containing little information about the Eskimo and no sensitivity to their perceptions and practices. The missionary, Archibald Fleming, wrote one book (1965), and Winnifred Marsh, widow of the missionary Donald, published her husband's notes in 1987, a helpful addition to the literature.

I have discovered no analysis of the effect of the church, and there were virtually no Anglican mission records available for public scrutiny at Church House

in Toronto with the exception of some handwritten journals from a Pangnirtung nurse in the 1930s and some miscellaneous pamphlets, letters and notes from a few well-known missionaries -- Fleming, Marsh, Peck, Stringer and Bompas -- which were not particularly useful for my purposes.

The Roman Catholic codex, housed at Saint Paul's University in Ottawa would be an invaluable source of information on the Catholic mission, but I have not investigated this. It is surprising that those who lived and worked with the people -- Anglican or Roman Catholic -- seem not to have been inclined to philosophize on the experience in print. This may be due to the fact that few of the missionaries were of a scholarly bent. The Oblate missionaries were "worker-priests," many from Belgium and France and the Anglicans tended to originate from the British lower middle class. It is clear that there is a need for the same kind of painstaking research that Ross has done for the whaling period to elucidate the important impact the missions had on the people.

Similarly, there is no good data on the police. An official biography was commissioned from an English gentleman named Harwood Steele (*Policing the Arctic*), but this has the content of a Zane Grey comic, substituting imputation for knowledge, and moralizing for analysis.

The cooperative movement

Part IV of the thesis deals with the period after the inception of the cooperative movement, and I rely here on data of a rather different kind: my first hand experience as manager of arts and crafts development for the arctic Quebec co-

ops (1970-1980), and numerous original documents originating mainly from the co-ops, their distribution agencies, and the federal and territorial bureaucracy (minutes, letters, newspaper clippings, memorandums and reports) which I collected over a quarter of a century of involvement in the Canadian Arctic. This was the period when people came off the land, out of snow houses to live in wooden houses, run co-operatives and, eventually, become corporate shareholders.

Since this material is mostly unpublished, and since there has been virtually no analysis of the important Eskimo co-op movement,¹ I have included a great deal of evidence in my telling of this part of the story of contact. I have consulted more of this material than was required to illustrate points, but it was valuable to me in coming to conclusions to have perused as much of it as I did. For instance, although I was familiar with the general outlines of development -- and some aspects of it in considerable detail -- if I had not gone through as much material as I did, I might not have perceived the extent to which Inuit art was the focus of Canadian nationalism.

I have tried to be frugal with illustrative cases, restricting myself to those with direct relevance to my main argument of changing relations. But there are times when, in order to give a fuller picture of this unique phenomenon, I have included material which might be considered peripheral. It is to be hoped that other researchers will soon see fit to deal further with the Eskimo co-op and the material I have amassed will be made available for this purpose.

¹ Vallee (1964; 1967b) and Arbess (1966) published papers on the beginning of the Eskimo co-op, but these did not receive any scholarly follow-up.

Post land claims

Part IV, dealing with the settling of land claims and the emergence of the native development corporation, is less comprehensive than the preceding section on the cooperatives. Necessary to complete the argument of transformation to capitalist relations, it nonetheless, stands as a postscript to this thesis. The period it deals with is recent, and the documentation and analysis slim. This definitive period of transformation will soon need the same intensive treatment and analysis I have provided for the transformative effects of the co-operative.

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