

two parts is prefaced by a short commentary. The commentaries are succinct and provide a neat summation of the content and background of the documents they precede. While more detail in relation to many of the issues surrounding the Antarctic Treaty would have been welcome, for example concerning the significance of Article IV of the Antarctic Treaty, it is clear that the commentaries were intended to merely introduce topics rather than expound at length. In this task, they do an admirable job in informing the reader of an issue where it does exist, and the extensive accompanying bibliography indicates where further information can be sought. Short commentaries also precede each instrument, providing a context in which the material can be better appreciated and related to the other materials.

In short, this book is a useful tool for those engaged in research into the Antarctic Treaty, and into Australia's legislative responses to its Antarctic obligations. Its convenient size and content make it ideal for students, particularly those in Australian universities, approaching the ATS for the first time. Given, too, the heightened awareness and relevance of the ATS resulting from the entry into force of the Madrid Protocol, the book is also timely. (Stuart Kaye, Faculty of Law, University of Tasmania, GPO Box 252-89, Hobart, Tasmania 7001, Australia.)

GAINING GROUND? EVENKIS, LAND, AND REFORM IN SOUTHEASTERN SIBERIA. Gail A. Fondahl. 1998. Boston, London, Toronto: Allyn and Bacon (Cultural Survival Studies in Ethnicity and Change Series). xiv + 146 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-205-27579-6.

This short book is the first monograph of a well-read and well-travelled scholar of Siberian Evenki culture. Gail Fondahl has been collecting archival and oral accounts of Evenki reindeer pastoralism since 1987 and has pioneered a collaborative research project that has introduced Evenki political activists with their Canadian First Nation counterparts.

Given her long experience, this book captures only a slim part of Fondahl's accumulated field material. The intention of the work, as the series editors proclaim, is to provide a 'short, clear and accessible' account of an Evenki land tenure. The book to a great extent meets these objectives, but at many points the reader is left wanting either more detail or more explanation as to the significance of the presented facts.

The title points to the central theme of the book: have recent reforms since the fall of the Soviet state allowed this Siberian minority to negotiate a closer relationship with their land? The author argues that although the formation of recent 'clan' *obshina* territories have given this aboriginal nation more control over parcels of territory than they enjoyed in Soviet times, the relationship to these parcels is much more limited and fragile than the autonomy experienced in the pre-Soviet period. To make this nuanced argument, Fondahl marshals a wealth of historical evidence to establish how Evenki land tenure has

changed over time. In fact, of seven chapters, three are devoted to sketching out the different institutional settings of Evenki pastoralism from tsarist times, through the time of the revolution and subsequently collectivization, to the centralising reforms of the late Soviet period. These chapters set the stage, as it were, for the evaluation of the contemporary life of Evenki hunters and herders to be found in chapters six and seven.

The technique of understanding the ambiguity of the present through a recapitulation of the past is a well-worn trope in Soviet regional studies. To give credit to the author, it is a narrative technique that most middle-aged informants in the Russian Federation use themselves for communicating their life-histories. Most Russian language studies of Siberia mirror and reinforce this local style. In English, this narrative was most directly applied and analysed by Bruce Grant (1995) in his study of Nivkh village life. Fondahl borrows heavily from Grant's work by leaving us with the impression that the current market reforms are just one more 'perestroika' in a whole string of wrenching social experiments.

Of the several historical accounts of political change, by far the most valuable are from the tsarist period (chapter 3) and the early Soviet period (chapter 4). Drawing on rare archival documents and articles from regional journals, Fondahl sets Soviet colonial practice within a long history of Russian trade and mining in the region. Of special interest are her occasional observations of the effects of gold mining, institutionalised fur trapping, and military expansion on the landscape itself. Through each period, Evenkis are portrayed as somewhat passive but nonetheless capable actors within a complex state environment.

This account of several generations of reform in the rural areas to the east of Lake Baikal is enlivened by two literary illustrations of the flavour of Evenki life. In chapters 2 and 6, the author gives a composite account of the struggles that fictional protagonists might experience both before the Revolution and following the collapse of Soviet state socialism. These accounts are penetrating in their detail and demonstrate the author's sympathy and understanding of the culture. The intimacy of these accounts, however, sits somewhat uncomfortably with the interval accounts of mechanisms of Tsarist and Soviet power. In each period, the reader is given very clear maps and a lot of detail of how Evenki hunters and herders were monitored and eventually dispossessed of their 'clan' territories. However, it remains unclear why generations of state servants pursued such harsh and damaging policies. The various institutional impacts of Russian and Soviet state policy on Evenkis are made very clear, but they come across as equally malicious, or at least uniformly insensitive and misguided. The sense of tragedy (or paradox) could have been sharpened if the paternalistic and sometimes altruistic motives of these colonisers were made clearer. This observation is not important for merely stylistic reasons, but it would help the reader understand the sense of caution and hesitation with which present-day

Evenkis approach the present promise (or threat) of reform (chapter 7). Evenkis today reflect fondly upon the past. However, Evenkis (and other Siberian intellectuals) often choose only certain moments from the past with which to imagine a better future. These moments are not necessarily taken exclusively from the days of nomadic Soviets and roaming literacy brigades (as indicated here), but can often be a *mélange* of late-Soviet welfare socialism and pre-Soviet frontier-style anarchy.

To give an example, in chapter 4, Fondahl applies the term 'socialist land enclosure' to examine critically the peculiar idea of individual land-holding that was encouraged in the late 1960s in state farms all over Siberia. This type of *de facto* 'property ownership' (in a state that loathed private property) is contrasted here to an idyllic type of collective land-holding practised by Evenkis in the pre-Soviet and early Soviet period. This reader finds the idea of a socialist form of land enclosure to be evocative but inappropriately applied exclusively to the Lake Baikal region of the 1970s. In other parts of the book the reader learns of different types of rural administrations (*soveti*) and autonomous territories in the 1930s (as well as interesting autonomous enclaves in the nineteenth century) that form the basis of a collage of Evenki proposals for territorial autonomy in the 1990s. It would seem that the idea of enclosing land with imaginary lines is a fairly constant strategy in Transbaikalia (as in other parts of Siberia), and most importantly has not been solely a tool of Russian colonisation but has for a long time been a tool for Evenki self-determination. Instead of relying too heavily on historically constituted contrasts, it might have been more interesting to examine how the importance of constructing boundaries waxes and wanes in both Russian and Evenki society in this contested region of Siberia.

There are some miscellaneous oversights in the book. In the opening chapters, some short paragraphs and tables are devoted to situate Evenkis among other Siberian groups. Through the description of Evenkis in this region (*orochen*) there is no mention of neighbouring groups such as the Evenki cattle pastoralists (*khamniganil*) or the related Evenki populations in Mongolia and China. Perhaps more importantly, there is little reflection on the political influence of Buriats in the region on both Evenki society and access to land. Fondahl supplies a table and a map of the populations and locations of the major indigenous groups of Siberia. The map has some inaccuracies. The table oddly gives the Russian language name for every group except Evenkis — who throughout this book are evoked with the help of a common vernacular appellation. It would seem to be more consistent to use the official Russian version of this nation's name 'Evenk' or the local vernacular term 'Orochen.' These small oversights are more than supplemented by the fine maps and archival research, as well as the up-to-date discussion of policy options in chapter 7.

This book is a welcome addition to the libraries of Siberian specialists and to those active in struggles for land

rights throughout the circumpolar north and worldwide. Although this series is aimed at undergraduate students, the book may prove to be a bit too heavily historical for the novice reader of ethnography and social geography. However, it provides a very reliable introduction to land-tenure politics, equally among Evenkis of southeastern Siberia as to all Siberian aboriginal peoples. This reader shall eagerly await a second, perhaps more comprehensive, account of Fondahl's ongoing research. (David G. Anderson, Department of Anthropology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2H4, Canada.)

Reference

Grant, B. 1995. *In the Soviet house of culture: a century of perestroikas*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

SAFE PASSAGE QUESTIONED: MEDICAL CARE & SAFETY FOR THE POLAR TOURIST. John M. Levinson and Errol Ger (Editors). 1998. Centreville, MD: Cornell Maritime Press. xiv + 178 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-87033-504-9. \$US24.95.

Safe passage questioned is primarily the report of a conference called by the two editors to bring to the attention of the world the potential medical problems of polar tourism. Delegates at the conference, convened in Cambridge in October 1995, discussed who might be potential patients, what might be their illnesses, and what would be appropriate treatments. They also gave consideration to operational safety, to the responsibilities of medical personnel, to the facilities aboard polar vessels, and to the network of advice and support that is currently available to those doctors.

However, when considering publication as a book, the conference proceedings on their own were not deemed enough by the editors, who obtained additional authorship, in their words, 'to enable us to compile a coherent presentation on these special problems in the high latitudes of our world.' Have the authors succeeded? The book is an interesting amalgam of both professional and amateur views. It contains a wealth of information on medicine and on safety in the polar regions, and it indicates suitable further reading; but in the end, it may suffer from not clearly defining its target audience. I do hope not.

The book begins with a description of the Arctic and Antarctic regions with useful chronological tables of the discovery and other important events in the history of the polar regions. Some reference is made to the modern adventurers looking for a first in polar exploration and the excitements of Deception Island as a tourist destination.

The second chapter is an account of the growth of tourism to the polar regions. It is indicated that tourism to the Arctic started in 1856, with visits of ships to Spitsbergen and Greenland, carrying the first paying tourists. It is estimated that 100,000 currently visit the Arctic each year. Antarctic tourism is less developed, although 10,000 visit each year, mostly by sea, but some by air. The maintenance of a base in the Patriot Hills by one company enables