

NOMADS OF SOUTHERN SIBERIA

[Review by Ian Whitaker* of Sevyan Vaynshteyn's *Nomads of south Siberia: the pastoral economies of Tuva*, edited by Caroline Humphrey and translated by Michael Colenso. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980, 289 p, illus. Hardcover £20.00.]

The publication of a translation of a social anthropological study by a Soviet author is always an important event, but the appearance of a book on the indigenous population of the little known Tuvian ASSR is especially welcome. This book is a translation of *Istoricheskaya etnografiya tuvintsev*, which first appeared in Moscow in 1972. Vaynshteyn is, with L. P. Potapov, one of the foremost ethnographers of this region, which remained formally outside the Soviet Union until 1944. Locked away in the Sayan mountains, its people have been little studied by ethnographers in general, and particularly by those from the west.

Vaynshteyn has a command of the available literature dealing with the Tuva, also known in the past as Uryankhay or Soyots, although he makes little use of one of the major western students, the late Ørjan Olsen, who produced two books published in Norwegian dealing with his expedition just before World War I. This is regrettable. Fortunately some of the recent western discussion, especially that by the Hungarian scholar Diószegi—a much lamented student of shamanism—is mentioned in the very full introduction by the editor, Dr Caroline Humphrey (p 1–36). She seeks to place Vaynshteyn's work in the context of Soviet ethnography, which is an important service, since much of the book only becomes fully appreciated when it is seen in this setting. Thus Vaynshteyn's discussion of the historical development of reindeer husbandry in the Sayan mountains is part of an ongoing debate by Soviet scholars in which the perspectives of western anthropology are missing.

The study gives us, for the first time in English, detailed data on the traditional Tuvian economy in the 19th and early 20th centuries, as well as discussing other forms of pastoralism than the tending of reindeer, and the limited agriculture that is often pursued side by side with hunting or the care of livestock.

There is a special extra chapter written for this edition on 'Social relations' (p 233–48), but unfortunately it does not deal in the categories that are commonplace in such discussions in the west. In particular one looks in vain for any real discussion of shamanism, which the work of Diószegi demonstrates still survived—at least residually—in Tuva until the last ten years.

Another criticism of the book is that Vaynshteyn appears unwilling to document the survival of some of the cultural features recorded by earlier writers, into more recent times. Since he has engaged in ethnographic field work in Tuva himself since at least 1954, only ten years after the region's incorporation into the USSR, one might expect that he could document some of his discussion from his own observations. In general this is avoided, and one cannot but speculate whether it is more acceptable in contemporary Soviet academia to refer to 'safe' earlier observations, rather than admit that Tuvian society has not yet been totally transformed. In spite therefore of its essentially historical focus, Vaynshteyn's book is an excellent addition to the slender corpus of material that is accessible to us about the ethnic groups of southern Siberia.

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A CURTAILED HOME RULE

[Review by Axel Kjaer Sørensen* of Jens Brøsted's *Et beskåret hjemmestyre—et kritisk essay om den grønlandske hjemmestyre-ordning*. Rhodos Radius, København, 1979, 149 p. Softcover.]

The introduction of home rule in Greenland in 1979 can be seen for the time being as the culmination of a long development in Greenlandic participation in local administration. Participation began in the 1860s at a municipal level, increasing when twin councils were founded for the west coast in 1911. Later, in 1950 a directly elected single council was formed, which from the early '60s represented the whole island. Apart from direct administration of social welfare, these councils have played merely an

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advisory role. Home rule, however, has changed this, placing those sections of the civil service that can be financed by Greenlandic taxpayers into Greenlandic hands; Greenlanders also control some other areas for which the Danish government still gives substantial economic aid. But other responsibilities, including foreign policy and defence, are still under Danish control, leaving the home rule authorities in the age-old advisory position. But what of the willingness of the Danes to abandon control? Historical research has shown that since the 1860s reforms have been initiated by benevolent Danish civil servants, prompted after World War II by the Greenlanders themselves. In contrast, home rule was overwhelmingly initiated by Greenlandic politicians. There had been a growing opposition to the rapid post-war modernization which brought with it greater Danish influence. But if any one reason for the demand for home rule could be singled out, it might be Greenland's entry into the Common Market in 1972 despite a 70 per cent Greenlandic vote against membership.

In his discussion of the origin of Greenland's home rule, Jens Brøsted firmly places himself with the opposition, namely the Siumut and relatively small Inuit Ataqûtiit parties, overlooking the Atâssut party which has the support of roughly half the electorate. Overall, Brøsted criticizes the home rule agreement on one major point: it is an agreement based on delegation of power from the Danish parliament, and therefore governed by constitutional rights, and not one between two independent nations. Brøsted spells out in detail how detrimental this arrangement is. Although there is some uncertainty as to the degree to which the Greenlandic opposition parties were actually influenced by this criticism, Brøsted's investigation of the Commission's report, its preliminary work and the political debates between 1972 and 1979 is skilful and painstaking.

As he believes soundly that Danish policy towards Greenland is not one of mere benevolence, Brøsted must find some other reason why the Danes granted a greater degree of self-government. He first points to the general tendency in Denmark in the early 1970s to decentralize state administration, exemplified by the 1970 municipal reform which transferred tasks hitherto managed by the state to local administration, leading consequently to more local taxation. Quite correctly Brøsted shows that similar reforms were immediately prepared for Greenland. His second point, though, is more speculative, but may well be true. He believes that the Ministry for Greenland, fearing that problems in Greenland might become uncontrollable, preferred to allow the Greenlanders to cope with them themselves in a presumably cheaper and more efficient manner.

The main problem during the home rule negotiations was that of ownership of sub-surface land, especially the resources which might be there. Quite appropriately Brøsted dedicates a large part of his book to that problem. Not surprisingly both sides desired to be in control. The Greenlanders based their claim, at least in the later part of the negotiations, on the rights of aboriginal peoples, while the Danes upheld the view that Danish law placed ownership with society as a whole, ie, the state. No wonder that the question of whether Greenlanders were a nation, a people with its own sovereign rights, became a vital side theme in the negotiations. The outcome became a compromise with joint management of raw materials; the juridical dispute remains unsolved.

Jens Brøsted takes great care to supply the Greenlanders with every possible argument so that they may eventually win their case. My main objection to this otherwise scholarly, accomplished work is that he seems to put too much confidence in formal juridical arguments, in other words there is too much word-twisting and too little of commonsense reasoning which, to my knowledge, carries much weight in Danish jurisprudence. Nevertheless Brøsted's book can safely be recommended to anyone who takes an interest in the issue, provided they can master the Danish language.

NORTHERN OIL AND GAS EXPERIENCES COMPARED

[Review by N. Farquhar* of *The Scottish and Alaskan offshore oil and gas experience and the Canadian Beaufort Sea* by J. G. Nelson and S. Jessen. Ottawa, Canadian Arctic Resources Committee; Waterloo, Ontario, Faculty of Environmental Studies, 1981, xix, 155 p, illus. Softcover. Canadian \$6.50.]

The authors of this report have developed a framework, a 'management assessment model', for comparing offshore oil and gas development experiences within diverse political systems. Just as

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