

or recent models that deal explicitly with long stresses in valley glaciers). To summarise, this is a very useful book to those with some mathematical ability and who have an interest in the quantitative description and modelling of ice dynamics. It is of limited value to others, who may be better served by a broader-based glaciological text. (Bryn Hubbard, Centre for Glaciology, Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of Wales, Aberystwyth SY23 3DB.)

References

- Hooke, R. LeB. 1998. *Principles of glacier mechanics*. New York: Prentice Hall.
 Paterson, W.S.B. 1994. *The physics of glaciers*. Third edition. Oxford: Pergamon/Elsevier Science.

NEOTRADITIONALISM IN THE RUSSIAN NORTH: INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND THE LEGACY OF PERESTROIKA. Aleksandr Pika (Editor). 1999. Seattle: University of Washington Press. xii + 214 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-295-97829-5. US\$30.00.

Neotraditionalism in the Russian north is an important and ambitious book. Edited by anthropologist and human-rights activist Aleksandr Pika, it addresses one of the most crucial questions faced by indigenous peoples in the Russian north today. How are indigenous rights recognized by and inscribed in law and the constitution? How are indigenous attachments to the land and the complex interrelations between peoples, waters, plants, animals, and other natural resources recognized and addressed in national and international policy-making? And, pressing the issue even further, how can animal/land/human relations become the grounds on which to think about democracy and social justice in innovative and creative ways? 'Neotraditionalism,' it is argued, is one useful and promising site to think about such crucial questions without negating the terrible effects (increase in drinking and diseases, high suicide rate, impoverished conditions of living) of Soviet and post-Soviet life in northern Russian indigenous communities. Thanks to the collective efforts of Bruce Grant, Gail Fondahl, David Koester, David Anderson, Patty Gray, Christina D. Kincaid, and Alexander D. King, these discussions, first published in Russia in 1994, are now also available to an English-speaking audience. The translation is more than one adaptation of a Russian text: it also marks an opening, the beginning of a sustained dialogue in the long-strained relations between Russian and western-oriented anthropology.

The term 'neotraditionalism' condenses many concerns of the book. The authors use it in multiple ways, variably meaning the usage of traditional social and economic practices (reindeer herding, hunting, fishing, the kinship-based decision-making polity (*obshchina*)) in which indigenous people engage; the cultural premises on which arguments for indigenous rights and native self-government in the Russian north are based; and, less overtly than by implication, healing the effects of cultural and emotional injury that ravage northern indigenous communities today.

In short, neotraditionalism foregrounds and emphasizes traditional practices as a productive site for addressing and engaging the social problems in the Russian north that occupy indigenous peoples, administrators, policy-makers, human-rights activists, anthropologists, and social scientists alike. Yet at the same time — being aware that the term easily evokes connotations of tradition as primitive and timeworn and of indigenous peoples as if existing in archaic isolation — the authors quite emphatically emphasize that they do not wish to advocate a facile view of tradition as a return to 'the chums and *iarangas*' (page xxiv). They understand neotraditionalism as the basis of support for, and revival of, cultural distinctiveness, time-honored ways of livelihood, economic management, and indigenous land use. This is a momentous step away from the Soviet idea of development ('non-capitalist path of development of the formerly backwards people') that promoted a particular kind of political vanguardism and bureaucratic paternalism on part of the state to help native peoples achieve true socialism — that is, by implication, historical consciousness, literary edification, and the refinements of a 'civilized world.' This vision of development refused indigenous peoples their voice and denied the values of their traditions, knowledge, and heritage.

This book, then, provides important grounds on which to conceptualize and re-think the relations between regional and federal administrative institutions, local and civil laws, and international and national human-rights standards. Yet as important as these questions are, I cannot help but ask if the use of the term neotraditionalism may not be detrimental to the goal the book so assertively tries to achieve — a question, I think, implicitly asked by the authors themselves (page 21). The problem is that indigenous peoples have often been placed in frameworks of conceptual oppositions, ignoring their own histories to posit conditions of before versus after — of pristine isolation, on the one hand, and rapid cultural destruction or modernization, on the other. These contrasts leave only little room for the recognition and consideration of an array of productive social relationships and identities that have emerged in the interstices between tundra/camp/settlement contexts, or the inclusion of native people who live in urban centers, as well as those who do not embrace traditional practices as a site of meaningful identity for themselves. In light of the fact that a considerable number of native peoples do not necessarily share a vision of tradition as a cultural practice that may offer a solution to their predicament, the contrast between the traditional and the modern appears as too unbending in the book. For example, traditional religious practices are deemed as 'natural,' basically harking back to pre-modern identifications (page 16). From the point of indigenous subjects who embrace, and actively engage in, such practices, the text then argues, 'Russification was wholly artificial' (page 17). Yet what happened to the possibility that traditions can arise in the fissures and cracks between

time-honored, handed-down and modern knowledge?

The book is also about emerging indigenous-rights discourses in Russia, and here lies its formidable strength. It urges effective representation of indigenous peoples not only on the regional level but also in the highest levels of power; respectful and just social solutions to issues of territorial property rights; federal and legal support for the creation of economic market relations for indigenous communities with other national and international communities; and state support for indigenous economic self-sufficiency and political sovereignty. Within the context of the Russian nation-state, the authors argue, debates around ethnic identity and indigenous political participation must include freedom from political and economic domination by others; free and agreed-upon political and legal relations with the government of their own country; control over economic development and cultural, linguistic, and spiritual life; and the right to govern their own territories and lands. Indigenous peoples in Russia, as culturally distinct societies, should be in possession of their own representative political bodies and institutions. Yet by arguing for special minority or differentiated citizenship rights, the authors encounter the difficulty of legitimizing such demands to a multi-national public in Russia. And, maybe more importantly, they encounter the double-edged nature of human-rights discourse not grounded in universality, but based on cultural distinctiveness. On the one hand, the argument for special rights is based on the recognition and affirmation of indigenous traditions and the rights that follow from them. On the other hand, the authors find themselves in the dilemma that they can only endorse and support special rights if these rights infringe not upon the rights of all people. It is precisely this (moral) predicament that creates one of the greatest stumbling blocks for the recognition and legal endorsement of indigenous rights.

The book raises another important issue, that of sovereignty. The authors argue that it is crucial to formulate indigenous law codes in such a way that they are compatible with existing legal state norms (page 31). Again, an issue, connected to the implicit dilemma of indigenous-rights discourses emerges. After all, if indigenous laws need to be congruous with national laws, whose sovereignty comes first? Can indigenous communities be truly sovereign if they have to accommodate their own laws within the national law? Whose sovereignty, then, is served, protected, and maintained?

Neotraditionalism in the Russian north is a significant book, appearing at a crucial moment in time. Its importance concerns not only indigenous communities in the Russian north but extends into much broader debates on indigenous and human rights, sovereignty, and the democratic polity. It is a critical reflection of the current predicaments faced by indigenous peoples in the Russian north, a marvelous treatise on some of the most crucial issues faced by northern Russian indigenous communities, and a strong challenge to think about the legal and social problems in

the Russian north. I sincerely hope that the opening that this book has created, and the discussion that it has initiated, will not stop here but will propel indigenous activists, communities, and social scientists to find new ways to think and communicate about these issues in less divisive, more cooperative, and allied ways. (Petra Rethmann, Department of Anthropology, McMaster University, Chester New Hall, 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario L8S 4L9, Canada.)

ESKIMOS AND EXPLORERS. Wendell H. Oswalt. 1999. Second edition. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press. xiii + 341 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-8032-8613-9. £13.50.

This is the second edition of Oswalt's well-known work that first appeared in 1979, and, as such, it will be well-known to readers of *Polar Record*. Most of the text is identical to that of the original, but the final chapter, 'Before and after explorers,' has been revised, quite radically in places. These revisions include the incorporation of recent work on prehistory and on language classification, and on recent developments relating to political status. The writer includes in the preface a robust defence of his title in the face of attacks on the use of the word 'Eskimo' on the grounds that it is not the 'self identification' of the peoples in question. He points out that the word is of long incorporation into English and that there is no one single word that includes all the peoples concerned save 'Eskimo.'

Be that as it may, and it seems certain that the writer will be subject to criticism for persisting with what is perceived as an anachronism, this is a fine book as was the first edition. The strategy adopted by the writer is to deal with descriptions by outsiders of the peoples included within his definition both chronologically — starting with 'The Norse experience' and moving through the contacts made by searchers for the Northwest Passage and for the old Norse colony in Greenland — to a more regional description of the West Greenlanders, polar peoples, East Greenlanders, and so on, concluding with the Alaskan Inuit and Yuit. He points out that the modes of life of these peoples were a great deal more varied than is usually assumed, some, for example, being more or less exclusively fish-eaters. This lengthy survey comes before the rewritten final chapter, which is essentially a review bringing the whole up to date.

Some of the explorers were more astute observers of the peoples they encountered than others, and, of course, permanent residents had a much greater opportunity for learning the language and culture than did mere seekers for the Passage or for Franklin. To that extent, the most satisfactory descriptions are those by the residents of West Greenland, prominent among whom was Hans P. Egede, who wrote the first major work about Eskimos, *A description of Greenland*, in 1745. Oswalt devotes 14 pages to an analysis of Egede's book and proceeds to a statement of those areas of culture which Egede 'underemphasised or