

sistence hunting in Alaska. However, while I can recommend it as a summary and guide to existing literature, I feel it is like a bowhead whale carcass without the meat. (Mark Nuttall, Department of Human Sciences, Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH.)

**OUT IN THE COLD: THE LEGACY OF CANADA'S INUIT RELOCATION EXPERIMENT IN THE HIGH ARCTIC.** Alan Marcus. 1992. København: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. 117 p, soft cover. \$10.00 (US).

The story of development in Canada's Arctic has been told many times and from many different perspectives, and the various factors that have constrained it are by now well-known. This study, which deals with certain momentous events in the lives of a relatively small number of Inuit, exemplifies all these factors as if in a microcosm. I found it a first-rate piece of work.

To anyone with but a passing interest in recent Arctic history, the momentous events are themselves well known. They concern the setting up of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, now the northernmost civilian communities in Canada, in 1953–1955, by relocating Inuit from more southerly (in some instances, very much more southerly) communities. The reasons for the Canadian government sponsoring this relocation have also been fairly well discussed. However, it is to the author's credit that, because of meticulous research, this no-nonsense report not only fleshes out the details of these events in a most compelling way, it also demonstrates, for the first time in academic writing, what a sorry affair the whole business was. The author is careful to accept that his analysis has the benefit of hindsight and the perusal of substantial archival documentation (it also profits from the recollections, looking back over nearly 40 years, of many of those involved). Yet it is clearly only such analysis that can spell out vital lessons for the future: the failings of this episode, which have led an eminent professor of law in an independent report to call upon the Canadian government to apologise publicly to the Inuit, stem precisely from the government's confused motivations, inadequate research, and preparedness to take enormous risks with people's lives. Of particular interest to anthropologists was the government's evident lack of appreciation in this context of the nature of Inuit social structure and culture. Not surprisingly, the episode is today fast becoming, in Inuit eyes, a metaphor for government inadequacies vis-à-vis the Inuit throughout this century.

What is clear from this report is that the paternalistic attitudes of government in relation to Inuit, which generally prevailed in extreme form in the 1950s, were double-edged. Where the relocation of the Inuit to the high Arctic is concerned, the ostensible motives were the reasonably well-intentioned ones of 'dealing with' highly complex social and economic 'problems' in the northern Quebec emigrant community. Was this community in good or bad economic shape? Even the author hasn't decided (pages

22, 40, 50). Yet the extreme subservience of Inuit to government officials at this time also meant an almost total breakdown in communications between the two sides, such that the Inuit really had no idea as to what was being proposed on their behalf.

And then there were the ulterior motives.... (David Riches, Department of Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9AL.)

**THE SOVIET ARCTIC.** Pier Horensma. 1991. London and New York: Routledge. xii + 228 p, maps, hard cover. ISBN 0-415-05537-7. £45.00.

There is a long tradition in Soviet scholarship of hiding interesting books on specific subjects under the bushel of dull, general titles. Something of this tradition seems to have rubbed off on the author of this intriguing, original, and provocative book. This is a published edition of his doctoral thesis, circulated under the title of 'The northern frontier: Soviet polar policy since 1917 and its relation to the history of exploration' (University of Groningen 1988). But even the earlier title did not do justice to what tries ultimately to be a study of the role of Stalinism as an ideology and as a style of exploration, foreign policy, and historiography in the Arctic.

The book is a treasury of details of expeditions, persons, and events. But the author places Soviet polar activity firmly within the context of political goals and constraints, such as the need to define the USSR's northern frontier or to link the country's western and Pacific coasts, and closely follows the nuances of each period. He also shows a fine appreciation of the political implications of technological advances such as icebreakers, or aeroplanes ('effective occupation could be replaced by domination from the air'). At the same time, he discusses the ambivalent attitude towards foreign countries, with the delicate interplay between an admiration for their polar explorers and the insecurity of a young state supposedly beset by these same countries cast as imperialist enemies. Thus research and strategic considerations were supplemented by propaganda, in the form of history and popular literature.

The Soviet Union had scored many firsts, and Stalin saw the country's own Arctic record as an advertisement for the socialist ideology and way of life that supposedly made these achievements possible. At home, this record provided readers with a model of revolutionary heroism; abroad, it aimed to command the admiration of foreigners and to validate legal claims. To the latter end, the propaganda also looked backwards, in a nationalist vein, to very early Russian explorers. The author carries the study into the Cold War period, with a discussion in particular of the historical writings of Belov and Pinkherson. But the story seems to tail off during the 1970s and 1980s and a skimpy appendix on Gorbachev's new era (not in the original dissertation) only serves to emphasise that the book's real focus is on the Stalinist period.

The author returns repeatedly to the theme of Stalinism

itself and to its dark side: the triumphs and thrills of Soviet achievements in the Arctic were paid for by the repressions and forced labour on which they depended. Ultimately, these successes in turn became a justification for the immense sufferings of the Soviet people. But the author goes beyond this to claim that what he calls Stalinist attitudes persist to this day and that this is likely to remain the case so long as the country remains proud of its achievements in the Arctic. He is concerned with the lingering difficulty of 'destalinising' Soviet (as it was in 1991) Arctic activity. But there is a theoretical problem. He acknowledges terror as integral to the Stalinist enterprise. So what kind of Stalinism remains when this terror is removed? The answer is ultimately unclear, because the author's approach lacks the sociological or cultural analysis that would allow him to delve into the abstract essence of Stalinism itself, or to discuss whether an essentialist approach is justified at all (a fundamental problem with -isms). He acknowledges that Conquest's understanding in the late 1960s is inadequate (in fact, it was itself a form of anti-Soviet propaganda), but does not use the sophisticated and enlightening new literature of the 1980s.

In the last few pages, the author speculates on the continuing nationalist and conservative bent of the collective culture of the Soviet Arctic world under *perestroika*, and here his analytically unrefined concept of Stalinism truly flags, as it is drawn in to explain even this. There may be something in it, but one does not have to look to Russia or to Stalin to find a combination of nationalism and conservatism in the Arctic. A theory of empire, both eastern and western — and of its decline — might have allowed him a broader interpretation. Here, the polar regions appear as the only parts of the Earth that allow a relatively unchallenged fantasy of a landscape without people of its own (significantly, Siberian peoples do not appear in this book at all), a fantasy that is not brought up short by the radicalism of large, complex local populations as happened in the British tropics or in Soviet central Asia.

The bibliography is astonishing, amounting to 40 pages. Most of the references are to works in Russian, so that it serves as a valuable source. However, it falls between two stools. It surely far outstrips the number of works actually cited in the text, but would be hard to use for any wider purpose because it is not annotated. The seven-page index has no chance of living up to this list of sources. Thus, the bibliography lists Russian translations of books by or about 'Shaklton,' 'Piri,' and 'Scott' (spelt unaccountably with a 'c' rather than a 'k'); but nothing in the index helps the reader to find the discussion of these books in the text. (Piers Vitebsky, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

**CATCHERS AND CORVETTES: THE STEAM WHALECATCHER IN PEACE AND WAR 1860–1960.** John H. Harland. 1992. Rotherfield: Jean Boudriot Publications. 448 p, illustrated with 380 line drawings and 200 photographs, hard cover. ISBN 0-948864-09-5. £65.00.

A book for shipping buffs, this must surely become the

definitive account of the history and evolution of steam whalecatchers — the sturdy little steamships that for a century and more hunted whales in the world's oceans. Replacing sailing ships, they served the industry almost until its demise, being overtaken in the final years by motor vessels. This is also a book for whaling enthusiasts and for anyone else who is interested in how a mobile, inventive workforce met and solved a succession of day-by-day technical problems in engineering. The simplicity and ingenuity of many of the solutions are quite extraordinary; had the industry been devoted to anything other than killing whales, we would be hailing the engineers responsible as industrial pioneers of a high order.

The author is impartial and very thorough. Well-illustrated chapters cover the origins of steam whalers, development of hull shape, engines, armament, deck layout, accommodation, power, steering, accumulators, winching, and radio. Some catchers went to war, where their speed and manoeuvrability were appreciated: World War II corvettes owe points of their design to them, and were equally uncomfortable in rough seas. There is also a useful account of the development of whaling itself in the post-sailing period. If the same author could now be persuaded to turn his attention to the evolution and development of whale factory ships, he would most usefully close another gap in the history of a modern industry.

There is only one note of caution: check when buying, because in the review copy a printing fault left several pages blank. (Bernard Stonehouse, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

**DARWIN'S DESOLATE ISLANDS.** Patrick Armstrong. 1992. Chippenham: Picton Publishing Limited. 147p, illustrated, maps, hard cover. ISBN 0-948251-55-7.

This work is one of several in which an author has reconciled the observations of Charles Darwin about a particular place with its present circumstances. This has required a familiarity with Darwin's published and manuscript notes for the theoretical aspects, and a visit to the place in question for the practical ones. In March–April 1833 and the same months in 1834, Darwin made visits to the Falkland Islands while aboard HMS *Beagle* during a circumnavigation and surveying voyage from 1831 to 1836; the author visited in the autumn of 1989. As well as his scientific observations, Darwin was present during, and recorded many elements in, a period of special interest in the islands' history.

Regarding natural history — an old but useful concept including geology, biology, and meteorology — the author has carefully followed much of Darwin's travels from Port Louis and elsewhere on East Falkland; this is well indicated by contemporary and modern maps. Many of the problems considered by Darwin, such as the origin of stone runs with some rocks 'as big as churches,' the development of the deep peat beds, and plutonist and neptunist theories about the islands' geology, are commented upon in the light of modern knowledge (although