

THE SVALBARD ARCHIPELAGO: AMERICAN MILITARY AND POLITICAL GEOGRAPHIES OF SPITSBERGEN AND OTHER NORWEGIAN POLAR TERRITORIES, 1941–1950. P.J. Capelotti (Editor). 2000. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company. xii + 180 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-7864-0759-X. US\$45.00.

In the Treaty of Paris, 1920, it was agreed by the major powers attending the Conference of Versailles that the archipelago, hitherto known as Spitsbergen, should become part of the Kingdom of Norway and should be renamed Svalbard. Before this agreement, the island group had been considered *terra nullius*, and therefore without sovereignty. The Treaty came into effect in 1925 after ratification by most of the signatories.

Located in the Arctic Ocean between North Cape and the North Pole, Svalbard was seen, at the start of World War II, to have considerable strategic significance for weather stations and for monitoring the movements of enemy shipping. In 1987 P.J. Capelotti discovered, amongst military archives, a classified Special Study of Svalbard compiled in 1942 by American intelligence, and he has now published it together with some of the original maps and 50 photographs. The report also includes very brief accounts of Jan Mayen (which became Norwegian only in 1929) and, somewhat misplaced, of Norway's Antarctic possessions claimed in 1929 and 1939.

The report is basically a geographical gazetteer with brief notes on the topography of the coastal fjords, inland ice cover and seasonal sea-ice variations, tides, weather, and demographic and economic matters. The information attempts to be comprehensive, but is necessarily abbreviated and sketchy. The work invites comparison with the more detailed British *Naval military handbooks* prepared by senior geographers throughout the war at the Scott Polar Research Institute. The Spitsbergen handbook was prepared by Professor Robert Neal Rudmose Brown, but was one of the few not published and made generally available after the war. The author's claim of the uniqueness of the American report is not supported by literature available even in 1942, and his bibliography of recent literature omits many of the major authorities on Svalbard writing in both Norwegian and English. Rudmose Brown had, in fact, published a substantial book on Spitsbergen in 1920, and since the war important works include *Svalbard Treaty* by Geir Ulfstein (Oslo, 1995) and *Svalbard's historie 1596–1996*, by Thor Arlov (Oslo, 1996).

The brief American original report (74 pages plus illustrations) is supplemented by several useful appendices on 'Conditions of the islands,' 'Ports and harbors,' the 'Military operations of 1941 and 1942,' and 'Radiostations.' The publication of this report from US military archives is welcomed as it provides another wartime document about Svalbard, but there is no new material for the historical geographer. The black-and-white photographs are commended. (Peter Speak, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

ENDANGERED PEOPLES OF THE ARCTIC: STRUGGLES TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE. Milton M.R. Freeman (Editor). 2000. Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood Press. xx + 278 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-313-30649-4. £33.50.

Introductory texts for use in university courses on the circumpolar north are difficult to find, both for the human and physical geography of the region. Minority Rights Group's *Polar peoples* has provided such a text for the 'human' side of the north, but is now more than half a decade old. Thus, Milton Freeman's newly edited book, part of a series of 'Endangered peoples of the world,' is a welcome arrival. Alarmist title aside, the book offers a cross-section of studies of 14 northern peoples from around the north. It focuses on their evolving adaptations to Arctic life, in the face of the Arctic's ever-changing position in a 'globalizing' world. Written mainly by anthropologists, the book will nevertheless prove useful as a text for geographers, political scientists, and others as well. Its level is introductory, so that an interested layperson would also find this a good introduction to human aspects of the north. Its choice of focusing for the most part on specific sub-national groups (for example, Pribilof Aleuts, Isertormeeq of East Greenland) — rather than peoples (for example, Aleuts, Inuit) or states (native peoples of Alaska, Greenland) — allows a level of detail I find attractive in encouraging students to consider the wide range of available options to northerners in their adaptations, and the nuances of the choices made by different groups.

The layout is formulaic; each chapter involves the same headings: 'Cultural overview'; 'Threats to survival'; 'Response: struggles to survive culturally'; and 'Food for thought.' While such a structure ensures that material presented in each chapter offers opportunities for students to compare and contrast the situations of different peoples living in the north, authors have used a variety of secondary sub-headings to organize information of specific relevance to the people about whom they write, and/or of specific interest to them. For instance, the chapter on Sami focuses especially on legal issues, while the chapter on Evenki allocates more time to a discussion of ecological challenges. In this way, the book avoids a repetitive character. The required headings, being broad, allow for a wide range of topics, from language retention issues to environmental threats to subsistence strategies.

Chapters are arranged alphabetically by people, rather than geographically. This was initially disconcerting, and compromised the ability of one chapter to help set the stage for others on people in the same state who had experienced similar governmental policies (for example, Innu and Cree, Evenki and Chukchi). But in the end, I found I agreed with this layout, as the geographic hopping back-and-forth encourages persistent comparison/contrast among situations experienced by northerners around the globe. As apparent from the above headings, the book's and series' editors have put special emphasis on having authors address not only the challenges confronting aboriginal

peoples, but their responses, thus balancing documentation of marginalization and victimization with discussions of resistance and persistence.

A nice distinction was the incorporation of a chapter about the whalers of Lofoten, a 'non-aboriginal' group that experiences many of the same issues as aboriginal peoples. By including this group, the book vividly encourages the discussion of definitions of indigeneity, the limitations and possibilities of 'aboriginal' rights, and of similar topics.

Each chapter provides a set of questions for the student to ponder, and a resource guide that lists key written works, films and videos, web sites, and native organizations' addresses. More editorial rigor could have been used here: some chapters provided contact information for accessing videos and films (very useful), while others only provided names of films.

Like all edited volumes, some chapters are stronger than others. A few suffer from organization, a few from internal repetition. The chapter on the Kaska of Canada focuses almost exclusively on language retention — while this might be the most critical issue for the Kaska, more attention to other issues would have been welcome. Overall, however, the authors have achieved an admirable level of providing evocative detail about the key issues that face the peoples discussed. The book is an easy read, and suffers from minimal typographical errors. Pictures, though few, are of good quality.

No review would be complete without the inclusion of, albeit picayune, complaints of shortcomings. As a geographer I would prefer to have seen a standardization of maps. Some are excellent, some marginal; a number do not include places named in text. Another pet peeve: the chapters, while providing selected references to published sources, use citations sparingly. I do find this an alarming tendency in texts specifically pointed primarily at an introductory academic audience. At the very time at which professors are trying to instill a sense of necessity to cite works used, I wonder about assigning texts that flaunt this convention. It may make the reading flow, but it also provides the wrong message to students about the need to acknowledge sources.

Most problematic (but not without its value!) was the fact that the text and questions in a few places assume that the audience will be mono-cultural or not of certain cultures ('Would we allow Hindus, who do not eat meat...to tell us that we cannot eat hamburgers?' [page 180]; 'What characterizes a culture? Use our own culture as an example' [page 129]). These lapses in attention to the potential diversity of the audience will unwittingly provide opportunities for contemplation and discussion regarding the ever-pervasive hegemony of Euro-North American culture.

Minor grievances aside, *Endangered peoples of the Arctic* will provide a useful and timely text for those interested in the diversity of northern peoples, in the commonalities of the issues that face them, and in their respective responses. (Gail Fondahl, Geography Pro-

gramme, University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, British Columbia V2N 4Z9, Canada.)

Reference

Minority Rights Group. 1994. *Polar peoples: self-determination and development*. London: Minority Rights Group.

THE SOUL OF THE NORTH: A SOCIAL, ARCHITECTURAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE NORDIC COUNTRIES, 1700–1940. Neil Kent. 2000. London: Reaktion Books. 416 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-861-89041-9. £35.00; US\$45.00.

In his book *The soul of the north*, Neil Kent makes an important contribution to research on the social, architectural, and cultural history of the Nordic countries from 1700 to 1940. Kent's book constitutes essential reading for all those who are interested in Nordic culture, specifically that of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is also essential in a broader sense to historians of social history. Although there are many books dealing with the subject of Nordic diplomacy, politics, and even art history in the English language, there is a dearth of material on the interdisciplinary subject of social and cultural history, and, in this regard, Kent's book fills a long awaited area of study. He examines this area in considerable depth and fills the many lacunae still abounding with respect to social history in the Nordic countries.

In this unique study, Kent gives an informed description of Nordic history and culture, analyzing both domestic concerns of religion and spirituality (including that of the Saami and Greenlanders), family life, sexuality, health, hygiene, prison life, and urban and rural life, as well as Scandinavian colonial expansion in the Arctic and the tropical Caribbean colonies. Although concentrating on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Kent provides a broad view of rarely addressed aspects of Nordic culture. He also explores how Nordic society was affected by architecture and art. Despite poverty and sparse populations, art and architecture were used by kings from Christian IV to Alexander I to beautify capital cities, which was done with a view to deploying symbolism to express moral and political values, bringing order to domestic and public life.

Kent has carried out copious research on these matters, using his proficiency in Scandinavian languages, so essential to such a study. This book is based on statistics and demographic material, which are demonstrated with pertinent literary references, as well as architectural and visual examples. Kent also provides two very informative historical chronologies of important political events and cultural and scientific advancements.

The encyclopedic detail and depth with which *The soul of the north* is written, manifests Kent's knowledge of geography and social history. The focus given to the colonial periphery of the Nordic countries is striking: the Arctic possessions, like Greenland and Iceland and their growing national identities, as well as the Caribbean colonies, such as the Danish Virgin Islands and St Barthel-