

children do not talk to him. He conveys effectively, too, the very real difficulties Labrador Inuit face nowadays in achieving economic security. Brice-Bennett points out in her preface that missionary accounts gave emphasis to the poverty and deprivation of Inuit families in the 1930s and 1940s, and notes that although Paulus Maggo confirmed the difficulty of earning an income in those decades, 'his stories do not convey an impression of the hardship.' On the contrary, 'Paulus accentuates how Inuit improvised and managed with their own resources.' While they still made a living from the land, Labrador Inuit were able to help themselves. Today that is not so easy. 'There is very little or no fish to catch, no animals to hunt, seals are not in demand, boats and engines are in need of repair or broken down altogether because of neglect or lack of use... How will someone purchase food when there is not enough fish, and no equipment, so that a person can try to make money if they don't have a place of employment?'

At the end of his long life, Paulus Maggo admits to 'a feeling of hopelessness for the future.' Brice-Bennett is more optimistic. In her long introductory essay, she writes that Nain, where Paulus Maggo lives, is now a 'dynamic centre for both customary harvesting activities and new economic enterprises focusing on the fishery, tourism, and mineral development.' We must hope she is right. (Dorothy Harley Eber, 1115 Sherbrooke Street West, Apt. 1205, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1H3, Canada.)

**THE RESCUE OF CAPTAIN SCOTT.** Don Aldridge. 1999. East Linton: Tuckwell Press. xxii + 215 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 1-86232-070-5. £20.00.

I hate to say this, but Don Aldridge has produced a simply dreadful book. Sadly, this outcome could have been avoided. Much research went into its preparation. But the work demonstrates that, although the occasional gifted amateur can write good history (Michael Rosove's *Let heroes speak* stands out as a recent excellent example), not every amateur can produce a worthy volume.

Aldridge makes the kinds of mistakes no one who has had a decent undergraduate seminar in history would make. Starting with the basic presumption that Robert Falcon Scott could do no right, Aldridge interprets every incident, every nuance, as proof of his thesis, even when the facts simply do not support his contentions. Aldridge passes up no opportunity to interpret facts or impressions in a way that shows Scott in the most unfavorable light possible.

Frankly, the book is so replete with questionable or inaccurate interpretations that a lengthy review would be inappropriate in this journal. A listing and discussion of the problems with the book would be longer than anyone would likely wish to peruse. The book will be a painful read for anyone who has an understanding either of Scott or of 'Heroic age' exploration, so flawed are the author's interpretations.

Poor Scott — he has been the victim of two unfortunate historiographical trends: for 60-plus years hagiography,

for the past 21 years character assassination. Neither hits the mark.

I wish I could say something positive about Aldridge's book other than to note that the maps are nice and some, new material has come to light, which, with careful filtering of Aldridge's interpretation, might be useful. Pity Scott, a genuine tragic hero; too bad the tragedy of Antarctic historiography continues in the guise of works such as this one. (T.H. Baughman, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK 73034, USA.)

**POLITICS AND BUSINESS IN THE BARENTS REGION.** Bo Svensson. 1998. Östersund: Swedish Institute for Regional Research. 291 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 91-38-31461-4. SEK 344.

The Barents region has been described variously as a geographic region encompassing the northern reaches of Fennoscandia and northwest Russia, a historical region dating back more than a millennium, and a political region linking the northern provinces of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia in new patterns of political interaction. It also aspires to be an economic region, harking back to centuries of economic ties that linked Russian merchants along the White Sea with Norwegian fishing communities and Finnish and Saami settlements into a trading area far from national capitals and state authority. This so-called Pomor or coastal trade thrived until the Bolshevik Revolution brought it to an abrupt end in 1917. At the inauguration of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (or BEAR) in 1993, the Norwegian foreign minister, Thorvald Stoltenberg, evoked images of the Pomor trade to suggest that the Barents Cooperation was a return to political and economic normalcy in the European Arctic, characterising the east-west division of the Soviet era as but a 'seventy-year historical parenthesis.'

In *Politics and business in the Barents region*, Bo Svensson examines the case of the BEAR to determine how this political region-building project contributes to rebuilding transnational economic relations in the European Arctic. The potential for economic development is clear enough: access to capital on the Nordic side; and a rich natural resource base, an inexpensive yet well-educated labour force, an emerging consumer market, and a need for industrial modernisation and infrastructure improvement on the Russian side. The question is to what extent trans-border political relations can facilitate the local businesses in coming together to realise this potential. Svensson further asks whether this type of regionalisation offers Europe's Arctic periphery a way out of political and economic subordination.

Based on Svensson's extensive interviews with business operators, it is apparent that although Nordic firms had no problems in identifying business opportunities in northwest Russia, these opportunities were circumscribed by severe difficulties. In addition to the expected challenges of operating in post-Soviet Russia (an unclear legal and regulatory framework, unpredictable officials, and

unstable institutional arrangements), firms found it extremely difficult to cross the cultural divide. Nordic and Russian frames of reference have diverged to such a degree during the separation imposed by the 70-year Soviet interregnum, that communication between Nordic and Russian business partners is poor, misunderstandings common, and mutual distrust the result. A century ago, the Pomor traders communicated through a common trading language called *Russenorsk*. Today, there is just as clear a need to learn a common 'language' of business norms and expectations.

The role for inter-regional political cooperation in facilitating such a learning process seems obvious. Improving conditions for business activities became one of the key tasks of the BEAR's Regional Council. This help came partly in promoting individual business initiatives, but mostly through efforts to improve the legislative and institutional features of the business environment in north-west Russia. Svensson sets forth strong arguments that cooperation at the regional-level missed its calling by focusing on framework conditions over which the Russian regions had little power to change at their level, rather than adopting measures to speed up the 'socialisation process' between Nordic and Russian business operators and thus help them close the cultural gap.

The politics and business of regional development are invariably about money, and it is through analysing how governments spend their money that their regional development priorities and philosophies are brought into clearest focus. Svensson shows, through changes in national contributions to the annual Barents Programme and other regional development programmes, how promoting transnational business activities grew to become a high priority. At the same time as the priority increased, so did the *scale*, as initiatives grew into large-scale investment projects. This had the effect of shifting control away from the provincial level, first to central governments and subsequently to extra-regional sources, such as the EU and international financial institutions. This leads Svensson to conclude that regionalisation in the European Arctic remains subject to externalisation. EU policies have helped by returning a measure of control to the provinces in programming resources provided through the EU's Interreg programme, but the fact remains that the high northern regions remain dependent upon external resources doled out by the power centres to the south.

The product of Svensson's doctoral research, *Politics and business in the Barents region* is a thoughtful and insightful analysis of the interdependencies between business actors and different tiers of government in promoting economic development in peripheral regions. It is also refreshingly readable. His liberal use of quotes from business operators interviewed during his research not only help to make his case, they also keep the reader engaged and interested. In an apparent desire to maintain the anonymity of his interviewees and to generalise from his observations, however, the author scarcely mentions a

single business concern by name and shies away from providing the contextual details surrounding his subjects' experiences. This is unfortunate, since there are many excellent stories behind his data; a number of well-placed vignettes would have further enriched the book. Also, I found myself wishing the author had adopted a base currency to help make sense out of regional development budgets denominated in Norwegian and Swedish kroner, Finnish markka, US dollars, and the European currency unit. Listing average exchange rates in the book's preliminaries provides the reader with little help in making comparisons. Since this is a study of the *Euro-Arctic*, the euro would seem a natural choice.

*Politics and business in the Barents region* is a valuable and scholarly contribution to the growing literature on regional economic development and transregional cooperation. It succeeds in bringing into focus the fine details of economic development challenges in the European Arctic, as well as providing well-grounded insights into using inter-regional cooperation as a device for developing east-west relations. The book is distributed by CE Fritzes, SE-106 47 Stockholm, Sweden. (Steven G. Sawhill, The Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Box 326, N-1326 Lysaker, Norway.)

**THROUGH THE FIRST ANTARCTIC NIGHT 1898–1899.** Frederick A. Cook. 1998 (Centennial Edition). Pittsburgh: Polar Publishing Company; Hurleyville, NY: Frederick A. Cook Society. xxiv + 464, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-9665613-0-9; soft cover ISBN 0-9665613-1-7.

The Frederick A. Cook Society is an active body and has recently been connected with a number of ventures in publishing works on polar history. There could be no more appropriate area for the Society's involvement than the present work, a reprinting of Cook's famous book about the *Belgica* expedition of 1898–99, during which the ship became entrapped in the ice and accomplished the first Antarctic wintering. Cook's work will need little introduction to readers of *Polar Record*. Written in a clear and economical style, it recounts the voyage of *Belgica* in admirable detail and constitutes a major source for the study of the expedition, one of the main features of which was its multinational character. Cook, who was appointed as surgeon and anthropologist, reflecting the South American element of the expedition, was merely one among a cast of foreigners on board, prominent among whom were Roald Amundsen and Henryk Arctowski. It is well known that the expedition experienced considerable difficulties due to health problems and in leadership. There is no doubt that Cook was instrumental in overcoming the former and did nothing to exacerbate the latter. The book was, and is, a major contribution and should be on the bookshelf of all with interests in Antarctic history. This reprint makes that objective more feasible, since earlier editions have long been very expensive. A further point in its favour is the wonderful illustrations, photographs, and engravings therefrom.