

Reviews

THAT FIRST ANTARCTIC WINTER: THE STORY OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS EXPEDITION AS TOLD IN THE DIARIES OF LOUIS CHARLES BERNACCHI. Janet Crawford. 1998. Christchurch: South Latitude Research. 270 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-473-04966-X.

In the annals of British Antarctic exploration, the *Southern Cross* expedition of 1898–1900 does not rank with those led by heroes such as Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Shackleton. Its leader, Carsten Borchgrevink, tended to be regarded by the geographical ascendancy of his day as something of an opportunist and adventurer. Even so, as the first expedition ever to winter on the continent of Antarctica, it does deserve its place in the record books. There are two narrative accounts, both reprinted in recent years; the one by the central figure of this book, Louis Bernacchi, is by far the more reliable, albeit somewhat bland; the other, by the expedition leader, is very much a self-publicizing potboiler. This new study by Bernacchi's granddaughter, Janet Crawford, is based on a careful study of the explorer's diaries, written in pencil and often scarcely legible, now in the archives of the Scott Polar Research Institute, with copies and other material in the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch. The diaries served not only as the *aide-mémoire* for a future book, but, as Mrs Crawford makes clear, were also an emotional outlet, 'a "father confessor" in which he could write down incidents which he found it unsatisfactory to talk about more openly.' To have written openly about the downside of the expedition — 'the satiety of each other's company, and the sentiments of melancholia' — and more particularly the personal criticisms of one's leader, would have been taboo at that time. Now, a century after the events described, we have an uninhibited version of events seen through the eyes of an inexperienced 22-year-old.

Into her absorbing and well-constructed narrative, Mrs Crawford has woven the more coherent entries in the diaries. The opening chapters introduce us to Bernacchi's family background, his youthful upbringing in Tasmania, and his school days in Hobart, with its associations with the discoveries of D'Urville, Wilkes, and James Clark Ross, which inspired him to become an Antarctic explorer. In Melbourne, where he trained as a meteorologist and magnetician at the observatory, he first met Borchgrevink, who subsequently invited the boy to London to join the *Southern Cross* expedition to Victoria Land. Bernacchi had few reservations about so doing. Borchgrevink had only recently returned from a whaling expedition on which he claimed to have been the first person to land on the continental mainland at Cape Adare. He had the financial backing of Sir George Newnes, and the expedition's scientific staff included a respected zoologist, Nikolai

Hanson. Thus, all augured well for success. Bernacchi's diary begins with the departure of the expedition from London on 22 August 1898; it was not long before the storm clouds gathered. Chapter 3 tells of the ill-feeling caused by Borchgrevink's threat to stop all mail being sent home from the proposed base at Cape Adare — this presumably to prevent possible press leakage. Responding to protests, Borchgrevink quickly weakened and backed down. Next, the ship was delayed a month in the pack ice, having entered too far to the west, contrary to the advice of the navigator, Lt William Colbeck. Out of pique, Borchgrevink dismissed him from the expedition, a decision that he was subsequently forced to revoke. In due course, on 16 February 1899, the coast of Victoria Land was sighted and a landing effected at Cape Adare in storm conditions.

Bernacchi wrote of the site as 'terrible in its austerity that can only be witnessed at this end of the world. Truly a land of unsurpassed desolation.' Cut off from the hinterland by high rocks and glaciers, it was ill-suited for exploration and plagued by atrocious weather. The wintering party numbered 10, including two Lapps who spoke no English and four Norwegians. In the cramped conditions of the hut, this could lead to cultural problems, frustration, and frayed tempers. Had Borchgrevink been anything of a leader, some of the friction that was to characterise the enterprise might have been avoided. On local forays, often ill-conceived, valuable equipment and dogs were lost.

Bernacchi's increasing disillusion with the leader becomes obsessive in his diary entries, referring to the latter's 'sublime ignorance,' 'personal conceit,' and 'incompetence.' Claiming to have experience in the techniques of surveying, meteorological recording, and magnetic work, 'The Person' (a favourite epithet) continually demonstrated his lack of qualifications. Borchgrevink's reaction to being 'found out' in his various pretences was to either sulk or take revenge. Colbeck was twice dismissed and then reinstated — on one occasion being offered the post of ship's captain in place of Bernhard Jensen, then absent on *Southern Cross*! 'My opinion that Borchgrevink is insane now confirmed' noted Bernacchi.

Chapter 7 shows how expectations of improved morale with the advent of summer were dashed by the illness and subsequent death of the all-popular Hanson. A carelessly placed lighted candle came near to destroying the hut, followed by a near-fatal incident caused by fumes from a lighted stove, both being reminders of their perilous situation. Only a common distrust of the leader — then almost totally obsessed by a conviction that gold was to be found in the vicinity of the base — and hopes for the speedy return of the relief vessel remained to buoy up the failing

morale of Bernacchi and his companions.

Chapters 8 and 9 describe the sudden arrival of *Southern Cross* on 28 January 1900 and the first real opportunity for exploration with the cruise along the coast of Victoria Land, the location of the South Magnetic Pole, and a pioneering sledge journey over the surface of the ice shelf by Borchgrevink, Colbeck, and one of the Lapps achieving a farthest south record 78° 50' latitude. In her penultimate chapter, Mrs Crawford deals with the return to London and the aftermath of the expedition. The scientific results were patchy, notably the zoology, which suffered from Borchgrevink's inexplicable loss of Hanson's notebooks, absence of labels from specimens, and some poor taxidermy. Bernacchi, by contrast, was praised for his magnetic and meteorological work and acclaimed for his 'zeal and capacity,' all of which was to earn him a place on Scott's forthcoming *Discovery* expedition. As for the 'gold-bearing' ore, Borchgrevink fared no better than Frobisher. So it was that this curious figure received little honour in his day. Not until as late as 1936 — four years before his death — was all finally forgiven with his award of the Royal Geographical Society's Patron's Medal.

The book is rounded off with a brief review of subsequent visits to the huts at Cape Adare and plans for their conservation. Photographs taken at the time make interesting contrasts with some of recent years, appendices list items of clothing and equipment, and there are two most useful pull-out maps provided. This is a really excellent history, not just for the light it throws on a somewhat neglected expedition, but as a study of what extreme environmental stress can have on the personalities of a small ill-knit group of explorers living in total isolation. (H.G.R. King, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER.)

GEOPOLITICS IN ANTARCTICA: VIEWS FROM THE SOUTHERNOCEANIC RIM. Klaus Dodds. 1997. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons. xviii + 252 p, hard cover. ISBN 0-471-96992-3. £45.00.

Geopolitics concerns the study of states within the context of global space, in order to understand better the bases of state power and the nature of state interactions. Geopolitics thus aims to assess the impact of geography, economics, and demography upon the foreign policy of states.

Geopolitics in Antarctica uses the geography of polar politics as a prism to assess critically the foreign policies of six Southern Ocean Rim States (SORS), namely Argentina, Australia, Chile, India, New Zealand, and South Africa. Klaus Dodds, a lecturer in geography at Royal Holloway, University of London, has produced a serious piece of scholarship that strives to evaluate the effects of polar considerations on the foreign policies of these states, as well as the influence that each SORS's foreign policy has upon the development of Antarctic law and politics. In great measure, he succeeds in this ambitious undertaking.

Certain themes permeate Dodds' explanations of how geographical reasoning has affected the policies of these

states toward the Antarctic. Among these are the rim states' historical concern for the Antarctic–Southern Ocean region; the diplomatic role these states play as middle powers; the legal and political geographies of the polar south for sovereignty assertions made by Argentina, Australia, Chile, and New Zealand; the evolution of contemporary ocean law; and the progressive development of the constellation of agreements known as the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS). Treatment of these themes provides a fresh perspective of the Antarctic's politico-legal situation, since under the ATS national interests generally have been viewed as subsumed to a broader logic. This study also entails the first serious attempt to examine critically the role of middle powers in Antarctic geopolitics, within the analytical framework of a historical scheme for the periodization of the Antarctic events. The treatments of India and South Africa are especially welcome, since those governments' roles in Antarctic affairs have been largely neglected, and the author draws extensively upon government archives.

By way of introduction, the author briefly surveys the nature of geopolitics as a scientific study, especially as applied to Antarctica. The six principal Southern Ocean Rim States are then critically examined in separate chapters to ascertain and assess the influence of geopolitical considerations upon each state's own Antarctic policies. These chapters are organized in roughly the same way, thus providing for uniformity and easier comparative analysis. Each state's history of involvement in the Antarctic is discussed, including its government's views on law and sovereignty in the region. Likewise, perceived national interests in the polar south are set out, often as geopolitical views of prominent national authors who have influenced their government's Antarctic policy. In addition, treatment is given to each government's role in the 1959 Antarctic Treaty negotiations, the role of science in each state, territorial claims and resource interests in the Antarctic, national research programs, national security implications, and each state's participation in negotiations that in 1988 produced agreement on Antarctic minerals, only to be replaced in 1991 by the Madrid Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.

The historical analysis of the SORS is particularly useful, since each assessment is based on primary archival sources and framed within the geopolitical thinking of the time. The role of each government in the 1957–1958 International Geophysical Year and each state's strategic concerns and resource interests in creating regimes for conserving marine living resources and regulating possible Antarctic minerals activities are critically addressed. In the main, Dodds provides assessments that are balanced, reasonable, and well researched using original documents and primary materials. Certain leitmotifs converge as Dodds seeks to evaluate the legal, resource, political, and strategic interests of the SORS in the Antarctic. The common link of perceived geographical proximity to Antarctica unites each rim state and endows its government with perceived interests in influencing events