

and informative presentation of copious evidence. Here, her hypothesis of a direct link between the celebration of 'heroic failure' and contemporary guilt for the British Empire is somewhat anachronistic, and some of this book's conclusions are weakened when outside evidence is introduced. (George Lewis and Karen May, (georgelewis233@gmail.com)).

Russia's Far East: New dynamics in Asia Pacific and beyond. Rensselaer Lee and Artyom Lukin. 2015. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. 276 p, hardcover. ISBN 978-1-62637-389-1. \$68.00.
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This book by Lee and Lukin is timely, accessible, and essential for both Russian Far East (RFE) and Asia Pacific Rim (APR) policy specialists, as well as those readers with a general interest in contemporary Sino-Russian relations. This is a highly analytical and uplifting read and concludes with some thoughtful, evidence-based, and practical scenarios to improve and develop international relations in the APR/RFE, which hopefully will be read and reflected upon by respective government policy makers as well.

The book is divided into 12 stand-alone chapters, but with a common methodology throughout of exposition, supporting data, subsequent analysis, and possible future outcomes; the major themes of economic linkage, societal cooperation, and the development of a political architecture and framework(s) to support the RFE's resurgence - and facilitate possible Sino-Russian regional integration, is also apparent across all subject headings.

Chapters include, amongst others, a definition and history of the RFE, Russia's evolving policy towards the region(s), potential Sino-Russian alliances, Russian sovereignty versus Chinese infrastructure build-out/globalization, and potential economic integration of NE China with the RFE; the account of the geopolitics/economics of the region, including other Asian countries' interests as well as those of China, Russia, and the U.S. is particularly thought provoking, well-balanced, and unambiguously frank. Associated footnotes, economic statistics and references, are both informative and comprehensive.

Most refreshingly - and critical, is the continuous juxtaposition of both Moscow and Beijing's stated policies for the RFE/NE China, and the reality of such policy administration and implementation at the local level(s). This is where the rubber really hits the road in all human affairs, and Lee and Lukin have to their credit, identified and filled in this often missing "reality check" in academic accounts with copious interviews, news stories, and data from local practitioners of all kinds: legislators; financiers; economists; business people; and local as well as regional administrators.

Population demographics, (on both sides of the Sino-Russian border), migration out of the RFE by Russians, and the growing problem of access to fresh water for the NE Chinese population (compounded by a stunning and wilful indifference to the polluting of Chinese rivers in NE China), are sobering and game-changing facts, and the authors rightly emphasize the centrality of seeking solutions to these issues before any economic integration of the two regions can realistically take place.

Unsurprisingly, a lot of attention is reserved for discussion of major oil and gas activities between the two countries, regional

References

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infrastructure development, and the general capacity and will to finance both related activities, via provincial, regional, state, and PPI initiatives. The politics, economics, and commercial wrangling of the RFE's mammoth \$400Bn oil/gas deal signed recently between China and Russia is for example, well covered and exposes much that is both hopeful and depressing about the Sino-Russian relationship. The whiff of cultural mistrust and towering commercial corruption is well researched from local sources, and its negative effects are not discounted by the authors.

For Arctic specialists there are plenty of small nuggets of information and policy statements to be found that elicit hints about possible further Sino-Russian integration between the RFE/NE China and the Arctic in the future. Major oil and gas developments, infrastructure, and shipping, to name but three industries (Arctic river waterways are another), all have Arctic aspects to them in terms of their respective relationships to the routing and destination(s) of the NSR along the Russian Pacific coast. Moreover, a following of the money trail outlined by the authors (regional investment funds, OBOR, Silk Road Fund, Russian RFE Fund, etc.), suggests the possible funding mechanism for future Sino-Russian Arctic/APR integration as well.

One of the scenarios painted by interviewed Sinologists is that with their spectacular resource wealth, Arctic NSR-bordering territories, and positioning on the sensitive RFE Pacific coast (not many miles from the U.S.), the northern RFE's Chukotka Okrug, Sakha Republic, and the Kamchatka and Magadan Oblasts, may be China's next step northwards in the RFE, toward the Russian Arctic coast, and further economic integration of the RFE/NE China within the APR.

The NSR is a potential new maritime trade route for Asia as a whole, and also represents for China connectivity with Russian Arctic gas supplies, as well as affording strategic freedom from the U.S. Navy as the world's guarantor of safe passage/navigation of all other maritime trade routes, but not significantly, the Russian dominated NSR. If Chinese/U.S. relations deteriorate further with regard to the Malacca Straits, and disputes over UNCLOS rulings in the South China Sea, the NSR will become of more strategic interest to China over the coming years.

Furthermore, Chinese equity ownership in RFE oil and gas upstream projects, increasing ownership in the Arctic's Yamal LNG project with Russia's Novotek, and a joint venture between Rosneft and Statoil (but using a Chinese oil field services group) in the Sea of Okhotsk continues apace. Other commercial indicators of intent include a joint undersea construction project for an optic cable linking Chukotka, Kamchatka, and Magadan, and a rental agreement to jointly develop the Russian Pacific port of Zarubino in the Sea of Japan. Taken as a whole, these developments would seem to suggest an increasing strategic Chinese interest in northern/coastal RFE, and its physical linkage with the Russian Arctic (via the NSR), and thus the possibility of a widening economic role for China in a more broadly integrated and perhaps Chinese dominated, APR.

Whilst this future northern RFE/Arctic aspect is somewhat speculative at the moment, what is apparent is that Chinese financing in the RFE is available (and could be available from other Asian players as well, including Japan and South Korea); the AIIB, NDB, and the Silk Road fund are all heavily Chinese dominated, and as the authors point out, it is inevitable that their funding will primarily favour Chinese regional aspirations, at the same time as financing partner countries' projects as well. Nonetheless the strategic direction is apparent, and at present, unchallenged by the west. However the application, value, and sustainability of Chinese investment (FDI/cash) in the RFE is not yet clear as the authors state; and perhaps as serious in this Sino-Russian relationship, is the lack of a technically trained Russian labour force, poor ITC capacity/capability, lack of infrastructure, and the total absence of even a single added-value strategic **joint venture** equity project, without which Russia simply cannot kick-start their local strategic industries, or guarantee sustainable growth of a modern economy in the RFE - and only by doing so, build an equitable relationship with China in the RFE, and greater APR.

The final aspect of this book is a review of the present status of U.S./Russian relations, regarding the RFE. A conclusion is that there is much to agree upon, and that in this region irrespective of European sanctions, relations are good, straightforward, and practical.

In fact American policy makers make the point that Russia is an essential ally of the U.S., if the latter is to prevent Chinese hegemony in the broader APR; one challenge is the lack of an agreed western framework and /or institutional mechanism that could attract not only Russia, but other U.S. Asian allies (Japan, ROK) into such a coalition, and that could then match Chinese financial institutions such as the AIIB, Silk Road fund, and the China-dominated NDB, which are presently leading the way in funding the required infrastructure build-out that is necessary for any subsequent Sino-Russian regional integration.

This penultimate chapter and the final chapter on possible scenarios for collaboration in the RFE/APR, is a must-read for policy makers, especially in Washington following this year's presidential election outcome; an underlying theme throughout these two concluding chapters is that now is the time to act; and it occurs to this reviewer that there may be a deal on the horizon for Russia consisting of an alternative outcome for the RFE in the APR, alongside the U.S. (still with a Chinese presence, but less exclusive), in return for some leeway over Russian Arctic sanctions discussions, especially the negative effects on the NSR, as a future trade and energy corridor between east and west.

For Arctic specialists this is a most stimulating and unusual book, as its view of the RFE and its deepening relationship with NE China both economically and politically, is in an understated way, clearly linked to the development of the Russian Arctic and northern territories, and in particular the strategic role of the Northern Sea Route (NSR). Arctic scholars will be fascinated by many of the implications for the Arctic of these deepening Sino-Russian relations in the RFE and wider APR.

The book benefits from excellent primary source material; interviews with key Russian and Chinese (and other Asian players') decision-makers and analysts, well-cited coverage of original texts and documents, and shrewd and well informed analyses of the policy positions of politicians, military personnel, and leading business leaders from Russia, Asia, and the United States. A brief history of Sino-Russian relations in NE China/Manchuria and the RFE is deservedly included, which explains the background to the region(s) and provides the framework for the book's contemporary discourse. The book clearly benefits from the balanced inputs – and differing cultural perceptions of both the American and Russian authors; the fact that Artyom Lukin is a native of the Russian Far East, adds further insight and authenticity to the analyses. (Tim Reilly, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Rd, Cambridge CB2 1ER, UK (tbr22@cam.ac.uk))

Perished. The 1914 Newfoundland sealing disaster.

Jenny Higgins. 2013. Portugal Cove-St. Phillips: Boulder Publications. 72 p, illustrated, hardcover. ISBN: 978-1-927099-22-3. CA\$ 29.95.

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The seal hunt has for decades been an activity of utmost controversy. In light of its perceived cruelty, also the European Union has adopted a ban which prohibits the trade in seal products, resting on the assumption that the hunt is inherently cruel and that non-indigenous sealers do not benefit sufficiently from it – culturally and economically – that it could in any way be justified. Interestingly, however, this assumption is not based on empirical data, but rather on information by and large produced by organisations opposed to the seal hunt. Ethnographic data draws a different picture and places the seal hunt within a context of community integrity and socio-economic relevance (Sellheim 2015).

In how far the seal hunt plays a role in the self-understanding of Eastern Canadian rural communities show the most recent publications on the seal hunt that were published by Québécois and Newfoundland publishers (for example Gillett 2015; Menge 2016) of which the present volume *Perished* has for some

reason gone unnoticed albeit its publication already in 2013. Two reasons may to some degree justify this oversight: first, for a scholar familiar with the Newfoundland seal hunt of the past and present the book does not hold much new information; second, it is a book whose target audience is not necessarily the academic world, but rather lay persons and those very broadly interested in Newfoundland (sealing) history. That being said, there is no doubt in my mind that this book is truly unique. Essentially, it follows William Coaker, the leader of the Union Party of Newfoundland who joined the seal hunt on *Nascopie* in the sealing season of spring 1914 – the year the colony experienced its greatest disasters with a loss of more than 270 lives: the *Newfoundland* and *Southern Cross* disasters in which the former lost more than 70 men on the ice due to miscommunication and absence of modern equipment due to financial reasons, and the latter sinking along with its entire crew upon its return from Newfoundland's capital St. John's from the seal hunt in the Gulf of St. Lawrence (see also Brown 1988). Higgins skillfully inserts what has become known as 'Mr Coaker's Log', a series of log-entries as published in the *Daily Mail* between 11 April to 17 April 1914 into the narratives of the seal hunt. Providing insight into the living and working conditions of a sealer, the economy and processing of the seal, and as the title implies, the prelude, 'main act' and the aftermath