

politics. Creating international environmental regimes. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 22–55.

Ryan, S. 1994. *The ice hunters. A history of Newfoundland sealing to 1914.* St. John's: Breakwater Books Ltd.

SIBERIA: A HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE. Janet M. Hartley. 2014. New Haven, London: Yale University Press. xx + 289, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 978-0-300-16794-8. £25.00.

doi:[10.1017/S0032247415000108](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247415000108)

This book is a thoroughly comprehensive, and yet easy to read, introduction to problems that have frequently been seen as defying easy explanation. Namely who are the peoples of Siberia and where did they come from? It is definitely not a history of Siberia *per se*, for that one would have to look elsewhere, and it would be useful to familiarise oneself with the outlines before perusing this volume, but from the first chapter one is swept along in the author's infectious and attractive prose on a journey towards understanding, and there are rather few books nowadays about which one can write that.

In the introduction the author refers to popular perceptions of Siberia, its enormous size, ferocious climate, thinly spread population, the old fur trade, 'a place of terror and exile', and so forth, and goes on to affirm that her aim is, within a 'broadly chronological' approach, an attempt to understand 'the experiences of explorers, missionaries, priests, traders, officials, exiles and convicts' in tsarist and post tsarist Siberia. Starting with the advance into Siberia towards the end of the sixteenth century, the author examines the indigenous peoples and the problems of communication faced by anyone penetrating the region. She then proceeds to cover immigration in the seventeenth century and the development of the territory in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries following on with the traumatic events of the twentieth century. She lays stress on the differences between Siberia and European Russia concentrating on involuntary and voluntary immigrants, the role of the indigenous peoples and the difficulties of administration in such a vast area. And all this is in fewer than 300 pages with no hint of inadequate detail, hurried prose, or poor referencing!

For this reviewer the most interesting sections included those on the Old Believers, about whom there is a sensitive account laying due stress on the fact that many of them chose immolation in fire in preference to adopting the changes that they viewed as 'a heretical challenge to sacred symbols' and even as the work of the devil. Readers of this journal will be interested in the accounts of the Great Northern Expedition, although it is not named as such, and of other exploratory ventures in the north. Such characters as Laptev, Pronshishchev (and his redoubtable wife), Steller, Krashennikov, Müller and Gmelin stalk the pages and a necessarily concise account of Russian America is presented laying emphasis on its continual supply problems but omitting the part that the Hudson's Bay Company

played in alleviating these to a certain extent. An important chapter covers the advent of the Trans-Siberian Railway which was the 'root cause of the transformation of Siberia' and a full account is given of the multifarious difficulties faced by the engineers in the process of construction. The completion of the railway was of great importance with regard to the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) and this leads into a section on Japanese immigration into the Russian far east which started at the beginning of the twentieth century. There were 3000 in Vladivostok in 1902 for example. Comment is also made on the Chinese in Siberia. Immigration from Russia was stimulated by the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 and there was mass migration followed by another surge after 1906. The Stolypin reforms that were current at the time and were intended to assist peasants setting up as farms represent merely one of the series of lost opportunities that seem to have afflicted Siberia and its inhabitants since the very earliest days. The extraordinary development of agriculture in the years before 1914 receives due attention and it was startling to this reviewer when the author pointed out that by that year butter was the fourth most important export after grain, flax and wood and that there were some 4000 creameries in Siberia. Extraordinary for an economy that was then and still is regarded as more or less totally extractive.

The author handles the traumas of the 1920s with care and provides an excellent analysis of why the 'whites' were doomed to defeat. She cites fact after fact with regard to the development of the territory from the 1930s to the 1960s noting that by the latter year illiteracy was 'almost eradicated' and that by 1975 there were 51,000 higher education students in Siberia. A final chapter entitled 'The New Siberia' notes the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent reduction in the population of Siberia reflecting unemployment and higher mortality rates. The book finishes with what I take to be a note of optimism for the future of this perplexing land.

Considering its relatively modest length, the critical apparatus of the book is most impressive and reveals that the author has been living with the project for a long time. The illustrations are carefully selected and the maps are models of their kind.

To sum up: this book should be read by all with interests, however vestigial, in Siberia. As is pointed out there is something in the very name that attracts and repels but it cannot be ignored. No matter how profound is the reader's prior knowledge, no matter how many times has he or she been there, a reader will learn much from this book and be fascinated and entertained into the bargain. (Ian R. Stone, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Rd., Cambridge CB2 1ER (irs30@cam.ac.uk)).

THE ARCTIC CLIMATE SYSTEM (second edition). Mark Serreze and Roger Barry. 2014. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 404 p, illustrated, hardcover. ISBN 978-1-107-03717-5. £75.00.

doi:[10.1017/S0032247415000133](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247415000133)

While the Arctic sits in uncertain times experiencing amplified warming and rapid change, there is no better time for the second edition of *The Arctic climate system*. It brings an overview of climate interactions between atmosphere, land and ocean, detailing the complex systems at play. A wealth of knowledge