

9. Social welfare.
10. Labour market affairs.
11. Education and cultural affairs, including vocational education.
12. Other matters relating to trade, including State-conducted fishing and production; support and development of economic activities.
13. Health services.
14. Rent legislation, rent support, and housing administration.
15. Supply of goods.
16. Internal transport of passengers and goods.
17. Protection of the environment.

REVIEW

LIFE ON AN ICEFLOE

[Review by Terence Armstrong* of I. D. Papanin's *Led i plamen'*, Moscow, Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoy Literatury, 1977, 416 p.]

One of the most colourful figures in the history of Soviet Arctic endeavour has here written his memoirs. Papanin, the little round man with the toothbrush moustache, bursting with energy and enthusiasm, achieved world fame as the leader of the first Soviet drifting station on floating ice, set up at the North Pole in 1937. He had played an important role in the Arctic before that, and he returned from the expedition to play an even more important one as wartime head of the Chief Administration of the Northern Sea Route [Glavsevmorput]. He described the North Pole expedition in an earlier book, of which the English edition was *Life on an icefloe* (London, 1947), but he has not until now told us much of his other multifarious activities. The gap is now filled, but the reader must remember that these are the recollections of an old man for whom relations with other people were the most important thing in life. Large numbers of people are mentioned, almost always in complimentary terms, and a good impression of the author's ebullient character emerges indirectly. Papanin got much done, and kept his popularity at the same time. More than a little charisma must have been involved. He had friends everywhere, knew just who to go to, and was clearly a hard person to refuse. His eight Orders of Lenin are a measure of his success.

Yet there is disappointingly little here in the way of hard facts on Arctic subjects. As far as operations on the Northern Sea Route are concerned, incidents are recounted but there is no coherent account of any particular season. Perhaps memoirs are not the place for such accounts. Papanin is severe in his condemnation of Admiral Pound's fateful order to convoy PQ 17 to disperse, but he is fair on the Allied naval effort in the Arctic and in particular towards foreign visitors to the White Sea.

More interesting, perhaps, because less well known to Arctic people, are the chapters on his work outside the Arctic. He is proud of the fact that just after the Revolution he was in charge of a *Cheka* group (forerunner of today's KGB) in the Crimea. His Party loyalty is always rock-solid, and he is of the generation to whom Stalin meant everything (Papanin met him quite often). After his retirement from the Chief Administration through ill health in 1946 he started a whole new career with the Academy of Sciences [Akademiya Nauk SSSR], first as head of an office set up to obtain ships for the growing oceanographic fleet, then as head of an institute of biology of inland waters. During this time he played an important part preparing the first Soviet Antarctic expedition of 1955–57—and wanted to lead it himself. Whether he has even now finally retired is not clear (one suspects not), but when he was 76 he seems to have shed some of the load. Since then, there have been strenuous 80th birthday celebrations—and the news from Moscow continues to be good. As he says in this book, when he learnt in 1944 of the sinking of the survey vessel *Ivan Papanin*, he said to himself, Well, you've paid your tribute to the sea, so it's a long life for you now.

* Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge CB2 1ER.