

the scientific competence of indigenous scholars besides) and criticizing him for not knowing the tangled institutional history of the St. Petersburg-based linguists that lay behind this one unfortunate text. Bogoraz himself certainly suffered for daring to criticize authorities. One wonders if the editors of this volume should have been so enthusiastic about clearing and remarking all of his paths.

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ARCTIC SCIENTIST, GULAG SURVIVOR: THE BIOGRAPHY OF MIKHAIL MIKHAILOVICH ERMOLAEV, 1905–1991. By A.M. ERMOLAEV and V.D. DIBNER. Translated and edited by WILLIAM BARR. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2009. xiv + 591 p., maps, b&w illus., appendices, bib., glossary, index. Soft-bound. Cdn\$ and US\$44.95.

The celebrated Soviet scientist Mikhail Mikhailovich Ermolaev, whose life as an Arctic scientist spanned the period from just after the foundation of the Soviet Union in 1924 until his death during the year of its collapse, is the subject of this biography, conscientiously translated by William Barr. During Ermolaev's long life, his work involved a range of related academic disciplines from geology to geophysics and geochemistry and was conducted both out in the field in the far North, in a university setting, and in the GULAG prison camp system following his re-arrest in 1940.

After a first chapter on Ermolaev's early life prior to his 1925 voyage to Novaia Zemlia, the bulk of the book is concerned with his career in the field during the 1920s and 1930s and the period from 1938 to 1954, during which he was first imprisoned and then, after a brief period of freedom during 1940, became an inmate of the GULAG camp system and exile. Events in Ermolaev's life are described alongside elements of his scientific work, with further details on the latter in particular provided in Barr's notes and in appendices.

From this reviewer's perspective, the material on Ermolaev's arrest in 1938, release and re-arrest in 1940, and subsequent work within the GULAG system is particularly interesting, both in terms of the role of the system in the Soviet "conquest" of the Arctic and considering Ermolaev's experiences as a case study of its functioning. Here family materials provide a context that reinforces the emotional suffering endured by many families during the era of the "Great Purges" in the USSR.

The authors of this biography, Ermolaev's son Aleksei and V.D. Dibner, a colleague of Ermolaev's late in his life, had access to privileged personal materials, including what

appears to be a considerable amount of correspondence—much held by the family and some obtained from archives of the security services. Unfortunately, neither of the authors is a professional historian, and hence the attribution of material to sources in the endnotes is weak. On occasion, the authors have resorted to the Soviet-style device of presenting what is no doubt paraphrasing as direct speech. Although the authors do not eulogize their subject (as one might expect given the relationship of the authors to the subject and the very traditional Russian academic biographical style), this biography lacks a critical edge that might have made for livelier reading and indeed provided a more multi-dimensional portrayal of Ermolaev. The author's conscious avoidance of critical comments by the subject about other figures certainly contributes to making some of the material a little "dry." Some of the material on Ermolaev's early and later life, which is likely to interest a far more limited audience than the core of the book, could perhaps have been omitted to abridge these hefty 591 pages.

William Barr has done an excellent job of translating this work, which is also well illustrated. It is not entirely clear, however, what the purpose of the book is, other than serving as a memorial to Ermolaev. This goal may appeal to family, friends and colleagues, but many readers of this English translation are more likely to be interested in Ermolaev's perspective on Soviet Arctic exploration and development and his experiences of the tumultuous period of the "Great Purges" and late Stalinism. Though I accept that there was an honourable attempt to be sensitive to the desires of the family in production of the English translation, more ruthless editing and additional endnotes by the translator could have given those topics more prominence—perhaps leading to greater exposure for this prominent figure in Arctic science.

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ARCTIC DOOM, ARCTIC BOOM: THE GEOPOLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE ARCTIC. By BARRY SCOTT ZELLEN. Santa Barbara, California: ABC CLIO Publishing, 2009. ISBN 978-0-313-38012-9. xi + 232 p., notes, bib., index. Hardbound. US\$49.95.

Zellen, a former journalist and newspaper editor who worked for the Inuvialuit in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, during the 1990s, argues that the Arctic has reached a "tipping point" in terms of both climate change and consequent geopolitical (read: military, economic, and politically strategic) importance on the international stage. With the loss of sea ice, melting permafrost, warming ambient temperatures, and consequent changes in flora and fauna