

# A Fractured North: Musings on Coping with the Closure of the Russian North to Scholars

January 24, 2025

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has mostly 'paused' the 30+ years of collaborative research carried out by Western scholars with Indigenous partners in the Russian North that Gorbachev's 1987 Murmansk speech instigated. These academics now must decide how to move forward in their careers, given the current geopolitics. In a series of volumes, colleagues Erich Kasten, Igor Krupnik and I have collected 40 papers addressing this scholarly fracture in circumpolar social sciences. Authors span the spectrum from early career researchers to retired colleagues who, like me, began their careers during the previous Cold War. Papers address the ethical dilemmas of continuing versus ceasing research in the Russian North; offer past histories of researchers dealing with repressive regimes; describe collaborative projects that are now 'on hold'; and discuss new ways of moving forward with research. I will summarize some of the offerings of these three volumes and offer my own thoughts on 'moving onward' with work on the Russian North.

**When: Friday, January 24 from 12 PM to 1:30 PM**  
**Where: In person only (Room 7-152)**

*Co-hosted by:*

**UNBC Northern Studies Program - NORTHERN DAYS**

**Global Friday**

**UNBC** UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA  
Faculty of Indigenous  
Studies, Social Sciences  
and Humanities

**Dr. Gail Fondahl, PhD**

**Professor Emerita**

**Department of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences  
University of Northern British Columbia**

