The Saami of Lapland

The Minority Rights Group Report No. 55

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The Minority Rights Group Report No. 55 · The Saami of Lapland

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- To secure justice for minority or majority groups suffering discrimination, by investigating their situation and publicising the facts as widely as possible, to educate and alert public opinion throughout the world.
- To help prevent, through publicity about violations of human rights, such problems from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, when polarised, are very difficult to resolve; and
- To foster, by its research findings, international understanding of the factors which create prejudiced treatment and group tensions, thus helping to promote the growth of a world conscience regarding human rights.

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The Saami of Lapland

By Hugh Beach

Hugh Beach is an anthropologist who has specialized in studies of circumpolar peoples. Since 1973 he has worked with the Saami in Sweden with shorter periods of fieldwork in northern Norway and Siberia. He has also worked for over a year as a reindeer herder with the Inuit of Alaska's Seward Peninsula. His publications, in Swedish and English, include works for the general public. Currently he leads a research project on the social effects of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster for the Swedish Saami.

The cover photograph is by Hugh Beach and was taken during a spring migration in northern Norway in 1975. The photograph on page 15, also by Hugh Beach, was taken during the September reindeer slaughter, in Jokkmokk region, Sweden, in the late 1970s.

Printed by Expedite Graphic Limited, Murray House, 3 Vandon Street, London SW1H OAG.

ISBN No 0 946690 62 6

MRG first published a report on the Sami (Saami) of Lapland in November 1982. This completely new report was published in September 1988.

The report that follows has been commissioned, and is published, by the Minority Rights Group as a contribution to public understanding of the problem which forms its subject. It does not necessarily represent, in every detail and in all its aspects, the collective view of the Group.

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THE UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from any fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if a man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore,

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

proclaims

THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11. (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14. (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15. (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16. (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17. (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21. (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interest.

Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25. (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26. (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27. (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28. Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29. (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

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by Hugh Beach

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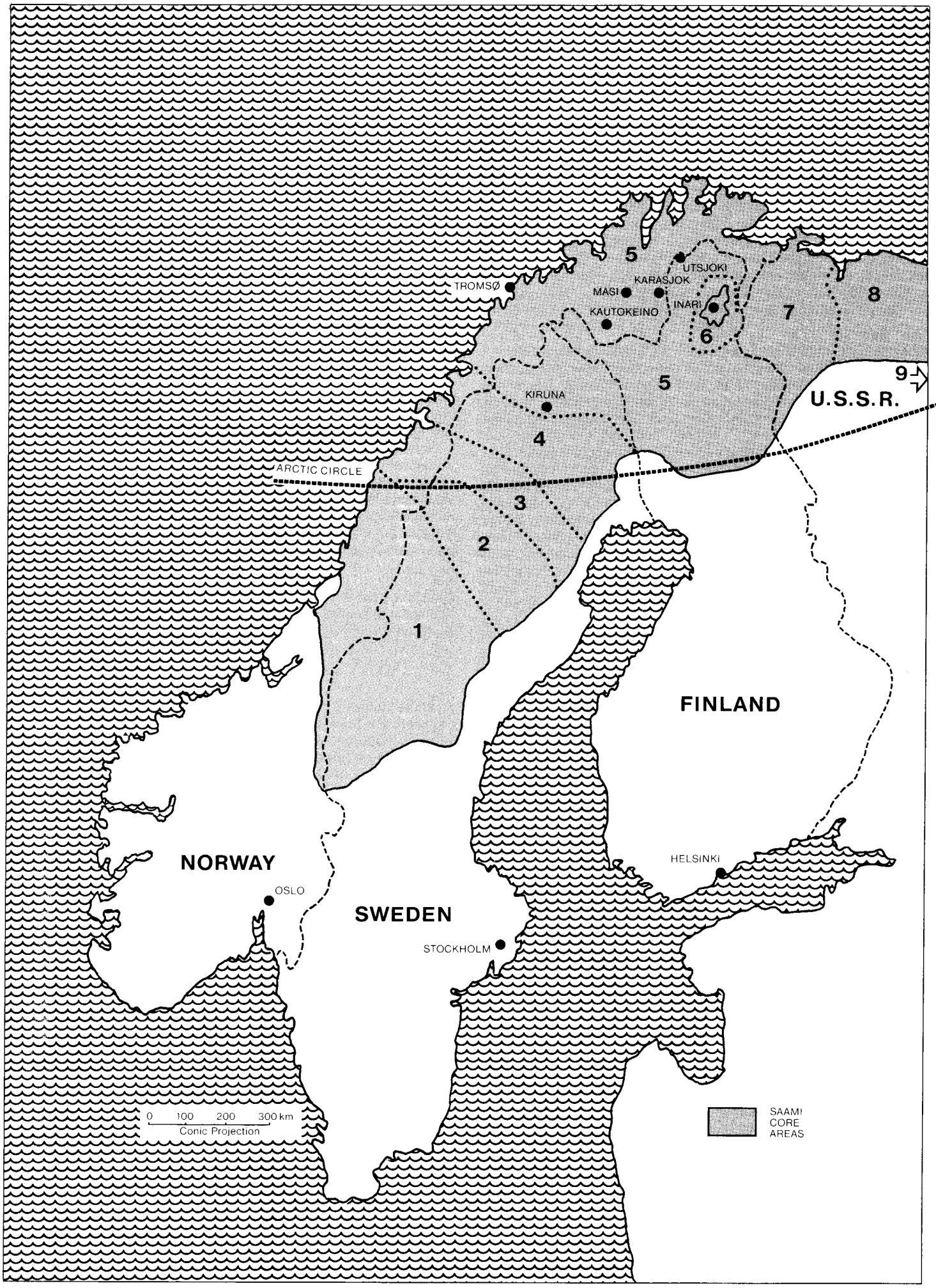

The Saami dialects: 1. South 2. Ume 3. Pite 4. Lule 5. North 6. Enare 7. Skolt 8. Kildin 9. Ter
(from Nickul, K, *The Lappish Nation, Citizens of Four Countries*, 1977)

Introduction

The Saami, or Lapps, are the Native people of the area known as Lapland in northernmost Europe. Due to the national borders forced upon them, the Saami have been divided between four countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Soviet Union. There were social, economic and linguistic differences within the Saami population before the division into separate States, but these were and largely still are subordinated to the overall unity of Saami ethnic identity. Unlike many other ethnic minorities, the Saami maintain access to much of *their* land, despite ongoing debates concerning questions of legal ownership. Yet, in spite of the fundamental differences between the Saami minority and other non-indigenous minorities in these countries, the Saami have been treated in many respects like refugees, to the extent of being subjected to powerful assimilation policies. (In fact, in some respects it is only thanks to policies forged to support the cultures and languages of immigrant groups that the Saami too have gained similar support.)

Few groups have had so much written about them as have the Saami, and in this short space it is impossible to do this material justice. My purpose will therefore be to provide basic information about the situation of the Saami and to contribute a much-needed analytical update in light of recent and highly significant developments.

The Saami People

Accurate demographic statistics on Saami population size and distribution are largely lacking. Much depends, of course, on the operational definition of 'Saami', and this presents a difficult problem. The most commonly cited figures for the Saami population are for a total of 35,000 Saami, of whom 20,000 are in Norway, 10,000 in Sweden, 3000 in Finland and 2000 in the Soviet Union. Ruong's revised standard work on the Saami, however, gives considerably higher numbers: a total of 60,000 Saami, of whom 40,000 are in Norway, 15,000 in Sweden, 4000 in Finland and 1500 to 2000 in the Soviet Union.[1] Obviously this rise of over 58% in seven years reflects more than a growing birth rate; it reflects various definitions of Saamihood based largely on criteria of language and individual self-ascriptions as formalized in the 1980 Saami Political Programme. There is furthermore a growing tendency for those Saami who earlier sought to avoid public admission of their ethnic roots for fear of stigmatization[2] to take new pride in their ethnic membership.

Saami political organizations have demanded that government censuses record their ethnicity. Not only would knowledge of Saami numbers indicate potential Saami political strength, but a census would also facilitate the realization of the newly proposed Saami Parliaments in these countries. Even if the participation of officially recognized Saami in the election of their representatives is a matter of free choice, just who is to be recognized as a Saami is a matter not fully resolved. An important issue in Sweden, for example, concerns linking the Saami status of individuals to that recognized for their parents or grandparents. Partly because of a desire to 'harmonize' Saami policies and definitions in the Nordic countries, it has been suggested that the new Saami Parliaments of Norway and Sweden be composed of representatives elected by freely registered Saami, as is already the case in the existing Finnish Saami Parliament. However, some Saami are afraid that if registration is left up to the individual, apathy or fear of stigmatization will cause many to refrain from joining the Saami electorate. The issue is vital for the status recognition of future generations and not only for those alive and able to vote today.

Tacitus in 98 A.D. wrote of the 'fenni', north of the Germanic tribes. According to his description, these fenni had no horses, no weapons, and no houses. They dressed in hides and slept on the ground. Women as well as men joined in the hunt. In 550 A.D., Prokopios described what he termed the 'skrithiphinoi' in much the same way. The prefix 'skriti' used by Prokopios is an Old Norse word meaning to ski. The Saami have been referred to as 'scrirdifiner', 'scirdifriner', 'rerefenar', 'scricfinner' or simply 'finner' and 'finnar'. 'Finner' is an old nordic name for the Saami which is still used at times in Norway and evident in the name of Norway's northernmost region, Finnmarken. The Finns, inhabitants of Finland, were then known as 'kväner'.

Around 1200 A.D., Saxo Grammaticus described the Saami as moving with their houses and for the first time used the term 'Lappia' for Lapland. Gradually it became common to speak of Lappia inhabitants as Lapps, usually together with the modifier 'wild'. Thus the term 'Lapp' is a relatively recent name for the Saami which spread via Swedish to the rest of the world. Another, probably mistaken derivation of the term 'Lapp' claims it to come from the word 'lapp' used to signify a piece of cloth, a rag or a triangular cloth piece used in sewing clothes.

The Saami call themselves 'saemie', 'sapmi', 'saa'm' or similar dialect variations. For many years Saami spokespersons have campaigned to substitute 'Saami' for 'Lapp' (considered by many Saami to be a derogatory term). During the 1960s and 1970s 'Saami' (in Swedish and Norwegian 'Same') has come to replace 'Lapp' in all official texts. A similar process has gained momentum internationally. For a small minority people threatened with assimilation, destruction of their resource base and deterioration of their language, gaining authentication from others of their own name for themselves is a symbolically significant step toward international recognition of their cultural needs and rights to self-determination.

Origins

Early researchers into Saami racial traits were largely preoccupied with measuring Saami skulls, and have presented a range of hypotheses claiming almost every conceivable origin for the Saami. Guerault (1860-63) and Nilsson (1866) considered the Saami to be mongoloid. Schefferus (1673) grouped the Saami with the Finns. Giuffrida-Ruggeri (1913) placed them with the Samoyeds. Wiklund conceived of the Saami as the remnants of the root race for both yellow and white races. The Saami have even been called the lost tribe of Israel. The confidence with which these theories are presented must be weighed against the enormous range of their variability. We simply do not really know where the Saami originated or even if this is the right question to ask. Poul Simonsen (1959) suggests that the appropriate question is not where the Saami came from, but rather when the various peoples in the north coalesced into Saami with a Saami identity.

The often encountered debate over who were the first occupants of the northern reaches of Fennoscandia, as linked to the question of who should therefore be given special resource rights, is entirely misguided. The fact is that the Saami as a fully developed ethnic group held the area and had held it past the brink of human memory when the nations to the south took the first steps to colonize it. New evidence continually presents itself. The recent archeological finds of Dr. Inger Zachrisson, for instance, indicate that Saami inhabited the Härjedalen area of Sweden in the year 1000 A.D., which casts strong doubt on one of the main pillars of argument in the Swedish Supreme Court's ruling against the Saami in the famous Skattefjäll Case.

From the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, it seems that many scholars wished to isolate the characteristics of their own 'civilized race' by making crude comparisons with other peoples. It was thought that certain Saami gene frequencies bespoke long isolation. Social or 'vulgar' Darwinism was in vogue. So-called racial hygiene, condemning intermarriage between races of different order, was a respectable topic. As a result, older descriptions of the Saami race are often hard-drawn, absolute, and derogatory.

Language

The Saami language belongs to the western division of the Finno-Ugric branch of the Uralic family. Finnish, Estonian, Livonian, Votic, Veps, Mordvin, Mari and Permian belong to this same western group. Although it is undergoing change, Saami is basically a so-called agglutinated language, meaning that the function of a word in a sentence is decided by building prefixes and

suffixes onto a root. Inflections can be added onto the root in long chains. The root is often characterized by internal consonant value changing according to the form of the agglutinating syllables.

Saami is characterized by a wealth of noun cases (as many as 7-8 cases) and diminutives. Saami personal pronouns exhibit a dual as well as singular and plural forms. It is a language remarkably well equipped to deal with the ecology of the far North and especially with the reindeer herding livelihood. For example, Saami terminology distinguishes reindeer according to nomenclature based on sex, age, colour and the form or absence of antlers. By combining the distinctions of each category in different permutations, hundreds of descriptive terms can be generated and used to pinpoint accurately each particular reindeer in an entire herd. The herder who does not speak Saami is handicapped.

The Saami language is divided into a number of major dialects with variations so marked that a Northern Saami and a Southern Saami might resort to one of the national languages in order to communicate. In fact, Hansegard[3] claims that these major variations can be considered different languages. The major dialects encompass sub-dialects so that the trained ear can pinpoint quite accurately the original home area of a speaker.

The Saami dialects are: Skolt, Kildin and Ter Saami, spoken on the Kola Peninsula of the Soviet Union; Enare Saami, spoken around Enare Lake in Finland; Northern Saami, spoken in northern Norway, Torne Lappmark in Sweden and neighbouring zones in Finland; Lule Saami, spoken in Lule Lappmark; Pite Saami, spoken in Pite Lappmark; Umea Saami, spoken in the southern Arvidsjaur region and in northern Västerbotten; Southern Saami, spoken in most of Västerbotten and in Jämtland, Härjedalen, the Idre region in Dalecarlia and nearby areas in Norway. These can be grouped into three major categories: Eastern, Central and Southern Saami.

Because of border disputes constraining the traditionally free flow of nomadic Saami across the Nordic countries and in particular the enforced relocation of many Northern Saami families southwards during the first half of the 1900s (to be discussed later), the Northern Saami dialect is now widely spread to the central and southern areas as well.

Saami contains many borrowed words from Finnish, indicating Saami-Finnish relations for at least 2000 years, and also from Old Norse, going back at least 1300 years. Even in recent times, large parts of northern Sweden and Norway have been bilingual in Saami and Finnish. Swedish and Norwegian have increasingly pushed out Finnish in northern Sweden and Norway, but in certain areas it is not uncommon to find trilingual populations, speaking Saami, Finnish and Swedish or Norwegian.

The colonizing powers have had fluctuating attitudes toward the Saami language. On the one hand, Saami has been suppressed as a language unfit to carry the weight of higher civilization or to convey the glories of Christianity. Some churchmen even considered the Saami language to be the devil's tongue. More enlightened churchmen, on the other hand, understood that the most effective way to spread the gospel to the Saami was through the Saami language.

In the early 1700s, Thomas von Westen led the Saami Mission in northern Norway. He used Saami as a matter of course for missionary work, and the Saami Mission continued in this spirit for many years after his death. By the late 1700s, however, the tide had changed in Norway. The Saami language did not receive renewed support until around the 1820s, but then enjoyed a comeback largely due to the work of the priests Deinboll and Stockfleth. With the rise of Norwegian nationalism around the mid-1850s, the Saami language was once again suppressed in Norway. Apparently, large-scale immigration of Finns to northern Norway at this time fanned the flames of a one-State-one-culture ideology. In many ways, the Saami suffered from the Norwegian fear of 'Finnization'. For example, a ruling in 1902 forbade the sale of land to citizens who did not master Norwegian and use it daily. This bleak period for Saami language and schooling in Norway continued until the close of World War II.

Similar shifts between the poles of Saami language support and suppression have occurred in Sweden and Finland. During the worst periods, Saami children received instruction only in the language of their nation-State and were often not permitted to speak Saami together. Saami speakers were stigmatized in general, with the result that this stigma frequently became internalized by the Saami themselves.

The Saami language was first put into writing by missionaries of the colonizing powers in the 1600s. In 1755 the New Testament was translated into Saami, and the whole Bible followed in 1811. In fact, the use of written Saami in Finland was mainly confined to religious texts up until the 1970s. Naturally the various churchmen wrote the Saami dialect they had learned from their mission station, and as there was no standard orthography, they devised their own systems. Dialectal variation was thereby compounded by orthographic variation. In the interests of maintaining a strong, living Saami language, it has been important to try to achieve a standardized orthography. Prof. Knut Bergsland from Norway together with the Saami Prof. Israel Ruong from Sweden composed a standard Saami orthography which was used by many dialect groups from 1951 to 1979. Later, some adjustments were made so that now the major Saami dialect groups in Norway, Sweden and Finland have agreed upon a standard.

Language loss and lack of reading and writing skills have been pressing problems for the Saami. The research of Henning Johansson for the non-herding Saami population in Sweden showed alarming results: 20% cannot understand Saami; 40% cannot speak Saami; 65% cannot read Saami; 85% cannot write Saami.[4] In Finland, the outlook for maintaining the Saami language is not good. Measures to teach reading and writing skills in Saami through the schools have been focused upon children alone.[5] While figures demonstrating Saami linguistic competence give cause for alarm, the situation is far worse when it comes to actual language use. Individual linguistic competence has been found to persist far longer than use, but it is use which keeps a language alive through generations, breeding new competence. Aikio points out that in Finland lack of teaching material, Saami-speaking teachers, media exposure and official recognition even within the realm of the reindeer herding administration, all inhibit the use of the Saami language even by those competent to do so. Recent research by Guttorm[6] found that Saami-speaking children often spoke Finnish outside the home even when speaking to each other. Now, with increasing pride in Saami identity and Fourth World community, the rise of Saami political and cultural organizations, and support from State governments, these linguistic and literacy indicators can be improved.

Largely due to new laws designed to cope with the influx of immigrants to Sweden, the Saami have recently been given increased support for the maintenance of their language. Saami children have the right to mother-tongue training within the Swedish schools. In the so-called Saami schools, of which there remain only six in Sweden, elementary Saami school children now receive much of their normal instruction in Saami. Earlier, children of reindeer herders had to attend so-called Nomad Schools, but after 1962 these schools were opened to all Saami. Nonetheless, of the 2500 or so Saami children of school age in Sweden, only about 5% attend the Saami Schools, where instruction is given in both Swedish and Saami. In some areas, Saami kindergartens have been started where the children receive language training and also contact with Saami culture. However, in Jokkmokk, where such a kindergarten had run for some years on a trial basis, the municipal government voted to close it despite overwhelming support from Saami parents. Home language support for children of kindergarten age in Sweden is not provided for by law as is that of older children.

There is a Saami Folk High School for older children and adults in Jokkmokk, Sweden, but after 1968 financial difficulties forced the school open to non-Saami students as well. This school maintains a strong Saami profile, with courses in Saami language, handicraft and reindeer herding. A Saami School Board was established in 1980, also in Jokkmokk. In 1975 a Saami department was founded at the University of Umeå, Sweden, with a professor and a lecturer; it provides courses in Northern, Southern and Lule Saami dialects for both beginners and mother-tongue speakers. Saami language courses are also available at Uppsala University (where there has been a professor's chair in Finno-Ugric languages for many years) and at the Teacher Training College in Luleå.

In Norway, the Primary School Act from 1969 and its later revisions assure Saami children in the Saami areas the right to Saami language lessons through the first six school years upon

parental request. With the 1985 revision, these children could also obtain Saami as a language of instruction (at least to the third grade). Older children, from grades 7-9, make their own decisions about language classes in school. Saami is a school subject from grades 10-12 in Saami centres such as Kautokeino, Karasjok and Hamaröy. Even outside the traditional Saami areas, such as in Oslo, Saami immigration has occasioned Saami language instruction in schools. Alta, Bodö and Levanger host teacher training colleges with Saami courses, and advanced language studies can be followed at Oslo and Tromsö universities. A professor's chair in Saami was established in 1986 in Tromsö, while a chair in Finno-Ugrian languages has existed in Oslo since 1866.

In Finland, with but minor exceptions, the Saami language was not taught to Saami children in school prior to 1970. Since then, it is permitted to instruct Saami students in their own language dialects, thanks to the efforts of a Planning Committee for Instruction in Saami. Nonetheless, in Finland, Saami children do not have special Saami schools, and it has not always been possible to offer them instruction in Saami. The obligation for the municipalities to provide Saami instruction in the so-called Saami Home Region has been especially stressed in recent legislation. Gains have been considerable if uneven. In Finland as in Norway, one of the main stumbling blocks to Saami language instruction until recently has been the lack of appropriate teaching material. Teachers since 1975 have been able to take a leave of absence in order to study the Saami language, and since 1981 paid leaves of absence have been provided for those who wish to prepare educational materials in Saami. A standardized orthography has been important in overcoming the lack of Saami teaching materials, as texts produced in any of the Nordic countries for a dialect of Saami can be used in the other countries as well. At university level in Finland, a lecturer's chair was founded in 1979 in the Saami language and culture at the University of Lapland. Saami language courses are regularly offered at Uleåborg and Helsinki. Courses in Saami ethnography are available at the major universities of the north.

Inter-Nordic cooperation took a major step forward in 1973 with the founding of the Nordic Saami Institute (NSI) in Kautokeino, Norway. The NSI's goals are to further the social, cultural, judicial, and economic situation of all the Saami in the Nordic countries. Among other things, NSI supports research in Saami linguistics and history. It also arranges language courses. An excellent example of cooperation among the Nordic nations is the production of the Saami language course, *Davvin* – both textbooks and radio broadcasts. This cooperation has involved the national radio networks of Norway, Sweden, and Finland as well as NSI. *Davvin* is a course designed for those who do not already have Saami as their first language. Another radio course, *Samas*, has been produced to teach reading and writing skills to those with Saami as their mother tongue. This course has also been broadcast on TV.

Saami representation on the Nordic TV networks has otherwise been weak but is growing slowly. As late as 1985, Swedish television in Luleå transmitted only 3.6 hours of programmes, reports and documentaries in the Saami language. In Norway there is as yet no permanent Saami TV time, but it appears that the government has agreed to arrange this.[7] Aikio points out that despite the recommendation of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 1981 that there should be at least five minutes of Saami language broadcasting on TV per day, there are no Saami language TV programmes in Finland.

There are regular radio programmes and news broadcasts for the Saami, both in the Saami language and in the language of the majority. In Norway, the Saami Radio broadcasts from Karasjok three times daily in the Northern Saami dialect for a total of about six hours a week. There is also a short programme in the Southern Saami dialect sent from Trondheim. In Sweden there is a national Saami programme (in Swedish) 30 minutes a week and programmes in Northern, Lule and Southern Saami dialects, 30 minutes a week. In Sweden, the regional radio stations of Norrbotten, Västerbotten, and Jämtland also broadcast programmes in the Saami dialects. In Finland, Saami radio broadcasts in the Northern, Enare, and Skolt dialects cover the so-called Saami Home Region. Aikio lists about three-and-a-half hours of radio broadcasts per week in the Saami language. Despite these advances and good intentions, Aikio regards these gains as 'too little too late' to keep the Saami language from declining further.

Along with reindeer herding and Saami handicrafts, the Saami language stands as a major feature of Saami identity. The language criterion is one of three designated by the 1980 Saami Political Programme to define Saamihood. The other criteria are self-ascription (accepted by representative Saami organizations) and Saami descent. Understandably, those Saami in groups most severely weakened by language loss and assimilation, while attributing significance to the ability to speak Saami, may consider other aspects of Saami identity more important.[8] Nonetheless, all Saami would agree to the vital importance of maintaining and developing the Saami language for the continuation of Saami culture and collective identity.

The Saami Parliaments now being created in both Norway and Sweden will probably first and foremost implement a language criterion in combination with a person's subjective evaluation of himself or herself as Saami when seeking to establish the Saami electorate. It should be noted, however, that this does not mean a denial of all of the many Saami who no longer speak Saami or that non-Saami speakers cannot be considered Saami. If those Saami who do not speak Saami have a parent or a grandparent who speaks or spoke Saami, then the non-Saami speaker can still register as a Saami for voting purposes.

While an official Saami electorate can probably be maintained despite language erosion, it is doubtful whether the essence of Saami identity and culture can survive the death of the Saami language. Not so long ago, the overlap of Saami ethnicity and language was much more complete. Language loss on a large scale has been a more recent if frighteningly rapid development, and it is thought that the extended language criterion should cast a net broad enough to capture all those Saami who wish to vote. Helander lists four major conditions essential for the maintenance and development of the Saami language: official status; institutional support; experienced need and interest; and actual use of a language in daily life.

Background

The history of the Saami can be discussed according to three phases or major forms of influence: 1) an early colonial, tax period; 2) a policing period to regulate Saami-settler relations and 3) a rationalization period with increasing focus on meat productivity and welfare norms at the expense of indigenous land rights and cultural elements. Of course the characterizations of these periods are to some extent arbitrary, and aspects of one period can be found to persist in later periods without clear-cut temporal divisions. Nonetheless, I believe they will be helpful in organizing this historical sketch and will elucidate the essential facets of Saami relations with Nation-States. This sketch cannot strive for completeness. It is designed rather as background for an appreciation of current affairs.

The reader might feel that this background material is overly concerned with developments in Saami reindeer herding. As a matter of fact, reindeer herders are but a minority (approximately 10% in Norway and Sweden, somewhat higher in Finland) within the Saami minority. The Saami were hunters and fishermen long before some became pastoralists, and, for many, fishing remains the dominant activity. The Saami have also herded and farmed in combination, but access to resources and their utilization have been heavily regulated by States which have not necessarily followed similar policies. In Sweden, integration of reindeer herding and agriculture would have been far more prevalent had it not been for laws insisting on their separation. This policy led to the collapse of many Saami combined economies, and those not able to sustain themselves on herding alone had to give up herding altogether to join what became known as the 'poor Saami proletariat'. Nonetheless, despite a subsistence base of non-herding as well as herding traditions, and despite regulations driving many Saami from herding, reindeer management is of enormous weight for the legal status and culture of all Saami.

Early Centuries and the Period of Initial Colonization

According to the earliest written sources the Saami were hunters and fishermen living in a winter village referred to by scholars as the old *sita* or old *lappby* organization, probably related to the *sita*

organization preserved today among the Skolt Saami (a Saami group with their original homeland in the border area of Finland and the USSR) and once believed to be the basic pan-Saami form of social structure. The origin, distribution or character of the old *sita*, however, has not yet been researched adequately. We do not know, for instance, to what extent the winter villages may have come under the influence of outside trade relations with regard to concentration and localization.

The 9th century Norwegian chieftain Ottar (Ohthere) in his account recorded by Alfred the Great mentions that he possessed 600 unbought reindeer of which six were trained decoy deer used in the hunt of their wild brothers. A number of scholars have jumped to the conclusion that Ottar's account substantiates the existence of full-fledged reindeer pastoralism at this early date. However, it is impossible to know from the text how he obtained these deer, if they constituted a breeding unit or were even assembled in a herd. It seems the pastoral economy in Lapland did not develop for another seven centuries. Olaus Magnus (1555) makes it quite plain that some reindeer pastoralism was practised by the beginning of the 1500s at least. This is not to say, however, that deer were not tamed for decoy purposes and for transport much earlier.

Disagreement exists as to whether the development of pastoralism evolved from domestic stock used for decoy purposes, or from stock used for transport. More intense has been the controversy whether or not the pastoral system grew from this initial domestic stock at all or if it owes its origins to the taming of entire wild herds. What were the reasons behind the adoption of this radically different pastoral mode of production? Did it come from one point of origin or many? Is it an inevitable stage in cultural evolution? These and other questions have consumed scholars of reindeer pastoralism, but in this report they can scarcely be pursued.

Trading relations were well developed before the creation of official markets at fixed locations and times. East-west trade among different peoples across the top of Lapland was well established by the time the interests of the emerging nations started trade moving also in a north-south direction.

Long before the Danish, Swedish and Russian Crowns became entities to reckon with, various peoples from Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway made raiding and trading forays into Saamiland to extract what they could of her riches in foodstuffs, furs, and other natural products. With the rise of the governments to the south, certain 'traders' received royal sanction and support for their activities in specific areas claimed by a king in return for which a certain percentage of the goods was to go to the royal coffers. As the Crown increased in power, as the riches from Saamiland became more desirable, as the licensed 'third party' traders proved dishonest in supplying the Crown's share, and as Saamiland gained in geo-political importance, it became all the more logical for the different Royal powers to take over and to assert their own taxation administrations.

Wiklund and Hultblad [9] both hypothesize that with the gradual decrease of hunting and increase of the importance of herding, the Saami were pushed toward so-called 'whole-nomadism', and the collective winter village had to split up. The argument for this supposition is that big herds cannot be concentrated around a single camp for a long time, for the grazing will run out. For similar reasons, it became increasingly necessary to differentiate summer and winter grazing lands. For example, in Sweden this meant the utilization of mountain grazing lands in the summer and the forest lands in the winter, while in northern Norway it meant the utilization of the coastal zone in summer and the inland *vidda* during the winter.

Information concerning the further evolution of herd forms before the 18th century is scant. Before that time, Hultblad[10] suggests that there was little ground for separating herders in Sweden into mountain-Saami and forest-Saami categories. Shifts and mixed forms were common, as were their correlations along the semi-nomadic-to-whole-nomadic scale. Later, in many parts of the north there was to be a crystallization into two basic nomadic poles, that of the mountain-Saami and that of the forest-Saami – a situation evident today in the Swedish distinction between mountain *samebys* and forest *samebys*. The formal distinction between mountain and forest herd management units, in Sweden called *samebys* (or earlier, *lappbys*), is not found in Finland or Norway. In Finland there are 56 reindeer herding units, called *paliskuntas*, and in Norway there are approximately twice that number of so-called *reinbeitedistrikts*.

National borders were not fixed, and the herders migrated through different spheres of influence. Even if registered under the protection of a single hegemonic authority, some Saami paid tax to three courts at the same time – in the 14th century some were also taxed by the Republic of Novgorod. Should the taxing authority or authorities prove too demanding, a nomad might well shift his allegiance to another. The kings who laid claim to regions in Lapland often followed a course favourable to the Saami, for they could ill afford to estrange 'their' Saami. Not only did the Saami supply valuable goods in the form of tax, but their allegiance to a particular king helped him to secure a claim on the territory used by the Saami.

The Norwegian-Swedish border in the northern districts was not specified until 1751. Saami had migrated on traditional paths without hindrance between Norway and Sweden and were guaranteed the right to continue to do so in a codicil to the boundary agreement. Immemorial territories of the different Saami groups (the old *lappbys*) were crosscut by the national border. Swedish Saami traditional grazing rights were respected in Norway, and the grazing rights of Norwegian Saami were respected in Sweden. This 1751 Codicil has been termed the Saami Magna Charta, as it guarantees Saami immemorial rights. It has never been cancelled, but its implementation has been regulated by a succession of bilateral commissions. Swedish Saami access to Norwegian grazing has been tightly constrained. While some penetration across the border is allowed for some *samebys*, the time of stay in Norway and the distance of penetration permitted are highly controlled. Compensation payment for lost land and water has been demanded, and in some cases it has been provided.

Throughout the north of Sweden, it was common to specify so-called *lappmarks*, areas supposedly reserved for hunting, fishing and herding by the Saami, as opposed to the coastal and most heavily colonized zones suitable for agriculture and the primary use of settlers. Farming continued its spread, however, so that *lappmark* borders, while limiting Saami rights beyond them, lost power to protect Saami rights within them. Nevertheless, these lines (and others of a similar nature such as the Agriculture Line in Sweden) have been incorporated into various administrative grids.

Parallel to the gradual administrative encapsulation of the Saami came missionary activity. The previous religion of the Saami, a form of animism, had used shamanistic techniques and ecstatic trances to contact and negotiate with the spirit world. The Saami shaman, or *noaide*, was similar to that of many other circumpolar peoples. He could beat on his magic drum and in a condition of trance release his spirit to travel to other worlds, for example, in the form of a bird or a fish. Through consort with spirits, the shaman could cure the sick or tell of events in far off places. They were known to be able to tie the winds in knots or to unleash them in full fury. The warring kingdoms to the south even employed Saami shamans in their military exploits.

The first attempt to Christianize the Saami was by the 'Apostle of the North', Stenfi, in 1050. In the mid-1300s the Archbishop of Uppsala, Hemming Nilsson, made a missionary trip to Torneå. In 1313, the Norwegian king proclaimed a 20-year tax reduction to the Saami upon conversion to Christianity. In Sweden, permanent preachers settled in first among the pioneers along the north-western coast of the Baltic Sea, and in the mid-1500s they began to preach among the inland Saami. Norsemen founded a church at Tromsö in 1252 and one at Vardö in 1307. The Skolt and Kola Saami to the east came under the religious sphere of the Greek Orthodox Church. In the mid-1500s, Trifan the Holy built a Greek Orthodox church at Boris-Gleb and a monastery in Petsjenga which became an important centre for the eastern Saami. The major transition of the Saami to Christianity, however, occurred in the 1600s, although shamanism was to persist in places hundreds of years later.

The communication of the Saami shaman with his helper spirits was seen by these early missionaries to be discourse with the devil. Shamans were killed, and their drums burnt. Fascinating accounts of the Saami pre-Christian religion have come to us largely by way of the early missionaries, but they must be read very critically. It is significant that these missionaries did not conceive of themselves as merely spreading light among superstitious people. In their

accounts, the missionaries frequently marvel at the supernatural powers of the Saami shamans, powers which the missionaries experienced as no mere slight of hand. Instead they saw themselves as doing battle with a real and powerful devil with whom the shamans consorted.

The Church played a prominent role in Saami education. The early markets, to be held once a year in fixed places, were occasions when the Saami also registered themselves and paid taxes to the Crown. It is evident that much of the colonial administration was facilitated by the Church. At this time, missionary activity was also a means for a kingdom to establish political control (through and with tax rights) over a territory. Swedish church constructions in the 1500s and 1600s on what has since become Norwegian land, for example, spurred the Danish-Norwegian Crown to increased missionary zeal.

Much later, in the 1830s, a fundamentalist movement started by Lars Levi Laestadius in Karesuando gained a strong following in Saamiland. This puritanical movement did much to overcome the social problems in the north caused by alcohol and played a major part in the 'revolt' and killing of oppressive officials by some Saami in Kautokeino in 1852. Laestadianism is still a vital force among Saami and non-Saami alike and has even spread to other countries.

Policing Saami-Settler Relations

The transformation of the administration dedicated to the levying of taxes was largely a result of the spread of farming and of the inevitable conflicts between farmers and herders. The old system of administration had been devised basically to ensure the even distribution and efficiency of tax-producing operations. Later legislation, however, became increasingly devoted to the strict regulation and inspection of herding in order to smooth herder-settler relations.

It was generally believed that conflicts could be avoided by separating geographically the herding and farming systems as much as possible. In Sweden, grazing areas were to be contained in newly specified *lappbys* (after 1886 a territorially defined legal term) whose members would collectively be responsible for damages caused to farmers by reindeer. Anything (such as a farming commitment and a permanent house) which might cause the herder to leave the nomadic life or neglect his reindeer – allowing them to spread unattended and cause damage – was frowned upon by the authorities. Social Darwinism was a common ideology by the late 19th century, and the Saami were often considered beings of a lower order, who should not be given the same legal status as the Nordic peoples nor stand in the way of higher civilization.

Although the *lappbys* were designated in 1886 with many accompanying regulations, they were basically composed of the old Saami *sita* entities, old *lappbys*, determined by natural environment and traditional social groupings. The Swedish *samebys* which in 1971 replaced the *lappbys* as designated in 1886, brought some new regulations besides a new name to these entities, but did not change their physical or social borders. The territorial and social units recognized and confirmed in legislation by the governments of the Nordic countries for the reindeer-herding Saami are derived to a great extent from original Saami patterns.

The issue of damage by Saami reindeer to the settlers' property has been a dominating theme in herding law. In Sweden, at least, the conflicts diminished with the reduction of northern farming after World War II. Herding law has been formulated to take account of considerations in farming. Officials of the administration were to be well informed of all herding movements and sometimes to direct them. In Finland, developments have followed a somewhat different course, as here the policy of strictly forbidding the combination of herding and agriculture within the same family has not been followed. In fact, one need not be a Saami to be a reindeer herder; one need only be a land owner (and therefore very likely a farmer) within a designated herding district. The Swedish case will serve to illustrate a common Nordic pattern: the transformation of Saami *rights* into Saami *privileges* granted by the Crown/State.

A noteworthy feature of the Swedish Reindeer Act of 1886 was the beginning of a series of fractional divisions of the Saami ethnic group. It is here that one first finds the legal distinction of the category 'Lapp', who were granted certain resource rights and which in 1886 excluded Saami who fished for their livelihood. The special resource rights (ability to graze one's reindeer as well as to hunt and fish within limits on 'Crown' land) which had been reserved for Sweden's native minority, now became focussed upon only the reindeer herding Saami. Further legislation was to cause further divisions. While all Saami were free to devote themselves to reindeer herding under the Acts of 1886 and 1898, this immemorial right was heavily restricted under the Act of 1928 and the Act of 1971.

The prevalent attitude of the times was that a 'Lapp should be a Lapp', that is, a true nomad. Herding families were not to build chimneys in their houses lest the herders become too comfortable and less inclined to brave the elements in the care of their reindeer. Saami nomad school children were to lead a spartan existence so as to foster the lifestyle 'for which they were most fit' (The Swedish School 'Reform', 1913). Sweden's attitude seems to have been that the Saami should be able to keep their exotic culture and enjoy certain *privileges* (as opposed to *rights*) of resource access as long as they stuck to the reindeer herding niche and did not disturb the pace of 'progress'. A Saami who left the herding occupation, lost his privileges and had no more resource rights than any other Swede.

Norway's attitude was somewhat different. Norway had for centuries been annexed by the Danes, only to be forced into union with the Swedes. This historical heritage, combined with the fear of 'Finnization', brought a surge of Norwegian nationalistic fervour toward the turn of the century. All official posts were given to Norwegians, and the Norwegian language experienced a renaissance – all, unfortunately, to the detriment of the Saami who became severely stigmatized. The Saami soon learned that worldly advancement was open to those who 'went Norwegian'. In the last generation this situation has changed dramatically. Norway seems to be developing the most enlightened of all Nordic Saami policies, and the Norwegian Saami themselves are leaders in a pan-Saami movement of cultural pride.

In 1905, the Norwegian-Swedish union (established by the Treaty of Kiel in 1814) was dissolved. Norwegian settlers expanding north encouraged by their government wanted to restrict the access of Swedish Saami to the traditional Norwegian grazing lands. Sweden chose to ignore Saami rights in favour of accommodating Norwegian demands. In the following decades, many Northern Saami were forcibly displaced from their summer lands in Norway and relocated to grazing areas in the south. Here was a double affront to Saami civil rights. The forcible relocation of Northern Saami to points south was a direct violation of their immemorial rights as defined by Swedish and Norwegian law. It was equally a violation to force the Southern Saami to accept them on their territory. Cramér[11] ascribes the stipulation in the Swedish Reindeer Act of 1928 – that Saami must become officially government registered members of the *lappbys* in order to practise their rights to herd, hunt and fish – to the State's need to override Saami immemorial rights and enforce the relocation. Under the new Act of 1928, the State authorities could legitimize the transfer of Northern Saami much further south in Sweden by registering them as members in the Southern *lappbys*. The same law also provided authorities a means to exclude 'degenerated' Southern Saami (for example, those who might herd and farm in combination) from their *lappbys* by omitting them from the membership lists.

State stimulation and direction of agricultural settlement in the north with resulting conflicts between herders and settled farmers, this time in Sweden, caused further constraints in the Act of 1928. New methods were sought to reduce the number of reindeer herders. According to paragraph 1 of this Act, those of Saami heritage are eligible to be herders *if* they have a parent or grandparent who has had herding as a steady occupation. As a result of this law, there are some Saami who are eligible to herd and other Saami who are not. Moreover, some Saami eligible to herd do not or cannot because they have not acquired *lappby* (now *sameby*) membership. They are no longer able to exercise their rights.

The Rationalization Period

As the 20th century progressed, farming declined drastically in parts of the north. Small-scale farmers had little choice but to move south or find other employment. During World War II, German

forces retreating from northern Lapland destroyed much of the countryside and burned buildings in a scorched-earth policy. (This is one reason why old, traditional Saami buildings of a permanent type are far more frequent in Sweden than in Norway.) Job opportunities became scarce, and large rural areas were gradually depopulated. The conflicts between herders and farmers, which had once preoccupied the authorities, subsided and the emerging welfare States turned their attention to maximizing profits for the sake of higher living standards. This was the policy of 'rationalization'.

Some of the motivations that prompted the programme of rationalization were based on humane values of caring and compassion. Medical surveys showed the 'vital statistics' of the Saami to be comparable with those of people in underdeveloped countries.[12] Shocked by the poor living standards (usually calculated only in monetary terms) and high infant mortality rates among its herding population, the Nordic States sought to raise the living standard of the Saami and considered that doing so would automatically help preserve Saami culture. These two goals, however, do not necessarily integrate without difficulty. In Sweden, a two-pronged plan was adopted, so-called structure rationalization and production rationalization. The ideals of the former advocated a 30% reduction of the herding labour force on the grounds that there were currently more herders than necessary. Moreover, the fewer the herders, the more reindeer each might own. The ideals of production rationalization advocated modern ranching methods, with calf slaughter, to maximize the amount of meat produced per unit grazing – methods quite alien to Saami traditions and not always rational by the State's own definition.[13]

Of course, the Saami too were in favour of an updated legal herding framework and actively campaigned for one. With the end of the demand for constant policing by a Swedish Lapp-sheriff, herders saw the opportunity to gain more autonomy within their herding territories. By the Act of 1971,[14] the old Saami administration was dissolved in Sweden, and new administrative offices were established under the Department of Agriculture. The *lappbys* were renamed *samebys* and reorganized as a hybrid form of economic corporation. The *sameby* collective was to be responsible for the herding on its territory. (However, the members as individuals are still responsible for any eventual *sameby* debt.) The *samebys* became emancipated from the rule of the Swedish Lapp-sheriffs and were encouraged to establish a rotating labour force funded by a herding fee per reindeer paid by the owner to the *sameby's* communal treasury. Certain premises inherited from earlier laws continue to persist, however. Just as herders are not supposed to acquire the major part of their income from a source other than herding, so are the *samebys* not permitted to engage in any economic activity other than herding.

Each *sameby* has a specific rational herd number, that is, the total number of reindeer maximally allowed to be herded by the *sameby's* members on the *sameby's* grazing territory. The numbers have been calculated to avoid over-grazing, and should they rise above the limit, the *sameby* is responsible for enforced slaughter. Figures given for the number of reindeer needed today to support a normal family vary from around 300 to 500 head, and it is this figure (assuming for the moment that all reindeer within a *sameby* are distributed equally among its herders), divided into the rational herd number which indicates the maximum number of herding families supportable (according to the authorities) in a given *sameby*. Reindeer ownership, however, is individual, private, and unequal. Men, women, and children can own reindeer, but even women who do participate in the herding life are generally still not credited with being active herders. Moreover, families do not necessarily subsist on reindeer herding alone, so any calculation of this sort is hopelessly more complex than outlined here. Nonetheless, the *sameby* herd limit does put a ceiling constraint upon the number of herders likely to be members of the *sameby*.

Unfortunately the number of reindeer needed to achieve a certain living standard rises steadily, thereby causing the number of herding families supportable by the *sameby* according to this standard to decline. Many Saami point out that a living standard in line with that of a Swedish industrial worker is less important to them than a life in the north within the traditional herding livelihood.

Throughout Saamiland, the group of herding Saami forms a small minority within the Saami minority. For example, today there are only approximately 900 active reindeer herders in Sweden, and with their family members, this means there are at most about 2700 persons economically dependent upon reindeer herding. About the same number of Saami depend upon reindeer herding in Norway and about half that number in Finland. There comes a point when the improvement of living standards for reindeer herders at the expense of increased reduction of their numbers cannot lead to improved cultural maintenance of the Saami as a whole. The problem stems from the inability of the Nordic States to integrate their strictly economic herding policies with their Native minority policies, or to realize that reindeer laws cannot adequately substitute for such native policy.

Current Herding Structures

Saami reindeer herding in Norway can be found in the regions of Finnmark, Troms, Nordland, Nord-Trondelag, Sör-Trondelag and northernmost Hedmark. Non-Saami can practise herding outside these areas. The Department of Agriculture administers reindeer management, particularly through an office in Alta, but each region has its own local administration; (Finnmark actually has two local herding administrations.) Herding is regulated by the Reindeer Act of 1978. Reindeer-herding Saami are represented in both the local and central levels of administration.[15]

Currently there are 52 *samebys* in Sweden divided into three basic types: 1) mountain *samebys* with long, narrow grazing lands running from the Norwegian-Swedish border toward the southeast; 2) forest *samebys*, with a territory smaller and rounder in shape, situated in the lowlands and mainly east of the Agriculture Line but west of the Lappmark Line; and 3) 'concession *samebys*' in the Torneå area and east of the Lappmark Line. These concession *samebys* are similar to the forest *samebys* but are operative only on a ten-year, renewable lease from the State. Reindeer herding is currently regulated by the Reindeer Act of 1971. The total land area open to herding in Sweden is technically about 240,000 sq. kms., but because of natural impediments, lakes, high mountains and other areas without grazing, the net usable pastureland has been estimated at 137,000 sq. kms.

As noted, in Finland non-Saami can own and herd reindeer as long as they live within the reindeer-herding area. This area is divided into 56 herding districts, so-called *paliskuntas*, and covers most of the Lapland province and the northern part of Uleåborgs province. Stemming from an earlier Act of 1932, the current Finnish Reindeer Act is from 1948, although it has been subject to some modifications since then, notably in 1968. The *paliskunta* is a type of economic cooperative which served in part as a model for the Swedish *samebys'* reorganization in 1971. A *paliskunta* has a communal treasury to which members pay according to their reindeer stock. Finnish law does not seek to stop herders from receiving the main part of their income from sources other than herding, as is the case in Sweden. Each *paliskunta* is a member of the central organization *Paliskuntain Yhdistys*, formed in 1948, which is responsible for reindeer administration, development and research. The herders are members of their own organization, *Poro ja Riisto oy*, for the distribution of their reindeer products.[16]

Unlike the other three nations incorporating Saami populations, the Soviet Union contains many traditional reindeer-herding peoples. The so-called Small Peoples of the North, including many reindeer-herding and hunting peoples, were assessed to be at a 'pre-capitalist' stage of socio-economic development at the time of the Russian Revolution. The new government sought to foster in these peoples a culture of socialistic content while at the same time allowing for the continuation of their national forms. The capitalist stage of development was to be leap-frogged.[17]

The means of production, among them the reindeer, were collectivized. There appears to be no native struggle in opposition to the State. No particular ethnic group, either by right or privilege, enjoys special access to resources. Private ownership of reindeer has basically been abolished, and the State is therefore able to promote both structural and production rationalization procedures unhindered. Some private ownership on a small scale has been permitted, mainly for customary use and to allow for private transportation.[18] Reindeer-herding *kolkhozes* were established where the workers themselves owned the means of production

collectively, worked collectively on large farms and shared their produce. Today, all reindeer-herding farms in the Soviet Union have been reorganized under the *sovkhoz* form. In this form, the State owns the reindeer, and workers are wage earners paid by the State. Increasingly the *sovkhozes* have grown to encompass more than one type of production, even if one main form of economic pursuit might be dominant. The *sovkhozes* are also multi-ethnic. The Saami in the Kola Peninsula, for example, herd reindeer along with a number of different peoples within the *sovkhozes* there.

The Saami in the Soviet Union do not have their own, ethnically defined political organizations. Reindeer herding is not a privilege bestowed as a concession to the cause of cultural preservation; it is a vitally important part of the northern economy. According to Andrejev[19] 77% (2,400,000 head) of the world's tame reindeer stock is found in the Soviet Union. Reindeer herders are among the highest-paid workers. The Kola Saami herders are mainly centered in the Lovozero *sovkhoz* where, along with other workers, they are provided with schools, housing, a clinic, club-house and child care facilities. Recently, contacts between the Saami of the Fenno-scandian countries and those in the Soviet Union have increased, although these have been on a cultural or practical herding plane rather than of a political nature.

Land Encroachment

Saami reindeer herding is seriously threatened by the ever increasing encroachments of extractive industries, notably the timber, mining, hydro-electric power, and tourist industries. Each industry has its own history, and yet none can be grasped in isolation. Much of the labour force brought north by the hydro-electric power industry in Sweden, for instance, has shifted to the timber industry. The road cut through wilderness to a mine or dam site can later open nearby forests to logging and tourist industries.[20] The mines have often brought about the establishment of large cities with a wide transportation system and populations which demand recreation opportunities. The various extractive industries have together created populations in the north which dwarf the local Saami into a minority position (with proportionately reduced political power) in most of the municipalities of their core area.

Conflicts are inevitable and focus not only on the loss of total grazing area, but also the loss of strategically important pasturage, natural mountain passes, rutting grounds, and calving grounds. The combined resistance of the Saami and conservationists to the construction of the Alta hydro-electric dam in Norway was a significant factor in the realignment of the Norwegian government and the institution of Saami Rights Commissions in Norway and Sweden.

With its world-famous steel and timber production and its position as Scandinavia's main producer of hydro-electric power, Sweden exemplifies all the problems experienced by herders. Currently the timber industry poses the most severe problems for reindeer herding. Because of expensive transportation and foreign competition, mining in the north is no longer so expansive as it once was. The hydro-electric power industry is in painful retreat, and threatens the few remaining untouched waters in order to give jobs to its employees. The timber industry has reached a point where irreplaceable, virgin forests in the mountain regions are sacrificed in order to supply raw material to the over-dimensioned timber plants for finished products along the coast and to the south. Here, again, employment opportunities are frequently given as the justification for permanent environmental damage. Yet the timber industry – almost more than any other – has rationalized its labour structure and developed its technology to the extent that one man operating a modern timber machine replaces scores of workers. The large-scale encroachment of the timber industry for the first time into forests near the mountains in zones formerly spared causes the loss of hanging beard moss, an important emergency food for reindeer during harsh winters, while the soil preparation necessary for replanting efforts causes the loss of ground lichens, the reindeer's main winter food.

Tourism is widely acclaimed as the 'solution' to the unemployment problems of the north. It is hoped that this will give new jobs without destroying the necessary land base for existing jobs. For Saami pastoralists, however, tourism is a mixed blessing, for while it depends largely upon the maintenance of an unspoiled natural environment, it does not always seek to maintain Saami herding within this environment.

The tourist whose greatest challenge is to experience 'Europe's last wilderness' does not delight in the knowledge that this wilderness is in fact the immemorial homeland of Saami and the stamping grounds for highly developed traditional reindeer herding. The Saami have in fact been instrumental in creating the environment which some conservationists wish to label as purely natural. As the conceptualization of 'nature' comes to exclude humankind, the Saami herders will find themselves increasingly hampered in their traditional lifestyles.

Ironically, the Saami herders and their reindeer are advertised as major tourist attractions. The tourist who desires a wilderness challenge is often willing to accept a leather-clad herder living in an old traditional tent, tending his herd on foot; but should the herder, garbed in synthetic materials, fly to his modern cabin by helicopter, the tourist can become indignant and demand restrictions. He argues (and not without grounds) that if there are rules protecting the environment which apply to him, they should also apply to the Saami herder.

Tourism has in places grown to grotesque proportions, but it should be noted that tourism in reasonable proportion and of considerate character for the environment is also of some benefit to Saami herders. Contacts lead to mutual understanding which can lead to strong friendships and alliance in the face of threat from extractive industries. The herders gain the ability to supplement their economy by offering seasonal services to tourists (boat transport, for example) or by selling handicrafts and provisions.

Naturally, one cannot take the position that traditional cultures should be frozen in time and that all modern developments are deleterious. It cannot be denied, however, that northern industrialization has decreased the ability of reindeer herding to serve as a livelihood. Herding can support fewer families, and rationalization efforts disproportionately support the survival of large-scale herding enterprises. While some argue that industrialization offers new job opportunities to those who might otherwise have commenced a herding career, thereby luring them away from their traditional livelihood, others argue that these same jobs provide those Saami who would leave the herding livelihood anyway with a means to stay within their home districts. Herders themselves often take part-time, non-herding jobs during slumps in the seasonal reindeer work schedule and in many ways modern developments aid the herder in his herding work.

Organizations

In Norway today there are three main Saami political organizations: *Norske Reindriftssamers Landsforbund*, the Confederation of Norwegian Reindeer Herders (NRL), founded in 1948; *Norske Samers Riksforbund*, the Norwegian Saami National Union (NSR), founded in 1968; and *Samenes Landsforbund*, the Saami Confederation (SLF), founded in 1979. Besides these, there are other, much smaller organizations.

NRL has a broad platform, dealing with economic, social and cultural issues of the reindeer herders. All herders, pensioned herders and herding family members can belong to NRL, and even non-herding Saami with an interest in herding can become supporting members. NRL has recently been very active in promoting the herders' cause against extractive industries which endanger the grazing lands. The organization has also shown itself active in promoting education for herding children from a cultural perspective suited to their background and needs. In 1976 NRL came to represent the reindeer-herding Saami in dealings with the Department of Agriculture.

NSR was established initially through the union of a number of local Saami organizations in Finnmark and Oslo. Its goals are to promote the rights of the Saami people, to coordinate activities to better the social and economic status of Saami in Norway, and to ensure that correct information concerning the Saami is available to the public. Membership in NSR is open to all Norwegian Saami regardless of place of residence, employment or language.

SLF was founded by a group of Saami from Tana in opposition to the policies of NRL and NSR. Among other things, SLF did not favour the incorporation of a special passage concerning the Saami in the Norwegian constitution; nor does SLF favour the establishment of a Norwegian Saami Parliament. As with the other Saami organizations, SLF works for the development of the Saami language and the maintenance of Saami rights.

The first Swedish Saami local organization was founded in 1904, and in 1918 the first Saami national conference was held in Östersund. Another major national conference took place in 1937 in Arvidsjaur. In 1950 the Swedish Saami National Union (SSR) was founded at a national conference in Jokkmokk. SSR is composed of representatives from all the *samebys* and local Saami associations across the country. At the outset, SSR was mainly active in building public opinion, but in 1962, with its establishment of a Saami ombudsman, SSR entered into a phase of confrontation with Nation-States in courts of law. The Saami ombudsman, lawyer Tomas Cramér, was instrumental in the defence of Swedish Saami rights in Norway during the Altevatn case, 1964-68 (Assent to all Saami Claims), and it was also Cramér who served as attorney for the Saami throughout the lengthy Skattefjäll case, 1966-81 (Assent to Saami Immemorial Rights).

Another Saami organization, *Riksorganisationen Same-Ätnam* (RSÄ), is primarily concerned with Saami cultural activities. Same-Ätnam has established a number of committees, such as that on Saami handicraft, and works in support of Saami language, art, literature and music. It also works for inter-nordic Saami cooperation and cooperation with other indigenous peoples throughout the world.

The *Landsförbundet Svenska Samer*, Confederation of Swedish Saami (LSS) is composed primarily of non-herding Saami. This organization campaigns for the rights of Saami on a broad, ethnic basis. There are many other Saami organizations of different types, among them a Saami Youth group, *Saminuorra* (SSR-U).

The Swedish Saami political organizations receive financial aid from the Saami Fund. This fund comprises money received in support of Saami social and cultural activities through compensation payments for *sameby* lands which have been taken for other, non-herding purposes. Of course, the support of Saami cultural activities and organizational forms by the Saami Fund is welcome, but at the same time the recipients are ever conscious that such support is paid for by money amassed from the destruction of *sameby* grazing territory.

In Finland, resulting from the work of the Finnish Saami Committee, proposition 1973:824 which advocated the establishment of a Saami Parliament was accepted. This Parliament, under the Department of the Interior, had its first meeting in 1976. The Saami Parliament concerns itself with Saami rights and supports Saami economic, social and cultural development. Moreover, the Saami Parliament can take the initiative to present cases to different authorities, although it has no control outside its own organization.

The Finnish Saami Parliament is composed of 20 representatives, chosen by the Saami, but authorized by the government. Elections are held every fourth year. There is an official list for the Saami electorate which now contains about 3000 names. To be eligible for this list, one must be 18 years of age or older and fit under the language criterion – that is, have learned Saami as first language or have a parent or grandparent who has. The Saami Parliament has five working committees: a legal committee, an industrial-business committee, an educational committee, a cultural and social committee, and a work committee. The Parliament convenes six times per year. Expenses are paid by the Finnish government, although the low working budget has caused difficulties.

A Saami Delegation, not to be confused with the Saami Parliament, was founded by the Finnish government in 1960. This delegation is composed of the governor of the Lapland province and ten members – five from different government departments and five from the Saami Parliament – authorized by the government. The delegation is to prepare the government with respect to the recommendations from the Nordic Council on the Saami, to monitor the development of Saami economic conditions, and to provide information to the authorities in the Lapland province in response to questions about the Saami. The legal section which has been tied to the Saami Delegation and which is to investigate Saami resource rights is sometimes referred to as the Finnish Saami Rights Commission in the spirit of harmonization with the commissions in both Norway and Sweden.

The Norwegian Saami organizations NRL and NSR (but not SLF) cooperate with the Swedish Saami organizations, SSR and RSÄ, and the Saami Parliament of Finland within the Nordic Saami Council. The Nordic Saami Council was founded in 1956 during a Nordic Saami conference in Karasjok, Norway. The Council meets now every second year. Its stated purpose is to promote Saami economic, social and cultural interests. In 1973, upon the recommendations of another Nordic Saami conference, a Nordic Saami Institute was founded in Kautokeino, Norway. This Institute promotes research into Saami traditions, language, values, economic situation and legal rights. It plays a dominant role in the spread of Saami information and coordination of Nordic Saami activities. The Nordic Saami Council now acts as the Institute's advisory organization.

Through the Nordic Saami Council, the Saami of Norway, Sweden and Finland became members of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) in 1975. The Saami also keep close contact with the United Nations Working Group for Indigenous Populations in Geneva. The Saami hope that the creation of Saami Parliaments in Norway and Sweden, even if only advisory to their governments, will be a step toward the establishment of a larger, Nordic Saami Parliament, within which these Saami Parliaments would be represented.

Native Status

In 1980, during (and largely as a result of) the major conflict over the damming of the Norwegian Kautokeino-Alta waterway, a Saami Rights Commission was initiated in Norway. Eighteen representatives from different regions and interest groups, including NRL, NSR, and SLF, have worked together on this Commission, which has a broader mandate than that given later to its Swedish 'twin' Saami Rights Commission. The Norwegian Saami Rights Commission was to deal with issues of a general political character, with the issue of a Norwegian Saami Parliament and also with economic matters. It was to investigate questions about Saami rights to natural resources and make recommendations toward new legislation. Because of its mandate to analyze Saami resource rights in Norway, thereby necessitating a thorough historical study, the Norwegian Saami Rights Commission has not confined its legal perspective on Saami rights to the requirements of international law as has the Swedish commission.

From 1980 to 1985 Professor Carsten Smith led the Norwegian Saami Rights Commission and presented its first partial report, *On the Legal Position of the Saami*,[21] a work of enormous breadth and solid scholarship. This report marks a new era in Norway's Saami policy. The Swedish Saami Rights Commission follows largely in its wake. As a result of the recommendation of the Norwegian Saami Rights Commission, the Norwegian Parliament voted to establish a Norwegian Saami Parliament.[22] In the autumn of 1987 the Norwegian Parliament added a new paragraph to the Norwegian Constitution: 'It is incumbent on the government authorities to take the necessary steps to enable the Saami population to safeguard and develop their language, their culture and their social life.' Despite the gains made, there are many points on which Saami demands are not met by the commission. Many Saami have demanded that the Saami Parliament be empowered with a veto on land encroachments injurious to Saami land usage. However, it appears that neither in Norway nor in Sweden will the newly formed Saami Parliaments be permitted a veto of any kind. In the realm of international law, the Norwegian Saami Rights Commission has stated that the Saami cannot be considered a 'people' according to the meaning of the term in the UN's 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Without this recognition, the Saami are not considered to possess the right of self-determination. Instead, the Commission argues that the Saami come under the safeguards of Article 27 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and interprets this article to require positive discrimination for minorities and indigenous populations.

The right for a much reduced category of Swedish Saami to practise their reindeer herding rights is all that remains in practice of their far wider immemorial rights. Sweden's *samebys* define zones whose limited use is conferred upon certain specific Saami herders. A *sameby*, therefore, defines a social as well as a territorial entity. The Swedish government does not recognize any general Saami ownership of land. According to the Norwegian Altevatn verdict, however, it is the *samebys* (stretching back to the old *lappbys*), as collective entities, which are the proper subject of Saami immemorial rights. To be sure, the Swedish Supreme Court in its 1981 verdict in the Skattefjäll case did confirm Saami immemorial rights in principle,[23] but in fact Swedish legislation continues to ignore that ruling. The compulsory membership of herders to the *samebys*, first demanded in the Act of 1928 and continued in the current Act of 1971, ignores the existence of Saami immemorial rights prior to these Acts. By implication of the Skattefjäll decision, the right of a Saami to hunt, fish, and herd on land to which he or she can demonstrate immemorial ancestral ties (without major discontinuity in active usage) supersedes any prerequisite of *sameby* membership. However, this concept of immemorial rights is generally ignored, although on a few specific occasions Saami have been compensated for the denial of these rights. It is ironic that through the Norwegian court's Altevatn verdict in 1968, the rights of Swedish *samebys/lappbys* to continue their immemorial utilization of areas in Norway have been upheld. Yet their immemorial rights in their own country are disregarded. Moreover, the value of land and renewable resources can never really be compensated for by a lump-sum payment.

The Swedish State has granted certain special resource rights to the Saami in order to preserve their unique culture, but Saami culture is then narrowly recognized by the government to mean only reindeer herding. To the extent a Saami strays from this livelihood, to that same extent he must give up his special rights. Paragraph 9 of the Act of 1971 asserts that the *sameby* may engage in no economic activity other than herding. In this manner Saami self-determination has been severely limited. With the increasing pressures of extractive industries on the land, the available grazing lands, and by extension the *samebys*' rational herd numbers, constantly decrease. At the same time, the subsistence minimum in terms of the number of reindeer needed per family continues to increase. Thus, the herders are hit from both ends. According to the law, the herder must keep herding as his major income source or leave the *sameby*. Furthermore, the *sameby* as a collective can exercise its special resource privilege only in connection with herding. The transition of Saami immemorial rights (a civil right) to a mere privilege is currently under investigation by international courts and commissions.

The economic realities pressuring the herder from the field – rationalization policies, extractive industries, and rising subsistence minimum in reindeer – must be put in relation to the Saami category divisions with respect to herding eligibility and most pronounced in paragraph 1 of the Act of 1971. What emerges is a highly efficient *phase-out* mechanism.[24] Once an active herder stops herding, he loses *sameby* membership. His chances of ever re-entering the *sameby* are small, and in three generations his descendents are not even eligible to herd. Because of the unemployment crisis in the north, he may well be forced to leave the Saami core area and move south. There are now more Saami living in the national capitals of Fennoscandia than in most of the municipalities of Saamiland. As one would expect, the population graph for the Saami shows that while the total number of Saami is rising, the number of herders has been falling steadily.

The linkage of Saami resource rights to reindeer herding alone has not only separated many non-herding Saami from their lands and deprived them of compensation money paid by the State for expropriation, it has also placed Saami culture and identity in an extremely vulnerable position. Certainly the reindeer, as an object of both hunting and herding, has been of central importance for the Saami, not least as a cultural symbol. Nonetheless, crediting reindeer herding with being the primary expression of Saami traditional culture neglects the importance of other facets of Saami culture. The result of these State policies on Saami culture and identity has been to link them ever more closely to this single dominant expression. Hence, any threat to reindeer herding – like that caused by the April 1986 nuclear reactor disaster at Chernobyl – not only jeopardizes the economy and lifestyles of the herders themselves, but also constitutes a serious threat to Saami native rights in general.

The combined effects of extractive industries on Saami grazing lands had caused alarm. By a directive of the government (Dir 1982:71) a Swedish Saami Rights Commission was organized to consider: 1) the advisability of strengthening the Saami legal position with regard to reindeer herding; 2) the question whether a democratically elected Saami organization should be established; and 3) the need for measures to strengthen the position of the Saami language. In an addition to the directive, the Commission was asked to deal with questions related to the position of the Saami as an indigenous population in Sweden. To date, the Commission has issued a partial report which deals with Saami rights under international law,[25] and a second partial report suggesting the establishment of a Swedish *Sameting* (Saami Parliament) and changes in the Reindeer Act of 1971 to strengthen the position of Saami land usage is soon to appear. It seems that the State's narrow definition of Saami culture is under revision.

Remarkably, this first partial report leaves aside the important questions of the historical rights of the Saami and instead concerns itself solely with comparing the situation of the Saami in Sweden to the minimal requirements of international conventions on human rights. Essential to any Swedish commission on Saami involving resource rights, culture and political organizations is a thorough analysis of immemorial rights. The very framework of the Commission's directive is somewhat misconceived and therefore it cannot approach many central issues. The Commission has been set up to investigate whether contemporary pressures from extractive industries have threatened herding to the extent that protective measures should be taken to maintain Saami culture. If so, the Commission is to make concrete proposals for such protective measures. Yet this manner of framing the issues constitutes an implicit acceptance of the supposedly pro-Saami premise that herding is something to be supported (or perhaps not) as a kind of sympathy action for the Saami. In short, the legal rights of the Saami to herd and their rights to shield their herding from extractive industries are here treated merely as a special privilege which the State can give or withhold depending upon its own perception of Saami needs. The legal issues of land ownership and resource rights remain ignored in favour of a new slight adjustment of welfare.

The same attitude of privilege and welfare outlined above with respect to herding and Saami resource rights in general finds a distinct echo in the Swedish State's approach to Saami political organization as well. In 1977 the Swedish government called together ministers and advisors from various departments to form a working group for Saami issues. Its main purpose is to coordinate the expansion of government support for the Saami and their culture. The government may allow the Saami the privilege of advising State authorities, but it will not imbue Saami organized on ethnic grounds with real power. Nowhere, even in the Saami core area of Sweden, do Saami form a majority of voters, and no political party finds much motivation to support Saami demands. The directive of the Commission states from the start that any eventual Saami Parliament should not be given constitutional authority or veto rights. Yet even if established with only an advisory capacity, a Swedish Saami Parliament, cutting across the herder/non-herder Saami split, would be of major importance.

In Finland, a Saami Committee was directed to evaluate the legal position of Saami long before the Saami Rights Commissions of Norway and Sweden were started. The Finnish Saami Committee's report,[26] proposed a Saami law, defining Saami on a linguistic criterion (as that discussed above) and attempting to ensure the continuation of Saami resource usage by the acknowledgement of a specific Saami area. This proposal has not been taken up by the Finnish government or Parliament, but as a result the Finnish Saami Parliament was founded and the Saami Home Region defined. According to the Saami Committee, the Saami are the original owners and users of the Saami Home Region. Whatever rights this would secure the Saami have not been examined by the State and, according to the Committee, the Saami do not practise the rights which are their due. As there is no general law governing Saami rights, these are instead regulated in diverse specific laws such as those about water, timber, and fishing – none of which is specifically directed toward Saami. The current reindeer-herding law in Finland dates from 1948, although there

have been a number of revisions to it. As noted earlier, reindeer herding is not a right reserved for the Saami. Ever since 1974 work toward the legislation of a new reindeer herding law has been in progress, and ever since 1978 a legal section was tied to the Saami Delegation to research Saami rights to natural resources. The unexamined and unspecified conditions of Saami rights in Finland runs contrary to the international agreements Finland has ratified. As in Sweden, it seems the government in Finland has chosen to investigate the Saami culture's need of special support rather than to implement Saami rights. The Saami Cultural Commission of Finland, focusing upon such concerns as handicraft, sports, libraries, study groups and museums, has delivered the report KB 1985:66.[27]

Cultural Expressions

Traditionally, the Saami are a sparsely spread hunting and pastoral people whose cultural activities have not been directed toward grand exhibition or material permanency. Saami creative genius has instead been concentrated in the improvised and the transient: the *joik*, for example, a special form of Saami song, as well as a rich folklore. Utilitarian articles, such as wooden reindeer milking bowls and sheathed knives made of reindeer antlers, demonstrate excellent craftsmanship and individual variation even within a traditional framework of form and function. After the colonial encounter, to be sure, Saami forms of expression developed considerably, but within this development there has always been a continuity, a basic Saami sense of pattern and design. For those acquainted with it, the Saami touch is unmistakable.

Perhaps the most unique and characteristic art form is the joik. The Saami Johan Turi has called such singing 'a way to remember'. To describe it as a song is to indicate its outer mode of expression only. It is vocal, melodic and rhythmic, and yet its original purpose was not simply to entertain. In fact, joiks were and still are often improvised on the spot, not repeated and not meant for any ears except those of its creator. It was the doing of the joik which was its essence. By conceptualizing in sound the characteristics of a person, animal or place, the joiker could feel himself close to his object, he could 'remember' it. People have personal joiks which somehow describe them in sound even though the joik is often totally lacking in words. A bear joik cannot be mistaken for the joik of a reindeer calf. The joik has roots deep in the shamanic past, and it is probable that once the joik was not only a means to remember, but also a means to become. With the joik a shaman might transform himself into the shape of an animal or travel to far-off places. It has been said that the joiker 'imitates' its subject, but this word does not convey its spirit, for the joiker is not striving for some external accuracy (even if he can achieve it to a great degree). He is opening himself to his subject, filling himself with it; in a sense he remembers by becoming.

The joik is often a very emotional experience for the joiker. Should a listener be present who shares the joiker's vocal grammar and who can feel with him the object of the experience, a good joik will be equally moving. Of course there are joiks which have become true songs – that is, they have become standardized in music and text and are now in the public domain. Today one can hear joiks accompanied by guitar and accordion, and they can be performed in front of a large crowd or bought on a record. Joiks can indeed be beautiful songs, but the proper criteria for appreciating a joik are quite different from those appropriate to the rhythms and melodies of standard European folk music. For a Saami a joik can be a joik, while to an outsider the same joik can only be heard as a song. To hear one spring unannounced from the lips of a herder in the context which inspired it and to share its feeling is an unforgettable experience.

Saami handicraft work is now famous in Fennoscandia and is becoming increasingly known throughout the world. Traditionally men have worked in antler and wood, while women have worked with leather, pewter thread, roots and fabrics. Originally each family produced its own utensils. Someone especially skilled at a certain form of handicraft might make things for a wider circle, but there was no large, external cash market as there is today. With the introduction of modern materials and the transition to a more settled life style, many of the old handicraft skills began to disappear. In Sweden, basketry weaving with roots, for example, has only barely been rescued from oblivion, and the art of pewter thread revived, in each case through the concerted efforts of individual Saami artisans. Similarly, the Saami Folk High School in Jokkmokk has been instrumental in regenerating much of Saami handicraft. This school gives courses to Saami students in handicrafts. A handicraft cooperative in Kautokeino, Norway, has operated for nearly two decades.

Saami handicraft work has become of considerable economic importance, not only to those few who have become full-time Saami handicraft artists, but also to reindeer herders, for whom it can afford seasonal work and much-needed supplementary income. Unfortunately, Saami access to the raw materials necessary for traditional handicraft work is not fully secured. Non-herding Saami do not share with herding Saami the uncontested right to take raw material from the *sameby* territory. They are now campaigning to insure in law that Saami handicraft workers will be able to obtain the traditional materials they need.

Another major threat to Saami handicraft is the production of cheap simulations. Imitation Saami handicraft has been produced as far away as Asia and sold in Saamiland to unaware tourists. The Handicraft Commission of Same-Ätnam has established a quality control check, so that now most genuine Saami handicraft will be marked as such with a special Same-Ätnam tag. Tourists who learn something about the methods of manufacture of Saami handicraft and who gain an eye for its quality should have no difficulty in spotting counterfeit handicraft.

The Saami language has only recently been used as a literary means for the Saami to express themselves. The Saami preacher, Lars Levi Laestadius (mentioned earlier), was the first to write Saami prose with a literary style. There has been much debate as to whether the epic poems related by Anders Fjellner in the Saami language in the mid-1800s were entirely his own creation or rather specimens of old popular poetry similar to that of the Finnish *Kalevala*. Of course, they may be the creations of Fjellner but with roots in popular, oral epics. In any case, they show true poetical merit. Johan Turi's *Muittalus Samid Birra* came into print in 1910; Nils Nilsson Skum's *Same sita, Lappbyn*, in both Saami and Swedish, was issued in 1938; Anta Pirak's *Jahttee Saamee Viessoom* (dictated to Harald Grundström) appeared in 1937. Each of these works provides detailed and often fascinating accounts of old Saami life style, as well as their folklore and general world view. These books are all classics for those interested in the Saami and have been published in different languages. The first novel published in the Saami language was *Baeivve-Alggo* which appeared in 1912. The Saami poet, Paulus Utsi, has produced a collection of poems in *Giela giela*. Saami authors, for example Erik Nilsson Mankok and Per Idivuoma, have also written novels in Swedish dramatizing the Saami situation in modern European society. Currently there are many active Saami authors appearing in print, some writing in Saami and some in Swedish, Norwegian or Finnish. A few internationally renowned books have also been translated into Saami.

In Norway, Saami literary activity has increased greatly since 1971 due to the support of The Culture Board of Norway. Approximately five to ten Saami books are published there per year, many of them with the Saami publishing company *Jår'galaed'dji*.

The oral literature of the Saami is vast, and much of it has been collected into written form. These stories demonstrate a wide influence from traditions far afield. The so-called Stalo legends of the Saami contain a number of motifs reminiscent of Homer's *Odyssey*, but other thematic elements are found nowhere else. The Stalo is a giant figure who seeks to capture and eat the smaller Saami. Luckily, Stalo is quite stupid, and the clever Saami is usually able to trick him. Stalo legend motifs and even the name 'Stalo' indicate a Scandinavian identity to this dangerous troll-like figure.

A number of Saami have worked in the non-traditional media of drawing and painting. Johan Turi illustrated his book with his own highly original drawings. So detailed, informative, colourful and artistic are the famous pictures by Nils Nilsson Skum that they often assume the dominant position in much of his published work describing the herder's and hunter's life. Skum was a stickler for accurate detail, and his beautiful pictures are also of great ethnographic value. Lars Pirak exemplifies the marriage of the traditional Saami handicraftsman and the modern, creative artist.

He works both with the old materials and forms, and with the new. His etchings, water colours and oil canvases depict with wonderful feeling the nature of Saamiland, the Saami way of life and their ancient spirit world.

Not long ago a Saami theatre group was started in Sweden. This group, *Dalvadis*, has produced dramatizations of the Saami predicament and stories from Saami mythology. The group has close contact with other Native theatre groups and plays a part in the development of an international Native theatre. More recently, a South Saami theatre group, *Åarjel Saemien Teatere* started in Sweden. In Norway several Saami theatre groups exist. One, *Beaivvas'*, has become well-known and will probably form the seed of a permanent Saami theatre. In Finland, a Saami theatre group, *Råvgos*, started in 1981.

Besides those already mentioned, Norway hosts numerous other Saami organizations, many of them nordic in compass: *Samiid duodji*, an organization for the support of Saami handicraft work; a Saami studies association; an association for Saami sportsmen; an association for Saami artists; an association for Saami authors; a Saami youth society and a Saami music society. Two Saami newspapers appear in Norway, *Nuorttanaste*, weekly, and *Sami Aigi*, twice weekly. *Sagat*, a newspaper which was supported by the Norwegian State to distribute news to the Saami population, has almost completely ceased using the Saami language.[28] In Sweden there is a National Saami Museum in Jokkmokk (*Ajtte*), a Saami Cultural Centre, *Saddje*, in Stockholm and a monthly Saami newspaper, *Samefolket*. The Saami youth organization, SSR-U, also produces a quarterly newspaper, *Saminuorra*. In Finland, the magazine *Sapmelas* is published monthly and is distributed free of charge to every Saami household. A small number of Saami language articles also appears in the Finnish newspaper *Lapin Kansa*.[29]

Much more could be said about Saami cultural expressions. Even the method of butchering reindeer is extremely complex and sophisticated, varying within the different Saami groups. The colourful traditional Saami clothing reveals the origin of the wearer just as does the dialect he or she speaks. The incredible engraving designs on Saami antler work and the patterns of woven bands are not only beautiful, but they have a complex history of their own. Likewise, the construction of the Saami mobile tent or the permanent turf dwelling contain many traditional and specifically local refinements. Indeed, the greatly detailed and refined character of all these traditional crafts constitutes a general context of highly developed skill which provides the foundation for much individual creativity and genuine art.

Conclusion

The spread of nuclear fallout across Lapland from the Chernobyl disaster in the Soviet Union has had a profound effect on the Saami. The lichen which the reindeer eat during the winter has absorbed large doses of cesium 134 and 137. In fact, the lichen, the reindeer and many northern inhabitants were already somewhat contaminated by nuclear fallout before the Chernobyl disaster due to atmospheric atomic bomb testing in the Soviet Union especially during the 1960s. The distribution of the new fallout on the grazing lands was highly variable depending upon the course of wind and rain in late April 1986 when the Chernobyl explosion occurred. The limits set by the nordic governments for cesium concentration in foodstuffs to determine their marketability have also been highly variable. In Norway the limit rose quickly from 600 becquerels Cs 134 and 137 per kg. meat to 6000 Bq/kg., while in Sweden the initial limit of 300 Bq/kg. (for Cs 137 only) was elevated to 1500 Bq/kg. in May 1987 (for reindeer meat and inland fish only).

In the 1960s, however, Cs concentrations in Swedish reindeer meat reached values of 3000 Bq/kg., that is, above the limit which today has been declared unfit for human consumption. Why were no limits set then? Understandably many Saami suspect that the precautions taken today stem from the fact that the fallout from Chernobyl was not confined to Lapland and did not affect only the basic foodstuffs of the Saami population. Because of the special absorption properties of the lichen and the grazing habits of the reindeer, it is now mainly the reindeer herders (but also inland freshwater fishermen) in certain areas that must continue to deal with the problem. The cost of compensating herders for their confiscated reindeer after Chernobyl has been high, and it is also understandable if herders regard this as the main reason behind the raising of the fallout concentration limit for marketability of reindeer meat in Sweden.

Following upon the Chernobyl disaster thousands of reindeer have been confiscated, their meat declared unfit for human consumption and their bodies dumped in pits or ground into fodder for fur farms. Although the governments of Norway and Sweden, those herding countries hardest hit by the fallout, have paid compensation for confiscated reindeer, many herders have still suffered financial losses and had to change their diet habits and work schedules. In the worst hit areas, the problems following the Chernobyl disaster for the Saami will surely continue for many years to come.

For many, the psychological effects have been every bit as great as the practical ones. Herders tried to work as before, only to see the fruits of their labour thrown away. A small minority, living a traditional life close to nature has suffered one of the worst blows of pollution created by industrialized humankind. There is no escaping the irony of the situation, and news of the destruction of Saami society and culture became not only a media scoop, but also a hot issue in nuclear power debates. Frequently the mythic qualities of the story far outgrew the facts. Undoubtedly harm to the environment and to the people has been done, and this should not be belittled by the demands of controlled verification and measurement. Nonetheless, the Saami are not suddenly vanishing from the earth because of the Chernobyl disaster. The lives of the herders are back to normal in most of Lapland; their reindeer are marketable. In the hardest-hit areas new methods are used to decontaminate the reindeer with some success. Families have changed their eating habits, even if their network of friends and relatives helps supply them with 'clean' products. It is far from over, but life goes on.

Even before the advent of the Chernobyl disaster, the countries of Fennoscandia had acknowledged that the Saami were hard pressed to maintain their culture – hence the ongoing Saami commissions and work to found Saami parliaments in Norway and Sweden. It was recognized, too, that the Saami are split into many different groups with different needs. Again, the Saami parliaments based on free elections, are thought to help clarify the Saami will. While the creation of these parliaments in Norway and Sweden and their prospective combination with the already existing Finnish Saami Parliament on an intergovernmental level must be viewed as major victories for the Saami, these developments are not without challenges and risks. The State will now gain the ability to refer to the will of the Saami as expressed in their representative organizations. However, the great many Saami interest groups and organizations are not politically organized or activated to the same extent. It may take a good deal of time before the new Saami parliaments actually do represent the full spectrum of Saami. In the meantime, there is always the risk that the small or unorganized group within the general Saami category loses its voice with respect to the State.

The Saami parliaments hold a promise of improved Saami-State relations, but there may be a cost, at least initially, of internal Saami strife. Of course, this is an unavoidable consequence of the democratic process, and such strife is certainly not something new. However, the bureaucratic parliamentary process itself is not Saami. The gains from this new model will be brought from within a context of increased encapsulation. The Saami must try to mould their parliaments to themselves rather than merely to the demands of State processes and to maintain general Saami concerns despite short-sighted gains to be made by any one faction temporarily in a position of power.

The situation of the Saami minority offers valuable lessons for the growth of pluralistic societies in a worldwide perspective. The Saami do not suffer from official policies of negative discrimination. The encompassing Fennoscandian governments are known for being dedicated to the precepts of human rights and social welfare. The Saami are not grossly impoverished, and they still inhabit their land. Nonetheless, they face serious problems in the struggle for cultural maintenance. While the linkage of Saami culture to the reindeer has provided the Saami with great cultural strength and continuity, the more the northern grazing lands are exploited by modern industrial needs, the more this strength turns toward a liability. In the effort to protect the Saami while at the

same time supporting the needs of industrialism, governments implement a welfare-privilege ideology at the expense of acknowledging absolute resource rights. The Saami, a minority people of considerable variety, have been split further by all manner of (legally and ethnically false) legislative categorizations, and are now called upon to unite under elected representative organizations with only advisory capacities. One can only hope that the parliamentary organizations manage to represent Saami diversity justly and that their voices will be respected even when opposed to State desires. For the Saami, this is a time of new political processes, new laws and increased pan-Saami cooperation – a time of extraordinary challenge.

Addresses of Saami organizations

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Norske Reindriftssamers Landsforbund (NRL)
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N-9001 Tromsø
Norway

Norske Samers Riksforbund (NSR)
Postboks 226
N-9730 Karasjok
Norway

Riksorganisationen Same Ätnam (RSÄ)
Box 4
S-933 00 Arvidsjaur
Sweden

Svenska Samernas Riksförbund (SSR)
Brogatan 5
S-902 48 Umeå
Sweden

Sameparlamentet
SF-99870 Inari
Finland

FOOTNOTES

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Unlike many indigenous peoples today, the Saami do not face widespread poverty or political persecution and they maintain access to much of their traditional land. But as a small minority they are faced with powerful assimilative pressures from the majority society. Each country maintains its own system of ethnic categorization, language, education and regulations on Saami economic life, especially reindeer-herding. Environmental degradation crosses international borders. The precarious environment which the Saami have continually and sensitively shaped for their own needs is constantly threatened by industrial development, forestry, hydroelectric dams, roads, indiscriminate tourism and most recently by radioactive fallout from the Chernobyl nuclear accident.

The Saami of Lapland, Minority Rights Group Report No 55, gives a concise account of Saami history, language and culture. Written by Hugh Beach, an anthropologist who has worked with the Saami, this completely new report outlines the developments of the last decade, both positive and negative, and demonstrates that the Saami, although small in numbers, continue to maintain a unique culture and way of life. An essential resource for all those interested in anthropology, history and indigenous people and their place in the modern world.

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