



*Lukas Allemann*

## The Sami of the Kola Peninsula

About the life of an ethnic minority in the Soviet Union



University of Tromsø  
Centre for Sami Studies

Senter for samiske studier, Skriftserie nr. 19



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## Foreword

The Sami, the original inhabitants of Lapland, populate an area covering four national states, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Their history in the twentieth century was dominated on both sides of the Iron Curtain by fateful ruptures. In this context the recent history of Russian Sami, numbering less than 2,000 and living on the Kola Peninsula, remains poorly researched. For the period after World War II, in particular, only isolated items of research exist. It is into this gap that Lukas Allemann steps. His work is based on interviews with five Sami women between 2006 and 2008. Starting from these, he sets out to explore the life world of people in their structural contexts. The personal testimonies are supplemented by an analysis of relevant literature.

Lukas Allemann poignantly illustrates how the Sami's life world was colonized. Following the collectivization and the terror of the Stalin era, the resettlements undertaken between the 1930s and 1970s, primarily for military and industrial policy reasons, deeply intruded into their lifestyle. High unemployment, crime, alcoholism and suicides point to the consequences of these actions. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Sami's living conditions deteriorated even further. Even so, a movement to reflect on their own culture has begun.

Lukas Allemann has succeeded in achieving a new look at the life of the Sami. The story of this numerically small population shows in exemplary fashion the revenge that is taken when no respect is accorded to people's life worlds. Through the fate of the five women and their environment we can begin to understand how their daily lives looked, and how they dealt with the fundamental changes in their lives. Lukas Allemann's exemplary study will hopefully reach a large audience and inspire further research along similar lines.

Emeritus Professor of Eastern European and  
Contemporary General History  
Dr. Heiko Haumann  
University of Basel

## A word of thanks

Many people were involved in the creation of this work, without whom my research would not have been possible. First and foremost I thank my interview partners Nina Afanas'eva, Apollinarija Golyh, Anna Jur'eva, Anastasija Matrëhina and Marija Popova. They agreed to tell me about their lives and patiently answer all my questions. The information they gave me forms the core of this work. Ms Afanas'eva also very kindly made the effort to seek out numerous photos from her vast private archive and make them available to me. For this too I thank her most sincerely.

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Lukas Allemann

Author

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*“Yes, the time will come when the Kola Peninsula is accorded the commercial and political significance that nature herself intended for it.”*

*Aleksandr Platonovič Engelgardt, governor of the Province of Archangel'sk, 1897*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Objectives of this work

The Sami, the indigenous people of Lapland, today inhabit the territory of four national states, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. In this way the fate of this ethnic group was for many years divided in two not just by national borders, but also by an ideological border, the Iron Curtain.

In this work I explore with the help of oral history interviews the living conditions of the Sami in the Soviet Union, with a particular focus on the period between the end of Stalinism and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The interviews were conducted by myself from 2006 to 2008 with five Sami women in Murmansk and Lovozero (Russia).<sup>1</sup> In the present thesis I set out to show how my interviewees succeeded in navigating in their everyday lives the narrow path between welcomed progress and bad planning during the Soviet period. Little attention is paid to this question in the existing literature. This is dominated by strongly pro- or anti-Soviet positions, which scarcely reflect the ‘real life’ conditions in which men and women have to come to terms with the hard facts of existence. This oral history project on the Russian Sami is intended to close a thematic and temporal research gap.

A thematic gap because the scientific literature on the Sami of the Kola Peninsula has been primarily ethnological and socio-anthropological and less historiograph-

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<sup>1</sup> The fact that I interviewed only women was not intended from the outset and can be explained by a combination of several factors. On the one hand during my short stay in the Kola Peninsula none of the men who had previously agreed to an interview were reachable, many of them having travelled out for longer periods into the tundra. On the other hand, apart from this rather random factor, I should mention that the life expectancy of Sami men is much lower than that of women, and as such is the fact that my list of potential interviewees contained significantly more women than men is quite representative. More detailed information about life expectancy and the procedure for selection of the interviewees can be found in Chapters 1.3.2. and 2.3.1.

ical in nature. Of course, these works cannot but include historical perspectives, and these too are essential sources of information for the present work. A sociologically oriented history, as practised in my work, “shares with other sciences such as cultural anthropology, ethnology or historical sociology the project of writing ‘society history’”.<sup>2</sup> The deliberate crossing of institutionalized disciplinary boundaries is also an important principle of my work. The fact remains that there are surprisingly few scholarly papers on the history of the Russian Sami.<sup>3</sup> In addition, many of those that exist focus on reindeer herding. The latter is indeed a ‘trademark’ of Sami culture, but was never as dominant as among the other reindeer herding peoples of Russia. Indeed, in Soviet times less than half the Sami population was engaged in reindeer herding.

In temporal terms there is a gap in research, in that the existing literature does not cover all eras equally thoroughly. The period up to the 1930s is particularly well studied in terms of ethnology by both pre-revolutionary and Soviet scholars.<sup>4</sup> A small number of post-Soviet works have also examined closely the traditional culture of the Sami.<sup>5</sup> The Stalinist terror and the war have been examined only recently in a small number of works, but then in relatively great detail.<sup>6</sup> The beginning of the democratization of the Soviet Union (*perestroika*) and the post-Soviet period are particularly well researched from the socio-anthropological viewpoint.<sup>7</sup> However, the intervening period, that is between the end of World War II and the beginning of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, is poorly researched. In the existing literature it is treated largely as a ‘by-product’ of central topics or in less comprehensive publications.<sup>8</sup> Analysis of the interviews will help to close this gap.

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<sup>2</sup> Gerbel/Sieder 1988, 191.

<sup>3</sup> The research described here relates exclusively to the Sami in Russia. On the other hand, there is a wide range of literature in English, Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian on the Sami living in the Nordic countries.

<sup>4</sup> See, inter alia: Čarnoluskij 1930; Haruzin 1890; Luk’jančenko 1971; Volkov 1996. Volkov 1996 is a manuscript dating from 1946, the author of which was a victim of the Stalinist terror.

<sup>5</sup> See in particular: Bol’šakova 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Cf.: Bol’šakova 2005, Stepanenko 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Cf.: Konstantinov 2005, 2006, 2007; Konstantinov/Vladimirova 2002, 2006; Vladimirova 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Cf.: Gucol/Vinogradova/Samorukova 2007.



We should, however, bear in mind that “whoever separates actions and experiences from the contexts of their origin and effect, cannot write the proper history of everyday life”.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, despite the above-mentioned limited time focus, it would be wrong not to include in any analysis of the interviews and of the literature both the historical run-up to and the after-echoes of the period in question. For both the author and the reader of this work, a due degree of contextual knowledge is essential.

“The hypothetical construction of a life in a concrete society and historical situation requires at times considerable background knowledge. The more precise the general knowledge of the society in question, of the historical events and development-psychological dynamics, the more accurate the background constructions from which the individual structures emerge.”<sup>10</sup>

The players themselves – here the interviewees – are also shaped, in their past and present actions and memories, by the context, that is by the ever-changing social discourses which surround them. As it is to be expected that a person will from time to time rearrange and restructure his existing memories, the historian who is interested in life worlds and in constructions of meaning must also concern himself with the intervening period between the era which he is setting out to investigate and the interview recording date. It is in this intervening period that we can find the reasons why a person will reinterpret past facts and change his portrayal of them. This is particularly evident in the case of my interview partners: one of the most serious breaks in their lives – the break-up of the Soviet Union – took place precisely between the main period under investigation and the recording of the interviews. This break cannot be left out of account when interpreting their present statements about the former Soviet times.

Being shaped by one’s environment also means “that we are not dealing just with the ‘little people’. The influence and status, power and prestige of the ‘big peo-

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<sup>9</sup> Lüdtke 1989, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Fischer-Rosenthal/Rosenthal 1997, 152.

ple' cannot be excluded."<sup>11</sup> Especially in a country like the Soviet Union, with its long tradition of personality cults and where heads of state stayed in power for very long periods, leader figures represented an important part of everyday life.

When penetrating into the life worlds of a handful of 'ordinary citizens', as done in the present work, we cannot therefore limit ourselves to the isolated lives of these people.

"In any life world the individual and the system are inextricably linked. For the life world orientation of historical science it follows that the repeatedly invoked contrast between micro- and macro-history does not exist in such a perspective. In the actor's eyes, micro- and macro-worlds are perceived simultaneously."<sup>12</sup>

In short, both the diachronic context (what happened before and after the primary period of study?) and the synchronous context (what took place socially and politically in the Soviet Union during the period being related by the informants?) are of vital interest for the present study and must not be lost sight of.

Overall, it can be stated that very few scholarly monographs and only a small number of papers have been published on the Sami of Russia, but that on the other hand a wealth of articles have appeared in the local press since the end of the Soviet Union. Including all these articles would be a near impossible venture. In my project I consciously rely as sources on verbal first person reports and much less on written documents from the press. Nonetheless these oral sources are in the present work constantly compared with the relatively concise corpus of available scientific literature on the Sami. In this respect, this work can be viewed as a quite comprehensive research report, which attempts to integrate as many viewpoints as possible. Here it has to be said that there are only very few publications that focus specifically on any one of the topics presented in this work. Most publications address a variety of topics, but rarely in depth, offering only isolated items of information.

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<sup>11</sup> Lüdtke 1989, 27.

<sup>12</sup> Haumann 2006, 48 f.

The structure of the paper is largely chronological, in part with thematically organized sub-sections.

## **1.2 On the transliteration of Russian and Sami words, on the glossary and on gender usage**

All non-English words in this work are placed in italics, with the exception of people and place names. Russian words, other than those with received English spellings (kolkhoz, Khrushchev, etc.) are spelled according to the transliteration rules of ISO/R 9:1968. Words in other languages (mainly Finno-Ugric languages like Sami and Komi) occur only rarely and relate mainly to the traditional lifestyles. These are transliterated according to their Cyrillic spelling in the same way as Russian words.

In the main text and in the interview transcriptions, unspecified terms which the reader cannot be assumed to recognize are explained in the glossary, which is located in the appendix of this work.

For the sake of readability, the masculine gender pronoun (he/his/him) is frequently used in the present work in a general sense to designate a single person of either sex, with the female form (she/her) used only when women are exclusively meant.

## **1.3 Introductory information on the Sami people**

### **1.3.1 Distribution area and source of the Sami**

Although belonging to the Finno-Ugric language group, the Sami differ significantly from their nearest linguistic relatives, the Finns, Karelians, Veps, Estonians and others. On the question as to whether the so-called Proto-Sami were a Finno-Ugric people or not, there is no consensus. The literature on this subject fills entire libraries, and we shall not go further into the subject. The territory that the Sami inhabit can be broadly divided into four zones: the forest areas of northern Sweden and Finland; the North Sea coast (Barents Sea); the mountainous regions of Norway, Sweden and Finland and the Kola Peninsula (Russia). The entire coast of the Barents Sea, both in Russia

and Norway, being at the far end of the Gulf Stream, never freezes throughout the year, whereas the White Sea (southern coast of the Kola Peninsula) ices up during the winter months.



Illustration 1: Today's settlement area of the Sami from [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samen\\_\(Volk\)](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samen_(Volk)), modified and supplemented by Lukas Allemann.

Since the Sami, despite their relatively small number (around 50,000 people), live scattered over a vast area of several hundred thousand square kilometres, considerable cultural and dialectal differences have developed between the different communities. In earlier times, the Sami also inhabited more southern areas, but they were later pushed back by other peoples (Russians, Karelians, Finns and Scandinavians) into their present settlement area.<sup>13</sup> The Sami have inhabited their present homeland for a very long time, with the northernmost point of Europe inhabited continuously since the sixth century B.C. Archaeological finds from all periods testify that there

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<sup>13</sup> Cf.: Luk'jančenko 1994, 310.

were no events (wars, natural disasters, etc.) that could have interrupted the transfer of knowledge from one generation and so lead to the destruction of a culture.<sup>14</sup>

Most likely the Sami received the name 'Lapps' (russ. *lopári, lop'*) from their neighbours. Even if folk etymology interpretations very often have a pejorative tinge to them, linguists connect this ethnonym with the Finnish root *lape, lapea* ('side') or the Swedish *lapp* ('place'). Today the auto-ethnonym, 'Sami' (Russian *saamy/saami*) is preferred both in literature and in everyday use. The designation 'Lapland' (Russian *laplandija*) as a toponym for the homeland of the Sami is, however, still widely used.<sup>15</sup>

### 1.3.2 Demographics of the Sami

The Sami are one of the 26 indigenous peoples, numbering in all 184,000 persons, that inhabit the north of Russia from Lapland to Čukotka (opposite Alaska) (official name: *Maločislennye narodnosti Krajnego Severa, Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka*). Among these, the Sami take a special position in that they are the one people to live on the territory of several sovereign states.<sup>16</sup>

Depending on the criteria used to define membership of a particular ethnic group, there are significant differences in the estimated number of Sami and the accuracy of the individual accounts. Since in the Nordic countries, in contrast to the Soviet Union, no separation is made between citizenship (*graždanstvo*) and ethnicity (*nacional'nost'*) estimates for these countries exhibit greater disparities than those for the Russian Sami. Figures of between 30,000 and 70,000 are given Sami living in Scandinavia.<sup>17</sup> According to the reference book *Narody Rossii* (1994), around 30,000 Sami live in Norway, about 17,000 in Sweden, some 4,000 in Finland and in Russia 1,835, of whom 1,615 on the Kola Peninsula.<sup>18</sup>

The figures for Finland are more accurate than those for Norway and Sweden, and permit an interesting comparison with Russia. In 1984 a total of 11,475 people

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<sup>14</sup> Cf.: Kiselev/Kiseleva 2000, 15.

<sup>15</sup> Cf.: Luk'jančenko 1994, 311.

<sup>16</sup> Cf.: Kiselev/Kiseleva 2000, 15.

<sup>17</sup> Cf.: Vaba/Viikberg [no date], [no pagination].

<sup>18</sup> Cf.: Luk'jančenko 1994, 310.

lived in the Sami region of Finland (*Lapin lääni*). 3,892 of them (32.9%) were Sami. In the Sami region of Russia, the Kola Peninsula, lived at the same time 1.1 million people, of whom 1,615 (0.15%) Sami.<sup>19</sup> This infinitesimal proportion of the Sami in the total population of the Kola Peninsula is explained primarily by the extraordinary development of this region in the twentieth century, which is today most the most densely populated region in the world to the north of the Arctic Circle, with the largest city (Murmansk). The northern parts of the Nordic countries were not so forcibly colonized in the twentieth century, so that there the proportion of the indigenous population is much higher there.

If the peninsula had, in 1897, a total of 8,000 inhabitants, in 1920 there were already 14,000, in 1930 32,000 and in 1940 318,400. The Murmansk region reached the one million mark in the 1980s. During this period the number of Sami was always relatively constant at between 1,600 and 1,900.<sup>20</sup> Of the Sami of the Kola Peninsula, around 70% live in rural areas, well above the average for the highly urbanized Kola Peninsula, where more than 90% of the total population is urbanized.<sup>21</sup>

The lower absolute number of Sami in Russia compared to the Nordic countries is explained primarily, however, by the greater remoteness of the Kola Peninsula. Until its forced urbanization after the October Revolution, the Kola peninsula was overall more thinly populated than the northern regions of Norway, Sweden and Finland.

The number of Sami in Russia has remained remarkably constant. The fact that nowadays somewhat fewer Sami than previously live on the Kola Peninsula is explained primarily by increased mobility within the Soviet Union.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the Sami of Russia are, in the opinion of many authors, threatened with extinction, especially if language is regarded as one of the most important characteristics of an ethnic group, which is still mostly the case. Whereas in 1959 70% of all Sami gave Sami

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<sup>19</sup> Cf.: Vaba/Viikberg [no date], [no pagination].

<sup>20</sup> Cf.: Sarv 1996, 131, 135.

<sup>21</sup> Cf.: Kulinčenko 2002, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Cf.: Federov 2000, 27.

as their mother tongue, this number had fallen to 44% in 1989, and is even lower today.<sup>23</sup>

At 44 years the life expectancy of Russian Sami is today significantly higher than in 1926 (25.8 years), but is still far below the overall average for Russia. While the low life expectancy in 1926 was explained primarily by the general poverty and large families with high child mortality rates, today it is the men in particular that drag the statistics down. An especially large number of them die from alcoholism, accidents and suicide.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Cf.: Federov 2000, 29.

<sup>24</sup> Cf.: Federov 2000, 28.

## 2. Oral history and personal accounts as tools of historical scholarship

The increasing use of orally transmitted historical evidence has much to do with the evolution of technology in the twentieth century. Tape recorders, radio, cinema and other technological innovations have given oral accounts an important place in the canon of historical sources. For the historian, non-written sources can open up access to layers of society that do not produce written records. Today we want to know more than ever “how elementary historical changes in the economic situation, state and society were understood and processed by individual persons”.<sup>25</sup>

The fact that oral history and narrative sources have up until now achieved an increasingly important place in history is the result of numerous and lengthy discussions: in part as a critique of structure-oriented social and economic history, in part providing a supplement to discourse-oriented cultural history. Without examining in detail the history of these numerous theoretical and methodological discussions, the following paragraphs will briefly set out the ideas with regard to oral history, everyday history and narrative autobiographies that are the most important for the present work.

### 2.1 Everyday history and narrativity

The present work is very much in line with the ever-growing interest over the past three decades

“in the behaviour of the individual in history, a counter-movement to the major structural issues. [...] This is especially true for those social classes in history which usually were not among those who expressed themselves often, but formed the silent mass.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Schulze 1992, 420.

<sup>26</sup> Schulze 1992, 419.



While quantitatively the Russian Sami can hardly be spoken of as a 'mass', the above description applies especially to them, given that in the Soviet era they had even less opportunity to express themselves than the dominant ethnic group of Russians. And if allowed to, then as Soviet people, as kolkhoz employees, with little attention paid to their pre-Soviet, Sami traditions.

"Research into everyday history focuses on the actions and sufferings of those who are often labelled as 'little people', a term that is as eloquent as it is inaccurate. [...] In everyday history, attention is directed no longer only to the deeds (and misdeeds) [...] of the 'big people'."<sup>27</sup>

Today we have clearly moved away from the claim to want to write history objectively. The simple fact that all of us – both historians and witnesses – are children of our time influences the questions and perspectives of informants and their interpreters alike.<sup>28</sup>

This recognition explains in part the general trend towards qualitative research, which is not alien to the present work. Whereas in the quantitative approach the tendency is to start with a hypothesis which, it is hoped, the research will verify, with qualitative methods most hypotheses develop in the course of the research from the constant questions arising from the informant narratives. The present work is also organized in this way. Without denying that there are areas in which quantitative research makes sense – for example in identifying demographic or economic changes – the following points can be enumerated to which a qualitative approach may be better suited than a quantitative one:

- The full impact of social phenomena can be fully captured only by including individual input. The investigation of reactions at the individual level is important for the understanding of broad contexts.
- Social facts have to be evaluated variously in the context of different situations. There is no *one* objective truth.

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<sup>27</sup> Lüdtkke 1989, 9.

<sup>28</sup> Cf.: Gerbel/Sieder 1988, 193.

Noiriel (2002) uses the term “narrativity” for the tendency towards approaches that give preference to the study of individuals.<sup>29</sup> To the notion of literary-narrative historiography Noiriel opposes so-called ‘scientific’ historiography.<sup>30</sup> The term ‘scientific’ in this context does not seem particularly well chosen, but it is clear from the following table what Noiriel means by it:

<b>Conceptualisation of the task of the historian</b>	<b>‘Scientific’</b>	<b>‘Literary’ [‘narrative’]</b>
<i>Central questions of historiography</i>	People’s life environments	People in life worlds
<i>Important influences</i>	Sociology, demography, economics	Anthropology, psychology
<i>Object of investigation</i>	Social groups	Individuals
<i>Models for explaining historical change</i>	Stratified and mono-causal	Coherent and multi-causal
<i>Procedure</i>	Group quantification	Individual examples
<i>Method</i>	Analytic	Descriptive

This does not mean that we are no longer interested in enquiry into the generalities of history. It has, however, been shown that approaches that rely too heavily on quantitative methods often fail to adequately uncover hidden causalities. The fact that, however, qualitative studies too can have a representative value will be shown in the course of this chapter.

Cultural history and anthropology-influenced history have gained weight, thereby also giving an impetus to social and everyday history.<sup>31</sup> It is in particular the history of marginalized groups that comes in this way more into historians’ sights. This can happen, however, only by using ‘alternative’ sources, such as letters, diaries, photos and films, or else narrative interviews.

## 2.2 The life story interview as historical source

“One of the most important innovations in the science of history, which can significantly contribute to the realization of such social history, is the biographical interview.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Noiriel 2002, 356.

<sup>30</sup> Noiriel 2002, 356 (quotation and following table).

<sup>31</sup> See here also: Schulze 1992, especially 422.

<sup>32</sup> Gerbel/Sieder 1988, 190f.

Through these interviews a voice is given to those people who otherwise rarely have the opportunity to express themselves, and whose perspective remains mostly unknown. And yet it is precisely their vision that embodies the regulating forces, as typical representatives of a social group. Narrative interviews – including memory and life history interviews – develop in this way their full potential in the context of a life-world orientation of historical science.

“The life world, understood in its totality of both natural and social world, is both the stage and the target of my and our mutual activity.”<sup>33</sup>

Starting from on this basic definition (*Urdefinition*) of life world, that revolutionized the social sciences, the following can be considered a good characterization of a life world-directed historiography:

“Unlike the concept of environment, which refers to the natural and social environment of a person or a group, the human individual is [...] himself at the centre of the life-world approach. From this vantage point the eye falls on the environmental conditions and the symbolic orders, interpretation patterns, ideologies, norms and values.”<sup>34</sup>

In oral history interviews “the operation of a system is reconstructed”<sup>35</sup> from the perspective of individuals and “insights into historical events are made possible that were barred by the limitation to more general structures”.<sup>36</sup>

Each time an interview for historical purposes is undertaken, it is important to establish at the outset how it is to be performed. In this the following distinction is of central importance:<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Schütz/Luckmann 1979, vol. 1, 28.

<sup>34</sup> Haumann 2006, 48.

<sup>35</sup> Haumann 2006, 50.

<sup>36</sup> Haumann 2006, 51.

<sup>37</sup> Cf.: Gerbel/Sieder 1988, 192.

<b>Focused Interview</b>	<b>Open, life history interview</b>
The researcher asks specific questions, based on hypotheses developed in advance.	The researcher is in principle open to all topics that the narrator picks up of his own accord.

According to this categorization, open life history interviews have been conducted for the present study. Finding suitable informants was not a particularly difficult task as for this research project we were looking to hear, not from an elite, but from representatives of the 'silent mass'. Details of the criteria by which the interviewees for the current study were chosen can be found in the section *Recruitment of Interviewees* (Chapter 2.3.1).

That fact that memory interviews produce large quantities of subjective material is obvious. This should not be seen as an obstacle but as a virtue.

"Case reconstructions of narrated life stories serve [...] to uncover cause-and-effect mechanisms from specific concrete cases. Against the backdrop of a dialectical conception of individual and general, one can start from the principle that the general can be found in the particular."<sup>38</sup>

The interdependence of subjective and objective becomes particularly visible in the interview. Facts come to the fore only through the prism of human experience. For this reason, not only the facts, but also how these facts are experienced and the social regulation of the same form an inalienable part of history.<sup>39</sup>

"If we accept [...] that the validity of a regulatory and direction-giving structure is already visible in the individual case, the narrative-biographical approach permits accurate reconstructions of social structures, taking full account of real experience."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Rosenthal 1994, 134.

<sup>39</sup> Cf.: Gerbel/Sieder 1988, 200.

<sup>40</sup> Fischer-Rosenthal/Rosenthal 1997, 157.

Properly performed and interpreted life history interviews are therefore fully representative sources for arriving at the perception of a majority of the population. For this one must, as a historian, not only reproduce one's respondents' conceptions of reality, but make out of the interviews more than the simple retelling of the life story. Many other sources, such as state archives, are unable to offer these advantages, advantages that cannot, however, be exploited without solid theoretical and methodological foundations. For this reason it is important to bear in mind certain key points when interpreting and reconstructing life stories. These will be elucidated in greater detail in the following sections.

### 2.2.1 Everyday and scientific interpretation

As historians of everyday life, we dive into the life worlds of our interviewees and to try to 'step into their shoes'. However, one needs always to maintain a certain distance, which we will call epistemological vigilance. We have on the one hand to plunge into the everyday lives of our interviewees and try to understand them, but without on the other hand yielding to the temptation to regard as self-evident what is self-evident to our interviewees. Both their – as much as our – everyday interpretation and action is aimed at

*"[...] minimization of doubt. We always fall back on interpretation and action patterns, i.e. consensual forms of interpretation and action. [...] This results in a further defining feature of our society, that not everything has to be said. [...] Our daily certainties are to a large degree implicit. Their role lies not in the recognition of truth, but the coming to grips with our reality. [...] Everyday certainties serve [...] to reduce complexity [...]. Everyday certainties are to a large extent uncritical and therefore in danger of producing illusion."*<sup>41</sup>

If in our analysis of life stories we apply the same everyday interpretation as we do in our own daily lives and as many of our informants do in their lives, numerous impulses of the life story and the surrounding discourse will remain hidden. Our interpreta-

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<sup>41</sup> Gerbel/Sieder 1988, 195.

tion must, however, serve the understanding of truth, a truth that is often not communicated by our informants, sometimes consciously, but often unconsciously owing to their everyday interpretation.

Against this everyday interpretation we must oppose our scientific interpretation. While in the conduct of the interview we follow the rules of communication and interpretation that we have learned to apply since the cradle, when analysing the interviews we need to step back a little and “move for the purposes of scientific interpretation to a critical-reflective distance from the necessities of everyday life.”<sup>42</sup> This may sound obvious, but is all the more difficult to implement when one is dealing as a historian with oral, spontaneous, ‘un-thought-through’ statements instead of dusty files. Placed side-by-side, everyday and scientific interpretation differ in the following respects:<sup>43</sup>

<b>Everyday interpretation</b>	<b>Scientific interpretation</b>
minimizes doubt	systematizes doubt
strives for uniqueness	looks for ambiguity
covers up contradictions	un-covers contradictions
the everyday certainties are implicit, they need no justification	reasons have to be given for hypotheses and interpretations

The more alien to us the culture or the social environment of our informants, the harder it is to understand behavioural patterns and motivations, but the less likely we are to succumb to everyday interpretation.

“We want [...] neither to become natives (a word that is already compromised) nor to imitate the natives. [...] Understanding the culture of a people leads to the uncovering of its normality, without short-changing its specialness. [...] Placed into the context of their [that is of the people of another culture, age or social group, L.A.] own everyday-ness, their incomprehensibility disappears.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Gerbel/Sieder 1988, 196.

<sup>43</sup> Cf.: Gerbel/Sieder 1988, 194-197.

<sup>44</sup> Geertz 1995, 20f.

The interpretative work of the historian needs therefore to satisfy both requirements. On the one hand we need to understand the everyday certainties of our interlocutor – which may or may not be implicit – and on the other hand we need to present these everyday certainties in an explicit manner.

### 2.2.2 Experienced vs. narrated life history

Our own story is always just one viewpoint, one image formed and expressed of a past reality and cannot be identical to it. This applies not only to the statements of historians, but also the stories of our interviewees. There is no *one* objective truth.

In court, witnesses can and should tell only what they have seen, what they have perceived. Although this does not necessarily correspond to what actually occurred, we must assume, if they are honest citizens, that they are telling the truth, their truth, what they remember. Basically, the judge has to work with three levels: 1) the witnesses' statements, what they communicate or what they conceal, consciously or unconsciously, and the current memories underlying these statements; 2) the experiences of the witnesses at the time itself, which can differ from both level 1 (due to the ever-changing memory) and from 3) what actually happened.

It is the same with historical sources and thus also with the oral history interviews used here: "The texts that 'bear witness' to the past are not the past itself"<sup>45</sup>

"If today the witnesses of former times no longer remember, or continue to attempt to prevent the experienced scenes penetrating into memory, then they are not lying, but are being truthful."<sup>46</sup>

One can imagine in this context, for example, glorifying statements about Stalinism, like those often found in Russia among representatives of the older generation. Even if an informant doggedly keeps silent about the horrors of the Stalinist era and talks only of the calm and orderly circumstances, his statements are true, for it is his

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<sup>45</sup> Gerbel/Sieder 1988, 193.

<sup>46</sup> Rosenthal 1994, 131.

memory, his interpretation, perhaps his argument for his own identity and his way of making sense of his life.

“Questions like: ‘How good or bad is the narrator’s memory?’ or: ‘How honest are his statements?’ are mostly based on the generally entertained assumption that the narrative is deficient compared to the event, and that we are dealing with a ‘difficult to control source of error’ and ‘subjective data base’.”<sup>47</sup>

To this we need to oppose the following. First of all that sources of every kind have their shortcomings. State files or papers, especially in a country with a monistic ideological system and limited freedom of expression, as was the Soviet Union, are for our purposes hardly more informative as sources. Second, that it is precisely the subjectivity of the narrative interviews that should be seen as a virtue, as has already been explained above.

Historical narrative – both my own and that of my informants – is therefore never mere retelling. As a result: “their [the informants’, L.A.] history, their life histories [1] are one thing, the stories they tell about it are another [2]”.<sup>48</sup> This is precisely the difference between experienced [1] and narrated [2] life history. Let us look a little more closely at this important structural difference, which is dealt with in particular in the works of Wolfram Fischer-Rosenthal and Gabriele Rosenthal (1994, 1995, 1997).

“When people tell their biographical experiences, these experiences integrated into historical and social reality point beyond the biographee’s personal story to a collective history. People’s lives take place in a historical-social reality, on the one hand they are embedded in historical structures and processes, and on the other hand people’s lives constitute social reality.”<sup>49</sup>

“Narrated life stories are bound, at their origins, to the present time of their production. The narrator’s current life situation and his current perspective on life

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<sup>47</sup> Rosenthal 1994, 129.

<sup>48</sup> Gerbel/Sieder 1988, 193.

<sup>49</sup> Rosenthal 1994, 128.



determine the way he reflects back on the past. [...] In this way narrated life stories so always refer both to present life with its past and to the way these past events were experienced at the time. [...] The first question that needs to be put to the *text* is not: 'What was experienced then [...]?'. First we need rather to reconstruct the narrative situation, the current perspective of the biographees and hence the mechanisms that control the selection of the stories told. The reverse applies correspondingly: if I want to make statements about the overall biographical vision [...], I first need knowledge about this particular life."<sup>50</sup>

These statements, that are generally valid for any life story, are especially to be heeded for biographies that have been accompanied by major ideological fractures. It is to be assumed that the end of the Soviet Union and the resurgence of ethnic self-awareness among the Sami have triggered revisions by informants of their own views, which are not always explicitly stated.

"This confirms that the 'social context' of memory, the interaction and communication of a person with his environment, has to be taken into consideration. Over long periods of time a myth, a certain image can be constructed, that enters into the common memory of a society, takes root and shapes the way this society sees itself."<sup>51</sup>

In this way the in-depth examination of narrated life stories – which must always include an analysis of the un-narrated – also serves a certain "generalization about the mechanisms of experienced and narrated realities."<sup>52</sup>

The distinction between experience and narration is an extremely important epistemological paradigm of Rosenthal's research (Rosenthal 1995, 1997). Nevertheless the attempt to achieve a separate reconstruction of experienced life history – as

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<sup>50</sup> Fischer-Rosenthal/Rosenthal 1997, 148 f.

<sup>51</sup> Haumann 2006, 46.

<sup>52</sup> Rosenthal 1994, 136.

Rosenthal calls for in order to distinguish it from narrated life history – must remain a suggested reality reference, for which no proof exists.<sup>53</sup>

“The individual dimension of experience is tangible only in its currently expressed form at the time of narration, in which a clear separation between experience and interpretation is no longer possible.”<sup>54</sup>

The text remains a recapitulation of experience, into which elements of interpretation have been gradually incorporated over time.<sup>55</sup> These elements of interpretation are part of the ever-changing life world and demand an explanation. Despite this we remain interested in the ‘real’ situation in the past. Comparison with other sources and with the scholarly literature is therefore indispensable.

In the analysis of important points in the interviews, the following questions in particular were taken from Rosenthal’s method of so-called reconstructive case analysis and put to the text:<sup>56</sup>

1. Why is this topic introduced at this point?
2. Why is this topic presented in this text genre (argument, description or narrative)?
3. Why is this topic presented in such detail or so briefly?
4. What are the possible thematic fields into which this topic fits?
5. Which topics (life areas or life stages) are addressed and which are not?

Individual moments of the life history may indeed, according to Rosenthal’s method, be contrasted in their narrated and allegedly experienced form. In the present study, however, this happens only occasionally and not consistently for the interviews as a whole, as the added value in terms of knowledge gained remains questionable. Equipped with the necessary background knowledge, the historian can ask for this

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<sup>53</sup> Cf.: Jureit 1997, 101.

<sup>54</sup> Jureit 1997, 97.

<sup>55</sup> Cf.: Jureit 1997, 101.

<sup>56</sup> Cf.: Fischer-Rosenthal/Rosenthal 1997, 153.

and reconstruct how far the interviewee sees or represents this or that episode today differently from how he did at the time of the event.

### 2.2.3 Memory as giver of meaning and assurance of identity

As we have seen, life history interviews are sources, “in which an individual intentionally or unintentionally reveals or conceals himself”.<sup>57</sup> This is the lowest common denominator of all the specimens of this type of source. Every ego is constantly evolving, trying to adapt constantly to the changing environment and, if necessary, explaining itself anew. Narrative biographical interviews “explain, so to speak, the current social situation and the personal state of the narrator. Life history narration serves to secure the social and personal identity and cultural tradition”<sup>58</sup> i.e. it serves the narrator by enabling him to explain himself and give meaning to his past action. That is why never in any interview is it only facts that are enumerated; facts alone possess no identity-anchoring function.

It is precisely these ‘soft facts’ lying behind the ‘hard facts’ that the research approach applied here seeks to bring to the surface. Edmund Husserl already expressed this concern:

“In the dire situation in which we find ourselves [...] this science [positivist-quantitative methods, L.A.] has nothing to say to us. It excludes on principle precisely those most burning questions asked in our unhappy times by people abandoned to major and highly fatal changes: the questions of the meaning or futility of the whole of human existence.”<sup>59</sup>

Sense and meaning-giving constructions are a central part of this work, which of course does not mean that the ‘hard facts’ are not considered. The two go hand in hand and are mutually conditioned. The collapse of the Soviet Union probably occasioned, for most of its citizens, more or less substantial revisions of their own view-

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<sup>57</sup> Quoted from Schulze 1992, 428.

<sup>58</sup> Gerbel/Sieder 1988, 207.

<sup>59</sup> Husserl 1977, 4 f.

points. Many people who have experienced the end of the USSR look inevitably through this prism at their memories of events prior to this time. This is not to suggest that this is the pivotal point of every change in memory and interpretation. Personal experiences that have not been experienced by every other citizen may well lead to a change of perspective on one's own life. The collapse of the Soviet Union is intended to serve here only as an example that the memory of experiences does not necessarily only become weaker over time. It is quite possible that

“with new interpretation patterns or the disappearance or becoming superfluous of formerly active mental blocks, the remembered aspects of the experienced situation may be closer than in previous memory situations – an assumption that is based on psychoanalytic practice. i.e. through awareness of repressed and denied experiences or also isolated parts of these experiences, the analysand can see and relive ‘more’ than before.”<sup>60</sup>

Here one can cite the following concrete example: today all interviewees think it is good that schools again teach in the Sami language and very much regret that most Sami of the younger generation no longer speak Sami. However, when bringing up her own children, one of the informants spoke no Sami at home with her children – instruction in schools was in Russian only – as she had been persuaded by the teachers that two languages would only confuse the children and worsen their academic performance. Today's insight could be a new view that has replaced the old conviction. More likely, however, is that now, after the end of the Soviet Union, a mental block has fallen away. If interviewed during the Soviet period, the mother would probably have said, because of the social consensus and despite inner doubts, that she did not speak Sami with the children out of conviction, because it was harmful to their mental development. Speaking today, she says that the teachers spread this opinion and that she bowed to their will, as otherwise she saw only disadvantages – external, not developmental – for her own children.

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<sup>60</sup> Rosenthal 1994, 133.

Incidentally, this interpretation shows that not only the self-reporting but also its exegesis by the historian are constructions of meaning: "In the process of critical and interpretive understanding of meaning [...] the historian creates new meaning and co-creates the reality."<sup>61</sup>

## 2.3 On conducting life history interviews

Conducting an interview as a historian interested in life paths has nothing in common with what is understood by such an interview in a journalistic context. For this reason, we will briefly describe the key points that must be observed before and during these conversations. A life history interview is structured as follows:<sup>62</sup>

1. The initial narrative prompt
2. The main narrative shaped autonomously by the interviewee
3. The narrative-generating post-questions
  - a. Immanent post-narrative questions
  - b. External post-narrative questions
4. Completing the interview
5. Noting the basic biographical data.

Specifically, this means:

1. The main difference with a journalistic interview is that it is not the interviewer but the informant who 'leads'. For this the interviewee needs to be motivated to provide a narrative that is as free and detailed as possible. To achieve this, the following points should be noted:
  - The interview should take place in a non-authoritarian, permissive, friendly atmosphere. This includes attention to details such as the seating arrangements: sitting diagonally to each other creates a more relaxed atmosphere than frontal

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<sup>61</sup> Haumann 2006, 51.

<sup>62</sup> For detailed instructions here, see Rosenthal, 1995, 186-207 and Fischer-Rosenthal/ Rosenthal 1997, 140-147.

seating. The word 'interview' should be avoided if possible: speaking of a 'conversation' reduces the sense of expectancy. In most cases, the interviews were conducted at the informant's home; this was proposed by the interviewees themselves and was extremely conducive to generating an atmosphere of safety and intimacy. Only in one case did the interlocutor prefer to meet in a neutral context.

- Before the interview, one should not set out one's intentions in too great detail, as this could affect the conversation. The informant will then be tempted to provide 'desired' answers and arguments.
- The interview style should be neither too direct nor contradictory. One should begin, not with an opening question, but with a request to narrate formulated in an as thematically and chronologically open a manner as possible. The start and end point of the narrative should as far as possible lie outside the period of primary interest to the interviewer. Likewise, it is unwise to set the desired start or end point of the story at a time of important historical change. In so doing one obstructs at least partially the important perspective changes that such pivotal times – such as the end of the war, the beginning of *perestroika*, or the end of the Soviet Union – may have occasioned in the interviewee. A successful request for narrative was for example the one with Anna Jur'eva: "I'm interested mainly just about your life. Your environment, to your life belong indeed all sorts of people, also those closest to you: your children, husband, parents, and also the people with whom you worked. All this is interesting for me. Maybe just start with where and when you were born, how you lived in the family home."<sup>63</sup>

2. For the main story, the following should be noted:

- Periodic discreet, non-verbal signs of attention in the form of body language or an occasional "oh" or "aha" are important for successfully keeping the conversation going. Throughout the interviews, one should ideally be alone in the room with the interviewee with no outside disturbance.

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<sup>63</sup> Jur'eva interview, lines 1-4.

- The interviewer should not rush in too early with his own interventions. Even though the narrator spends a long time 'beating round the bush', he should be immediately instructed that he should please start at his childhood. A too precipitous intervention would signal a lack of interest and jeopardize the atmosphere of confidence. In addition, certain thematic digressions can often only later be tied in to the main narrative. So as not to disrupt the narrative flow, the informant should be interrupted as little as possible in the narrative phase with requests for details, in particular w-questions' ("When was that?", "Where was that?" etc.), or even with questions about other experiences. Otherwise answers will tend to become shorter and shorter. If, instead, the informant is not interrupted by interventions in the process of building up his memories, the narrative sequences tend to become longer and longer. The fragile process of memory begins to come alive, and more and more experiences surface out of the narrator's memory. This requirement is, however, particularly difficult to observe in the actual practice of interviewing. First of all it may happen that, despite all efforts, the interview can only very gradually be brought to autonomous narration. This was the case, for example, in the conversation with Anastasija Matrëhina. If the hesitancy continues, the open questions sooner or later become exhausted, and *nolens volens* one has to pose detailed questions, that inevitably steer the conversation in one direction or another. Second, there is a great temptation to interrupt and ask: "When was that?", "Where was that?" etc., when the narrator is simply telling what comes into his mind at that moment, without strict regard for chronology. Often it is hard to hold back such questions, only to find at the transcription stage that one's interventions have led to a shortage of explanations. Therefore, ideally, all questions should be noted down and kept back to the third part.
- Often the interviewee builds momentum the longer the interview lasts, because his memories open more and more and one memory calls up new ones. The interviewer's attention curve runs in the opposite direction: falling more and more, which, given the wealth of new and often chronologically disordered information about personal experiences, is understandable. I have noticed in myself how, to-

wards the end of the interview, I kept less and less to the rules of interviewing and began interrupting, when the interviewee was producing lots of seemingly irrelevant information.

3. Post-narrative questioning consists of two distinct parts:

a. Immanent post-narrative questions

Ideally, questions of comprehension should be posed and previously unclear items clarified only after completing the main story. For this the interviewer can use the questions noted during the main narrative.

b. External post-narrative questions

Subsequently, narrative-generating questions can be put, that is again questions which are as open as possible on particular topics or life stages which have been only slightly addressed, if at all, by the informant. For this a list is drawn up in advance of topics to be addressed in each interview (see Chapter 2.3.1).

4. Completing the interview

At the end of the interview, the interviewee should be asked if there are topics that have not yet been raised, whether there is anything he would like to add, and whether he is satisfied with the conversation.

5. Noting the basic biographical data.

At this stage the interviewee should be questioned again on biographical data like the names, birth dates and locations as well as workplaces of himself and the important people in his life and a corresponding questionnaire filled out. These data are essential as reference points for later analysis, but should be gathered only completing the interview, so as to avoid the interviewee having the impression that we were only interested in collecting 'hard facts'. This is a qualitative study, which is something the interviewees should pick up implicitly.



### 2.3.1 Interviewee recruitment

As mentioned above, for the basic interviews, the circle of potential interviewees was defined quite broadly. In addition to the requirement that the interviewee should view himself at least partly as a Sami, the following criteria were applied:

*Age:* Since the main period under investigation was rather broad, the age requirements were not particularly strict. The criterion was thus established that the interviewee must in any event be retired.

*Gender:* This played no role from the outset. As already mentioned in a footnote, it is more due to accident that only women were interviewed. The men asked to give interviews were all unavailable locally at the time of my research. It is no coincidence, however, among those eligible under the age criteria, the proportion of women is much higher than that of men, given the massively lower life expectancy of Sami men.

*Education and professional background:* No specific limits were set here, other than that the person should not belong to an elite - in the sense described in Chapter 2.2.

*Location:* Since the present work does not concern itself with the fate of the Sami who have permanently emigrated from the Kola Peninsula, an essential criterion was that interviewees should have spent most of their lives on the Kola Peninsula.

The contacts with the interviewees were prepared by Ms Anna Prahova, a Sami who lives in Murmansk, teaches at the Pedagogical University there and is active in various social institutions. In order not to discourage potential interlocutors, it made sense that a person known to them (Ms Prahova) rather than an unknown foreign historian make the first approach concerning the project. After Anna Prahova had sounded out potential contacts, a list was compiled of persons who met the selection criteria and were willing to be interviewed. With whom the meetings actually took place was ultimately decided by chance: my stay in Murmansk and Lovozero was rather short, so whom I met also depended on the current availability of the persons in question.

The random element fits perfectly with the intentions of the present study because, in addition to the above criteria, it was important that no further biographical details should play a part in the selection of candidates - no one life is 'better' than another.

### 2.3.2 The list of topics

Before conducting the interviews, a list of topics to be addressed in each interview was drawn up. If the interlocutors did not bring up these topics of their own accord in the main narrative, they were treated in the subsequent after-questions part.<sup>64</sup>

The following topics were addressed, with no requirement for them to be dealt with in a particular order:<sup>65</sup>

- Places and stations of the interviewee's life
- The relationship with the Russian and Sami languages
- Alcoholism
- Collectivization and Stalinism
- Was there humiliation based on ethnicity?
- Were there cases in which it was, on the contrary, helpful to be a Sami?
- Home: hierarchical order, education, festivals and holidays, customs, eating habits
- School: educational levels, educational opportunities, teachers, classmates, freedom of choice
- Work: conditions, career choice, superiors, colleagues
- Health and illness
- Life in the tundra/village/city: communities, conflicts, infrastructure
- Contacts with other Sami communities (also from the Nordic countries), with the Russians and other ethnic groups

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<sup>64</sup> One exception is the interview with Anastasija Matrëhina, which took place spontaneously and relatively unprepared about a year before the other interviews and for which no such list of topics was available.

<sup>65</sup> The list of topics was to a large extent taken over from the research project "The Shtetl in the Soviet Union", directed by Prof. Dr. Heiko Haumann and for which I myself had undertaken a life history interview. This project also dealt with the lives of a minority in the Soviet Union, this time Jews. Other topics were added to the list, especially those relating specifically to the Sami.

- Were there dreams of a life in the city?
- Thoughts on the present: What is better, worse? Future prospects for the Sami people?
- Religion
- Love and marriage: choice of partner, Russian or Sami? Prohibitions and taboos
- Influence of political, cultural and social events on the local and personal life (e.g. death of Stalin, the 'Sputnik' shock, introduction of radio and television)
- Looking back: In retrospect is life in the Soviet Union perceived differently than before?
- Songs, verses or crafts: What role did they play in life?

## 2.4 Technical aspects of transcription and analysis of the interviews

All five interviews were recorded and then fully transcribed in the original language (Russian). The transcription is not as spoken, but keeps largely to Russian spelling rules, with the language slightly smoothed in the process. The transcription signs needed to represent the phonetic nuances of speech are taken over both in the original Russian version of the interviews and in the quotations translated into English. The system of transcription characters comes from Rosenthal (1987). The Russian transcriptions have a line numbering. A list of transcription characters is found in the appendix.

Direct quotations in this book are given both in the original Russian version and in English translation. The corresponding line numbers in the complete text of the interview are given in the footnotes. The translation of direct quotations has been stylistically polished, since it is very difficult to reproduce word-for-word the unevenness of spontaneous spoken language (broken sentences, misuse of cases, etc.).

Following normal practice in scholarly papers on historical subjects working with life history interviews, names have been left unchanged. All the interviewees have given their explicit permission to transcribe and quote their statements without changes.

The already transcribed interviews were coded using the MAXQDA 2007 software, which has long established itself for qualitative interview research. The results of the coding using this program are similar in many aspects to the sequencing as used by Rosenthal (1987), but also incorporate the sorting of individual sequences by topics (codes), allowing sequences from all interviews that are relevant for a particular code to be retrieved at once.

### 3. The Sami of Russia before the October Revolution

Among the northern regions of the Russian state the Kola Peninsula has always occupied a special position due to its relative proximity to European Russia and to its closeness to Norway, Sweden and Finland. The Kola Peninsula was colonized earlier than Siberia by the Russians. Moreover, there were always trade contacts with the people of the neighbouring areas: Karelians, Norwegians, Swedes and Russians. Thanks to these contacts Sami culture very early began to change in many areas, and it would be wrong to assert that it was only with the emergence of the Soviet Union that the traditional Sami way of life changed. Before examining more closely the history of the colonization of the Kola Peninsula, we give, however, a brief overview of the main features of the traditional Sami way of life. Although the life histories of the interviewees are presented only in Chapter 4, for the sake of clarity we give already some statements by the interviewees about their ancestors.

#### 3.1 The traditional way of life

Like all sub-polar regions of the world, the settlement area of the Sami is characterized by reindeer herding.

*Siidas* – or *pogosty* in Russian – are the traditional Sami form of settlement. These settlements were very small, with populations of less than one hundred to a few hundred. A *pogost* included not only the settlement itself, but also the corresponding grazing and hunting grounds and other territories necessary for the life of a clan. At the turn of the twentieth century there were 18 *pogosty* on the entire Kola Peninsula.<sup>66</sup> The original settlement and social system of the *pogosty* was characterized by territorially and dialectally strongly demarcated family clans. This system remained largely intact until the commencement of collectivization in the 1930s.

Families did not usually live in large groups under one roof, as in general sons moved after marriage with their new families to a new home. Work was never very strictly divided into men's and women's tasks, but the women tended to take re-

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<sup>66</sup> Gucol/Vinogradova/Samorukova 2007, 10.

sponsibility for fishing in the freshwater lakes, berry picking, sewing and cooking, while men were responsible for the reindeer and hunting.<sup>67</sup>

Certain features of the traditional way of herding on the Kola Peninsula differ sharply from those of the other reindeer herding peoples of the far north of Russia and Siberia. These are the relatively small size of the herds and the fact that the reindeer graze unattended during the summer months (*vol'nyj vypas*), the reindeer therefore being considered as semi-domesticated.<sup>68</sup> In November, the animals are rounded up with the help of dogs and driven south, where they graze closer to the Sami's winter settlements (*pogosty zimnie*, in contrast to the summer settlements - *letnie pogosty*) and can therefore be protected more easily against wolves.<sup>69</sup> This produces the traditional semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Sami, in contrast to that of the Komi who had earlier moved to a sedentary lifestyle with reindeer breeding geared towards expanding herd counts.

None of my interviewees had taken part directly in this way of life, but Nina Afanas'eva spoke in this respect about her parents:

O: [...] а потом переезжали вот, скажем, наши саамы, мои родители, все кто жили в этом маленьком поселке, они сконцентрировались в зимней деревне. Это по-саамски «Тальв Сейд». Это было местное название, по-русски Семиостровье, это в глубине материка Кольского полуострова. Переезжали в лесную зону. Там, понимаешь, дров больше и ягель лучше для прокормки вот оленей. Кочевая жизнь с оленем была связана. //

A: [...] Later [at the beginning of the winter], the Sami – my parents among them – moved to a winter village; it's called «Tal'v Sejd» in our language. This was a local name, in Russian it's called Semiostróv'e and is located deep inside the Kola

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<sup>67</sup> Cf.: Klement'ev/Šlygina 2003, 108 f.

<sup>68</sup> Cf.: Luk'jančenko 1994, 310.

<sup>69</sup> Cf.: Robinson/Kassam 1998, 12 f.

Peninsula. We moved into the forest where we could find more firewood and better moss for our reindeer. Our nomadic lifestyle revolved around reindeer.<sup>70</sup>

The fact that the Sami's reindeer herding, as long as they had not yet been exposed to foreign influences, was organized in a semi-nomadic way and on a subsistence level has mostly to do with the relatively small size of the Kola Peninsula, compared to the settlement areas of other peoples both west and east of the Urals. As the tundra vegetation, especially the reindeer moss (scientific name: lichen, in Russian *lišajnik/jagel'*) is very slow to recover, this 'scattered' form of grazing is particularly sustainable.<sup>71</sup>

In other words, the Sami's semi-nomadic lifestyle was based on the migratory movements of the reindeer. These are predicated by bears, which hunt them, and by the mosquitoes and other insects which are ubiquitous inland in summer, and from which the reindeer escape to the windswept shores of the Barents Sea.<sup>72</sup>

As characteristic features of traditional reindeer herding on the Kola Peninsula we can therefore list:<sup>73</sup>

- Semi-domesticated reindeer, unattended grazing
- Summer migration to the Barents Sea
- Herds of no more than 2,500 animals
- Not expansion-oriented, but based on subsistence and sustainability.

Of central importance for the Sami besides the traditional reindeer herding were hunting, fishing, berry-gathering and seal hunting.<sup>74</sup>

We now go on to describe briefly the many changes brought about by the early colonization of the Kola Peninsula.

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<sup>70</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 21-25.

<sup>71</sup> Cf.: Klement'ev/Šlygina 2003, 67.

<sup>72</sup> Cf.: Robinson/Kassam 1998, 77 f.

<sup>73</sup> Cf.: Robinson/Kassam 1998, 104 f.

<sup>74</sup> Cf.: Luk'jančenko 1994, 310 f.

### 3.2 Religion: Shamanism, Christianity, atheism

In the pre-Christian beliefs of the Sami, shamanism, worship of the sun and moon and numerous natural occurrences played an important role. Each occupation, like fishing and hunting, was under the protection of a particular deity. An important role was also played by the many spirits that lived in lakes, in the air and on the ground. Especially important places of worship were *sejd*, large boulders that were considered sacred and to which offerings, for example, reindeer blood, were brought.<sup>75</sup>

The Christianization of the Sami began already in the sixteenth century, leading to a degree of cultural assimilation with the Russians already living on the Kola Peninsula. An important role was played here by the monastery of Pečenga (Petsamo), which was founded in 1550.<sup>76</sup> This explains also why for centuries the Sami's names have been russified.<sup>77</sup> Like other peoples of the north, the Sami did not forsake their former beliefs with the arrival of Christianity. In everyday life this duality (*dvoeverie*) was seen as in no way contradictory.<sup>78</sup>

Due to the strong mixing with the Russian culture and the far-reaching changes brought about by the Soviet Union, shamanism today is – unlike for many peoples in Siberia – no longer relevant.<sup>79</sup> Anna Jur'eva also testifies to this:

V: [...] Я сейчас не помню, когда саами стали православными, но ведь были другие религиозные обряды до-православные, скажем.

O: Нет, все время была православная церковь, все время была эта религия.

V: Значит, шаманизм вас не касался никак?

O: Нет. Были шаманы, были тоже шаманы. У саамов были, шаманили. Но религию не трогали, были. А я тоже выросла, в мое время уже не было шаманов. Это бабушка рассказывала, были шаманы.

V: И сейчас это дело исчезло?

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<sup>75</sup> Cf.: Luk'jančenko 1994, 312.

<sup>76</sup> Cf.: Luk'jančenko 1994, 310.

<sup>77</sup> Cf.: Konstantinov/Vladimirova 2002, 11.

<sup>78</sup> Cf.: Bol'sakova 2005, 36 f.

<sup>79</sup> Cf.: Luk'jančenko 1994, 312.



O: Сейчас не знаю. Таких нету, нету. //

Q: [...] I can no longer remember when the Sami became Orthodox, but were there not other rites dating back from before Orthodoxy?

A: No, we've been Orthodox all along, there's never been any other religion.

Q: You mean that shamanism has never been part of your life?

A: Yes, there were shamans, they did exist. They lived among the Sami and practiced their rites. But they left the Orthodox religion in peace. In my childhood, shamans no longer existed. I only heard stories of them from my granny.

Q: So, now they no longer exist, do they?

A: They don't. There are none left.<sup>80</sup>

In the 1920s and 1930s, priests and shamans alike were declared enemies of the people, churches converted or demolished and, with the introduction of the Soviet educational system, atheism was increasingly propagated.<sup>81</sup> More information can be found in the section *Repression and Terror under Stalin* (Chapter 5.2).

### 3.3 Transliteration and written codification of the Sami language

The Sami of the Kola Peninsula were largely illiterate right up into the Soviet era. Nevertheless, with the missionary work of the Pečenga monastery, texts were repeatedly translated by Russian clergy into Sami and committed to writing. In the sixteenth century monk Feodorit Kol'skij translated certain prayers into the Sami language. In the nineteenth century other religious texts were translated into Sami, without the language, however, being codified in any way. A first attempt in this direction was the *Azbuka dlja Loparej*, written by a priest named Konstantin Ščekoldin. The first school for the Sami of the region was opened in 1888.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Jur'eva interview, lines 55-63.

<sup>81</sup> Cf.: Sarv 1996, 133.

<sup>82</sup> Cf.: Bol'shakova 2005, 170.

On the Kola Peninsula alone, there are four major Sami dialect groups, Notozero, Kildin, Akkala and Ter Sami, that vary considerably from one another. Several attempts to codify a standard Sami language were made in the 1920s and 1930s and from the late 1970s onwards. All attempts, however, remained more or less unsuccessful. Further information on this subject can be found in the section on the role of the Sami language in the Soviet educational system (Chapter 5.4.4.1).

### 3.4 The immigration of the Komi and Nenets

The comparatively lively migratory movements on the Kola Peninsula brought the Sami into early contact with other populations. As a result their way of life was not unaffected by many different influences. The relative proximity to Central Russia attracted many settlers and the sparse population of the area also meant that the presence of the Sami did not stop new settlers from establishing themselves on the Kola Peninsula. It was also in the interest of the Tsar to have as many Russians as possible settle in this strategically important border area.

But the first contacts with Russians go back well before the emergence of the Russian Empire. As early as the 12th century settlers from Russia, especially from the region of Novgorod, settled on the southern shore of the Kola Peninsula on the White Sea.<sup>83</sup> Until today this area is traditionally inhabited not by Sami but by Russians. These Russian colonists were known until the nineteenth century as Pomors (*pomorj*), a word that is still familiar to everyone in the Murmansk region.

Settlement of the Kola Peninsula was continuously promoted by the Russian state to block political and religious expansion from the west. If until the October Revolution the state borders were porous, a religious boundary did exist. While the Russian Sami were Orthodox, the Swedes and Finns had brought the Lutheran faith to the western Sami. Over time the monasteries that had been doing missionary work in the Kola Peninsula since the sixteenth century became the biggest landowners, in a country whose natives originally had no concept of land ownership. When in 1766 it sharply reduced the Church's possessions, the government became the larg-

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<sup>83</sup> Cf.: Luk'jančenko 1994, 310.

est landowner, whose land the Sami and Pomors were permitted to use. In contrast to central Russia, a wealthy land-owning nobility (*pomeščiki*) did not develop here. In this way the abolition of serfdom was not a very relevant watershed for the population of the Kola Peninsula.<sup>84</sup>

In this way it came about, as writer and amateur ethnologist Nemirovič-Dančenko tells us, that already in the nineteenth century almost all Sami spoke Russian, often even mixing up Sami and Russian, and had close contacts with the Russians.<sup>85</sup>

A much more serious intrusion for the Sami was the unexpected migration of Komi and Nenets from the Ižma basin west of the Urals into the Kola Peninsula, which took place in the 1880s. The Komi (also called *ižemcy*), and with them the Nenets as hired herdsmen, drove huge herds of up to 5,000 reindeer into the Kola Peninsula searching for new living space. Until recently these migrations were believed to have been caused by an epidemic among the reindeer. Following his archive research, Konstantinov (2005) comes, however, to a different conclusion. Police records tell us that a first group of Komi was forbidden to move into the Kola Peninsula in order to guarantee an undisturbed life to the Sami. The Komi had requested a settlement on the Kola Peninsula, because the overcrowding of their grazing grounds required them to open up new areas. Despite the authorities' rejection of their request, more and more Komi arrived in the peninsula. Amazingly, around 1890, the attitude of law enforcement officials in the far-off administrative centre of Archangel'sk – as yet no towns existed on the Kola Peninsula – changed radically: the Komi were praised for their industriousness and their colonization of the Kola Peninsula legalized, as is clear from documentary sources.<sup>86</sup> The 'Lapp race' was stated by the governor to be dying out, thereby officialising the 'backwardness vs. progressiveness' ideology as continued during the Soviet period.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Cf.: Konstantinov/Vladimirova 2006, 119.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted from Bol'sakova 2005, 173.

<sup>86</sup> Cf.: Konstantinov 2005, 174 f.

<sup>87</sup> Cf.: Konstantinov 2006, 6.

On the Kola Peninsula the Komi quickly took a socially dominant role. Anna Jur'eva reports

O: Они, знаете, враждовали до войны, говорят, я-то не здесь [в Ловозере] жила так. Вот по людским только словам слышала, что они враждовали, вот это коми на саами враждовали. Потому что они сюда приехали, стали командовать над землей. Советская власть тогда не это- не командовала. Они стали- значит, там наша земля или что ли, в общем как делить? А вот которые были саами-то, жили-то со стадами, они были- земли разделенные тоже там вот в тундре. Как вот мой прадедушка-то, он в Умбозере же жил на горах. У них тоже было разделено. [...] И вот как коми сюда приехали, вот с саамами из-за этого враждовали, но потом они как-то помирились.

V: И при вас уже не было конфликтов?

O: Нет. Нет. Нет (3) Они приехали меня еще на свете не было сюда когда. //

A: People say they didn't get along too well before the war. I, for my part, did not live here [in Lovozero]. Word had it that the Komi were hostile to the Sami because as soon as the Komi came, they started taking over. Because the Soviet authorities weren't as strong back then. The Komi said it was their land. And there were Sami who lived with their herds, their land was divided even out in the tundra. Back then, my grandfather lived in Umbozero, out in the mountains. All of their their land was also divided [...]. That's why the Komi and the Sami didn't get on too well with each other; though later on they made peace.

Q: Did you personally witness any arguments?

A: No, no, I didn't (3). They came when I wasn't yet born.<sup>88</sup>

The dying down of this ethnic conflict after collectivization is largely confirmed by the other interviewees. Only Anastasija Matrëhina had second thoughts when in 1958 they had the choice of moving to Lovozero, where apart from Russians live

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<sup>88</sup> Jur'eva interview, lines 325-337.

many Sami, Komi and Nenets, or to Gremiha (Ostrovnoj today), where mostly Russian military live. Unlike her father, she preferred the Russian environment in Gremiha:

O: [...] Мы тут [в Гремиху] переехали, не наш-то край стал. Русские живут. Отец пожалел: “Надо было потерпеть и уехать в Ловозеро.” Я говорю: “В Ловозеро я бы в жизни не поехала! Там все разные нации.” В общем, я все боялась, в Каневке такие были, «ижме» [коми-ижемцы] были. Лопарей они все так не любили. В Каневке и в Ловозере, там больше «ижме» были. Нация такая. По нашему: «ижме». По-русски не знаю как. //

A: [...] When we moved here [to Gremiha], it was no longer our land. Here the Russians lived. Father regretted it: “We should have gone to Lovozero.” I replied, “Never in my life would I move to Lovozero! There’s all sorts of people there.” I was simply afraid, [also] in Kanevka there were such ‘ižme’ [Komi from the Izma Basin] They did not like the Lapps. In Kanevka and Lovozero there were more ‘ižme’. There is such a people. In Sami [they are called] “ižme’, I don’t know the word in Russian.<sup>89</sup>

Overall, however, differences between the Komi and the Sami were hardly mentioned in the interviews, although I brought up the topic every time. This can be explained mainly by the fact that, given the massive colonization of the Kola Peninsula by Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians, the numerically far inferior Uralic peoples, Sami, Komi and Nenets, now found themselves in the same boat and their conflicts with each other faded somewhat into the background.

The Komi, in contrast to the Sami and Nenets, were already since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries no longer nomads and operated a very extensive form of reindeer herding, which included capitalist methods such as production of primary and secondary goods and their export to Moscow and Norway.<sup>90</sup> This had been possible also in the broad plains to the west of the Urals. On the relatively small

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<sup>89</sup> Matrëhina interview, lines 359-363.

<sup>90</sup> Cf.: Konstantinov 2006, 4.

and hilly Kola Peninsula, the Komi with their space-demanding form of reindeer breeding rapidly pushed out the ecologically balanced subsistence economy of the Sami, leading to their social downgrading.<sup>91</sup> Since the Komi unlike the Sami watched over their reindeer throughout the year, it was a constant occurrence for the Sami's free-grazing reindeer to be regarded by the Komi to be escaped or wild reindeer and incorporated into the Komis' flocks.<sup>92</sup> A social order came into being in which there were numerous wealthy Komi, for whom the Sami and Nenets worked as herdsman. Of course there were also independent and relatively wealthy Sami, but they were in the minority compared with the Komi.

Researchers on the one hand argue that the culture and economy of Komi were clearly superior to those of the Sami and that the Sami also understood this, but for a long time did not consider it necessary to adapt their herding practices.<sup>93</sup> Such statements should be seen in light of the collectivization and expansion of reindeer herding in the Soviet period, with the planners largely following the methods of the Komi.<sup>94</sup> On the other hand it has been pointed out that the Sami's form of reindeer herding was better suited to the less favourable topography and climate of the Kola Peninsula and not without reason was kept small-scale. Moreover reindeer herding was just one of three approximately equally weighted sources of income for the Sami. Hunting and, especially, fishing were also important.<sup>95</sup> The fact that today the Sami are often associated virtually only with reindeer husbandry does not correspond to their original way of life and is primarily explained by the historical developments of the last 150 years: after the Komi had brought large-scale reindeer herding to the Kola Peninsula, the Soviet planners took over their system and established it.

It would probably be unreasonable to assert that without the arrival of the Komi small-scale and sustainable reindeer herding would have been preserved as a cultur-

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<sup>91</sup> Cf.: Rasmussen 1995, 50 f.

<sup>92</sup> Cf.: Kiselev/Kiseleva 2000, 18.

<sup>93</sup> Cf.: Kiselev/Kiseleva 2000, 18.

<sup>94</sup> Cf.: Konstantinov 2006, 7.

<sup>95</sup> Cf.: Klement'ev/Šlygina 2003, 71.

al heritage of the Sami. In the Nordic countries the Sami today undertake extensive reindeer herding. This must be seen as an inevitable result of the global trend to increase productivity in all areas over the last century and a half. But the fact remains that the Sami even today see the Komi as uninvited hosts and the relationship is somewhat strained.<sup>96</sup>

While the migration of Komi and Nenets was still numerically relatively limited, with the foundation of the city of Murmansk in 1916 and the construction of the railway from St. Petersburg the flow of newcomers began to grow to an unprecedented rate. The railroad represented the first borderline traversing the peninsula and in this way the first major obstacle to reindeer herding. Some communities had to move away and abandon grazing land. The construction and operation of the railway line also created new jobs and thus brought about the departure of a portion of the Sami from their traditional activities.<sup>97</sup>

In 1926, just before the beginning of collectivization and thus the first significant intervention for the Sami of Soviet state power, 286 of a total of 371 Sami families still lived as semi-nomads.<sup>98</sup> The new Soviet state was to put an end to this situation.

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<sup>96</sup> Cf.: Konstantinov 2006, 5.

<sup>97</sup> Cf.: Rasmussen 1995, 48.

<sup>98</sup> Cf.: Klement'ev/Šlygina 2003, 66.

## 4. The reconstructed life stories – an overview

Before examining, in Chapter 5, the further history of the Sami from collectivization through to the end of the Soviet Union, it is time to summarize the life stories of my interviewees and place them in chronological order. The professional lives of all five women – who have as native languages, in addition to Russian, two very different dialects (Ter and Kildin Sami) and come from four different *siidas* – were played out to a large extent precisely in the above-mentioned period. Only in a later step (Chapter 5) will individual information from the interviews be analysed in greater depth in the context of the historical events, and compared with the data from the existing literature.

The narrative presentation, which has been kept as even as possible, should not obscure the fact that the information presented here is the result of an at times complex and time-consuming reconstruction process. The interviews jump backwards and forwards in time, with extraneous insertions, while other important information is often entirely absent. At times the memories and ideas that emerge become so confused that the interviewer is no longer able to determine the time, place or people involved with ultimate certainty. As already indicated in the chapter on theory and methodology, already in this first step we are not simply retelling biographies, but are at once undertaking a double interpretation. The view of things offered by the interviewees (first interpretation) was recorded, processed and supplemented by myself in order to reconstruct it as life story (second interpretation).



## 4.1 Nina Eliseevna Afanas'eva

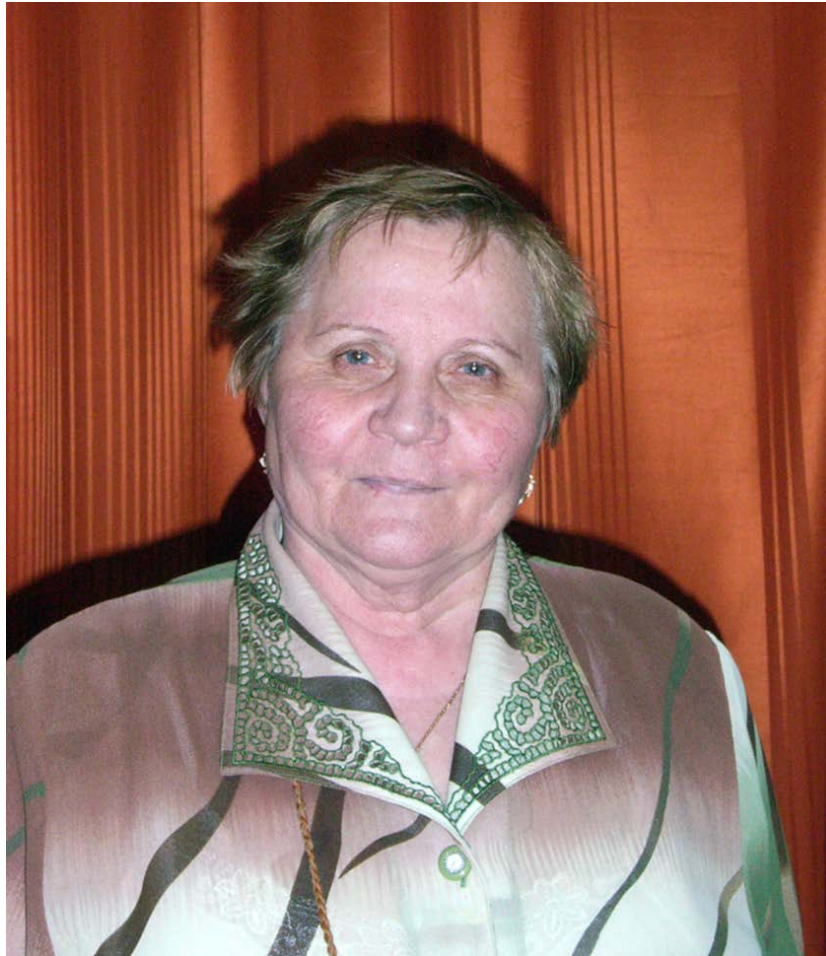


Illustration 2: Nina Afanas'eva (photo: Lukas Allemann, 2008).

Nina Eliseevna Afanas'eva was born in 1939 in the Sami village of Varzino. Her parents had moved as late as 1937 from the settlement of Semiostrov'e, which was liquidated in the course of collectivization, to the newly-founded village of Varzino where they settled for good. Nina Eliseevna was the youngest child in the family, and her sisters Anastasija and Viktorija – the latter died while an infant – and her four brothers Artëm, Vjačeslav, Aleksandr und Dmitrij had all been born while the family was still in Semiostrov'e.

It was only after moving to Varzino that Nina Eliseevna's parents became members of the kolkhoz (collective farm). Previously they had owned a herd of about 150 reindeer, a rather small number given the large size of the family. The parents had

tried as long as possible not to take part in the collectivization and were one of the last families to join the kolkhoz. They had to surrender everything: the reindeer and all the equipment. Nina Eliseevna complains that no one took account of how many not officially working members a family contained. With the small salary that the father and mother earned from the kolkhoz, the eight-member household was worse off than before collectivization.

Her father died in 1942 at the age of 53, when Nina Eliseevna was only three. He had fought in World War I and had therefore not been up called up for World War II. At that time, however, most of Nina Eliseevna's brothers were in the war, which is why the death of the father of the family at this juncture was especially difficult: Nina Eliseevna's mother and her brother Dmitrij who had stayed at home worked in the fishing industry of the kolkhoz and had to feed with their work not only themselves but also Nina Eliseevna and her sister. Two of Nina Eliseevna's brothers did not return from the war.

During the war there was just about enough food, everything was weighed very carefully. There was never enough bread. Kolkhoz members received rather small quantities of the abundant fish and reindeer meat. For this reason the children also needed to help gather berries and wild onions in the summer. The Varzino kolkhoz also produced dairy products, as cows had been imported in addition to the reindeer. The dairy products were mostly transported by ship to Gremiha a hundred kilometres away.

As a widow, Nina Eliseevna's mother continued working after the war in the kolkhoz as a *čumrabortnica*. This meant that she could not see her children for many months at a time since, together with the herdsman, she accompanied the reindeer herds inland for the entire winter. In this way Nina Eliseevna spent much of her childhood with relatives. Later, her mother worked in the village as a cowherd to supplement her meagre 20 rouble pension.

After relocating to Varzino, the Afanas'evs had until 1960 no house of their own, living for 21 years with various relatives. First they lived in the house of an aunt, who with her husband had been sent in 1937 into exile as kulaks. After Nina Eliseevna's

father's death, the family moved home several times, with Nina Eliseevna growing up mainly in the care of an aunt, because her mother was working most of the time in the tundra. When in 1960 Nina Eliseevna's mother finally moved into her own house, she would live in it for only four years, because then Varzino was liquidated.

Life in Varzino overall was harder than in Semioströv'e because the village was right on the windswept, treeless coast of the Barents Sea, a place where traditionally Sami – following the life rhythm of the reindeer – stayed only in summer. This knowledge of the natives the Soviet planners had failed to take into account when establishing a year-round settlement. This failure meant that in winter the inhabitants had to bring in the necessary firewood from a long way off, rather than, as previously, finding it on their doorstep. Varzino was closed in 1964 as part of a further concentration of the collective farms into a few locations. Despite all the shortcomings, Varzino was Nina Eliseevna's beloved home, and it hurts her to this day that this village was closed and, most importantly, that its inhabitants received no new place that they could call home.

Nina Eliseevna attended the first four schools classes in Varzino. At twelve, she went to boarding school in Gremiha. The time at boarding Nina Eliseevna describes with mixed feelings. There was very little room, as the school had been built too small for the many children. The food was good, however, and there was also enough meat. Although it was not forbidden to speak Sami, the entire instruction took place in Russian. There were also Russian children at the boarding school, among other of military personnel. Nina Eliseevna stressed several times in the interview that the children of different ethnicities were entirely equal in the classroom. It should not go unmentioned that Nina Eliseevna had already in Varzino joined the pioneers, the official youth organization, and had since risen to a leader position. In this way she was particularly well integrated into the social system. The most that Nina Eliseevna experienced as 'discrimination' was when the Russian pupils teased the Sami children and insulted them as Lapps (*Lopari*).

Since Nina Eliseevna was a good student, she was given the opportunity, on finishing seventh grade, to spend the last two school years in Leningrad at the peda-

gological university in a newly formed 'school faculty'<sup>99</sup> (*Fakul'tet Narodov Krajnego severa*) which served to prepare the children of the peoples of the north for university study. On completing her secondary schooling, Nina Eliseevna was able to remain in Leningrad, to study Russian and German Philology at the university and to train as a teacher. The native languages of the natives of the north were not part of the curriculum.

This promotion programme was intended to train new teachers for the northern regions of Russia, so that in the future teachers could be recruited from the local population instead of, as until then, from outside. Despite her general disappointment with the Soviet – and present – policy towards the Sami, Nina Eliseevna expresses at this point a great sense of gratitude towards her home state. Thanks to this programme, she, "the wild girl from the tundra"<sup>100</sup> received a college education and the opportunity to live in a big city, where she soaked up the existing cultural offering, taking ballet lessons and with a subscription to the Philharmonic. Despite government support, money was always very tight, and Nina Eliseevna during her seven years in Leningrad was unable to travel home every summer. She received a lot of support during this time, however, from her two year older sister, who was also studying in Leningrad.

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<sup>99</sup> Afanas'eva interview, line 1394.

<sup>100</sup> Afanas'eva interview, line 1626.



Illustration 3: August 1958, the beginning of the journey from Varzino to the distant Leningrad (by ship to Murmansk, and then on by train), to study (Nina Afanas'eva - private archive).

Upon graduation, Nina Eliseevna had a choice of teaching posts at three locations in the Murmansk region. She opted for Apatity, a city some 200 kilometres south of Murmansk. The main reason for this choice was that the city was well connected to the transport network, with direct rail and air links to St. Petersburg, and for Nina Eliseevna it was important to be able to visit the city of her studies at any time. In this way she opted finally for an urban life and against returning to a rural existence.

When Nina Eliseevna took up her teaching position in 1963, she already knew that very soon her home village of Varzino would be liquidated. In 1964 all inhabitants had to leave Varzino, including Nina Eliseevna's mother and the two remaining brothers. The state planned to merge several kolkhozy and to relocate their employees to Lovozero, the newly created centre of the Sami. The problem was that, as so often, no housing was available for the newcomers. Nina Eliseevna tells how her mother and brothers were not given their own living quarters and did not receive real jobs, because all this was simply not available. Nina Eliseevna and her sister had of course no right to housing in Lovozero, because at the time of the liquidation of

Varzino they already no longer lived there. Meanwhile Nina Eliseevna, however, had started a family, and she took her mother to live with her to Apatity. In this way they lived relatively comfortably as four people in a four-room apartment: Nina, her husband, her mother and the newborn child.

In the emotionally most difficult part of the interview Nina Eliseevna spoke of the plight of her brothers. They lived in Lovozero until their death without ever having their own living quarters, always with friends or relatives. Fate struck especially hard her brother Dmitrij. Torn from his home in Varzino, he was unable to find his feet professionally in Lovozero. Since officially unemployment did not exist, he, a man without regular work and housing, was repeatedly arrested for parasitism (*tunejadstvo*) and sent to a so-called 'profilaktorium'. In 1980 he was murdered in Lovozero in circumstances which could not be clarified in the interview.

Since 1980 Nina Eliseevna has lived with her divorced son in Murmansk. In 1989 she was a key figure in the founding of the Sami organization *Associacija Kol'skich Saamov* and actively participates to this day in defending the interests of Russia's Sami.



## 4.2 Anna Nikolaevna Jur'eva



Illustration 4: Anna Jur'eva (Photo: Lukas Allemann, 2008).

Anna Nikolaevna Jur'eva was born in 1934 in Umbozero. This settlement is located in the hinterland of the Kola Peninsula, not far from Lovozero in a mountainous area. Traditionally, Anna Nikolaevna's family too lived from reindeer herding, fishing and hunting. Already before her birth, Anna Nikolaevna's father worked as a brigade leader (*Brigadir*) in the kolkhoz; in their village collectivization had taken place relatively early. Previously Anna Nikolaevna's parents had owned a large herd of reindeer.

In contrast to the heavily militarized coastal areas of the Barents Sea, where interviewees Afanas'eva and Matrëhina grew up, there were few Russians living in Umbozero. This meant that Anna Nikolaevna barely spoke Russian when she started school. She attended in all three schools between the age of ten and thirteen (1944 to 1947). Anna Nikolaevna's late enrolment is explained by the war. The entire reindeer industry was at this time in the hands of the women and of the few men who had remained at home. Anna Nikolaevna's father too was away on military service from 1941 to 1945. While a part of the villagers accompanied the herds in their annual cycle to the coast of the White Sea (in the south) and back again, Anna Nikolaevna remained with her mother, grandmother and the four siblings in Umbozero and had to help in the home, to ensure the family's survival. Unlike Ms Matrëhina and Ms Afanas'eva, Anna Nikolaevna tells that her family suffered greatly from hunger during the war and that her great-grandparents practically starved. Of the younger generation all, however, survived the war, and when the father returned from the war and began working again in the same kolkhoz as a brigade leader, their standard of living began to improve.

Towards the end of the war, Anna Nikolaevna's grandmother took her to the boarding school in the not distant Lovozero. Instruction at the boarding school was only in Russian and attention was paid to making sure that no Sami was spoken. Despite her generally very positive view of the Soviet state, this is a point that Anna Nikolaevna complained of repeatedly in the conversation.

In Lovozero Anna Nikolaevna joined the pioneers, while her father had joined the military service of the Communist Party. Anna Nikolaevna admitted that she became very keen on communism from her early school years.

Anna Nikolaevna's brother had followed in his father's footsteps at age 14, becoming a reindeer herder in the kolkhoz, when in 1946 her father brought Anna Nikolaevna back to Umbozero. From then on, she worked her whole life as a *čumrobotnica*, until age 19 with her father in Umbozero, later in Lovozero.

1954 Anna Nikolaevna married Anisim Efimovič Yur'ev, a Sami from Lovozero. Whereas all her sisters married Russians, and some of them went on to receive higher



education, moving to totally different parts of the Soviet Union (Har'kov, Doneck, Rostov on the Don) and leading urban lives, Anna Nikolaevna was the only one to marry a Sami and continue the traditional form of life. Anna Nikolaevna presents this as a fairly conscious choice.

After the marriage Anisim Efimovič gave up his work as a miner in Mončegorsk where he had been for four years, to return to work as a reindeer herder and live with his wife in Lovozero. For 42 years, from 1954 to 1996, they worked together as members of the kolkhoz in reindeer herding, from April to the new year in the tundra and in the remaining time at home in Lovozero. Later they also joined the Communist Party. To crown their overall successful working and party lives the couple were able, towards the end of the Soviet period, to move into a single-family house in a new quarter; a comfort which few Soviet citizens ever enjoyed.

Anna Nikolaevna's husband died in 2005. Anna Nikolaevna has six children, five of whom are married and one is single and lives with her in Lovozero. Together, they have to live on two small pensions, one of which goes entirely on heating, electricity and other charges, and the other is barely enough for food. With some longing, Anna Nikolaevna therefore remembers the days when the bottom line was better.

Of the biographies illustrated here, Anna Nikolaevna Jur'eva's life is the only one not characterized by forced resettlement. She and her family were always able to live and work in their familiar environment. Anna Nikolaevna and her husband had fulfilling working lives that resembled in many ways the traditional lifestyle of their ancestors, but in which they could also benefit from the positive aspects of the Soviet period, without noticing too much of the dark side. These are the main reasons why Anna Nikolaevna's overall view of the Soviet era is considerably more positive than that of the other interviewees.

### 4.3 Anastasija Nikolaevna Matrëhina

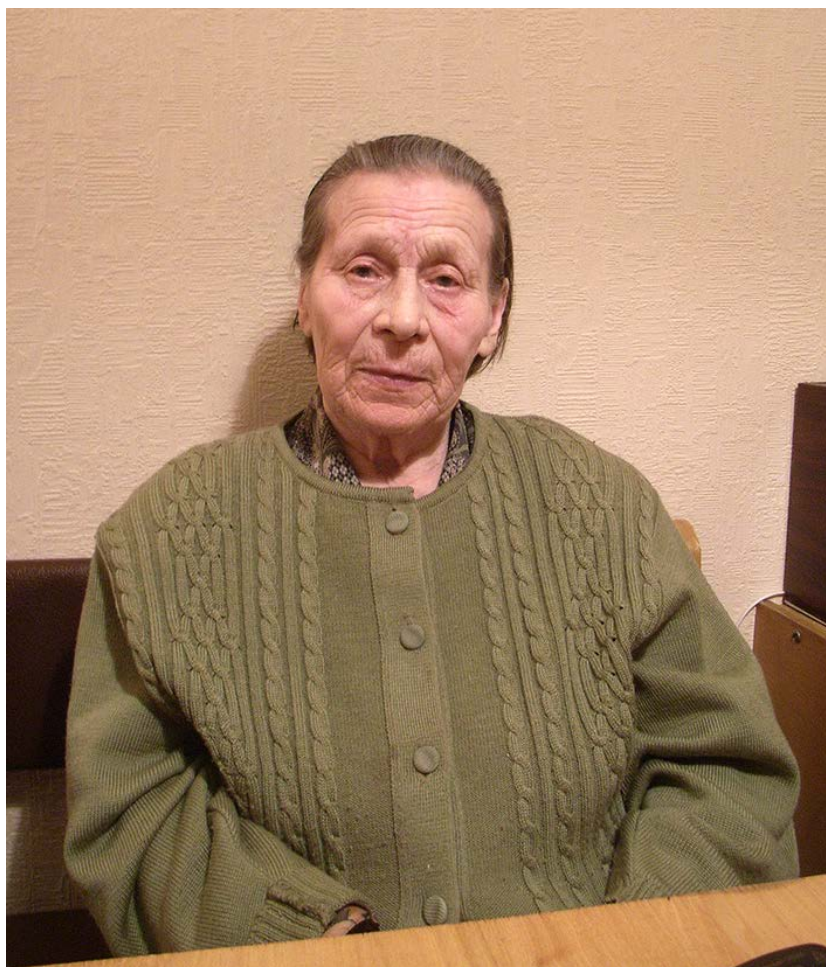


Illustration 5: Anastasija Matrëhina (photo: Lukas Allemann, 2007).

Anastasija Nikolaevna Matrëhina was born in 1928 on the Kola Peninsula in the Lumbovka settlement on the Barents Sea coast, a Sami village that could be reached only by sea, and in the winter by sleigh. As a child, Anastasija Nikolaevna experienced the period of collectivization. Prior to collectivization, her family lived from traditional reindeer herding, fishing and hunting, and hardly ever came into contact with the authorities.

Without giving an exact data, Anastasija Nikolaevna recounts that along with Soviet state power there came to their village for the first time, apart from the kolhoz, institutions such as a school, a village council (*sel'sovet*) and a post office. Contract labour was one 'achievement' of the Soviet state, that Anastasija Nikolaevna

rates as very positive. Compared to the pre-Soviet period the situation was also better, according to Anastasija Nikolaevna, as regards food and clothing. Cows, sheep and goats were brought in from 1934 and supplemented the reindeer stocks. There was also a small vegetable garden, which also produced the most essential products during the short summer.

The entire family – with a total of 13 children, also from the father's previous marriages – lived in a well-built log cabin. The father had always been a reindeer herder. In addition he hunted in the winter and fished in the summer, both for himself and later for the kolkhoz. Once the Communist Party had penetrated as far as Lumbovka, Anastasija's parents both fairly soon, before Anastasija Nikolaevna's birth, became party members and kolkhoz employees. Anastasija's mother worked in the kolkhoz as a baker.

According to Anastasija Nikolaevna, at the start of World War II, all of the reindeer and goats which were their private property were taken away by the state. This was the small amount of livestock still privately owned, as collectivization was already completed on the entire Kola Peninsula in the late 1930s.

Only at age 11, in 1939, was Anastasija Nikolaevna enrolled at school. The exact reasons could not be elicited, but she was no exception. The fact that schools were only gradually opened in the small settlements and not always simultaneously may explain the late enrolment. For example, in Varzino, Nina Afanas'eva's home village, the first school was not opened until 1939.<sup>101</sup> Anastasija Nikolaevna's first language was Sami, and only at school, at age 11, did she begin to learn Russian. She reports that, since collectivization, Russian was the official language in her village, and that for this reason only Russian was spoken in the school. In 1941, when the war came, Anastasija Nikolaevna had to leave school after just three years and, as a teenager, work in supplying the front, i.e. de facto military service. The whole family, including Anastasija's younger sisters were yoked in for work which Anastasija does not describe in greater detail, while her brothers and the father were drafted and sent to the front. For the work done, they received food. This was rationed, but they did not suf-

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<sup>101</sup> Cf.: Afanas'eva interview, lines 142-145.

fer hunger during the war, since there was ample fish, meat and milk – a situation of which during the war most of the inhabitants of central Russia could only dream. Only flour was a very scarce commodity in these latitudes. Nevertheless Anastasija Nikolaevna says that in their village two people died during the war of hunger and exhaustion. Several of Anastasija's brothers perished on the front.

After the war, Anastasija did not return to school because she had already reached working age and her family could not afford to send all children to school. The mother was sick, and of the children still living with their parents Anastasija Nikolaevna was the oldest. The family decided that only the youngest child should receive a full education. This younger sister became an accountant and was the only one of her generation to move away from the Kola Peninsula. She still lives in Novgorod. Anastasija Nikolaevna, on the other hand, could read and write only with difficulty throughout her life.

In 1950, at age 21, Anastasija Nikolaevna married Ivan Nikitič Matrëchin. Her husband took her to lokanga, another Sami settlement, also on the Barents Sea. There Anastasija Nikolaevna worked as a cashier.

In 1958 lokanga was liquidated by the state under the policy of 'agglomeration' or 'consolidation' (*ukrupnenie*), and all its residents were relocated.<sup>102</sup> Lumbovka and other places were also closed at that time or had already been liquidated. Anastasija Nikolaevna moved with her husband and children to the nearby settlement of Gremiha. The relocation took place against their wishes and those of the majority of the Sami, because no one wanted to give up abruptly the existences they had built up. Anastasija Nikolaevna's children Nadežda, Ol'ga and Ljubov' missed lokanga for a very long time.

While Anastasija Nikolaevna's children had in lokanga been able to speak Sami among themselves largely undisturbed, this was no longer so in Gremiha. According to Anastasija Nikolaevna it was de facto forbidden to speak Sami at the school in Gremiha. The Russian teachers even visited the parents at home to convince them that it would be better if the children spoke only Russian at home. In this way the

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<sup>102</sup> The exact reasons for the numerous liquidations of Sami villages are discussed in Chapter 5.

Sami language was increasingly sidelined in the Matrëchin family. Today no one of Anastasija's children and grandchildren can speak Sami.

Anastasija Nikolaevna complains particularly of the circumstances of the resettlement in Gremiha, where the state provided virtually no help. Neither homes nor jobs were made ready for the displaced persons. Even before the family moved to Gremiha, Anastasija's husband searched on his own for a new home. Through acquaintances, he found an abandoned old house, which according to Anastasija's words had long been used as a lavatory by passers-by and residents.<sup>103</sup> Before the family's arrival, Ivan Nikitič more or less repaired this house with his own hands. He had to totally disinfect it, poison the rats and completely replace the floors. Only after several years did the family receive a two-room apartment in a new apartment building.

The work was hard: Anastasija Nikolaevna worked for 17 years in Gremicha as a washerwoman, and after that another one and a half years in the production and maintenance of buoys. These were manufactured or repaired in winter, and in the summer they travelled out into the fjord to install them. Among the predominantly male workforce another three women apart from herself were employed in this work.

From 1947 onwards, Anastasija Nikolaevna was several times deputy for the kolkhoz and in this capacity was sent four times as part of a delegation to Murmansk. There are some doubts about the actual decision-making power of this body. In the kolkhoz, employees were put forward as deputies, and the fact that the choice fell on the nearly illiterate Anastasija Nikolaevna is significant. One suspects that this was a mere formality. In Murmansk she gave no speeches, she travelled with the others, answered questions put to her about the work on the kolkhoz and travelled back home. Unfortunately Anastasija Nikolaevna did not provide any further information

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<sup>103</sup> There were no sewers in these settlements. To minimize the tedious work of emptying one's own toilet, it was easier to relieve oneself outdoors away from the settlement or even in an uninhabited building.

on her activities as a deputy. In this way this *per se* interesting topic remained largely unexplored.<sup>104</sup>

Anastasija Nikolaevna's husband died relatively early. During the war, he had received a shrapnel splinter in the lung, but was not operated on until 1961. This war wound caused him pain right to the end of his life. Especially in thius later years, he fell victim to alcohol, and died in 1984. Anastasija Nikolaevna had difficulty broaching the subject of her husband's alcoholism. In separate conversations with her granddaughter, Ivan Nikitič was presented however as a man who struggled all his life with alcoholism. Elsewhere in the interview Anastasija Nikolaevna presented alcohol as the greatest scourge of their people, with an emotional force unique to people who have been personally affected.

For another ten years Anastasija Nikolaevna lived alone in Gremiha, which is still only accessible by boat. All her daughters had already started families and lived on the 'mainland' (*na bol'šoj zemle*). As a pensioner she worked several hours a day as a cleaner in a store. In 1994 she moved to Murmansk, where one of her daughters had started a family and was living. The military-dominated Gremiha was greatly reduced in size in the 1990s. The residents were offered apartments in other cities if they left - better conditions than in 1958, which Anastasija Nikolaevna only too happily accepted. Since 1994 she has lived as a pensioner in Murmansk, together with her grandson, in a one-room apartment received from the state. She regularly sees her other relatives who live in Murmansk and the surrounding area.

Anastasija Nikolaevna Matrëhina's life story was rather difficult to reconstruct. The interview with her was the shortest because it was hard to get Anastasija Nikolaevna to relate events in her life. Since I could understand her only with difficulty – she was the oldest informant and spoke very unclearly – it was difficult to react to her statements with narrative-generating questions. Rather I had to repeatedly to interrupt with comprehension questions, which further blocked the narrative flow.

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<sup>104</sup> The attempt at a second interview by telephone unfortunately failed because of Anastasija Nikolaevna's poor hearing.



But the aim of this work was not the search for the 'perfect' interview, and Anastasija Matrëhina's statements remain a valuable source.

#### 4.4 Marija Alekseevna Popova



Illustration 6: Marija Popova (photo: Lukas Allemann, 2008).

Marija Alekseevna Popova was born in 1933 in the old Sami settlement of Voron'e. Already as a child she often travelled with her parents into the tundra. When attending school she also always spent the summer months with her parents in the tundra – her father was fortunately not sent to the front. Marija Alekseevna had five years' schooling until 1945. After that she had to leave school as several family members were sick and unable to work. Nor could she travel any more into the tundra she

loved. Her father could no longer walk and the mother had to spend most of her time in bed because of a back problem. On top of this the grandmother was seriously ill. Marija Alekseevna had therefore to take care of the household and of her younger siblings.

The war years were hard. The family suffered hunger, especially bread was scarce. As with the other interviewees, however, they were helped by the fact that there was sufficient meat in the north. Even though much of it had to be delivered to the front, there was still enough left to survive. Of particular help in this time were people's own, privately owned reindeer, which could be held in small numbers. The quota was 40 animals per herder, and the Popovs were lucky that Marija Alekseevna's youngest brother could work as a herder. The other two brothers were called up. The first was killed in the war and the other was seriously wounded and also died shortly after the war. In many other families all the men had been called up and the women had to look after both the households and the reindeer all on their own.

Marija Alekseevna also relates that school was taught only in Russian. She reports that the teachers even came to their home to forbid the parents to talk to their children in Sami. Even so Sami remained the everyday language in the family. Marija Alekseevna regrets, however, that the behaviour of the teachers of the day was quite successful and that many families avoided speaking Sami.

At age 16, Marija Alekseevna began duty in the kolkhoz as a milkmaid. The work was hard, at the beginning she had to work 12 hours a day and with no days off, and the pay was very low. At her job she was pushed to join the Komsomol state youth organization, which she did, but never wanted to join the party. In fact, she was never interested in political activities at all. Also, when working on the farm, Marija Alekseevna loved wearing traditional Sami clothing. When she was 18, this was forbidden by the chairman of the kolkhoz and everyone had to wear Russian clothes. Marija Alekseevna quickly rose to the position of head of department. She had twelve people under her, who looked after cows, sheep and horses and produced milk, butter and other dairy products.



## The Sami of the Kola Peninsula

At the age of 20, Marija Alekseevna married the Komi Ivan Popov. He was not, however, a local man. He came from the Komi Republic and was in Voron'e on official business. Immediately after marrying, Marija Alekseevna gave up her work on the kolkhoz and moved with her husband to Eremeevo, a village in the Republic of Komi, near the capital of Syktyvkar. There they lived thirteen years, with Marija Alekseevna learning the Komi language during this time. She initially worked in Eremeevo as the secretary of the village soviet (*sel'sovet*), and after the birth of her first child was employed as a nurse in the infirmary.

During this time a sad fate befell Marija Alekseevna's home village of Voron'e: a hydroelectric power plant was to be built there and the village had to make way for the resulting dam. 1964 all residents were evacuated – mainly to Lovozero -, and the village was flooded. Here again hardly any living space had been prepared in Lovozero for the evacuees, nor were they allowed to dismantle their log houses and rebuild them elsewhere. Marija Alekseevna's older sister was particularly unfortunate: she and her family had only just built a new house in Voron'e when they were informed that the village was to be liquidated. The family had lived just one year in the new house when they had to leave it. Of course, the shock was very great, and no one understood why the population could not have been warned at an earlier stage. Despite the house having been flooded, the family had to spend several years paying off the debts for it. A few years ago, Marija Alekseevna's sister received compensation of 10,000 roubles for the former, government-inflicted damage - an amount corresponding to a low monthly wage.

In 1969 Marija Alekseevna returned with her husband and children from the Komi ASSR to the Kola Peninsula. They had chosen to move for the sake of their children. Since the road to school was too long and dangerous in Eremeevo, they decided to move to Lovozero, where the school was in the village itself and the children were therefore safe. Also most of Marija Alekseevna's relatives were now living in Lovozero, and initially the family lived with Marija Alekseevna's mother. Marija Alekseevna now worked in the Pioneers House (i.e. the house of the Pioneers state youth organization) and ran craft groups in which she taught traditional Sami bead-

work and making fur garments. Today Marija Alekseevna is retired and still lives in Lovozero.

Almost all of Marija Alekseevna's children speak Sami. Only one daughter, Galina, cannot speak the language. The youngest son, Pëtr, has married a Norwegian Sami and lives with her and their two children in Norway, where he even worked for a while as a Sami teacher. Except for Pëtr, all of Marija Alekseevna's children live in Lovozero.

Marija Alekseevna has relatives in Finland. For the first time, in the 1980s, cousins of Marija Alekseevna's mother came to Lovozero looking for her. Unfortunately, the mother had recently died, so that she never saw her close relatives from the other side of the Iron Curtain. But the contact with Marija Alekseevna and their sisters was established, and later there were family gatherings also on the other side of the border.

Marija Alekseevna's youngest brother worked all his life as a reindeer herder, but died very early from cancer. Of Marija Alekseevna's two sisters, one lives in Lovozero and the other in St. Petersburg. The latter was trained as a teacher and remained there. Marija Alekseevna's husband died in 2007 aged 74.

Today Marija Alekseevna complains primarily that there is too little money, and that the state does not allow old people to live in dignity. One evil that is today for her much worse than during the Soviet Union is poaching. For this reason today hunting and fishing are severely regulated and restricted.

Despite all the difficult circumstances Marija Alekseevna has always attached great importance to the preservation of the Sami language and traditions. Not least through the revived contacts with the Sami in Norway and Finland she has been able to maintain fairly well an interest in their own roots, including in her grandchildren's generation. She is very keen for the Sami culture to be promoted more strongly, also in an institutional setting.

## 4.5 Apollinarija Ivanovna Golyh



Illustration 7: Apollinarija Golyh in home-sewn clothing for winterstays in the tundra (photo: Lukas Allemann, 2008).

Apollinarija Ivanovna Golyh was born in 1932 in the old Sami settlement of Voron'e. All her life she travelled into the tundra and was employed in reindeer herding, already as a small child she always accompanied her parents. Prior to collectivization, Apollinarija Ivanovna's father had a herd of about five hundred animals. When the kolkhoz was established, her father joined it. At that time you could only have 30 private reindeer, a number that was much too small for big families. A bit later, Apollinarija Ivanovna relates, it was possible to own more reindeer, but every year one had to pay high taxes, so that keeping the animals was not a paying proposition. For this reason her father preferred to slaughter his animals.

Before the war, hardly any Russians lived in Voron'e and Apollinarija Ivanovna therefore always spoke Sami during her childhood. In 1941 she started school, and in 1942 her father was drafted into the war. This brought great changes in the lives of

the entire family, which consisted, apart from Apollinarija Ivanovna and her mother, of two brothers and two sisters. For five years they were required to live the whole year round in Voron'e because reindeer herding as a whole was severely limited. There was little to eat, and they had to work hard for it. The brother worked as a herder from the age of twelve, and her mother too was busy with the animals almost round the clock. With the reindeer she transported goods to other places (like almost everywhere on the Kola Peninsula, there were no roads in the area). At age 11 Apollinarija Ivanovna began to work alongside school, looking after small children in a nursery which was opened in the summer months to enable the adults to go about their work in the kolkhoz. As a worker she received 700 grams of bread a day instead of the previous 300 grams, which was a major help for the family in those hard times. Apollinarija Ivanovna says that the abundance of fish and wildlife helped little for surviving. With all the men gone and so much work in the kolkhoz, most of the produce of which was sent to the front, there were hardly time or hands to go fishing or hunting privately. On the way back from work or school, family members often gathered mushrooms or berries. This was a crucial additional food source, at least during the short summer and autumn months.

Apollinarija Ivanovna attended school between the age of eight and twelve (1941-1945), four classes in all. Even if no Sami was spoken in their class, the teachers in Voron'e did not try to strictly 'ban' the Sami language, as was the case in Lovozero or Gremiha where the Russian portion of the population was much higher. Apollinarija Ivanovna speaks with joy of her teacher, a Ukrainian who had more or less learned Sami, and enjoyed communicating in Sami with the children during the free time.

Although the war was already over in May 1945, her father returned only in October. But the visit was short-lived, as in addition to unplanned military service, he now had to do the regular compulsory military service. In this way the father was discharged from the army only in 1950, after eight years. Apollinarija Ivanovna had worked in the kolkhoz since finishing primary school, and married in 1952. She had met her future husband, the Sami Vassilij Nikolaevič Golyh, two years earlier at the age of 18. Apollinarija Ivanovna also tells of a Russian who had come with an expedi-

tion to Voron'e and was courting her. But she was uncomfortable at the idea of leaving her homeland, and therefore decided to marry a Sami. Vasilij Nikolaevič worked as the head of the local club.

In 1964, the flooding by the new dam meant that the young family had leave its home village of Voron'e, along with all the other inhabitants (see brief biography of Ms Popova). Just like Ms Popova, Apollinarija Ivanovna has nothing good to say about this resettlement. The Golyh family had only five years before built their new house, and was looking forward to a stable future after the suffering of the war years. But then came the news of the impending construction of the hydroelectric plant. Clearly the planners were afraid of protests, and so about a year before the resettlement officials came to Voron'e and rashly promised that in Lovozero all families would be allocated new homes free of charge. Because of the over-hasty planning, not enough new housing units had been built in Lovozero at the time of commissioning of the hydropower plant. In this way Apollinarija Ivanovna's family spent four years with no fixed place of residence and had to billet themselves for short periods with friends and relatives ("*skitalis*").<sup>105</sup> Apollinarija Ivanovna describes this roundly as 'fraud'.<sup>106</sup> At times, four families had to live together, with Apollinarija Ivanovna's family crowded seven to one room. The few dwellings that had been built in time were, however, claimed by the 'better-placed'.<sup>107</sup> Housing shortage, as experienced previously by millions of people in mainland Russia, in this way became an unpleasant side-effect of the planned urbanization of the tundra,

Also it was only in Lovozero, after the relocation, that Apollinarija Ivanovna was confronted for the first time with the problem of widespread alcoholism. Many people around her succumbed to alcohol, something that had not happened in Voron'e. There the Sami lived virtually among themselves, and hardly any vodka was drunk. Only on festive occasions was a brewed alcoholic beverage (*braga*) consumed.

After relocating to Lovozero, the Golyhs worked together in reindeer herding and until Vasily Nikolaevič's death in 1988 travelled together each season into the

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<sup>105</sup> Golych interview, line 638.

<sup>106</sup> Golych interview, line 633.

<sup>107</sup> Golych interview, line 641.

tundra. After that Apollinarija Ivanovna continued to work at the same rhythm until 1996. She describes her work and life in the tundra in great detail. From December to April, she worked in Lovozero in the kolkhoz sewing studio. There she sewed footwear in the traditional way for the reindeer herdsman. From April to December, the Golyhs lived mostly out in the tundra. There was no shortage of work there: as a *čumrabortnica* – two women had to provide for eight herders – Apollinarija Ivanovna's job was to wash, sew, bake bread, chop wood, heat the bathhouse, tan leather and fish. Holidays were therefore in winter, with Apollinarija Ivanovna and her husband on a number of occasions being able to spend these in a sanatorium in southern Russia to recover from the hard work.

In the wild, the brigades (i.e., the groups of herdsman and *čumrabortnicy* responsible for a herd) initially still lived in large tents (*čum*), which were moved from time to time following the movements of the animals. From the 1960s onwards, a network of wooden huts was built, which made life more comfortable. Apollinarija Ivanovna appreciated this innovation. What she did not like, however, was the transition to motorized 'draft animals'. Whereas previously Apollinarija Ivanovna would drive directly on reindeer sleighs to the more northerly summer pastures on the Barents Sea, from the 1960s onwards the herdsman were brought to their grazing areas first by bus, with a long detour via Murmansk, and then by *vezdehod* (an all-terrain amphibious vehicle). Apollinarija Ivanovna regrets especially the lost emotional aspect of the journey with the reindeer. These and similar rationalizations made the profession of reindeer herder increasingly unattractive. These decisions were all made by the kolkhoz management, which according to Apollinarija Ivanovna consisted solely of Russians.

The Golyh couple was never politically active, even if Apollinarija Ivanovna's husband had joined the party during the war. This was customary, and hardly anyone was able to escape the group pressure. Apollinarija Ivanovna herself never cared for political or ideological issues, especially after the disappointment of the resettlement. When joining the party was proposed to her, she refused.



Apollinarija Ivanovna has one daughter, Svetlana (born 1952). She also gave birth to two sons, one stillborn and the other who lived only four months. The desire for more children was unfortunately not fulfilled. During the summer months, her daughter Svetlana, like all other reindeer herders' children, was able to join her parents in the tundra. The rest of the time she lived in a boarding school. Apollinarija Ivanovna does not particularly regret this fact; even if it was hard at times, it was ultimately the only possible way for the children to get a full-length education. Svetlana attended school for eight years.

After her husband's death, Apollinarija Ivanovna continued until 1996 as an employee of the kolkhoz (and then the cooperative that emerged from it) in the tundra. Usually her grandson was also there, who had stepped into his grandparents' footsteps and worked as a herdsman. Unfortunately, this grandson was in 1995 shot dead in the tundra in a conflict with poachers. To date, the cause has not been fully clarified, as his companions who were witnesses to the incident were either unwilling or unable to make any concrete statements, claiming that they were all too drunk. A poacher was subsequently arrested, but then released six months later, with the rumour going around, as Apollinarija Ivanovna reports, that he had bribed his way free.

The unnatural, violent death of a family member is an event that significantly affects one's perspective on life. It is therefore easy to understand that for Apollinarija Ivanovna the Soviet period was, in retrospect, clearly better than the post-Soviet one. Despite the relocations she praises the stability of their working lives. The brigades were well supplied in the tundra – helicopters flew in food and medical supplies – and they had nothing to fear from poachers. The situation in this respect is very different today, as Apollinarija Ivanovna has felt in full force through the loss of her grandson. By comparison, Ms Afanas'eva's situation is quite different: Her brother's murder in 1980 she interprets as a late consequence of the relocation and the subsequent chaos of alcoholism and de facto unemployment. For Nina Afanas'eva, the Soviet time is therefore clearly the darker period.

Today Apollinarija Ivanovna lives alone in an apartment in Lovozero. She is still passionate about traditional Sami handicraft and sews reindeer fur garments. Until recently, she and a friend would still sometimes travel out with the cooperative's *vezdehod* to spend together a few weeks living and fishing in the tundra.

#### 4.6 Brief comparison of the life stories

The continuity of reindeer herding and the many years' working as a *čumrabortnica* with her husband, a job in which she could, despite many innovations, continue to live out Sami traditions, gave Apollinarija Ivanovna something to hold onto in life. This rhythm was a wholesome counterweight to the rupture caused by the relocation. It helped Apollinarija Ivanovna Golyh to an overall positive assessment of her life story, despite her – compared for example with Ms Jur'eva – cool relationship with the Soviet state and the then official ideology. Ms Golyh is thus to some extent mid-way between two extremes represented by Ms Jur'eva on one side and Ms Afanas'eva on the other. Ms Matrëhina's and Ms Popova's retrospective judgements of the Soviet state and its policies toward the Sami resemble overall those of Ms Golyh.

The large-scale displacement of the Sami between the 1930s and 1970s affected an estimated 70 to 80% of all Sami.<sup>108</sup> Ms Golyh had the good fortune, through her career, to have a counterweight of stability and so come to terms with the trauma of the poorly prepared mass resettlements to Lovozero. Ms Jur'eva had no experience of forced relocation, so that her belief in the Soviet state was not called into question by such disappointments. As such she is in a minority - both among my interviewees, as well as among the entire Sami population of the Kola Peninsula. Ms Afanas'eva was hurt especially by the fate of her mother and brothers, who suffered particularly hard from the resettlement while she was studying in Leningrad. Her brothers were unable to get back on their feet professionally and socially after the relocation and came to terms only badly with this break in their lives. They belonged to a generation of persons uprooted by the state.

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<sup>108</sup> Cf.: Bogdanov 2000.



## 5. Living conditions of the Sami of Russia after the October Revolution

This chapter is devoted to an analysis of individual sequences from the various interviews, each time on the same subject. My informants' statements are compared at the same time with the information available from the literature.

For reasons of space three of the five interviews have been selected for this step. The choice fell here on the interviews with Nina Afanas'eva, Anna Jur'eva and Anastasija Matrëhina, because their life stories involve very different places of residence and educational and career paths. Apollinarija Golyh and Marija Popova both lived like Ms Jur'eva in Lovozero. Of the three interlocutors from Lovozero, Ms Jur'eva was chosen as being the only one of all informants not affected by the resettlements. Nevertheless, any selection remains a regrettable act of arbitrariness, but one that was unfortunately unavoidable. The main distinguishing features of the biographies selected for deeper analysis are listed in table form:

<b>Nina Afanas'eva</b>	<b>Anna Jur'eva</b>	<b>Anastasija Matrëhina</b>
from the Barents Sea	from inland	from the Barents Sea
Higher education	Primary school	Primary school
Urban life in Leningrad, Murmansk and Apatity	Life in Lovozero, the "place of compact aggregation of the Sami"	Russianized village life in Gremiha
Forced resettlements experienced indirectly through her closest relatives	Did not experience any forced resettlement	Direct experience of forced resettlement
Highly critical of the Soviet era	Somewhat pro-Soviet attitude	Somewhat neutral stance towards the Soviet era

### 5.1 Containment of nomadism and collectivization

Collectivization progressed relatively slowly on the Kola Peninsula, beginning in the late 1920s and largely completed a decade later. Fighting between the Whites and the Reds had continued in the Murmansk region until 1921, and the Sami had, until the beginning of collectivization, felt relatively little of the new Soviet state power. Precursors of the collective farms were cooperatives (*artel'*), which could be joined on

a more or less voluntary basis.<sup>109</sup> Briefly, the following happened in the period of collectivization:<sup>110</sup>

- The reindeer were largely nationalized;
- The reindeer herding was systematized with brigades of herdsmen working as employees on a shift basis, with the wives either joining them as *čumrabortnicy* or staying at home;
- If the parents worked in the tundra, the children stayed in boarding schools;
- In all, eleven kolkhozy were organized where the Sami people worked together with Komi, Nenets and Russians.

As already mentioned, in the eyes of Soviet planners and ideologues, production-oriented reindeer herding (*tovarnoe olenevodstvo*) was preferable to the nomadic version (*kočevoe olenevodstvo*).<sup>111</sup> The clear preference for the methods practised by the Komi had a definite detrimental impact on the self-confidence of the Sami, who were constantly referred to as a dying-out ethnic group. It would, however, be wrong to state that it was only with collectivization that the traditional form of Sami reindeer herding began to disappear. The extensive breeding of the Komi had started, in numerical terms, to largely displace the Sami form of reindeer herding already before the Revolution. Whereas in the mid-nineteenth century the reindeer stock on the Kola Peninsula counted about 5,000 animals, there were already 43,000 in 1894 and 74,000 at the beginning of World War I.<sup>112</sup> By 1921, however, when the Soviet state power was finally established in the Murmansk region, the number of reindeer had fallen by 60%, with many animals having to be slaughtered in the hard times of war and revolution.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Cf.: Afanas'eva interview, lines 59-64.

<sup>110</sup> Cf.: Klement'ev/Šlygina 2003, 71, 115.

<sup>111</sup> Cf.: Konstantinov 2006, 7.

<sup>112</sup> Cf.: Konstantinov 2006, 9.

<sup>113</sup> Cf.: Robinson/Kassam 1998, 14.

Just as, in the farming areas of the Soviet Union after collectivization, kolkhoz members were still allowed small plots for private use, so the families of the Kola Peninsula were permitted to keep a small number of private reindeer (*ličnye oleni*) within the state herd. Konstantinov (2006) estimates their share during the entire Soviet period at about 10% of the total reindeer stock. Moreover, the collective farms carried out conventional breeding of cows, sheep, pigs and goats, which were imported from southern regions of Russia. Ms Matrëhina sees this as a decisive step forward in the quality of life, with dairy products forming part of the daily diet.<sup>114</sup>

With the beginning of collectivization we see the first efforts at centralization, i.e. resettlement of the Sami, who had until then – in contrast to the Komi – lived in a very scattered way. The massive colonization of the peninsula increasingly reduced the living space of the reindeer and those living from reindeer hreeding. Nina Afanas'eva reports on the circumstances of the first relocation of her family in 1937 from Semiostrov'e to Varzino, which took place shortly before her own birth:

О: С приходом советской власти уже в тридцатые годы начинают создаваться колхозы, и начинается перевод саамов на оседлую жизнь, в связи с **чем**, скажем, Семиостровье было закрыто [...]. Почему? Потому что туда дорог не было, зимой-то на оленях проедешь, а летом как добираться? И принято было решение обосновать постоянное место жительства вот на берегу Баренцева моря. Вот в этой деревне ((показывает фотографию)). Это летняя деревня была [...] Там я и родилась, а именно в Варзино я родилась. [...] Почему здесь наши не жили саамы раньше зимой? Потому что это очень холодные места. [...] Потому невозможно было зимой жить. Потому саамы не жили здесь. Но ведь советскому человеку, который строит новую советскую власть, ему и в дамок не было, а как эти люди будут жить, где вообще дров, растительности нет. То есть, там [...] в Семиостровье, это лес, там можно было березняк нарубить, спилить, заготовить дрова. [...] И поэтому здесь зимой жить очень тяжело было. Но тем не менее наша

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<sup>114</sup> Cf.: Matrëhina interview, lines 51-55.

деревня Варзино просуществовала до тысяча девятьсот шестьдесят четвертого года. //

A: When the Communists came to power, as early as 1930s they created collective farms, or kolkhozy, and started converting the Sami to a sedentary lifestyle. **That's why** the village of Semiostróv'e was closed [...]. Because there were no roads leading to it, you could use reindeer to get there in winter, but you couldn't do that in summer. That's why they decided to create a permanent settlement on the Barents Sea coast. This is my native village ((shows a photo)). It was a summer village [...]. That's where I was born. It was called Varzino [...]. You ask why Sami didn't live there before? Because it was a very cold place [...]. One couldn't survive there in winter, that's why Sami didn't live there. But the Soviet authorities were building a new life and hadn't a clue how the settlers would survive in a location where there was no firewood and no trees. There was a forest [in Semiostróv'e], so one could go and fell a couple of birches and cut them up for firewood [...]. That's why life was so difficult there in winter. But in spite of this, Varzino, our village existed till 1964.<sup>115</sup>

This relocation had nothing to do as yet with military interests. This was much more the case during the Cold War, when civilians were moved away en masse from the Barents Sea coast (see Chapter 5.4). At the start of collectivization, there was rather a shift in the opposite direction: larger, year-round settlements, such as Varzino, were founded directly on the coast in order to ensure better access to the traffic routes and so ship the goods produced, as the year-round ice-free sea provides the only route connecting many places on the Kola Peninsula.

Nina Afanas'eva addresses one of the main problems of this resettlement: the local knowledge of the indigenous population was simply disregarded. As is clear from Ms Afanas'eva's explanations, there were good reasons why in this inhospitable region of the world people had for thousands of years had separate winter and sum-

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<sup>115</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 26-35, 57-59, 242 f., 253-263.

## The Sami of the Kola Peninsula

mer homes. The important vegetative border between taiga and tundra runs through the Kola Peninsula. While inland, trees are available in sufficient numbers, these become fewer and fewer as one moves north. The north coast, which contains not only Varzino but also Gremiha, Ms Matrëhina's place of residence, is almost entirely destitute of trees, which also means a lack of protection from the icy winter winds and lack of firewood. This disregard of the fundamental knowledge of the indigenous inhabitants and of the local peculiarities of climate and vegetation brought not new logistical difficulties, such procuring firewood, but also made people unhappy with their new, assigned, place of residence.



Illustration 8: Nothing remains today of the village of Varzino on the coast of the Barents Sea which was liquidated in 1962 (Photo: A. Stepanenko, 2001).

About the handling of so-called kulaks in the period before the Great Terror there is very little information in the existing literature. According to the work of Kiselev/Kiseleva (1987), which represents the official Soviet position, the more prosperous reindeer herders had to reckon, in the first period of collectivization, with administrative measures: they were forced to hand in their guns, excluded from the cooperatives and not served in the newly created slaughterhouses and veterinary

stations. In the Sami centre of Lovozero they were denied access to the newly created library.<sup>116</sup>

## 5.2 Repression and terror under Stalin

There comparatively gentle measures were followed, however, no later than the mid-1930s, with much harsher practices.

“The Great Terror of the late 1930s culminated a shift from terror based on class to that based on ethnicity. It brought the extension of ethnic cleansing to all Soviet borderlands. [...] the most striking paradox of the last two decades of Stalin’s rule: the simultaneous pursuit of nation building and nation destroying.”<sup>117</sup>

It is in this light that we must see the years of Stalin’s reign of terror, which did not leave the Sami unscathed. Nina Afanas’eva relates:

O: [...] Пока до смерти отца у нас было жилище, было, мы жили не в доме-ну да, в доме тетушки Марии. А тетушка Мария, почему во время войны ее не было, она была замужем за Матрехиным, и они попали под репрессию. То есть, как зажиточная семья. В тридцать седьмом году ее мужа забрали, и он ушел и не вернулся. А тетя Мария вместе с детьми, [...] она была отправлена в Архангельскую область на выселение [...].

В: Как жена врага народа?

O: Как жена репрессированного, ведь она ж жила с ним в достатке, поэтому, ведь зачем. Искореняли, так весь род искореняли. [...] Потом она в конце войны вернулась. [...] И она же конечно заняла свое жилище-то. У нее там русская печка была, теплая изба, и потом пекарня там еще была. И она у нас работала пекарем, тетя Мария. Поэтому она заняла свое законное жилище, а мы начали по семьям. //

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<sup>116</sup> See Kiselev/Kiseleva 1987, 70.

<sup>117</sup> Martin 1998, 815 f.

A: [...] While our father was still alive, we had a roof under our head, though we lived at Aunt Marijas, not in our own house. Why wasn't she around when the war started? That's because she was married to Matrëhin<sup>118</sup>, and since they were a fairly well-off family, they fell victim to Stalin's purges. In 1937 her husband was arrested, they took him away and he never came back. And Aunt Marija and her children [,,,] were exiled to the Astrakhan region [...].

Q: As a wife of an 'enemy of the people'?

A: As a wife of someone who was persecuted by the state. Before that, she and her husband used to be pretty well-off. But they were uprooted, their whole extended family was uprooted [...]. When the war was over, she returned and moved back into the house that was her own. It was a warm house with a Russian stove. Later, there was a bakery in that house. And Aunt Marija worked as a baker in our village. So, she moved back into her property, and we had to find housing somewhere else.<sup>119</sup>

Whereas at the beginning of collectivization, people were encouraged to join the cooperatives (*artel'*) out of conviction, with time the measures became more and more heavy-handed. As mentioned in the previous chapter, using the example of Semioštrov'e, between 1931 to 1938 many smaller *pogosty* were closed and their inhabitants relocated to larger villages, most of them established after the Revolution, and forced to join the *kolkhozy*.<sup>120</sup> The *siidas* (*pogosty*), the age-old form of settlement, were from now finally declared redundant. Many who still preferred the semi-nomadic life and refused to hand in their reindeer to the collective farms were classified as kulaks and some of them were exiled or arrested. In Jona, where a new *kolkhoz* was founded, a number of men were shot, also as a deterrent.<sup>121</sup>

The policy, extending right through the Soviet Union, of the general condemnation of entire ethnic groups, rather than – as before – social classes, was something

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<sup>118</sup> This is not necessarily a relative of Anastasija Matrëhina. Matrëhin is one of the most common Sami family names on the Kola Peninsula.

<sup>119</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 342-371, 467-484.

<sup>120</sup> Cf.: Bogdanov 2000.

<sup>121</sup> Cf.: Robinson/Kassam 1998, 50.



the Sami came to feel. In 1938 the NKVD fabricated the so-called Sami nationalist counterrevolutionary conspiracy, as a result of which 34 people were arrested. Of these, 15 were shot and 13 sentenced to long prison terms<sup>122</sup>

A tougher approach also was taken in the struggle against religion. In Bol'šakova's book (2003), one of the few works on the Sami that is enriched with personal testimonies, a contemporary witness tells that in 1938 the church in Lovozero was converted into a club and the church towers destroyed. Crosses, icons and books were first demonstratively trampled on and then burned. Graves were also desecrated on a site on which a building was to be erected. People were forced to sign documents disassociating themselves from the Church. Clerics were arrested and disappeared.<sup>123</sup> Despite this it appears to have been still possible to visit churches and practise one's religion, even if one might have had to distance oneself officially from the church. Anna Jur'eva speaks about her grandmother:

B: [...] А как вы относились и относитесь к религии? Была ли она важна во время вашей жизни в советское время?

О: У меня родители всю жизнь- При советской власти-то запрещали. А бабушка всю жизнь молилась богу, нам предсказания говорила все. Вот. А на большие- на каждый большой праздник она ездила в Кировск в церковь [45 км от Умбозера]. Там во время войны церковь-то не разрушена была, церковь стояла. Деревянная церковь была. Она все праздники ходила туда молиться. Потом стала добиваться, чтобы здесь [в Умбозере] церковь сделали. Она добивалась, добивалась, ничего не могла добиться. Заболела, она умерла в 89 лет. Но сказала, говорит, церковь здесь будет, в Ревде будет и в Ловозере здесь будет. Но она, жалко, не дожила до этого. (3) Родители у меня- папа был коммунист, но он все время верил все равно в бога, мама все время верила, бабушка так все время, уж у ней икон очень много будет. [...] Мама потом умерла, и тоже иконы все забрала вот живет в Апатитах сестра, все старинные иконы забрала эта сестра.

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<sup>122</sup> Cf.: Bol'šakova 2003, 233.

<sup>123</sup> Cf.: Bol'šakova 2003, 40-42.



V: А вы?

O: Я в свою церковь хожу тоже.

V: И в советское время?

O: В мыслях все время была.

V: Как, в мыслях?

O: В мыслях все время с богом жила тоже. Потому что я крещенная, мне говорили, крещенная. //

Q: [...] What was and is your relationship to religion? Did it play an important role in your life in the Soviet times?

A: As for my parents, all their life they- Religion was prohibited during the Soviet times. My grandmother always prayed to God and told us prophecies. Each religious holiday she would go to the church in Kirovsk [45 km away from Umbozero]. The church there was not destroyed during the War. It was a building made of wood. She would go there to pray on all religious holidays. Then she wanted a church built here [in Umbozero]. She tried her best, but her dream never came true. When she was 89, she fell ill and died. But before that she said there would be a church here, in Lovozero and Revda. It's a pity she didn't live to see that day. (3) My father was a Communist, but he, like my mother, believed in God. As for my grandma, she was a very religious person and had lots of icons. [...] When my mother died, my sister took all those very old icons with her. She now lives in Apatity.

Q: And what about you?

A: I also go to church.

Q: Did you go there in the Soviet times as well?

A: In my thoughts I was with God all along

Q: What do you mean 'in your thoughts'?

A: In my thoughts I always lived with God. That's because I was baptized. That's what they told me.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Jur'eva interview, lines 400-420.

The control of private lives in these rural areas was apparently not as strong as in the city. This is proved by the survival of the grandmother's icon collection, which has remained in family hands.

The NKVD's misdeeds were aimed more at ethnic than at religious or, as mentioned earlier, class origin. The corresponding events on the Kola Peninsula have only recently found their way into print. Besides Bol'sakova's book, that of Stepanenko (2002) is devoted in particular to a description of these events. Using numerous sources (photos, oral and written testimonies), the book records the shooting of the men of the Motovskij settlement, the liquidation of the *Tundra* kolkhoz and the forced deportation of the Sami in 1940 from the area where the Germans marched in. Only in 2001 did the descendants of those shot receive official rehabilitation certificates.<sup>125</sup> Overall, during the years of Stalin's rule, 73 Sami and 33 Komi were arrested, of whom 37 and 18 respectively were shot dead.<sup>126</sup>

Already during *perestroika*, Kiselev/Kiseleva (1987) – a work to be used today more as a source – mentions the NKVD repression only in the form of very indirect allusions:

“И хотя после чистки рядов партии [...] численность тундровых партийных организаций несколько сократилась коммунисты, оставались ведущей и руководящей силой в осуществлении социалистических преобразований в тундре.” //

“Although purges in the ranks of the Communist party [...] weakened its presence in the tundra, Communists retained their leadership in the socialistic transformations of the tundra.”<sup>127</sup>

Kiselev/Kiseleva (1987) remains the most comprehensive historiographical presentation of the Russian Sami. In it the entire period between the Revolution and the Se-

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<sup>125</sup> Cf.: Stepanenko 2002.

<sup>126</sup> Cf.: Bogdanov 2000.

<sup>127</sup> Kiselev/Kiseleva 1987, 66.

cond World War, with its violent upheavals, is summarized euphemistically using the familiar mantra of international friendship:

“Успехи культурной революции на Кольском полуострове, достигнутые в довоенные годы саамами вместе с русскими, финнами, карелами, коми, ненцами, были очевидны.” //

“In the years prior to World War II, Sami together with Russians, Finns, Karelians, Komi and Nenets contributed tangibly to the success of the cultural revolution on the Kola peninsula.”<sup>128</sup>

### 5.3 The Finnish-Russian War and the Second World War

Little literature exists on the role the Sami played in the war. Nor were the interviewees able to say much about it, being still children at the time.

The boundary changes due to the 1939-1940 Russian-Finnish conflict meant that many Sami had to move away from their previous place of residence or suddenly found themselves belonging to another state.<sup>129</sup> During World War II, a tragic fate befell the small settlement of Skolt close to the German-Russian front: all the men were shot, the women and children deported.<sup>130</sup>

Deportation away from the war zone was also the fate of other, potentially traitorous ethnic groups. In an impressive testimony written in novel form the Finnish-born Sven Lokko (1993) tells how those communist-minded Finns who had emigrated soon after the October Revolution, for political reasons, to the Kola Peninsula – including Lokko himself – were deported and had to produce goods for the war industry in labour camps far from the front. As Lokko presents things, those who survived this time and returned home after the war were treated with suspicion and reviled as cowards who had hidden from the war.

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<sup>128</sup> Kiselev/Kiseleva 1987, 104.

<sup>129</sup> Cf.: Rasmussen 1995, 48.

<sup>130</sup> Cf.: Sarv 1996, 134.

According to official statistics, during the war 8,617 ethnically 'different' people (*inonacional'nosti*), i.e. non-Russians, were deported, owing to the alleged danger of collaboration, from the Kola Peninsula to areas further from the front, such as Karelia, the Archangel'sk area or even the Altai Mountains.<sup>131</sup>

During the war, more than a few Sami were deported or killed, but the majority helped, either at or behind the front, to win the war. For their own physical safety, this was of course no less a risk than being deported or arrested. After the war, the social status of those who had fought was, of course, much higher than that of those who had been deported. The only study specifically devoted to the role of the small peoples of the North on the Arctic front comes to the conclusion that the individual ethnic groups by and large took on different tasks: the Russians commanded, the Sami, who knew the roadless terrain best, acted as pathfinders, the Nenets were good at sharp-shooting from hides in the wilderness and the Komi looked after the transportation with reindeer.<sup>132</sup>

For the elderly, women and children who had remained at home, the supply situation depended critically on whether many of their men had been drafted or not. Ms Matrëhina is the only informant who says that people did not go hungry in her village during the war, and mentions in the same breath the reason: all the men in the vicinity had stayed at home and could provide for their families by fishing and hunting.<sup>133</sup> The families of my other interviewees were less fortunate. Almost all able-bodied men were sent to the front. The remaining women and children had first of all to keep the kolkhozy running to supply the front. For the private sourcing of food, which would have been entirely possible from the surrounding natural resources, there was simply no time left.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Cf.: Bogdanov 2000.

<sup>132</sup> Cf.: Gorter-Gronvik/Suprun 2000, 129.

<sup>133</sup> Cf.: Matrëhina interview, lines 47-51.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. for example: Jur'eva interview, lines 67-87.

## 5.4 The final centralization of the Sami and the establishment of the Soviet reindeer herding system

V: А Иоканга? Вы там жили.

O: А Иоканга, я в 41-ом по 58-ой год- В 58-ом году уже переехали, выселять стали. С Иоканги. Там всех выселили.

V: То есть, Иокангу ликвидировали? А по какой причине?

O: Начальство такое. Ну, ((кашель)) Лумбовку закрыли, Иокангу закрыли [...]. Все закрыли. Столько оленей было! Не знаю, почему так случилось.

V: А как вас переселяли в Гремиху? Народ хотел?

O: Нет, очень сопротивлялись. Все закрыли, так куда деваться, надо уезжать. Оленей много было, всех угнали, всех продали. Иоканга-то большая была! Всех выселили. [...] С Иоканги, кто куда хочешь мог ехать. Больше у нас в Ловозеро уехали.

V: Добровольно можно было уехать, или вас отправляли туда? Кто переселял?

O: Переселяли. Начальство, власти. Что они будут говорить, закрыли и все. Вот колхоз закрыли и все. Сельсовет закрыли, фабрику закрыли. Больше делать нам там нечего. Вот и уехали. //

Q: And what about Iokanga? Did you live there?

A: Yes, I lived there from 1941 to 1958. In 1958 we moved to a different place because they started evicting us from Iokanga. They evicted everyone there.

Q: You mean they removed the village? Why?

A: It was because of the authorities. They removed Lumbovka and Iokanga [...] They removed everything. There were so many reindeer! I don't really know why it happened.

Q: They relocated you to Gremiha? Did you want to leave?

A: No, the local people were very much opposed to it. But they had no choice because everything was closed. And they couldn't but go somewhere. They had a lot of reindeer. But they lost all of their herds, they had to sell them. Iokanga

used to be a big village, but still they made everyone move out [...]. So, the locals could go wherever they liked. Most of us went to Lovozero.

Q: Did they go voluntarily or were they made to? Who relocated you?

A: It was the authorities, those who were in power that made us leave. They didn't waste words, just closed the village and that was that. They dismantled the whole of the kolkhoz. They also closed the community centre and the local shop. That's why we could no longer live there and had no other choice but to go.<sup>135</sup>

Following the forced resettlements of the pre-war period (due to collectivization) and the war (with the movements of borders and front lines), there was from the 1950s to the 1970s the third and final wave of resettlements, of which Ms Matrëhina speaks here and the reasons and circumstances of which are detailed below. Since the 1970s, the Sami have lived completely centralized in a small number of settlements (*mesta kompaktnogo proživanija*), especially in Lovozero and Krasnoščel'e. In this time of particular deprivation with the resettlements and the rapid enlargement of the collective/state farms, the persons interviewed in my research project were working, starting families and bringing up their children. This makes this period one of the most important reference periods in the lives of my interviewees. We shall therefore be looking in particular detail at what both the existing literature and my informants have to say about this core period of my research.

#### 5.4.1 The closing of Sami settlements

The reasons for the resettlements were many. Officially, these were the enlargement of the most important collective farms (kolkhozy) and their conversion into state farms (sovkhozy), with smaller collective farms liquidated for reasons of rationalization. Whole villages were in this way classified as having no prospects (*besperspektivnye*) and closed. This third wave of resettlement found its legal basis in the 1957 decision "On measures for further development of the economy and culture of the

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<sup>135</sup> Matrëhina interview, lines 95-103, 371-375.

peoples of the North” (*postanovlenie “O merach po dal’nejšemu razvitiju èkonomiki i kul’tury narodnostej Severa”*), which formulates the objectives of enlarging the individual collective farms and converting them into state farms<sup>136</sup> The decision was a direct result of Khrushchev’s policy of ‘agglomeration’ (*ukrupnenie*) and agricultural expansion.<sup>137</sup> The result of this last wave of relocations was that many families were forced to change their place of residence two or three times over, such as Anastasija Matrëhina’s family or Nina Afanas’eva’s parents, who before the war had had to leave Semioströv’e for Varzino, and after it had also to leave Varzino:

O: [...] в шестьдесят четвертом году деревню [Варзино] закрыли, а последние жители выезжали уже в шестьдесят восьмом году.

B: То есть, вы считаете, что зря построили этот дом? [Незадолго до выселения построили новый дом.]

O: Почему?

B: Четыре года всего [вы смогли там жить].

O: А почему, мы ведь- В то время, когда он [отец] строил дом, мы не думали, что кому-то в голову придет, опять из этих власть имущих, что надо- Хрущевское время уже. Политика укрупнения хозяйств. Опять-таки, понимаете, тридцать седьмой год, там разрушали деревни, которые отдаленки, малоперспективные были, начиналось разрушение всех саамских деревень. [...] то есть, советское время по нас как огнем и полымем прошло, понимаете? Целые деревни, тридцать деревень саамских было закрыто, в том числе Семиостровье, где мои родители, бабушка, дедушка – все жили. Оно прахом ушло. И дальше в деревне [Варзино], где я родилась, где мы прожили практически- я с тридцать девятого года, я в последний раз была в шестьдесят четвертом году [...] А в шестьдесят восьмом году деревни не стало. //

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<sup>136</sup> Quoted from Kiseleva 1994, 75.

<sup>137</sup> Cf.: Vladimirova 2006, 140f; see Golych interview, lines 671-681.

Q: [...] the village [Varzino] was closed in 1964, its last residents moved out in 1968.

A: You mean, you needn't have built that house? [Prior to the eviction they had built a new house]

Q: Why?

A: What do you mean?

Q: You only used it for four years.

A: While he [her father] was building the house, we had no idea that the authorities would do anything like this because it was Krushchev, not Stalin, who was in power. And the official policy was to enlarge the farms. It was different in 1937 when the state began destroying far-off villages that for them had no prospects. They just started destroying all of the Sami villages. [...] They were all devastated like by a wildfire. They closed whole villages, as many as 30 of them, including Semiostróv'e that was home to my parents, my grandmother and grandfather. All of their efforts were wasted. And as far as the village of Varzino is concerned, we moved there in 1939. In 1964, I visited it for the last time [...]. In 1968, it ceased to exist.<sup>138</sup>

Nina Afanas'eva, however, brings up in the conversation the real reasons for the closures. These were of a totally different type and not officially publicized:

O: [...] У нас [в Варзино] часть была войска помор, стояли на горке, охраняли небо наше, ловили самолеты чужие, и пограничная часть была. Так вот было построено так называемый командный пункт из этой школы и стрельбище. Ну, рельсы проведены там, мишени бегали. Учили мальчиков стрелять. Поэтому. Поэтому вот нашу деревню закрыли, чтобы тоже не нужна стала. То есть мотивов для закрытия было много, и военные занимали эту территорию. А подводный флот, погранцы, ПВО, куда-то их надо было, а гражданское население показалось как бы помехой. [...]

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<sup>138</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 533-551.



B: Вы рассказываете все эти вещи, скажем, не очень приятные обстоятельства для вас и ваших родных.

O: Ну это не только меня касалось или моих родных. Это коснулось всех саамов Мурманской области. То, что пережили мы в этой маленькой деревне, это пережили жители Кильдина, это пережили жители Чудзъява. [...] Да западную сторону взять. Тридцать поселков саамских закрыли. Так вот то, что пережила я, весь запад, да там еще Западная Лица. Поселок Белокаменка, сегодня занято Североморском [крупнейшей базой Северного флота]. Военные. Понимаете, развивая систему здесь на Кольском полуострове, мощную военную систему, местное население, оно как бы оказалось в заложниках. Потому что мы мешали тут, мы мешали сям, мы мешали здесь. //

A: [...] There was a Pomor military unit in our village [Varzino]. They stood on a hill and watched the sky for enemy airplanes. There was also a border patrol station. They built the so-called command post and a shooting range. They laid rails and had targets running on them. They used this equipment to teach shooting to young soldiers. That's why they closed our village: they no longer needed it. I mean there were many reasons why they did it. The military wanted to move in. Submariners, rangers, air defence – they all needed space, and the civil population was just seen as a hindrance [...].

Q: The things you are talking about must not have been very pleasant for you and your family.

A: Well, it didn't only concern me and my family. All the Sami in the Murmansk region were affected. We who lived in that small village, those who lived in Kil'din and Čudz''javr shared the same fate [...] The authorities closed as many as thirty Sami settlements on the western side, including Zapadnaja Lica and Belokamenka where now Severomorsk [the biggest base of the North Fleet] is located. It's all about the military. The army wanted to build up a strong presence on

the Kola Peninsula while the local population had to suffer the consequences. Wherever we were, we, locals, were seen as in the way.<sup>139</sup>

Interestingly, almost all the settlements that were officially classified as unproductive and then were liquidated (Iokanga, Varzino, Lumbovka, etc.), were on the Barents Sea coast – the zone that the military wanted for itself. The military was interested in establishing bases and in the large-scale removal of civilians from the coastal area of the Barents Sea, as the Kola Peninsula was one of the few direct points of contact between the Soviet Union and a NATO country (Norway). The strategic relevance of the area was (and is) high, and the local population had to pay the price for this.

Industry also had important needs: With the growing demand for energy several hydroelectric power plants were built on the Kola Peninsula that is rich in rivers and lakes. Restikent, Ivanovka and Voron'e, the home village of Ms Popova and Ms Golych, were flooded by reservoirs. Several Sami settlements also stood in the way of the powerful mining industry.

V: А, в общем, насколько все эти неприятности были связаны с тем, по вашей оценке, с тем, что вы нерусские-

O: Нет, так нельзя сказать, что-

V: Что вы саами?

O: Нет, это нельзя сказать, что я именно саами- Именно с побережья нужно было [выселять], для того чтобы военные базы стояли, так понимаю сегодня, именно саамы не жили в южной территории, в центральной только Ловозеро, в центральной части. Остальные-то жили [на севере]. В Воронье тоже был выход на Баренцево море. Потому что олень так-, такое животное, которое в зимнее время в глубине материка находится, а в летом переезжает, переходит к берегу, потому что от овода, гнуса, комара- там легче спастись. Ну, ветер северный гуляет. [...] Он [саамский народ] освоил те места, которые ну, были необходимы для того, что бы заниматься оленеводством, охотой и рыболовством. В глубине материка озера есть. Но

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<sup>139</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 680-687, 830-842.

вот не настолько богаты. Им на- Экостровский погост тоже был. Между Апатитом и Мончегорском. И Имандра. Большие озера. Вот там мончегорские саамы были. Повсюду. Мончегорск ведь построился. Тех же самых куда? Тоже куда раскидали. Лапландский заповедник построили, он до сих пор существует. Гордость Кольского полуострова ((с сарказмом)). Лапландский заповедник. Сегодня дед Мороз там поселился, живет. Туда губернатор наш ездит отдыхать. Там красиво, там хорошо. Куда саамов бабинских, куда саамов деть? У саамов был зимний погост, закрыли. Ведь не спрашивали и не учитывали систему выживания этого народа. А система была четкая. Летом мы тут живем, осенью мы здесь живем, то есть полукочевой образ жизни, а зимой на длительное время, на более длительное время оседлая, оседали в зимних погостах. [...] С одной стороны военные с побережья нас выселили. Мончегорск, Кировск, Апатиты, строятся огромные горнопромышленные комбинаты, которые- которым нужна была земля, богатая минералами, которые они добывали. То же самое западное там побережье, поселок Никель где, Заполярный, что, это то же. И промышленное, промышленное освоение. Оно было, есть и сейчас будет продолжаться. Без нас оно, нас не будет. Мы теперь для них не помеха. //

Q: How far, for you, were all of those problems because you weren't Russians?

A: I wouldn't put it this way.

Q: You mean you don't think it was because of your ethnicity?

A: No, I don't think so. It was primarily our settlements off the northern sea coast that they wanted to dismantle to free up land for military bases. That's the way I see it today. The Sami didn't live in the southern parts [of the Kola Peninsula]. The Sami living in the central part of the peninsula were only in Lovozero. The others lived [in the north]. The Voron'e settlement had access to the Barents Sea. That's because reindeer spend winter deep in the mainland. In summer they travel to the north to flee from gadflies, gnats and mosquitoes. Northern winds

blow there. [...] That land was home to the Sami people who used it for reindeer breeding, fishing and hunting. There are lakes deep in the mainland. But they are not that abundant. The Ékostrovskij settlement was also located there, between Mončegorsk and Imandra. And there were also very big lakes. That's where the Mončegorsk Sami lived. They lived everywhere. Then Mončegorsk [a new industrial city] was built. And the Sami who lived there were, too, scattered around. The authorities built the Lapland reserve [a biosphere reserve]. That's where Grandfather Frost [a Russian equivalent of Santa Claus] is headquartered. Our governor likes going there on vacation ((sarcastically)). It's a very beautiful place. But what about the Sami from Babinskiy [used to be a settlement, is now part of the biosphere reserve]. They used to have this winter settlement, but the authorities dismantled it. They were not too mindful of this people's lifestyle. But the Sami followed a very strict pattern of survival: in summer, they lived here, in autumn, they lived there; in other words, they were semi-nomads. When winter came, they were sedentary for a longer period, living in the winter settlements [...]. But the military made us leave the sea coast. They built huge mining plants in Mončegorsk, Kirovsk and Apatity and needed the land which is rich in minerals. The same is true for the sea coast where the Nikel' and the Zapoljarnyj settlements are located, the situation there is just the same. They are building up industries there. And it will carry on like this – without us because we'll no longer be there. We're no longer a hindrance for them nowadays.<sup>140</sup>

In other words – unlike in wartime under Stalin - we are not talking about resettlements for specific ethnic criteria. Put rather simply and crudely, it was precisely the Sami who 'just happened' to inhabit the areas on the north coast that were interesting for the military, it 'just happened' to be the Sami who inhabited the areas of the Kola Peninsula along the main traffic routes that were important for industry, and it was ironically also the Sami who inhabited the area that which was selected in 1930 by the state to found the – since 1985 UNESCO protected – Lapland Reserve (*Lap-*

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<sup>140</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 866-898.

## The Sami of the Kola Peninsula

*landskij Zapovednik*), in reparation for past and future environmental crimes. The fact that this reserve is designed only for the protection of flora and fauna, but not endangered ethnic groups, is shown by the fact that the Sami ultimately had to make way, not just for the Soviet military and Soviet industry, but also for Soviet nature protection. All these 'chance happenings' are not, however, surprising: the Sami had inhabited almost the entire Kola Peninsula for thousands of years, but because of their infinitesimally small number were unable to withstand the mass colonization of the twentieth century.



Illustration 9: Intact reindeer moss in the Lapland Nature Reserve (*Laplandskij zapovednik*). Such areas are found more often on the Kola Peninsula than in the neighbouring regions of Finland, where reindeer herding is undertaken much more extensively, leaving fewer intact reindeer moss pastures (photo: Lukas Allemann, 2003).

Only the southern shore of the Kola Peninsula was not inhabited by Sami. Here lived the Pomors, who were left largely unaffected by the military and industry, because these areas were strategically unimportant and too peripheral for industry.

In the tendentious presentation by Kiselev/Kiseleva (1987) the resettlements between the 1930s and 1970s are often cynically presented with active verbs – described more as moves than as resettlements:

“В 1931-1934 годах саамы Каменского погоста переехали на новое место жительства.” //

“In 1931-1934 the Samis of the Kamenskij *pogost* moved to a different location.”<sup>141</sup>

But the book also uses ambiguous forms, which can be read in Russian as both active and passive forms:

“В 1931 году переселились в Иокангу саамы Иокангского зимнего погоста.”  
//

This sentence can be read two ways: a) “In 1931 the Sami from the lokanga winter *pogost* were moved to lokanga.” [a newly-founded settlement in the vicinity, L.A.] b) “In 1931 the Sami moved from the lokanga winter *pogost* to lokanga.”<sup>142</sup>

Here it is claimed that all relocations were voluntary and were carefully financed and carried out by the state.<sup>143</sup> These statements are in direct contradiction to the information given by my interview partners. Particularly grotesque is the statement, attributed to a Swedish writer named Hans Andersen, that in the Nordic countries “the construction of hydroelectric power plants has calamitous consequences: The most productive pastures are flooded.”<sup>144</sup> The fact that reservoirs were also created on the Russian side is not hushed up, but is mentioned in a completely different place and euphemistically, without listing any negative consequences. An attentive reader

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<sup>141</sup> Kiselev/Kiseleva 1987, 31.

<sup>142</sup> Kiselev/Kiseleva 1987, 31.

<sup>143</sup> Cf.: Kiselev/Kiseleva 1987, 30.

<sup>144</sup> Kiselev/Kiseleva 1987, 188..



equipped with this information can, however, quickly make the necessary associations. Such associations are in this book the only way to come closer to the truth.

If today there happened to be a new and comprehensive historiographical representation of the Russian Sami, one could confidently leave the Kiselev/Kiseleva monograph (1987) to gather dust on the shelf. Unfortunately, this is not the case, so in many ways this book remains an important source of information. It therefore seems appropriate to explain the reason for the constantly encountered internal contradictions of this standard work. The date and place of publication as well as the mostly officious style with only very occasional criticisms expressed between the lines lead to the following interpretation: while in 1987 *perestroika* had already begun, we must not forget the great distances in Russia, and the glaring differences between the centre and the provinces. This monograph was written by historians from Murmansk and printed there. The new ideas from Moscow took their time to reach the periphery. At the same time Murmansk was and still is a stronghold of the 'hawks' - the military, the intelligence officials and other representatives of state power (*siloviki*). Except in the form of allusions that are accessible only to a reader with pre-existing background knowledge, the fruits of *perestroika* could not yet be displayed in a book published in Murmansk at this still relatively early point of time.

The Sami born in Lovozero and Sosnovka were the only ones not affected by resettlement. On the other hand, more than 40 smaller and larger settlements were closed for the above-mentioned reasons. It should be recalled at this point that the vast and sometimes multiple resettlement of Sami between the 1930s and 1970s involved an estimated 70 to 80% of all Sami. All the settlements in which Sami live today, were either founded after 1917 – for example Čudz''javr and Krasnoščel'e – or completely redesigned in accordance with Soviet urban planning concepts.<sup>145</sup> The most important example here is Lovozero, to which the following section is devoted.

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<sup>145</sup> Cf.: Anohin 1963, 276.

#### 5.4.2 Lovozero and centralized, expansive reindeer breeding

O: [...] Но в час ее смерти мы спрашиваем: „Мама...“. Мы понимали, что вот-вот умрет. „Мама, где мы тебя будем хоронить?“ Надо было спросить. Либо в Апатитах, где я жила в то время, в Кировске жила моя сестра Настя, либо в Ловозеро, поскольку у нас там уже лежал брат один похороненный, там еще родственники и большинство варзинцев. И не получив ни метра жилья, ушли, легли в ловозерскую землю. Потому что система такая гнилая была, что, загнав людей с пяти деревень, не обеспечивали работой по-настоящему, не хватало рабочих мест - это раз. И жильем. У нас вот посмотри, какой прекрасный полдома было [в Варзино]. Пусть полдома, но у нас комната была большая, сенцы, коридор, печка [...]. Но когда они переехали в Ловозеро, ни метра жилья не получила наша семья, ни метра. [...] И мама моя знаете, с таким гневом сказала, когда спрашивали: „А может быть мы, тебя мама, в Ловозере похороним? Как бы родня там.“ Так мать знаешь, что ответила: „К черту это Ловозеро.“ Такая, в общем, неприязнь ее.

B: И где ее в итоге похоронили?

O: В Апатитах. ((Плачет)) (12) //

A: [...] We asked our mother on her deathbed: “Mom, where would you like us to bury you?” We simply had to ask her this question. We could bury her in Apatity where I was living at that time. My sister Anastasija lived in Kirovsk back then. Or we could do so in Lovozero, one of our brothers was buried there, as well as other relatives and most of those who had previously lived in Varzino. Those Varzino folks were ordered to leave their homes by the authorities, weren’t given any decent dwelling in recompense and died in Lovozero. All this was because of the rotten system of government. They forced people from five villages to leave their homes and failed to provide them with jobs. There were not enough jobs to go round, that was one thing. Nor places to live. Back in Varzino we had a nice house. It had a big room, a parlour, a corridor and a stove [...] But when we were relocated to Lovozero, our family wasn’t given any place to live in. We were giv-



en absolutely nothing in return [...] We asked our mother: "Would you like us to bury you in Lovozero?" And then she turned very angry: "To hell with this Lovozero." That's how much she hated it.

Q: Where did you bury her in the end?

A: ((in tears)) In Apatity (12).<sup>146</sup>

Nina Afanas'eva's and her mother's emotions reflect the sad consequences of a failed policy towards the Sami, which sought to concentrate the small people on a small territory. After the Sami had been removed from the industrialized and border zones on the Barents Sea coast, they lived largely centralized in a few settlements, always mixed with Russians, Komi, Nenets and other. By far the largest such settlement is Lovozero, though even in this artificial Sami 'capital', Sami comprise only about 20% of the population.<sup>147</sup> The state farms were – in contrast to the new towns of the 1920s and 1930s – not managed on the basis of ethnic separation. Not only different ethnic groups lived together here, but also Sami from different *siidas* and with different dialects. Some of these found it difficult to communicate with one another in Sami. In this situation, the Russian language became an inter- and intra-ethnic lingua franca, thereby gaining a new importance.<sup>148</sup> This encouraged the repression of the Sami dialects. This serious encroachment of the Soviet Union into the existence of the Sami also explains why, in the lives of my interviewees, the conflict between the Sami and the Komi almost did not matter. At the end of the nineteenth century it had been the Komi who intervened as colonists in the life rhythm of the Sami that had developed over hundreds of years. In my interlocutors' lifetimes, the Soviet state took over this role on a much vaster scale, pushing the differences between Komi and Sami into the background.

From the 1970s onwards the shock of resettlement gradually gave way to a normal life. It is this short period of a little over ten years, roughly from the mid-1970s until *perestroika*, that many Sami from Lovozero remember as the best times.

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<sup>146</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 590-611.

<sup>147</sup> Rantala 1995, 58.

<sup>148</sup> Cf.: Gucol/Vinogradova/Samorukova 2007, 43.

This is shown by the interviews in the monograph by Vladimirova (2006) on the status of reindeer herding today.<sup>149</sup> Particularly praised in comparison to today are the facts that the herdsmen were well-paid government employees with numerous allowances for harsh working conditions, that a network of overnight huts was built in the tundra, that the supply system worked perfectly thanks to airplanes, helicopters, *vezdehody* and snowmobiles, regardless of operating costs, and that there was a well-functioning system of veterinary care.



Illustration 10: Sami reindeer herders in the tundra, 1960s. In the background we see sleighs of a model taken over from the Komi (Nina Afanas'eva – private archive).

With the concentration of reindeer herding in Lovozero came also the conversion of the two *kolkhozy* (collective farms) into *sovkhozy* (state farms). Social anthropologists Konstantinov and Vladimirova show convincingly that, for those working in them, there was practically no difference in practice between these two operating formats, and that in everyday speech both forms were and are used synonymously, except in order to mark a timing difference (*kolkhoz* up to 1971, *sovkhoz* after

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<sup>149</sup> Cf.: Vladimirova 2006, 220-222.

that).<sup>150</sup> Families continued to be allowed to hold a proportion of private reindeer within the community herd, in the same way as workers in arable farming collectives retained plots for private use. The 'practical' side of this system was that, in the absence of controlling bodies in the tundra, private reindeer (*ličnye oleni*) that fell prey to predators or simply ran away could relatively easily be replaced by state animals (*obščie oleni*), and in this way officially bears and wolves always attacked only state, but never private reindeer. Konstantinov includes this in many of his works as the reason why until now the few people still involved in reindeer herding look back with longing to the risk-free days of the Soviet Union, during which indeed profits were largely made over to the state, but in which every private loss was compensated. This nostalgia with low commitment to innovation Konstantinov subsumes under the concept of 'sovkhozism' or 'state farm-ism'.<sup>151</sup> This attitude was particularly noticeable in the case of Ms Jur'eva, who of my interlocutors was the one who benefited most from the 'sunny side' of the Soviet policy towards the Sami.

В: Ну, и вернемся к советским властям. У вас какое впечатление, что они, власти, они поддерживали ваш образ жизни или вам мешали?

О: Это при советской-то власти? Нет, мне кажется, они не мешали, они поддерживали, помощь давали, мне кажется. Вот, например, оленей пасли как-то, это, как вам сказать, **стада** при советской власти они были застрахованные. Сельскохозяйственный как- я не знаю что-то выплачивало им, например, называется как- отход. Ну, падёж оленей. Оленьтехник или бригадир пишет акт, акт сдается в контору, эти акты сельскохозяйством посылались в Мурманск, а им за это выплачивали, чтобы не было урона или как называется. А сейчас ничего такого нету. Сейчас все, что добудут, то и заплатят оленеводам-пастухам. У нас была 13-я зарплата. Мясоплан вот, например, выполнили хорошо ((кашель)), очень хорошая 13-я зарплата за мясоплан выплачивали ((кашель)). //

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<sup>150</sup> Cf.: Konstantinov 2007, 4 f. and Vladimirova 2006, 142.

<sup>151</sup> Cf.: Vladimirova 2006, 9-11.

Q: Let's get back to the Soviet authorities. Do you think the Soviet authorities were supportive of your lifestyle or were they opposed to it?

A: You mean in Soviet times? No, I don't think they were opposed to it. As far as I remember, they were supportive of it. For instance, **our reindeer herds** were all insured by the state which paid sort of indemnity for them. When their reindeer died, a reindeer technician or brigade leader would write a memo and submit it to the collective farm which would send it on to Murmansk and get compensation to make good the losses. Nothing of the sort exists nowadays. Today, herdsmen are only paid what they have earned. We were paid the so-called 13th salary which was very good money. When herdsmen fulfilled the meat plan [*mjasoplan*], they were paid the 13th salary.<sup>152</sup>

It is especially this implicit social contract between the state and collective/state farm employees during the Soviet period, in which employees were able informally to pursue their own interests within the collective economy, that many people mourn today. Rather than in terms of opposition of private vs. collective, one can, following Konstantinov, understand the Soviet system with the formula 'the private within the collective'. Thanks to this formula the reindeer herders were able to maintain a small number of private reindeer without, however, having to bear the risks of a sole proprietor, since, as the private animals were staying in the same herd as state ones, lost reindeer could easily be written off as a state-owned. Furthermore, alongside this institutionalized theft there was a stable monthly salary, and private activities could be pursued in the tundra, without having to bear the cost of transportation, materials, etc. In those days the state sent a helicopter, today there is no money to run the snowmobiles.<sup>153</sup> A risk-free existence is no longer guaranteed.<sup>154</sup>

Nevertheless, there were, in objective terms, even in this 'golden age', numerous defects that were a direct result of the policy of the past - a policy which had consist-

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<sup>152</sup> Jur'eva interview, lines 238-248.

<sup>153</sup> Cf.: Robinson/Kassam 1998, 77.

<sup>154</sup> See, especially: Konstantinov 2002, 171; Konstantinov/Vladimirova 2002, 1; Konstantinov/Vladimirova 2006, 124; Konstantinov 2007, 2-7, 14-19; Konstantinov 2006, 3, 10-12.

ently ignored the age-old knowledge of the indigenous population. Paradoxically, and at the same time significantly, it is precisely Kiseleva (1994), the co-author of the beautifying monograph by Kiselev/Kiseleva (1987), who after the end of the Soviet Union was the first to report on these abuses in a scientific study. From the 1970s onwards, the reindeer stocks stopped growing and the long-standing unconsidered use of resources began to show its effects. It is precisely the centralizing of the Sami population, presented previously as the greatest advance, that Kiseleva presents as the greatest mistake. The consequences of this were that most *pogosty* were abandoned, and the pastures were no longer distributed over the entire peninsula. This in turn led to an overuse of a few areas, the fragile subarctic flora of which can recover only very slowly. Also the transport routes from the few settlements in the tundra are long and expensive. At the same time a steady increase in the reindeer population was sought for while neglecting to build up an industry for processing reindeer products. This could have created valuable jobs. Kiseleva's study presents as a source of massive social problems the systematized way in which herding was changed from a way of life to purely professional employment. This made the profession unattractive, because either the men had to live in the tundra for weeks or months at a time without wives and children or, if the wives came along, the children had to live in boarding school. At the same time, the children and young people no longer learned the profession of reindeer breeder from their fathers. Reindeer herding was seen by the planners not as a part of the Sami culture and way of life, but only as one industry among others.<sup>155</sup> Efforts to systematize education in reindeer management resulted in a training of reindeer herdsman – from now on known as reindeer technicians (*olen'technik*) – that smelled of the classroom and involved little hands-on experience.

The social problems, however, went much deeper. Information about them is found in the existing literature mostly in the form of marginal notes. For this reason the following section will be devoted to my interviewees' accounts of the immediate and later negative consequences of the policy of agglomeration.

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<sup>155</sup> Cf.: Kiseleva 1994, 76 f.

### 5.4.3 Unemployment, crime, alcoholism and suicide as consequences of resettlement

As we have seen, Anna Jur'eva, who came of her free will through marriage to Lovozero, almost always praises Soviet policy to its people and is overall very positive about their lives. Summarizing she says:

O: Например, наша семья, когда уже встали на ноги после войны, мы жили хорошо при советской власти. Хоть и большая семья была, но жили в достатке. **В достатках** жили. Работали. //

A: Once our family had got back onto its feet from World War II, things went pretty well during the Soviet times. Though we had a big family, we were **never** short of money. We worked hard.<sup>156</sup>

The resettlements are hardly mentioned in Ms Jur'eva's narratives. Her only statement on resettlement comes as an aside when speaking about a completely different topic, the practice of religious traditions:

O: [...] Варзинские жили там. Они потом сюда переехали, я вот не знаю в каком году. И тут посреди тундры, (Лявозеро), сейчас там живет бригада вторая, в (Лявозере) стояла, в березовом лесу стояла часовня. //

A: [...] The Varzino folks lived there. Then they moved over here. I no longer remember in what year. They started living here out in the tundra, in (Lajvozero). Now, the second brigade lives there in (Ljavozero). And in that birch wood there used to be a chapel.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Jur'eva interview, lines 13-15.

<sup>157</sup> Jur'eva interview, lines 465-467.

As we have seen already in her short biography, Ms Jur'eva was not affected by the relocations. As people began only slowly, from about 1989 onwards, to come to terms in a public discourse with the negative consequences of the resettlements, it may well be that Ms Jur'eva concerned herself very little with the suffering of the many newcomers to Lovozero. Ms Jur'eva is a long-established resident of Lovozero and proud owner of a single family home that she was able to move into newly-built at the end of the Soviet era. One can presume that she is well aware that this was a very great privilege that only a few benefited from, and hence the omitting of the resettlements in her narrative may also be an expression of a certain repression. Lovozero is a village with a few thousand inhabitants, who all know each other more or less, and almost all depended on a single kolkhoz. That such great social differences existed within this community is probably rather difficult for Ms Jur'eva to accept.

Their living conditions are viewed in a completely different light by those interviewees who witnessed the forced relocation as participants. That is the case for all my interlocutors, with the exception of Ms Jur'eva. Nina Afanas'eva relates:

О: [...] У Хрущева была, конечно, идея создания-колхозы это себя как бы изжили. Новая система коллективного хозяйства, форма, такая форма, совхозы, совхозная система. Можно подумать от названия колхоз-совхоз что-то улучшится. Ничего не улучшилось. Еще более того ухудшилось. Пришла негласная безработица. Понимаешь? Необъявленная безработица в том же Ловозере. Потому что перенаселение получилось. Ну, смотрите, закрыли поселок Кильдин, закрыли ( ), закрыли Воронье, закрыли Иоканьгу, закрыли Варзино. Куда людей? Вот все сюда в один мешок ловозерский сунули. А в Ловозере то и сам, и само население-то было. То есть, рабочих мест стало просто не хватать. И не в оленеводстве, нигде. Здесь у нас [в Варзино], когда на побережье, ну, семужные бригады создали, хоть летом люди работали. Зимой на озерах рыбачили. И доход имели. Пусть это все в государство шло, но рабочие места были. Здесь же [в Ловозере] этого ничего не было. И привело к тому. Да, пошли сильная пьянка, да



суицид. У Насти моей [сестры родной] бы спросил, у меня этих данных нет суицид, когда люди сами себя лишали жизни от той же (4) нечеловеческой системы ((плачет)), когда у тебя работы нет, когда у тебя дома нет. Куда деваться? (12) //

A: [...] Of course, Khrushchev came up with the idea of creating-. Kolkhozy were no longer up to the task. Khrushchev came up with the idea of creating a new type of collective farm, the so-called state farms or sovkhozy. As if changing the name could make any difference. In real life, it made no difference at all. Things went even worse. Covert unemployment arrived. Just imagine that! Lovozero was no exception because the town was overpopulated. They closed the Kil'din and the ( ) settlement, then they went on to dismantle Voron'e, lokanga and Varzino. But they had to do something with the people. So they decided to cram them all into Lovozero. But this town had its own people. That's why jobs were too few – in reindeer herding, everywhere. While we lived in our village [Varzino] on the sea shore, they kept people busy by creating salmon catching teams to give them work at least in summer time. In winter, people would go fishing out in the lakes and earn some money. Though their catch belonged to the state, local people had some work to do. But nothing of the sort was in here [in Lovozero]. All this resulted in alcoholism and a growing number of suicides. You should ask Anastasia [sister]. I don't have the numbers and can't tell how many people took their own lives because (4) of the inhumane system ((in tears)) when they were jobless and homeless. How can one possibly find a way out in a situation like this? (12)<sup>158</sup>

In a similar light only Bol'shakova (2003) – herself a Sami and an eyewitness – presents in a scientific publication the social consequences of the forced resettlements. But in her book too, only a few pages are devoted to this topic. Most newcomers had no new homes waiting for them. Everyone was left to their own devices. Many lived for

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<sup>158</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 689-703.



many years in confined spaces either with relatives or in abandoned houses and barns, including Anastasija Matrëhina's family, whose search for somewhere to live was already mentioned in her short biography:

V: А в Гремихе вы где жили? Как вас поселили там?

O: Сами! Мы, знаете, первое время где останавливались? Был туалет! [...] Одного знакомого мужчину, знаем хорошо, дядя Саша Крещев. И Иван [муж] спрашивает: "Где же мне работу найти и жилье найти?" – "А вот работу легче всего найдешь! Твои руки все сделают! Жилье-то нету. Пойдем, Иван, я знаю домик, квартира была. Так там сделали туалет." [...] Пришли, снег все вычистил, я помогала. [...] Все набрызгал от паразитов, день-два прошло. Там обои были, все оборвал, все перевернул, пол разобрал. Пол почему разобрали, там тоже набрызгали, там тараканы и крысы бегают. Пол сам снова сделал. Стенки все, как тебе, стены все намазал и оклеил. Остался печку поставить. Дымоход вот только как сделать! Стал топиться, все хорошо. Отштукатурили, все сделали. [...] Вот мы там так жили. //

Q: Where in Gremiha did you live? What type of living quarters were you allocated?

A: We had to do everything ourselves. Do you know where we stayed in the beginning? In what had been a toilet. There was a very good acquaintance of ours, Saša Kreščev. My husband Ivan asked: "Where in the world can I find a job and a place to live?" – "The easiest thing is to find a job. You've got a golden pair of hands. But there's no housing available. Come with me, Ivan. I'll show you a small house. Right now it serves as a toilet" [...] We went there and cleaned the house of snow; I helped him do that [...] Then we used an anti-rodent spray and waited for a couple of days. Inside the house there was old wallpaper hanging off the walls. Saša stripped all of it, did everything from the ground up, ripped up the wooden floor and sprayed an anti-rodent poison inside because there were lots of rats and roaches. Then he laid a new floor himself, plastered and papered the walls. He built a stove and a chimney and started to heat the house. That was

not an easy thing to do. We plastered the walls and got everything into shape. That's the way we lived there.<sup>159</sup>

There were also more privileged people who could actually get their promised apartments:

О: [...] В Ловозере начался, ну как бы начался новый круг. А где жить? Потому что обманули людей ск-самым страшным образом. Коммунисты, которые у власти стояли, обманули. Что там приедете и работа будет и жилье будет, а вот получили. По-русски говоря, два вперед, четыре назад. Вместо жилья [...]. Обманули, привезли. Да, кто-то получил жилье, ну председатель колхоза. Как же председатель колхоза, как же жилье не дать. Как же не дать, бухгалтер работал в колхозе. Это уважаемые люди. Бухгалтер получила квартиру. Председатель получил квартиру. А остальные-то вынуждены были скитаться опять по чужим углам, жить у родственников. И кто-то пустит еще, а кто-то и не пустит. А мы были- у нас тогда в Ловозере жила тетка Анна. [...] Был дом. Так вот в этот дом заселилось можно так сказать две семьи. [...] А куда моим братьям заселяться, у них уже места нет. А других родственников у нас там не было. Так вот Дмитрий [родной брат] работал опять-таки с лошадьми [как в Варзино]. И он бездомный, в то время, так сказать. [...] Вот бездомный, вот в то время скажите-ка слово в советское время, что Дмитрий Елисеевич, мой брат был бездомным. А он **был** бездомным. И он работал, спал на той конюшне вместе со своими лошадьми. За что маме было любить эту деревню Ловозеро? [...] И так мои братья умерли, ушли в землю, не получив ни метра жилья. //

A: In Lovozero, life began all over again, so to speak. We faced a grave housing problem because people were badly deceived. It was done by the Communists who were in power. As soon as you move there, you'll be given jobs and living space [...], they said. They brought us there and cheated us shamelessly. It's just

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<sup>159</sup> Matrëhina interview, lines 140-174.

like in a Russian proverb: two steps forward, four steps back. We were given nothing. They just cheated us. Of course, there were those who got a place to live, the kolkhoz director, for instance. They were not in a position to say no to a man like him. There was also another person like him in the kolkhoz, the chief accountant. Both of them had a high standing in the community. That's why the accountant was given a flat. The kolkhoz director got one, as well. Others had no other choice than beg other people for accommodation or stay with their relatives. Some people would take them in, and some wouldn't. Back then, Aunt Anna lived in Lovozero [...]. She had a house. It was occupied by as many as two families [...]. There was no room left for my brothers to move in. We had no other relatives there. Dmitrij [brother] worked as a horsekeeper [like back in Varzino] and was homeless back then. No one would have believed back then that Dmitrij Eliseevič was homeless. But that was true. He worked and slept in the stable with the horses he groomed. That's why my mother had no reason to love that Lovozero village [...]. Until their dying day my brothers had no home of their own.<sup>160</sup>

Homelessness must not be imagined at that time as living on the street, but as having to live in overcrowded conditions with friends or relatives or, like Nina Afanas'eva's brother Dmitrij, in makeshift shelters. This was a degrading condition. Added to this was the de facto unemployment of many people:

V: А вот ну, много людей приезжало в Ловозеро, в том числе ваш брат. Безработица, по сути, работать нигде не устроиться.

О: Ну, я не могу сказать- была создана другая система для тех, кто без работы. Для таких, как мой брат Дмитрий Елисеевич. Такой как мой брат Вячеслав Елисеевич. [...] И для таких подобных же в Ловозеро, у которых не было работы, была создана в Советском Союзе система лечебно-трудовых лагерей, ЛТП. Лечебно-трудовой профилактический лагерь. Вот как, лечебно-трудовой профилакторий, не лагерь [...].

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<sup>160</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 625-667.

V: А что это собой представляло?

O: А это, значит, здесь даже план был у наших, милиционерам было над чем работать, кого заслать, кого отправить в эти трудовые профилактические, профилактории. Это бесплатная рабочая сила была, которая использовалась в системе большого государства. И люди работали. Раз там, в деревне не было ( ) места- у брата там было койка-место. Он спал. Да, их гоняли куда-то работать. В Апатитах строился- в Апатитах этот лагерь находился. Профилакторий, трудовой профилакторий.

V: Но это не считалось наказанием, то есть, не за что-то именно наказывали?

O: Нет, это считалось наказанием. За то, что он не хочет работать, якобы.

V: То есть, ему место работы не дали и стали обвинять в тунеядстве?

O: Да, тунеядство. Служба тунеядства тогда существовала. Но слова не было безработный, тунеядство было. Потому что-

V: Потому что безработицы не было.

O: Не было, в Советском Союзе не было объявлено о безработных, но тунеядцы, они были. И чтобы человек не жил в туне, и не блаженствовал, отдыхая от какой-то работы или от чего-то, их отправляли в эти лагеря. В эти профилактории. [...] Мой брат начал-по-моему, три раза он сидел. Там на три года сажали. Сидит, выйдет, опять приехал в то же Ловозеро. А куда ехать, в то же Ловозеро едет. Опять поболтался=поболтался, какое-то время дают ему трудоустройство, а он не может трудоустроиться. Милиция. А пьет еще к тому же. Пьяного, ах ты такой сякой тунеядец! //

Q: Many people came to Lovozero, your brother was one of them. There was very high unemployment, it was impossible to find a job.

A: I wouldn't say so. There was a different system that existed for those who were jobless, like my brother Dmitrij Elisevič or another brother of mine Vjačeslav Elisevič [...]. For people like him in Lovozero, who were jobless, they created in the Soviet Union the system of 'therapeutic-prophylactic work camps.

To use the exact term: 'Work Therapy-Profilaktorium' [*lečebno-trudovoj profilaktorij*], not work camps [...].

Q: What were they like?

A: I mean our police had a special plan. They were to decide whom they would get rid of, whom they would send to those labour profilaktoria. Those centres had a free workforce at their disposal that was used by the state machine. And people worked. Back in the village, my brother had no place to live ( ), but in the profilaktorium he was given a bed to sleep in. He and others like him were sent somewhere to work during the day. This camp was in Apatity. I mean this labour profilaktorium.

Q: But it wasn't considered as punishment. I mean they weren't sent there as punishment, were they?

A: Yes, it was. He was punished because, allegedly, he was unwilling to work.

Q: You mean though he wasn't given a job, they accused him of parasitism [*tunejadstvo*]?

A: Exactly. There existed a special government agency that was in charge of it. The word 'unemployment' didn't exist back then, they used the word 'parasitism' instead. Because-

Q: Because unemployment didn't officially exist.

A: No, it didn't. There was no declared unemployment in the Soviet Union, but social parasites did exist. They wanted to keep people busy, no one was allowed to be idle and stay away from work. That's why they sent them to those camps, to those profilaktoria.. As I remember it right, my brother served three terms there. [...]. Each time, he went there for a three-year term. He would serve his term, be released and then go back to Lovozero. He could only go to Lovozero and nowhere else. He would hang around for a while. They would give him time to find work, but he couldn't find any. Besides, he was often drunk. Then the police would come for him and say: you're not just a drunkard, you're also a parasite!<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 739-772.

Unemployment was a taboo subject in the Soviet Union. Officially non-existent, it was not discussed as a social problem. Nina Afanas'eva's story here gives a very different picture. The vicious circle in which people found themselves when once they had been in the so-called 'profilaktorium' is obvious: they were unemployable, hardly any employer wanted them. The violent uprooting due to the resettlements was followed for some people by further desocialization due to the state's handling of unemployment. Criminalization of the unemployed also enabled the state to remain faithful to its long tradition of forced labour.

Precisely because the subject of unemployment was taboo, people who were well integrated into the workplace scarcely concerned themselves with it. The state-organized social marginalization and criminalization of those affected – these were mostly resettled persons – also showed their impact on Ms Jur'eva - one of the persons not displaced:

O: Ну, была работа. А сейчас что народ живет. Сейчас работы нету! Какие-то бичевские, я называю их лентяйские деньги плотят. Это разве- А при советской власти только **лодырь** не работал, **везде** можно было устроиться и работать. Все время можно было хлеб кушать, а сейчас что народ живет. Сейчас вот у нас здесь в поселке очень много, как их называют, бичи или тунейанцы ((sic!)) или как. //

A: There was work. There's none today, though, and people find it very hard to make ends meet because now there's no work. They earn a pittance. I call them bum wages. Back in the USSR, only the **lazy** ones were jobless. One could find work **everywhere**. Everyone could have enough to eat, while today people are having a very hard time. There are lots of them in our settlement, they are called bums or parasites or whatever.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Jur'eva interview, lines 161-165.

A sad consequence of the de facto unemployment and homelessness for many people, and of the violent uprooting in general, were frequent cases of alcoholism and numerous suicides. Bol'šakova (2003) quotes, unfortunately without citing her sources, the following numbers: among the Sami, there are 2.7 times more cases of alcoholism than the overall average of the Murmansk region, half of all deaths are due to alcoholism (this figure probably refers only to men), half of all Sami men under 40 have not founded a family, and every third family moved from Varzino mourns at least one suicide. As an indirect result of alcoholism or their sentences for 'parasitism', many parents were deprived of parental rights and the children sent to boarding schools. After finishing school, many of these children were left completely to their own devices with few prospects, resulting in another generation of alcoholics, criminals and suicides.<sup>163</sup>

### 5.4.4 The educational system

#### 5.4.4.1 *Language*

"Native language is an important ethnic marker, closely tied to an individual's ethnic self-concept, yet also distinct from it. For most people, the change of native language is a fundamental, though not definitive, indication of change in ethnic self-concept, fairly easily followed by ethnic re-identification."<sup>164</sup>

After years of preparation, a 38-character alphabet was published in 1933 for the Soviet Sami, based on the Latin alphabet, along with a dictionary. But this attempt at codification apparently met with little response, aimed as it was at creating a synthetic language, intended to emerge from a mixture of the different dialects spoken on the Kola Peninsula. These dialects differ so strongly among themselves, however, due to the large distances between the individual communities, that Sami from different regions often are unable to communicate with each other. In 1937, a Sami dictionary based on the Cyrillic alphabet was published. This too, was not a success, be-

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<sup>163</sup> Cf.: Bol'šakova 2003, 69 f., 82.

<sup>164</sup> Anderson/Silver 1989, 614.

cause this was precisely the year when the NKVD began to inflict serious damage among the Sami. The Sami dictionary was used, in the artificially constructed Sami nationalist conspiracy which has already been mentioned in the section *Repression and Terror under Stalin* (Chapter 5.2), as evidence for counter-revolutionary propaganda, as a result of which its author A.G. Ęndjukovskij and numerous other 'separatists' were executed, and all teaching in the Sami language halted for many years.<sup>165</sup>

According to the official Soviet presentation of the facts, a further problem was that the schoolchildren took poorly to the Latin alphabet. Without mentioning the 'Sami conspiracy', the authors report that the teachers had convinced themselves that teaching the Sami in Russian was more successful. Moreover, the war was to blame for that fact that efforts to codify the Sami language had come to nought.<sup>166</sup>

From then on the Sami language was relegated almost exclusively to the family sphere. For the children it was clear that the path to a good education lay exclusively via the Russian language, and to this day Sami is the mother tongue of fewer and fewer people. How Sami-Russian bilingualism was handled in everyday life will now be discussed with reference to some quotes by my interview partners.

Ms Matr hina relates:

O: В Гремихе уже обзывали [детей]. Лопари! Лопари! Лопари! Дети мои лопарский язык не понимали [отвечающая перепутала, имеется в виду русский язык] . Приехали мы в 58-ом году, они маленькие еще были, ничего не понимали.

B: А у вас уже дети были?

O: В 58-ом году у меня дочка пошла учиться.

B: А в школе наказывали, если в школе по-саамски разговаривали?

O: Нет, но он не нужен стал, и так и саамский язык бросили. Никто не стал разговаривать. Мы дома, знаешь, разговариваем. А меня так Валентина Яковлевна- моя двоюродная сестра учительница была. И мы если дома

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<sup>165</sup> Cf.: Bol'šakova 2005, 173-176.

<sup>166</sup> Cf.: Kiselev/Kiseleva 1987, 94.



разговаривали, она говорит „не приучай их по-саамски разговаривать! Там смеются. Они язык путают.“ [...]

V: То есть, вы считали, что для ваших детей лучше будет, если они не будут говорить по-саамски. У них меньше проблем, может, будет.

O: Ничего, я не против. Лучше бы учились. Попробуй, раз поругают учителя. [...] Ну, куда, надо уж бросать. Потом не стали. Повзрослей стали, все забыли. //

A: In Gremiha, they laughed at my children at school. ‘Lapps! You’re Lapps’, they’d call them. But my children didn’t understand Russian. [My informant slipped up here, saying ‘Lapp’ instead of ‘Russian’.] We relocated to [Gremiha] in 1958. My children were very small back then and didn’t understand anything.

Q: You already had children then?

A: In 1958 my daughter went to school.

Q: Did they punish her at school for speaking Sami?

A: No, they didn’t. But since no one needed it, they just dropped it. No one used it any more. We only spoke it at home. My cousin Valentina Jakovlevna was a teacher then. When we were speaking Sami at home, she often said: “You shouldn’t teach the language to your children. They’ll mix it up with Russian and others will laugh at them” [...].

Q: You mean you thought it would be best for your children not to speak Sami? To make life easier for them, perhaps?

A: Essentially, I don’t mind it. It would’ve been better if they’d learnt it. But it’s not so easy if your teachers at school tell you off for speaking it. [...] That’s why they had to drop it and never took it back up. They lost it as they grew up.<sup>167</sup>

Ms Afanas’eva and Ms Jur’eva’s situations were similar, but for reasons that will be examined later in more detail both women were nonetheless able to preserve the Sami language and to pass it on to their children.

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<sup>167</sup> Matrëhina interview, lines 119-127, 200-204.

Ms Afanas'eva relates:

О: Да, то есть, у нас саамский язык был постоянно в общении.

В: Он не терялся?

О: Нет. И опять-таки никому не поверю, что кто-то мог сказать, запретить говорить на родном языке, это твое искрен- исти-, твое личное, хочешь – ты его сохраняешь. Не хочешь – ты, конечно, отвернешься как от чего-то поганого. Язык – это твое достояние, твоя культура. Как можно от него отвернуться? И я приезжала [из Ленинграда] в деревню, у нас мы только по-саамски общались. И с мамой, и с тетями, и с дядями и со всеми и конечно между собой могли и по-саамски говорить и могли по-русски. То есть у нас оба языка в ходе были, в ходу были. //

A: Yes, we used the Sami language in everyday life.

Q: You mean you never lost it?

A: No, we didn't. I'll never believe anyone who says that it was prohibited. It's a matter of your own choice. You are free to keep it if you want to. If you don't want to, you are free to drop it as something dirty. Your language is your culture and your legacy. How can you turn your back on it? When I went from Leningrad to the village, we only spoke Sami. And with my mother, my aunts and uncles, with everyone and, of course, among ourselves we could use speak Sami and we could speak Russian. I mean we used both languages.<sup>168</sup>

Ms Jur'eva also kept the Sami language in her family:

В: Вернемся к саамскому языку. Ваши дети – они все говорят по-саамски, но говорили ли они в школе по-саамски или только в семье?

О: Меж собой-то ясно говорили, меж собой там. Девочки-то, да мальчики-то меж собой тоже говорили по-саамски. Чтобы учительница только не видела, посеCRETничать-то надо. ((смех))

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<sup>168</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 1472-1480.

V: То есть что, когда вы маленькая были, когда ваши дети в школу ходили, всегда было такое, что саамский язык запрещали или хотели-, пытались запретить.

O: Пытались, пытались, чтобы не было саамского языка.

V: И детей ваших или вас наказывали каким-то образом, если обнаруживали?

O: Ну как обнаруживали, их- я даже и не знаю, они мне никогда не жаловались, чтобы их наказывали. [...] все время с мужем в тундре [...] Они жили самостоятельно уже, сами отдельно. ((кашель)) Мы с мужем уезжали их оставляли одних жить в квартире. Так меж собой они вот разговаривали по-саамски, кто им запретит. Кто им запретит по-саамски говорить меж собой. Приедем, тоже по-саамски говорим. //

Q: Let's get back to the Sami language. All of your children spoke Sami. But did they speak it at school or only in the family?

A: They used it among themselves, of course. The girls among themselves, the boys among themselves. They had to be a bit secretive about it, make sure they weren't seen by the teachers ((laughing)).

Q: You mean when you were small and when your children went to school, the Sami language was prohibited or they tried to prohibit it?

A: Yes, they did. They tried to make it disappear.

Q: Did they punish you or your children when they heard you speak the language?

A: When they noticed it. Well, I don't really know. They never complained to me of that [...] my husband and I went out to the tundra and left them on their own at home. Then they spoke Sami among themselves. Who was there to stop them? Who was there to forbid them speaking Sami among themselves? When we came back, we also spoke it.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Jur'eva interview, lines 271-286.

Today, Nina Afanas'eva's and Anna Jur'eva's children speak all Sami, while Anastasija Matrëhina's children no longer master the language. Ms Matrëhina regrets this, but pushes all the blame for this onto the teachers.

Ms Afanas'eva contradicts this in the most violent manner, saying that it was purely a matter of willpower, whether they retained the language within the family or not. Each family was itself responsible for which language they used at home. In the consciously multi-ethnic Soviet state, there was no prohibition on the Sami language, in this respect there were no official sanctions.

The teachers, with their 'knowledge' of the alleged disadvantages of bilingualism, tried to persuade the families, with some being more and others less receptive to this message. The parents' linguistic environment at work certainly had an impact. In Ms Matrëhina's case, on top of the admonitory words from her teacher-relation came the fact that she lived in a settlement inhabited predominantly by Russian soldiers and both she and her husband spoke only Russian at work. In this way there was little room for Sami in their own daily lives, and not only in that of their children. The strong assimilation was also a more or less personal choice of the Matrëchins, as we have already seen in the chapter *The Immigration of the Komi and Nenets* (Chapter 3.4.). In contrast to her father, Anastasija Matrëhina made a conscious choice to live in Gremicha in a purely Russian environment, instead of in the multi-ethnic mix of Lovozero. For the Matrëchins there was no strong sense of tradition motivating them to force the use of Sami at home.

For Ms Jur'eva the situation was different. She lived in Lovozero and worked in the kolkhoz, along with many other Sami, so she and her husband often spoke Sami at work. At the same time in the kolkhoz, Russian was often used to communicate with the Komi and Russian employees. Ms Jur'eva and her husband saw from their own experience that bilingualism was not a problem in everyday life and were therefore accustomed to speak Sami at home. In addition, finding themselves confronted with a significant Sami-speaking population, the teachers in Lovozero tried less stubbornly to militate, also outside school, against bilingualism.

Interestingly, Ms Afanas'eva, otherwise the sharpest critic of the Soviet system, has little negative to say about the the handling of languages in the school. On the contrary, she praises the education system as the only real progress of the Soviet era, which is understandable, as of all interviewees she was able to benefit most from it, receiving a university education in Leningrad. It is precisely the teaching of Russian that she praises as a particular success of the teacher:

О: [...] Даже учителя начальной школы, я так им благодарна и так им сегодня сочувствую. Сколько надо было приложить усилий, чтобы научить говорить по-русски не говорящего человека. Мало того научить говорить, научить еще писать и грамотно писали, что это правило учили, а учить их ох как неохота. //

A: [...] I feel so thankful to the elementary school teachers and have so much sympathy for them. Just think how hard a task it is to teach Russian to somebody who is not a native Russian speaker. Besides teaching us to speak, they had to teach us how to write properly, according to the rules, and we were not the most diligent students.<sup>170</sup>

In contrast, Ms Jur'eva, who otherwise has good memories of the the Soviet era, speaks more sharply of the schools' language policy than the other interviewees:

В: [...] Были ли периоды когда, и где вам и саамскому народу лучше жилось, когда хуже?

О: А мне кажется, все было одинаково при советской власти. Все одинаково было, никакого различия не было, что ты русский или саами. Работали, платили все одинаково. Никакого отличания не было. Чтобы, например, ты - лопарь, так не работай или что ли. **Вот** это в школе было дурость, учителя были, запрещали говорить, а больше так никто не запрещал говорить по-саамски. Никто. Только это в школе дурели тут у нас. А никакой разницы не

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<sup>170</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 1211-1215.

было между саамами там, карелами, ижемцами, это я так, например, не ощущала, ничего не слышала. Все относились как обычно к людям, как все мы. //

Q: [...] Were there times when life was better for you and the Sami and times when it was worse?

A: I believe life was the same for everyone in the Soviet Union. Everything was the same; it didn't really matter if you were a Russian or a Sami. Everyone worked and was paid the same wages. There was no difference. If you were a Lapp, it didn't imply that you had a different status at work. Only that at **school** there were some teachers, though, who prohibited children to use speak Sami. Both otherwise no one really forbade us to speak Sami. No one. But it was only at school. In everyday life, Sami, Karelians or Komi were all treated equally; I didn't feel and didn't hear of any discrimination.

As Ms Jur'eva was able to lead a peaceful life in which she could maintain the Sami traditions quite well, she also has a good opinion of the Soviet state. The only thorn in her eye was the school because of the attempt made there to prevent their children from speaking Sami. This was the only point at which the Soviet state tried to change in an undesirable way Ms Jur'eva's otherwise relatively unmolested Sami way of living.

Ms Afanas'eva on the other hand is less negative on the educational system for the reasons already mentioned earlier. Several times in the interview she insisted on the absence of any discrimination against Sami pupils:

В: А вот, ну дети вас дразнили. Учителя – они вас в чем-то ущемляли? Вот саамских детей по сравнению с русскими.

О: Нет и никогда. Я знаю, что я просто- Никого не ущемляли. Человек, который хочет знания получить, будь то он русский, хоть ты из Голландии приехал, немца любого возьми. Если он лодырь, то он и в Африке – лодырь. [...] То есть, притеснений никаких не было. //

Q: Well, other children teased you at school. But what about your teachers? Did they discriminate against you in any way? I mean compared to Russians?

A: Oh, no, never. No one was discriminated against. What really matters is that one wants to learn. It doesn't make any difference whether you are Russian, Dutch or German. Lazy people are lazy everywhere, even in Africa. [...] I mean we didn't feel any discrimination.<sup>171</sup>

Apart from the positive personal experiences, these statements are certainly explained by the fact that Ms Afanas'eva became a teacher himself. In so doing she became part of the system that did not promote the Sami language, and that, as a teacher, she could with the best will in the world do little to change.

Not until in 1976 was Sami again taught as an optional subject for the first time since 1937 in the boarding school at Lovozero.<sup>172</sup> In Kiselev/Kiseleva (1987) this is praised as a good deed of the ever-caring state:

„Советское государство постоянно заботится, чтобы саамы сохранили свои традиции, национальную культуру и прикладное искусство, не утратили свой язык. Вот почему в Ловозерском районе началось преподавание саамского языка в школах.” //

“The Soviet state does everything to help the Sami people to preserve their traditions, their arts, their language and culture. That's why the Lovozero district introduced Sami language classes at school.”<sup>173</sup>

No other subjects, however, are taught in Sami, even up to the present day.

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<sup>171</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 1163-1170.

<sup>172</sup> Cf.: Bol'šakova 2005, 177.

<sup>173</sup> Kiselev/Kiseleva 1987, 41.



Illustration 11: Classroom for teaching Sami at the Lovozero boarding school in 1998 (Nina Afanas'eva - private archive).

Despite the resurgence of ethnic consciousness, the younger generation must come to terms with feeling themselves to be Sami without mastering the Sami language, or learning this effectively as a foreign language with only a few lessons a week. Unfortunately, there are no surveys on how many of the young inhabitants of the Kola Peninsula today feel themselves to be Sami or Russians. One finds in the literature many different views as to whether an independent Sami culture and ethnicity would be able to survive if the Sami language were to disappear entirely. This uncertainty can not ultimately be eliminated by the words cited at the beginning of this section.

#### 5.4.4.2 *Boarding school*

A special feature of the Soviet – and also contemporary Russian – educational system are the boarding schools for children of parents who are engaged in reindeer herding or live in very remote locations. As in the other sub-polar regions of the country, several of these boarding schools were established on the Kola Peninsula.



In the foreword I have already mentioned that the existing literature on the Sami of the Soviet Union often takes a strong pro- or anti-Soviet position, which does not always match the reality of everyday life. The pro-Soviet position has already been amply demonstrated in the publication by Kiselev/Kiseleva (1987). It is on the boarding schools that Sarv (1996) expresses an extremely negative opinion, with statements that could not be confirmed by any of my interviewees. We contrast a few of these statements with interview excerpts.

“The teachers were bent on acculturating the children; i.e. they were force fed Russian food, potatoes and semolina pudding even though they would have preferred the traditional fish and reindeer meat.”<sup>174</sup>

This statement is already incorrect in suggesting that the Sami diet consists solely of fish and meat. For centuries before the October Revolution the Sami had had contact with the other ethnic groups present in one or the other form on the Kola Peninsula, trading with them and buying grain from them. Flour-based food had for long been as much part of the Sami diet as fish and meat. Ms Afanas'eva also reports from her time at boarding school:

O: [...] Но все равно вот душа туда рвется домой, потому что мама тепленькая ждет тебя. И кушанье домашнее ждет, там [в Гремихе] ведь интернатовское питание. Нас все равно олениной кормили, уху варили.

B: Да?

O: Да. Давали. Была возможность в Гремихе. Рядом колхоз большой в Варзино и колхоз «Искра» иокангский. Мясо давали интернату. //

A: [...] And yet, you miss home very much where your warmly loving mom is waiting for you. Because there you enjoy home-made food. But even in the Gremiha boarding school they served us reindeer meat and fish soup.

Q: Really?

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<sup>174</sup> Cf.: Sarv 1996, 136.

A: Yes, they did. They could do that in Gremiha since there was a big collective farm in Varzino and the Iskra kolkhoz in Yokanga. They supplied the boarding school with meat.<sup>175</sup>



Illustration 12: Sami children born in 1953-54 (6th grade) at Gremiha boarding school. Nina Afanas'eva is at the back to the right (Nina Afanas'eva – private archive).

Sometimes boarding school pupils were able to travel to a boarding school summer camp on the Black Sea. This possibility of free trips to the south, which were also available to adults with many years' service, was consistently appreciated by all my interviewees. Sarv (1996), however, presents this also as a disadvantage:

“Beginning in 1957, children were taken south for the summer to the Black Sea, so they had no opportunity to become acquainted with their own language or culture.”<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 1123-1129.

<sup>176</sup> Cf.: Sarv 1996, 136.

Of course, the children looked forward to this camp by the sea. The objection that in this way they spent even less time with their parents, did not accompany them in summer into the tundra and so get to know reindeer herding is, on the one hand, plausible. On the other hand, the children were not sent every year to the south. Ms Afanas'eva even reports that, at her own request, she was sent to the Crimea, not in summer, but only in autumn, so as to enable her to still spend the summer months with her mother.<sup>177</sup>

#### 5.4.4.3 *Further education and career opportunities*

All interviewees except for Nina Afanas'eva were able to attend only elementary school. This is explained mainly by the late enrolment due to the delayed opening of schools and the rigours of war.

Nina Afanas'eva, the youngest interviewee and the only one to reach school age after the war, was able, through the newly established educational system, to obtain a university education in Leningrad. For this reason – and for this reason only – she feels grateful to the Soviet state:

О: В связи с чем предложили [поехать в Ленинград учиться]. Значит, это, так называемый, была- Советское время, конечно, хулить **нельзя**, там была направленность. Забота о детях, забота об одиноких матерях и забота о тех семьях, в которых, ну как, кормильцев нет, погибли. Вот у меня старшие братья погибли. Мы мал-мала меньше остались, поэтому мама у нас одинокая. [...]

Но Ленинград, в Ленинграде при университете имени Герцена, педагогический университет Герцена, был создан [школьный] факультет народов Крайнего севера. Для таких детей, как я: остронуждающихся в государственной- здесь вот была оказана всем север- детям севера **государственная поддержка** семьям малоимущим:, у которых просто денег не было как одеть, во что одеть, накормить и так далее. [...] Нам

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<sup>177</sup> Cf.: Afanas'eva interview, lines 1235-1251.

талончики выдавали, мы ходили и завтракали, обедали, ужинали. Нас хорошо, давали по обуви, пальто, шарфик какой-то или платье, то есть, одевали. [...] Не все и всем все нравилось. Просто, понимаешь? Мы подрастали, становились девушками. Нам хотелось что-нибудь поизящнее. А мы одевались, то, что выдавали. Особого выбора не было. Но все равно и это было хорошо, понимаешь? //

A: Why did they make me the offer [to go and study in Leningrad]? It is **wrong** to be too critical of the Soviet times. Because children, single mothers and families who had lost their breadwinner were taken care of by the state. My two elder brothers had been killed. We were a bunch of fatherless kids, and our mother had to provide for us on her own. [...]

The Herzen pedagogical university in Leningrad had created a special Northern Peoples faculty [to prepare young people for university].. It was created for children like me who badly needed **support from the state**, who were from poor families and had no money to buy food and clothes. [...] We received food tickets and used them to buy our meals. We were also given clothes, shoes, coats, scarves and dresses, I mean we always had something to wear. [...] It's not that everyone liked everything, you see? We grew up and wanted to have some more elegant clothes, but had to wear what they gave us because we had very little choice. On the other hand, even that was fine.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Afanas'eva interview, lines 1345-1349, 1371-1384.



Illustration 13: Nina Afanas'eva (front, kneeling) in the eighth grade (1955-56) in Leningrad. In the photo are children from the following ethnic groups: Nenets, Buryats, Chukchi and Sami (Nina Afanas'eva – private archive).

Another aspect of education policy was the institutionalization of the profession of reindeer herding and the creation of corresponding professional training. As none of the interviewees said anything about this, we will simply briefly quote information from the existing literature.

Since the 1970s there has been a vocational school in Lovozero (*professional'no-techničeskoe učilišče, PTU*), that teaches professions directly connected with reindeer herding. This includes the training of herdsman, under the official title of *olenevod-mechanizator* or *olen'technik*. The problem here is that the training is overly theoretical and takes place largely no longer in the tundra, but in the classrooms of the technical college. The practical ability of herdsman is largely neglected, which is something a lot of older former herdsman complain about today.<sup>179</sup> This was incidentally a general problem of vocational training in the Soviet days and remains so of the educational system that has derived from it.

All in all the boarding schools were the price that had to be paid to both have an educated generation and continue reindeer herding. The deficiencies in the educational system lie not in the conception of the boarding schools, but rather in the handling of the languages and in the vocational training. The educational system brought and brings benefits for those pupils wanting to go on and lead, not a traditional, but a modern, urbanized life. For those wanting, however, to exercise a traditional job, the educational system offered and continues to offer unsatisfactory options.<sup>180</sup> This has led to a general devaluation of traditional occupations, thereby erecting a further barrier to the survival of the Sami culture.

#### **5.4.5 Concluding words on the period of the final centralization of the Sami**

Despite the relatively detailed information in this chapter, it can be stated that the data available in the existing publications, precisely for this period running from the 1950s to the early 1980s, is somewhat sparse and, in particular, thematically one-sided. Almost all studies focus on reindeer herding, although in 1989 only 35% of Russian Sami of working age were employed in this sector.<sup>181</sup> Analysis of the inter-

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<sup>179</sup> Cf.: Vladimirova 2006, 219.

<sup>180</sup> Cf. here also: Maksimov 2002.

<sup>181</sup> Cf.: Bol'sakova 2005, 219.



views has shown that the lives of many Sami have for a long time no longer revolved around reindeer breeding. While many ethnologists and social anthropologists may regret this in their publications, a thematic overweighting of reindeer herding ultimately fails to provide a realistic description of the living conditions of today's Sami. As a citizens of the multi-ethnic state of Russia they are to be found in all kinds of occupations, especially those Sami like Nina Afanas'eva and Anastasija Matrëhina who did not or no longer live in Lovozero.

With all the changes described in the previous sections, the original way of life of the Sami was largely lost. Hunting and fishing, once as important as reindeer breeding, became largely irrelevant as sources of income and were practised often only as a leisure activity.<sup>182</sup> As already mentioned in the first part of this book, the traditional way of life had begun to change significantly already by the end of the nineteenth century. The most dramatic upheavals in the lives of the Sami took place, however, between the 1930s and 1970s. The politics of the post-war period (1950s to 1970s) – a time that many other residents of the USSR look back on as a period of relative calm and stability – cost the Sami people dearly. It is from this viewpoint that we can interpret the statement by Sami eyewitness Alja Sergina, as quoted by Robinson/Kassam (1998) but not further commented on, that for them the Stalinist era lasted from 1930 to 1974.<sup>183</sup> The thaw began late for the Sami, from the mid-1970s, when the Soviet planners' system had been finally 'pushed through', and life returned to a relatively steady rhythm.

## 5.5 *Perestroika* and the post-Soviet period

O: Так эта перестройка-то, конечно, была начата-то, было очень плохо. Не нравилось. Нисколько не нравилось это вот. Вот начал у нас перестройку-то- как лысая голова-то?

B: Ну, в 85-ом году началась.

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<sup>182</sup>Cf.: Klement'ev/Šlygina 2003, 74. Today, in times of massive unemployment, low wages and unaffordable prices, hunting and fishing have regained importance as sources of food.

<sup>183</sup>Quoted from: Robinson/Kassam 1998, 81.

O: Да, не нравилось нам, но все же они сделали свое. //

A: This perestroika got off to a very bad start. We didn't like it. We didn't like it at all. It was all started by that bald guy [Gorbachev]. I no longer remember his name.

Q: It all began in 1985.

A: Right, we didn't like it, but they did everything their own way.<sup>184</sup>

For reindeer herding, *perestroika* initially brought little change. This came a little later, from about the 1989 onwards. Under Gorbachev, one can speak of a 'national awakening' of the Sami. In 1989 the Organization of the Sami of the Kola Peninsula (*Associacija kol'skich saamov*) was founded, with the goal of protecting Sami interests in local politics and establishing contacts with Sami of Fennoscandia. Later on, a parallel organization, the OOSMO (*Obščestvennaja Organizacija Saamov Murmanskoi oblasti* or Society of the Sami of Murmansk Province) was also formed. Although the work of the two organizations is repeatedly slowed by conflict, their merit surely lies, among other things, in promoting the ethnic self-awareness of the Sami. Today many younger people are reflecting on their Sami roots, even if often with no direct command of the Sami language.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Jur'eva interview, lines 301-304.

<sup>185</sup> Cf.: Bol'sakova 2005, 219; Klement'ev/Šlygina 2003, 42; Kulinčenko 2002, 27.





Illustration 14: 6 February 1993. Day of the Sami: Founding of the Organization of Sami Handicrafts - another symbol of the resurgence of Sami ethnic self-awareness. The Sami flag is visible in the background (Nina Afanas'eva – private archive).

The obvious problems of the Sami were first made known to a wide public in 1989 in the Moscow-published and nationally distributed newspaper *Trud*. This article is an impressive historical document, containing information that until shortly before could never have been discussed in public:

“In the tundra used to be many scattered settlements [...] in which men and women worked side by side. The inhabitants of the settlements were resettled in Lovozero. The women were torn from their traditional way of life, the men, how-

ever, remained in the tundra with the herds. In this way, the families were torn into three parts. [...] Not every mother [...] wanted to send her child to a boarding school. And this is the statistic: in 1989 20% die of natural causes, 40% die tragically: they drown or freeze to death in the tundra, die in in car accidents or while drunk, as many of them are chronic alcoholics. In the village [Lovozero, L.A.] visible wealth was created: single-family houses<sup>186</sup> and cars, but that is something of a show for guests. [...] In fact, everything is quite different: [...] Constant reindeer meat and male society for three months at a time. Then two weeks off, and then back hundreds of kilometres, with no electricity, housing, television and above all with no human interaction ... But with a lot of heaviness of heart."<sup>187</sup>

This article is particularly impressive when one realizes just how far its content clashes with the monograph by Kiselev/Kiseleva (1987) published just two years before. This is another indication that there was a lot more freedom of expression at that time at the centre (Moscow) than at the periphery (e.g. Murmansk), where the new ideas of *perestroika* and *glasnost* prevailed only gradually. The newspaper article pinpoints what is, in my opinion, one of the main sources of social problems, in addition to the resettlement in Lovozero. This is that the Soviet policy of the centralization of the Sami and the professionalization of reindeer herding had the effect of reducing herding from a way of life to a purely professional occupation, which meant that families were separated for most of the time. On the other hand, this is not to deny that the urban-type housing and the schools also represent a step forward. One has the impression that, in the coverage of the situation since around 1989 until today, the pendulum has swung in the other direction: whereas previously only the progress was lauded, scholars have started since the end of the Soviet Union to report mainly the negative aspects.

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<sup>186</sup> At a central location in Lovozero some amazingly spacious family houses were built in brick, which is extremely unusual for Soviet housing, and it is one of these houses that Anna Jur'eva lives. In fact, most people live in Lovozero in ordinary Soviet apartment blocks from the Khrushchev era (*hruščevki*).

<sup>187</sup> Galenkin/Kovalenko 1989.

The only area that has since been studied thoroughly and in a relatively well balanced way across all eras is reindeer herding, which has been investigated extensively by Konstantinov, Vladimirova, Robinson/Kassam and others. As mentioned earlier, this industry employed, however, less than half of all working Sami. Nevertheless many Sami, especially of the the older generation, continue to identify themselves with reindeer herding. Even if they themselves did not work in this sector, their parents did or they have other relatives who used to work or still work in this professional area. These authors' findings on the transition period from a planned to a market economy will therefore be summarized briefly here.

Just as in the agricultural areas of Russia most of the land has remained in state ownership, so on the Kola Peninsula there was no direct return of nationalized property. The state farms were transformed into cooperatives (*tovariščestvo*) that are owned by the workforce. This was not a restitution in that the number of shares awarded to a family depended not on the number of reindeer its forebears had owned prior to collectivization, but on years of service on the state farms<sup>188</sup>

While since the end of the Soviet Union there has been a general lack of people willing to work in the reindeer industry, within the workforce of the cooperatives – the successor organizations to the collective farms – there are again more Sami, and Sami reindeer herding traditions have increasingly prevailed once again. More value is placed on traditional clothing, tools and ornaments. The herds are again smaller and far less monitored (*vol'nyj vypas*, see Chapter 3.1. *The Original Way of Life*), leading to more balanced grazing and the more sustainable use of resources.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Cf.: Konstantinov/Vladimirova 2002, 16.

<sup>189</sup> Cf.: Klement'ev/Šlygina 2003, 76.



Illustration 15: Sami reindeer herders in the tundra in 1998. Break in the *kuvaksa*, the traditional Sami mobile dwelling (Nina Afanas'eva – private archive).

Anna Jur'eva, who worked her whole life in Lovozero as a *čumrabortnica*, does not, however, view the return to the *vol'nyj vypas* method as beneficial.

O: [...] В общем, не так пасут, как раньше пасли оленеводы. Сейчас называется вольный выпас. Важенки телятся сами собой. А раньше было дежурили по суткам [...].

B: Ну, в общем хуже сейчас, чем было в советское время?

O: Хуже, хуже. Вот нам пожилым людям намного кажется хуже. Намного. Потому что мы **работали**, мы были **работой** заняты, всё. Сейчас людям, я еще раз скажу, молодежи негде работать! А у нас же поселок большой был, при советской власти все равно работу находили. Работали. [...] У нас вот, например, здесь раньше стада- Одно стадо было 4-5 тысяч, одно. Три стада это уже 15 тысяч. А сейчас вот с трех стад собрали пять тысяч. И **чем** будут платить людям, там работают? Чем платить? Нечем платить людям. Там были

мясопланы такие сумасшедшие, по 100- этот- по 100 тонн было, по 90 тонн, по 80 тонн были. Мясоплан чтобы бригаде надо выполнить. Одной бригаде. И **выполняли**, пасли. Потому что в руках стадо, как называется, в руках пасли, все время не пускали. [...] И пасли оленей, пасли от медведя, от росомах. **А сейчас вон чего**, вольный выпас. Он телится, ребеночка тут же, может, и ворона даже отбирает от них, когда теленочек только поднимается. [...] Лиса тут же сразу отбирает, росомаха, а медведей полно завелось сейчас в тундре. А тогда, когда дежурили во время отела- не вижу- ((стук)) не давали этим медведям-то кушать телят. //

Q: Is it worse nowadays than it was during the Soviet times?

A: It's worse, much worse. We, older people, believe things are a lot worse. Because back in our days, we had a lot of work that kept us very busy. Today, young people have no work at all. Back then, we lived in a big village, and everyone could find work. We worked hard.[...] We had reindeer herds to take care of, for instance. One herd consisted of four to five thousand animals. In three herds there were as many as fifteen thousand animals. Today, however, there are only five thousand of them in three herds. There is **no money** to pay the herdsmen. No money. In the past, we had to fulfil the so-called meat plans, I mean provide 80, 90 or 100 tons of meat for the state. That was a meat plan for one team alone, and they did fulfil it. Nowadays, **just imagine!** They leave the herds and let them graze on their own. If a reindeer cow gives birth, even a crow can come and carry away the calf as soon as it gets to its feet, not to mention wolverines or bears. It can be carried away by a fox or a wolverine. Or a bear. There are lots of bears out in the tundra nowadays. Back then, however, I don't see- ((a knock on the door)) During the Soviet times, herdsmen worked in shifts to guard the calves from bears.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Jur'eva interview, lines 250-252, 761-779.



The less intensive supervision and smaller herds can also be viewed negatively, as a further step in the decomposition of reindeer herding as an industry. If one assumes that it is utopian today to breed reindeer in the same way as 150 years ago and that realistically one needs to adhere to the dictates of modern economic life, the latest developments of reindeer herding are to be seen rather in a dim light. In the present circumstances there are no longer 'meat plans' to be fulfilled, but large processing quantities are still needed in order to work economically.

In 2002 only 7.8% of the total population of the Murmansk Region (*Murmanskaja oblast'*) lived in rural areas.<sup>191</sup> The proportion of Sami living in rural areas is, however, over 70%.<sup>192</sup> The main problems of the Sami living in rural areas one can enumerated as follows:

#### 1. Poaching

Since the end of the Soviet Union the number of poachers has increased dramatically. They are a danger not only to the animals, but also to the people who get in their way. Particularly dangerous are poachers from among the numerous military on the coast, as they are well-armed, have transportation and are 'untouchable'.<sup>193</sup>

#### 2. The unattractiveness of herding as a profession, general unemployment

The poor supervision of the herds by the herdsmen, who are keen to minimize the time spent in the tundra, leads to drastic losses of reindeer, which are less well protected against wild animals and poachers. Other reasons for the decline in the reindeer population are deficient breeding methods, in particular an uncoordinated birth and slaughter policy. All this leads to reindeer seeing human beings more as enemies as friends, becoming undomesticated and going lost.<sup>194</sup> Reindeer herding is not only hard, it is also poorly paid, making the job unattractive. This and the scarcity of alter-

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<sup>191</sup> [Anonymous], Čislennost' naselenija Rossii ... 2002, [no page numbering].

<sup>192</sup> Cf.: Kulinčenko 2002, 26.

<sup>193</sup> Cf.: Golych interview, lines 223-235, 1062-1111; Klement'ev/Šlygina 2003, 76; Vladimirova 2006, 171 f; Robinson/Kassam 1998, 77, 112.

<sup>194</sup> Cf.: Jur'eva interview, lines 224-237; Klement'ev/Šlygina 2003, 76; Vladimirova 2006, 171 f., 214-220; Robinson/Kassam 1998, 80.

natives mean that unemployment is very high. The social problems – especially alcoholism and its consequences – are today no less prevalent in the Soviet era. On the contrary, they have increased.



Illustration 16: Bridge burned down by poachers on the gravel road between Verchnetulomsk and Kovdor. Poachers protect themselves from hunting inspectors by the systematic breaking of roads (oral information from hunting inspector Zajkov, April, 2003) (photo: Lukas Allemann, 2003).

### 3. The poor ecological situation and the reduction of living and working space due to industrialization, militarization and tourism

Three factors today impact the precarious ecological situation and serve to reduce the living and working space of the Sami living in the country:

a) Industrialization

The massive colonization of the Kola Peninsula, with the consequent construction of roads and industrial plants, on which whole towns depend,<sup>195</sup> has severely reduced the reindeer habitat. Hardly any reindeer are to be found west of the main transport routes (road and rail line to St. Petersburg). In particular mining and the metals industry have created ecological disasters in the areas around Nikel' and Mončegorsk. Whole forest zones have been killed off by sulphur dioxide emissions, with continuing serious consequences.<sup>196</sup> Given the relatively small area, early colonization and dense population of the Kola Peninsula, the problems attendant on urbanization and industrialization are greater than in most other sub-Arctic regions of Russia.

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<sup>195</sup> The cities of Nikel' and Apatity are, for example, named after the raw materials nickel and apatite that are mined and industrially processed there.

<sup>196</sup> Cf.: Wheelersburg/Gutsol 2008, 82.



## The Sami of the Kola Peninsula



Illustration 17: Heavy metal-contaminated industrial landscape at Mončegorsk in winter (photo: Lukas Allemann, 2003).



Illustration 18: Heavy metal-contaminated environs of Mončegorsk in winter (photo: Lukas Allemann, 2003).

#### b) The military

“A less well known abuse of the Sámi’s land was committed by the Soviets for years during the cold war. The Soviets used the waters near the port city of Murmansk as a dump for radioactive waste from 1964 to 1986. The inexplicable act of using the Arctic Ocean as a nuclear dump threatens the northern Sámi greatly because of their dependence on fish for a large part of their diet and income. [...] The waters in which the dumping occurred were only tens of meters deep or less, with a high fish population located in the area.”<sup>197</sup>

The problems of the already existing, localized nuclear contamination and the threat of large-scale nuclear disaster affect of course not only the Sami, but the entire population of the Kola Peninsula. The Sami in particular have seen their living space heavily reduced by the military, a situation that has not changed to this day.

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<sup>197</sup> Summer [no date], [no pagination].

### c) Tourism

Since the end of the Soviet Union, the Sami have faced an additional threat in the form of sports fishermen. Many of the best fishing grounds (rivers for salmon fishing) are leased by business companies from the state. The mostly western tourists are flown in by helicopter for lots of money and live in camps. It is the inhabitants of the rural areas who lose out, among them the Sami. Especially in the post-Soviet period, many people are again increasingly fishing and hunting for food, but are finding themselves barred from the best fishing grounds.<sup>198</sup>

In light of today's problems – not a few of them added or enhanced following the collapse of the Soviet Union – it is therefore understandable that for many people the time of the growing collective farms and stable wages look attractive in retrospect. Vladimirova (2006) goes so far as to note among her interview partners a “clear trend of glamourization and mythologization of the Soviet successes”.<sup>199</sup> This is true in one way or another of all my interviewees, even if they can be very sharp critics of the Soviet system in other respects.

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<sup>198</sup> Cf.: Robinson/Kassam 1998, 108.

<sup>199</sup> Vladimirova 2006, 222.

## 6. Final considerations: The Sami and the Soviet state - an ambivalent relationship

The present study of the living conditions of the Sami of the Kola Peninsula during the Soviet era has opened up a number of new perspectives. Firstly, it has become clear that the black-and-white image that is often drawn in the highly polarized literature cannot be maintained. Secondly, it has become evident that the greatest evils for many Sami were not collectivization per se nor the Stalinist terror, but the resettlements. This “experiment with human beings”<sup>200</sup> affected almost every Sami family. The issue of the resettlements has been given too little attention in previous publications, and I hope that my study can contribute to closing this knowledge gap.

The ambiguous impressions of my interview partners can be summarized as follows:

Ms Jur’eva glorifies the Soviet reindeer herding system, because she did not experience the dark side, was able to combine the Sami traditions with the Soviet innovations relatively well, and today has to look on and see how much has perished. For her and her family, the collective economy of the post-war period between the 1950s to the 1980s brought an unambiguous increase in prosperity. This prosperity has now evaporated. Ms Jur’eva is, on the other hand, fiercely critical of the educational system: having always lived and worked in an environment in which the Sami language was used in everyday life, she criticizes the repression of the Sami language in the schools. The state-organized education thus worked against parental education at home. The fact that Ms Jur’eva has no further criticisms and is silent about the resettlements should not be read as her being unaware of them; rather it is hard for her to accept that her fellow human beings who were outwardly equal and worked in the same collective as herself had to contend with massive social problems deriving from their resettlement experience.

Ms Matrëhina experienced the resettlement from Iokanga to Gremiha during the Soviet period. She criticizes the educational system and places the entire blame on

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<sup>200</sup> Gucol/Vinogradova/Samorukova 2007, 5.

the teaching profession for the fact that her children no longer speak Sami. We have seen, however, that there were also other reasons, like the parents working in a majority Russian environment and their not particularly strong sense of tradition. For Ms Matrëchina, the greatest scourge which the Sami took from the Russians is alcohol. Only from 1958 onwards was it a dominant problem of her environment, the year when she and her family was relocated to Gremiha, where the Russians were in the majority. For this reason too Ms Matrëhina yearns back to Stalin's days, because the latter "had the conduct of [the people] under control."<sup>201</sup> Ms Jur'eva has a similar opinion of the Stalinist era.

Ms Afanas'eva has a different view on this, having witnessed her own relatives falling victim to repression. She is also extremely critical of the subsequent decades of the Soviet Union, having experienced first hand the continuation of state repression, even after Stalinism. Following the forced resettlement she had to look on as her brother, unable to find his place again in society, was sentenced repeatedly to prison and forced labour. Ms Afanas'eva tends, however, to effusive praise when talking of the achievements of Soviet education. Soviet educational policy did indeed achieve much on the Kola Peninsula, an area in which there were formerly few schools and almost a hundred percent of the indigenous population were illiterate. It would be inappropriate to follow Sarv (1996) and to speak only negatively of Soviet educational policy (1996). But it is significant that Ms Afanas'eva – herself a Russian and German teacher and thus a representative of this educational system – scarcely mentions the issue of the exclusion of the Sami language in the educational system and in the same breath highlights the achievement of the teachers in teaching the Russian language to the Sami children. Another important difference with Ms Jur'eva is that Ms Afanas'eva does not see the transition from a subsistence economy to a more productive form of economic life after collectivization and resettlement as a benefit, as it failed to raise her family's living standards. The subsistence economy had provided greater prosperity for her own family.

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<sup>201</sup> Matrëhina interview, line 284.

All interviewees state in unison that social problems such as alcoholism, unemployment and crime have, if anything, increased after the end of the Soviet Union.

In the existing literature on the Sami people of Russia one can identify two very different underlying trends. On the one hand there are those authors who argue that the Soviet state very abruptly introduced brutal changes, which ought to be reversed with equal speed. On the other hand there are a series of works that emphasize the continuous processes of change on the Kola Peninsula which began with colonization long before the October Revolution.

Both attitudes are, each in its own way, eligible. It is certainly unjustified to state that the traditional Sami economy continued in its pure form until 1917 and was subsequently destroyed.<sup>202</sup> Equally exaggerated is the formulation that an attempt was made to civilize the Sami "by teaching them Russian and force-feeding them with the majority culture".<sup>203</sup> As shown in this study, almost all Sami of the Kola Peninsula already spoke Russian at the end of the nineteenth century.

More persuasive is the reasoning of those authors who emphasize the special position of the Kola Peninsula within the northern regions of Russia. The fact that it was settled by Russians earlier than many Siberian colonies and was recognized as strategically important explains why the Sami came into contact with Russians earlier than other so-called small peoples of the north, and why their language, culture and religion began very early to mingle with those of the Russians. This is also evidenced by the Russified names the Sami have had ever since their Christianization. Konstantinov and Vladimirova emphasize in their works not only the centuries-old contacts with the Russians, but also the migration of Komi and Nenets, whose forms of reindeer herding were already at the end of the nineteenth century better adapted to the forward march and the realities of a modern world functioning according to the laws of economics. To this extent reindeer herding on the Kola Peninsula was, no differently from the rest of the Russian economy of the late nineteenth and early

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<sup>202</sup> Cf.: Klement'ev/Šlygina 2003, 42.

<sup>203</sup> Sarv 1996, 136.



twentieth centuries, literally catapulted into modernity. The form of reindeer herding taken over from the Komi after the October Revolution was insofar nothing new.

Konstantinov and Vladimirova (2002) identify a majority “pro-red”<sup>204</sup> attitude among Sami towards the Soviet period. This they attribute to the already intensive contact with Russians before the Revolution. In contrast, for many members of small peoples of Siberia, the first contact with the Communists was also the first contact with Russians. Wrong, in my view, however, is the claim that there is almost no collective memory of the period before the state farms<sup>205</sup>. If Ms Jur’eva or Ms Golyh look back with pleasure at the sovkhos period, this is not because there is no memory of the time before that, but because the 1970s and 1980s appear stable and prosperous *compared* with the years before and after. The analysis of my interviews has highlighted this point.

The fact that the hard times of the 1930s to the 1970s are far from forgotten is shown by the informants’ statements. The real evil that befell the Sami during collectivization was not the expansion of reindeer herding. This was an inevitable process that was not initiated but only continued by the Soviet state. The systematization and enlargement of the reindeer stock need not, however, have been accompanied by a *relocation of almost the entire Sami population*. Instead of centralization, an expansion of the transport infrastructure, primarily in the form of roads, would have been more efficient and eco-friendly for both the population and nature. This would, however, have been at the expense of the state, while the transfers were mainly at the expense of the people. Nor did the end of collectivization mark the end of forced resettlements. Electrification (reservoirs), industrialization and militarization of the Kola Peninsula meant that many Sami had to change their place of residence unvoluntarily, being uprooted from their livelihoods and their social environments.

If, however, one views the mass colonization, industrialization and militarization of the Kola Peninsula as given and immutable, Lovozero would basically not have been such a bad concept, as shown by the life of Ms Jur’eva who came voluntarily to

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<sup>204</sup> Konstantinov/Vladimirova 2002, 12.

<sup>205</sup> Cf.: Konstantinov/Vladimirova 2002, 14.



Lovozero and integrated well there. The serious shortcomings of the Soviet state are seen primarily in the course of the resettlements. These were prepared and carried out in excessive haste. The resettled persons were unable to retain their material property and were forced to leave a lot behind. There was no housing to resettle into, although this had been promised. The newcomers were all required to be employed, but this was not possible. Many people therefore received jobs on paper only and were subsequently criminalized for not showing up for work. It can be stated generally that the resulting social problems were either swept under the carpet or the blame placed on the victims. The resettlement caused wounds that have still not healed till this day.

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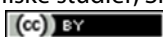
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## 9. Appendix

### 9.1 Glossary

<i>braga</i>	Brewed alcoholic drink that the Sami produced and consumed well before living together with the Russians.
<i>čum</i>	General term for the tents of nomadic peoples of the North.
<i>čumrobotnica</i>	Woman in the → <i>čum</i> , companion and helper of the reindeer herders moving with the herds. Tasks: fishing, collecting berries, cooking, washing, sewing, leather tanning, and more.
<i>edinoličnik</i>	Individually operating economic player. In the context of the present work, a reindeer breeder/fisherman/hunter not joining the → <i>kolkhoz</i> (applies in particular to the first wave of the 1920s, when joining was not mandatory).
<i>ižemcy/ižme</i>	Designation for the northern Komi → from the Ižma river basin (west of the Urals)
<i>jagel'</i>	Reindeer moss (like Iceland moss)
<i>keržža</i>	Sleigh in the shape of a small boat, drawn by a reindeer or dog
<i>kolchoz</i>	Short for <i>kollektivnoe chozjajstvo</i> ; collective farm in which nominally all assets belong to the organization and whose members are paid according to the number of days worked ( <i>trudoden</i> ).
<i>Komi</i>	Finno-Ugric people from northeastern Europe. Today the Komi total about half a million.
<i>kovvas/koavas/ kuvaksa</i>	Sami word for → <i>čum</i>
<i>likbez</i>	Short for <i>Likvidatsiia bezgramotnosti</i> (liquidation of illiteracy); the generally used term in the 1920s and 1930s in the USSR for adult and teenager literacy institutions.
<i>lopari</i>	Lapps (obsolete name for → <i>saami</i> /Sami)
<i>narty</i>	Sami reindeer sleigh
<i>Nenets</i>	Finno-Ugric people from northeastern Europe and northwestern Siberia, in total there are now about 40,000 Nenets.
<i>NKVD</i>	Short for <i>Narodnyj Komissariat Vnutrennich Del</i> (People's Commissariat of the Interior, from 1946 Ministry of the Interior); its responsibilities included the security services with the secret police of the Soviet Union.
<i>olen'technik</i>	Soviet term for reindeer herder
<i>otdalenka</i>	Distant settlement without road access (colloquial)
<i>(o)telit'sja/otël</i>	to calve/calving
<i>pogost</i>	Old Russian word for small settlements, has survived to this day in Russian as the specific designation for → <i>siidas</i> . One distinguishes <i>zimnij p.</i> (winter settlement) and <i>letnij p.</i> (summer settlement).
<i>pogranicy</i>	border guards (plural, colloquial)
<i>pomory</i>	Designation for the Russian settlers who occupied the coastal areas of the Kola Peninsula even before the establishment of Murmansk and before the October Revolution.
<i>PTUšnik</i>	Student of a vocational school ( <i>professional'no-techničeskoe učilišče</i> ), colloquial

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<i>pyrt</i>	Typical one-room wooden hut
<i>rybkom</i>	abbrev. for <i>rybnyj kombinat</i> (fish processing factory)
<i>saami/saamy</i>	Sami: indigenous people in the north of Fennoscandia
<i>sanrejs</i>	Short for <i>sanitarnyj rejs</i> : flights by helicopter or small plane for medical treatment of kolkhoz/sovkhos personnel working in the tundra.
<i>sejd</i>	Important places of worship of the Sami: sacred rocks to which offerings were brought. Usually near water.
<i>siida</i>	Settlement area/common land of a Sami community (settlement, grazing, hunting and fishing grounds and places of worship). The siida was the original settlement and living form in the pre-Soviet Sami social system. Known in Russian as → <i>pogost</i> .
<i>sovchoz</i>	Short for <i>sovetskoe chozjajstvo</i> ; state farm, where all assets are owned by the state and employees receive a fixed salary.
<i>trudoden'</i>	see → <i>kolchoz</i>
<i>tunejadstvo</i>	Idleness, parasitism, when a person did not work on a regular basis or did not turn up to work. In the Soviet Union this could be prosecuted as a criminal offence under the name <i>tundejadstvo</i> .
<i>utël</i>	colloquial for → <i>otël</i>
<i>važenka</i>	Female reindeer
<i>veža</i>	Small tent
<i>vezdehod</i>	Highly mobile amphibious vehicle on caterpillar tracks, able to operate in the absence of roads. Causes massive damage to the fragile subpolar vegetation.
<i>vol'nyj vypas</i>	The leaving of reindeer to graze unattended for long periods. This type of reindeer herding corresponds to the Sami traditions, was not practised during the Soviet era and is again becoming more widespread.

## 9.2 Transcription characters

Q (En.)/B (Russ.)	Interventions by the interviewer (Russian вопрос)
A (En) / O (Russ.)	Interventions by the interviewee (Russian ответ)
[10 min] / [20 min] / ...	Specification of the elapsed speaking time (every 10 minutes), only in the full Russian transcription
(4)	Speech pause in seconds
yes:	Slowing of speech
((laughter)) / ((phone rings))	Transcriber's comment
[reference is to Voron'e]	Comment added to text at the dissertation writing stage for better understanding of the quote
<b>no [bolded]</b>	Stressed
<b>NO [bolded capitals]</b>	Spoken loudly
'no' [in single inverted commas]	Spoken quietly
very- [word with hyphen]	Uncompleted words or sentence.
yes=yes [words spaced with equals signs]	Rapidly following words
( )	Unintelligible speech, the length of the empty space corre-

	sponds approximately to the length of the incomprehensible word run.
(he said) [words in brackets]	Poorly intelligible speech, the word has been guessed by the transcriber.
« veža »	Non-Russian (here: mostly Sami) words. For English equivalents, see the Glossary.
“Don’t go anywhere!”	Direct speech in the narrative of the responding person

(Following Rosenthal, 1987)

### 9.3 Key biographical data of the interviewees

	<b>Nina Eliseevna Afanas’eva</b>	<b>Apollinarija Ivanov-na Golyh</b>	<b>Anna Nikolaevna Jur’eva</b>
<i>Date of birth</i>	01.02.1939	19.02.1932	25.10.1934
<i>Birthplace</i>	Varzino, Murmanskaja oblast’	Voron’e, Murmanskaja oblast’	Umbozero
<i>Education</i>	10 school classes, 5 years teacher training college	4 school classes	3 school classes
<i>Educated between:</i>	1948-63	1941-45	1944-47
<i>Places of Residence</i>	Varzino (1939-51), Gremikha (1951-55), St. Petersburg (1955-63), Apatity (1963-80), Murmansk (1980-)	Voron’e (1932-64), Lovozero (1964-)	Umbozero (1934-53), Lovozero (1953-)
<i>Husband’s name</i>	Ivan Karlovič Afanas’ev	Vasilij Nikolaevič Golyh	Anisim Efimovič Jur’ev
<i>Dates of birth/death of husband</i>	1941-1991	1927-1988	1929-2005
<i>Husband born in</i>	Staraya Russa, Pskovskaja oblast’	Voron’e	Lovozero
<i>Father’s name</i>	Elisej Fedorovič Pavlov	Ivan Ignat’evič Fefelov	Nikolaj Izosimovič Železnjakov
<i>Father’s occupation</i>	Fisherman	Reindeer herder	Reindeer herder
<i>Mother’s maiden name</i>	Praskov’ja Nikolaevna Jur’eva	Tat’jana Andreevna [family name unknown]	Ul’jana Petrovna Galkina
<i>Mother’s occupation</i>	Housewife/čumrabortnica, livestock keeper	Housewife/čumrabortnica	Housewife/čumrabortnica
<i>Children and dates of birth/death</i>	Vladimir (*1964)	Svetlana (*1952), Anatolij (1956-57), Genady (1959-59)	Nadežda (*1957), Valentina (*1959), Elena (*1961),

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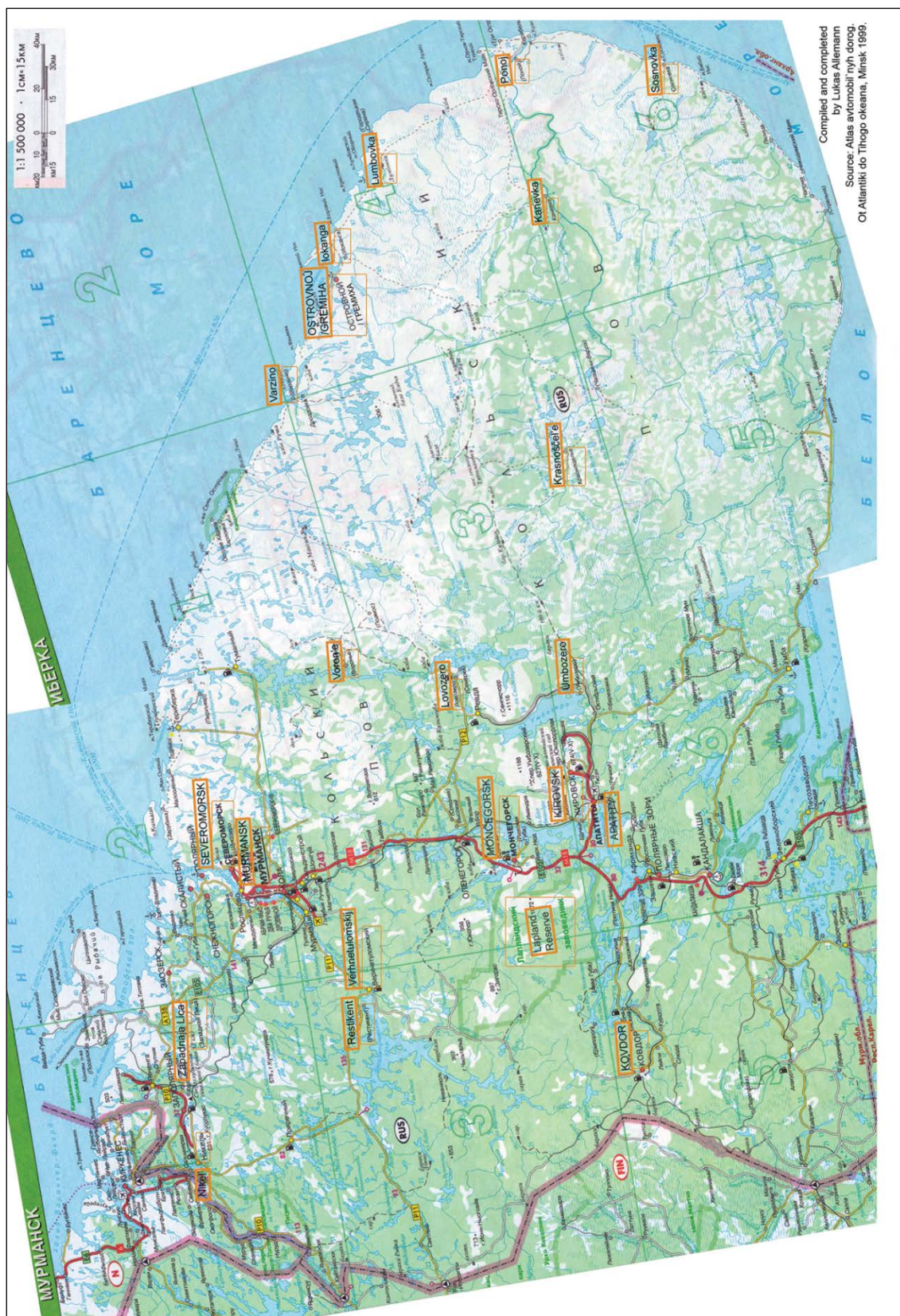
			Ul'jana (*1966), Nikolaj (*1967), Valerij (*1970)
	<b>Anastasija Nikolaevna Matrëhina</b>	<b>Marija Alekseevna Popova</b>	
<i>Date of birth</i>	29.08.1928	10.03.1933	
<i>Birthplace</i>	Lumbovka	Voron'e	
<i>Education</i>	3 school classes	5 school classes + 2 years evening school	
<i>Educated between:</i>	1939-41	1940-45	
<i>Places of Residence</i>	Lumbovka 1928-50, lokanga 1950-58, Gremiha 1958-94, Murmansk 1994-)	Voron'e (1933-56), Eremeevo (Komi ASSR, 1956-69), Lovozero (1969-)	
<i>Husband's name</i>	Ivan Nikitič Matrëchin	Ivan Ermolaevič Popov	
<i>Dates of birth/death of husband</i>	1922-1984	1933-2007	
<i>Husband born in</i>	lokanga	Sar'judin, Komi ASSR	
<i>Father's name</i>	Nikolaj Petrovič Matrëchin	Aleksej Anisimovič Šaršin	
<i>Father's occupation</i>	Reindeer herder/herder in the kol-khoz	Reindeer herder, chairman of sel'sovet	
<i>Mother's maiden name</i>	Ul'jana Stepanovna Danilova	Vasilisa Fedorovna Kiprijanova	
<i>Mother's occupation</i>	Baker	Housewife/čum-rabotnica	
<i>Children and dates of birth/death</i>	Nadežda (*1951), Ol'ga (*1953), Ljubov' (1956-2004)	Ol'ga (*1954), Galina (*1958), Aleksej (*1962), Pëtr (*1969)	

## 9.4 General map of the Kola Peninsula





# The Sami of the Kola Peninsula



Compiled and completed  
by Lukas Alenham  
Source: Atlas avtomobil'nyj dorog.  
Ot Atlantiki do Tihogo okeana, Minsk 1999.