

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

WGM-22

The Summer in a Nutshell - II

Højsdal 12

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Dear Dick,

At the end of part I (WGM-21) of this three-part précis of my summer travels, I was on board the Norwegian coal boat "Ingertre" bound for Mo i Rana *. After a day and a half of solid sleep in my cabin on "Ingertre" (the cabin, incidentally, turned out to be the sick bay!), I rather sheepishly turned up at mealtime to take the expected ribbing. The word sovesyke was bandied about with relish (sovesyke is the Norwegian for sleeping sickness); but no one seemed to agree on whether I had the disease or was in danger of contracting it as a result of my protracted slumbers. Anyway, I fared better than the German Cultural Attaché, who didn't put in an appearance at meals the whole trip.

"Ingertre" was carrying coal from Longyearbyen to the coking plant at Mo i Rana. The coking plant (Norsk Koksverk A/S), government-owned, was variously described by those on board as "oh, that" or "the white elephant" or "the mistake". This plant began operating in 1963 to use Svalbard coal in making coke for the State-owned iron and steel works (Norsk Jernverk A/S), also at Mo i Rana. The iron works started in 1955 on the basis of some rather thin ores found locally. It now also uses iron ore concentrate from Kirkenes. Both the coking plant and the iron and steel company have proved financially disastrous for the Norwegian government. When one looks at the "big picture", things are not really so bad after all--~~that~~ that is, if one forgets about the nagging question of why these two industries were built in the first place. Both operations seem to be a conscious attempt to have a Norwegian iron and steel industry--by reason of either security or national pride (presumably the latter). The coking plant fits nicely into the picture by supplying coke to the iron works and ammonia (a by-product) to the State power company (Norsk Hydro). The coal for the coking operation comes from Svalbard, thus assuring Norwegian national interests there. (Svalbard coal, the coke plant, and the iron works will be discussed in a coming newsletter.)

* Mo i Rana, a strange-sounding name to some ears, is a town in western Norway. Technically, its name is Mo, but since there are over 30 places in Norway called Mo, the addition "i Rana" (in Rana fjord) is usually added. The word Mo means sandy plain, moor, or heath. Mo i Rana is not, as some maps in northern books show, located in the middle of the Gulf of Bothnia, but rather on Norway's west coast a bit south of the Arctic Circle.

We docked at Mo i Rana late one evening after sailing for hours past the outer islands and, finally, up Rana fjord itself. How green and lush everything looked, even after only twelve days in the icy north. Coal unloading began immediately. I chose, unwisely it turned out, to sleep on the ship. I had to catch a train north to Bodø at 6 o'clock the next morning, and it seemed that no sooner had sleep come after the noise of unloading than it was time to get going.

The train ride north from Mo on that beautiful day in mid-July was past fast-flowing rivers, small farms with hay drying in the valleys, and high moorlands scraped bare of soil by the great glaciers of the Pleistocene. The hilltops and mountain peaks were still well snow-patched. The permanent glaciers and snowfields, which were glimpsed at intervals, constantly reminded me of past climates. This was untamed land. At Mo we had left behind the last road connection with neighboring Sweden; there is some talk today about a Kiruna-Narvik road, but road connections in the North have always been difficult, and costly.

After slipping down from the mountain highlands, we skirted around the shores of Skjerstadfjord and into Bodø. I should explain here that most Norwegian maps use the spelling Bodø, but almost all text prefers Bodø. The great four-volume work on Norway which appeared in 1963 (NORGE) follows this practice. After trying to draw the / through the o in Bodø on my maps, I can now understand why! Perhaps former ICWA fellow Jack Tuck can explain this; he lived in Bodø for a spell not long ago.

The four-hour ride from Mo seemed to go by rapidly. My hunger for green landscapes had been reasonably sated. The railroad northwards ends at Bodø. The trip to Tromsø, as earlier, was by air--no scowling MP at the airport this time. One half hour after leaving Bodø we landed at Tromsø.

I was planning, had I taken "Skule" back to Tromsø from Svalbard, to speak with officials of the shipping company (Troms Fylkes Dams-Skibsselskap, herein TFDS) about their future plans for Svalbard shipping. Now I had an afternoon and the next morning before leaving for Kirkenes and Murmansk. From the company's administrative director, Fr. Wicklund Hansen, I learned that next year the State will extend the regular coastwise shipping service (Hurtigruten = rapid route) up to Svalbard from Honningsvåg, near North Cape. A ship will sail to Svalbard during the summer about every 14 days, but it will not stop long and will therefore be unsuitable for tourists as there are no facilities in Svalbard to take care of layovers. The State really needs a new vessel for the Svalbard route. The good ship "Skule", which was chartered by TFDS from the State for last summer's cruises, is now too old to fulfill the safety requirements. TFDS has had some good seasons; this year they were fully booked for the mid-season trips to Svalbard, but not for the early and late season ones.

Other ships sail to Svalbard waters, although the trips by "Skule", as well as her well-known predecessor "Lyngen", are the best

known. Sailing out of Magdalena Bay, Vest Spitsbergen, we passed the Lübeck liner "Regina Maris" chock-full of camera-totin' tourists. For the elite few, sealing vessels leave Tromsø every summer on charter to take small hunting parties to Svalbard; some charters even guarantee a polar bear and a seal. But the price is high, of course.

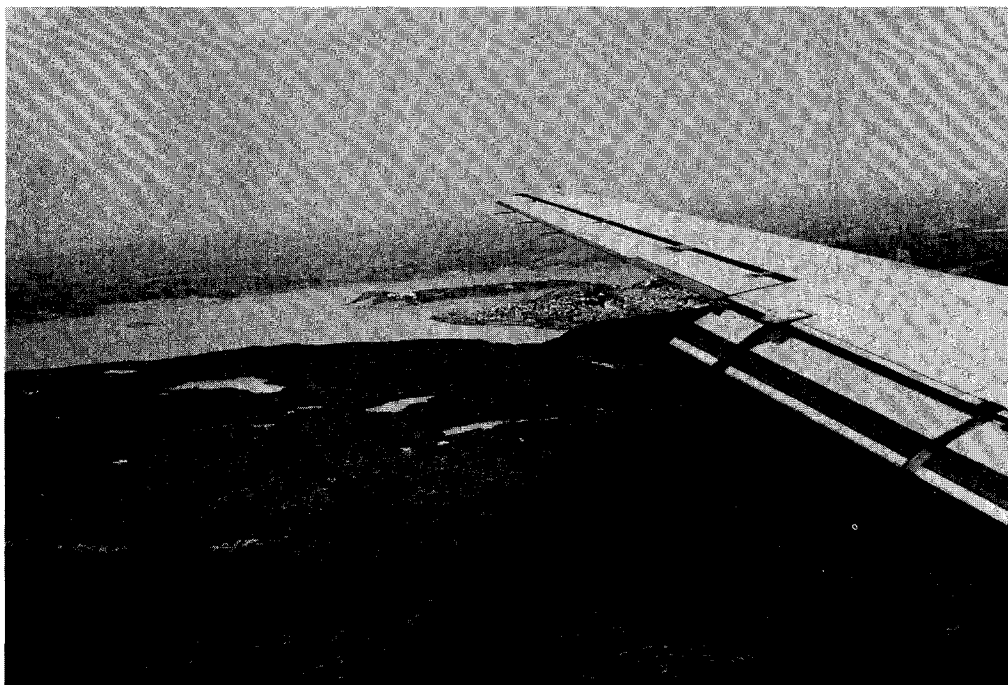
Because there is no place for a tourist to stay on land in Svalbard, future trips will continue to be by tour ships. Even though tourist interest in Svalbard is strong, "Skule" is going out of service and the regular coastal route will not cater to tourists. Director Wicklund said that TFDS did not advertise too widely because of their limited capacity (I had a hard time in both Copenhagen and Oslo getting information about trips to Svalbard). He suspected that a great deal of interest could be aroused merely by wider advertising. I think that someone is missing a good thing here, but of course the season is quite short for ship tourism. The lack of facilities on land, as in other northern areas, is definitely the big factor hindering tourism in Svalbard at present.

Before leaving on the plane to Kirkenes I had a chance to visit the Tromsø Museum, a veritable mine of northern lore. On the bus ride out to the Museum, I glanced at a local tourist brochure, which reminded me that I was at almost 70 degrees N. latitude (about the same as Scoresby Sund in Greenland and Point Barrow in Alaska). The local record high temperature was 84 degrees F. and the low 4 degrees F. Archeological finds prove that human dwellings existed at Tromsø at least 4500 years ago. Now I see one reason for having a Tromsø Museum.

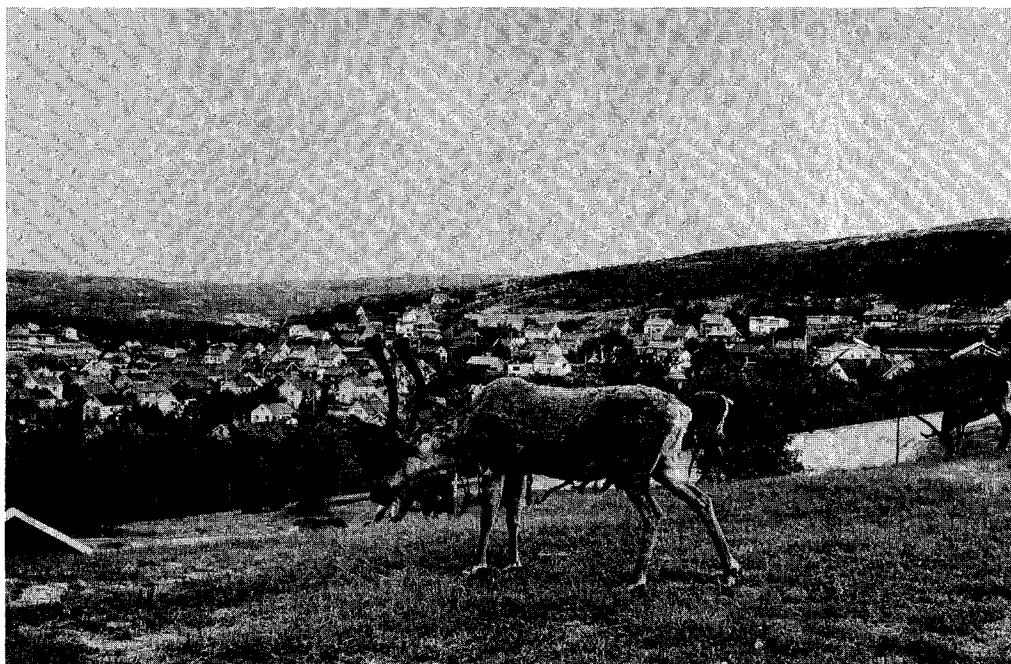
Tromsø Museum, which was founded in 1872, has been in an impressive new building since 1961. The staff, including technicians, numbers about 50 people within seven departments and a library. The departments cover the fields of geology, botany, zoology, marine biology (with two research vessels), archeology, Lapp ethnography, and recent culture-history. Tromsø Museum, with its interest in both social and natural sciences, is similar to the museums in Bergen, Trondheim, and Stavanger. A large part of its 1.2 million kroner (\$168,000) annual budget is contributed by the State. Although its main purpose is research, the Museum also makes its work known to the general public through exhibitions, as well as a popular publication series. The exhibitions are both permanent (at the Museum) and traveling ones, which are sent throughout North Norway in special cabinets. The comprehensive results of various scientific research projects are printed in several Museum publications. Tromsø Museum is obviously an active and vital institution in the cultural life of North Norway, and the whole of northern Scandinavia as well.

The plane from Tromsø to Kirkenes made two stops on the way--Alta and Lakselv--as we skirted the northern cap of Europe, an area known in Scandinavia as Nordkalotten (the northern calotte). This is an area of vast importance today--both strategically* and culturally.

* see Ørvik, Nils. 1963. "Europe's Northern Cap and the Soviet Union". Harvard Univ. Center for International Affairs Occasional Papers in International Affairs, no. 6 64 pp.



Approaching Kirkenes from the west, 20 July 1967



Reindeer grazing on the iron ore company's lawn overlooking Kirkenes.

Nordkalotten is today a testing area in Scandinavian cooperation. At the yearly meetings of the Nordic Council (Nordiska Rådet), a group of senior parliamentarians from the four Scandinavian countries and Iceland, common problems of development in Scandinavia are discussed. It is in Nordkalotten where Norway, Sweden, and Finland have common borders and cultures. Progress, although slow at times, is gradually being made in joint highway construction, water power development, and in a suitable policy for the wandering Lapps.

North Norway (Nordland, Troms, and Finnmark counties) is mountainous country, cut up by fjords and valleys. The alpine terrain extends to the outer coast, although here the mountains are usually bordered by a rim of lowland called strandflat. This low coastal platform is dotted with many islands. Human settlement is restricted mainly to this strandflat and to the valley bottoms leading inland into the mountains.

The rugged mountain landscape is most characteristic of Nordland and Troms counties. Farther east in Finnmark the relief becomes less mountainous and more plateau-like; it resembles the interior of Québec-Labrador. Approaching Kirkenes, in the extreme east of Finnmark, one sees that the country is even less rugged. It is a low plateau of ice-scraped rocks dotted with lakes. Through this rather barren countryside flows, in a series of elongated lakes, the Pasvik River. The Pasvik River valley is good farmland; the river itself teems with fish and, at a series of low waterfalls, offers hydroelectric potential. It also, for part of its course, forms the border between Norway and the Soviet Union, the only common boundary between a NATO land and the USSR. Just east of Kirkenes the Pasvik River meets the sea by emptying into a branch of Varangerfjord.

Kirkenes was fortified under Nazi occupation during World War II (Festung Kirkenes). With Malta, it therefore was heavily bombed. What was not destroyed during the Allied raids was leveled by the Nazis before they retreated to the west. What I saw was a 20-year old town.

The big industry at Kirkenes is iron ore--the mining, concentration, and shipping of ore by the company Sydvaranger A/S. I was interested to see how this mine compared with the operations in Schefferville, Québec of the Iron Ore Company of Canada.

Iron mining by Sydvaranger A/S near Kirkenes is a 60-year old operation similar to the taconite mining areas in Minnesota. It involves open pit mining of iron ore with about 32% iron at Bjornevatn, nine kilometers from Kirkenes. The ore is crushed and separated magnetically into a concentrate of 60-65% iron.

Concentrate production, when I visited Kirkenes, was at about 2.4 million tons annually. A pellet plant is being planned now which is to be in operation by August 1969. At that time about 1.2 mill. T. of pellets and an equal amount of concentrate will be produced each year. The pellet plant will be built by Allis Chalmers in cooperation with Fried. Krupp Industries of Germany.

After a short talk with the company's executive assistant, I was given a tour of the operation from the mines right through to shipping. As we left Kirkenes for the mines at Bjornevatn a herd of reindeer grazed across the company's grounds, moving along with that curious clickety-clack of hooves unique to the reindeer. More about the iron ore workings will be described later on when I should also have room for a few more photographs of this the largest mining operation in Norway.

Early the next morning I met with the chief engineer of the Skogfoss power plant, Mr. Helskog, for a trip up the Pasvik River valley to Skogfoss and then farther up the valley to Noatun. I should say here that the first thing I did upon arrival at Kirkenes was to contact the border commissioner Commander Rygg. His interpreter phoned over to the corresponding border office in Russia to find out about my passage to Murmansk, and there was little to do about definite plans in that direction until hearing from the Russians. That would be sometime in the next few days. So I went about my business, touring the mines and, on the day before I thought I was going to Russia according to my visa dates, riding up the Pasvik Valley.

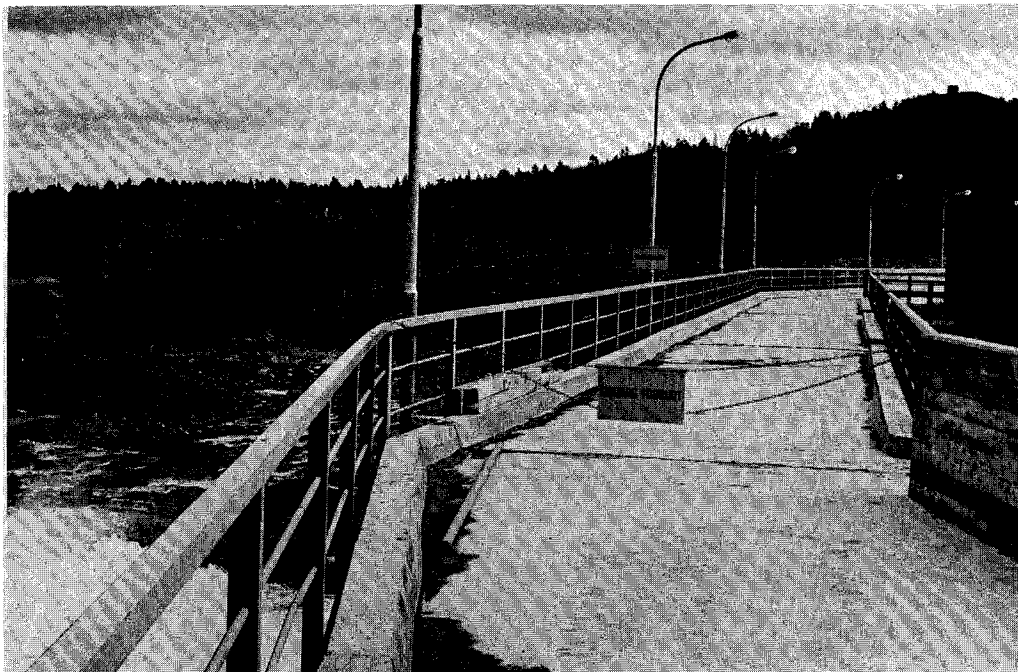
Before reaching the hydroelectric power station at Skogfoss on the Pasvik, we had a view of Nikel', the Russian nickel smelting town across one of the lake expansions of the Pasvik. Nikel' was very much in operation, belching smoke into the clear northern air. I would see it at close range the next day.

Recent water power development along the Pasvik River is a cooperative effort between Norway and Russia according to the agreement of 1957. This agreement for development of the Pasvik was to the effect that the river's 70-meter drop between Grensefoss and the sea would be utilized equally by the two countries. The boundary between Norway and Russia along the Pasvik is generally a line following the river's deepest channel. Russia controls the eastern side and Norway the western, except at Boris Gleb, a Russian enclave on the western bank, which allows Russia to control both sides of the river for a short distance. At Grensefoss, Norway controls both banks for about 100 meters. Farther downstream near Kirkenes, Norwegian territory extends across both banks of the river. Norway and Russia are presently discussing changes in the boundary resulting from artificial lakes created during power development along the river.

The first power project after the 1957 cooperative agreement resulted in harnessing the 8-meter high Skoltefoss near Boris Gleb. This waterfall, being in the enclave, is Russian. The dam and power plant were built for Russia by a Norwegian construction firm. The first power flowed in 1963. The remaining drops in the river occur where Norway and Russia each control one bank of the river and one-half of the actual waterfall. At these sites the 1957 agreement is now being carried out. At Skogfoss a Norwegian power station was completed in 1964. At Hestefoss, still farther upstream, the same Norwegian construction company is presently building a hydroelectric plant for the Russians. The Hestefoss station will produce 45,000 kW (the Russian station at Skoltefoss produces 55,000 kW), delivering about 220 million kWh yearly. Upon completion of the project at Hestefoss in 1969, this power is expected to be coupled into



Across the Pasvik, the Russian mining and smelting town of Nikel'.



Atop Skogfoss dam: The Norwegian-Russian border, Russia in the background.

the transmission grid supplying the Kola Peninsula. Farther upstream from Hestefoss, the Russians have three more power stations, built for them by Finnish construction companies. These, however, lie completely inside the Soviet Union.

The Pasvik River has its source in the great Lake Inari in northern Finland. Before World War II, Finland began hydro development in their Petsamo area. After the war, Russia took over the Petsamo corridor and with it the Finnish installations--a hydro plant at Jäniskoski and a regulating dam at Niskakoski. These two installations were actually transferred to Russia in 1948, after Russia realized she would need power to operate the smelter at Nikel'. The Russians now have control over the flow of water from Lake Inari down into the Pasvik River, although this control is based on an agreement between Norway, Finland, and Russia.

According to the 1957 power development agreement, Norway can develop the potential at Melkefoss (downstream from their plant at Skogfoss) for its own use. When this is completed, the Pasvik's hydro potential will be fully developed.

My auto trip along the Pasvik River with Mr. Helskog continued on up the verdant valley until we reached the Norwegian power station at Skogfoss (foss in Norwegian means waterfall), 60 kilometers from Kirkenes. Driving from the iron ore pits at Bjernevatn to Skogfoss, we passed many abandoned farms. The universal problem of getting and keeping young people in farming was starkly obvious as well. The main crops of the area are hay, potatoes, carrots, and cabbage. The potatoes were just in bloom (23 July).

As we drove along, the Skogfoss dam suddenly appeared through the trees. We got out and went through the power plant, which was just as clean and antiseptic and humming as any other hydro plant. We then walked up onto the dam and along its top until a small chain barred our way. A sign said in Norwegian "No Admittance" and another a few meters behind it marked the boundary. On the river's far bank I spotted the red and green boundary posts of the Soviet Union. A Russian observation tower was perched upon a nearby hill. I was surprised when Mr. Helskog said that photography was allowed. After taking a few shots, I accompanied Helskog back to a nearby tourist inn for lunch.

The project at Skogfoss was started in 1961; the switch was thrown on 26 September 1964. Skogfoss produces about 150-160 million kWh yearly. The plant is owned jointly by the Varanger Power Board and the iron ore company at Kirkenes. Engineer Helskog is the power company's only employee. I asked him about cooperation with the Russians. Apparently everything goes rather well along the Pasvik. Occasionally there is a lack of rapid communication from the Russians when they release large amounts of water upstream.

"Sometimes we get the word after seven days, or perhaps two weeks--but also sometimes before the water arrives! It has been better in the past six months, though."

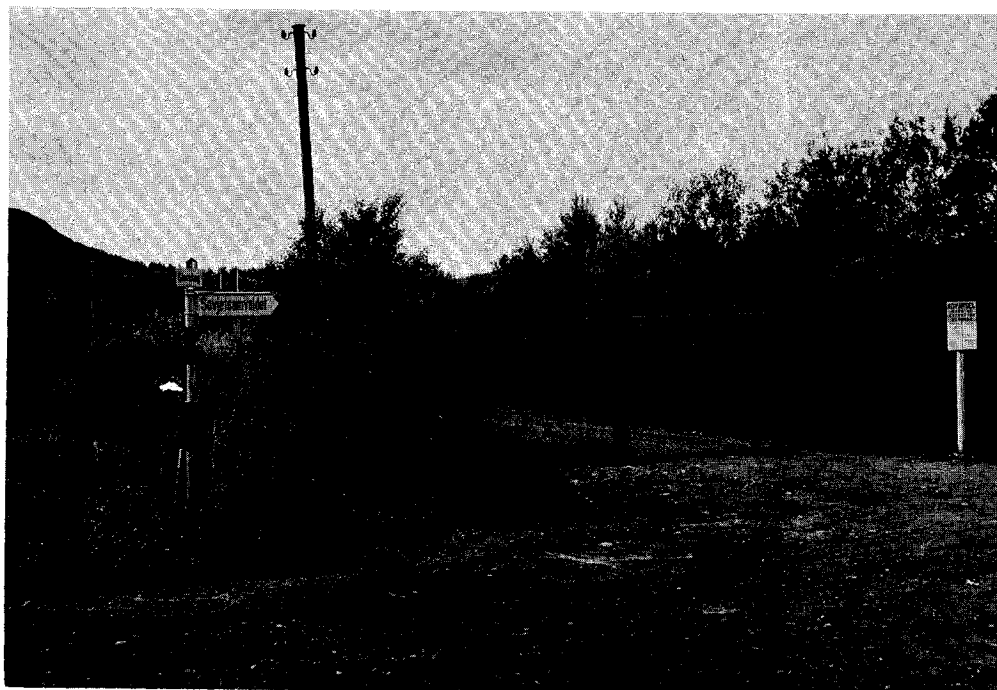
When I arrived back at the Kirkenes Turisthotell late that afternoon a message from the border commissioner, Commodore Rygg, said that the Russians had informed him that I should be at the border at Storskog the

next morning at 0600 hours. As I headed off to the sauna, I left my passport at the reception desk of the hotel. The Kirkenes police would drop by to stamp it. A pretty good system, albeit casual--the police do not like getting up early in the morning either.

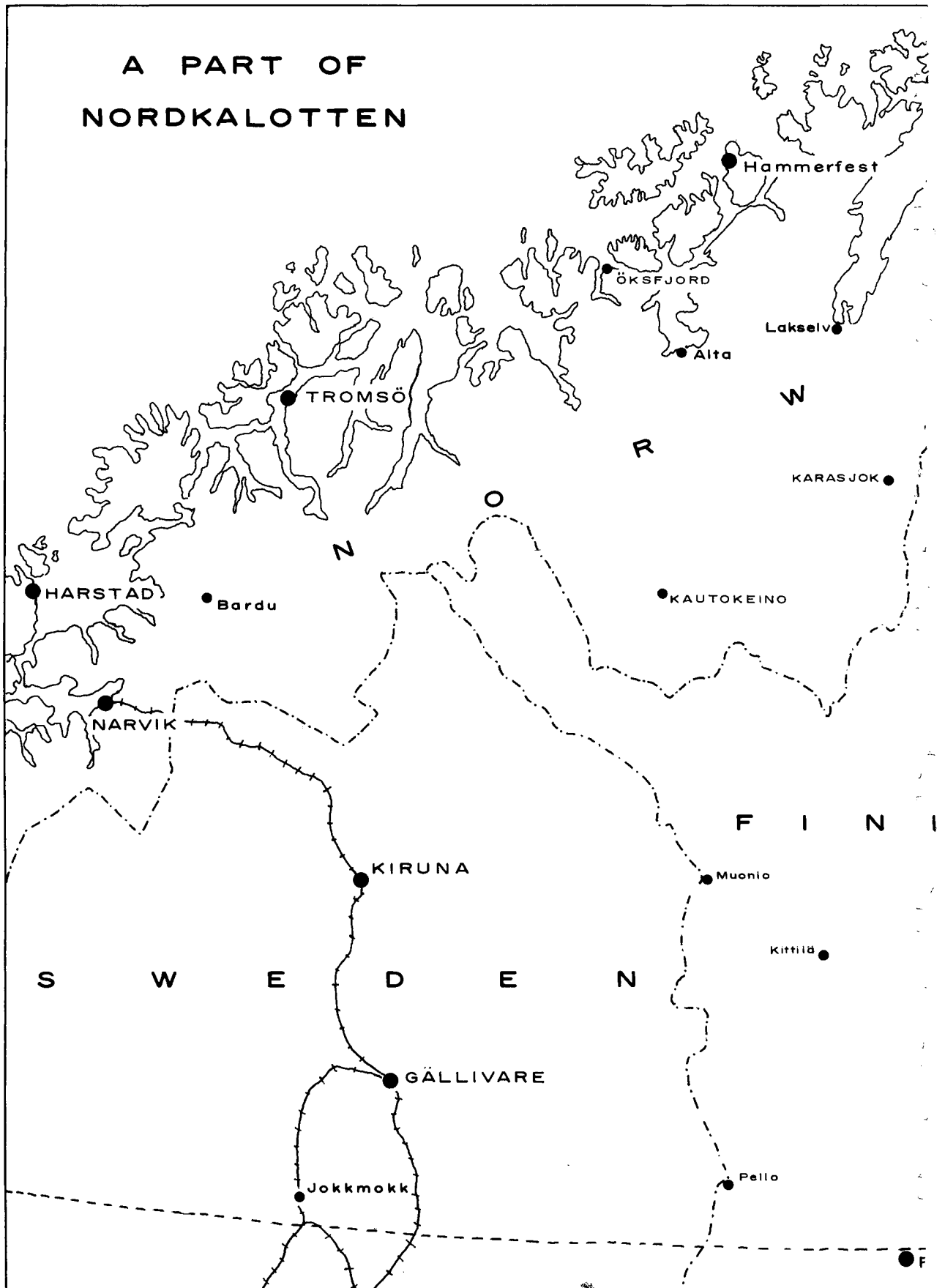
The next morning, Sunday, 23 July, I got up at 5 and took a taxi the 16 kilometers from Kirkenes to Storskog. At Storskog there is nothing but a small farmhouse where the Norwegian and Russian border officials meet. A chain fence stands behind a sign pointing towards the Soviet Union. On the fence is another sign posting a shortened version of the border agreement.

All was stillness in that light of early morning; a few birds chirped but otherwise all was dead calm. Off on a rise in that clearing in the scrub stood the border farmhouse with no signs of life. The taxi driver, who takes many tourists from Kirkenes to see the "Iron Curtain", looked expectantly at me. I told him I was to cross the border and would not return with him to Kirkenes.

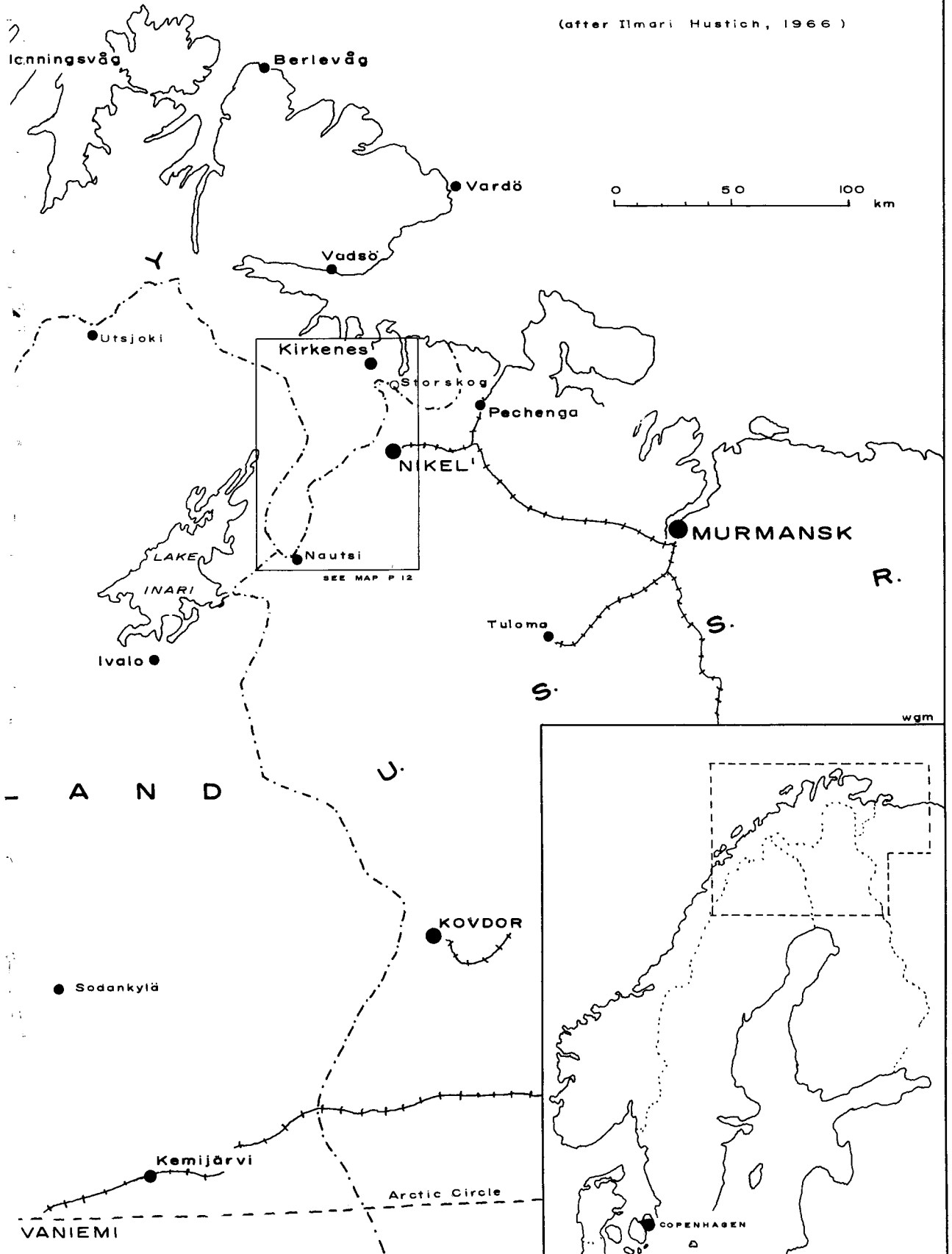
At that point a Norwegian soldier appeared in the doorway of the farmhouse. He was gone again in a minute, but reappeared with a colleague, who carried a carbine. They walked down the dusty road as I paid the taxi man and said goodbye. Beyond the chain fence all was quiet. Then we heard a truck off in the distance indicating some activity in the Russian

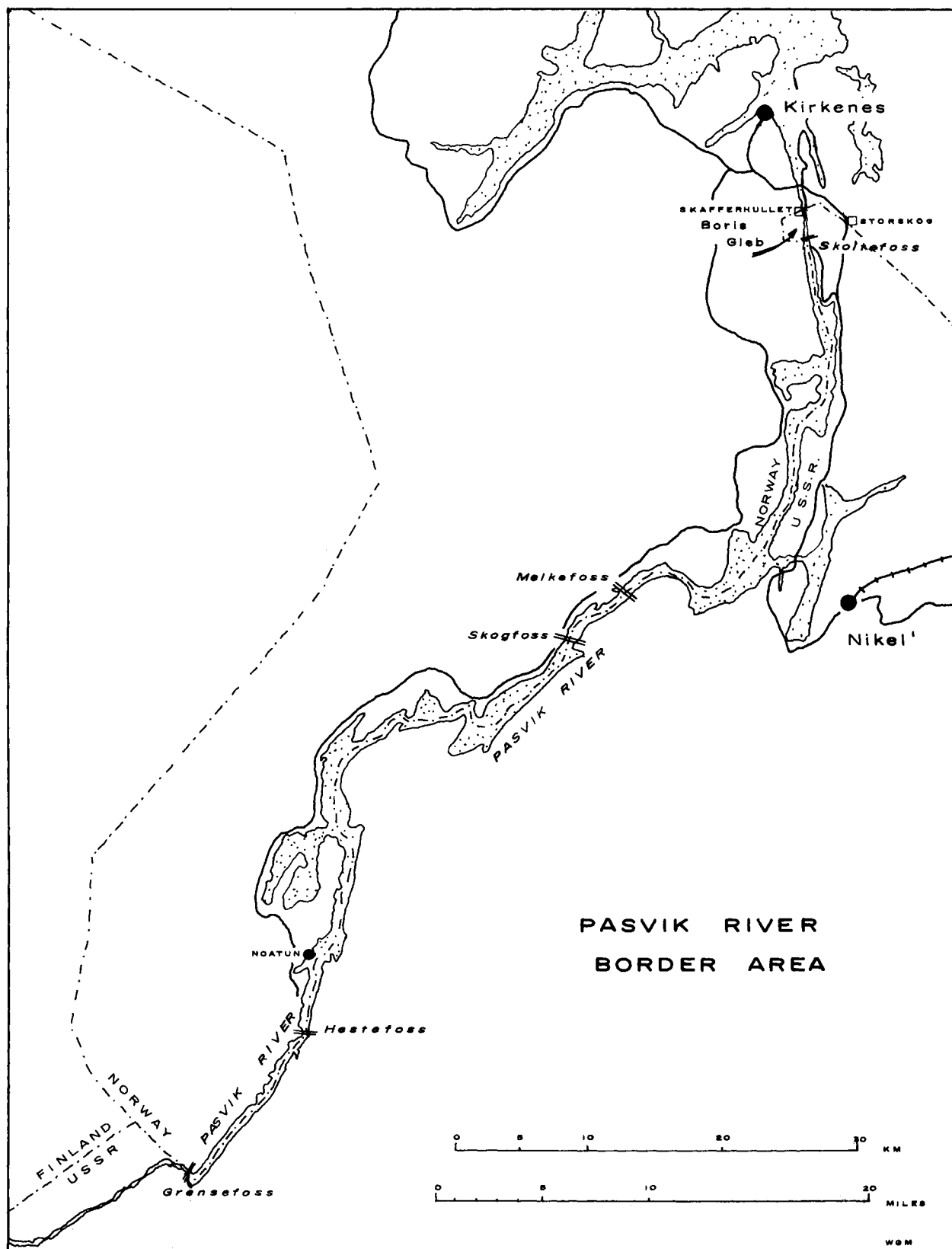


At Storskog, Norway, near the border crossing into the Soviet Union,
23 July 1967



(after Ilmari Hustich, 1966)





camp. The Norwegian soldier unlocked the gate on the chain fence and we walked along a dirt road for about 100 meters to the actual border.

We came then to a barricade where a military truck was parked. As we approached, three Russian soldiers got out of the truck and shook hands with their Norwegian counterparts and then with me. The Russian soldiers looked like Russian soldiers. One was even bear-like and seemed possessed of good humor. He asked the Norwegian soldier in German how everything was going; "Gut, und wie geht es Ihnen?" End of exchange; economy with propriety is the word. The Russians requested my passport and visa and then disappeared into the rear of the truck. Then another vehicle resembling a '48 Dodge sedan (but actually a new Moskva) disgorged a young driver and a woman, both in civilian dress. These two were Intourist representatives; they were to drive me to Nikel' to catch the train for Murmansk.

After a short while I got my passport back from the military and off we sped down a bumpy road toward Nikel'. (My passport presumably had been photographed--the only thing which could account for the closed truck and the time spent inspecting the passport.) Unlike the Norwegian side of the Pasvik, the Russian border area is quite empty. Russian civilians apparently are not permitted within a certain distance of the border; perhaps the high fence with surrounding barbed wire between the road and the Pasvik had something to do with this, or perhaps a NATO invasion was expected.

After driving 15 minutes or so the road became paved after it joined the road leading from Boris Gleb. In the summer of 1965, amid much fanfare, the Russians opened a tourist center at Boris Gleb, on the west bank of the Pasvik. The border crossing at Boris Gleb had been open for three years while the Norwegians were building the power station at Skoltefoss for the Russians. With the 1965 opening, however, Norwegian visitors could cross the border into Boris Gleb, buy cheap vodka at the bar there, and return merrily to Norway again--all without a visa. Since hard liquor cannot be purchased in the whole of East Finnmark, this tidy arrangement seemed to suit some Norwegians. But you could not travel into the rest of the Soviet Union from Boris Gleb, nor was the traffic a two-way affair with Russian visitors going over to Norway. It was instead a bald effort to play tourist host and reap a bit of good publicity (along with the foreign currency).

Then came the Mott affair, in which the American, Newcomb Mott, got into the bar at Boris Gleb without going over the legal crossing point. He was not allowed over the regular way, to say nothing of crossing through the woods. The tragedy of his arrest, after apparently asking the waitress to get his passport stamped, and subsequent death in Russia under mysterious circumstances is now well known. That case was a bit too much for the easy-going Norwegians. They promptly closed their border--that is, refused to allow any crossings into Boris Gleb from Norway. The Russians kept their side open but, of course, it takes two to tango.

In 1966, with Skafferhullet, the Norwegian crossing point into Boris Gleb, still closed, the Russians invited tourists to Boris Gleb from the Storskog crossing point a few miles to the east, but not one visitor came. On 1 October 1966 the Russians closed Boris Gleb and that is where the matter stands today.

Storskog is the only border crossing point from Norway into Russia, but it is by no means a known and well-traveled point. To cross into Russia at Storskog, one needs, first of all, permission from the Norwegians--in addition, of course, to the usual Russian visa. The only destination in that part of the Soviet Union is Murmansk, which is reached by train from Nikel'.

It took us about 40 minutes to drive to the station at Nikel'. Nikel' is the site of a nickel mining and smelting operation, formerly run by INCO of Canada under concession from Finland. The Petsamo territory was transferred to Russia following the 1944 Armistice; Nikel' has been a Russian operation ever since.

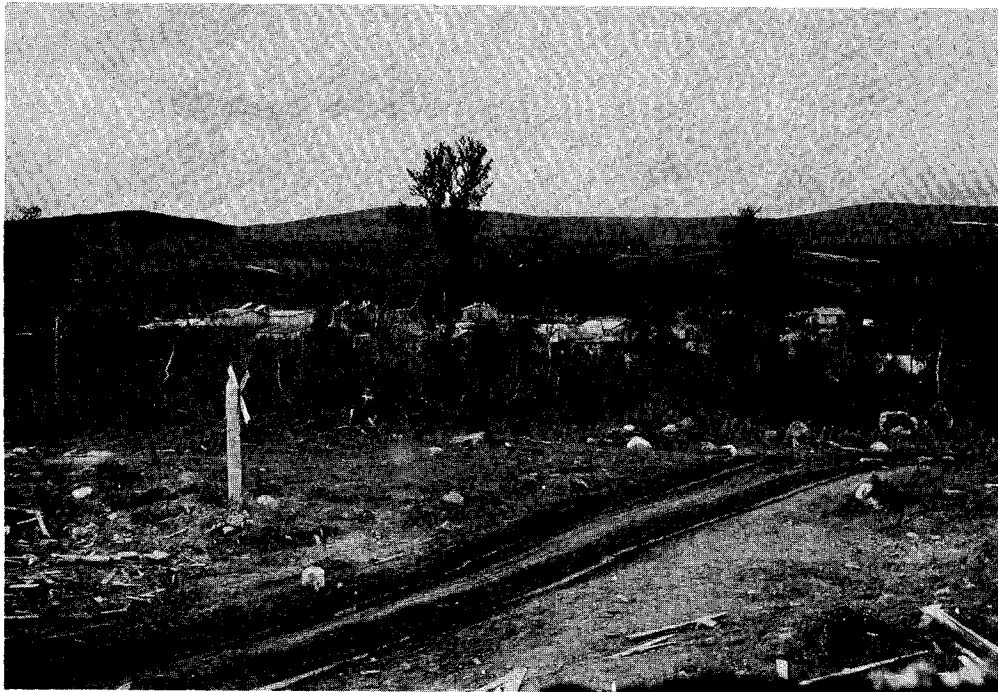
I didn't get too much of a glimpse of Nikel' as we sped for the railway station. It appeared to be a bleak, frontier town on that rainy morning. I don't think I'd choose to live there.

Even though North Norway extends eastward into two time zones, Norway has retained uniform time over all the country. Therefore, one has to set clocks ahead two hours when entering Russia. My train left Nikel' at 0922 (0722 Norwegian time) and was scheduled to reach Murmansk, 197 kilometers away, at 1800 that evening. Whatever else you might say about such a trip, covering 120 miles in 8.5 hours isn't exactly zooming. I got an inclination of this as the chambermaid on the train made up the seat with mattress, sheets, and a pillow. I wasn't planning on a sleep, but this could have developed into an endurance contest.

My Intourist lady and driver introduced me to the dining car steward and gave me my meal tickets for the train. I had breakfast soon after we chugged out of Nikel' (sliced white bread, cheese, 2 poached eggs, tea) and spent the rest of the morning alone in my compartment. The rolling wilderness of the Russian Subarctic was occasionally broken by a metal-smelting town or a small settlement. The train's clickety-clack accompanied the music blaring out of the loud speaker over my door. At 1115 a uniform brought me a pile of propaganda literature and guide books: "Leningrad - A Short Guide Book", "Crime against Peace", "For Peace and Security", "Art Festivals of USSR, 1967", etcetera.

After two hours we reached the branch line to Petchenga (Petsamo), and then continued on towards Murmansk. The countryside showed little signs of agriculture and much low, marshy ground, gradually growing sparser of trees as we proceeded eastwards. The land was gently rolling, with areas of glacial deposits, scrub birch, and a few shallow, slow-running streams. Occasionally I saw old burn areas. After 4 hours the country became just about treeless, with but scattered low birch. It was a barren scene, large expanses of scrub, marsh, rock, erratic glacial boulders, and streams. A freight train passed us going in the opposite direction carrying coal, timber, and crushed rock. It passed us at a station stop--the rail line is single track.

At 1400 I ate dinner, which was finished off with an unintelligible discussion with a young Russian electrical engineer, who had had a heated argument with the dining car director during the early part of my meal. The young man was finally escorted away by a soldier or policeman.



East of Nikel', USSR. A small settlement seen from the railway.
23 July 1967

I got the words Amerikansky and touristy, but missed all the rest. Dinner began with a fine borsch, served quite hot. Then a salad of quartered tomatoes, followed by chicken breast and rice, and an orange for dessert. Plus a glass of some mild, undiscernible fruit drink.

The Russians on the train and those at the station stops appeared scruffy, unkempt, unhealthy, fat, and dowdy with but few exceptions. The exceptions were the military and police, who looked quite fit.

The maddening music continued to blare forth: soaring arias, a mixed conglomeration of various types of songs interspersed with time checks, news, and a lively drama or two. It was enough to send a person completely batty--and at twice the required volume.

By late afternoon we seemed to be getting into a more heavily populated area. A few hydroelectric dams, factories, and railroad yards appeared. At 6 o'clock we arrived at Murmansk. Although I was prepared to find a good-sized northern town, I was nevertheless surprised at Murmansk. This city is on a completely different scale than anything else I have seen in the North. It has close to 300,000 inhabitants, is Russia's largest fishing port (800,000 tons of fish landed yearly--or more than Britain), and undoubtedly has vital shipping and military installations.

I was met at the station by two women: an Intourist agent and an interpreter hired by Intourist. The interpreter was young, chic, good-looking, and very skilled in English. She would accompany me throughout my short visit to Murmansk. We drove by taxi to the hotel (Hotel Severn--Northern Hotel) and went to the Intourist office and, afterwards, I was shown my room. The next day, Monday, would be my only full one in Murmansk. On Tuesday afternoon I had to take the train back to Nikel'.

As I left my room to eat dinner in the hotel's restaurant, I was beckoned by the hall porter, a rather dumpy lady in a shawl, who asked for my key. Her life's job seemed to be taking charge of the key deposit system. After a quick meal and brief meeting with Intourist for my program the next day, I retired for the night. My suite consisted of two large rooms and a bathroom, all clean and freshly painted, but with curious, ornate, barely-functional fixtures.

I fell asleep musing over what my interpreter, Zina, told me at dinner. She was from the Caucasus and had been in Murmansk since January. Wages in Murmansk were 40% higher than elsewhere; they increased 10% annually until reaching a level 80% higher than in the rest of Russia. Costs are also higher, but the net result is a definite high wage level in Murmansk (as well as in the rest of the Soviet North).

I was up and dressed by eight the next morning. Breakfast was delivered to the room: 2 boiled eggs, a glass of kefir or a kind of sour milk like the Danish tykkmalk (delicious!), poached salmon, fried potatoes, scallions, sliced tomatoes, bread and butter, and 2 cups of tea. Joan would have approved of all this. She believes in getting the blood sugar level up by a good breakfast. The salmon would have received special approval.

After breakfast I took a picture of the street from my window. Rain had showered during the night, and it looked like more was on the way. Not a good day for pictures. Before leaving Copenhagen, I asked the Russian consulate for their regulations about photography. Mr. Roganoff waved off my question and said I could photograph anything I liked. The Russians have no printed regulations to guide visitors about photography (but strangely enough, the U.S. State Department published a brochure to aid tourists and visitors to Russia). The Intourist head in Murmansk said I could photograph anything except the harbor. It depends upon the locality, of course, but I think the Russians have eased up a bit about photography. I certainly had no difficulties when standing at the border on the dam at Skogfoss and taking pictures of Russian territory there.

On the way to my first appointment (The Fisheries Research Institute or PINRO), we taxied about Murmansk in the rain, even as far out as one of the "satellite developments", an apartment block complex on the hills overlooking the city.

In a 3-hour visit to PINRO, I had a conference with the Institute's director, Dr. Alexeev, and his staff and a tour about their buildings.



A Murmansk street from my hotel window.



The Murmansk Oblast Museum



WGM crowned by Lenin in Murmansk

PINRO is responsible for the marine biological work supporting the massive Russian trawler fleet which operates in various areas of the North Atlantic. PINRO operates 18 research vessels, but not all of these are working at the same time.

The Russian fishing fleet out of Murmansk works off Labrador (began in 1961), Svalbard and Bjørnøya, Grand Bank off Newfoundland, and from Georges Bank south to the Hudson River outlet. They also fish the northern North Sea and Norwegian and Murman coastal areas. The Institute has an impressive library; it carries all the fishing journals and many other publications of the area. One translator was working full time on the Scandinavian material. The display cases of sea conditions and types of fishing, found around the walls of the Institute's small museum, were alone worth the trip to Murmansk. I wanted to visit the Murmansk Fisheries Combine; it was, however, closed for repairs.

After a late lunch, I went with my interpreter to the Murmansk Oblast Museum, and another 3-hour visit. This museum was a gold mine of information about the Kola area, well done in typical Russian scale and thoroughness. Everything from wildlife groups to regional economic development was displayed. By six that evening I felt as though my visit had certainly been worthwhile.



Murmansk scenes



Back at the hotel's Intourist office, a man waited from the Murmansk Shipping Company, a Mr. Makeev. He had been there for several hours, but seemed unperturbed by his wait. I had expressed an interest in the company, which sails to Montreal among other places, and asked to visit one of their ships in the harbor. Makeev invited me to dinner at a nearby restaurant. His wife was away on vacation with the family. "Comrade" Makeev (as the Intourist chief addressed him) and I had a fine evening. Appropriately for Murmansk, we went to a seafood restaurant called "Gifts of the Sea" and sampled kalmari (squid) and a tasty fish stroganoff. And there was vodka.

Makeev picked me up at the hotel at 10 o'clock the next morning and we went to the harbor to visit the passenger ship "V. Vorovsky". The Murmansk Shipping Company operates a fleet of 5 icebreakers (coming soon: a sixth, the "Murmansk") and 80 cargo ships. "V. Vorovsky" was sailing later that day to Archangel, to Havana in September, and off and on to Georges Bank to service the fishing fleet. She carries 300 passengers. In addition to supplies to the fishing fleet, she takes complete crew shifts to the fleet. With the ship's Master we ate a lunch of caviar, Kamchatka crab, and white wine; but it was soon time to go and pack for the train. My visit to Murmansk was over--short, too short. And fleeting impressions are perhaps dangerous ones.

Murmansk is a good example of what can be done in the North. It consisted of one log cabin in 1916. I suppose most people think of the North Atlantic convoys of World War II when they hear the name. And who would imagine a bustling city of close to a third of a million people as far north as Disko Bay or Point Hope, Alaska?

My train left Murmansk at 2:15 that afternoon. The same ride through the bush and scrub followed. We got to Nikel' at 10:30 that night and I crossed the border into Norway an hour later.

The same two Norwegian border guards met me. A few Norwegians, out for an evening drive, were stopped along the fence near the farmhouse. They were full of questions. The border guard said I should drop by the police station to have my passport stamped. And yes I could get a ride into Kirkenes with these folks here.

I don't know why exactly, but I breathed a big sigh of relief on the way back to Kirkenes. The next morning at 3:30 I got up to catch the SAS flight for Oslo and Copenhagen. I got home that same day. In ten days I was to leave for Greenland, but first we had to move to a new house.

Sincerely,



W. G. Mattox

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