

and the wish to think in global categories are still strong. However paradoxical it may seem, the most vital rivers in the Chukotka, the Anadyr', Kanchalan and the Velikaya, are basically ownerless. They do not appear on the USSR Ministry of Inland Waterways' list, and are not included in the USSR Ministry of Seaways' lists either. The seaport of Anadyr' is mainly responsible for putting up navigational and warning notices on them. However, it obviously has very little power. The rivers are certainly not maintained everywhere. And, as captain Yu. Mel'nikov at the port of Anadyr' told me, vessels have to navigate "by the bush, by the little promontory, by the colour of the water". At times of low water, which occurs in August and September, vessels have to make their way along the channel literally "on their bellies". Usually they are led by a tug. The waves they create make it possible to pick out sandbanks. This is how the Chukotka rivermen work.

But the trickiest and, I would say, dangerous time comes in October, when there is ice coming down the rivers, and one after the other the vessels of the Far Eastern Steamship Company are coming in to the port of Anadyr' carrying the most precious loads of all: potatoes, meat and vegetables. They have to be unloaded quickly, without hold-ups, so that the produce doesn't get frozen or spoilt, otherwise the area will be left without food throughout the entire long winter.

The low water gulf of Onemen freezes over quickly and, during the ebb, the ice moves at a speed of eight knots towards the mouth of the Anadyr' River, which is no more than two miles wide in the port region. A huge ice pack is formed. The sea vessel moorings break, unable to withstand the pressure. They have to use anchors on the bollards