

In September 1927, the province became a district and was included in Leningrad Oblast. Although Murmansk was called a city at that time, it was underpopulated (10,000 residents), made of wood and dirty.

The creation of the Murmansk district and the all-round help of the country and Leningrad speeded up the development of Khibiny, the creation of a fishing industry and the formation of a working class in the Trans-Polar region. But centralization of the economy and remoteness from Leningrad in many cases hindered effective decision making and made Murmansk district a difficult-to-manage part of Leningrad Oblast. The question of separating the Murmansk district was again the order of the day.

On May 28th, 1938, Murmansk Oblast' was created by an Order of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

And just what was Murmansk Oblast? It was 127,000 km<sup>2</sup> in area with a population of about 300,000. Over the last 50 years, the population of the Kola Peninsula has just about quadrupled and is now 1,138,000. Eleven major cities have sprung up in the oblast, including 8 of oblast subordination, five regions and more than 20 workers' settlements. Our oblast can be called one of the most "urban" in the country. The structure of the local Soviets has changed accordingly, although their number remains practically the same.

In 50 years, the total industrial output has grown about 23 times. The value of fixed assets as of January 1st, 1988 was 19 billion rubles.

The railway, which connected the capital of the Soviet Trans-Polar region with the rest of the country, has played an enormous, if not to say decisive role in the development of the area. Constructed during the First