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**EXTRACTS FROM THE SOVIET PRESS  
ON THE SOVIET NORTH  
AND THE ANTARCTIC**

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## ARCTIC

### Icebreaker to Take Tourists on Polar Cruise

Following the Arktika and the Sibir', which have been to the Pole, the atomic icebreaker Rossiya is also preparing to visit the top of the earth. Unlike its counterparts, it will not be carrying scientists but tourists from capitalist countries. An agreement on this has been concluded between the Murmansk Marine Steamship Line (MMSL) and the West German firm "Polar Schiffahrts Konsulting."

"A journey to the Pole is, of course, an expensive pleasure," said N. Matyushenko, senior deputy chief of MMSL, who is busy organizing the first cruise. "Our passengers will therefore be well-to-do people only. Under the agreement, the cost of a ticket is 35,000 West German marks.

"The cruise will begin in Murmansk, where the tourists will arrive on a special flight from the Federal Republic of Germany. Here they will be shown the sights of the city and its suburbs, and on the following day, July 30, the Rossiya will leave the port of Murmansk with its guests on board and set course for the Arctic.

"Three possible routes were considered for the cruise. The shortest was from Murmansk west of Franz Josef Land to the Pole. The second passed to the east of these islands. A third was chosen--the route followed by the atomic ship Arktika in August 1977. It will take 15 days--a few days more than the first alternative--but it has already been approved. According to the calculations, the icebreaker will reach the Pole on August 6-7. The return to Murmansk is planned for August 13.

"A representative of the West German firm who visited the Rossiya, which is undergoing regular maintenance, was fully satisfied with the living conditions offered to the tourists."

It should be added that the foreign exchange which the steamship line received for the unusual cruise will be used to solve the collective's social problems. It has been decided that summer cruises of atomic ships in the Arctic will become a tradition in the future. There are more than enough people who want to travel in the icy regions.

Rabochaya tribuna

1 May 1990

Page 3 (full text)

### Give the Arctic Back Its Wings

It seems only yesterday that feelings ran high at the Constituent Assembly of the All-Union Association of Soviet Polar Workers. Although the passions have subsided, the pain remains. This is shown by letters from our readers. Let us open one of them.

...In the article "Facing North" (Vozdushnyi transport, February 27, 1990), I read a discussion between the correspondent and I. Levandovsky, head of the Krasnoyarsk administration. I can in no way agree with the assertion that "specialized management of polar aviation now is not a panacea." The director apparently only spoke

this way because he knows full well that polar service will be reinstated--the administration will eliminate runs to the North and discontinue flights to the Arctic. It is no secret that profits are the reason. This would be a frightening loss.

Polar aviation is so necessary to the country! Let us suppose that some unforeseen and unpredictable medical assistance is required today in a remote settlement in Taimyr. What are we going to do? Wait until an aircraft arrives from Krasnoyarsk? But what if the weather en route is poor? What if there isn't a single machine on the ground at Khatanga itself? What it means is that people can die because of departmental foul-ups.

However, surely this is not all that is at stake. Formerly, pilots in polar aviation carried out regular daily cargo and passenger flights throughout the region and terrain permitting landed their planes close to the most remote little peasants' houses. Naturally, skilled pilots, aces in fact, were selected for this.

Moreover, the polar aviators took pride in their accomplishments and were respected for them since not everyone is capable of flying in the northern skies.

I repeat, I am in favour of reinstating the Polar Aviation Department. Also, I am in favour of inviting the very same M. Shevelev back to the controls. Sure, the veteran of the Arctic is no longer young, but he knows the job and will be able to train a distinguished new generation. I think that he will bring with him the old professionals he nurtured in his day. Think how effective it would be if the former polar aviator sat in the cockpit as mentor to one of today's pilots setting out to work in the North! Could such training possibly be bad?

I myself worked in polar aviation for almost 25 years. I flew in the Taimyr in An-2s, and Li-2s, and An-12s. I also had occasion to land on drifting North Pole stations and took part in three expeditions to the Antarctic. In brief, I know the business, as they say,

not by hearsay. Let us get to work--pilots, navigators, engineers--all who hold dear the title of polar worker. Let us resurrect what was lost and destroyed by a single stroke of the pen in the years of stagnation. I myself am ready to help with both advice and action.

S. Erokhov  
Aeroflot veteran  
Vozdushnyi transport  
11 May 1990  
Page 3 (full text)

### Ice Floe Breaks Up - End of High Latitude Expedition

The "North-90" airborne expedition to the high latitudes has ended. It was serviced by a composite arctic squadron of the Krasnoyarsk civil aviation directorate commanded by V. Grishin. On May 13 the State flag of the USSR was hauled down at the ice base drifting deep within the Central Arctic Basin.

In the last few days the ice floe has been subjected to particularly intensive pressure and hummocking and cracks developed in several places. That made it necessary to hastily transfer the camp and its tents, frame huts, supplies and equipment to another location. A sizable chunk of the ice airfield's landing strip broke off...

Nevertheless, the scientists completed the program successfully with the help of the pilots, said M. Sorokin, head of the expedition.

Vozdushnyi transport  
19 May 1990  
Page 1 (full text)

#### On Drifting Ice

The Leningrad--Pevek--NP--31--NP--30 air bridge has been operating for about a month. This year the "North-42" high-latitude air expedition of the Arctic and Antarctic Scientific Research Institute, led by S. Kessel', chose Apapel'khino airport near Pevek as its base. All the necessary supplies were brought here on An-26 and An-12 aircraft, and a new shift of polar workers arrived for both drifting stations. NP-31, which has a good runway, has assumed the role of transshipment base. The An-2 and Il-14 aircraft of the Kolymo-Indigirka airline which are based here transport people and cargo to NP-30. Owing to constant shifting of the ice, the station has frequently lacked an ice runway and now has a very small airfield which can only accommodate An-2 aircraft.

The veteran of the ice routes, the Il-14, whose crew is led by Yu. Klepikov, an experienced flying instructor with 30 years of service in ice reconnaissance and flights to the North Pole, has assumed the role of fuel supplier for the An-2 aircraft. Aviation fuel is parachuted onto NP-30. These drops are planned and carried out by members of the "Pole" Parachute Expeditionary Operations of the State Hydrometeorological Committee of the USSR.

The NP-31 collective is headed by Yu. Tikhonov, a frequent participant in polar drifts, and NP-30 by V. Sokolov, who has a wealth of experience working in aerial expeditions on drifting ice.

Vozdushnyi transport  
8 May 1990  
Page 1 (full text)

## ENVIRONMENT

### Novaya Zemlya Nuclear Weapons Testing Range: Press Interview Given

For a long time now it has been public knowledge that there is a nuclear testing range on Novaya Zemlya, even though very little information about it is leaked to our press. What things are like there, how atomic weapons tests are affecting ecological conditions in the Far North as well as the health of the people living there--these and other questions from our correspondent are answered by Vice-Admiral G. Zolotukhin, head of one of the departments of the Navy and USSR State Prize laureate.

Q. "Gennady Evpat'evich, what is the country's northernmost testing range like and what is the story behind its establishment? No reference book contains such information..."

A. "Until recently, information of that sort was a state and military secret. Its publication was not foreseen, to put it mildly... The testing range was created by a decision of the Council of Ministers of the

USSR in July 1954. I need not remind you of the complex situation at that time: the height of the "cold war," the politics of intimidation and the arms race it gave rise to. We started to build nuclear-missile weapons. To test and perfect them, a testing range was set up on Novaya Zemlya, among others.

It is 750 kilometres long and 150 wide. It occupies 90,200 square kilometres, 55,000 of which are on dry land. The area of the whole archipelago is 83,000 square kilometres. The northern of the two islands is a continuous glacier. In area it is the largest in the country. The southern island consists of arctic tundra.

I would add that the islands were practically uninhabited and hundreds of kilometres away from the nearest populated areas. Moreover, the test area almost ideally corresponded to the required geophysical, geological, meteorological, and technical and economic indices. Suffice it to say that even today, in relation to the wind rose - an extremely important parameter for the test personnel - it is one of the most stable regions in the Arctic.

The distance from the southern limits of the range to the town of Amderma is 280 kilometres, and to Vaigach Island, where several dozen people live in the settlement of Varnek, it is 180. Added to this is the fact that the geological structures of the lands making up the northern hemisphere are so distinctive that they rule out even the smallest seismic effect on the adjoining regions."

Q. "You spoke of the sparseness of population. However, the Nenets lived on Novaya Zemlya itself and ships of the Northern Fleet were based there... According to several specialists, these islands are rich in mineral deposits..."

A. "Let's be more specific. As to the Nenets, by 1954 only 104 families were living in the Belush'ya Guba camp, having migrated there from Pechora at various times. In view of the need to establish an atomic testing range, the Soviet government requested Tyko Vylko to consider the possibility of resettling them on the mainland, their ancestral home. Such a decision was taken at a meeting of the island Soviet.

It was not a base but rather an anchorage for ships of the Northern Fleet which was developed in the archipelago during the war years. It was this that paved the way for building a settlement for the test personnel. The first visit by Russian seamen occurred in 1870 on the Varyag and Zhemchug.

There are no industrial mineral reserves there, nor have any been discovered on Kolguev Island. There are some small deposits of copper, zinc and zinc-lead ores on Vaigach, but it would not have been economically feasible to exploit them. All this became yet another argument in favour of the testing range.

What makes it special is that, in the first stages of nuclear weapons testing, powerful aerial explosions were carried out (at altitudes ranging from 3 to 10 kilometres). There was also a small number of underwater, above-water and land-based explosions. The altitude chosen for the detonations prevented high levels of contamination of the surface below. Thirty years after the cessation of testing in these three media, the levels of gamma radiation are now at the level of the earth's natural background radiation as a result of natural decay."

Q. "But nuclear weapons tests are continuing, even though they are now underground. What guarantees are there that carelessness or some other factor will not lead to disaster? People are concerned that the ecological conditions in the Far North have deteriorated as a result of the test site. Are such fears only due to lack of information about the actual danger of the tests conducted on the range or are there genuine grounds for concern?"

A. "I want to say frankly that we are partly to blame for this concern: secrecy has left its imprint everywhere. Of course, even now the testing range is not a place to go for a stroll, but we are definitely going to rectify the situation and give people reliable information about everything that goes on there. I hope that my meeting with you will be only the first step in this direction and that others will follow.

The test site is not to blame for the worsened ecological conditions in the Arctic. They are the technogenic consequence of man's multifaceted and wasteful activities in exploiting the riches of the Far North. Oil and gas workers, metallurgists, mining engineers and geologists have all had a hand in this... In a word, many departments. In my opinion, to say the least it is not very fair to shift all of the blame onto the military.

As regards the radiation situation, this is monitored daily and during test periods by means of special highly sensitive airborne, waterborne and land-based equipment. This is far from being a narrow departmental matter. In addition to the special services of the test site and the Ministry of Defence, monitoring is also done at posts maintained by the State Hydrometeorological Committee, the USSR Ministry of Health and various institutes of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

At the end of last year in particular an aircraft fitted out as a radiation and ecology monitoring laboratory overflew the northwestern part of the country to conduct an expert study of the prevailing background radiation along the route Archangel-Nar'yan Mar-Vaigach-Novaya Zemlya at altitudes of between 100 and 3,000 metres. A 20-mile zone of islands on the Barents Sea side was also investigated. Experts from the Ministry of Defence, representatives of the Centre for Public Information on Atomic Energy and scientists from the Physics Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian SSR participated in the work.

Without citing specific figures, although they are available, I will say that no anomalies in the natural ecological situation attributable to the testing range were discovered. The scientists' findings clearly state that the Novaya Zemlya range is not ecologically dangerous in terms of radiation.

However, there are portions of its territory with an elevated level of ionizing radiation, about one milliroentgen an hour. These are the areas where land-based tests were conducted up to 1963. They are closed, of course. No one is allowed into these sanitary zones.

On some occasions when underground nuclear tests are conducted, radionuclides of inert gases are observed escaping to the surface. But they are very few in number and do not have a serious impact on the environment.

As far as safety guarantees are concerned, I am afraid that references to the superior professional competence of our people and to careful and thorough preparation and organization of the work are not very convincing nowadays. Everyone understands that a nuclear blast is a potentially dangerous experiment. Anything can happen. But I will advance the following argument. I myself spent a total of about five years on the testing range, and my colleagues in the directorate spent 10 years or more there. Some had children who grew up there. By the way, the delivery room on the archipelago is not idle: every year 17 to 20 children are born within its walls. The test personnel's settlement has its own secondary school, swimming pool and club... I am convinced that if any sort of danger threatened people's health there, no amount of money would lure them to the place. Anyway, their salaries are not so high as that..."

Q. "Nevertheless, Gennady Evpat'evich, how can one reconcile the very existence of the nuclear testing range and the conduct of military tests there with the idea of a nuclear-free zone in Northern Europe which has been put forward by our government?"

A. "You know, I would break your question down into two separate ones. First, a nuclear test site is an institution and unit of the Ministry of Defence. Historically, the military exercise jurisdiction over it. But nuclear weapons are the property of the government of the country. Their inspection, improvement and testing are all planned by the government and are conducted in accordance with its decrees. And not only with a view to strengthening battle readiness, but also in the interests of basic scientific research. For the time being there are no other means of replicating the very intricate physical processes which take place in a nuclear explosion than in the conditions at the test site. It is no accident that at one time or another eminent Soviet physicists such as Yu. Izrael', E. Negin, M. Sadovsky, E. Fedorov and G. Tsytkov have visited and worked at Novaya Zemlya.

We fully support the proposal for a nuclear-free zone and are prepared to see it come about, although it will cost all of us very dearly. But I will say frankly that this is not entirely dependent on us or the countries of northern Europe, which are extremely interested in the idea. Other states must also refrain from carrying out nuclear tests--in particular, the United States of America--or at least agree with us to reduce them to the bare minimum in number and magnitude."

Q. "And how do things stand on the testing range today? What are its prospects for the future?"

A. "Our range has been 'silent' since December 4, 1988. Its fate is in the hands of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the government, which are, I am convinced, no less concerned than the military to maintain the country's battle readiness and that of its armed forces at the appropriate level. It is for them to decide."

Izvestiya  
2 May 1990  
Page 4 (full text)

Unsuccessful Use of a Nuclear Explosion to Quell  
Oil and Gas Gusher in 1982 Hushed Up:  
Serious Ecological Consequences

On the eve of the new year the correspondents' office on the Northern (Railway) received three letters one after the other from readers on the Krasnoyarsk, Southern Urals and Southwestern (lines). Such unexpected "geography!" But these letters dealt with one and the same subject, which was equally unexpected: what had happened in the Pechora region? The readers had been intrigued by the statement of V. Nosov, People's Deputy of the USSR, at the second Congress of People's Deputies, and especially by these words of his: "For eight years a well at Nar'yan Mar spewed out a liquid that was deadly to all forms of life. Whereas its output in 1980 was 807,000 cubic metres of gas, after the atomic explosion it became 1,740,000 cubic metres. But the culprits got away with promotions rather than being sent to jail."

For help I turned to Vladimir Ovchinnikov, a journalist colleague from Syktyvkar who has been studying questions relating to the ecology of the North for several years.

Yu. Vakhnin  
Gudok correspondent

(Explanatory article follows)

The fact is that whereas the inhabitants of our country learned about the wrecking of an oil tanker off the shores of Alaska almost the same day that it occurred, even today very few people know anything definite about the tragedy at "Kumzha" well No. 9. Nevertheless, in terms of its consequences it can in no way be likened to any other ecological catastrophe either before or after 1980. Although there was an official investigation at the time, headed by A. Kazakov, Chief Engineer of the "Arkhangel'skgeologia" Combine, the commission's conclusions have remained the property of a narrow circle of specialists.

It was not without cause that gas and oil gushed out of the ruptured ground. This was, in fact, acknowledged by the commission: "Technically incompetent work execution... failure to monitor this adequately on the part of the Nar'yan Mar expedition..." and so forth. By 1981 the amount of gas and condensate escaping from the well was 807,000 cubic metres a day. The consequences of this can scarcely be compared with anything else: "Part of the road between wells No. 8 and 9, which passes by river beds and submerged sections of the Pechora River flood plains, is saturated with oil over an area of about 18,000 square metres," is how representatives of the Ministry of

Land Reclamation and Water Management described the situation. "The Bol'shoi Gusinets river bed, which is near well No. 9, is covered with a film of oil for a distance of two kilometres, and gas issues from the well for all to see. Oil is getting into Korovinskaya Guba. According to data obtained by the Hydrometeorological Service, the contamination is found not only in the channel of the Pechora River but also in the southeastern part of the Barents Sea."

Furthermore, as early as 1981 the fish stocks of Korovinskaya Guba had decreased more than tenfold in comparison with 1980.

But worse things were in store for Pechora. After a number of unsuccessful attempts to shut down the well, it was decided to use an underground nuclear explosion to get rid of it.

What happened then clearly shows the rashness of that decision. Not only did the nuclear charge set off at a depth of one kilometre fail to eliminate the gusher. It increased its force several times over by breaking up the friable rocks around it. After many explosions, condensate and possibly, radioactive discharges shot up to the surface. The well started to "produce" 1.7 million cubic metres of gas a day.

"In stopping gushers, there are usually no alternative methods," said V. Smolin, head of the operations section of the Ukhta militarised unit for oil and gas gusher prevention and elimination, of the "Ukhtaneftegazgeologiya" Combine. "Action must be based on real possibilities arising from what is available."

The only thing that was at hand, "available," was a nuclear bomb. It should be mentioned that, after the unsuccessful explosion, possible ways of stopping the gusher, which had grown several times larger, were nevertheless found. After a few attempts, slanting boreholes reached the damaged shaft of "Kumzha" and the gas flow was stopped after all.

"In 1985, when I began to work on repairing the damage," Smolin continued, "the well had already been dammed up. It was therefore possible to reduce its ecological consequences to the minimum. Dosimetric monitoring was carried out constantly to assess the radiation situation at the mouth of the well, in the area of the crater and in the settlement, which is a few kilometres from the well. The background radiation was normal. But I can speak with certainty about what I myself witnessed in 1985, that is, four years after the explosion."

The damage repair work was directed by a staff headed by the aforementioned Kazakov. It was made up principally of representatives of the USSR Ministry of Geology. As early as 1985 it became clear to this department, which was to blame for the occurrence and subsequent aggravation of the accident situation, that the ecological conditions had improved and that, after the pit had been dammed up, supposedly not even a hint of the baneful poison was reaching Pechora. But in 1987 N. Kotlyar, the USSR Minister of Fisheries, wrote in a letter to the environmental protection commission of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the USSR: "From November 1980 to the present, gas and gas condensate have continued to escape into the Kumzha area of the Pechora delta as a result of the accident at well No. 9." And although the minister's letter does not contain any subsequent reference to the nuclear explosion or radiation contamination, what else could explain the conclusion: "Based on data derived from ichthyological research, the contamination of Korovinskaya Guba has not only led to a change in the reservoir regime but has also given rise to irregularities in the biological development and condition of the fish."

Last year a commission of the USSR People's Investigation Committee confirmed these conclusions.

Korovinskaya Guba is a feeding ground for navaga, cisco and other types of whitefish. Salmon cross it on their way to spawning. In the seventies, great efforts were made to preserve these species of fish and increase their numbers. As a result, the cisco stock, for example, had started to grow. Ichthyologists unanimously call 1980 the turning point after which an abrupt decline began. The numbers of whitefish in Pechora started to fall not only because their usual habitats were "lost," but also because fish with underdeveloped or diseased sexual organs (up to 62 percent of the males) turned up in the school. The coefficient of natural reproduction dropped more than twofold. And during all those years fish caught in Korovinskaya Guba and environs were being eaten by local inhabitants and people living in other regions of the country.

"This summer I visited the 'Kumzha' well," said T. Osipova, an ichthyologist with the Komi Fisheries Management Directorate. "What I saw completely changed all my ideas about the scope of the damage. The craters left at the site of the well are literally 50 metres from the sea and 30 metres from the river bed. Despite a strong wind, gas could be smelt in the air. The amount of water pollution is enormous. Was there radioactive contamination of the water at the same time as it was being contaminated chemically? I don't think that anyone will tell the truth about this today."

But we simply must find out whether that happened or not. It certainly is possible that an "echo" of the nuclear explosion remains there even today.

... The departments do not part with their secrets willingly. By holding on to them they can shield those who are guilty from having to answer for their actions. That's the way it was at the beginning of the eighties also. S. Perov, chief engineer of the Nar'yan Mar Oil and Gas Prospecting Expedition, for example, whose work at the time was characterized as one of the factors which contributed to the accident, became head of the above-mentioned expedition and later even Director General of the large "Irkutskgeologiya" Combine.

That's the way it was. But that's not the way it should be.

Gudok

16 May 1990

Page 2 (full text)

## OIL & GAS

### Barents and Pechora Seas: New Oil and Gas Discoveries

A powerful gas flow obtained in tests of a new borehole by the crew of the drilling ship Valentin Shashin has shown arctic prospectors that yet another deposit of natural fuel has been discovered on the shelf of the Barents Sea.

"This is already the eighth hydrocarbon resource deposit discovered by the collective in 10 years," said Yu. Fedorovsky, head geologist of the "Arktikmorneftegazrazvedka" Production Combine. "Like all the earlier deposits, it can be classified as a big one. The drilling technicians are to be congratulated on the first major working achievement this year."

It is easy to understand the pride that can be detected in the words of the head geologist since far from every search is successful for the marine prospectors. And here there is another triumph: the prospectors have discovered oil in shallow water on the shelf of the Pechora Sea, which will make it possible to extract it from ice-resistant benches.

When will extraction of the fuel begin in the Arctic?

"You don't discover a deposit one day and begin pumping oil or gas from it the next," said Yu. Fedorovsky. "Time will be needed to get more precise information on the reserves and to work out the technology to extract it and transport it to the mainland."

In April the USSR Ministry of the Oil and Gas Industry joined companies from Norway, the USA and Finland in signing an agreement on the joint formulation of criteria to assess the technical and economic feasibility of developing the Shtokmanov deposit, which is one of the largest marine gas reserves in the world. It is planned that the drafting of the document will be completed this year, after which the parties to the agreement will decide when and how to implement it. People are confident that the gas deposits on the shelf near the coasts of the Kola Peninsula will be in the use before the end of this decade. Searches for new arctic marine reserves and the prospecting of ones that have already been discovered are continuing.

Sovetskaya Rossiya  
17 May 1990  
Page 4 (full text)

Pipeline Breaks a Common Occurrence in the  
Northern Tyumen' Region

It happened approximately 150 kilometres from the town of Noyabr'sk. The cultivator tooth of a powerful Komatsu tractor tore through an inter-field gathering main 159 millimetres in diameter as if it were thread. For two and a half hours oil gushed from the pipe until the break was discovered and the valves were shut off.

SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES

An exhaustive investigation was instituted to find out who was the blame. Was it the "Kholmogortruboprovodstroi" trust, whose tractor driver rammed through the steel line, or the "Muravlenkovskneft'" department, whose ill-fated pipe had not, as it turned out, been laid entirely according to specification? Or was nature to blame?

I. Sidorov, state inspector of the oblast's nature conservation committee, has confirmed that such an accident did in fact take place the other day. About 600 tons of oil escaped--at first on the ground, but later, since there is an incline there, the dark oily mass spread to the ice and covered the taiga river Nyudyapyagun-Yakha. Measures have, of course, been taken: about 150-160 tons have been pumped up and the work is continuing.

But our source found it difficult to understand why the correspondent was interested in this very fact. Not too long before there had been a forceful oil blowout in Uvat district at the time of the most recent in a series of breaks in the Ust'-Balyk--Omsk pipeline. The wash was lethal to vegetation and inundated six hectares. In localizing the trouble spot and eliminating the break, hundreds of cubic metres of timber and a great deal of young growth burned. And a few months before that, oil that escaped because of another break in the very same area got into two nearby rivers...

Igor' Olegovich opened the official journal:

"Here is a recent incident which took place in Nizhnevartovsk district. Strictly speaking, however, it began last fall. A major break occurred in the territory under the 'Chernogorneft' administration. Our agencies issued the traditional instructions: "localize the break and eliminate the contaminant." This is done using various methods depending on the circumstances: for example, the entire mass is pushed into one place using bulldozers and is then either burnt or hauled away."

On the whole, according to the state inspector, what happened was not very nice. The administration carried out part of the work, the localization, while the rest of the work was to be done by one of the co-operatives with which an agreement had been concluded. The co-operators did not keep their word and then winter came and snow covered all traces of the accident.

As a result, all 850 tons of oil flowed into a tributary of the Vatinsky Egan River this spring.

The conversation with Sidorov was not a cheerful one. Pipeline breaks, escaping oil and the death of rivers, forests and lakes have unfortunately all become commonplace. The following statistics are extremely eloquent by way of illustration. Nizhnevartovsk district has an average of three accidents of various degrees of severity per day. Last year, Surgut district lost about 9,000 tons of oil owing to pipeline breaks. The penalties for slipshod work and technological illiteracy are essentially symbolic in nature.

It is believed that the new local Soviets will finally begin to make a fresh assessment and evaluation of everything that is happening in the territories under their jurisdiction.

Izvestiya

10 May 1990

Page 2 (full text)

## SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES

### A Description of Living Conditions at Dikson

More often than not of late, we have written about Dikson in rosy terms. We speak of the romance and tell about the polar workers, sailors and pilots as well as the polar bears which sometimes turn up on the outskirts of the town. But we unwittingly forget that there are ordinary people living here who have needs and requirements that are scarcely different from those of the inhabitants of, say, Moscow.

Why am I talking about this all of a sudden? It's because 75 years after the founding of Dikson I suddenly heard unexpected words spoken by a participant in the Soviet-Canadian trans-arctic ski expedition, pastor Laurie Dexter: "You really are happy people because you don't know how poorly you live."

We can partly agree with this and partly disagree. But let's try to figure out what basis he had for reaching such a conclusion. Is everything so satisfactory in this small settlement?

In the main, the people in Dikson are newcomers and are here temporarily. I said "temporarily" and then I thought, "Can we speak this way of those who have been living here for 10, 15 or 20 years?" For example, the head of the hydrographical base, Distinguished Polar Worker of the USSR Vladimir Sergeevich Alekseev, lived in the Arctic for 30 years or so. And there are many like him here. The majority of the people in Dikson have had and raised children and they also live "temporarily" at the edge of the earth.

In the Arctic today one hears more and more frequently regrets about the dismantling of the Main Administration of the Northern Sea Route, and sole manager not only of Dikson but of the entire Soviet North. It built housing, had its own aircraft, island-based scientific stations, construction organizations, ships, trading enterprises...

Today, this enormous region is fully experiencing the "charms" of departmental fragmentation. The interests of dozens of union and republic ministries and departments are clashing head on here. Although administratively, Dikson is subordinate to the Krasnoyarsk Krai, the majority of its enterprises are controlled from Murmansk, Leningrad or Moscow.

It is for this very reason that the people of Dikson look with some envy at Noril'sk, 600 kilometres to the south. Here everything is in the same hands and the town is therefore developing harmoniously and in an integrated manner.

But what about Dikson? It is being choked by a multitude of problems.

In recent years an extraordinary situation has arisen in the settlement with regard to the provision of heating to homes and production buildings. Every day breakdowns of various degrees of severity occur in the seaport's boiler facility. Although this started about seven years ago, the people of the port now are still trying to repair the breakdowns as much as possible. The main thing is that the boiler house must not be shut down because the heating season here is 365 days long.

In the spring of last year, when the temperature outside was 30 below, the air temperature inside people's apartments fell to 10-12 degrees.

Many people know about this problem Dikson has. It is common knowledge at the Murmansk Marine Steamship Line and at the USSR Ministry of the Merchant Marine. It is from these very organizations that the northerners have been waiting for several years now to receive genuine help. But there is only one way out of this deadlock and that is to stop patching up old holes and build modern new boiler facilities in Dikson.

The homes in Dikson have every convenience and yet on its streets today trucks can be seen delivering water. Everyday people carry it to their apartments in buckets. Some to the fifth floor, and others to the second. Nearby are the ocean and countless rivers and lakes in the tundra, but there's a "drought" in the settlement.

And what about the water supply system? There is one. True, there's unfortunately no cold water in the pipes now. It's finished for the winter in the collector lake. So people will have to wait until July, when the snow begins to melt.

For the time being there is hot water--from the sea. But it's salt water, of course. And in colour it looks a bit like the coffee made in the local restaurant. Doctors don't recommend using such water. This is because Dikson has no sewage-treatment facilities. All the spent water flows back to where it came from without being treated.

Dikson's problems are typical of the Arctic as a whole. Take housing, for example. Housing is built in the settlement. In recent years they have even begun to erect five-storey buildings instead of two-storey wooden ones. But there continues to be an acute shortage of well-built apartments. The reason is obvious. Credit authorities are usually scared of high prices. It is no joke that one square metre here costs over a thousand roubles? Twice as much as in Krasnoyarsk, for example.

But there are other problems besides housing! Last year a wooden secondary school burned in the settlement. A new one will have to be built. But where can the resources be obtained? The executive committee doesn't have them. It is true that negotiations were begun several years ago with the Murmansk Steamship Line to have it bear those expenses. Particularly since the settlement is made up essentially of enterprises belonging to the

Ministry of the Merchant Marine. This question remained unsettled for a long time. In May last year the first pile for the foundations of a new building was driven in. And that was it. In the meantime the children are studying in temporary and unsuitable premises.

How about difficulties with supplies? Here everything has to be brought in. Everything! From machinery to children's toys.

Take medical problems. The only hospital in the settlement, which belongs to the Murmansk Steamship Line, has long failed to meet modern requirements.

What can people do in their spare time in this settlement? That is the question to end all questions. Apart from the most basic requirements, the conditions for solving this problem do not for the present exist in Dikson. Only in the long term can the construction of a new Palace of Culture be envisaged. The old one is unappealing and scares people away with its sagging ceilings.

Dikson, where winter lasts for nine months, has no skating rinks, hockey arenas or skiing facilities... It is as if there was no one to build them for. A tour by Krasnoyarsk performers is looked upon here as an extraordinary event. And visitors from the capital don't get to these parts at all.

Two years ago a people's art gallery opened in the building of a former wine store (after it had been rebuilt). It is, by the way, the northernmost one in the country. At that time the Artists' Union of the Russian Republic sent it more than a hundred graphic works, paintings and sculptures by the best artists of Russia.

At first people went there, but now the halls of the gallery are deserted more often than not. People have lost interest. The exhibits change very rarely and have therefore been studied down to the tiniest details.

Today the northerner does not want to feel cut off from the world at large. He wants to have a normal warm apartment here and a co-operative on the "mainland." And he has a twofold right to this, if you will. He wants to be in touch with culture. Read newspapers only one day after they are issued, rather than a week later. Talk to friends and relatives by long-distance telephone. After all, it was possible to set up reliable communications between Dikson and the rest of the world for the D. Shparo expedition two years ago. At that time Canada could be heard better in Dikson than Dudinka can now. True, when the expedition left, so did the lines.

So what do the people of Dikson dream about now? They are waiting for the day when they will be able to take a hot bath after work and buy fresh tomatoes and cucumbers in the stores. They are dreaming about not wasting at least half of their holidays trying to get somewhere. They just want to live normally.

Vodnyi transport

15 May 1990

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TRANSPORT - WATER

BEYOND THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

Ob-Irtysh River Shipping: New Passenger Lines Opened

The crews of ships belonging to the Ob'-Irtysh Steamship Line are expecting to carry more than 3 million passengers this year.

A unique indication of the rapid growth of Beloyarsk, the youngest town in the Tyumen' north, will be furnished by the opening here at once of two new passenger lines. Motorboats of the "Zarya" type will link the Tobol'sk river port with Sergino and Igrim. And in the Yamal' - Nenets Autonomous District, in turn, a new high-speed line will open between Salekhard and Lopkhari.

"Our short-term plans call for the opening of the first river passenger line north of the Arctic Circle, namely, Salekhard--Yar-Sale. We intend to send 'Meteors' to the centre of Yamal' district," said N. Starikov, head of passenger service in the Ob'Irtysh Steamship Line. "It should be pointed out that last year 'Meteors' from Tobol'sk successfully travelled from Salekhard beyond the Arctic Circle to the settlement of Aksarka, the centre of Priural'skyi district. The first experiment was successful and economically profitable, so we must build upon it."

In the 1990 cruise season the river transport workers are also planning to organize cruises on the General Karbyshev and Tobol motorvessels along the Irtysh and Ob' with foreign tourists on board.

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12 May 1990  
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### Nuclear Powered Ships: Survey of Public Opinion in Murmansk

The base of the world's largest civilian atomic fleet is located within the city limits of Murmansk. Until the tragedy at Chernobyl' and the loss of the Komsomolets submarine, the base did not particularly worry the townfolk. Now, however, the atomic fleet is under the watchful eye of the public.

The staff at "RAZUM" (Development of Managerial Thinking), the local branch of the Leningrad sociological scientific research centre, recently carried out a survey of Murmansk residents to find out what they felt about the atomic fleet. Of those surveyed, 88.1 percent believe that it affects the ecology and people's health to one degree or another. Out of nine ecologically harmful factors, the people were asked to choose the three they considered the worst. The result was that the atomic fleet came second in this dubious company. The only factor which the people of Murmansk considered to be more harmful was air pollution by motor vehicles. Considered less harmful was damage due to the lack of sewage treatment facilities in the city, as well as damage caused by the activities of industrial enterprises, broiler houses, cars of apatite concentrate which fill the air with dust daily on the way to the commercial port, and many other things that are rife in an industrial centre.

Why are the townsfolk so afraid of the peaceful atom?

The results of this first study of public opinion led to specific reflections first of all by the organizers of the survey themselves. Here is the view of V. Mararitsy, "RAZUM" director and consultant to the Murmansk Oblast Committee of the CPSU:

"The people's fear is due to ignorance. Here are some more data on the results of the survey: 34.1 percent of the people in Murmansk are convinced that nuclear-powered vessels are sources of increased radioactivity; 17.8 percent believe that there is a potential danger and that there could be a new Chernobyl' in the event of an accident: only about 12 percent of those surveyed deny the baneful influence of the atomic fleet. Imagine, people claim to be sure that there is increased radiation in the city but no one can explain where it comes from. Moreover, 64.2 percent of those surveyed clearly stated that they did not have enough knowledge themselves to assess the radiation situation.

"In assuming that this would be the case, we tried to structure the questionnaire in such a way as to ascertain the population's main sources of information and knowledge. It revealed that people rely first and foremost on the opinions of others, that the people of Murmansk place their greatest degree of trust in the mass media, particularly local sources (33.3 percent). All other sources lag well behind. It is now clear who is creating stereotypes and myths in people's minds."

True, Valery Fedorovich qualified what he said: that was an assumption only. You will undoubtedly agree that it is difficult to suspect the mass media of deliberately stirring up fear. It is more likely the other way around: unskillful propaganda in favour of atomic energy has precisely the opposite effect. Furthermore, we do not have a systematic and competent information dissemination system as is the case, say, in the United States and Canada. The nuclear societies which have been set up there (non-governmental associations of engineers and scientists) do not in any way embellish the potential effects of atomic energy but achieve impressive results with their explanations: 81 percent of Americans are convinced of the importance of atomic energy and 76 percent of the population are in favour of increasing the AEC's share in the production of electrical energy. By comparison, only 54.7 percent of the people of Murmansk recognize that there is a genuine requirement for an atomic fleet. Unfortunately, many add the proviso: "As long as it's not in Murmansk."

Conclusions still remain to be drawn from the first mass survey of the population. It has given food for thought to the town's governing bodies, the directors of the "Atomflot" technical maintenance enterprise, the people's deputies and the townsfolk themselves. The results will be interpreted by the very sociologists who carried out the study, which incidentally, was financed by "Atomflot" itself. Summing up my knowledge of the results of the survey, O. Veretennikov, a staff member of "RAZUM," formulated the following basic proposition: the people must be told the truth about the atomic fleet and thereby have their peace of mind and confidence in the future restored. In actual fact, the devil is not as frightening as he is made out to be.

Meanwhile in Murmansk, since they have no idea of how to talk to the people, what they do is often counter-productive. The urban executive committee decides to issue the townspeople potassium iodide tablets in case there is an accident involving a vessel with an atomic reactor and the tablets become a household item... And a quiet panic takes hold of the town. It grows and spreads to neighbouring Severomorsk. Subsequent explanations in the newspapers, together with information on the radio, only add fuel to the fire. It is astonishing how accustomed we are to playing with fire...

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#### New Passenger Ship to Operate on Archangel - Solovki Run

Solovki is the name given to the new passenger ship built for the northern marine steamship line by Norwegian shipbuilders.

This twin-hull vessel is equipped with the latest word in technology and is capable of speeds of more than 60 kilometres an hour. The 230-seat passenger salon is fitted out with comfortable armchairs.

The catamaran will operate on the Archangel-Solovki tourist route and will also provide scheduled passenger service between White Sea ports. This summer it is planned to carry only tourists on board the Solovki--over 10,000 of them. This will noticeably reduce the strain on the popular route. Twice as many travel

In assuming that this would be the case, we tried to structure the question in a way as to  
enthusiasts as last year will be able to experience the  
unique natural beauty and architectural monuments of the  
Solovki archipelago.

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