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

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

ARCTIC

The Arctic Needs a Boss.....	1
To the Aid of Polar Researchers.....	1
Protecting the Tyumen Northland.....	2

OIL AND GAS

Siberia's "Oil Kings" Air Their Frustrations...	4
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SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES

Karelia Dreams On.....	14
On the Eve of the Northern People's Forum.....	19
A Message from M.S. Gorbachev on the Occasion of the Congress of Northern Peoples.....	21
Open Microphone: Health of Northern People.....	22
Open Microphone: Ethnic Sports Needed!.....	23
A People's Deputy Speaks Out.....	24
Envoys from a Harsh Land.....	30
Far Reaching Program of Development Proposed for Northern Ethnic Minorities.....	32
Hopes and Fears.....	36

TRANSPORT WATER

Environmentally Safe, Amphibious Ships Designed for Use in the North.....	39
--	----

MISCELLANEOUS

Leningrad Branch of Association of Polar Workers Formed.....	41
New Radioelectronics Plant at Apatity.....	42
KGB Puts a Stop to Illegal Exports of Fuel Oil.....	42

ARCTIC

The Arctic Needs a Boss

In the article by Captain of Ocean Navigation G. Burkov - "How to Recover Past Glory" (Vodnyi transport No. 26 of 1 March 1990), on the subject of polar aviation and ice reconnaissance flights the following view was expressed: "A boss is needed who will see to solving the vital problems of aviation support for Arctic and Antarctic regions." In our opinion, the appropriate agency here is "Glavsevmorput" (Main Administration of the Northern Sea Route) which would operate in a new capacity, such as, for example, a Main Administration of the Northern Sea Route and Antarctic. It would assume responsibility for a wide range of issues: the state of transportation routes, aerial ice reconnaissance, development of port and shore facilities, etc. It would concern itself with the economics of Arctic development and with genuine cost-accountability, but not solely with respect to aviation.

Vodnyi transport

20 March 1990

Page 2 (slightly abridged)

To the Aid of Polar Researchers

The latest expedition to deliver essential supplies for the drifting stations SP-30 and SP-31 is currently underway. The expedition, the second of its kind this

year, is being mounted by airmen of GosNII GA (State Scientific Research Institute of Civil Aviation) aboard an Il-76TD airplane and by associates of the "Polyus" Centre for Parachute and Air Drop Operations of the USSR State Committee on Hydrometeorology. Both "Severnyi polyus" (North Pole) stations are now drifting near the Canadian shores. Parachutes will be used to supply the polar specialists with fresh vegetables and other foodstuffs as well as fuel.

Since they have no large landing strips, the stations can only accommodate small aircraft. These are Il-14 airplanes from the Kolyma-Indigirka Aviation Enterprise. They will be used to replace the polar specialists in April-May while the stations themselves continue drifting in the ocean.

The Il-76TD will be based for approximately 10 days on Srednii Island, from where it will conduct flights to the drifting stations.

Vozdushnyi Transport
24 March 1990
Page 3 (full text)

Protecting the Tyumen Northland

The executive committee of the Tyumen Oblast Soviet has approved proposals from the Khanty-Mansiisk and Yamal-Nenets okrug executive-committees and the Uvat District (Raion) Executive Committee concerning the creation of so called zones of precedential nature use.

In these zones industrial activity will be sharply curtailed and the protected forests, rivers, meadows and moss glades will begin to serve the native peoples of the Tyumen Northland.

Efforts to designate these zones and prepare their status have been underway in the autonomous okrugs for a long time. Representatives of local soviets and the associations "Spasenie Yugry" (Save the Yugra) and "Yamal-potomkam" (Yamal for our Descendents) held round table discussions more than once with the heads of various agencies in the spheres of petroleum, geology, natural gas and forestry. Each section of these zones was discussed in detail and, despite the differing interests, it was possible more often than not to find a mutually acceptable compromise.

Nevertheless, the oblast executive committee meeting at which the decision was taken was stormy. In principle, everyone was for these special zones, which afford the native residents of the north the opportunity to practise their traditional pursuits - hunting, fishing and reindeer breeding. Industrial intrusion on the taiga and tundra has severely exacerbated the ecological situation. Seventeen million hectares of hunting ground alone have been taken out of use, and the local residents forced to move to the outermost limits of the okrugs.

Within these zones, however, are oil and gas deposits and large tracts of forest. Industry officials, of course, did not want to lose these resources. The representatives of the soviets explained to the agency officials that it was a question of the survival of the indigenous peoples of the North.

There were even arguments over terminology. One proposal was to call these areas zones of "traditional" rather than "precedential" nature use, or even "survival zones for indigenous inhabitants of the North."

Now the decision has been made. From now on, over half the area of the Yamal-Nenets Okrug, a third of the Khanty-Mansiisk Okrug, and 8000 square kilometers of the Uvat Raion have acquired this special status. These are not reservations, sanctuaries or preserves.

In these areas industry and agriculture will develop in a natural fashion, but no drilling, timberfelling or major construction projects can be undertaken without the permission of local authorities. And the emphasis is on the word "local" since, within the zones of precedential nature use, orders "from above" will no longer have any force.

Izvestiya
4 March 1990
Page 1 (full text)

OIL AND GAS

Siberia's "Oil Kings" Air Their Frustrations

Western Siberia. The Tyumen Northland. So much has been said and written in recent decades about this harsh and lavishly endowed land! It was here, near the little known Lake Samotlor, that man struck the first oil gushers and the remote Siberian region became famous.

Each year millions of tons of oil and billions of cubic meters of natural gas flow from here to every corner of the USSR and beyond its borders. The Tyumen deposits account for more than half of all the Soviet Union's hard currency reserves.

Nevertheless, today you could not call this region prosperous by any means, as is reflected in the disquieting mail of Pravda. People complain about poor living and working conditions and the lack of economic autonomy.

As readers will remember, the plenum of the Tyumen Oblast Party Committee met in January. The entire bureau staff, led by its first secretary, filed for retirement. But the crisis did not pass. The editors continue to receive letters requesting that correspondents be sent so that they can examine the situation first hand.

The all-terrain vehicle rolled along the streets of Nizhnevartovsk past the multi-storied residential units and wooden shacks.

Soon the city was left behind. Alongside the winter road stretched the barren land, enlivened in places with splashes of pines and birches.

About 40 minutes later the drilling rig came into view. Fellows from Vladimir Lyapin's brigade approached us.

At first, the conversation didn't take hold somehow. The guys shrugged their shoulders, hid their wind-burned faces in the collars of their jackets. "What's there to say? We work like always." But then, little by little, they began to talk.

"Do you know how much we nurse per shift?" asked a young dark-eyed driller's assistant, Farit Tazhitdinov.

"Nurse who?"

"Not who, what. That's what we call it when we have to raise or lower pipes. In a shift you can "nurse" up to 200 pipes. If you add up the weight it's twenty, sometimes forty tons in all. But they feed us badly - 17 grams of meat per person per day.

Other workers confirmed what Farit had said. There are vegetables only on occasion. There's a shortage of vitamins, and in the spring many people's gums begin to bleed. Vegetable warehouses seem to have some reserves, but there is no way to store them to have them later.

People often catch cold in the wind. Hats and winter jackets cannot be bought. There is a chronic shortage. How can this be? They earn hard currency for the country but they cannot obtain decent clothing. In the city, for 400 rubles speculators offer commercially manufactured boots - there aren't near enough of the northern kind to be had. And how much does food cost? The shelves in the stores are empty. You have to go to the public market, but there beef is 10-12 rubles per kilo, pork 8-10, lard 10-15, and apples 6. Butter has simply vanished. And milk cannot be had either, unless you buy it in the morning. And most people have children.

The housing situation is bad. People are on waiting lists for years, sometimes for decades, and there's scarcely any movement on the lists. Married people live in shacks and dormitories or rent small private rooms. So what can their morale be like?

From an address by drilling Master V. Lyapin at the All-Union Conference of Representatives of the Working Class, the Peasantry, and Engineering-Technical Workers (January, 1990):

"For many years now people everywhere have praised us to the skies, calling us the oil kings and guardians of the working class. But they trained us to work patiently, humbly and modestly, constantly assuring us that the State is mindful of us and taking care of us. And indeed we cannot complain about a lack of attention on the part of the CPSU Central Committee and the government of the USSR. But what the actual payoff on this concern has been you, Mikhail Sergeevich, can judge for yourself since you have visited our city.

But today, I must sadly confirm that even the standard of living that we had is getting worse.

After M.S. Gorbachev's visit to our city, a beautiful program was drawn up, confirmed by decree no. 797 which outlined the prospects for supplying oil field workers with modern equipment, vehicles and machinery. I can only say one thing: these glowing prospects have remained a ghostly mirage in the polar wasteland..."

The story goes that representative from oil companies in Kuwait recently came to visit the city on the Ob. Publicly the businessmen said that they liked it in Nizhnevartovsk. In private, however, the guests expressed their sincere astonishment to their hosts: excuse me, but how can it be that you produce so much oil and there are so many poor people?"

From Documents of the Plenum of the Tyumen Oblast
Committee of the CPSU (January 1990).

"Kuwait produces 75 million tons of oil. They have created excellent living conditions there for their people. Tyumen Oblast, on the other hand, produces almost 400 million tons of oil and 500 billion cubic meters of gas but is totally unable to provide its people with proper housing. There is a shortage of pre-school centers, schools and hospitals. In terms of these indicators the yearly plan has failed. And now the food situation has also worsened sharply.

The oblast occupies first place in many categories with respect to implementation of capital investment, but almost last place in terms of social programs. For example, in the production of consumer goods it has 'successfully' moved from the 65th to the 69th place in the country."

We discussed the problems of the region with Viktor Palii, general director of the Nizhnevartovsk Oil and Gas Association (Nizhnevartovsk neftegaz).

"They call our association a millionaire with an outstretched hand," he said. "A sad joke, but there's a lot of truth in it. Here are some figures. Without them the real issue won't be understood.

"From filling State orders we earn 1 billion 850 million rubles per year. Of this amount almost a billion is paid into the State budget. That leaves 850 million, which would seem to be a lot. But it is not enough to provide food and social programs. Thus, we are forced to ask the government for money - 303 million to be precise. That means we contribute a billion to the country and beg for 300 million. And all the while they tell us: use non-traditional sources of financing. That is, we are supposed to sell something. But what can we sell? We only produce oil.

"There is a particularly acute situation with the resettlement of people from dilapidated houses. Last year plans called for resettling 852 families out of four and a half thousand. We didn't make it."

Today, the oil workers' association is literally taking on everything--demolishing dilapidated housing, developing cities, and erecting social facilities. The existing economic mechanism under which "Nizhnevartovskneftegas" is operating is simply unable to sustain all of this and move ahead. Wouldn't it make more sense to take urban construction away from the oil workers and place it under Soviet authority in the form of the city executive committee? And why not distribute the role of customer among all the enterprises?

From Documentary Records of the Plenum of the Tyumen Oblast Committee of the CPSU (January 1990).

"The slogan 'All power to the soviets' sounds rather strange in this, the 73rd year of Soviet power, although we utter it often. Nevertheless, this is precisely the task which all Party committees must handle by securing personnel and working out relations between enterprises and the soviets. Local organs of power require a firm economic base. The economic relations of the centre and the regions need to be altered. In the U.S.A. for example, in the State of Texas, which in terms of potential plays approximately the same role as Tyumen does for the USSR, all companies producing oil and gas pay into the state budget up to 25% of the value of their production. In addition, up to 5% is given as charitable contributions to support secondary and higher education.

With the same or approximately the same system of economic relations, it would be altogether possible for the oblast to convert to a self-supporting basis. And then the soviets would acquire a real economic base."

Our numerous meetings with people throughout the Tyumen Oblast confirm the simple truth that all social wellbeing is dependent on a firm economic foundation being in place.

At a recent conference of representatives of labour collectives held in Nizhnevartovsk the following idea was advanced: the only possibility of achieving a normal existence is when there is normal organization of one's labor. This may not seem like a great discovery, but today we need to talk about the basics, which have been largely overlooked.

In Nizhnevartovsk we heard many people say that in the torrents of criticism and demands to overthrow the bureaucracy some managers, as well as some rank-and-file workers, had somehow forgotten their basic responsibilities. And the result of this is an increase in lost work time, more absenteeism, and cases of poor workmanship and failure to complete tasks.

Oil industry workers are well aware that the primary foundation for developing production and improving productivity is scientific and technical progress, together with the implementation of scientific and technical advances, modern technology, and new methods of working and managing. But in the quest for economic and technical progress one must not forget discipline, the organization of work, rationalization of the workplace, and a greater use of shift work. In a word, all that goes under the heading of intensification of production.

In the social sphere, too, greater initiative and enterprise is required today. The oil workers of Nizhevartovsk, for example, have managed to successfully operate four of their own sovhozes and to forge direct ties outside the borders of their region.

"What has changed over the past month in the party organization of your association?" we asked the secretary of the party committee. "A lot has changed: in the collectives there has been a flood of growing impatience. People are anxious for positive changes. They cannot and will not be content with the idea that, with such enormous volumes of oil being produced for the country, they can scarcely make ends meet.

"Maybe I am even aggravating the problem, I don't know. But there's a concept in mathematics known as the catastrophe theory. According to this theory, from certain small indications in the behaviour of a function you can predict an increasingly rapid catastrophic behaviour. So, for example, if we don't all finally start tackling cardinal solutions to the burning problems which have been facing us for a long time already, then we are in for some stormy events, and these could be much more severe than strikes by miners. This is something people need to be aware of. There is a reason for the open letter from the people of Tyumen to N.I. Ryzhkov and S.A. Shalaev, which was published on March 10 in the Oblast newspaper under the headline "We will wait until April 1".

Public organizations are unanimous in condemning strikes as a means of settling conflicts. But at the last labor collective conference there was open discussion of initiating a collective labor dispute with the government. We are forced to sell to the government 99.8% of the oil produced - such is the magnitude of the State order - at 23 rubles per ton. This State order, in our opinion, is

highway robbery. If the oil industry workers were given the opportunity to sell by themselves even 8-10% of what they produce, we wouldn't be involved in these bewildering issues of food and of financial and material-technical support and would not be arguing with the government."

"The fact that our industrial product is raw materials, that the government has a monopolistic right to the sale of the raw material, and our total dependence on centralized funds and on deliveries under direct contracts at prices significantly above government prices - all of this has placed our region, considering the situation today, in an extremely difficult position," adds V. Sidorchev, secretary of the Nizhnevartovsk City Committee of the CPSU. "I am firmly convinced that the soviets should be sole masters of the land and mineral resources."

"But wouldn't this lead to increased exploitation of mineral resources? Won't the oil workers naturally want to produce more so they can sell it on the open market?"

"Of course, things should be done sensibly. As soon as the money is available, the soviets will set about energetically developing the social infrastructure. But now, you can see for yourself that this city, which was brought into existence by the government and exists solely because of oil, has virtually no future. A monostructure is a road to nowhere."

The lack of a clear strategy on the part of the Tyumen Oblast Committee of the CPSU for scientific development of the oblast's natural resources has made the nationality problem more acute. The fate of minority peoples of the North is at risk...

To be fair, we should note that there have been some positive developments here recently.

"In order to preserve the environment, the distinctive culture and traditional pursuits of the people of the Khanty-Mansiisk Autonomous Okrug," report V. Graifer, USSR deputy minister of the oil and gas industry and head of 'Glavtyumenneftegas,' "a program has been designed and approved jointly with the Okrug executive committee for the social economic development of ethnic settlements to be funded by enterprises of the Main Administration."

In summarizing our meetings and talks in the Tyumen region, we can assert that the oil workers want to work better and to supply the country with more fuel and chemicals. But they do not merely want to work. In the final analysis they want to feel that they are fully equal masters in this harsh northern region.

First of all, the oil and gas industry workers expect the legal right to freedom of action, the right to conclude honest, normal contracts rather than submissive ones. This way we will not have the kind of absurdity that we see today: while fulfilling State orders and giving the country all of the hard-won oil from Western Siberia, the labor collectives continue to be dependent on the same allied industries, from whom they literally beg cement and metal and housing.

There is not even a trace of partnership in these relations. What there is is a one-sided dictatorial relationship in which the "oil kings" never get rich and will always remain poor, not even having money at times to buy meat or potatoes.

Pravda
22 March 1990
Page 3 (Abridged)

SOCIOLOGICAL ISSUES

Karelia Dreams On

Why Solutions to the Region's Problems are Slow in Coming

The author of this article is Anatolij Vasilevich Anikiev, a Lieutenant-General of the Internal Service and RSFSR First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs. A native of Belomorsk, he graduated from an aviation technology institute and holds the degree of Candidate of Economic Sciences. Following his assignment to internal affairs, over a thirty-year period he devoted his experience and knowledge to the protection of public order. He served for almost four years in Afghanistan.

I must confess that I am still strongly affected by my impressions from a trip to my home country - the towns and villages of the Loukhi, Kem, Belomorsk, Segezha, and Pudozh districts of Karelia. As a native of these parts I knew that life here is not easy. But the reality turned out to be even more unpleasant. The residual approach to the essential needs of the people has resulted in the standard of living of a large fraction of the republic's population being approximately one and a half to two times below what it is in the other relatively prosperous regions of the RSFSR.

A popular song contains the words: "Long shall Karelia dream..." and goes on to speak of "eyelashes of the sharp-pointed spruces over the blue eyes of the lakes". But everything spoken of in this song may soon disappear forever.

The senseless felling of timber continues. In order to halt this barbarity, we need to reduce wastage, intensify processing, utilize faggot-wood and low-grade timber and convert to Finnish technology, which is virtually waste-free. Today, for example, approximately 20 percent of the wood ends up as waste at the felling site while another approximately 30 percent is lost in sawmilling. If all the wood was used, the cutting of timber could be reduced by a factor of one-and-a-half to two. Instead, roundwood is still being exported at bargain basement prices.

In essence, our economic system is predicated on non-economic coercion. The lion's share of earned income is collected from the producer. The sawmill in the town of Shalskii, Pudozh Raion, generates an income of approximately 9 million rubles, but only about 840,000 remain at its disposal. Under these circumstances how can one speak about modernizing production and solving acute social problems...

In meetings with people from my home region one question could be heard almost everywhere: "Why is it that, after more than a decade of hard work in lumber camps, mines and ports, I have not been allocated a normal apartment?" I also remember seeing the haggard women of the Segezha Pulp and Paper Combine, who for 15-20 years had been caring for children in communal services and dormitories. And the worst of it is that they have no real prospect for improvement.

Expansion of the building components combine, the principal supplier of "Karelstroi" (Karelian Construction Trust), is still only in the planning stages. Modernization of the "Zhelezobeton" (Ferro-Concrete) Association is still beset by difficulties. At the current pace, replacement of the worn-out equipment will take 45 years. It is not difficult to imagine how we will look in the year 2035 when you take into consideration the inevitable progress of the world's construction industry by that time.

The conditions that would be necessary for developing housing construction on cooperative lines are still non-existent. In 1988, of the 23 cooperatives engaged in building activity, not one had erected any residential units. As for individual residences, the level of this kind of construction is 22 times less than that foreseen under the "Housing-2000" program. Evidence that durable and high-quality building is possible even under these severe conditions is provided by the town of Pyaozerskii, built masterfully by the Finns. Today in Karelia only 30-40% of housing is equipped with running water, sewer lines, central heating - a figure that is two times lower than the average for Russia.

Karelia, unlike neighboring Finland, is not self-sufficient in food. In Kostomuksha, for example, average per capita production is only 2 kilograms of potatoes and vegetables, 3 kilograms of meat and 10 liters of milk per year. And yet, the strengthening of sovkhoses - the principal producer of agricultural goods - is proceeding very slowly, while the development of subsidiary farming enterprises is in even worse shape. What is needed is real stimulus for the private sector, but judging from all the evidence, no one is even thinking about this. Everybody I met spoke with bitterness and bewilderment: "we are ready to keep livestock and run a farm, but they won't give us land or help us obtain materials and feed or sell us yearlings."

In the republic there are 62,000 rivers and lakes, as well as the White Sea with its substantial stocks of commercial fish. Despite this, the food industry is nominally producing one-and-a-half tins of fish per resident per month, but even these are not on sale. According to Pravda, seven grams of fish are put on the market per person per day.

The "blue eyes" of Karelia's many lakes, already clouded by a film of chemical wastes, stare unseeing into a smoke-filled sky. Over the last five years emissions of harmful substances have increased in the Belomorsk and Kem raions by 50 percent, in the Loukhi Raion by 200 percent, and in the Pudozh Raion by a factor of 3.6. In Segezha these emissions are estimated at 1.138 kilograms per resident; in Kostomuksha they already exceed 2 tons.

Considering all this it is logical to ask, for what purpose and on whose behalf do construction, industry and agriculture exist? What are people working for? Who needs such an enormous disparity between the individual and the results of his labor? The last two or three decades have sharply divided us according to professional interests, departmental hierarchy, job responsibilities and levels of authority. Now, in almost any situation one can respond with justification and complete equanimity: "That's not my job." Meanwhile, the humble and incredibly patient worker doesn't even know which door he should knock on so that his deprivation finally becomes somebody's business, so that someone shares his concern. Should he appeal to the raion committee, the executive committee, the police? He knocks, and somebody tells him where he should go... There, too, they refer him to someone else...

'Perestroika' has made us aware of many things, but almost nothing has changed up to now. Why? Because, in my opinion, the most dangerous and persistent consequence of the era now known as the "years of stagnation" is the habit of doing nothing, the fear of offering a clear political appraisal of current events, an inability to calculate the effects on one's decisions, and the fatal tendency toward half-measures, which, in the final analysis, are fruitless and merely exacerbate the situation. We have always been fond of demonstrating our enthusiasm, but primarily just words. We have a great weakness for any form of reorganization, especially when

there is a change in leaders, but only to the extent of cosmetic touch-up - repainting the facade and changing the signs. "Don't make any substantial changes" is the unwritten rule to which we adhere unconsciously or out of conviction, but virtually everywhere and in everything.

How surprising that, in many respects, we continue to follow this rule even now, although we have proclaimed a radical transformation in our economic and political systems. But proclaiming is easy. What is needed now is concrete action.

What struck me most of all in the meetings with my countrymen was the modesty of their requests: there's no boiler, no bath, no clinic; it would be nice to have a new school; they aren't issuing coupons; they changed the bus route... This lack of action on the part of authorities can only be explained by the incompetence or bankruptcy of their representatives. I am convinced that the solutions to many concrete problems are fully within the power of local soviets. That is, if they acknowledge their growing responsibility and if the people who join them do not start to focus only on their own welfare.

Karelia, however, cannot solve its socio-economic problems alone. What is needed are all-Russian measures, appropriate laws, consolidation of resources, and mutual coordination in the efforts of labor collectives. However difficult it may be, we must re-examine the question of equalising the benefits enjoyed by the northern districts of Karelia and a number of other oblasts with districts in the Far North, establishing from the very beginning of a person's working career northern bonuses if the person is living in such a district, extending these bonuses to pensions, and differentiation depending on price levels.

Otherwise, a paradox arises and the prices eat up the bonuses. It is obvious that Karelia - and not only Karelia - will require state subsidies. While this is a difficult issue, it must not be side-stepped, especially

since such measures, however necessary they may be, cannot be considered long-term solutions. Otherwise, there can be no question of any form of economic independence or self-financing.

Pravda

12 March 1990

Page 3 (slightly abridged)

On the Eve of the Northern People's Forum

On March 28, 1990, delegates to the congress of Minority Peoples of the North met with V.I. Vorotnikov, member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and chairman of the presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, and with A.V. Vlasov, candidate member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and chairman of the RSFSR Council of Ministers.

Many important and urgent issues were discussed. They concerned the drafting of a new status for national autonomies and organizations, regions of traditional management for indigenous peoples of the North, the training of a national pool of specialists, strengthening the material and technical base of educational institutions, the formation of a minority people's development fund, ecology, and demography. Most importantly, the issues were discussed in the framework of devising strategies and tactics for resolving them.

It was stressed more than once that the vigorous industrial development of the North was in sharp contradiction with the traditional way of life of the native population. In their pursuit of intensive

development of natural resources, agencies of the central government continue to ignore the interests and vital needs of minority peoples and the distinctness of their culture. Despite some improvement in recent years, there has been no noticeable development in the social sphere.

Those participating in the meeting noted that the Comprehensive Program for Development of the Economics and Culture of Northern Peoples to the Year 2005 will be an important step in solving vital problems affecting northern peoples. A draft of the program has already been worked out by the RSFSR Council of Ministers and USSR Gosplan. It takes account of the aspirations of native people, social priorities, and principled concerns regarding comprehensive development of various regions. The draft will be discussed at the conference. There was a conviction that a truly "working" document will result.

Professor Ch.M. Taksami, chairman of the organizing committee, talked about the preparations for the congress. In particular, he noted that the minority peoples of the North were uniting in a mass movement to join forces, together with the peoples of Russia and the entire country, in solving the acute and complex problems resulting from further development in the North.

Representatives from all nationalities and ethnic groups were elected delegates to the congress.

The congress is to be held March 30 - 31 in Moscow in the Kremlin's Great Palace. Plans call for creation of an all-Russian association, the adoption of a charter and program and the election of a council for it.

Sovetskaya Rossiya

29 March 1990

Page 2 (Full Text)

A Message from M.S. Gorbachev on the
Occasion of the Congress of Northern Peoples

Dear Comrades!

Warm greetings to you, representatives of the indigenous peoples of the North who are gathering in Moscow for your conference within the walls of the Kremlin. I feel that this forum is an event of great importance both for the peoples of the North and for our entire multinational fatherland.

Your congress is convincing proof that the great work of renewing Soviet society is today being carried on by all the peoples of the USSR. The ideals of 'perestroika' have been taken to heart by thousands upon thousands of our fellow countrymen who serve the welfare of the country under the severe conditions of the northland.

There is growing civic action among northern peoples, and their contribution to the solution of nationwide tasks is increasing. The striving of native peoples of the North to become the genuine masters of their land and their fate is legitimate. Our multinational society is becoming increasingly aware that the ability to live in harmony with nature and the knowledge, acquired over centuries, of preserving nature's riches are universally human values whose importance in today's world is constantly growing.

I am certain that your congress will serve the development and strengthening of national distinctiveness and the renewal of cultural traditions, and will contribute to preserving the environment for northern native peoples and improving their living and working conditions.

My wish is for fruitful work and successful endeavors for your newly created Association of Northern Peoples.

Sovetskaya Rossiya

30 March 1990

Page 1 (Full Text)

Open Microphone: Health of Northern People

I'm a physician, and what concerns me most, of course, is people's health. For minority peoples of the North this is still a question of survival, of preserving themselves as a nation. For example, according to 1989 data, the population of northern peoples increased by 17%. This is due to a drop in the mortality rate and a rise in the birth rate. Nevertheless, the demographic situation on the whole remains unfavorable. Overall mortality and infant mortality remain high: overall mortality is 1.7 times the general RSFSR level and infant mortality is double, while the average life span of northern peoples is 18-20 years less. The high mortality rate among working-aged people has led to a distortion of the family, resulting in more single mothers. What is particularly

alarming is the high incidence of diseases of the nervous system, circulatory system and respiratory organs, and cases of tuberculosis among peoples of the North are six times greater than the RSFSR level. This is due not only to low immunity to this disease but also to unsatisfactory social and living conditions.

The United Nations has declared 1993 the year of indigenous and threatened peoples. But the situation in our country is such that we need to declare that every year. Aboriginal people need help. A State program is needed to protect their native interests.

Sovetskaya Rossiya

30 March 1990

Page 4 (Full Text)

Open Microphone: Ethnic Sports Needed!

If I were given the opportunity to address the congress I would bring up the following topic: "The status, problems and ways of developing traditional physical culture among peoples of the North." I consider this a very important part of spiritual culture. We need to conduct scientific research in this realm, collect ethnographic material on games, competitions, etc.; to set up at pedagogical institutes special chairs - Ethnic Games and Sports of Peoples of the North - within departments of physical education, and we need a division for the training of teacher-organizers of northern peoples physical culture in Sverdlovsk at the newly created Institute of Physical Culture. Maybe we could go even further and create an

all-Russian federation or association of ethnic sports of peoples of the Far North, Siberia and the Far East. In the future I see us holding an all-union olympiad, possibly even International Olympic Games of Ethnic Sports among peoples of the North. Why not? We just have to dare!

Author Viktor Prokopenko, Candidate of Biological Sciences, department docent of the Sverdlovsk Pedagogical Institute, deputy chairman of the Scientific Methodology Commission on Northern Peoples under RSFSR Goskomsport (State Committee on Sport).

Sovetskaya Rossiya
30 March 1990
Page 4 (full text)

A People's Deputy Speaks Out

Interview with Roman Rugin, member of the USSR Supreme Soviet, deputy from the Yamal-Nenets Electoral District

Q. "What goal did you set for yourself upon entering the campaign for a mandate as deputy?"

A. "In seventy years of Soviet power little has changed in the life of the indigenous peoples of the North - the Nenets, the Khanty, the Selkups - despite the fact that there's been no shortage of decrees concerning improvements in their economic and social status. The decrees have merely remained on paper. Today the question

is whether the native population will survive in regions with gas deposits. As these deposits have been developed the indigenous peoples have been squeezed out of their native lands, the area of their traditional existence has shrunk considerably. We have been deprived of places to pasture our reindeer, deprived of hunting and fishing grounds ... There has been a significant worsening of the already impoverished living conditions of northern peoples, and all of this has had a disastrous effect on their development. For this reason, cardinal measures are essential, a comprehensive State program is needed in which priority is given to the indigenous ethnic minorities of the North."

Q. "And what is your program as a deputy? What have you already achieved?"

A. "The main part of my program is to achieve normal living and development conditions for indigenous peoples of the North in the period of their rapid industrial growth. A great many problems have accumulated in medical services and public education. In actual fact, these problems are common to everyone."

I am quite alarmed when I think about how the people have, quite frankly, "drunk themselves into a stupor" in recent years. The anti-alcoholism campaign, like all such campaigns, has yielded no tangible results. Clearly, we need to become more deeply involved in the life, the culture, and everything that has an impact on the social well-being of the people. Today our primary task is the ethnic regeneration of each people, even the least populous. Their culture is as fragile and vulnerable as the flicker of a campfire in the tundra. We must not allow it to go out."

Q. "For the past 20 years the Yamal North has been the principal supplier of natural gas. If I'm not mistaken, two-thirds of that produced in the entire country comes from your region. Has this changed the life of northern peoples?"

A. "If there has been a change it has been only for the worse. Of course, there was the appearance of Novyi Urengoi, Nadym, Noyabrsk, workers' settlements with well-built houses, modern schools and hospitals; up-to-date social, cultural and living conditions. But alongside each of these cities and settlements are the regions where the indigenous people live, where they huddle in wretched dilapidated wooden shacks built in the 30's and 40's. In the local schools the children study in several shifts. Medical services are non-existent, as is also the case with assistance from numerous enterprises and government agencies. Money belongs to the ministries and corporations, and there is none left over for the needs of the indigenous people. I am convinced that soviets with full authority in their own region will help to rectify the economic, social and financial situation in these regions and to solve the urgent problems of the North's native peoples."

Q. "For centuries the chief treasure of Yamal has been its reindeer, fish and furs. How is the native resident of the North managing these resources?"

A. "Centralism has produced a situation in which the North is not the master of what it possesses. For example, in the unique Ob Basin one finds prized varieties of fish: sturgeon, nelma, muksun and syrok. Not even one percent of the catch is left over for the needs of the local population. Everything goes to Tyumen, Moscow and other Soviet cities and abroad. In our stores you won't find this fish. In my program I raised the issue of increasing the sales quotas through the local trade network. This matter is now being decided. But is it fair that the acceptance price for fish is 10-15 kopeks per kilo when the State is selling it at 2-3 rubles... The interests of the people producing the goods are not taken into account. As

for furs, it was only last year that they allowed a portion of these products to be sold among the workers of the sovkhos. Before, we never even saw them. It's like this: if we catch the fish, we should be able to eat it. And our women have the right to adorn themselves in sable and fox furs, which, after all, are taken on their lands. Meanwhile, they are being worn by women in France, Italy and Germany - any who want them, just not us: all of the best furs are exported."

Q. "The third session of the the USSR Supreme Soviet adopted laws regarding property and land. Will there be changes in the North in connection with this?"

A. "There should be significant improvement in the life both of the indigenous peoples and of the population of the region as a whole. These laws must be like a breath of fresh air to them. Finally, the land will have a true master, who will take care of his own and never permit what the ministries and government agencies arbitrarily wrought here. Maybe we will be able to finally move beyond the current standstill situation. As a result of ill-conceived experiments on northern lands, approximately six million hectares of reindeer pasture lands have been lost in our okrug alone, and many bodies of water have been put out of use. In the upper reaches of the Ob highly prized fish species can no longer be found because there is so much oil flowing into the water. The people will not stand for this any longer. Without the people's consent there will be no more industrial development in the region. This will force the highly placed officials in the central government to understand that it is not they but the true masters of the land who will manage its resources."

Q. "How then must we develop the North in order to avoid the previous mistakes?"

A. "We need a comprehensive approach to northern development. Development must be accompanied by sound ecological expertise and measures aimed at protection of nature must be respected. Only then is it possible to decide whether development should proceed. When irreversible processes of destruction commence it is too late to take action. The sad fate of the Aral has already demonstrated this. And so I repeat yet again: to avoid the mistakes of the past we must quickly transfer real power to the soviets."

Q. "You are the director of the press centre for the Congress of Minority Peoples of the North. We know that an Association of Peoples of the North is to be created at the congress. What do you think of this idea?"

A. "We, a group of writers, raised the question of an association in a letter to M.S. Gorbachev as early as 1987. Then the decision was made to create the association, the goal of which was to protect the political and economic rights of the indigenous population. An administrative structure will be created both in Moscow and in the local regions. Plans call for sending representatives to UNESCO. The association will become a serious barrier to mismanagement of northern regional development."

Q. "The work of a deputy is very complex and requires a lot of time. Doesn't this interfere with creative work?"

A. "Prior to my parliamentary work I wrote about 12 books of poetry and prose. I've always been inspired by the subject of ecology - of nature and morality. This year the Central Urals Publishing House will bring out a new book of stories entitled Waiting for a Son. One of the stories in the book - "On the Spawning River" - is devoted to the subject of a growing lack of spirituality. The story tells of how outsiders, in only three or four navigation seasons, destroyed a river which had previously been the preferred site for the spawning of rare fish.

Now, of course, there is little time for creative work. The most important thing is the mandate from my constituents."

Q. "And what is it your constituents are asking you to do?"

A. "I've received hundreds of letters in the past months. Acting on their requests I have made 150 demands, especially of comrades Ryzhkov, Lukyanov, Vorotnikov, Voronin and Nikitin, of the ministers of internal affairs, of construction of oil and gas industry enterprises, etc. I am working on introducing a unified salary coefficient for northern peoples, and a solution to the problem of border regulations, which at times can be simply absurd: A Nenets or Khanty who lives within a particular district must request permission to travel in order to visit his relatives in another region.

I believe that the problems of the North can be solved successfully. My region is already rolling up its sleeves. The most important thing is to help it along!"

Sovetskaya Rossiya

30 March 1990

Page 4 (Full Text)

Envoys from a Harsh Land

Yesterday and today the foyer of the Great Palace in the Kremlin has looked more like a museum of applied arts. Indeed, this exhibition - artefacts of northern peoples - would be the pride of any gallery in any country.

In the hall are gathered hunters, reindeer breeders, and representatives of the intelligentsia of northern regions, Siberia and the Far East. The delegates are representing 184,000 native inhabitants of harsh areas of our country, and their geographic representation is much greater - almost half of the area of the country.

Taking part in the work of the congress are M.S. Gorbachev, Yu.D. Maslyukov, V.A. Medvedev, N.I. Ryzhkov, A.V. Vlasov, A.I. Lukyanov, A.N. Girenko, Yu.A. Manaenko, G.I. Usmanov, and R.N. Nishanov.

The congress is slated to create an Association of Northern Peoples. This was mentioned at the opening by V.I. Vorotnikov, member of the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee and chairman of the Presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. The same idea was heard in the report by the chairman of the congress organizing committee, Doctor of Historical Sciences Ch.M. Taksami, and in many of the delegates' speeches.

"It's very a good thing that the congress has met," said N.I. Sleptsov, director of the Evenk sovkhos "Iskra" of Yakutiya during a pause between sessions. "We must save our environment, our land and our people. Potatoes, of course, do not grow on our land, they're brought in. And if we don't improve the situation, tomorrow they're going to start bringing fish to us as well. We must have some changes. Everyone understands this today."

"One issue is being posed correctly at the congress - give land to those who do not despoil it. Family farms and brigades here will improve the situation. And we're still waiting for more support from aviation. We in the North need new airplanes, new airlines."

"I represent the Saami people," says Anastasiya Mozoletskaya. "There are 1835 of us in the country. I myself am engaged in the development of native pursuits. Recently more attention has been paid to this among us in the Murmansk Oblast. The decisions at the congress are generally correct - northern peoples need a modern program of serious professional training. What's needed here are not bureaucrats but people with enthusiasm, people with a burning desire to work."

In the foyer the delegates surrounded RSFSR Meritorious Artist Kola Beldy: "I'm not a delegate to the congress but a guest. I feel that today a great event is occurring for all of my people, my northern brothers. Our life is difficult, but now it is clear that we must change it for the better. And I am happy that I can encourage them with my singing."

Pravda

31 March 1990

Page 1 (slightly abridged)

Far Reaching Program of Development Proposed
for Northern Ethnic Minorities

Every nation and every people, whatever the size of their population, is actively participating today in the renewal of Soviet society. An example of this is the Congress of Minority Peoples of the North, which opened on March 30 in the Great Palace of the Kremlin.

Representatives of the Evenks, Chukchi, Nanais, Nivkhs, Orochi, Saami - the 26 ethnic peoples inhabiting Northern, Siberia and the Far East - have gathered in the capital. The largest population of these peoples is slightly more than 30,000, while others number only a few hundred. The pressing problems of socio-economic development, ecology, and protection of these people's national culture are at the centre of attention of those participating in this forum.

In the hall are people's deputies of the USSR, officials of ministries and government departments, the heads of local organs of power, figures from the world of science and culture, and representatives of international and national organizations of ethnic minorities from a number of foreign countries.

V.I. Vorotnikov greeted those present on behalf of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and the RSFSR Council of Ministers. The peoples of the North, Vorotnikov said, occupy a worthy place in the community of the Russian Federation and the entire Union. And one has to be particularly gratified that the indigenous population of the republic is demonstrating its vital energy. This is evidence, once again, that the process of 'perestroika' is serving to the strengthen the sovereign rights of every nation.

In his presentation Professor Ch.M. Taksami, chairman of the congress organizing committee, noted that the ethnic minorities had made significant progress during the years of Soviet power. Many of these peoples have acquired their own written language and created a national intelligentsia. Nevertheless, in recent decades northern peoples have come up against serious difficulties connected primarily with a haphazard exploitation of natural resources. Opportunities for northern people to practice traditional pursuits - hunting, fishing and reindeer breeding - have diminished. Environmental conditions for all indigenous peoples have been spoiled. Due to a large influx of people from other regions they have become a minority on their own ancient lands.

It would be appropriate, the speaker feels, for the RSFSR Supreme Soviet to examine a package of draft legislation calling for the formation of new autonomous okrugs and national raions, of rural and village soviets, with simultaneous expansion of their rights; a guaranteed representation of northern peoples in local and higher legislative and executive bodies, including introducing quotas on deputy positions for the representatives of all ethnic groups; the creation of a two-chamber system in autonomous and okrug soviets; and the establishment in regions with mixed population of permanent commissions on inter-ethnic relations with veto power over decisions that contradict the national interests of northern ethnic minorities.

A.A. Khomyakov, deputy chairman of the RSFSR Council of Ministers and chairman of RSFSR Gosplan, presented a proposal for a comprehensive program of further economic and cultural development of northern minority peoples for the period 1991 - 1995 and up to the year 2005.

The main distinguishing feature of this proposal, Khomyakov stressed, consists primarily in the fact that resources should be directed at development of the populated sites where these peoples actually live, and at the setting up of production districts and brigades of traditional economic management rather than at generalized development of their home regions. The proposal takes into account a rational relationship between industrial development of the regions and the traditional way of life of the indigenous populations, and the protection of the natural environment as the primary condition for their existence.

It is obvious, the speaker went on to say, that the land legislation being drawn up by the RSFSR and the autonomous republic must provide for granting individual families or persons belonging to northern ethnic minorities free lifetime and hereditary ownership or use of hunting and fishing grounds, reindeer herding lands and other lands upon the approval of local soviets. This will afford the peoples themselves the possibility of managing all resources on the lands they inhabit.

In the context of self-financing and having enterprises pay their own way, the foundation for development of traditional economic sectors must be the broad implementation of lease, contract, cooperative, individual and family labor relations, the speaker continued. The program also calls for granting the right to sovhozes and kolhozes, fish factories, state game farms and cooperative fur farms as well as to other enterprises and organizations in the regions where minority peoples live, to retain and use up to 30% of the volume of purchases at their own discretion, as well as all fur, reindeer hides and meat produced and obtained by farms in excess of purchase volumes.

Khomyakov emphasized that, since the basis of socio-economic development of northern peoples will from now on be the improving of economic sectors based on the use, protection and rational regeneration of the environment, he considers it a matter of great importance that the USSR Academy of Sciences and USSR State Committee on the Environment (Goskompriroda), in cooperation with the RSFSR Council of Ministers and local bodies, formulate by 1991 a long-term program of nature conservation and rational nature management.

The speaker reported that the republican government, in collaboration with the USSR Academy of Sciences and the USSR State Committee on Science and Technology, is studying the question of establishing a centre for scientific research on problems of development of northern minority peoples and the organization of an inter-departmental scientific council on these same issues.

The proposed program calls for publishing newspapers and journals in all of the languages of northern ethnic minorities and the opening of specialized ethnic editorial boards at existing publishing houses.

This comprehensive program, the speaker said in conclusion, touches not only the fate of northern ethnic minorities but virtually the entire North, as well as many regions of Siberia and the Far East in the RSFSR.

Sovetskaya Rossiya
31 March 1990
Page 1 (text abridged)

Hopes and Fears

Judging by the first day of work and the discussions in the corridors at the congress, its delegates mean business. The North has already loudly decried its woes and misfortunes, and now is the time to take concrete decisions. Because, as Doctor of Historical Sciences Ch.M. Taksami, chairman of the congress organizing committee, noted in his address, the question today is: Will the northern peoples vanish from the face of the earth forever? Unfortunately, this is not hyperbole but bitter reality.

"What do you expect from the congress? What do you think should be discussed?" I put these questions to congress delegates and guests. Here is what they said.

Galina Egorova, district internist from Khanty-Mansiisk, a Khanty by nationality:

"As a doctor what concerns me most of all are health problems since the survival of any people depends on this. For northern aboriginal peoples today survival is the number one problem. But perhaps one cannot even raise the issue without posing a solution to economic, social and cultural matters. In general, the greatest hope is that our government will work on public health in deed and not just in words."

Anton Kutkhyrgin, editor of the Magadan Oblast Radio:

"I'm chairman of a city association of ethnic minorities of the North. The congress is a breakthrough for the future, but it was too late in coming. A lot of harsh changes have occurred. Now the process of rethinking them is underway. I am convinced that only the people of

the North themselves are able to halt the extinction that has begun. I see the main road as being the renewal of the national and historical foundations for the vitality of a nation by means of self-protection and self-regulation."

The fisherman Vasilii Shkuleva of the "Nizhnekolymskii" Sovkhoz is concerned about the future of northern people's traditional economic sectors:

"Soon our sovkhov will separate into two-components: a reindeer and a hunting sovkhov, which will engage in fishing and trapping. The comrade from Gosplan (State Planning Committee) was right when he said in his speech that we need to give fishermen and the hunters of game and fur-bearing animals the right to retain on the farms up to 30% of what they produce and use it for local needs. I'd like to see our problems be given more attention. There aren't any good houses where we live, the club and store are in dilapidated shacks. If we were the bosses it would be another matter. I really liked the proposal about converting hunting grounds and other such lands and reindeer pastures to lifetime use with the right of inheritance. Then the land would have a master. If I could address the congress I'd also say: Why did they take the inexpensive 'kazanka' boats that have oars out of production? Why can't we buy the motors 'Vikhr' and 'Veterok'? Without them you can't even get a business on its feet."

Well-known Soviet Chukchi writer Yuri Rytkeu:

"If I could speak at the congress I'd say: All of this is fine - the long-term plans, the proposed concept for socio-economic development, and various ideas. But the people of the North need help today, and not stretched out from 1991 to the year 2000. What's more, past experience has shown that long-term plans of this sort are one of the

tricks used by the bureaucratic leaders of the country. You must agree that in some places by the year 2000 there will no longer be anyone to ask about it, and everyone will simply have forgotten about the decisions that were made. Why am I saying this? Because in ten years, given the way the peoples of the North are living or struggling to live today, these plans will be of no use to anyone. The situation is extremely alarming, and I think there should be more talk about this at the congress. We need to look at many aspects of our life, including improved education and protecting the language, culture and environment. I want our children and grandchildren to still be able to speak in their native language in their native lands."

And how does Rafik Nishanov, chairman of the Council of Nationalities of the USSR Supreme Soviet, evaluate the congress?

"From the very start the convoking of this congress has confirmed how appropriate this extremely important forum is, not only for the people of the North but also for the entire country. You know, all people in the Soviet Union have enormous respect and sympathy for the peoples of the North, for their language, customs and traditions, and we all wish to preserve their distinctive culture and contribute to its development. The welcome from the country's president, M.S. Gorbachev, and the papers and speeches already presented at the congress demonstrate that the convoking of the congress was absolutely justified. I am totally convinced that the hopes of the peoples of the North are also justified. There are many questions, of course. There are problems regarding socio-economic and spiritual development, and the structuring of ethnic and State relations. To solve these problems faster, all efforts must be given organizational shape. So, for this reason, the proposal sounded at the congress about creating an Association of Northern Peoples, and about it participating in solutions to the accumulated problems at the level of the Supreme Soviet, the government of the

country, and other State organs, will of course be extremely important.. I, as chairman of the Council of Nationalities, will do my utmost to promote solutions to these issues."

The congress is bubbling, pondering, debating, criticizing, and seeking solutions to problems - in a word, the congress is at work.

Sovetskaya Rossiya
31 March 1990
Page 1 (full text)

TRANSPORT WATER

Environmentally Safe
Amphibious Ships Designed for Use in the North

Tests have been completed in our country of air-cushioned amphibious ships designed for service in the North. Recommendations have been issued for their series production.

River workers and shipbuilders of Tomsk have spent a number of years working on development of the amphibious vessels. The times require it. The short navigation season severely restricts shipping schedules and volumes. Maneuverability has also been curtailed: today's ships cannot enter small rivers - they require deep, broad bodies

of water. When the floods recede and the dry weather sets in (these ships) are left aground. Cargoes "expire" on route. They sink into the permanently freezing peat bogs. And freight transport using tracked and wheeled vehicles leaves permanent ruts, like open wounds, in the North.

The people of Siberia could not have solved this difficult problem alone. On their initiative a scientific production association was created as part of the Tomsk Industrial Transport Complex. Joining the association on a shared basis were scientific, design and production collectives of Tomsk, Gorkii, Moscow, Novosibirsk, Leningrad, the Mari ASSR, and elsewhere. The integration of science and production shortened the research phase by roughly two-thirds.

"The most important thing," reports P. Drachev, director of the association and head of the Tomsk River Port, "is that ships of the amphibious type do not damage the fragile environment of the North. They quadruple the size of the transport zone for the Ob-Irtysh Basin. Their introduction in this region will confer an annual economic benefit of approximately 9 million rubles."

Izvestiya

22 March 1990

Page 6 (full text)

MISCELLANEOUS

Leningrad Branch of Association of
Polar Workers Formed

A Leningrad branch of the Association of Polar Workers was formed in the course of a general assembly of representatives from various Leningrad agencies involved in research and development in the Arctic and Antarctic.

Elected as president of this new public body is the nationally renowned polar specialist, Candidate of Geographic Sciences N. Kornilov, deputy director of the Arctic and Antarctic Scientific Research Institute (AANII). Yu. Khistyayev of the department of scientific expeditions of AANII was elected general director.

V. Lukin, deputy chairman of the presidium of the Leningrad Branch, discussed the goals of the association.

"Primarily, it is a matter of social protection of polar workers. Another goal is to enhance the ecological protection of the Arctic, Antarctic and polar regions. The association's plans also include support for the development of northern people's traditional pursuits; the creation of our own insurance company; a number of measures aimed at organizing propaganda lectures, educational and publishing activities; and arranging for tourist excursions to the Arctic and Antarctic on a commercial basis.

A nation-wide gathering of polar workers' representatives is also being arranged.

New Radioelectronics Plant at Apatity

In the near future the Kola Peninsula - one of the country's main sources of raw materials - will become a major centre of the radioelectronics industry. A first step in this direction, the specialists feel, is the establishment at Apatity of a branch plant of the Leningrad "Severnaya zarya" Scientific Production Association.

"It isn't just a matter of a new plant - its construction has already been completed," reported the plant director N. Kozin. "What is happening, essentially, is the birth of a fundamentally new sector for the country - the production of extremely pure materials, the shortage of which is hampering the output of a new generation of television and radio equipment. In addition, we will use local mineral resources in manufacturing extremely thin wafers from lithium tantalate and niobate crystals.

Izvestiya
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Page 1 (Full Text)

KGB Puts a Stop to Illegal Exports of Fuel Oil

Workers of the Committee on State Security (KGB) have shut down yet another route for the illegal export from the USSR of scarce materials. The cargo this time was fuel oil, a chronic shortage of which is plaguing many of the country's enterprises and construction sites.

On receipt of a tip from railway personnel that the freight did not match the shipping documents, KGB personnel discovered that high-grade fuel oil was being shipped from Kirishi by way of the port of Murmansk disguised as tar residue, a by-product of oil refining. The export of this fuel oil requires special government permission.

The loading of the fuel onto the tankers was immediately halted. In the course of the ensuing investigation it was learned that 60,000 tons of fuel oil had already been shipped out of the country through this port disguised as waste material. Another 20,000 tons were stored in the tanks of a local oil storage depot. The depot was being used by its owner - the self-financing foreign trade firm "Kirishineftekhimeksport" (Kirishi Petrochemical Export) for the export of goods.

Criminal proceedings for smuggling have been instituted.

Vodnyi Transport
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Page 4 (Full Text)

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