

No Kerosene Journey One

Chapter 2

Through Icebound Lands

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Interlude & Dreamtime:

That Which Is Not Seen

Considering Encounters with Ecstasy



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Through Icebound Lands

Experiencing the Glories of Public Bus Services...



and the Ice-Free Port of Narvik.

(some external links are reached by clicking the red text)[https://
inspirationalpathways.org/no-kerosene-the-journey/](https://inspirationalpathways.org/no-kerosene-the-journey/)

Living in Northern Europe requires different skills (and attitudes) than are 'normal' for most people across the Continent & its Western Isles.

We were told 'winter comes later' but the far North region remains snow-bound & frozen for several months.

To reach Narvik we could fly (from UK) or use rail & bus. This is 'No Kerosene'. Our route is by rail & ferries - we take the bus. The journey was surprising, mildly exciting, but particularly, very impressive.

Public transport integration links schedules:

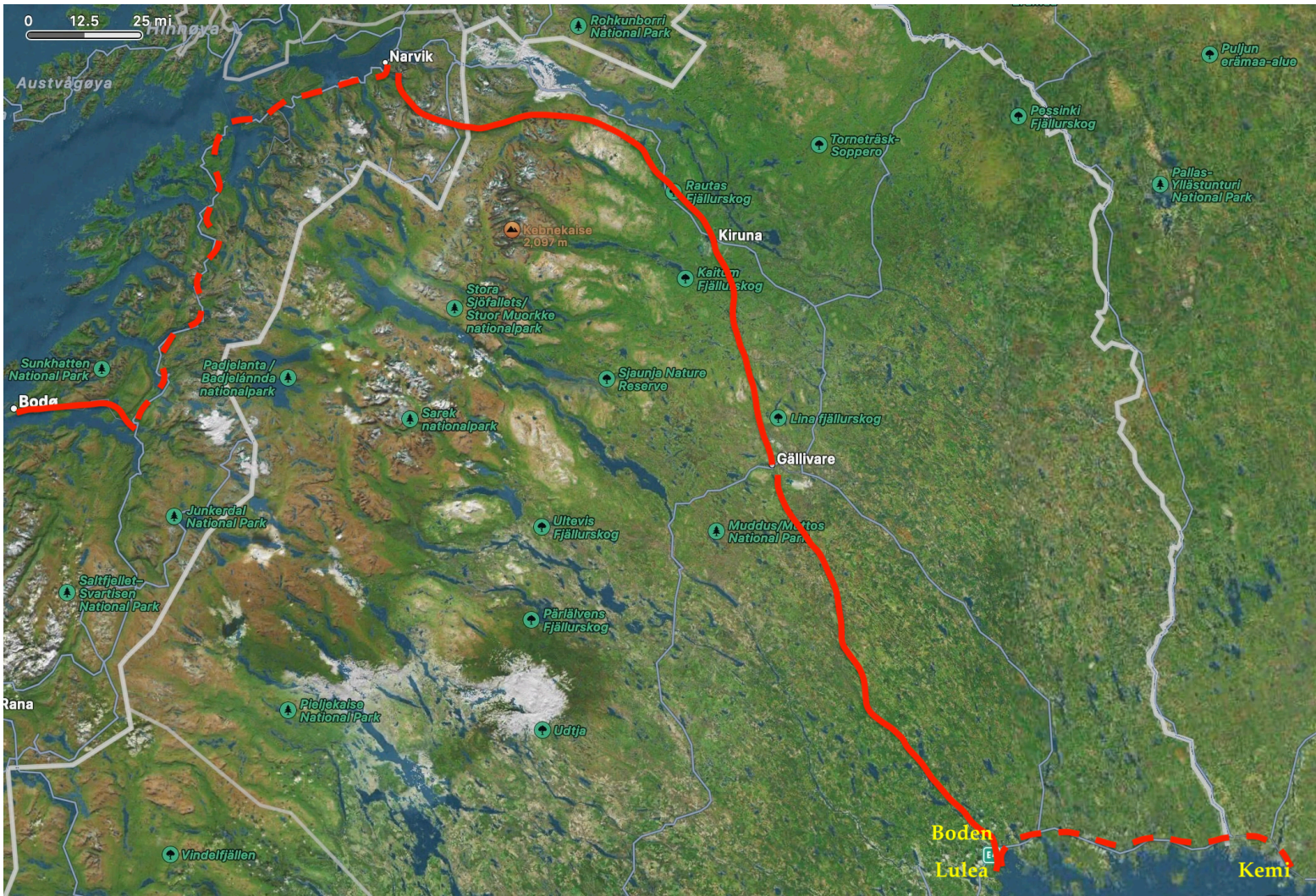
- Leave Oslo on the night train,
- change to day train in Trondheim,
- connect at Fauske with evening bus to Narvik (and points further north). Distance 1391 kms (864 miles)

We travelled on the day trains & buses.

Despite the variable weather and conditions, the 2 journeys we made on buses (dashed red line on map) were faultless & thoroughly enjoyable.

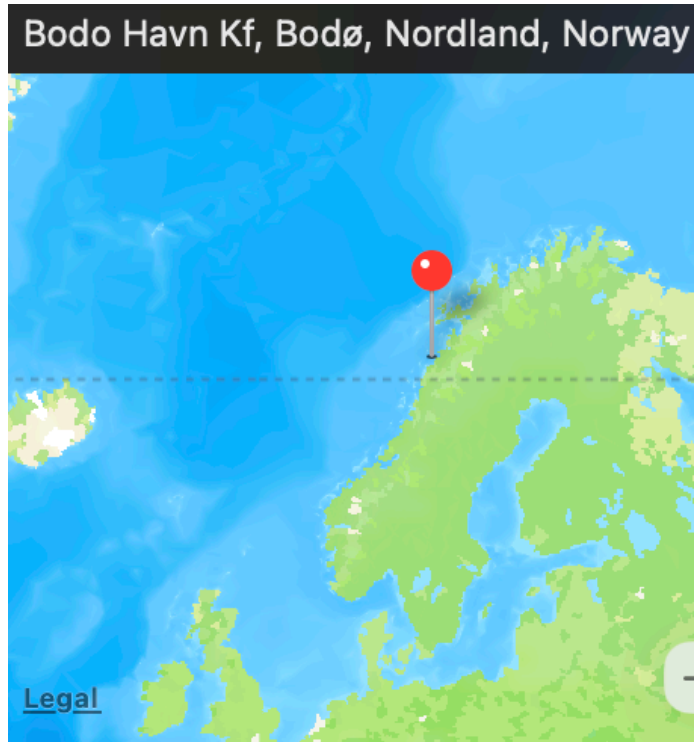
Part of that enjoyment was in being the only 'tourists' on what in summer is a very popular route

(inevitably we saw Dutch motor-home travellers on the journey - some seem to live without care - intrepid or foolish?)



Monday morning March 6th

An Arctic morning



We are realising that this journey needed to have more space included... ie days without travel

Yesterday we spent 9 hours on train... which was then late and so became 10 hours.... we were up and off at around 07.15 on Saturday & Sunday. On Saturday we arrived to face snow storms and only enough time to walk round Trondheim to find place to eat in the evening. Yesterday our journey lasted from 07.15 to 18.45 – we went to a restaurant had soup, then returned to hotel & retired early.



Today: train to Fauske (07.30 departure... fortunately our hotel is immediately opposite the station).

Change to a bus (we hope!) and in Narvik before 14.00. We have allowed an extra night there.... but that was largely to allow for 'catch up time' in case of disruption en route.

This journey is becoming 'helter-skelter'.... but it will be completed after another week + (it takes 2 night journeys and 3 days of travel to travel back from Finland).

We considered adding some 'extra' days into the next 2 journeys that head to central, eastern & southern Europe.



Fauske: and the final section of the northbound journey













Connections in a 'gathering gloom'



time & conditions mattered.....one passenger was nearly



left in the ensuing snow storm.



reflective moments as we rounded ragged rocks





..... others required links to remoter communities



Onto a ferry - it happened without any stop, just a slowing of the bus. Everything was prepared and arranged to fit the bus timetable





There was a cafe on the ferry - selling an essential winter product, a contribution from the small British port of Fleetwood to those living in Arctic conditions.

French president Emmanuel Macron uses them.. "He finds his energy in les Fisherman's, those lozenges which rip your throat out. He keeps them in his pockets and in the car-seats. When speaking publicly, he needs water, some slices of lemon and a small dish of Fisherman's. During the Presidential campaign, he was reported to have devoured crates of them, delivered to his campaign headquarters."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fisherman's_Friend







Narvik





Tuesday March 7th

Narvik, originally a small rural settlement developed in the late C19th as an all-year ice free port for the Swedish Kiruna and Gällivare iron mines. Sweden's nearest port, Luleå, on the Baltic, freezes in winter.

Narvik's natural harbour is also suitable for large vessels.

The railway was constructed to bring the ore to Narvik





Bifrost



Foto: Narvik komm. fotosamling.

Lasting 4. jan. 1903 av første malmbåt fra Narvik, S/S Upland, med Bifrost som skiftelokomotiv.

The photo is from 4. January 1903 and shows the first shipment of iron-ore from S/S Upland in Narvik, with Bifrost working as a shunting locomotive.

Bifrost er bygget ved Nydqvist & Holm i Trollhättan i Sverige år 1882 som lok nr 2 av 7

Lokomotivet ble først brukt i Skåne i Sverige før det kom til Narvik som første damplokomotiv høsten 1900

Bifrost ble fra 1901 benyttet i anleggstrafikk ved bygging av LKAB's anlegg og fra 1903 som skiftelokomotiv fram til 1942



Bifrost was built in 1882 at Nydqvist and Holm in Trollhättan, Sweden and was number two of seven locomotives to be made of this type.

Bifrost was first used in Skåne in Sweden before arriving in Narvik as the first steam locomotive in the autumn of 1900.

Bifrost was used under the construction of LKAB until 1903 when Bifrost was used as a shunting locomotive until 1942.

The name Bifrost derives from Norse mythology and was described as a burning rainbow bridge between Midgard, the world, and Asgard, the realm of the gods.





Foto: Narvik komm. fotosamling.

Lasting 4. jan. 1903 av første malmbåt fra Narvik, S/S Upland, med Bifrost som skiftelokomotiv.

The photo is from 4. January 1903 and shows the first shipment of iron-ore from S/S Upland in Narvik, with Bilfrost working as a shunting locomotive.



Narvik became a crucial port during the early stages of WW2 as Nazi Germany needed to secure supplies of iron from the Swedish mines.

This was achieved by conquest after initial Allied & Norwegian resistance.

Following its capture the German navy used it as a base for battleships that could harass and attack allied merchant ships on the 'Arctic Convoys' supplying their Russian allies via Murmansk (also an ice-free port).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arctic_convoys_of_World_War_II

Narvik has an informative museum explaining the whole period.

It explains and challenges.

<https://warmuseum.no/>

**NARVIK
KRIGSMUSEUM**

NARVIK WAR MUSEUM



To build peace, we must understand the war that was. First, this exhibition tells about the Second World War in the North. The war struck hard – Narvik, Norway, the World – and many stories have been told. The battle of good against evil, brave men and women who stood up against a superior enemy. Facts on the one side, falsehood on the other side. But no war is that simple. War is choices and values colliding, nuances, not black and white. This is where understanding is created – in the recognition that my truth may not be your truth.

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING ZONA

World War II is
documented and described

In hindsight it seems simple:
Our allies
the Enemy
The difference between right and wrong

But do not forget
those who fought, fled,
lost their lives, lived in fear,
they were not prepared,
but felt safe

Then as now:
Economic turmoil
Divisive political slogans
National borders being challenged
A fight for resources

"Three quarters of the factors on which
action of war is based,
are wrapped in a fog of greater or lesser uncertainty",
said the military theorist Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831)

ZONA is a tense borderland
Arms, material and experiences from
World War II meets a conflicted present
Different voices and opinions are launched

To whom should you listen?
Whom can you trust?

In ZONA you are surveilled by the gaze of history
It is your thoughts that keep ZONA alive

Narvik, our most northerly point on the No Kerosene Tour... yet still another 2407 kms to the North Pole.

Even Nordkapp (the most northerly point of the European mainland & still in Norway), is 740 kms.



Roma is shown as 3885 kms.

Our most southerly point will be on the 3rd Journey:
Spilinga in Calabria, Southern Italy, 4519 kms distant (634
kms from Roma).

The Northern Scandinavian & Nordic Lands, compared
with most of central Europe, are vast.

Hamburg, where our outward route turned north & to
which we return on this journey (via Helsinki) is nearly half
way to Spilinga.



Segregated pedestrian crossings? Men (in hats?) only...



...was I permitted as was wearing an appropriate type?



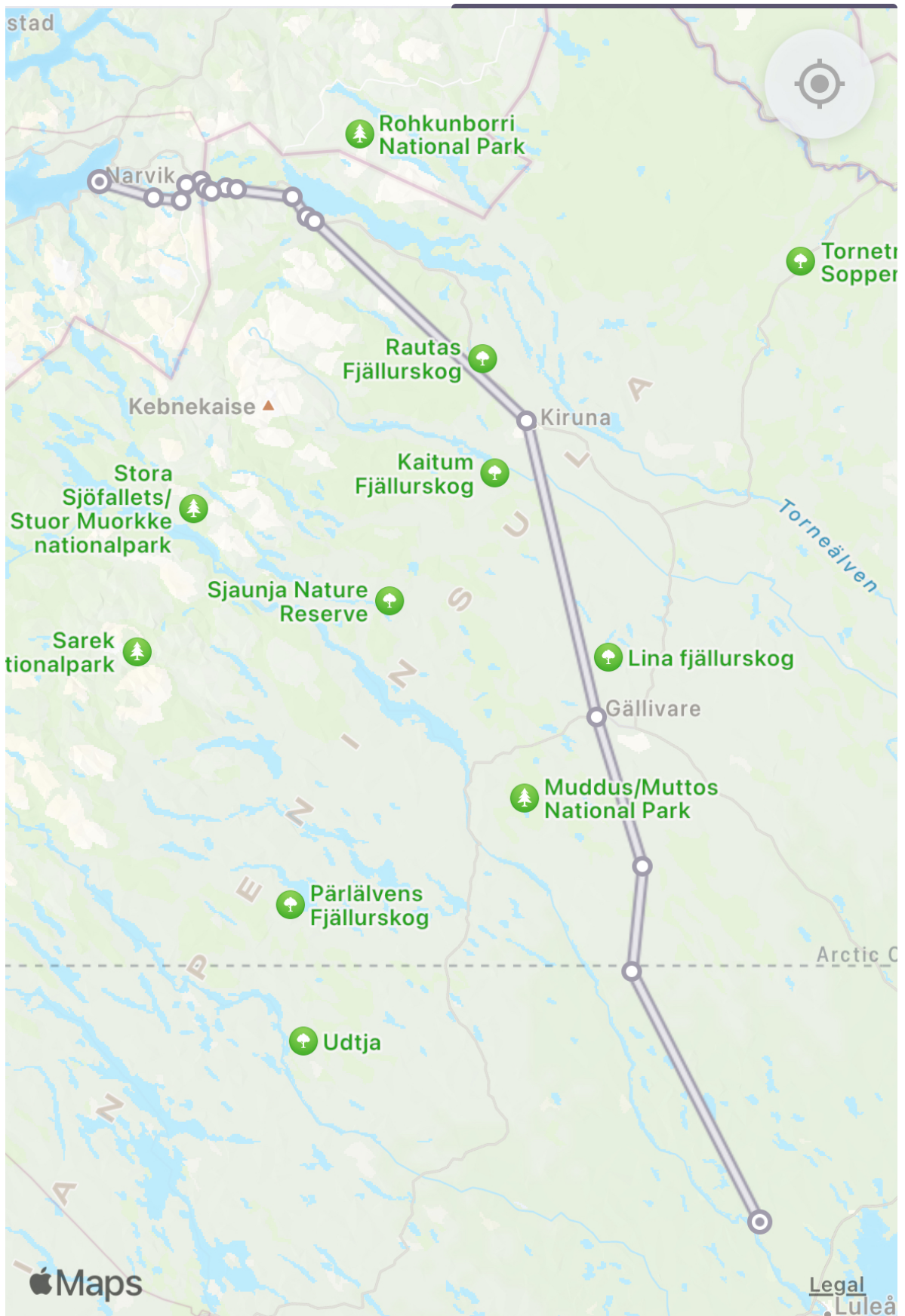


Wednesday March 8th: To Boden

The Railway system from Boden to Narvik is Swedish







There is an extremely steep climb away from Narvik and the coastal area.

As with many hill ranges the Steep slopes are on the west – the land gradually rises from the east. So the drama of the journey into Sweden is all on the western side.

Once the line has crossed into Sweden it gradually descends to the Gulf of Bothnia

Looking back



... and ahead.... the railway line is marked by the dark lines on the hillside.



and from one of those comes the following picture







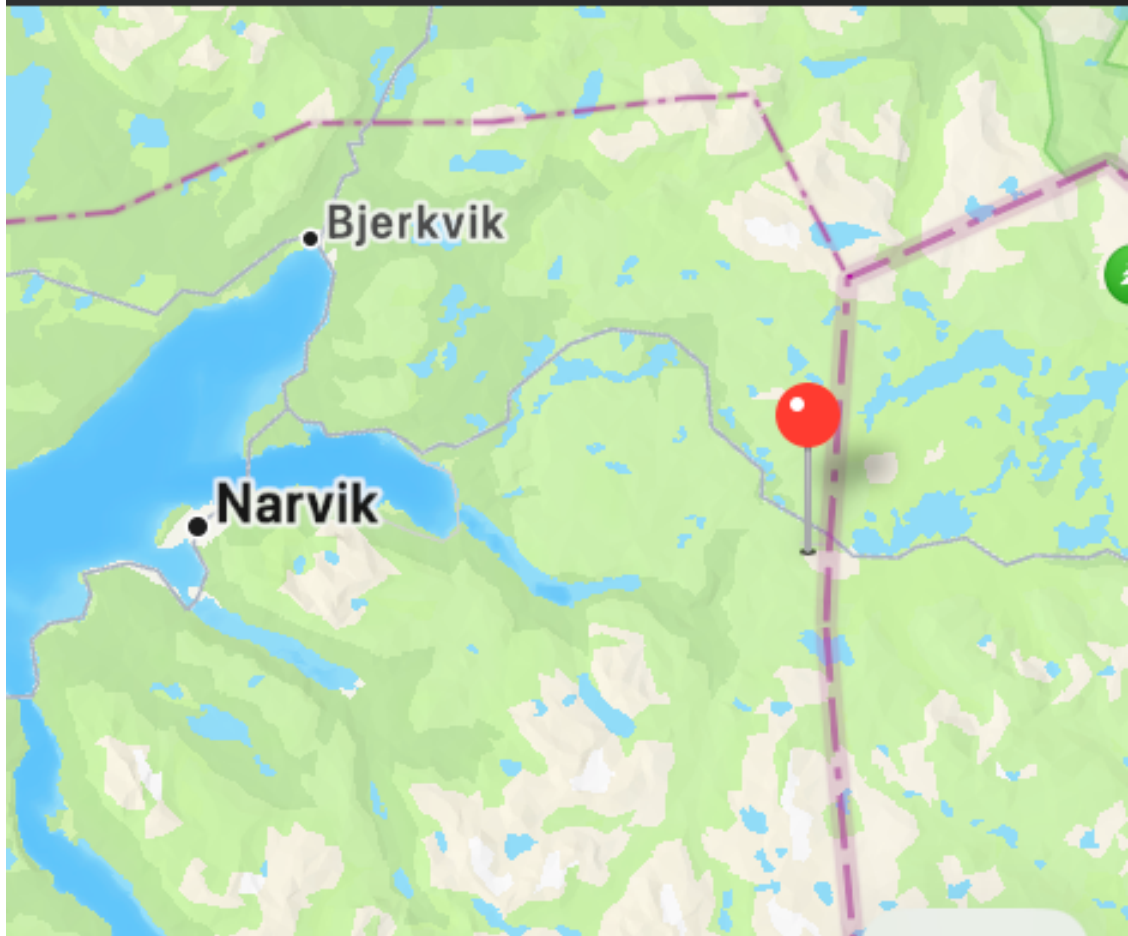




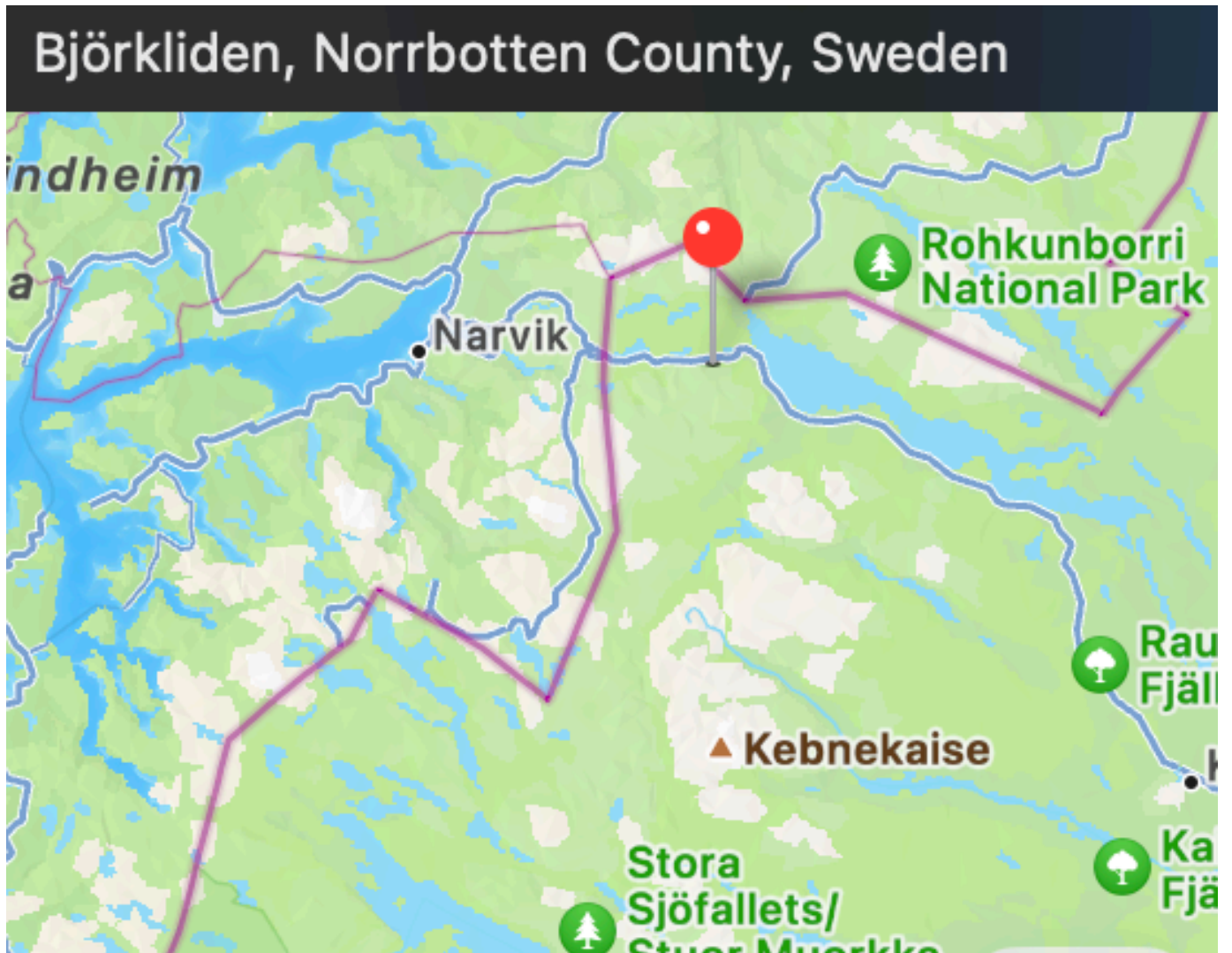
On the Border



k, Nordland, Norway



and into Sweden





Frozen lakes – the first of many, particularly in Finland





The mining town of Kiruna – and the reason for the railway being constructed to Narvik. It is the nearest ice-free sea port for export of the iron ore.



Click on [this link for a detailed article](#) on the history and general background of Kiruna
Image from the above link





Mining matters. Sweden has significant deposits of metals. In 2020, 93% of iron ore produced in the European Union (EU) came from its mines, as well as 32.8% of lead, 34.4% of zinc, around 18% of gold and silver and 10.7% of copper. In 2004 potential subsidence resulted in moving the town - 18,000 residents being re-housed - rather than close the world's largest underground iron ore mine.

A view that became 'standard' for much of the rest of the journey through all of the 'Nordic Lands'....



..... and into a bleak empty Gällivare



Interlude: Dreamtime

That Which Is Not Seen



Regardless of our knowledge, beliefs and attitudes there are, for all, only limited levels of experience and understanding.

Our train rolls smoothly through the Arctic Snows.

500 kms with 2 significant settlements:

Kiruna: population 23,000

Gällivare (conurbation): population 15,000

The train is so comfortable that we may never know & easily forget where we are, where & what we pass - that this is a harsh land of extremes - of environments & weather.

Tourist information (vital for the local economy) smooths everything in attractive presentations

<https://www.swedishlapland.com/gallivare/>

It is easy to remain ignorant of the complexities, mysteries & struggles of an area, a locality & a society.

A train rolling gently through the snows (average speed c.70kms per hour) creates our own calm dreamtime.

Dreamtime: Considering Ecstatic Encounters

Survival of an ancient European culture

In the Northern Lands there survives a Sámi 'Way of Life'.
Not unchanging - but with a continuity from & through past
time.



Granbergs Nya Aktiebolag - Old Photography from 1900 -1920
Nordic Sámi in Sápmi in front of two Lavvu Tents.

Do not be fooled by appearances.

These are commercially successful farming people working in a
harsh environment.

The photo probably taken during a tea break after the families have
been assembled

Not for them the 'unsophisticated tea-mug'
2 are holding cups and saucers

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sámi_peoples#/media/
File:Nordic Sami people Lavvu 1900-1920.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sámi_peoples#/media/File:Nordic_Sami_people_Lavvu_1900-1920.jpg)

Gällivare

An Iron Ore Mining town

Centre of the Firstborn Laestadians



The train stopped at Gällivare station & resulted in the personal discovery of a historically significant social, racial & linguistic complexity that defies easy explanation. The accidental discovery of Gällivare as the place of the **Christmas Celebration of the The Firstborn Laestadians** was one of several 'rabbit holes' of curiosity into which I crawled in the course of the 3 month peregrination.

We began our Nordic journey, in Oslo with a Sámi demonstration. The curious term (to me) 'Firstborn Laestadians', introduces a wider group that is historically important in the recent history of the local indigenous Sámi population.

Given the apparent severe beliefs of the the 'Firstborn' I wondered of what is involved in the

Christmas Celebration of the The Firstborn Laestadians.

From that reference I worked backwards in order to try and understand more.

Firstborn Laestadians are a subgroup within the
Laestadian Lutheran revival movement.

The Firstborn are known for their traditionalism and their conservative pietistic ideals, and they seek to avoid "worldly pleasures".

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/
The_Firstborn_Laestadianism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Firstborn_Laestadianism)

The Laestadian Movement had considerable influence, from the mid C19th, on the Sámi & their beliefs and practises.

In learning about the one I realise that I began to understand that this day's travels are through a significant part of Sámi territory.

There are no physical indicators - we 'rail tourists' are as the blind and deaf.... utterly ignorant of the importance (to an indigenous people) of the region.

We've been travelling through part of **Sápmi**: the territories of the Sámi people (whose demonstration we saw in Oslo).

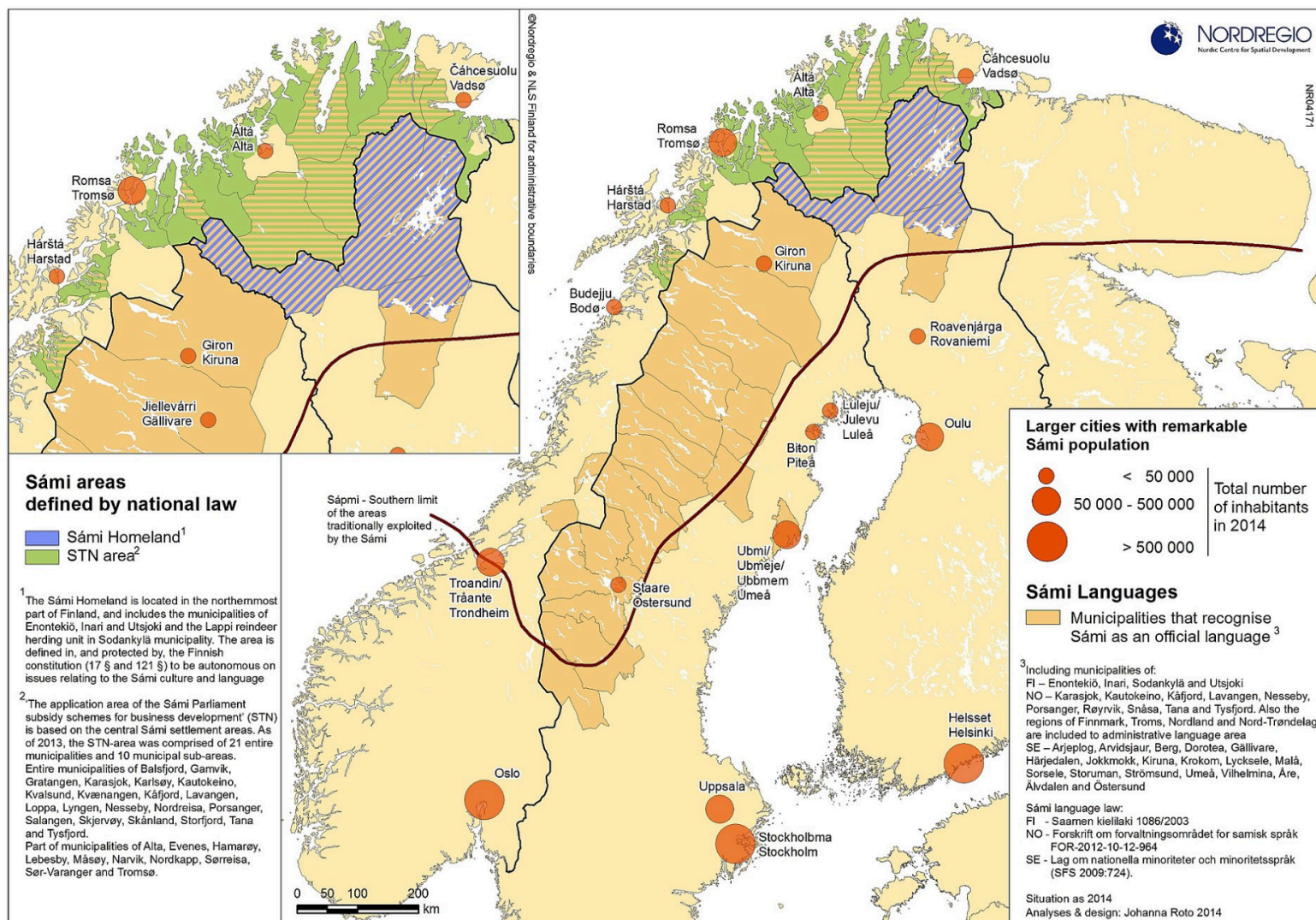
'Sápmi refers to the areas where the Sámi people have traditionally lived but overlap with other regions and definitions.'

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sápmi>

The demonstration in Oslo (Chapt 1, p54 ff) & our subsequent conversations on the train north from Oslo, introduced us, in some detail, to the issues that the Sámi people have had to survive & with which they continue to struggle. As the Bishop of Oslo stated, the present difficulties caused by the Norwegian Government are a 'human rights issue'.

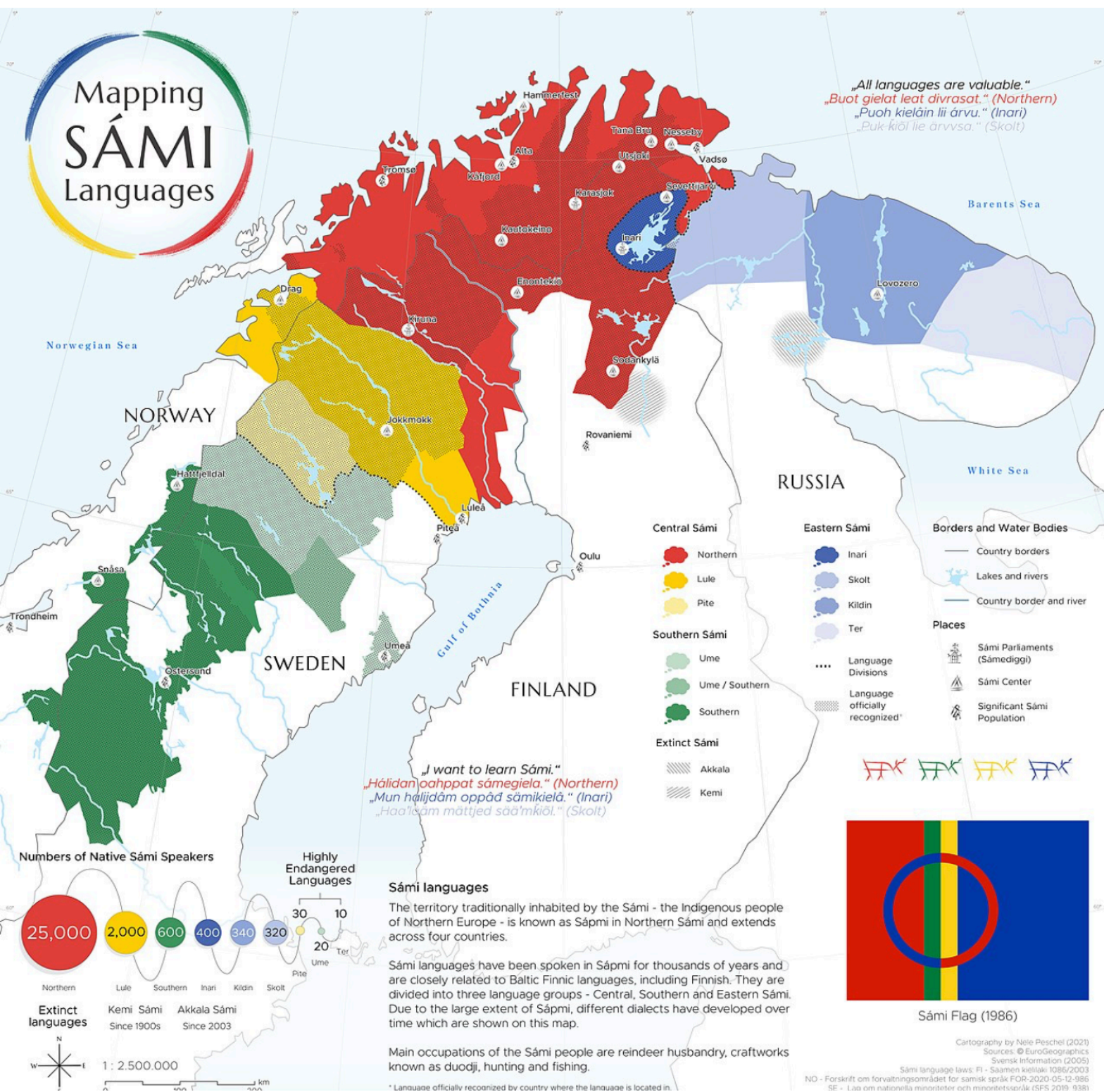
There are regions and linguistic differences amongst the Sámi and different terms used to describe them & their territory. Because of the derogatory use made of the term 'Lapp' (as in the common term 'Lapland'), the Sámi have largely disavowed its use.

The region covers 4 separate nations & the term survives as a geographic term within the region - as do other geographic terms such as 'Finnmark'. It is possible that the Finnish word 'Suomi', may be related to 'Sámi'.



The dark line marks Southern limit of the areas traditionally controlled by the Sámi.

A larger version of the above map may be viewed at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sápmi#/media/File:Sami_Language_Recognition.jpg

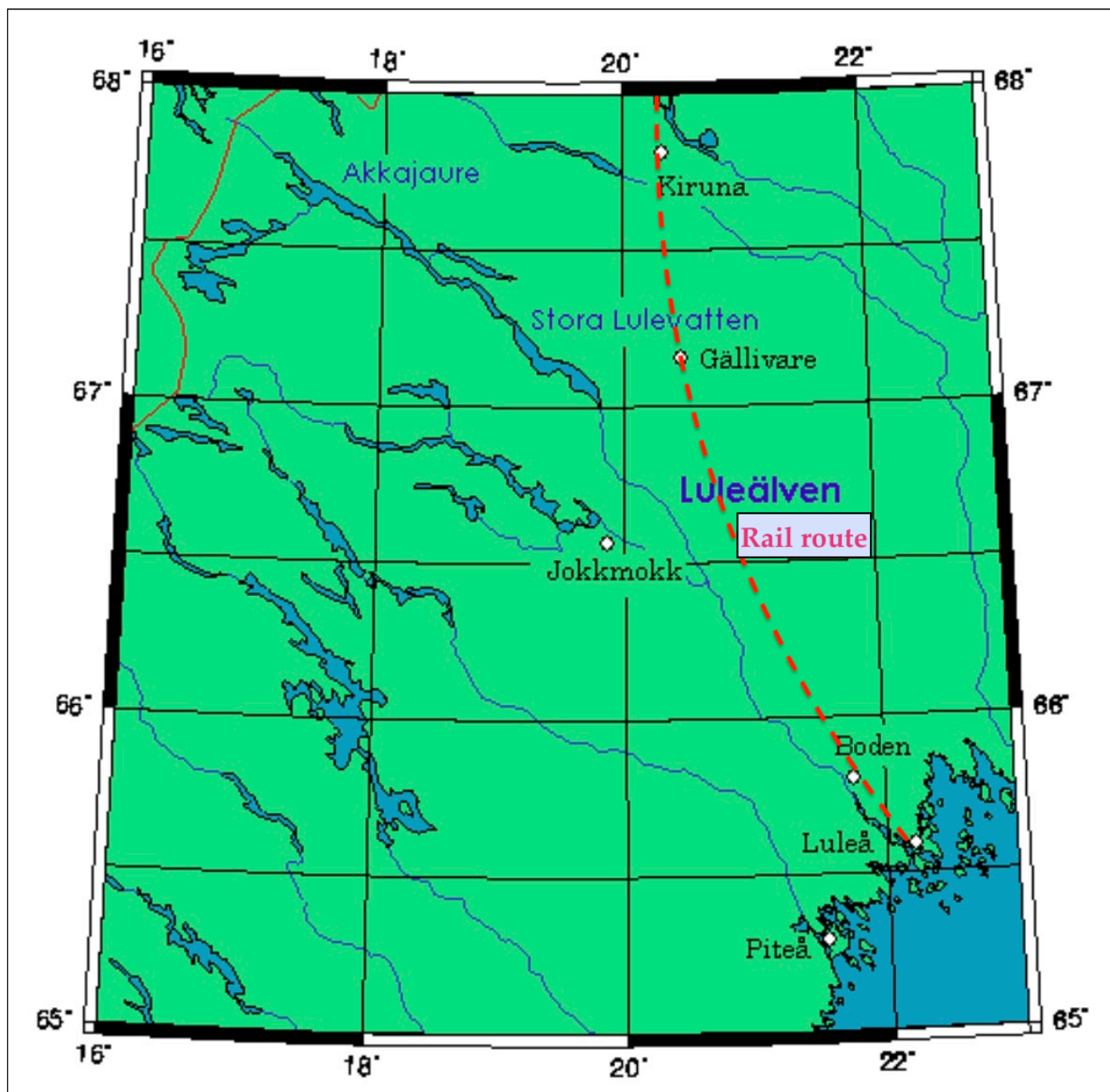


A larger version of the above map may be viewed at
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sámi_peoples#/media/File:Mapping Sámi Languages.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sámi_peoples#/media/File:Mapping_Sámi_Languages.jpg)

As well as the complexities related to Sámi there are other linguistic and social elements within the region. Most created by groups moving into & then settling in the region. Gällivare is apparently a place where many **Tornedaliens** (Finnish related) have settled.

It is all very confusing to an outsider who simply passes through the area - yet tries to learn a little.... just a little... of what exists in a locality.

Some basic research was achieved as the train travelled through one of the Sámi linguistic regions: Lule Sámi
It is based on the Lule River which the railway follows to the Gulf of Bothnia



Discovering the work of the C19th Lutheran minister, Lars Levi Laestadius, who was of Sámi descent, led into many of the issues relating to the survival of the Sámi.

The Sámi living in the regions on the above maps contain those whose way of living & its associated culture has been different to that of most western European societies.

These differences make descriptions & explanations difficult because we (outsiders) use our cultural terms to describe what is observed & recorded and our terms have often been negative or are insufficient.

There are some parallels with shepherding & herding societies (eg in Romania & Bulgaria) but those do not include specific language, cultural and 'belief' ('world-view') systems and structures.

In this area of northern Sweden (& other neighbouring nations) is a life as a reindeer herder, following their seasonal movements & practised since (at least) C16th.

However, these popular images of the Sámi (herding with its own very specific qualification & regulations) apply to only 10% of the Sámi.

Others are settled with land ownership capable of being demanded by external agencies (eg mining).



Aleksander Lauréus 1818

We also learned from direct conversation with Sámi on our train journey north from Oslo that Hi-Tech developments (internet etc) are allowing Sámi families to re-locate to their traditional heartlands in the north.

‘Only Connect’ as an English writer once suggested.
An exciting possibility - and one that is mirrored in different but related ways in many other places, especially since the ‘Covidian Intrusion’ began its disruptive presence.



Sámi Reindeer herders & 'Lavvu' photo from c 1900

click below for larger version

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9f/Sami-tent.jpg>

Details of a LAVVU: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavvu>

"The reindeer-herding Sami lived in tents or turf huts and migrated with their herds in units of five or six families, supplementing their diet along the way by hunting and fishing. Nomadism, however, has virtually disappeared; the remaining herders now accompany their reindeer alone while their families reside in permanent modern housing. While the reindeer of a unit are herded communally, each animal is individually owned."

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sami>



Recent Norwegian research

The Inga Family

A larger picture can be seen by clicking
http://www.vesteraalen.info/forfjord_ingafamilie_kanstad.jpg

The Inga family around 1896.

‘Those who today deal with reindeer in the Hinnøy part of Andøy have deep roots in the area.

This picture was taken, probably in 1896, in the Kanstadvjord area. The two adults on the left are Ingrid, née Sarri, and her husband Nils Andersen Inga.

These two are the origin of the reindeer herding family Inga in Kvalshaug in Sortland.

Before them, they have children Berit, married to Jon Andersen in Kvalshaug, and his brother Ole Nilsen.

Both spent many years in the Forfjord in the area near Finnsæterholman.

The adult lady on the right is Ellen, sister of Ingrid Sarri. In front of her are her children Inger Anna and Tomas. Inger Anna married Fjelldal, and is the parent of the Hansen reindeer herding family from Kanstad in Lødingen.

One of the sons from there, Peder Hansen (Buljo), who is Inger Anna's great-grandson, has settled in Medby in Andøy.

The photograph itself is unique. It was found in the archives of the US Congress, and was taken as a color photo(!).’

Above information is undated but may be as recent as 2020

http://www.vesteraalen.info/andoy_friluftsliv.htm

'The indigenous Sámi population is a mostly urbanised demographic, but a substantial number live in villages in the high Arctic. The Sámi are still coping with the cultural consequences of language and culture loss caused by generations of Sámi children being taken to missionary and/or state-run boarding schools and the legacy of laws that were created to deny the Sámi rights (e.g., to their beliefs, language, land and to the practice of traditional livelihoods). The Sámi are experiencing cultural and environmental threats, including: oil exploration, mining, dam building, logging, climate change, military bombing ranges, tourism and commercial development.'

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sámi_peoples



Motorised management

Our attempts to understand Laestadianism introduced the range of negative actions in their past & present existence that threatened indigenous Sámi people.

Anciently, Sámi peoples traded with other societies (eg Vikings) but there was no direct impingement on their lives until after the Black Death when Nordic peoples began to colonise. At this stage the Sámi seem to have made a transition to focus on Reindeer herding. This required a lived relationship with the seasonally itinerant Reindeer, adapting to their movements. Though greatly reduced the threat to its survival was the focus of the demonstration Oslo.



A Sami depicted in art, painting by François-Auguste Biard. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Click for larger image

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sámi_peoples#/media/File:François-Auguste_Biard_-_Un_Lapon.jpg

The Sámi had their “sámi vuoiŋŋalaš árbevierru” (their distinct traditions, customs, and beliefs).

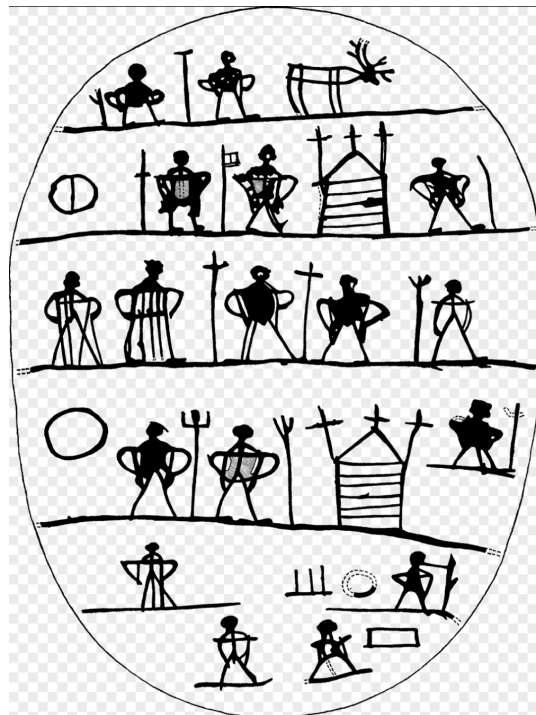
These included the use of ‘Noaidevuohhta’ (drum based ceremonies) in which the ‘Noaidi’ engaged in ecstatic action that connected the physical present with other levels of existence & consciousness.



The Noaidi seem to have a multi-functional role including movement across different levels of consciousness & existence, including healing, community conflict resolution, story-telling & entertainment. Some activities required

achieving a trance-like, ecstatic state in order to connect with other 'souls' & gain knowledge.

The drum illustrated above suggests 3 levels of existence & a rather managed, formalised position when in ecstatic trance. One British museum commentator describes the process as responding to 'the rhythmic sound of nature'. To achieve that requires some form of concentrated, focused effort which the drumming provided.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sámi_drum#

There is no equivalent word for 'religion' & the word 'belief' is almost too formal for what was an 'attitude' or 'world view' that included philosophy, nature, the essence of the human being and the relationships between them all & the physical natural surroundings.

These elements distinguished the Sámi from most of European society which, during the mediaeval period was gradually changing its own views, attitudes & beliefs.

Sámi beliefs may have assimilated related aspects of Christian beliefs but they were primarily non-Christian.

After the Protestant Reformation religious leaders in the Lutheran tradition (priests, ministers etc) began to insist on 'full conversion' to the Protestant Faith. The Swedish Crown (which also included Finland) established winter markets in areas where the nomadic Sámi grazed reindeer. This allowed increased control, taxation & establishment of a Christian church & priest. The efforts at conversion were limited. The Sámi were impermanent members of the market settlements. They also had their own counter-measures to those being imposed.

For example, required Christian baptism was often followed by a family cleansing the infant to remove the harmful, Christian name.

<https://jokkmokksmarknad.se/en/the-history/>

Sámi were forced to attend church services, under threat of fines, imprisonment and even the death penalty for those who did not give up their traditional beliefs. This effort included the burning of sacred drums and desecration of sacred sites, and led to an almost complete destruction of traditional Sámi religious expression. The persecution went hand-in-hand with state encouragement of farmers to settle on Sámi territory in the very far north of Sweden.

<https://minorityrights.org/minorities/sami-3/>

Some of the earliest images of Noaidi & drum ceremonies attempted to demonstrate the 'witchcraft' intentions of the Noaidi. The demons are shown as emerging from the prone figure of the Noaidi in an ecstatic trance.



drawn by the Swedish priest Samuel Rhen, 1671.

1688: 'Lars Nilsson. When he later lost his son, he used a drum in a futile effort at bringing him back to life.

He was prosecuted, but at the district court sessions he explained outright that he would “observe and use the custom of his forefathers, in spite of what higher or lower authority in this case would now or in the future prohibit him from doing”.

He was sentenced to death, the judgment was ratified by the court of appeal, and he was thus decapitated and burnt at the stake “together with the tree-idols he had used and the divination drum and the tools belonging to it.”

The execution was held in the presence of his kinsman, who had been summoned to attend. ‘

from: <https://www.laits.utexas.edu/sami/diehtu/giella/music/noaidi.htm>

Protestant Colonialism had negative impact. Drums became silent (destroyed & collected - many now found in museums).

However, it is also probable that lack of empathy & particularly understanding of language and culture, resulted in a quiescence amongst the Sámi - they obeyed the commands & continued to maintain their traditions. As anyone who has been beaten down or controlled by superior force might do.

At a simple level, all who have been through rigid formal education know that there is always 'something else occurring at the back of the class'.

Laestadius was different.

Lars Levi Laestadius:

A Lutheran Pastor who began

"a religious movement that some would say drove the final nail into the coffin of the traditional Sámi worldview."



https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lars_Levi_Laestadius#/media/

The following link explains how the Laestadian movement brought benefits but also profound change to Sámi culture.
<https://www.laits.utexas.edu/sami/diehtu/siida/christian/vulle.htm>

Having a background as Sámi (including ability to speak 2 of their languages) & of the same working-peasant background, Laestadius had a major influence of local Sámi societies and settlements.

He was remarkably erudite & maintained a level of curiosity into his natural and social environments.

“He was as an internationally recognized botanist and a member of the Edinburgh Botanical Society as well as the Royal Society of Sciences in Uppsala”. Some of the plants he listed are in the Kew Gardens (London) International Plant Names Index: <https://www.ipni.org/a/5200-1>

His work also included collecting examples of Sámi culture ‘Fragments of Lappish Mythology’ (unpublished until 1997).

In his version of Christianity he used terms and concepts that were naturally understood by the Sámi & he encouraged, through a very dynamic ecstatic approach which related to Sámi tradition, a reform of habits which included a change of faith and culture & dramatically reduced alcohol dependence (a major social problem at the time).



Click for larger image:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservative_Laestadianism#/media/
File:François-Auguste Biard - Le Pasteur Læstadius instruisant les Lapons.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservative_Laestadianism#/media/File:François-Auguste_Biard_-_Le_Pasteur_Læstadius_instruisant_les_Lapons.jpg)

The picture illustrates the way the Lavu was used in winter - a community living in protective 'snow burrows'. Apart from the 'Authorative' Top Hat (!) his clothing also compared with theirs - eg his traditional style winter boots. He was also, very importantly 'with them' on 'their' territory... not requiring them to be on 'his'.

A specific movement within Lutheranism was created around his work - and this has developed into further sub-groups such as the Firstborn Laestadians & Conservative Laestadians.

Sámi culture was not just been altered and reduced by direct action but by the influence of social, economic & cultural changes - for example, the rise of nationalism, belief in 'progress' associated with increased commercialism, industrial & urbanisation, formal education etc.



Sami school in Vaisaluokta, Jokkmokk, Sweden circa 1955

larger version click: [https://www.flickr.com/photos/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/28772513@N07/2684402099)

[28772513@N07/2684402099](https://www.flickr.com/photos/28772513@N07/2684402099)

Life in C21st is different from that of the older traditions.

“reindeer herding is characterized by large herds and a high degree of mechanization in all regions.”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reindeer_herding

The cultural beliefs and attitudes of the Sámi now include forms of Laestadian Lutherism, traditional beliefs & practises inherited from the distant past but also those that have evolved in recent times in more urban societies.

In the past 20 years there have been attempts to redress the harms imposed on the Sámi - including reconciliation commissions & increased local democracy.

The hurt is deep - and there are a continuing difficulties with certain sectors of society who have negative attitudes regarding the Sámi & their culture.

The pressures are considerable:

“Suicide is something that every Sámi family has been through,...”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/30/books/stolen-book-sweden-sami.html>

[the book is stunningly good at capturing the present situation of Sámi families]

The Great Beasts of Consuming Commercialism remain hungry for the rich mineral resources available in Northern Lands



Maybe they are the demons of C17th images - but in reverse... ones that prey on established tradition & lifestyles

For Noiade the dreaming is of a continually difficult future

In Sweden, one threat that has been revived recently concerns a British mining company called Beowulf.

A curious name for a mining company. In the Beowulf saga, troll like creatures are killed by the hero who is later in life killed by a gold hoarding dragon (though he also kills the dragon). The setting is Scandinavian.

Mining is important to the Swedish economy: eg 90% of European iron ore extraction is from Sweden.

The mining company had failed to gain a mining concession in Sámi reindeer herding territory to the west of Gällivare (and by coincidence one in which Laestadius was raised).

In 2021 the new Swedish government changed its position. The site at Gállok/Kallak is important (possibly 'vital') for the companies' future.

A survey conducted suggested

"Six out of ten people (62 %) between the ages of 18 and 79 think that the Swedish mining industry should be given the opportunity to develop in order to secure the supply of important metals, and every second person (49 %) could see themselves accepting an active mine in their vicinity."

<https://www.sgu.se/en/about-sgu/news-from-sgu/2023/january/more-positive-attitudes-to-mining-in-sweden/>

Quite how many of the 49% who would 'accept' a mine, have experience of living in a mining area is not stated.

Ore extraction (& associated activities & transportation) creates considerable physical impact.



Open-cast mine in Sweden

A 'mine' is not simply the 'hole in the ground' but the complexity of eg waste disposal, supporting structures, transportation etc that spread & extend the inevitable physical damage.

The Beowulf proposal states

- Kallak has the potential to create 250 direct jobs and over 300 indirect jobs in Jokkmokk, over the period that a mine is in operation.
- These jobs could be sustained over a period of 25 years or more.
- Kallak has the potential to generate SEK 1 billion in tax revenues, considering the case where 70 per cent of the mine's workforce are based locally, with annual tax revenues of SEK 40 million over a 25 years mine life.
- These tax revenues would help to develop and sustain public services and infrastructure in Jokkmokk, which are at risk due to a lack of new investment and job creation in the community, a declining population, and an ageing population.

<https://beowulfmining.com/projects/sweden/kallak/>
What happens after 25 years?



A summary of the issues:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kallak_mine

Impact Assessments for such proposals (including 'environmental') have not included the issues related to views and values:

One report noted that

"The Sami structure their worldview around the elements and phenomena of their natural environment. The Sami believe that all living things and other elements which other cultures may not even consider alive such as rocks and mountains are connected to one another."

It referred to an environmental/cultural assessment stating

"In the final results, the only recommendation about cultural heritage was: "Areas with prehistoric remains should be avoided" ... In the area there are four Sami villages or samebys. A detailed study of the reindeer herding activities was considered, but there was no direct contact with the Sami that make use of the area."

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8259850/>

A separate report is entitled

‘ “If the reindeer die, everything dies”:

The mental health of a Sámi community exposed to a
mining project in Swedish Sápmi ’

The qualitative report covered the impact of the original
Beowulf proposal & focused on views expressed by local
people (Sámi and non-Sámi).

‘David & Goliath’

The report underscored the consultation’s weighting in
favoured the proposers - with local tensions and
disagreements becoming a significant part of the
consultation process.

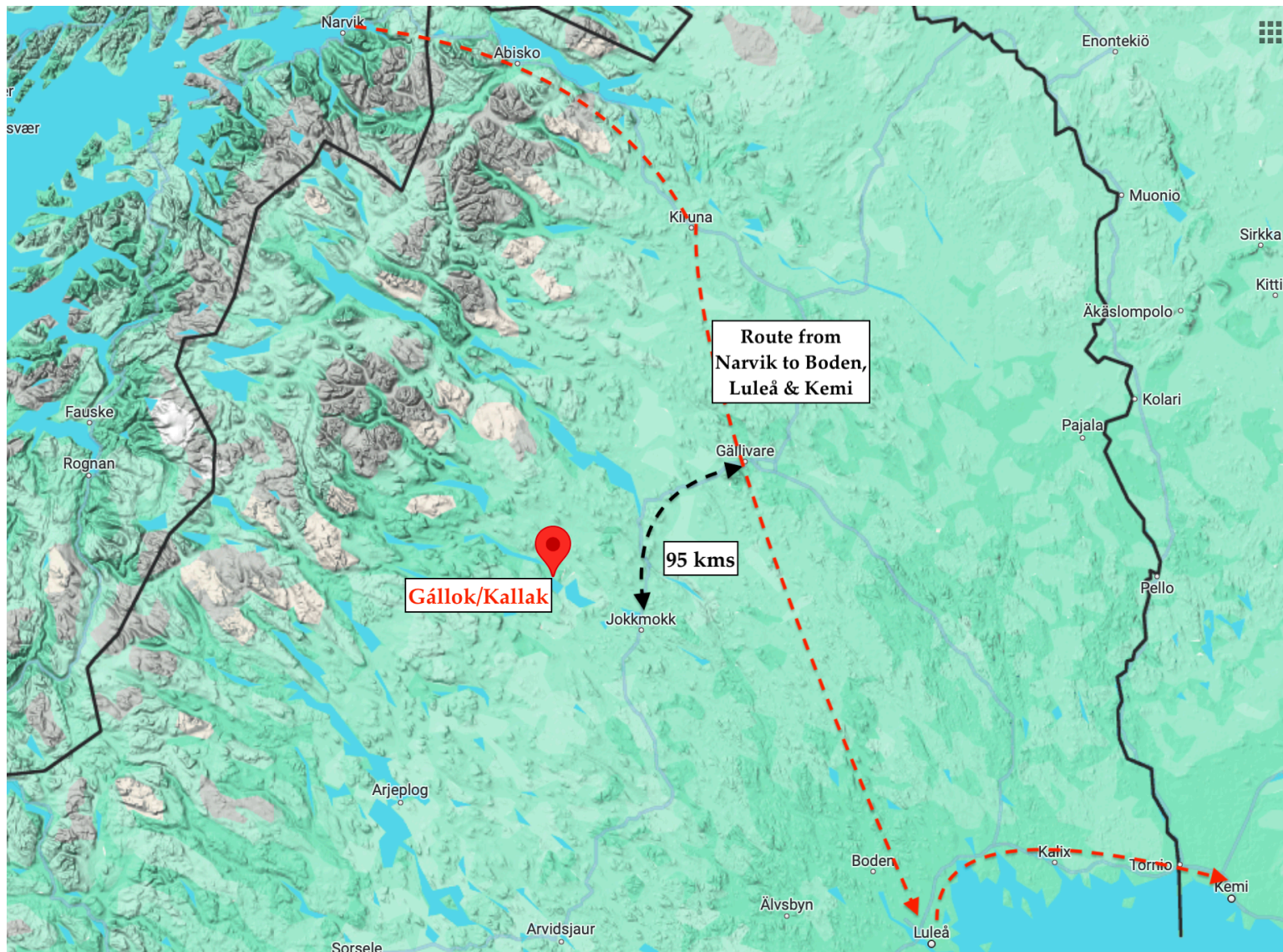
Negative attitudes to the traditional reindeer herders
surfaced - but the report had hints that some attitudes had
improved (maybe as non-Sámi residents began to
understand the full implications of the mine developments).

*[I recall a similar situation in our home village in Mid Wales where, as a
consultation evolved, a member of a ‘born & bred’ local family stated
publicly that ‘these newcomers have some use after all! ’]*

The report also made clear that

“The health component of the current EIAs is insufficient to
capture the impact on the social determinants of health and
its consequences.”

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8259850/>



Gällivare connects by road to Jokkmokk which is the municipality in which Gállok/Kallak is situated.

Many of the elements of what the above describes, sound familiar (though on a much larger scale & with considerably greater social implications).

Having lived in a rural community for 50 years it is possible to observe how many of the increasing number of 'incomers' with urban backgrounds (& greater affluence) settling in a largely farming community, may remain distant and indifferent to the local life & culture with its existing informal (but established and understood) social structures & methodologies. The tensions created can be damaging.

In more fragile (due to a range of issues) Arctic Societies the pressures are much greater.

The 'colonial' attitudes that existed in the C18th/19th remain, though expressed in different language. The 'mission' considered itself, well meaning. A C19th English hymn states:

‘The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone....

Shall we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?’

The ‘worldview’ & purposes of a C19th English missionary (& of those who ‘converted’ the Sámi) may be different to that of a C20th Mining Company but the power relationships are similar.

Stakeholders like the Sámi population are subordinated to more dominant stakeholders such as the government, the company and media, who have ‘more’ power or ‘different’ kinds of power ‘over’ others. Through these asymmetric power relations, historical state-Sámi relations are continuously reproduced within prevailing institutions, and also in this mining conflict. Interviewees from business and the municipality testified to the discourses driven by a neoliberal and profit-focused worldview.

As much as the C19th missionary formed part of a society that was imposing itself on another (usually for a variety of physical/economic gains and opportunities), so the present exploitation of resource is ultimately an accepted & reinforced product of ‘our’ society seeking similar gains.

“Discovering and Developing Natural Resources to Meet Society’s Needs”

The Company’s purpose is to be a responsible and innovative company that creates value for our shareholders, wider society, and the environment, through sustainably producing critical raw materials, which includes iron ore, graphite, and base metals, needed for the transition to a Green Economy and to address the Climate Emergency.

<https://beowulfmining.com/about-us/purpose/>

First concern is ‘shareholders’, the others follow that purpose.

At present there is no ‘return’ for shareholders as the company makes no profit allowing it to issue a dividend - & share value has declined since 2022.

‘Salvation’ is in the form of new economic & ‘Green’, opportunities

Both Mission & Mining preach ‘Improvement’ ... for individuals and society... but in terms that the recipients may not wish to accept.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose

Dreamtimes..... are they ever achieved, for an ancient society under threat, for missionaries determined to 'improve' others, for managers of international mining companies, for the C21st society in which we exist?.....Dream On...

- maybe we simply follow Aerosmith (1970)

'The past is gone

Oh, it went by like dusk to dawn

Isn't that the way?

Everybody's got their dues in life to pay, oh, oh, oh

I know nobody knows

Where it comes and where it goes

I know it's everybody's sin

You got to lose to know how to win

Half my life's in books' written pages

Storing facts learned from fools and from sages

You view the earth

Oh, sing with me, this mournful dub

Sing with me, sing for a year

Sing for the laughter, and sing for the tear

Sing with me, if it's just for today

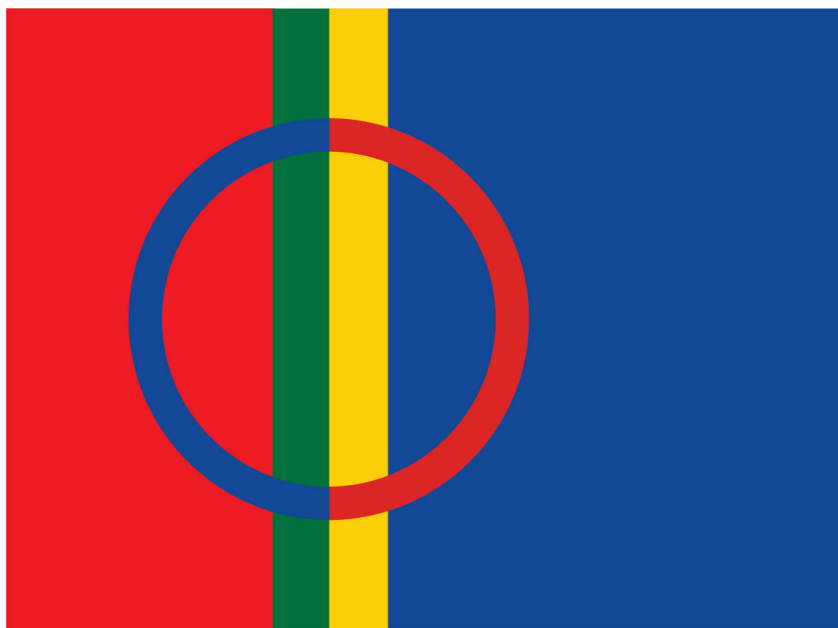
Maybe tomorrow, the good Lord will take you away.....

.... Dream On'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89dGC8de0CA>



The Drum remains integral to Sámi culture



Our train continues without incident - we do not even see a marker informing us we've left the Arctic Circle.

At dusk we arrive in Boden.

Boden Central station



Throughout the journey from Narvik we were accompanied by a person we labelled 'The Brighton Bore' (there used to be a expensive Pullman train called 'The Brighton Belle'). He seemed to pester almost everyone on the train – even sitting in with the staff. Though at times he spoke almost non-stop, asking questions etc, he never seemed to listen and questions were often repeated.

Our last sight of him was just after this picture was taken as he joined the 'Sleeper' train to Stockholm. He had a place in a 6 berth compartment – Jacqui and I felt very sympathetic towards the other members of that compartment – sleep may not have been easy!

He had one 'saving grace' – he carried quantities of gin and tonic & seemed to be possessed of a generous nature – so maybe the night train to Stockholm became more enjoyable as it progressed.



Tomorrow we hope to walk into Finland