

THE RACIST LEGACY IN MODERN SWEDISH SAAMI POLICY¹

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Abstract/Resume

The Swedish national state (1548-1846) did not treat the Saami any differently than the population at large. The Swedish nation state (1846-1971) in practice created a system of institutionalized racism towards the nomadic Saami. Saami organizations managed to force the Swedish welfare state to adopt a policy of ethnic tolerance beginning in 1971. The earlier racist policy, however, left a strong anti-Saami rights legacy among the non-Saami population of the North. The increasing willingness of both the left and the right of Swedish political life to take advantage of this racist legacy, makes it unlikely that Saami self-determination will be realized within the foreseeable future.

L'état suédois national (1548-1846) n'a pas traité les Saami d'une manière différente de la population générale. L'Etat de la nation suédoise (1846-1971) a créé en pratique un système de racisme institutionnalisé vers les Saami nomades. Les organisations saamies ont réussi à obliger l'Etat-providence suédois à adopter une politique de tolérance ethnique à partir de 1971. Pourtant, la politique précédente de racisme a fait un legs fort des droits anti-saamis parmi la population non-saamie du nord. En conséquence de l'empressement croissant de la gauche et de la droite de la vie politique suédoise de profiter de ce legs raciste, il est peu probable que l'autodétermination soit atteinte dans un avenir prévisible.

Introduction

In 1981 the Supreme Court of Sweden stated that the Saami right to reindeer herding, and adjacent rights to hunting and fishing, was a form of private property. In 1993—the International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples—the non-socialist government of Sweden, with the approval of the Swedish Parliament, confiscated parts of that right without compensation. How can a conservative government, believing in the creed of property, socialize constitutionally-protected private property without due process or just compensation? The answer can only be found in the history of Swedish Saami policy.

The history of Swedish Saami policy includes both early policies (1548-1846), created by the Swedish national state, with measures that essentially were local applications of general national policies, and later, special, Saami policies (1846-1971), created by the Swedish nation state, with measures that were principally ethnically discriminatory. In recent years Saami organizations managed to overcome the discriminatory policies and force the Swedish welfare state to adopt a policy of ethnic toleration (1971-1994), but the former racist policy left a strong anti-Saami rights legacy among the non-Saami population of the North. The increasing willingness in later years of different governments to betray their own ideologies, and take political advantage of this racist legacy, makes it unlikely that Saami self-determination will be realized within the foreseeable future.

Local Adaptations of General National Policy, 1548-1846

Territorial and Fiscal Policy, 1548-1635

During the Middle Ages the greater part of Lapland was only indirectly subordinated to the Swedish Crown. The right of trade and taxation belonged to a privileged group of Swedish and Finnish merchant-farmers from the coastal area, the *Bircarls*. The first year after his ascension to the throne, Gustav Vasa only consolidated royal power. Soon, however, his ambitions exceeded the medieval frame, and between 1548 and 1550 Lapland was put under direct royal administration. Bailiffs were appointed and royal taxes in kind, fish and fur, were introduced. Bailiffs were also judges, and assizes were held. A traditional Saami legal system did, however, continue to exist parallel with the new royal courts. Two general motives can be found behind the new policy: a fiscal one, with the object of increasing royal revenues, and a territorial one, with the object of fortifying Swedish sovereignty over Lapland in competition with the Danish and Russian Crowns (Olofsson, 1962:316-318, 362-369, 428; Lundmark,

1982:72-74; Lundgren, 1987:43; Vahtola, 1987:324).

The monarchs following Gustav Vasa tried to extend Swedish territory north to the Arctic Ocean, maintaining that Swedish taxation rights implied full territorial sovereignty. As a step in this northern policy Duke Karl in 1602 decided to create an ecclesiastical organization in Lapland, and to build churches and appoint clergy. The clergy would serve as the ideological spearhead in tying the Saami to the Swedish realm, besides giving credibility among other Christian powers of Swedish territorial demands (Olofsson, 1965:25, 33-34; Lundgren, 1987:48-49).

The implementation of the territorial and fiscal policy made the Saami far more subjugated to state power than during the Middle Ages. According to Lundgren the people and the economy of Lapland became subordinated to taxation principles, vested interests and institutional forms created by the national state that grew in southern Sweden. As a symbolic expression of this policy, Duke Karl, at his coronation as King Karl IX in 1607, included into the royal title the epithet: *King of the Lapps in the Northern country* (Olofsson, 1965:44; Lundgren, 1987:39-41).

Mining Policy, 1635-1673

The aggressive territorial and fiscal policy came to an end after the death of Karl IX in 1611, and Sweden abstained from any further claims on Saami land in Norway and Russia. The permanent church organization closed down and the new parishes in Lapland disbanded. The Saami were reintroduced into the focus of national policy, when silver ore was found at Nasafjäll in 1635, and Lapland suddenly was seen as a treasury able to support Sweden's imperial ambitions. Consequently, Swedish sovereignty was to be maintained westward to the height of land and the Saami were to be kept on Swedish territory. The territorial policy was therefore reintroduced, schools and churches were built, and parishes founded anew (Olofsson, 1965:188-189, 279-281; Olofsson, 1974b:3-5, 11-12, 21-22, 24, 27).

The Nasafjäll mine was a financial disappointment, but new mineral finds kept the interest of the government alive. However, the net economic results of these projects were negative. In addition, the Saami were heavily burdened with demands for transportation that hindered them in their herding. When the Saami refused to comply with the demands, the mining authorities resorted to force. A flight from the area was consequently triggered, and a noticeable population decline took place in Lule and Pite Lapland (Olofsson, 1974b:25, 28-31, 37-40; Lundmark, 1982:167; Lundgren, 1987:60-62).

Although the enforcement of the Saami transportation duty was carried

out with little regard for Saami interests, by using the military draft to recruit mine workers the government also involved the non-Saami population of the north in this policy. Indeed, the Saami were, during this and later periods, spared the consequences of war and military draft that fell heavily on other parts of the realm. For instance, the parish of Bygdeå in Västerbotten alone provided 230 young men for service in the army between 1621 and 1639, of whom fully 215 died in Poland or Germany, and the number of adult males in the parish decreased from 468 to 288 during the same period (Lindegren, 1980:159, 168, 175, 256).

Colonization Policy Without Saami Participation, 1673-1749

The governor of Västerbotten and Lapland, Johan Graan, himself of Saami descent, tried to mitigate against the exploitation of his people. In 1670 he suggested changes in government policy. He created a land register recording Saami possession of land. The political aim of the land register was to give Saami land use the same kind of legitimacy enjoyed by farmers in the coastal provinces. According to Olofsson, this meant that Saami resource utilization became a recognized factor in the total production of the country in conformation with the dominant mercantile theory. Thus the recognition of the national value of the Saami economy forced the Board of Mines to end its destructive policy (Olofsson 1974b:44-50).

The governor also suggested, and then organized, the colonization of Lapland by Swedish and Finnish farmers. The proposal was based on the notion that traditional Saami land use and agricultural land use could exist side by side without interference. This parallel theory was supported by the policy of economic separation followed by the Crown since the 16th century. The rights and duties of different groups and trades should be kept apart in order to diminish the state's transactional costs for revenue collection. According to Lundgren, this policy in general met with difficulties in a national economy with little division of labor. A settlement proclamation was issued in 1673, promising tax privileges and exemption from military draft for those who homesteaded in Lapland (Olofsson, 1974b:44-50; Arell, 1979:5-9; Lundgren, 1987:42).

During this period the church organization came into its final form and independent parishes were formed all over Lapland. The traditional Saami religion was finally forced underground. At the court session in Arjeplog in 1682 it was revealed that traditional Saami religion was exercised parallel with Christianity in most of Lapland. The jury and the people supported the old beliefs and refused to give it up. Superior Court assizes were held to investigate the matter and a traditional believer was executed in 1693. The persecutions of Saami traditional believers took place at the same time the

government enforced religious orthodoxy among the Swedish peasantry; between 1668 and 1676 about 300 persons, mostly women, were executed for witchcraft (Göthe, 1929:226; Olofsson, 1974b:56-58; Eskeröd, 1986; Lundgren, 1987:55-56; Fur, 1992).

Colonization Policy With Saami Participation, 1749-1846

During the 18th century the importance of Saami trade attracted official attention and fear was expressed that the Saami would take their goods to Norway, but this attention did not have any real influence on policy making. Reindeer herding and other traditional Saami land use was left to itself and the gates of colonization were opened. In 1749 a new settlement ordinance was issued that opened the settlement privileges for the Saami, an enactment of great importance for the future. As both settlers and Saami were regarded as necessary for a viable economy in Lapland, the government tried to protect both ways of living in accordance with the parallel theory. In court cases over land use the Saami usually won until the end of the 1780s. Thereafter they regularly lost in conflicts where their fishing rights were confronted with agricultural interests (Bylund, 1956:234-236; Olofsson, 1974a:522-528, 531-536).

Saami land was usually treated in the same way as freehold farm land, as opposed to land held in copyhold from either the Crown or the nobility. That meant that parcels of Saami land could be inherited, bought and sold, the title being entered into the land register, and be used as it pleased the holder as long as the taxes were paid. After the 1760s the government, however, started to regard Saami land as being the property of the Crown, and the individual possessors of Saami land as permanent tenants of the Crown. The royal prerogative in the treatment of Saami land was a local application of the nationally increasingly royalist doctrine that sprung up during this time. An indication of the new practice is the transfer of granting title to Saami land from the courts to the governors (Prawitz, 1967:21, 26, 30; Korpijaako, 1985(1):117-120).

After 1809, a general rejection of the royalist doctrine took place in national politics. The new liberal policy was, however, not applied to the Saami. During the 19th century the provincial governments regarded Saami land as belonging to the Crown and the courts were of the same opinion. In 1827 the Saami right to inherit land was rejected in Norrbotten as Saami land rights now were only regarded as a right of usufruct. In 1828, provincial authorities even stated that they thought themselves empowered to remove a tax-paying Saami from his land, if he lost his reindeer herd (Almqvist, 1928:448-449; Prawitz, 1967:30; Mörner, 1982).

A Special Saami Policy, 1846-1971

During the 19th century racial ideas gained larger adherence and science began to draw conclusions about the connection between physical traits and mind. Races and ethnic groups were ranked and their cultural state seen as an expression of inherited traits. In Swedish literature at the end of the 19th century a derogatory view of the Saami is often put forward. They are described as unsteady, suspicious, drunkards and childlike. These opinions are frequently presented in racial terms, although some authors instead saw the supposed Saami backwardness as an expression of cultural or environmental factors (Upman, 1978:34-36).

According to Upman, it is indicative that authors characterizing the Saami as more or less racially inferior also were proponents of the economic development of Lapland by the dominant society. The nomadic way of life was associated with a lower stage of development and many predicted the eventual dying out or assimilation of the Saami. The derogatory view present in literature also appeared in parliamentary debate. The disappearance of the Saami as a people was seen as something inevitable by many members of parliament. The main idea in parliament seems, however, to have been paternalistic, viewing the Saami as a weaker people in special need of government protection (Upman, 1978:41-43, 45-46, 85-86).

Assimilation Policy, 1846-1913

The expansion of forestry from the 1870s, and the mining boom from the end of the century, led to a heavy influx of non-Saami workers and from now on the non-Saami population dominated Lapland. Special legislative enactments for the province were gradually abolished and general law introduced. The general tax act became applicable in 1873 and the liquor prohibition abolished in 1898. An assimilationist school policy was adopted. In 1846 the language of the Saami schools was adapted to that of the majority in the parish. Saami schools were opened for non-Saami in 1877, and Swedish became the main language. The usage of Saami in church also diminished. Leaders of the assimilationist policy were the Bishop of Härnösand, Lars Landgren (1876-1888), and his successor, Martin Johansson (1888-1908) (Upman, 1978:99, 115-117; Sjölin, 1981:38-41; Henrysson, 1986:10-11; Lundgren, 1984:7-13; Kvist, 1992:189-190).

An economic interpretation of Saami ethnicity has a long standing in Swedish policy-making and administrative practice. At least since the introduction of the parallel theory a difference was maintained between a Saami livelihood (*lappmannanäring*) and an agricultural livelihood (*lantmannanäring*). A Saami livelihood was gained through hunting, fishing and

reindeer herding. Persons pursuing this way of life were regarded as ethnic Saami, which was indeed the case. Settlers and farmers, on the other hand, pursued an agricultural way of life, and were regarded as ethnic Swedes or Finns, even if they were Saami or of Saami descent, which many were (Korpijaakko, 1985(2):140-145).

From the 1870s on this economic interpretation of ethnicity gained strength and decision-makers only regarded those pursuing a traditional Saami way of life, especially reindeer herding, as Saami, and thus worthy of government protection. The other Saami were officially ignored. As more and more Saami over the years left the traditional way of life, the consequences of this non-policy were the loss of ethnicity for a large number of Saami, and a total disregard for the ethnic rights of the majority of Saami that were not reindeer herders. The long term results of this non-policy can be seen by the fact that in 1975, 20% of the non-herding Saami population could not understand Saami, 40% could not speak Saami, 65% could not read Saami, and 85% could not write Saami (Sweden, 1975:344; Sjölin, 1981:38, 81; Mörner, 1982:48-49).

Segregation Policy, 1913-1971

The paternalistic policy towards Saami pursuing a traditional way of life was characterized by notions of segregation. The nomads could only be protected by separation from the general population. The special legislative enactments for Lapland were superseded by special legislation for a certain ethnic group, the nomadic Saami. Through the reindeer grazing acts of 1886 and 1898 the Saami definitely lost their ownership to land, and individual pasture rights were made into an exclusive communal right for the Saami villages. These acts signified a desertion of the parallel theory. The government was not longer prepared to grant the Saami any rights that would diminish the claims of farming and forestry. Arguments in favor of this policy often stressed the negative in the traditional Saami way of life. A feature of the grazing acts, stressed by Hugh Beach, was the beginning of a series of fractional divisions of the Saami. The first act of 1886 focused the right to reindeer grazing, hunting and fishing only upon reindeer-herding Saami. While all Saami were free to devote themselves to herding under the acts of 1886 and 1898, this right was heavily restricted under the acts of 1928 and 1971. Saami rights were henceforth seen as privileges granted by a benevolent state (Mörner, 1982:48-49; Beach, 1988; Idivuoma, 1990:138).

The reindeer grazing acts also formally diminished the political status of the Saami. As reindeer grazing rights were not assessed as taxable property, they did not give general or municipal suffrage before the intro-

duction of the general suffrage for men in 1909 and the abolition of the graded municipal suffrage in 1919. To enforce the grazing acts, a special police administration (*lappväsendet*) with superintendents and agents was introduced. These officials not only enforced the grazing legislation but were also responsible for welfare services, care of the aged, education and protection of the Saami in general. This new administration became an increasingly powerful force, usurping the right of Saami peoples to make decisions about their own lives. While the rest of the society was set on a course of increased democracy and greater citizen participation in public life, the Saami became more and more subordinated to the administration. The low status of Saami civil rights can be seen in the forcible removal of northern Saami to southern Saami villages during the 1910s and 1920s (Sjölin, 1981:35, 95-98; Sjölin, 1982:86; Beach, 1988).

In 1908, the first Bishop of Luleå, Olof Bergqvist, a fervent adherent of a segregationist policy, was appointed chairman of a Royal commission on Saami schools. The report of the commission recommended a continuation of a separate Saami school system. It stressed a need for schools that would not induce Saami children away from their traditional way of life. The report suggested that the Saami were best adapted to utilize the mountain ranges that otherwise would be unused and that it therefore was in the public interest to protect their way of life. They were also seen as in special need of protection from the encroaching civilization and lacking the physical and psychological stamina needed for farming. This line of argument was also supported by the influential lappologist K.B. Wiklund. The Saami School Act of 1913 was based on this report and introduced the infamous tent schools (*kåtaskolor*). In order not to spoil Saami children the schools were to be held in tents or huts. In spite of its motives, the Act was ambivalent regarding the language of instruction, maintaining the need for Swedish in some classes. The Act applied only to nomadic Saami; children from other Saami families were directed to the Swedish school system (Upman, 1978:45-47; Henrysson, 1986:12-13).

The Saami criticized the new school system. Indeed, opposition against it was instrumental in making the first Saami national congress possible in 1918. A new School Act in 1925, although based on the report of a commission with Saami participation, did not change the basic principles of the school system. Swedish was, however, generally made the sole language of instruction. The ambition of the new *School Act* was to put the Saami school system on the same footing as the Swedish schools. Yet—according to Per Idivuoma, himself educated in this system—four semesters in tents and huts did not prepare the pupils for a proper understanding of society. Tents and huts dominated as school buildings between 1916 and 1940, but Saami opposition led to their gradual disbandment in

accordance with the new *School Act of 1938*. It was not until 1962 that the Saami school system was opened to Saami children outside the herding way of life. Yet, as late as 1975 only 5% of Saami school children attended Saami schools (Henrysson, 1986:14-16; Beach, 1988; Idivuoma, 1990:11-12, 38-40, 239-240).

Ethnic Tolerance, 1971-1992

The first national Saami congress was held in 1918. The radical member of parliament, Carl Lindhagen, who was in close contact with the Saami leaders Torkel Tomasson and Gustaf Park, persuaded the Swedish Parliament to give the Saami an opportunity to make their opinion known. The main concern referred to proposed amendments to the *Grazing Act of 1898* and the *School Act of 1913*. A second conference took place in 1937, and a third in 1948. Local Saami organizations already existed in 1918; indeed the idea of a central organization had been brought up as early as 1904. Saami interest in the reindeer grazing convention with Norway in 1919 increased Saami organizational efforts. Yet, it was not until after the Second World War that a central Saami federation came into being (Idivuoma, 1990:38-43, 48-51).

The German occupation of Norway prevented the Swedish administration from a strict enforcement of the grazing regulations. This had a positive effect on reindeer herding and gave the Saami new self-confidence, proving that they could run things better on their own than under the guardianship of the police system. The administration, however, wanted a return after the war to the old ways, and managed to push through new village by-laws, that in minute details would regulate herding for the next thirty years. As a reaction against this attack on their newly won freedom of action, the National Federation of Swedish Saami People (*Svenska Samernas Riksförbund*) was founded in 1951 by Gustaf Park, Israel Ruong and Nils Petter Stenberg. National congresses have been held annually since then. The National Saami Cultural Federation (*Riksorganisationen Same-Ätnam*) was founded later on, and in the 1980s the Confederation of Swedish Saami (*Landsförbundet Svenska Samer*) came into being, composed primarily of non-herding Saami (Idivuoma, 1990:31-32, 52-53; Beach, 1988).

Fifty years after the winning of citizen's rights by the Swedish working class, the Saami were still put under guardianship. The late 19th century thesis that a Saami society could not administer its own assets was still alive as late as the 1970s. Strangely enough, old labor organizers and working class fighters like Gunnar Sträng (Minister of Finance) and Torsten Nilsson (as Minister of Agriculture, responsible for Saami Affairs, later

Minister of Foreign Affairs) could not accept that the Saami wanted to speak for themselves. Through the *Svenska Samernas Riksförbund*, however, the Saami gained a voice in Swedish society that could not be denied them by the administration. When Israel Ruong in 1959 became president of the *Svenska Samernas Riksförbund*, he gradually convinced the responsible minister that *Svenska Samernas Riksförbund* was a positive factor in Swedish society. There still existed a remnant of the former racist policy, however, among the non-Saami majority of the North, who possessed strong notions of the inferiority of the Saami. Negative images of the Saami were included in Swedish elementary school textbooks as late as 1969, and still color the perception of many adults (Idivuoma, 1990:62, 97, 104, 127, 143; Granqvist-Nutti, 1993).

The Saami Legal Struggle, 1971-1981

In 1971 the old police administration was abolished and a new service was established devoted to the economic improvement of reindeer herding. The Saami became emancipated from the old oppressive system and finally put in a position to manage their own affairs. Yet, the government failed to change its policy from one focusing on reindeer herders to one taking into account the whole Saami national minority. In 1977 a Saami Bill was introduced by the then non-socialist government. The Bill was based on an extensive Saami cultural commission that was appointed in 1971. In the debate on this Bill, the then responsible Minister for Saami affairs, Jan-Erik Wikström acknowledged the Indigenous status of the Saami, saying that: *[The] Saami constitutes an ethnic minority in Sweden who in their role as an Indigenous population in their own country assume a special position both to the Swedish majority and to other minority groups*. The minister went on to say that: *... the basic concept of the special position of the Saami implies that in implementing public aid to Saami culture, room should be given to other judgments than those that can be made regarding other minority groups in Swedish society* (Beach, 1988; Idivuoma, 1990:130, 158-161; Niia, 1991:151-153).

An institutionalized favoring of the dominant population in economic competition existed (and still exists). This led the Saami to contest Crown ownership of the reindeer grazing mountains of Jämtland and Härjedalen in an effort to stop land encroachment and assert Saami land rights. After 15 years of litigation, the Supreme Court of Sweden in 1981 decided the *Tax Mountain* case by entering a judgment against the Saami. At first the disappointment was great, but gradually the Saami realized that the judgment was a step forward. The courts had granted them a right of action previously denied them by the government. Government had earlier main-

tained that legal actions in matters concerning Saami land rights could only be taken by the police administration or the Board of Treasury. In its judgment the Supreme Court said that existing usufructuary Saami land rights, although fully regulated by the *Reindeer Herding Act*, did not emanate from parliamentary legislation, but were independent rights under civil law (Jahreskog, 1982; Idivuoma, 1990:111-115; Wheelersburg, 1991:112-117).

The Saami Political Struggle, 1981-1994

Since the Second World War, when the Norwegians experienced foreign domination during the German occupation, Norway has been the leading country in developing new Saami policy. The conflict over the damming of the Kautokeino-Alta waterway embarrassed the Norwegian government and the Norwegian people, and led to the creation of a Royal Commission on Saami rights in 1980. In Sweden, *Svenska Samernas Riksförbund*, having abandoned the policy of legal confrontation, managed—citing the Norwegian example—to persuade the government to put up a Saami rights commission in 1983, too. The Swedish commission worked half a step behind its Norwegian counterpart but its proposals were far less radical than the Norwegian ones. When criticized for this, Saami members of the commission said that they only put forth that which was politically acceptable. The implication of this is clear: that Sweden can only accept less radical propositions than are acceptable in Norway (Beach, 1988; Niia, 1991:149-150).

In a series of reports from 1986 to 1990, the Swedish Saami rights commission suggested the creation of a Saami Assembly as a focal point for Saami self-determination, an increased use of the Saami language, and a change in legislation to embody the principles set forth by the Supreme Court in the *Tax Mountain* case (Sweden, 1986; 1989; 1990). Enlargement of Saami hunting rights in the wake of the *Tax Mountain* case had, however, led to a forceful reaction among the non-Saami majority of Lapland. Further proposals from the commission, suggesting the negotiation of rights for the Saami before the start of large-scale logging, had farmers, loggers and forest companies come together with already discontent hunters in a large anti-Saami rights opinion. Three of Sweden's largest forest companies, together with hundreds of small farmers and landowners, sued the Saami villages of Härjedalen contesting their right to reindeer grazing in the area. The case is so far (in 1994) undecided, although the forest companies and the Saami have made a settlement out of court, preserving the *status quo* (*Samefolket*, 1992[6-7]:8-9).

The Social Democratic government did not present a Saami rights Bill

to the parliament. A proposed minor amendment of the *Reindeer Herding Act* was thrown out by a parliament that, on Saami instigation, insisted on a full Bill. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that Norway signed, the Social Democratic government did not sign the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169, concerning Indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries (*Samefolket*, 1991[1]:14-23).

In spite of their efforts, the Social Democrats lost the election in 1991, and a non-socialist coalition government came into power. Large hopes were set on the new government, as it was during the previous non-socialist government that Saami Indigenous status first was recognized. The non-socialist opposition had also been sensitive to demands from Saami organizations, insisting on a full Saami rights Bill. Despite the great expectations, the Saami Bill introduced in parliament in the fall of 1992 was a dismal failure. The Bill proposed the creation of a Saami Assembly (*Sameting*), but it expressly said that no constitutional amendments were needed, that there would be no *Saami Language Act*, or the signing of the ILO Convention 169. Moreover, the Bill contained amendments to the *Reindeer Herding Act* that would open up Saami hunting and fishing to non-Saami in Lapland (Sweden, 1992/1993b). This amendment had never been discussed previously, neither by the Saami Rights commission, nor in any other public forum.

Needless to say, the government's proposals were met with a very forceful reaction by the Saami. The Bill was burnt at an extraordinary session of the Saami National Congress, and the Saami leaders used words of anger, something not heard for many years. The possibility of raising the legal issues of ownership to land anew, was also contemplated (*Samefolket*, 1992[11]:12-25). In spite of these protests, the Bill was approved by the Swedish Parliament in 1993 (Sweden, 1992/93a:SS 8)—the International Year for the World's Indigenous Peoples—and the opening up of Saami hunting to non-Saami in Lapland took place as planned during the fall of 1993 (*Samefolket*, 1993[9]:36).

Conclusions

A national state is a state governing substantial territories through a centralized administration. The national states were created on the ruins of feudal society. The demolition of medieval society in Lapland started when the Saami were put under direct royal administration. In spite of the forced labor extracted from the Saami at the mining projects, and the forceful conversion of them to Christianity, the Saami were not treated any differently than the population at large. During this time, hundreds of

peasant women were burned as witches, and almost a quarter of the able-bodied male population died in foreign wars.

The Saami differed in culture and language from the yeoman of central Sweden, but in the multinational Swedish realm so also did the slash and burn cultivator of Finland or the Estonian and German serfs in the trans-baltic provinces. Saami land was treated in the same way as freehold farm land, and protected by courts and administration from encroachments. As both settlers and Saami were regarded as necessary for a viable economy in Lapland, the government tried to protect both ways of life.

A nation-state is a national state whose people share a strong linguistic, religious and symbolic identity. After the cession of Finland in 1809 and Pomerania in 1815, Sweden soon developed into a nation-state, with a population that contained a vast majority of ethnic Swedes of evangelic-Lutheran confession. During the 19th century a common social-Darwinist and racist ideology became established in the Western World in general, and also in Sweden. The Saami way of life became associated with a lower stage of development and many predicted their eventual dying out or assimilation.

An order was introduced in which the nomadic Saami in reality became legally and economically segregated from the rest of the society. That took place within the framework of an administrative tutelage in a system of institutionalized racism. The pressure towards Saami areas was limited for a long time. The subarctic forests and mountain of northern Sweden held only a limited appeal to agricultural colonists, who themselves in many cases were of Saami descent. It was not until the forestry and mining boom at the end of the 19th century that the large economic potentials of northern Sweden were realized at the expense of the Saami nation.

It was with the introduction of racist ideas during the 19th century that both decision makers and the general public in Sweden began to view the Saami as savages doomed to disappear. In fact, at this time a mental exoticization of the Saami occurred in Sweden, leading to the paternalistic and segregationist policy that well deserves comparison with contemporary practices in North America. In the light of the economic and ideological motives, this policy can be explained in terms of the common social Darwinist and racist ideology that became established in the Western World at this time, and functioned as an ideological weapon in the struggle over the natural resources.

A welfare state is a state in which the government takes over many tasks of the civil society. Due to its character as a nation-state, Sweden's transformation to a welfare state was exceptionally smooth and uneventful. Yet, fifty years after the winning of citizen's rights by the Swedish working class, the Saami were still under guardianship. Through Saami organiza-

tions the Saami, however, gained a voice in Swedish society that could not be denied them by the administration.

In 1971 the old police administration was abolished and a new service was created devoted to the economic improvement of reindeer herding. Yet an institutionalized favoring of the dominant population in economic competition still exists. This led the Saami to contest Crown ownership of mountain lands in an effort to stop land encroachment, and assert Saami land rights. The Supreme Court of Sweden in 1981 decided against the Saami. Yet, the Supreme Court did say that existing usufructuary Saami land rights were rights under civil law, and thus a form of constitutionally-protected private property.

As a remnant of the former racist policy, there exists among the non-Saami majority of the North strong notions of the inferiority of the Saami. When the supposedly inferior Saami show outward signs of success in the form of snowmobiles, cars, and helicopters, the non-Saami Northerners refer to myths about government grants and compensation to explain this contradiction in their eyes. In the same way, ignorance about Saami legal rights leads to the widespread perception that the Saami have privileges not shared by the general public.

The policy of the Social Democratic government was obviously affected by the strong anti-Saami rights reaction, and a wish not to alienate a northern electorate usually supportive of their policy. Great expectations were therefore put on the non-socialist coalition government that came into power after the 1991 general elections. It was also believed that the non-socialist attitude towards life, liberty, and property would favor increased Saami rights. The new government did create a Saami assembly, but they also opened the small game hunt on Crown land to non-Saami, thereby confiscating constitutionally-protected Saami property without due process or just compensation!

It is obvious that the non-socialist government is using the dilution of Saami hunting and fishing rights as a bait to lure the working class voters of the north over to their camp. The government obviously hopes to cash in on the large anti-Saami rights reaction and to make inroads into a northern electorate usually hostile towards non-socialist ideas.

The Social Democrats are ideologically committed to the brotherhood and equality of man, while the non-socialist parties believe in the right of property. Yet, in regard to Saami affairs, both the left and the right in Swedish political life have betrayed the very core of their ideological principles in order to maximize their votes.

In the meantime Saami self-determination seems as distant as ever.

Note

1. An earlier draft of this paper was presented at the 1993 Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society in Eugene, Oregon, October 28-31, 1993.

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