1. Introduction

This paper deals with an ethnic group that has remained fairly unknown, despite its presence in written history both in Scandinavia and in Russia/the USSR. From both perspectives, it was included in a larger group: a Scandinavian splinter group of nomad Sami, speaking a North Sami linguistic variant, that settled in Russia; or for the Russians, the nomad Sami that appeared in the Kola peninsula, or became visible there in the first half of the 19th century, who were Lutheran, and who were often identified with all Norwegian or Scandinavian Sami. For about one hundred years, however, they were distinct enough to be treated as a separate group, the Filmans (фильманы), both in Russian statistics and ethnographic descriptions. In Fenno-Ugrian studies, they, if mentioned at all, are Lutheran Sami dialect speakers living on the Murman coast of the Arctic Ocean.

The ethnonym Fil’man can only be found in older Russian texts. Thus, the dictionary of Archangel dialects explains филман (мн. филмана) as “Sami who lives in Finland” (Merkur’ev 1979: s.v.). The Kola encyclopedia provides the explanation “Sami of Norwegian origin” (Kola encyclopedia). In fiction, the ethnonym of this narodnost' is sometimes used to give local colour to events taking place in the western part of Kola peninsula. In Western sources, the word appears only incidentally, of which a few examples are shown in the chapters below. In toponymy, the ethnonym was the basis for

naming a settlement on the Murman coast by the Norwegian border: *Fil’manskoe/Finmanskoe.*

Generally, the group in question is denoted in Scandinavia by such expressions as Norwegian *fjellfinner/fjellsamer,* Finnish *tunturisaamelaiset* (mountain Sami), formerly also Swedish *renlappar,* Fi *porosaaamelaiset* (reindeer Sami); and No *flyttfinner* (nomad Sami). The coastal Sami are also included in the group of Filmans, and they are called Swe/No *sjösamer* or Fi *merisaamelaiset* (sea Sami). The Sami language that they speak is north Sami with its subvarieties.

2. The first sightings

Among Finnish travellers, the ethnographer and linguist A. J. Sjögren was the first to mention the *Filmans,* or *Filmons,* as he wrote. In January 1826, he was in Lapland and the coast of the Arctic Ocean, charting the Sami language and people. From Finmark in Norway he was taken by a nomad Sami to the the border to Neiden (Ru Njavdam, Fi Näätämö). He traveled together with a group of eight Sami nomads, conversing with them in Sami and resorting to Norwegian vocabulary at times. He spent one night in the tent of the guide. The Sami in Neiden were fishermen and kept a few sheep and cows, which at the moment were looked after by the *Filmons* on the coast. Sjögren explained that this was the name for the Finmark Sami, and the place *Filmorii* meant ‘Finmark’. The local dialect differed very little from the Filmans’ speech (Sjögren 1826).

The father of the Finnish national epos the *Kalevala,* Elias Lönnrot, travelled widely in eastern Finland and the bordering areas of north-west Russia collecting data on Finnish dialects and folklore. In 1842, he was in Lapland and the Kola peninsula. After spending some time in the town of Kola he wrote on the 2nd (14th) of May, 1842 a travel report, addressed to a friend and intended for a Finnish newspaper (Lönnrot 1911: 317–347):

[After having written about the Murmans, Lönnrot continues] “In Kola, I heard for the first time of another mighty people, up to now unknown in history, – the Filmans [Filmannerna in the original/ML]. As I did not find on

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2 Rosberg (1919: 108) wrote *Filmarskoje, Finmanskoe.* Spisok naselennych mest Arxangel’skoj gubernii k 1905 godu, 1907: 210, has *Fil’manskoe.*

3 The report was published in *Litteraturblad för allmän medborgerlig bildning,* 2/1854.
the map any Filmannien (or Fillmannien), I had to find out from people in Kola about this land and its inhabitants, since neither seemed to lag behind Murmannien and the Murmans, about whom I already had gathered information. The Filmans live on the Filman coast, and this coast lies to the west from the Murman coast, extending through Nordcap till Hammerfest and further. Their way of life appears to be almost like the Murmans’; during the daytime they are on the sea, and during the night either on the sea or in bath-houses and huts on the shores of sea gulfs, some made of wood, some of turf. How they spend their winter remained unknown to me, but people thought that they mostly disappear in the autumn, like the Murmans, of which one does not see a trace during the winter.

In Murman a language is spoken which is much like Russian, but the Filmans have their own language called Kakspreck, or as it rather should be written, kak spreck [---]. As I travelled specifically with philological aims, I became not so little glad to discover this new language; who knows if it won’t some day play among languages such a prominent role as does Sanskrit nowadays. So much at least is certain that it contains basic elements of not only Russian and Norwegian, but also of Finnish and Sami. In Kola we met some people who spoke Kakspreck, and also during the trip from there to Kandalax we met in Rasnovolok two burghers, one of which claimed that he could speak Norwegian; but though he did not speak it, the better he spoke Kakspreck. Varifrån reser du was Härfru du fara (from where do you come), vad är ditt namn – kak du heta (what is your name), med huru många renar reser du – här mange alenej du fara (with how many reindeer are you travelling), önskar du thevatten, så kokar jag – du ēai vill hava, tak ja koga (If you want tea, I’ll boil it), har du egen thekanna – sin čainik du hava (Have you a tea kettle of your own) etc. [---] People from Kola who had spent a few summer months in Filmannien, spoke the language with great aptitude. One of the most common words is the word da, repeated (da, da).

Lönnrot continues with attempts at an etymology, either via Greek philomerner or by identifying Filmanner with Murmanner, which is supposed

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4 Kakspreck, or Russenorsk, was a mixed language spoken on the coast of the Arctic Ocean by Norwegian and Russian traders and fishermen, and also by Sami who had dealings with them.
to combine the Russian word море, ‘sea’, and the Sami word mannee, ‘traveller (farande)’. Fil- refers to Finmark, and the meaning is ‘inhabitant of the coast of Finmark’.\(^5\) Though probably serious about the reference to Sanskrit, Lönnrot lodged the responsibility for the alleged “mightiness” of the Filmans with the Kola burghers, who knew nothing about the world outside their town and its environs (Lönnrot 1911: 325).

In Russia, Filmans were mentioned in the descriptions of Kola and the Lapland coast in the 1820s by M. Rejneke. While making hydrographic measurements along the coast, he reported on the population, using alternately the ethnonyms фінман and фільман: the Finmans and the Samoyed guarded their reindeer herds, but the Lopars (лопари; the traditional designation for Russian Sami) and the Kola people let them roam free all through the year. The Lopars did not keep horned cattle, but the Finmans often had up to 20 head and also used reindeer milk, unlike the Russian Lopars. Rejneke identified the Finmans as Norwegian Sami (Rejneke 1826; 1827: 130–131). In his description of the town of Kola, he wondered why the local Sami did not keep many reindeer, while the Filmans had big herds (Rejneke 1830). He listed the places where they lived on the coast, up to Vadsø in Norway (Rejneke 1878: 200).

3. The Norwegian connection

Since the 13th century, the area of the Kola peninsula and the whole northern coast had been taxed by the neighbouring states, Denmark-Norway and Russia, and later, Sweden. In 1613, the area called fællesdistrikt (‘common area’) was defined in documents, but the borders were not closed. In some areas, the Sami paid taxes to all three states. This situation continued till 1751 when the western part of the district was divided by marking the border between Sweden and Norway. The Finnish area of Inari became a border area between Russia and Sweden. Still, the Sami were able to take their reindeer herds and fish and hunt on both sides (Lähteenmäki 2004: 346–347). Later on,

\(^5\) Another popular etymology goes back to Norwegian A. J. Friis, who suggested that the name comes from the word normanska; he claimed that in loan words, Russian often replaces a word-initial н for м (Friis 1872: 206–207). As to Finmark, in Norway, finn used to denote ‘Sami’.
the term applied only to the three areas of Neiden, Pasvik and Peisen, where there lived both Orthodox and Lutheran Sami. Most of the latter settled on the coast, fishing and keeping cattle. In addition to these sea Sami, reindeer herding nomad Sami roamed around the area (Tanner 1929: 73; Wikan 1998: 43). Many of the sea Sami had been nomads before, but had had to take up fishing. The nomads had become – and would remain – a group that embodied the Sami ethnos more than any other, and the surrounding populations saw them as a proud and economically independent people whose freedom was an object of envy (Wikan 1995: 186). They had a high degree of self-identity supported by endogamy. Generally, they were considered to be the nobility among the Sami.

The nomads were increasing, and their herds needed more pasture and regular routes between the tundra and the sea coast where the climate in summer was more suitable and freer from insects. In south Varanger, the nomad families can even be identified, and their movements since the 1820s into and out of Finland and Russia, namely the pastures of the east Sami, to Neiden, Pasvik, Suenjel and Pečenga are to some extent known (Blix 1967; 1971).

The common area was divided in 1826, and the border between Norway and Russia was defined. At the time, there were 29 “Russian” families (67 people) and 35 “Norwegian” families (82 people) in the area (Tanner 1929: 75); the latter were almost all sea Sami on the coast. The number of the nomad families was ca. 20. In the division, Russia received Pečenga, and Neiden and Pasvik were partitioned: in Pasvik, the religious and economic centre Boris-Gleb became Russian, while in Neiden, the centre with the Neiden chapel became Norwegian. Within three years the Skolt Sami in both siidas were to choose citizenship and move out of foreign territories. In both areas, a small group became Norwegian, while the majority continued under Russian rule (Andresen 2005: 84–88). The Norwegian area was renamed Syd- and later

6 In the sources, the place names appear in different forms depending on to which state the place belonged and the language of the publication. Thus, Norwegian Neiden is Russian Njavdam, Finnish Näättämö; No Pasvik is Ru Pazvika, Pazreck, Fi Paatsjoki; No Peisen is Ru Pečenga, Fi Petsamo etc. Nowadays, they have official Sami names as well.

The Filman Sami on the Kola Peninsula

Sør-Varanger. The border between Finland and Russia was settled in 1829–1830.

In 1852, the grazing of the Norwegian reindeer herds in Finland was stopped by the closure of the border between Finland and Norway; the latter retaliated by denying Finnish citizens free access to fishing on the Arctic sea coast. The nomads of Finmark took their herds to pasture to the area of the Neiden Sami and eastwards, and some moved entirely to live in Russia. Some nomads kept moving back and forth across the border, at least up to 1901 (Vorren 1951: 116). Generally, with the closure the good times for the nomads were over in South Varanger, and many of them became fishermen (Wessel 1979: 141; Wikan 1995: 155).

4. The Finnish connection

In the 1820s, the priest of Utsjoki, Jacob Fellman, wrote that nomad Sami families had appeared in Inari. They were six households, and they had moved south from Utsjoki. In summer they moved to the coast west of the Kola river in Russia. The distance to the church in Inari was at least 30 mils, and in winter they lived closer to Inari. They were like the other nomad Sami: they lived in tents and married among themselves or with other nomads. Since they were isolated from other reindeer herders, their herds thrived better. In Kola they sold reindeer products and had consequently more money than the others. Altogether they were said to own at least 6,000 reindeer, of which one person, Olof Pehrsson Inger, owned more than one half (Fellman 1906a: 356–357). Apparently, an increasing lack of space and pasture had driven the nomads from Norway to the Russian coast, especially the lush pastures on Fiskerhalvøya (Rybačij peninsula, Kalastajasarento, the Fishermen’s peninsula). Väinö Tanner, a strong partisan of the Skolt Sami, wrote about the matter some hundred years later and thought that the move of the Norwegian Sami to Russia via Inari was a manoeuvre by Norway to bring in more of her citizens to the area to support subsequent territorial claims. Or the nomads themselves thought that in this way, as citizens of Finland/Russia, they would secure for themselves the use of the pastures of the Kola peninsula (Tanner 1929: 75; Wikan 1995: 49).

There were constant conflicts between the nomads and the local populations both in Inari and in Russia. In 1831, Olof and Pehr Inger, Pehr, Olof and Matts
Halt, and Ivar Skåre sent a written complaint to the governor of Oulu because the Kola Sami had collected illegal taxes from them on the area now belonging to Russia. They themselves considered these lands as their own ancient territory (Lähteenmäki 2004: 376–378). Their herds were regularly plundered; at one time the Kola burghers slaughtered so many of Olof Pehrsson Inger’s reindeer that they were selling the meat from two big boat-loads in town (Fellman 1906a: 289, 356). The nomads were not eager to choose their country. In 1833, the local law court in Kola for the elimination of conflicts between the Sami of Russian districts, the Uleåborg (Oulu) province and Norway had asked an official in eastern Finmark to use strict measures in order to force the Norwegian Lapps to leave the Pečenga district and return to their own territory. In 1837, the Norwegian and Finnish Sami were living in the same districts with their reindeer herds, and none of the Norwegians expressed a desire to take up Russian citizenship (Peresadilo 2005: 119). Unruly behaviour continued in the next decades as well. In 1847 the Archangel Chamber of State Domains had informed the civil governor that in 1845, Ivan Aleksej Skore, a Sami registered originally among the Norwegian Sami and subsequently ranked among the state peasants of Kola district, had left for Norway with his entire family and herds, without permission (Peresadilo 2005: 121).

One result of the new situation was that the Skolt Sami, who had but a few reindeer each, found that these got mixed in with the huge herds of the nomads. Consequently, they gave their reindeer to be taken care of in the bigger herds of the Filmans. Instead, they concentrated on fishing since it was more profitable. This led to a change in the Skolt way of life, as they began to live by fishing alone (Tanner 1929: 55–73, 177–178).

5. The Filmans in Russian descriptions

V. Vereščagin’s description in Očerki Arhangel’skoj gubernii (1849) seems to be the first Russian treatment of the Filmans. The name was given as a variant of Firman, Finnman, and explained as a derivation from Finmark. These Sami were both reindeer herders and fishermen, and now they were causing problems to the Russian Sami. The herds of the nomads were said to

8 Repeated in Severnoe obozrenie 1849.
be enormous, and they ate up the moss on the Russian side of the border. Fishermen Sami-Filmans were also intruders, fishing on the sites of the Russian Sami. The Filmans themselves were of the opinion that their movements were made on Norwegian ground. The area in question was situated on the coast, 150 versts from Varanger fjord to the gulf of Pećenga, in the pogosts of Neiden, Pazreck/Pazvig, and Peisen/Pećenga (Severnoe obozrenie 1849: 149–179).

In the 1860s, mentions of the Filmans/Finmans appeared in Arhangel’skie gubernskie vedomosti. The most comprehensive account was written in 1861 by K. Solovev, who appears to have lived or travelled with the nomads for
some time (AGV 39/1861: 31). The account was titled Фильманы, Финманы and was part of a series of descriptions of Russian Lapland. It gave the following information:

The Filmans were nomad Sami in the north-western part of the Kola peninsula, by the borders of Norway and Finland. They differed from the Murman and Ter Sami by their outer appearance and way of life. They most likely originated from Northern Finland or Norwegian Finmark, for they were like the Sami in those countries. They had come after Russia had defined her borders against the neighbouring states. In Russia, their number was 40 families. They had large reindeer herds off of which they lived, staying at one place till the animals had eaten all the moss. Their location was the tundra: the Pazreck, Motka (Muotka) and Peçenga tundra, from Kola to the borders, from east to west about 300 versts, from north to south about 150 versts. The families lived separately, not in communities, and two families stayed together only if they were close kin.

They lived in tents, called kuvas [which seems to be exactly the kota of the Finnish and Norwegian Sami/ML]. They were lazy and only looked after their animals. The rich ones had up to 10,000 reindeer. They exchanged reindeer and skins in Kola or with the Pomors for flour, powder, broadcloth, cooking vessels etc. The most important trade took place by the lake of Inari (Enare), or, as the Russians called it, the Great Imandra in Finland. Finnish and Norwegian traders used to come to the fair there. Because the Filmans always had more than what was needed for the exchange, they sold the rest for cash. Some of them hunted wild fur animals in winter, skiing, shooting or trapping. Very few fished in summer.

They looked different from the Russian Sami: black eyes, big brown eyes, dark skin hair and red cheeks. The Russian Sami had brown hair, grey eyes, and a pale face. The Filman was morose like the nature around him, distrustful and carefree. The slightest offence made him lust for a sometimes cruel revenge, but he was hospitable and loved luxury, as he understood it. The Filmans’ marriages were based on calculation, not on attraction. Often the author saw young men of 18 or 20 married to old women of 60 because they were rich, and the other way round, half-dead oldsters with 16-year-old wives. Their young women were not beautiful, though not entirely ugly, whereas the old women were repellently hideous.
The Filmans decorated their tents inside with coloured cloth, carpets or pieces of cloth. Their dress was decorated with silver, lace and trinkets. They often herded their reindeer together and admired them with satisfaction. They did not know the number of their animals, but they marked their ears. The Filmans loved silver; they hid it in the ground but sometimes forgot it. They visited each other carrying gifts, and especially butter was considered a great delicacy, which deserved a whole reindeer as a gift. The Pomors often stole their reindeer and were beaten if caught.

Their main dish was reindeer meat, fish, seal meat and whale fat, all eaten raw. They hardly used any salt. They baked a kind of bread out of rye flour and bought baked bread from Kola. Some ate the meat of wild animals. Their greatest delicacy was coffee, which they drank twice a day.

The Filmans were very dirty because they never washed. Their dogs ate from the same vessel as the people did, and it was never washed. The clothing for both women and men was pečok, made of reindeer skin with the hair outside, like that of the Russian Sami. They wore jary, long boots made of reindeer skin. The men carried a hat of blue cloth with a fur trimming. Fixed to the belt there was a big knife, which was used for everything. The women’s headgear was a cap made of red and blue cloth. In summer the pečok was changed into a white cloth blouse.

The Filmans were all Evangelic Lutheran and carried out their religious obligations during their trips to Inari to the Lutheran pastor. In every family the author saw the Old and the New Testament in Finnish, and everyone could speak and read Finnish. They had their own dialect different from the dialects of the Russian Sami. The author could not find any folksongs, beliefs or special traditions. Generally the Filmans were on a lower cultural level than the Russian Sami. Their health was good, and illnesses were rare. Life expectancy among them was about 50, rarely 60, years.9

The same newspaper repeated the same information in Ètnografičeskij očerk fil’manov by N. Deržačev, a member of the Archangel statistical committee in 1869. The only new item is the number of the Filmans: they were 175, and out of this total 61 were Norwegian and 114 Finnish.10 Their

9 N. Deržačev repeated the same information in his book “Russkaja Laplandija: statističeskij, geographical i etnografičeskij očerk” in 1877.
10 This may be a misconception. Ušakov (1972: 313) and Sæther (1992: 71–72) give the figures 61 and 114 for Norwegian and Finnish colonists.
locations are specified: the rivers Ura, Litsa, Pečenga and the coasts of Zemljanaja guba (= Pummanki) and Vojdo-guba (= Vajdo-guba, Vaitolahti).

Perhaps the best-known description was written by V. I. Nemirovič-Dančenko, a popular writer who travelled in the arctic areas of Russia. In his book Strana holoda, which describes his travels in 1873, the information from Solovcov is repeated with some exaggeration. Thus, the Filmans were much richer than the Russian Sami; even the poorest had at least 100 reindeer. In Ledzovskaja guba the author had seen a morose Filman dressed in ragged furs, although he had 70,000 reindeer, i.e. 490,000 rubles worth of property. The author went to the tundra with a Filman. The dogs were let loose, and within one hour a herd of several thousand reindeer appeared (Nemirovič-Dančenko 1877: 319).

Shortly before, the Filmans had realized the importance of money, and not content with proposals of exchange, they said to the Russians: Хлеба я сама купить. Давай денег. At another place, when reporting on the poor knowledge of Russian among the Finnish colonists, who after ten years in Kola could not understand a simple sentence, Nemirovič-Dančenko contrasts it with the Norwegian Sami, who after 4–5 years’ sojourn in Russia could speak the language very well (Nemirovič-Dančenko 1877: 318–323).

The author stressed again how different the Filmans looked, as compared to the Russian Sami. They were tall, with black hair, and out of a tan face brown eyes looked distrustfully. The Russian brown-haired, grey-eyed Sami looked like dwarves compared to these Patagonians of the North. The Filmans were morose and silent, suspicious, unforgiving, and due to their revengefulness an object of fear to other Sami. If they caught a thief, they beat him to death (Nemirovič-Dančenko 1877: 318–323).

Apparently, the Russians were fascinated by the contrast to the more familiar Russian Sami. The Filmans were savage but literate, dirty but chaste, boastful but hospitable, revengeful but religious, calculating but generous and unable to keep track of their herds or silver, reticent but able to speak many languages. Not everything is necessarily true: the Filmans surely usually smoked, dried or cooked their meat – the large pots they had were hardly used for making coffee only (Vorren 1951: 89–91, 138).
6. The Filmans in the second half of the 19th century

In the 1860s, Russia began to encourage colonization of the Murman coast by promising special privileges to foreign settlers, since Russians turned out to be unwilling to face the severe conditions. Settlers from Finland and Norway were welcomed. The “Settlers’ Magna Charta” of the Emperor of 22.11.1868 attracted the colonists with privileges in taxation: they could freely trade, hunt and fish. Besides, they were allowed to use their native languages with the authorities. True, some of the generous conditions remained hypothetical only. The Sami were provided with the same privileges as the other colonists, if they wished to settle down. At the same time, the jurisdiction concerning the Sami was to be kept separate from that of the colonists (Itkonen 1921: 25; Lähteenmäki 2004: 449; Sæther 1992: 71–72).

The Norwegian theologian and linguist J. A. Friis travelled in Russian Lapland in 1867. He was also struck by the difference in looks, dress, habits and language between the Lutheran Sami in South Varanger and the Russian Sami. Friis travelled together with one Norwegian Sami, one Skolt Sami and two Lutheran Sami, i.e. Filmans. In Vaido-guba they discovered a tent with nomads who had the New Testament and the Cathechism in Sami.11 These Lutheran Sami were Russian citizens. Altogether there were 19 Lutheran families living in Russia: seven nomad families and three settled families in Peisen, in Muotka six settled and three nomad families, and one settled Sami by the Ora fiord. They spoke the dialect of South Varanger.

Most of the Sami had lived there since 1826, from the time when the area was still fællesdistrikt, and one old man remembered having paid taxes to both Russia and Norway. The nomad Sami who stayed in Peisen and Litka in winter took their herds in summer to the Fishermen’s peninsula, where there was space enough and no need to guard them. Friis found that the nomads all looked healthy, no doubt because of a diet which contained a lot of meat – here Friis was quite adamant against the Greek Orthodox dietary restrictions. At the Ora fiord, the Filman met a relative, Lasse Halt, who took them to his family’s tent. The neighbouring tent belonged to his father-in-law, one Inger who had 2,000 reindeer and a lot of silver coins which he had hid in the

11 While the Finnish church required that the Sami learn Finnish, in Norway Sami was the language of the printed word used in the religious life of the Sami.
ground – a recurrent tale about the Sami. A drawback in the area were the Skolt Sami and the Russians who stole some 100 reindeer every year (Friis 1872: 145–180). Friis asked the Halt family to dress in their finest and took a photograph:

![Picture: Friis 1872/Museovirasto: Norwegian mountain Sami in Pečenga.]

In the 1870s, there were already disputes between the Finnish and Norwegian colonists over land use with the Filmans west of Murman and the Sami of Motka, Pečenga and Pazreck (AGV 6/1873). Nemirovič-Dančenko thought that the local Sami on the Murman coast were being pressured by the colonists, and would soon have to settle in the colonies as well (Nemirovič-Dančenko 1877: 122). The author thought that this outcome would be best, considering the high moral values and capabilities that the “Norwegian” branch of the Sami show. It appears that the Filmans were not keen on alcohol, unlike the Russian Sami. Their fidelity in marriage also contrasted with the local customs (Efimenko 1878: 59).
The basic treatment of the Russian Sami by N. Xaruzin (1890) only mentions that while the Russian Sami were half-nomads, the Filmans were fully so. He reported that in 1886, the number of Filmans was 31 men and 31 women and that they lived in the Ensk and Čalmozersk settlements (Xaruzin 1890: 59). Z. Černjakov in the 1920s claimed that Xaruzin never went further than the town of Kola and received his information from the local priest (Černjakov 1998: 90). While Xaruzin did travel with his sister to Boris-Gleb as well, this certainly seems to apply to Aleksandra Efimenko, whose publication in 1878 still claimed that the number of the Filmans was 175. Further, she stated that the nomads did not care if Russian Sami stole their reindeer. The latter did not consider it a sin, and the Filmans took their losses with unconcern (Efimenko 1878: 33–34, 50–51).

7. The Filmans and the Lutheran church

As noted by Friis, the Norwegian nomads visited the church in Norway. In Finland, the pastor of Utsjoki, Jacob Fellman, was worried about the state of affairs in Russia. If the Inari nomads decided to stay in Russia after 1837, which was according to him the last date for a decision, they would need a prayer house or a church on the coast. The area by the Motka and Pečenga fiords where the Sami still in 1860 had their pastures was much too far from Inari. A prayer house was in fact built in Kivijärvi by the border, but the Sami stayed away, going instead to Kirkenes. At that time they were about 70 inhabitants in 13 households. By now, they were citizens of Russia, but still used the pasture lands of Inari (Nahkiasoja 2003: 207). Later on, when hundreds of Finnish colonists settled on the Murman coast, religious services were concentrated in Ura.

In the 1860–1880s, Finnish clergymen travelled to the Murman coast, attending to the needs of the Finns, Norwegians and also the Lutheran Sami who happened to be around. J. F. Thauwon wrote about his travels in the 1860s. On one trip he was taken to the coast by Lutheran nomad Sami who

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12 Xaruzin (1890: 59). This must be a misconception, for Čalmozero (Fi Salmijärvi) was the autumn camp for Pazreck Sami, and Finnish colonists had settled there; Buxarov (1885: 52–63).

13 T. I. Itkonen has the year 1836 as the last date; in 1875 there were still two nomads registered in Inari. From 1885 onwards, there were none (Itkonen 1948 I: 125).
belonged to the Inari parish. In the tundra, he received a warm welcome, because the hostess intended to come to confession, and all her children, except the eldest son, were due to be confirmed. The night was spent in the tent on reindeer skins, together with 20 dogs. The daughters brought in the morning from the forest a herd of over 1,000 reindeer; the Inger family was told to have more than 2,000. In that winter of 1868, in Ura-Guba 10 Finns and 9 Sami were confirmed, and four Sami who were found to be lacking in knowledge were told to try later on (Thauwon 1870: 202–204, 244–245).

Joh. Mustakallio (Schwarzberg) visited the coast in summer 1882. He tried to learn the language of the Sami but found it too difficult, and had to resort to the help of an interpreter. He reported that the Sami had difficulties in reading because the orthography in their books had been devised by Norwegians. Further, he noted that the only official who took note of the Sami was the Finnish pastor from Finland. The Russians only wrote down the names of those who were due for conscription into the army. At the time, there were 625 Finns and 63 Sami on the Murman coast – excluding some ten Sami that were in the inland or by the Peçenga fiord (Mustakallio 1884: 113–117).

At the turn of the century, Russia was worried about the missionary work of the Finnish Lutheran pastors. It took over the administration of the religious matters of the Lutherans by founding an Evangelic Lutheran parish in Peçenga, and a pastor lived permanently in the new capital Aleksandrovsk (now Poljarny). The last Finnish pastor Anders Gustav Vuotila travelled round the coast, visiting the Norwegian settlers as well (Onnela 1973: 58–63; Jentoft 2001: 33).

The church registers of the new parish disappeared during the 1917 revolution, but the registers by pastor Matti Hinkula from 1887–1888 contain a list of all the Lutheran inhabitants of the Murman coast. In 1887, there were 147 Lutheran Sami, and in 1888, 159, including Sami women married to Finns or Norwegians. Obviously, the Norwegian Sami had stopped visiting the churches over the border, and now came to, or had settled on the coast, for some of the Sami were born in Norway, some in Inari (Onnela 1973: 69–111). And if children are excluded from the figure, the number of the adults identified as “Lapp” is 71, including the Sami wives of the colonists.

14 The Sami family names are: Balt, Birget, Inkeri, Ivarisen, Gunnersen, Haltta, Jörgensen, Larssen, Malvig, Naula, Nielsen, Olsen, Oxfufvud, Panna, Pehrsen, Rauna, Sanka, Skore, Trenger and Winter.
8. The fates of the Filmans in the 20th century

It appears that the Filmans lived mostly on the Murman coast as colonists or fishermen. A couple of Norwegian nomads returned to Norway with their herds in 1903 (Vorren 1951: 120–121); how many stayed is unknown. During the First World War, the figure for the Lutheran parishioners, as reported by the pastor in Aleksandrovsk, was 1,942. Out of these, 85% were Finns, 9% Norwegians, 5% Sami, and 1% Germans and Latvians. Thus the number of the Sami was 97 (Granö & Itkonen 1921: 51).

During the war, various armies operated in the area, and local men, including Sami, were conscripted into the Russian army; the reindeer herds were destroyed.

8.1 Finland

With Russian defeat and the Tartu peace treaty, Russia ceded to Finland the Pečenga area, Petsamo (the Pazreck and Pečenga rajons). It gave Finland an opening to the sea. It also cut the Fishermen’s peninsula in half, and the border went through the traditional Skolt Sami pastures in the inland as well. In the 1920s there were in Petsamo among the Skolts three nomad Sami families, Filmans, altogether 14 people. They were becoming semi-nomad and accommodated their language to the surrounding Skolt Sami. There were four ex-nomads as well. On the coast there lived 37 sea Sami, whose ancestors had moved there in the XIX century (Tanner 1929: 68–83).

A Finnish linguist, Paavo Ravila, went to the coast of Norway ("Ruija") and Petsamo in 1929 and 1930 to collect language samples from the Lutheran Sami. In Petsamo, there lived 54 Sami and 20 half-Sami. On the Norwegian side in Kotajoki (Sandnes), there were 69 Sami and 22 half-Sami, and in Rautavuono (Sarfjord), 147 Sami and 18 half-Sami. The Sami were both nomads and fishermen. The reindeer herds had diminished, and the richest owner had ca. 500. Others had lost their inherited herds and settled on the coast, fishing, hunting, selling hay etc. Some lived in the huts of the Skolts. In Petsamo those living close to the Lower Monastery – this part of the Pečenga monastery was taken by the Finnish Lutheran church – were still reindeer herders, while those living in Maattivuono in a village together with Finns and Karelians were fishermen. In Rautavuono/Sarfjord the Sami were originally
fishermen, but now they lived mostly by working in the newly started mines on the Norwegian side. In a few other places, there lived one or two Sami. Living on the coast side by side with the fishermen Sami, the nomads had adapted to their dialect, and only two people in Kaakkuri had retained features of their old dialect. On the Russian side, there were also fishermen Sami. Most of them lived in Muotka, where, as Ravila had heard, their number was 39.15

During the Winter War of 1939, the inhabitants of Petsamo were evacuated to Tervola, south of Rovaniemi (Lehtola 2004: 33). According to Norwegian sources, some 1,200 civilians fled to Norway (Wikan 1998: 48). Reindeer herding was difficult, animals were stolen, and some lost all of them. After a short period of peace, the Second World War brought the German armed forces to the north, up to the Litsa river. From Finnish Petsamo, the Sami were evacuated to central Finland. The war ended with the defeat of Finland and, among other things, the loss of Petsamo. Nowadays, even the last of the oldest generation of Sami who had heard of the Filmans from their parents have passed away.

8.2 The Soviet Union

With the peace of Tartu, the border between Finland and the USSR was closed, and contacts consisted of returning boats or reindeer that had crossed into the neighbouring country. Apparently, those Sami who had relatives on the other side visited them secretly. In the beginning, the Soviet Union advocated bringing civilization to the ethnic minorities, narodnosti, by language planning and organizing their administration. Counts were taken. In the 1930s, in the Aleksandrovsk rajon, extending from the Fishermen’s peninsula up to the gulf of Kola, there lived 1,836 inhabitants, out of which 1,079 were Finns, 170 Karelians, 160 Russians, 148 Norwegians, 91 settled Sami (Lopari), including 65 Filmans, and 84 semi-settled inhabitants of undefined ethnicity (Zolotarev 1930: 5). Apparently, since the Filmans are not mentioned anywhere else, they had indeed settled down.

15 According to Ravila (1930: Foreword III–IX), the Sami family names on the Finnish side were: Guttormsen, Hansen, Haltta, Menna, Noste, Saraksen, Skore (Banna), Slieden, Snaula and Westerelv, and on the Russian side Haltta, Purra, Snaula and Westerelv. The Halttas were both fishermen and reindeer herders, and the Russians called them Galtin.
Scientific expeditions were organized to study the Kola peninsula. In 1927, ethnologists and anthropologists were sent to study the Sami, along with the Komi, the Nenets and the local Russians. The final publication presented the overall statistics on those Sami that were measured, without specifying the Filmans (Zolotarev 1928). However, the leader of the expedition, D. A. Zolotarev, wrote an article about their visit to the West Murman coast.

On the Titov island by the Fishermen’s peninsula there lived only colonists, but in summer Sami from Motka came here, as did Russian Pomors who came to fish. The anthropological type of the Sami indicated a mixture with other races. Ozerko, close to the Finnish border, was a Finnish-Filman settlement formerly called Motka (Muotka), which had arisen in the 1860s. There were 221 inhabitants: 182 Finns, 19 Karelians, 8 Russians, 3 Estonians and 9 Filmans (who lived all in one household). The members of the expedition stayed there for one day, and to their astonishment, were not met with open arms and offerings of tea, coffee or food. Small Western Litsa, already a hundred years old, had 42 inhabitants: 16 Filmans, 13 Finns and 13 Karelians. They had cattle, sheep and pigs, but only 40 reindeer. Fishing and farming hay were their main occupations.

Three Filmans were photographed including a man and a woman who rather looked like Finns to Zolotarev (1930: Fig. 24, reproduced below). Notable is the traditional Sami jupa that the woman dressed in for the occasion. An “older” dark anthropological type, as Zolotarev called it, was represented by a young girl (1930: Fig. 25–26, reproduced below), who looked more like a Sami. In Great Western Litsa there were Finns and Russian Sami. By the gulf of Kola, there lived Russian Sami and colonists: Finns, Karelians and Norwegians. The Sami had settled down, but still had reindeer, as did the colonists (Zolotarev 1930: 1–21).
Elsewhere in the Aleksandrovsk volost’ there lived Filmans as well: in the colony Great Karelija six, in the colony Ura-Guba 14, and in the Novozersk volost’ (in addition to the 16 in Small Western Litsa), in Suhoj Navolok 18, in Ozerko 9 and in Kutovaja 2, altogether totalling 64 (Zolotarev 1928: 17).

In 1933, Z. Je. Černjakov, a linguist planning the new Sami literary language, travelled to the Murman coast to check the suitability of the alphabet on site. There were two schools in the Poljarnyj rajon, one in Titovka by Motka, another by Western Litsa. The former was a Russian school, the latter Finnish. The “Tundra” kolkhos in Titovka lived by reindeer herding and fishing, and the majority of the inhabitants were Sami. There, the author wrote down texts in the dialects of Motka, Pasvik and in the Filmans’ language. The Filmans were considered to be Norwegian Sami, but they were strongly Finnicized. Černjakov wrote down a text from Sara Härkönen, née Birket, and grammatical information from Varvara Kuzmina, née Mosorina. It turned out that the language was rather close to Sami both in morphology and lexicon. He planned to continue working with the language (Černjakov 2006: 45–52). Nothing seems to have come out of the intention.17

The last mention of the Filmans stems from a publication in 1979, where it is mentioned that in the 1930s, there were still ca. 70 Filmans in 11 families on the Kola peninsula (Kiselev & Kiseleva 1979: 23, 26).

A Finnish journalist from Petrozavodsk wrote a travel book in 1933, concentrating on the Finnish fishermen and their kolkhoses on the Murman coast. There were at the time ca. 1,600 Finns on the western coast, and they had 11 kolkhoses, comprising 400 people (Luoto 1933: 78–79).

The book contains references to “mountain Sami”, and some are named. Obviously these are descendants of the nomad Sami, Lutheran and Finnish-speaking – Lasse and Hanski, the youngsters who led the author through the Fishermen’s peninsula to Muotka, and Lars Haltta, who had come from the mountains to live at the coast at Ura. In Läätsi (Litsa) there lived Lassi Ukshuuto (Oxhuvud?), who was 98 years old. In Ara-Guba, which had a Sami-Finnish population, citizen Martti Birget was the oldest Finnish inhabitant. With his Sami wife he had come from the west and settled in Ara where “mountain people” and Pomors lived. In old Ura, the mountain Sami

16 The editor remarks that the language was “sea Sami”.
17 Russian became the language of teaching among the Sami in 1937, see Kiseleva (1980: 51).
Joutin Juntti had had his fishing hut; now there lived Finns. There had been conflicts and even violence between the “aborigines” and the newcomers, who had taken over the traditional and secret fishing sites of the former. The author explains that although the Sami had lived behind a hundred versets in the mountains, or on the fiords, they had considered the fishing site as their own (Luoto 1933: 206–223).

According to S. N. Daščinskij, the first arrests on the tundra took place in 1930 connected with the collectivization of reindeer husbandry, concerning those reluctant to part with their property. The real terror took place in 1937–1938. In Ozerko, fisherman Egor Andreevič Snaul, 72 years old, with his sons Egor, Nikolaj, Matvej, Hans, Andrej and Jurij were arrested. In 1938, the father and four of the sons were executed, and two sons, Hans/Gans and Jurij/Julij, were sent to labour camps for 10 and 8 years. Neither came back. Apparently, they were guilty of being non-Russians. The father was born in Norway, but lived most of his life in the Soviet Union. His ancestors were Sami, but in the documents he is alternately defined as Finn, Sami or Russian (Daščinskij 2006: 68–69).

In the Ara fiord lived the aforementioned Martin Birget. He was a Norwegian Sami, and despite his advanced age, he continued building boats and houses. In 1937, one of his sons, Leonard, who worked as an accountant in the kolkhoz Rajakalastaja, was arrested and in 1938 executed. The father disappeared from Ura in 1938. As it turned out later, he was executed. The second son survived and was evacuated to Karelia (Lokka 1999: 120, 194–195). Rikhard Ulovič Birket, b. 1916, was executed as well (Kniga pamjati 1997: s.v.).

The lists of those “repressed” in the Murmansk region include also Galtin, Andrej Romanovič, b. 1889 in Pečenga, a Sami fisherman in kolkhos Rajakalastaja (executed in 1938), and Haalto (Haltta), Petr Lossovič, b. 1891 in Ura-Guba, a Finnish fisherman in kolkhos Tarms, who was sentenced to 5 years in labour camps (Kniga pamjati 1997: s.v.).

9. Conclusion

The Filman group always remained small, between 10–20 families. While the nomads from Inari counted ca. 70 at their greatest, those from Finmark may have been more numerous. The registers of South Varanger, Polmak and
Nesseby show some 80 adult Sami who were born or lived in Russia. There were at least eight nomad families that moved to live there (Blix 1967; 1971). Around the turn of the century, the Finnish registers made no distinction between the Lutheran nomads and the fishermen; their number was 64 (Kuusikki 1996). After the new border division some 50–60 Lutheran Sami in Petsamo became Finnish (Tanner 1929: 83), while in the USSR, the number of the Filmans remained at ca. 65 until the 1930s when they disappeared.

After the war, the Kola peninsula became a centre of mining and an important military area with deep-sea bases for Soviet submarines. The Sami villages were abandoned as economically non-viable, and the population was resettled into Lovozero in the 1960s. There, Russification continues to be strong, and mixed marriages are the rule. The number of Sami in the Kola peninsula remained for hundreds of years around 2,000. The Encyclopaedia of Saami Culture tells us now that there are 707 speakers of Kildin Sami, 20–30 speakers of Skolt Sami, 6 speakers of Ter, and probably one speaker of Akkala Sami in Russia (The Saami. A cultural Encyclopaedia 2005: 89). Descendants of the Filmans – not everyone was killed in the 1930s – are probably still alive, dispersed in Russia, Finland and Norway.

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