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## Indigenous Peoples of Taimyr and Industry: Project-Based Collaboration

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**Abstract.** Major mining and oil companies (MMC Norilsk Nickel, OC Rosneft) are not sole actors in the development of Taimyr and its resources; wild reindeer hunters, reindeer herders, and fishermen (the Dolgans, the Nenets, the Ents, the Nganasans, and the Evenks) are also actively involved in the process. Norilsk Nickel has always invested in the Taimyr region – both when it was known as the “integrated works” (as it is still called by the local population) and when it became a “master” (a joint-stock company and a world-famous industrial giant). It offers a significant package of projects to support the indigenous peoples of Taimyr: from the construction of new villages to sponsorship of local ethnic festivals, from the support of family communities to offering various grants to students in different educational establishments. Following a high-profile accident at CHP-3 in May 2020, “support for indigenous people” was added as a separate point to the company’s development strategy. The main instrument for the company’s interaction with the indigenous peoples is the “Agreement on Cooperation with the Federal, Regional and Local Associations of Indigenous Peoples” signed on September 25, 2020 in Moscow. The company’s aim is a constructive dialogue and building partnerships in accordance with the *international standards*. Since the 2000s, oil and gas companies have been actively increasing their presence on the Taimyr Peninsula. The beginning of oil and gas fields development contributed to the aggravation of land resource management problems, including pastures, water areas, and landscape zones of local communities. The oil and gas companies’ policy and their methods of communication with the indigenous population do not always meet the expectations of the latter. The dialogue is not maintained easily. While criticizing the subsoil resource managers and the local authorities, the indigenous peoples organisations invite them to build relations based on “cooperation on equal terms.”

**Keywords:** indigenous peoples, subsoil resource managers, Taimyr, resources, partnership, projects, leaders.

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Research area: Theory and History of Culture and Art (Cultural Studies); Ethnography.

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## Коренные народы Таймыра и промышленники: проектное взаимодействие

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**Аннотация.** В освоении Таймыра и его ресурсов участвуют не только добывающие и перерабатывающие компании (ГМК «Норникель», НК «Роснефть»), но и охотники на дикого северного оленя, оленеводы, рыбаки (долганы, ненцы, энцы, нганасаны, эвенки). В Таймырский регион «Норникель» инвестировал всегда – и когда был «комбинатом» (так его продолжает называть местное население), и когда стал «господином» (акционерным обществом и известным во всем мире промышленным гигантом). В его арсенале весомый пакет проектов поддержки коренных малочисленных народов Таймыра: от строительства новых поселков до спонсирования этнических праздников, от поддержки родовых общин до финансирования обучения студентов в разных учебных заведениях. После вызвавшей огромный резонанс аварии на ТЭЦ-3 в мае 2020 г. «поддержка коренных» была включена в стратегию развития компании отдельной позицией. Главным инструментом взаимодействия с КМНТ называется подписанное 25 сентября 2020 г. в Москве соглашение о взаимодействии и сотрудничестве с федеральной, региональной и местной ассоциациями коренных малочисленных народов. Компания нацелена на конструктивный диалог и выстраивание партнерских отношений в соответствии с *международными стандартами*. С 2000-х гг. на полуостров Таймыр активно заходят нефтегазовые компании. С началом разработки нефтяных и газовых месторождений все более обостряются проблемы использования земельных ресурсов – пастбищ, водных акваторий, ландшафтных зон поселений. Политика нефтегазодобывающих компаний и их методы взаимодействия с коренным населением не соответствуют ожиданиям последних. Диалог выстраивается тяжело. Критикуя недропользователей и местные власти, КМНТ предлагают выстраивать отношения как «сотрудничество на равных».

**Ключевые слова:** коренные малочисленные народы, недропользователи, Таймыр, ресурсы, партнерство, проекты, лидеры.

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The Krasnoyarsk region is one of the richest in various resources areas in Russia. Its territory contains huge mineral reserves, including oil, gas, iron ore, coal, non-metallic minerals, non-ferrous and rare metals. Due to its unique natural resources, the Krasnoyarsk region is one of the main industrial regions of the Russian Federation: its basic industries include metallurgy (the non-ferrous metallurgy share is more than 40 %), mining (about 30 %), hydropower and solid fuel power generation (more than 10 %), as well as forestry and timber processing industry.

Reserves of platinum, platinoids, cobalt, copper-nickel ores are concentrated in the Taimyr Dolgan-Nenets municipal district, including Norilsk-1, Oktyabrskoye, and Talnakhskoye fields, which together form the Norilsk mining district. The Taimyr coal basin known since the middle of the 19th century is located on the territory of the Great Arctic Reserve, the largest in Eurasia. In the 1970s, the world's largest deposit of impact technical diamonds was discovered within the borders of the Popigai ring structure. According to the resource distribution map, more than 40 mining companies operate on Taimyr<sup>1</sup>. The main subsoil resource user on the peninsula is MMC “Nor Nickel”. Over the past few years, oil and gas companies have been actively increasing their presence in the territory of the district. The flagship project for Taimyr is the Rosneft Vostok Oil project<sup>2</sup>.

The mining and processing companies are not sole actors in the development of the pen-

insula and its resources; wild reindeer hunters, reindeer herders, and fishermen (the Dolgans, the Nenets, the Ents, the Nganasans, and the Evenks) are also actively involved in the process. The meaning of the “development” concept is better understood through “resource – user” projections, which involve different stakeholders and actors. While all residents of Taimyr share common resources that may be used by everyone, they are used in different forms and volumes. The difference in usage do not depend directly on the location or the type of the resource (say, pastures or minerals), but is driven by traditions, interests, technologies, and strategies. The motives and attitudes of communities (peoples, villages, corporations) and their leaders play a decisive role. Different views and approaches may generate conflicts, but also they may form a basis for cooperation and the development of multilateral models of interaction. On the whole, it is not the resources themselves, but the behavioral strategies of their users that form the picture and history of a particular territory. The analysis of overlapping motives reveals the existing setup of interests, as well as the possible future development scenarios (Golovnev, 2014; Funk, 2018; Resource Curse..., 2019).

#### **Norilsk Nickel: grants and ethnoprojects**

The Russian mining and metallurgical company “Norilsk Nickel” has over eighty years long history. The earliest mention of the discovery of mineral resources in the territory of Taimyr dates back to the 18th century. Geological expeditions in the 1920s confirmed a high potential of the region (the Norilsk-1 deposit), and already in March 1935, the Council of the People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) adopted Resolution No. 1275–198cc “On the

<sup>1</sup> Prirodnye Resursy Rossii URL: <https://map.minprirody.ru> (access date: 30.05.2023).

<sup>2</sup> Boris Marcinkevich. Arkticheskiy klaster Taimyra. 02.08.2019. In Geoenergetica.ru. URL: <http://geoenergetics.ru/2019/08/02/arkticheskij-klaster-tajmyra/>; Boris Marcinkevich. Arkticheskiy klaster Taimyra. Neft dlya Severnogo Morskogo Puti. 05.08.2019. In RussiaPost.su (access date: 30.05.2023).

Construction of Norilsk Integrated Works” and on the transfer of “Norilskstroy” (full name – “Norilsk Mining and Metallurgical Integrated Works named after A. P. Zavenyagin”) to the NKVD USSR<sup>3</sup>. The industrial facilities of the works, as well as the Norilsk township were built by the prisoners of the Norilsk correctional labor camp. Already by the end of the 1930s, Norilsk had grown into an industrial giant of the Arctic, which radically changed the economy of the Taimyr National District.

On November 4, 1989, the Council of Ministers of the USSR adopted a resolution on the establishment of the State Concern for the Production of Non-ferrous Metals “Norilsk Nickel”. On June 30, 1993 the State Concern for the Production of Precious and Non-Ferrous Metals “Norilsk Nickel” was reorganized into the Russian Joint Stock Company for the Production of Precious and Non-Ferrous Metals (RAO) “Norilsk Nickel” by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation. Today the Open Joint Stock Company Mining and Metallurgical Company “Norilsk Nickel” (OJSC MMC “Norilsk Nickel”, since 2016 – MMC “Nornickel”) is the world’s largest producer of palladium and refined nickel, one of the largest producers of platinum and copper; it also produces cobalt, chromium, rhodium, silver, gold, iridium, ruthenium, selenium, tellurium and sulfur. The company operates two main production sites – the Polar branch on the Taimyr Peninsula (in Norilsk, Talnakh, Kayerkan and Dudinka), and JSC “Kola Metallurgical Company” (in Monchegorsk, Zapolyarnoye and Nickel) on the Kola Peninsula<sup>4</sup>.

Norilsk Nickel has always invested in the Taimyr region – both when it was known as the “integrated works” (as it is still called by the local population) and when it became a “master” (a joint-stock company and a world-famous industrial giant). In the coming years,

“Nornickel” expects to invest more than \$ 10 billion in the development of the North of the Krasnoyarsk region (agreement between the Krasnoyarsk region, the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation, and MMC “Nornickel”)<sup>5</sup>. The criticism of “Nornickel” for its irresponsible behavior towards the environment and the people, especially in connection with the spill of petroleum products at CHP-3 in May 2020 (Golovnev, Davydov et al. 2021; Kisser 2021; Basov, Kovalsky 2021), does not exclude its perception as the main investor in Taimyr and the Krasnoyarsk region, as follows from numerous interviews:

“In Soviet times, every village had a supervisor-sponsor assigned by the Works. Trilateral agreements were signed between the Works, the Region, and the District” (PMA, Dudinka, 2021, Nenets).

“Since perestroika, no one cares about the population. “Nornickel” is only interested in taking from the region, and the rest may live as they wish. Even now, after the spill accident, they wish to bring the people to heel, it will not work though!” (PMA, Norilsk, Dolgans, 2021).

How should the indigenous population and the mining company start building a new relationship? Shall they ask or demand, be hostile or cooperate? It seems the “either-or” type dualism would be counterproductive; their relationship is a lot more complex, its remodeling might require not only strict restrictive measures, but also alternative agreed scenarios.

MMC “Nornickel” is the main generator and organizer (sponsor) of all project-driven activities in Taimyr. Their support of many large-scale events and bright initiatives is an evidence of the socially responsible policy of the company as the “region’s donor”. The range of both new and already traditional projects and grants is quite diverse. For instance, in

<sup>3</sup> Taimyrskiy Arkhiv. F. 24. series 1. G.R. Popov's Personal archive D 1. G.R. Popov Taimyrsky Natsionalny Okrug (economico-geograficheskaya charakteristika). PhD in Geography Dissertation thesis L. 158–165.

<sup>4</sup> OAO GMC “Norilsk Nickel”: Istoria i struktura kompanii. Spravka// RIA Novosti URL: <https://ria.ru/20100803/261218037.html>; Nornickel. Official website: URL: <https://www.nornickel.ru/company/profile/> (access date: 30.05.2023).

<sup>5</sup> “Norilsk Nickel” vlozhit v razvitie Krasnoyarskogo Kraya bolee 10 mlrd dollarov. In Vestisnab URL: <https://vestisnab24.ru/investment-projects/nornikel-vlozhit-v-razvitie-severa-krasnoyarskogo-kraya-bolee-10-mlrd-dollarov/> (access date: 30.05.2023).

2013 “Nornickel” launched a charity program of social projects “World of New Opportunities” to support the sustainable development of all regions of the company’s presence; the program is implemented in the Krasnoyarsk region (Norilsk, the Taimyr Dolgan-Nenets Municipal District) and the Murmansk region (Monchegorsk, Pechengsky district). The aim of the program is addressing various social problems, the key task is to support and promote intersectoral cooperation between local communities. Each of the nine nominations of the tender represents significant development vectors of the cities, territories and people: “Pole of revival”, “Pole of energy”, “Pole of growth”, “Pole of the future”, “Pole of goodness”, “Pole of nature”, “Pole of the North”, etc. In 2021, 208 applications were submitted for the tender from 133 organizations in Norilsk and Taimyr. Fifty four projects from 52 organizations became the winners of the program. The winning projects covered a large number of public life areas: from the adaptive activities center for children with disabilities to the digital literacy programs for the elderly; from celebrating the anniversary of the first house in Norilsk to museum performances; from research collaboration of high school students with the university teachers to the handicraft workshops for felt boots making; from robotic tournaments to a digital teach-yourself book of the Nenets language using the VR-applications<sup>6</sup>.

The “World of New Opportunities” is a powerful grant project. “Norilsk Nickel” is the largest grants provider, it distributes grants up to 5–6 million rubles, sets up rehabilitation centers, and supports many diverse projects. A tender is also organised in Murmansk; our projects are reviewed by their experts and vice versa. In this part of Nornickel’s policy, I really like their position, they have interesting rules. I can definitely say that the company acts responsibly (PMA, Dudinka, 2021, Nenets)

<sup>6</sup> V Norilске poyavyatsya "Zeleniy Tsentr", "Akvatoriya" i "Doverie Severa. In Taimyr Telegraph URL: <https://www.ttelegraf.ru/news/v-norilске-poyavyatsya-zeleniyj-czentr-akvatoriya-i-doverie-severa/> (access date: 01.06.2023).

There are no special nominations for the indigenous population in the “World of New Opportunities” program, but among the winners there are many ethnic projects submitted by the representatives of both indigenous and non-indigenous population. For example, in the summer of 2018, the Turkic festival “Polar Sabantuy” was organized in Talnakh with grant funding. The mastermind of the project was the council chairman of the “Local Nogai National Cultural Autonomy” NGO, Kумыkbiy Ibragimov<sup>7</sup>.

In general, the support of various ethnic festivals and holidays is not new for “Nornickel”. Traditionally, since the Soviet times, celebration of the main holidays of the indigenous peoples of Taimyr, the Fisherman’s Day and the Reindeer Herder’s Day have been sponsored by the company.

“We are working with “Nornickel” on the organization of holidays – the Reindeer Herder’s Day and the Fisherman’s Day. They provide 5 million rubles annually. We buy gifts on their behalf through a charitable foundation” (PMA, Dudinka, 2021, Nenets).

In 2021, on Reindeer Herder’s Day, nomadic herders from the tundra once again gathered in Tukhard to participate in reindeer sled races, meet with family and friends. 30 men’s, 16 women’s and 26 youth teams took part in the race. They had to cover a 30-kilometer long distance. The first to finish in the men’s group was Alexander Yamkin who won the main prize – a snowmobile. Grigory Yaptune took the second place winning an outboard motor. The third place was taken by Timur Marik, who also received an outboard motor. The women’s race winner was Henrieta Tesedo, Oksana Yarotskaya came the second, and Gilda Lyrmina came the third. Nikolai Yamkin was the fastest in the young herders group, Illarion Naivosedov was the

<sup>7</sup> Obnovlennuyu blagotvoritelnyuyu programmu "Mir novykh vozmozhnostey predstavili v Norilске. In Taimyr Telegraph URL: <https://www.ttelegraf.ru/news/obnovlennuyu-blagotvoritelnyuyu-programmu-mir-novyih-vozmozhnostey-predstavili-v-norilске/> (access date: 01.06.2023).

second, and Peter Naivosedov was the third. In addition to reindeer sled races, there were other competitions in ethnic sports: throwing a *maute* (lasso) on *khorey* (pole for driving reindeer teams), traditional wrestling and sled jumping. The villagers and the guests of the festival could participate in contests of men's, women's and children's traditional clothes, and festive harness. The winners and the laureates in each of the contests received gasoline generators, chain saws, tool kits, and sewing machines<sup>8</sup>.

The people on Taimyr always look forward to the Reindeer Herder's Day and the Fisherman's Day, however, according to the population, these holidays are becoming less interesting from year to year. The interest in participating in contests, for instance, in reindeer sled races, goes down because of the prize quality. Expensive goods purchased through tenders turn out to be of so poor quality that they compromise the very idea of the holidays celebration (Golovnev, 2021: 11). The indigenous people remember an episode of transporting a snowmobile donated for winning a race on cargo sleds as a local horror story, since it was not possible either to start the new vehicle, or, as it turned out, to use it for its intended purpose. Of course, the direct responsibility lies with the organizers, not the sponsors, but the shadow of "disapproval" nonetheless falls on the latter. It seems that in order to protect the sponsor's image, it is necessary, in addition to financing, also to monitor the progress and the outcomes, as well as to evaluate the potential of supported projects and grants, especially those that are designated as the strategic area of the company's activities.

Support for the indigenous peoples of the North was added to MMC "Nornickel" 2030 development strategy as a separate point. One of its important components was the "World of Taimyr" project tender, initiated in 2020 after the events at CHP-3 (Perevalova, Kisser, 2021: 183). The aim of the project is creating conditions for sustainable development of the territories of traditional residence of the indig-

<sup>8</sup> Na Taimyre nachali otmechat' odin iz samykh znachmukh prazdnikov – Den' Olenevoda URL: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CLEXPzVFQH/> (access date: 01.06.2023).

enous peoples of the Taimyr Peninsula<sup>9</sup>. Depending on the nominations (and there are four of them in the program), the amount of grants ranges from 1.5 to 6.5 million rubles<sup>10</sup>. The tender supports socially significant initiatives of non-profit organizations of indigenous peoples of Taimyr, family (clan) communities, the state and municipal institutions registered and operating in the territory of the Taimyr Peninsula. The project geography covers the Taimyr Dolgan-Nenets Municipal District of the Krasnoyarsk region<sup>11</sup>.

In 2021, the winners of the tender were 6 projects of the family (clan) communities, 2 projects of non-profit organizations and 20 projects of municipal and state-financed institutions. The prize-winners' projects address a variety of issues: language revival, environmental actions, infrastructure development in the villages of the Taimyr Peninsula, preservation of historical memory, etc. Of the four nominations of the tender, the absolute leader was the nomination "Ideas of Taimyr" – among the others projects regarding the cultural heritage revival, support for gifted children, and ethnic sports development. Seventeen winning projects were presented in this group, for a total amount of 15.5 million rubles. The largest in terms of the requested funding was the project in the nomination "Opportunities of Taimyr" – "Tyakha Ethnopark", submitted by a family (clan) community of indigenous peoples "Tyakha" (4.5 million rubles). The project aims to complete the construction of an ethno-ecological settlement, where household items and culture of the indigenous peoples of the Taimyr Peninsula would be presented<sup>12</sup>.

Although the general significance of the tender in the development and promotion of in-

<sup>9</sup> For further details see.: URL: <https://www.nncharity.ru> (access date: 03.06.2023).

<sup>10</sup> "Mir Taimyra podderzhit razvitie Taimyrskikh poselkov // Taimyr Telegraph URL: <https://www.ttelegraf.ru/news/mir-tajmyra-podderzhit-razvitie-tajmyrskih-poselkov/> (access date: 03.06.2023).

<sup>11</sup> "Nornickel podderzhit grantami korennye narody Taimyra URL: <https://www.nornickel.ru/news-and-media/press-releases-and-news/nornickel-podderzhit-grantami-korennye-narody-tajmyra/> (access date: 03.06.2023).

<sup>12</sup> Op.cit.

digenous initiatives and the popularization of the territory is high, there are obvious shortcomings in its organization and procedures. The stumbling block turned out to be the support of a large number of projects from the state-financed organizations, rather than from the family communities themselves.

“The Nornickel “World of Taimyr” grant program was developed as a response to the spill, but out of 45 communities, only five won the grants, the rest of the recipients again were the state-financed organizations that paid salaries from the budget, but nonetheless they managed to take these grants, while the communities to which the funding was promised, for which this grant program was created, once again did not receive anything” (PMA, Norilsk, 2021, Nganasans).

One of the reasons for this bias is the low quality of preparing applications by the communities due to the lack of experience or legal assistance.

“Nornickel” was asked to offer grants to communities, and the company agreed to do this. However, among the applicants there was a significant number of state-financed organizations. Out of 45 communities that submitted applications, only five or six won <...>. Most of the winners were state-funded organizations – 22 of them. This is wrong. They could have made it at least 50–50, some of the communities should have been assisted, guided, after all, that is what the experts are for... After this, there was a strong negative reaction from the communities. I was even ashamed that I won the grant because it was about tourism, my grant application was written by professionals, I invite experts because I work as a team player... I apply knowledge, adapt it so that it meets social norms, grant requirements, and the project description is done by experts. Their fees are included in the project... In order to win one needs professionals” (PMA, Dudinka, 2021, Dolgans).

A certain bias was also noted in the type of the contest projects: applications from community members, on the one hand, due to the specifics of their activities, and also, to be honest, already out of habit to receive subsidies, had a “commercial” orientation.

“I did not apply for the “World of Taimyr”, because I think it’s all about social issues, I applied a few years ago and was also turned down, they said that my application was too commercial, I ask for purely material values. I know that it is already clear who wins – dancing, festivals, artists” (PMA, Norilsk, 2021, Dolgans).

“No one gave me a chance to win a grant from, let’s say, “Norilsk Nickel”, which I keep praising. I didn’t win, planned to spend a million on raw materials purchase. Our winners were dancing, games, and public institutions. You think it’s normal? I am left without a single reindeer skin” (PMA, Dudinka, 2021, Dolgans).

In turn, the organizers of the tender blame the local communities for lack of initiative.

“Nornickel” has initiated another grant tender, The “World of Taimyr”. The communities were seldom the winners, because a lot depended on the quality of the application. In this case, it was our principle position to assess applications regardless of whether they were submitted by communities or other organizations. In general, the communities do not really work, we have maybe eight communities out of 100 that are active” (PMA, Dudinka, 2021, Nenets).

However, the communities’ activity is largely dependent on their leaders, and their inertia is associated with the lack of experience, legal literacy, or the ability to make business or organize their work in market conditions.

The grant-tender policy certainly has a potential, since the tenders are organized periodically and openly, providing a possibility for a quick response from both sides, however, the main instrument for MMC “Nornickel”

cooperation with the indigenous population is the quadruple agreement on collaboration and cooperation between the Russian NGO “Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation” (President G.P. Ledkov), the Regional NGO of Indigenous Peoples of the North of the Krasnoyarsk region (President A. I. Gayulsky), the local NGO of the Taimyr Dolgan-Nenets municipal district “Association of Indigenous Peoples of the Taimyr Krasnoyarsk region” (Chairman G. I. Dyukarev) and the Open Joint Stock Company “Mining and Metallurgical Company “Norilsk Nickel” (A. M. Grachev) signed on September 25, 2020 in Moscow. The agreement includes a detailed “List of actions to assist the socio-economic development of the Taimyr Dolgan-Nenets Municipal District of the Krasnoyarsk Region for 2020–2024” (in short, the “Indigenous Peoples Support Program”), covering 42 projects in various areas with the total funding of 2 billion rubles<sup>13</sup>. This type of agreement with a specific action program is an unprecedented format for Taimyr. Moreover, although the program was proposed as a compensatory measure in connection with the accident at CHP-3, JSC Norilsk-Taimyr Energy Company (JSC NTEC), part of the MMC “Norilsk Nickel” group of companies, it clearly goes beyond the traditional “patronage” or sponsorship format.

Undoubtedly, the new large-scale program of “Norilsk Nickel” is an attempt to build partnerships with the indigenous population of Taimyr, an evidence of the company’s ability to respond promptly and provide assistance to the population in extreme situations. The “Norilsk Nickel” Department for Cooperation with the Indigenous Peoples of Taimyr, established in January 2021, is responsible for the control over the progress and implementation of the program. The department is aimed to work directly with the local authorities, NGOs, and family (clan) communities<sup>14</sup>. A number of proj-

ects have already been implemented and had a good resonance, nevertheless, the attitude of the indigenous population towards the Program is rather ambivalent.

“I believe that as long as they are united and invincible as the monopolists, any partnership or cooperation with the Works is impossible. Not just with “Norilsk Nickel”, but in general. They happily approved 2 billion rubles and signed an agreement, as to the problems – you may solve them yourself. In Canada, where I was once, the villages have joined to form a corporation. Both the state and the oil companies pay them. They have their own shares, their own highway, transport, aviation and river fleet” (PMA, Dudinka, 2021, Nenets).

Perhaps, one of the most discussed projects recently initiated by “Norilsk Nickel”, was the construction “from scratch” of a comfortable village for the residents of Tukhard. The Tukhard shift-workers camp for the builders of the Messoyakha-Dudinka-Norilsk gas pipeline (“Zapolyaregaz” company, now “Norilskgazprom”), was built on the left bank of the Yenisei, near the old Nenets village Kislyi Mys back in 1968. Due to its location (76 km from Dudinka) and good supply, the camp grew quickly, owing, among other things, to the resettlement of Kislyi Mys villagers, and turned into a transshipment base for reindeer herders migrating in the nearby tundra<sup>15</sup>. The helipad formed a kind of a border between the part of the camp where the shift workers lived, called “Fakel”, and Tukhard proper (“fire city” in Nenets, or “a place where fire is made”), where houses for the indigenous population were built. Main problem of the village (today consisting of more than 80 houses inhabited by about a thousand people, an elementary school, a hospital, a post office, a community center, a library and an airfield for small aircraft) is the non-compliance with the environmental regulations and “safety standards”, as the village is located

<sup>13</sup> Obespechim Dvizhenie k "zelenomu budushchemu" Moscow, Dec. 2020. P. 31–33.

<sup>14</sup> V Nornickele sozdadut otdel po vzaimodeistviyu s korennyimi narodami Taimyra. In Taimyr Telegraph. URL: <https://www.ttelegraf.ru/news/v-nornickele-sozdadut-otdel-po-vzaimodeistviyu-s-korennyimi-narodami-tajmyra/> (access date: 10.06.2023).

<sup>15</sup> Na Taimyre dlya tysyachi chelovek planiruetsya postroit s nulya sovremennyyi poselok Novyy Tukhard. In Komsomolskaya pravda. Oct. 15 2021. URL: <https://www.krsk.kp.ru/daily/28344.5/4489880/> (access date: 16.06.2023).



in the sanitary protection zone of an industrial enterprise, however, the greatest problem is the quality of the houses, not suitable for living in the Far North conditions<sup>16</sup>. As the residents of Tukhard say, it is impossible to live in the houses due to design faults, lack of proper infrastructure and poor quality of construction (most of them are in disrepair).

“Nornickel’s policy on indigenous peoples is actively changing. They have allocated 170 million rubles to the indigenous communities. Subsidizing reindeer herders through grants is quite impressive, it is about 180 million rubles, of which about 150 million remain on Taimyr (half in Norilsk, half in the district). Twenty seven houses have been built in Tukhard with Nornickel’s money. However, the village is frozen because there is no connection to the power grid or the boiler station. This is a political dispute between the region’s authorities and “Nornickel”. The authorities seem to favor Deripaska and “RusHydro”, therefore they impose debt obligations on “Norilsk Nickel”. This is bad for us, because while those *bojars* are quarelling, our new village is falling into disrepair (PMA, Nenets, Dudinka, 2021).

In 2021, “Nornickel” proposed to build a New Tukhard one and a half kilometers from the village with the necessary infrastructure and social facilities (school, kindergarten, hospital, shopping center, visitor center for tourists). In order to discuss, agree and approve the resettlement project, “Nornickel” started the procedure of free, prior and informed consent (SPOS). For this purpose, the Interregional Non-Government Organization for the Protection of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (KMNS UNION) has established an advisory council, consisting of both international and Russian experts<sup>17</sup>. Representatives of the indig-

enous population saw in this procedure not an act of “free, prior and informed consent”, but rather the fact of compliance with the federal law and the responsibility of the residents of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.

“This is not a SPOS, this is an eviction in accordance with the federal law on the sanitary zone. First, it is necessary to agree where the village will be, what buildings will be there, etc. ... sign a letter of intent” (PMA, Nenets, Dudinka, 2022).

A meeting of residents of Tukhard on November 21, 2021, elected a Council of Tukhard residents representatives, including reindeer herders who do not reside permanently in the village (Chairman Igor Yamkin) to act as a link between the Tukhard residents and the company. At the meeting on March 4, 2022, the participants discussed a “Program of Resettlement and Development of the Village of Tukhard, 2026”. By the results of two meetings an agreement “on giving SPOS” was signed between the Council of Tukhard residents’ representatives and the CEO of JSC “Norilsktransgaz” production sites in Tukhard M. Shilykovsky. It has been developed in accordance with the international standards, contains the company’s obligations to the residents of the village, defines the conditions of resettlement, including options for compensation or purchase of housing in other communities of Taimyr or the city of Dudinka, provides for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the resettlement program at all stages. A separate paragraph, although in rather abstract terms, indicated the need to take into account the “ethnocultural characteristics of the territory”<sup>18</sup>.

It is obvious that MMC “Nornickel” is placing a serious stake on the construction of New Tukhard. Against the background of the

<sup>16</sup> Novaya zhizn tundry: dobrovolnoye pereselenie zhitelei poselka Tukhard. URL: <https://dudinka.city.online/news/2022-03-23-novaya-zhizn-tundry-dobrovolnoe-pereselenie-zhitelej-posyolka-tuhard> (access date: 16.06.2023).

<sup>17</sup> “Nornickel” poluchil SPOS zhitelei Tukharda na programmu pereseleniya i razvitiya poselka. In Official site “Nor-

nickel” URL: <https://www.nornickel.ru/news-and-media/press-releases-and-news/nornickel-poluchil-spos-zhiteley-tukharda-na-programmu-pereseleniya-i-razvitiya-poselka/> (access date: 16.06.2023).

<sup>18</sup> Novaya zhizn tundry: dobrovolnoye pereselenie zhitelei poselka Tukhard. In Gorod online. URL: <https://dudinka.city.online/news/2022-03-23-novaya-zhizn-tundry-dobrovolnoe-pereselenie-zhitelej-posyolka-tuhard> (access date: 16.06.2023).

deplorable state of many Taimyr villages with their problems in addressing basic life support issues (energy and water supply, heating, housing repairs, garbage removal and disposal), with a complex expensive transport scheme and high prices for consumer goods, lack of digital means of communication and information, and unemployment, the construction of an exemplary village would significantly improve the image of Nornickel's programs and projects.

As the Vice President for Federal and Regional Programs of the company, A. Grachev commented: "This collaboration and partnership will help us to create a comfortable environment for life and development." And, although, according to the laws of the Russian Federation, obtaining consent for resettlement from the local population in such cases is not required, "Nornickel" emphasized that the company acted in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2007), voluntarily recognizing the international standards<sup>19</sup>.

The indigenous population also has some hopes for the successful implementation of the resettlement program:

"And my opinion on the SPOS in Tukhard is that Norickel does not need a new epic failure, so now everything will be done properly. As to the Tukhard representatives, it seems that all those living in the village are the employees of the administration, post office, culture facilities – they will do whatever they are told, they do not have their own opinion. I remember that reindeer herders did come to the meeting, and they spoiled the mood of the organizers a little" (PMA, Nenets, Dudinka, 2022).

### **Oil and gas companies and the indigenous population: lack of parity**

Since the 2000s, oil and gas companies have been actively increasing their presence on the Taimyr Peninsula. The «Vostok Oil» proj-

ect alone at the end of April 2021 operated 52 license areas covering the territory of 13 discovered oil fields. Part of the project was the construction of a huge oil loading terminal in Severnaya Bay on the eastern coast of the Yenisei Gulf at Dixon seaport (40 km from Dixon), designed for the transshipment to oil tankers and transportation of oil from the fields along the Northern Sea Route (NSR) to the ports in Russia, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region<sup>20</sup>. Drilling operations at Payakhskoye field began in July 2022. The beginning of oil supplies from the field was planned for 2024<sup>21</sup>, however, in the strategy for the development of the Taimyr fields and the operation of the Northern Sea Route, the voices of indigenous peoples were barely audible.

"Almost the whole of Taimyr has already been marked as the license areas. Allocation of licenses is the prerogative of the Federal authorities. There is no parity. They make a decision in Moscow and pencil a square on the map disregarding wherever may be there – the villages, wild deer, or fish. This done, they come here with all the documents, and the local administration accepts it as fact. In this, our right as indigenous people is infringed. Well, give us an annuity of 1 % on the dollar, and that would be enough for us. We will build houses ourselves, we will motivate our young people to study without external help. Now they do everything for us, if they come to build, they bring their own labor. But we could have educated our builders, we know how to build a house for us" (PMA, Dudinka, 2021, Dolgans).

<sup>19</sup> Svobodnoe, predvaritelnoye i osoznanoe soglasie (SPOS) v Tukharde. URL: <https://fpic.kmnsouyuz.ru> (access date: 16.06.2023).

<sup>20</sup> Proekt neftenalivnogo terminala "Port Bukhta Sever proshel gosexpertizu. URL: <https://neftegaz.ru/news/transport-and-storage/672263-proekt-neftenalivnogo-terminala-port-bukhta-sever-proshel-gosexpertizu/>; Na Peterburgskom ekonomicheskom forume zaklyuchen ryad soglashenii po stroitelstvy nefterminala na Taimyre. NovostiO URL: <https://www.gornovosti.ru/news/ekonomika/item/b0b89f00-7c2e-49b8-8a59-f9d61dca32e8/> (access date: 06.06.2023).

<sup>21</sup> Rosneft nachala ekspluatatsionnoe burenie na Paiyakhe "Vostok Oila". In Delovaya Gazeta "Vzglyad". URL: <https://vz.ru/news/2022/7/26/1169377.html> (access date: 06.06.2023).

“There are conflicts. People move here from the east and from the west, the locals have nowhere to go... I flew by helicopter last year, it’s just terrible what happened to the land, it’s all cut up for kilometers to go. Apparently, the administration issues work permits... As far as I understood “Rosneft” would also work here in future, in general, we may expect a huge development here, especially along the coast; soon a big industrial center will grow there. The people started a race for land in order to make the oil business aware of us” (PMA, Dudinka, 2021, Nenets).

At the same time, the authorities and non-government organizations of Taimyr are already cooperating with the oil companies.

“The oil companies are expanding their operations. Somehow or other, they do help. Last year, “Lukoil” built a training facility in Khatanga. Two and a half years ago, the same company helped to build a boarding school for 150 children in Nosok village. Surgutneftegaz assisted in organizing a celebration of the Reindeer Herder’s Day in Karaul village. Of course, they do help, but we would like to see a more serious relationship. Particularly with the company that is going to dominate here in future, “Rosneft” (PMA, Dudinka, 2021, Nenets).

The beginning of oil and gas fields of Taimyr development contributed to the aggravation of the land resource usage problems, including pastures, water areas, and landscape zones of local communities (Perevalova, 2022: 100, 101). According to comments, the oil and gas companies’ policy and their methods of interaction with the indigenous population do not always meet the expectations.

“Reindeer herders are looking for lands with better forage reserves compared to the territories densely covered with oil rigs or many kilometers of oil pipelines ...” (KPMA, 2022);

“Due to the occupation of some pastures by oil companies and the imminent depletion of the remaining ones, almost all left-bank reindeer herders of Nosok will have to move to the right bank of the Yenisei...” (KPMA, 2022);

“It is easier to offer free condensate as a pay-off, than to bring gasoline and not put the people in a humiliating position” (KPMA, 2022).

It is not easy to build a direct dialog. The public hearings held on May 4, 2021 in Karaul village were quite indicative in this regard. By the decision of the villagers meeting, the unauthorized seizure of the territory by “Yamal-dorstroy” was criticized and denounced; “Sibtract LLC” (“Vankorneft” contractor) application for allocation of a land plot in the landscape zone of the settlement was refused; the meeting also adopted a motion of no confidence to local authorities in administrating issues regarding the “entry” of oil companies and their subcontractors into the territory of the village. The local population was not shy in criticizing the actions of the companies and the administration:

“They did a “great” job – arrived, landed about 100 m away, neither hello, nor goodbye. Did not even think of warning the administration or meeting with the population” (PMA, Karaul, 2021).

Cases like these demonstrate the ability of a small Arctic community to say “no” to the planned activities of oil companies. In general, the indigenous population of Taimyr is “not against the oil industry”, “not against development”, “not against Presidential decrees”, but they resent the subsoil resource managers’ behavior “as masters”. They disregard the opinions of the local residents, who, by and large, cannot influence the land use situation, since the “tundra beyond the village area” is agricultural land, and permissions for its use are issued by the municipal district, moreover, “these lands, along with the Karaul village, have been long since owned by Rosneft.”

Local communities are particularly angry about the lack of information about projects for further development of the territory of Taimyr. This applies both to the territories near the populated areas and to the distant Taimyr tundra.

“So far, only technical divisions come here, they prepare the sites, build bases and sand pits in order to lay pipelines in the future. Nobody informs us about this, we find information on the Internet, that such and such a company is planning to perform some works in a certain year. We do not receive information from the district or from the region that would tell us: – Dear residents of Karaul, we expect some Ivanov-Petrov-Sidorov to come here, and this Ivanov-Petrov-Sidorov will be involved in some particular type of operations in your territory. Maybe they think they do not have to tell us, that it’s not our business. But it is, it’s our concerns and interests, our life!” (PMA, Karaul, 2021, Nenets).

“Not far from Karaul and further away in the tundra there are several facilities and technical bases, the production personnel itself is not here yet, the companies that came to our territory are only preparing the ground, build quarries; and before that there were geologists. And now I’ve driven through the tundra, and saw two quarries that are quite ready. What are the “Rosneft’s” and other companies’ plans? It is clear, that they will have several sites along the Yenisei, the so-called terminals. They have already made bids, won some tenders, began construction. All these are the powers of the district – the coastal part outside the villages” (PMA, Karaul, Nenets 2021).

“There’s some information that when it is necessary to hold a hearing, then they would give us a certain package of documents. Land allocation outside of landscape zones is the authority of the district <...> Formerly, we learned news from the papers, we also had radio. And now there is no radio, the tundra people know absolutely nothing” (PMA, Karaul, 2021, Nenets).

On August 10, 2021, public hearings on the construction of the Vankor-Suzun-Payakha pipeline along the Yenisei coast were held in Dudinka. The participants of the hearings were the local residents and public opinion leaders in the region – the local Duma members, bloggers, leaders of indigenous communities. Just before the hearing, “Rosneft” provided a summary of their indigenous peoples support programs in the territories of its presence. They talked about the construction of houses and the development of reindeer herders’ villages infrastructure, as well as the material and technical support for KMNS families, and the assistance to the educational institutions where children of the indigenous peoples of the North study, and the implementation of a “Comprehensive Training Program for Workers and Specialists for “RN-Vankor”<sup>22</sup>. At the same time, the hearings started with the criticism of “Rosneft” projects. The whitefish population recovery in the Yenisei basin, the construction of crossings over the pipelines for reindeer herders, and the building of proper information infrastructure for “Rosneft” contractors communication with the local population were the most actively discussed issues. The Taimyr Duma member Sergei Sizonenko mentioned several important problems:

“It is good that our herders have been heard, and additional crossings for herds over the pipelines have been included in the construction program. However, we need to take a balanced approach and discuss once again all other issues of cooperation with “Rosneft” and its contractors <...>.

In addition, I return to my proposal to introduce a quota for hiring local people by the “Rosneft” contractors. In the villages, we have a lot of people who can work as drivers, welders, cooks, or handymen. We must have a helpline service, through which any tundra worker or villager will be able to quickly inform Krasnoyarsk or the head office of “Rosneft” about any violations

<sup>22</sup> V Dudinke proshli slushaniya po stroitelstvu truboprovoda "Vankor-Suzun-Paiyakha". In Portal "Narody Rossii". URL: <https://kmns.ru/blog/2021/08/11/v-дудинке-прошли-слушания-по-строител/> (access date: 06.06.2023).

observed, from environmental problems to the drunk shift workers” (KPMA, Dolgans, 2022).

In the situation of intensive industrial development, the indigenous population and its leaders activism and readiness to defend their interests are very important. The local population sees the potential for constructive dialogue in open cooperation and direct collaboration with the oil companies and their contractors. In addition to payment of compensations for the environmental and economic damage, as well as various kinds of social support programs, the local population is greatly interested in the revival of ethnic villages and the creation of jobs.

“They should offer jobs to us, why they always bring their own shift workers; they will pump out oil from our soil, and how would the Taimyr locals benefit?” (KPMA, 2022)

“Dudinka and the villages of Taimyr should be transformed with the presence of “Nornickel” and “Rosneft”. Residents of Taimyr should get access to all workplaces. I understand it would not happen overnight, but that is how it should be. And that is normal (KPMA, 2022).

The KMNS main advantage can be their excellent knowledge of the territory, the availability of mechanisms for large territories management, including the possibility of organizing land control (registration of the facts of the tundra soil damage, the administrative offense reports, etc.) and soil reclamation and environmental protection works.

“I suggested that reindeer herders could be hired as the pipeline security guards. After all, they are accustomed to the severe climate and can move quickly on their sleds. All it takes is to agree the time for radio contact, give them a hand held radio and a salary. Then it would be possible to use less off-roaders to ride along the pipe and save fuel costs, as well as the shift-personnel salaries” (KPMA, 2022).

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Therefore, in the industrial development of Taimyr, “Nornickel” and “Rosneft” are the two leaders, which, at least in their official statements, advocate the preservation of the traditional way of life and ethnic identity, as well as constructive dialogue between the companies and the indigenous population. These companies offer a significant package of projects to support the KMNS, but the local population associates their future with the development of large-scale collaboration programs and building partnerships based on simple principles, rather than with grants and support programs (according to the survey data<sup>23</sup>). Here are some of these principles:

“Do not forget that the indigenous population lives on their land, take into account their opinion”;

“Cooperate on equal terms, guarantee transparency in providing assistance, and open dialogue on all issues”;

“If you make a mess using the land and resources, always clean up after yourself, recultivate and bring everything to order, that’s a simple rule”;

“Bilateral agreements on the use of natural resources, payment of compensations for damage to the landscape and nature”;

“In addition to meetings, some real actions are required”;

“Teach companies how to work. Otherwise, the KMNS will always stay with an outstretched hand. As it is, we have already a third generation of freeloaders, that’s about enough.”

It is quite important, that the indigenous peoples of Taimyr leaders, who are aware of the complexity of the situation, have an understanding that in building constructive partnerships between indigenous population and the industrial companies, the state should act

<sup>23</sup> 100 questionnaires were collected: Dolgans – 44, Nenets – 22, Nganasans – 17, Evenks – 9, Ents – 6; in addition, Taimyr –1 and Tunguso-Yakut –1 participated in the survey. The anonymous questionnaire consisted of 18 questions aimed at clarifying the positions of the indigenous population on the following topics – “the status of the KMNT”, “rights and benefits”, “indigenous peoples and production companies”.

for the next five years as the guarantor and the mediator, since coordinated decision-making and actions via the Associations and Unions of the KMNT is complicated by serious contradictions, both between and within these non-government organizations. The development strategy of Taimyr should focus on the formation of a platform for long-term collaboration between the production companies and the indigenous Northerners, based not on competi-

tion, but rather on cooperation and partnership, which will ensure the effective use of the region's natural resources. The scenario of coexistence of an industrial cluster and the ethnocultural communities, in which three main actors are involved – the industrial companies, the government (federal, district, municipal), and the indigenous peoples, should be based on close monitoring and conducting ethnological expertise.

### List of Abbreviations

KMNC – Indigenous Peoples of the North  
KMNT – Indigenous Peoples of Taimyr  
KPMA – Cyber-field research materials of the authors  
PMA – Field research materials of the authors  
SPOS – free, prior and informed consent

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