1) The Swedish society is in fact a class society. A sort of census 12 years ago said there are 17,000 Sami in Sweden. Probably this figure is higher than ever before and yet not as high as a full census would show. 2,000 Sami are reindeer-breeding members of the Sami village, full-Sami, status Sami. The Sami village is a group of men. It also signifies a territory including the reindeer pastures where the reindeer can graze all the year around. These 2,000 Sami form an elite, an upper class, in the 50 Sami villages of which they are members. This class is the only Sami class who can exercise the Sami rights to land and water, whereas these rights are also held by the 8,000 non-village Sami who live in the Sami kernel lands in the North. Among these 8,000 Sami you have some Sami artists who have a status comparable to that of the Sami village members. These artists can also be said to belong to the Sami upper class. The majority of the 8,000 non-status Sami in the North, or half-Sami as you might call them, form the lowest stratum in Sami society. The 7,000 Sami living in Stockholm, Gothenburg and other cities are in general economically well-off and form a middle class. This middle class is, however, not equally important for the preservation of Sami culture, as they can generally visit Samiland only during the industry vacation in Sweden.

The organization Landsförbundet Svenska Samer (LSS) wants to promote the viewpoints of the lowest strata of the Sami people in the North, and this task is absolutely necessary for keeping the Sami culture, language, etc. Even in their own interest the 2,000 full-Sami should keep in close contact with all the 8,000 half-Sami in the North. This is necessary for keeping the language etc., and it is also necessary for keeping up the lobbying capacity in Parliament.

2) Compared to other small nations of the North Samiland can be characterized as a Benjamin. The others are in a comparison “beati possidentes”, that is to say that they can take advantage of the unfounded but famous “salt water rule”. This rule does not exist in the convention text and is a result of power politics. Russia and France have many minorities and they are not willing to give them any self-determination. The promotion of a fictitious “salt water rule” is then an ingenious device for not giving nations – peoples their rights. Greenland is looked upon by Royal Committees as having the right of self-determination because it has borders and is colonized. The Swedish Sami have defined borders – the borderline of 1751 to Norway and Odlingsgränsen of 1873. As for colonization, Sweden has taken out enormous riches from Swedish Samiland in the form of hydro-electricity, timber cutting, mining, heavy motorized tourism etc. Sweden has, however, never made any investments for the benefit of the Swedish Sami people. It is true that Sweden has built some reindeer fences etc. but this is only part of an unemployment scheme that Swe-
has for all its inhabitants in the North. Denmark, on the other hand, has made heavy investments to the profit of its Greenlanders.

3) The Norwegian professor Ottar Brox has said that to promote an idea, a new political program, it is not enough to have a guru – a professor or author with creative ideas. Even if new ideas are present, even if these new ideas are apt to form a new hegemony in the general thinking, the guru needs a politician to make his ideas a reality. In some cases a “warrior” can do this useful work, for instance by going to the courts of law with crucial cases, in order to change the ruling mentality in the matter.

The “young Israel Ruong” was such a guru together with Erik Nilsson-Mankok, both Sami authors. Ruong was the head of SSR and he persuaded me to be Sami Ombudsman 1962-1982, that is over 20 years, and I continue now as an elected member of the Board of LSS and still I am Sami Ombudsman.

Israel Ruong, his Board of Directors and the SSR annual meetings made decisions to start the Altevatn-case in 1963 and the Skattefjäll-case in 1966. As you all know the Altevatn-case was won on all courts in the Supreme Court of Norway in 1968 and the crucial point of “rights from time immemorial” (urminnes hävd) was won in the Supreme Court of Sweden in 1981 after the biggest case the latter court has ever had since its start in 1789.

4) It is now very important that the Crown of Sweden does not get full title (lagfart = tinglysning) to the Skattefjäll in Härjedalen-Jämtland. This issue is still open and litigation is in process regarding the southern Skattefjäll. This case is extremely important and is now in the Court of Appeal. Crown “lagfart” on the Skattefjäll would mean that the Sami there are then only protected by the 1971 statute which is founded on the false idea of lapp-privilege, “privilegium odiosum”, a false legal theory that is not accepted by the Supreme Court. The pending case should be kept going in order to permit negotiations with the Crown. The SSR will be taking on a very great and heavy responsibility if they, representing the Sami upper class, do not go through with this case but instead agree with the Crown’s anti-Sami course.

5) As for the reindeer pasture convention between Norway and Sweden, it will expire in 2002. We are afraid of the events that will come. After the Norwegian lawyer, Andreas Arndtzen, had been defeated by myself and Björn Dalan in the Supreme Court in Oslo in 1968, Norway appointed Arndtzen secretary of a reindeer-breeding commission, which took part in the negotiations until the present convention was agreed in 1972 for 30 years. Arndtzen and the Norwegian members of this commission then in politics took back what they had legally lost in the Supreme Court. Of course this can be explained by the fact that the 1968 Altevatn verdict was a great disappointment for all Swedish and Norwegian experts who had convinced themselves that the right of the Swedish Sami villages to pastures in Norway was a right for the state of Sweden. Many years have passed since then and maybe the government experts are now more likely to understand that Sami rights are owned by the Sami themselves. However, the situation seems menacing and it is a pity that Otto Jebens, who has written extensively on the 1751 codicil and other Sami issues, only takes up Norwegian literature and seems to ignore the extensive Swedish literature in the field of Sami rights to land and water. This coarse and simplified way of reasoning will make negotiation very difficult. It is necessary that these Sami issues shall be studied carefully.