

But either way metals are required to build all of this (that means mines). Which means projects like the ones in Mertainen, Viscaria, Rönnbäcken, Lejäniemi, Rönnbäcken, Kaunisvaara, Fäboliden, Gällök, Sahavaara,... At present, there are 15 mines in operation in Sweden and another 14 projects have now been granted the processing concession of Bergsstaten ("the Mountain State"). Arne Müller writes: "In total, there are a dozen mining projects that have gone so far in the process that with today's conditions, it is quite reasonable that they actually will begin to mine within the next ten years. Some could get started within two to three years, but for most of them there is more than five years to start. Together with conceivable increases in production at existing mines, it would mean quite a substantial growth in the Swedish mining industry in the coming years (authors own translation)." And he wrote that 2020.

In order to provide some perspective to what is going on in Sweden right now, it can be added that Europe's perhaps biggest annual international trade, conference and meeting point for the mining industry's most important people named "Euro Mine Expo" is organized in Skellefteå. In addition, Luleå Technical University (LTU) together with Boliden, LKAB, Mobilaris, Northvolt, Skellefteå Kraft and SSAB started the project T-25 who intends to increase the number of inhabitants of Norrbotten and Västerbotten with 25,000 people within until 2027.

Also in the forest industry, SCA and Sveaskog expand their factories and prepare for increased exploitation. For example SCA are building a new pulp mill in Sundsvall ("Ortviken's industrial terminal") which will allow a tripled production very soon, as well as a doubled production at Bollsta sawmill through the construction of a new adjustment plant that is estimated to be completed in the autumn of 2022. The wood industry company Setra, which is a subsidiary to Sveaskog and Mellanskog, are doubling their production in Malå (Västerbotten) by investing about 39 million euros in its facility. In addition, there has just been built a large forest machine factory for Komatsu in Umeå.

This not only means more but also larger factories, not only more but larger mines, not only more but larger clear cuts, not only more but bigger wind turbines. It is not enough that everything increases in number. The increase is also in both size and pace. And together, the whole colonial project keeps pushing the gas to the bottom.

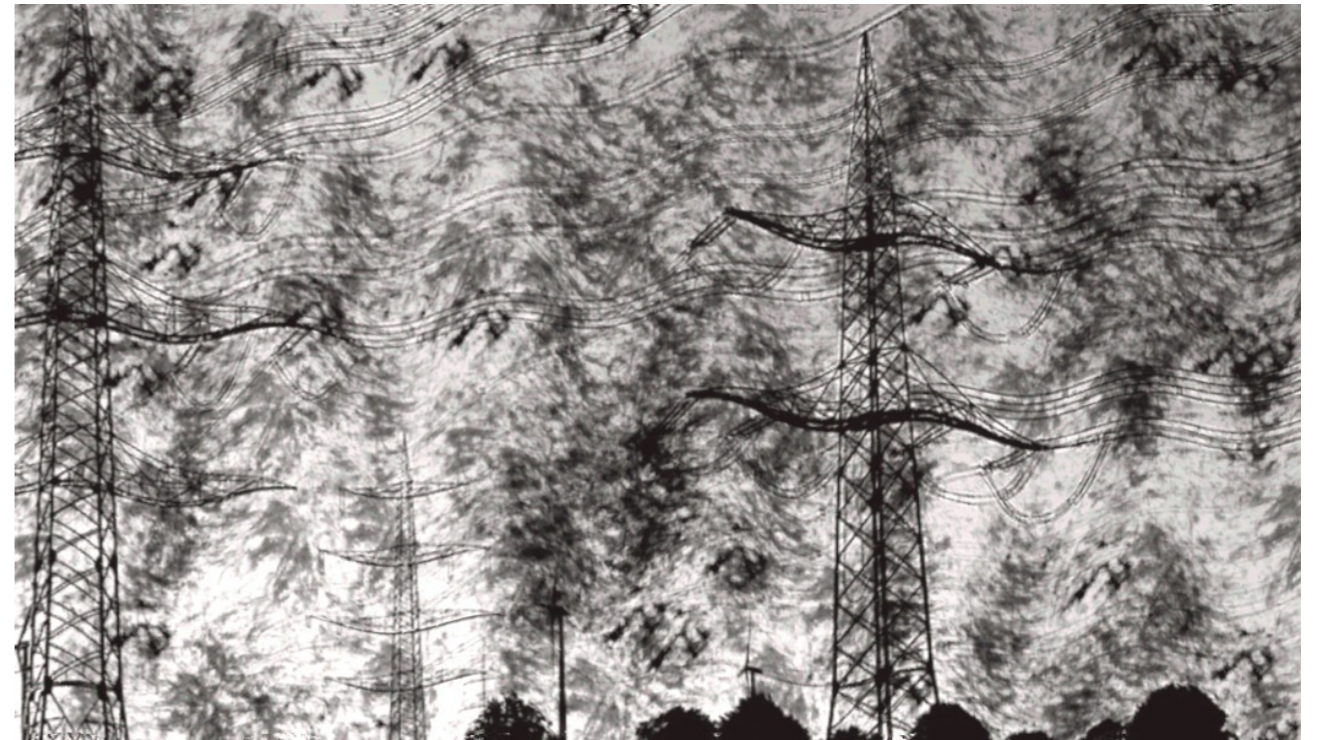
It is deeply rooted in the Swedish self-image that Sweden is full of forests and mountains, but that reality is being taken away from us. It is more like if nothing is getting done soon all the real forests could be gone in a matter of years. Approximately at the same time as Sápmi has turned into an ugly toxic industrial zone, where the bedrock in many areas has been blasted into pieces and people might have to buy their drinking water at the grocery store.

kolonialinfrastruktur.noblogs.org is a webpage publishing information about the progress of industrialization in Norrland, Sápmi, focusing on infrastructure for the mining, forest and wind power industries. Here you can read about where Sweden's largest sawmill is located, what mines are beginning to get ready to start, what plans there are for the coastal cities, how the freight transport routes go, where the managers live, and when and where the different industries meet and keeps their fairs and events. For questions, suggestions, comments and thoughts, please feel free to email us:

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COLONIAL INFRASTRUCTURE



How the green transition means doubled exploitation

Colonialism – “states or groups conquest and mastery of, for them, more or less alien territories” and the “practice through which countries with power directly controls countries with less power and use their resources to increase their own power and wealth” – Wikipedia

Infrastructure - ”facilities and structures who are securing foundational functions in society. Especially, systems for transport of goods, persons and services as well as for energy and information are meant. Infrastructure also includes buildings and real estate structure. ”

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GREEN COLONIALISM

Every day, the forest disappears down the forest roads, down to the paved roads, further on to sawmills, wood terminals, pulp factories and paper mills. Every day, ore and minerals travel along the Iron Ore Line to the ports of Luleå and Narvik. Every day, mercury and arsenic is finding its way out of the wastewater ponds of the blasted mountains. Provides nerve damage to animals and people. Gives us cancer and autoimmune diseases.

The wealth of the cities' does not just grow out of nowhere. With harvesters, excavators, trains and trucks they pick up resources and energy in the colonies and convey them to the urban areas. It is apparent that the flow goes on a one-way direction. From the outskirts of the world system to its center. From the out-backs to the city. From us out here to them in there.

Nothing with this is new. The structure is still based on the same logic of discharge of certain areas and accumulation on others. Colonialism is not a closed chapter. It has only been changed and made more effective. There are still *some groups that directly control areas with less power and use their resources to increase their own power*. It is concrete and obvious for us. As obvious as the trains that groan by with ore or trucks with timber passing by outside our windows.

The difference is how the colonialism is expressing itself. The extraction of metals, the clearcutting of forest and the establishment of large windmill farms is now portrayed as keys to succeed with the so-called "green" transition to be able to counteract a global warming and create a fossil-free world. It is commonly emphasized that this exploitation is a necessary step in the right direction to a sustainable and climate-smart society. More concrete: metals and minerals to things like electric cars, solar panels and wind turbines, and trees to bio fuel and electricity.

But the reality out here looks very much less green and environmentally friendly. Then the picture painted by the companies, politicians and governmental institutions. The companies are increasing their harvests, and the few real forests that still remain are soon also clear cut, marked and converted into tree plantations. In parallel with a mining boom that literally is exploding in the north, at the same pace as a drastic increase in the number of windmill farms. Rather, we are witnessing how our landscapes are transformed into industrial areas. We are seeing miles wide windmill parks where neither animals nor people want to live, where tons of micro plastics are spread across the land and the wind turbines are killing the few birds of prey that still exist. We are seeing clear cuts and ghostly monocultures of contorta pines, a mass extinction of species and a reduced biodiversity. We are seeing mining waste water dams that leak heavy metals into our drinking water and leaving a huge empty hole behind.

This is the dirty backside of the so called green transition. This is what hides behind the plastic smile of green colonialism. The process has already begun, a long time ago, and an acceleration lies before us.

IT'S ACCELERATING

New roads, new factories, new mines, upgraded railways, faster deprecation, automated and improved industries.

There are great plans for the northern part of Sweden. There are huge investments being made right now, and according to journalist Arne Müller it is estimated that approximately 70 billion euros will be invested in factories of Northvolt, H2 Green Steel, LKAB, SSAB and Fertiberia for battery, steel and synthetic fertilizer production. They will together need about 80 TWh electricity per year. That's more than half of the current energy consumption of Sweden (149 Twh). I say that again: that's more than half of the current energy consumption of Sweden. They talk about that the electricity should come from wind power and biomass (that is forest), but according to Müller that seems to be an equation hard to solve. Just to supply these factories with electricity many thousand windmills would be needed. Beyond that, there is also a need for bigger amounts of electricity to power all the new electrical cars, to support the cement industry and different refineries. Because of that, they believe that Sweden's demand for electricity might double or triple the coming decades. This will put enormous demands on metals, land areas and power lines. Therefore, there are currently also huge investments being made to of upgrade the infrastructure in Norrbotten and Västerbotten.

There is also a lot going on in the transportation sector right now. Between Umeå and Luleå, they are building "Norrbotniabanan" for high speed trains that with its straight stretching, fast speed, and capacity to cope with heavier and higher loads, will be able to contribute to a huge increase in transport of people and goods. They are also working to digitalize the whole railway system with the implementation of the ERTMS signal system which will enable an increase in the density of the traffic. Which all means faster and more efficient resource extraction from the colonies to the center. Also "Inlandsbanan" (the train track running through the middle of Sweden down) which was created to be a transportation link to and from the most resources rich regions of Sweden with the aim to increase the opportunities for exploitation in the north of Sweden, is now being upgraded the coming years also to increase its capacity. All this means even faster and effective resource extraction from the colonies to the center.

In Svenska Kraftnät's system development plan, you can read that there are plans to upgrade the electricity grids so that the electricity consumption can be doubled in the next ten years.

When it comes to the wind power there are investments made on over 10 billion euros right now. The year 2021 it was estimated that they would build 2,2 GW and the year after 2,5 GW further. The industry's forecast is that the wind power production in 2024 will increase to 48 TWh. Then the wind power production would correspond to one third of today's electricity consumption in Sweden. That can be compared to that at the end of 2020 there were 433 wind turbines with a total installed effect of 10 GW and that the wind power together contributed with 27.5 TWh of electricity during the year of 2020, which was 17% of the electricity production and 20% of the electricity consumption. In addition, it's reasonable to ask yourself if wind power even has the capacity to supply these industries with electricity since they only generate electricity when the wind is blowing and thus is a fairly unreliable source.