

In the Hour of the Wolf

Tales of a Sámi Warrior

Niillas Somby • Edited by Gabriel Kuhn

Power lies with the activists at the grassroots, no matter how much those in higher positions try to rewrite history.

Niillas Somby is an icon of the Sámi resistance movement. In 1979, he was one of the hunger strikers outside of the Norwegian Parliament building, drawing attention to protests against a hydropower dam near the town of Áltá in the far north of the country. Together with the Kola Peninsula in Russia, the northernmost regions of Norway, Sweden, and Finland constitute Sápmi, the traditional homeland of the Sámi, Europe's only officially recognized indigenous people.

In 1982, after the Supreme Court of Norway upheld the government's decision to build the Áltá dam, Somby was one of three people trying to sabotage a bridge leading to the construction site. The action failed, with the bomb they were carrying going off too early. Somby lost an arm and an eye and was facing more than twenty years in prison. With the help of an international network of indigenous activists, he managed to escape to Canada where he was adopted and sheltered by First Nations until the main charges against him were dropped and it was safe for him and his family to return to Norway.

In the Hour of the Wolf is a tale of struggle and survival, of solidarity and kinship, of steadfast principles and spiritual awakening. It is written with care, rumination, and wit. The reader learns about both Sápmi, the First Nations of Canada, and transnational indigenous politics. It is a unique account of an extraordinary life. In the end, Somby reflects on the path of the Sámi struggle for sovereignty from the protest camps of the 1970s to the halls of the Sámi Parliament.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Niillas Somby (born 1948) has been a prominent figure in the Sámi resistance against colonization since the 1970s. He was severely injured in an ill-fated 1982 sabotage action and subsequently found refuge among First Nations in Canada. He has worked as a reindeer herder, sailor, mechanic, photographer, and journalist. Today, he lives in Deanušaldi, on the Norwegian side of Sápmi.

Gabriel Kuhn is an Austrian-born writer and translator living in Sweden. Among his book publications are *Turning Money into Rebellion: The Unlikely Story of Denmark's Revolutionary Bank Robbers* and *Liberating Sápmi: Indigenous Resistance in Europe's Far North*.

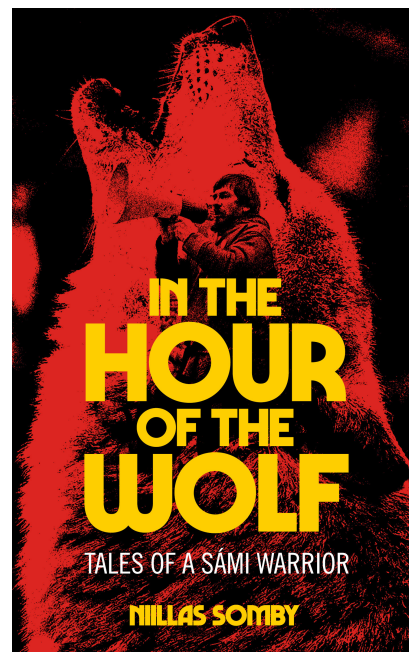
ACCOLADES

"In the Hour of the Wolf is an interesting representation of contemporary Sámi history."
—Arbeidernes Antikvariat (The Workers' Antiquarian Bookstore, Oslo)

"This is an important book, in which Niillas Somby traces the lines from the resistance against the development of the Áltá River to the Sámi Parliament and the institutionalization of Sámi rights."
—Samisk bibliotekstjeneste (Sámi Library Services)

"The book provides personal insight on a resistance movement that has met little recognition while having been crucial in the struggle for Sámi rights."
—Tina Andersen Vågenes, *Anarres*

"In the Hour of the Wolf is an important book that presents voices which have long been silenced."
—Ivar Bjørklund, *Nordnorsk debatt*



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