

criticized for their lack of a firm position on many vital questions affecting the district as a whole..."

Answer: "The criticism was justified. I believe that a scientist without opinions on social issues is only a servant to the powers that be. Our own opinions do not always coincide with official positions. This should be stated publicly, not whispered behind closed doors. Naturally, the scientist's public stand should be determined by the importance of the problems being discussed, especially if they are issues affecting the national economy. I believe that the more important the question which concerns the scientist, the greater his sense of duty as a citizen should be. You can accuse me of whatever you like, but I want to remind you that the idea of oil deposits in even Western Siberia was regarded as nonsense at one time. Yet it would be hard to imagine today how we could get by without it.

It is a shame that the extraction of gas and oil in the Soviet Union has become linked to a system of indices which is gradually ruining the country. If this has not occurred yet, it is only because we have such amazingly rich deposits in the Soviet Union. Soviet deposits have withstood all our ruinous practices and kept us very well supplied. I hope, however, with regard to Eastern Siberia we will find a common language with all the ministries concerned, just as we found a language to deal with Lake Baikal, to discuss the problems involved in utilizing hydro power resources, the ecological improvement of Siberian industrial centres, and many other issues. I place my hopes less in individuals, than in perestroika, which is cleaning the cobwebs out of our minds. Perestroika should bring a better