

BAIKAL-AMUR RAILROAD... ON THE AUCTION BLOCK?  
Will Our Descendants Forgive Us for What We Did to a  
Railroad That Was Once Proudly Called the "Main Line  
of Courage"?

At a recent municipal report-back Party election meeting in Tynda, delegates heatedly discussed remarks made at a meeting of the Collegium of the USSR Ministry of Railways to the effect that the Baikal-Amur Main Line [BAM] was incurring annual losses of approximately 200 million rubles. There are two ways out here. Either the line before the end of the five-year plan should (a) cease being a money-losing operation by cutting its enormous expenditures and building up the volume of its operations, or else (b) a decision should be made on its reorganization through apportionment of parts of the line to neighbouring railway lines (Gudok, September 20). The meeting's participants unanimously came out against reorganization of BAM and decided to send their resolution to the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Ministry of Railways. Some hotheads, feeling that a resolution was not enough, suggested going further, saying it was necessary to create a "front in defense for BAM" and to hit the streets with banners.

I'll say right away that things have not got to this point yet. But people are indignant: why is the fate of this line, with which are bound the interests of the entire region's populace, being decided in secret? Why has the USSR Ministry of Railways asked neighbouring lines to agree to the acceptance of sections of BAM without querying BAM people themselves?