

His article is in response to the article "Drooping Wings" by V. Kukharenko (Vozdushnyi transport, No. 63 of 26 May 1990).

As a specialist who has flown for almost 33 years in Krasnoyarsk Krai and has flown extensively in the North and in the Arctic, I am amazed by the kind of superficial and economically illiterate judgements about the significance of the erstwhile services of Polar Aviation, the cost of current air operations and the unified structural scheme for administration of air transport in the krai that we find in the article by V. Kukharenko.

I feel that it was a very smart decision to abolish the Administration of Polar Aviation.

This administration worked only for the Northern Sea Route, for the most part had airports along the arctic coast, and did not service such areas of the Enisei North as the Evenkiya region, the Taimir Peninsula or Norilsk. And how can one possibly compare the volume of operations of the entire Polar Aviation with today's operations of the Krasnoyarsk Administration in the Arctic and in the North? Today, this region is served by the An-12, An-26 and Yak-40 aircraft, by the still irreplaceable An-2, and by the Mi-6, Mi-8 and Mi-2 helicopters. We recently received a new Mi-26 helicopter, which is capable of transporting up to 20 tonnes of cargo both inside its fuselage and by external suspension. And how can one compare the economic aspect or the flight safety and comfort of a Yak-40 with an Il-14, an An-26 with an Li-2 or an Mi-8 with an Mi-4?

It is true that, due to the removal of the Li-2 and Il-14 airplanes from certain types of operations, service in the Arctic and Far North has deteriorated, but this is not our fault. To this day there are no new polar aircraft and helicopters and no one knows when there will be any. The Ministry of the Aviation Industry failed to ready replacements on time. The culprit here was the infamous 'residual' principle, first for the Air Force and then for Aeroflot. Somehow even conversion has still not yielded visible results. The An-74 has been "learning how to fly" for over ten years, but we still can't get hold of