

casing-head gas and to pump it in a semi-fluid state over pipelines to Tatariya, Bashkiriya and the Volga region to existing petrochemical enterprises. There, it would be processed into plastics, rubber, film and other petrochemical products. But when an explosion occurred on one of these pipelines, the proponents of this viewpoint moderated their enthusiasm.

More extreme critics of the chemical industry in general expressed the opinion that no such enterprises should be built since this would be ecologically unsound, expensive, and would divert resources from the solution of social problems. One could cite the titles of articles and critical letters in certain central newspapers: "Yet Another 'Construction Project of the Century'?", "Where Are We Headed in Such a Hurry?", "A Giant on Stilts", etc.

On the other side is a large group of scientists from Western Siberia. After a thoughtful study of the situation on site, and after weighing all the pros and cons, they wrote a letter this autumn setting out their position in favor of developing the petrochemical industry in Western Siberia and requested USSR Minister N.V. Lemaev, through whose department the proposal to build the petrochemical complexes was channelled, to bring these matters to the attention of members of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the government of the country.

And how do the workers of Tyumen Oblast feel about these issues, which are of vital concern to them in particular? Residents from one of the largest cities of Western Siberia - Surgut - held a meeting and directed an appeal to the USSR Supreme Soviet. The title of the appeal, which was published in a local newspaper, is characteristic: "Please Build the Chemical Complex!" Also in that month