

"Gosplan is obsessed with far-fetched schemes for a Nizhneangarskii Territorial Production Complex," Sergei Aleksandrovich noted. "The complex sounds great. But when you look at what happened to the Irkutians, what are we going to get from it? A regular bureaucratic monster. In the Angara region, for example, there's ruination everywhere. And now we have the Boguchanskaya power station, construction of which cannot be justified from any point of view. Lack of energy? But why not develop on a low-energy basis? Why do we need these energy-hungry wood chemistry giants, of which the Irkutians have way too many? There's enough raw material here for furniture factories for decades. What about power stations further downstream? In that case, however, the shallows will be poisoned by your neighbours' untreated wastes even faster...

In short, whatever you do is a dead end. Indeed, one of these "dead ends" is talked about in a study conducted by the Institute of Economics and Organization of Industrial Production, which is subordinate to the USSR Academy of Sciences' Siberian Branch, concerning problems of water resources by the creation of the Lower Angara Territorial Production Complex. The conclusion was that water protection measures for the planned super giants would require 3.7 billion rubles. But even these expenditures would make little difference since, and I quote: "surface water sources of the Lower Angara region are characterized by a slow rate of natural self-cleaning." In other words, don't count on the purity of Angara water.

"So what are we to do? Dismantle a dam into which so much has been invested..."

"Why dismantle it?" Arinchin retorts. "What we need to do is to stop construction of the power station so that we can weigh all the pros and cons calmly."

Bureaucratic dictates have bled our economy dry, have kept it on a ruinous path of extensive development. The capacity of one hydroelectric power station is only one third utilized, and we're going for another. Isn't it time we re-examined the use of these stations? How much energy is being lost? Many heat-and-electric stations are at