

conducted regularly with the staff, and once every three years we attend courses at a training centre. Professional training, however, must be backed up by a sound home front. But here.... In order to have a good sleep before a flight, one has to look for an unoccupied bed in the bachelor pilots' quarters. I do not wish to overpraise my own occupation: in aviation all services are essential. But I nonetheless believe that, in our aviation industry, authority (as is the case with the miner in the mining industry and the driller in the oil industry) still derives from the pilot.

Paradoxically, the aircrew in our Unit is in a worse position than are personnel in other services. The situation that has arisen can be explained very simply: an aviator can always be put in his place. If he has spoken out in opposition at a meeting, an "obstacle" will arise whenever the aircraft commander implements [a new proposal]. If he has said the truth at a trade-union conference, he gets paid back with a refusal to retrain on another type of aircraft. Have pilots appealed to the command about their living quarters? Time and again. The reply, however, runs something like this: "We lived under canvas, and now you'll get to know what problems are like".

You will understand that I am not a whiner. I served my time in the Armed Forces. In fact, I went to that school where they make people in the mould of "the proud and manly profession". In reality, however, these people are often humbled. It wasn't for nothing that an Aeroflot pilots' action committee has recently been organized in Moscow "to get the pilot off his knees" (this is neither a fantasy nor a joke: we recently discussed this group's program among our staff).