

"It isn't as simple as that," people at the railway administration commented to me. It might be possible to find some understanding and even support among the "southerners". For example, it's clear to everybody that for the same amount of money you can build two and a half residential buildings in the central zone in place of a single building in Vorkuta. More than once, in spite of months of talks in Ivanovo, Kostroma and Yaroslavl, we failed to overcome the egoism of local soviets: they said, "we don't need retired people, and that's that." And so, in the end, people gave up.

Everything is ultimately explainable. We've been trained to do that. But it wasn't until our backs were against the wall, when it became clear that there was no way out of the mess except to pull out all of the stops, that those twenty apartments turned up in Solvychegodsk and Vologda.

As for the local soviets, we can cite the vivid example of the miners, who are building even more than the "higher ups" ordered for the southern cities. The reason for this is that they try to accommodate local needs: they participate in tearing down dilapidated housing, they play a substantial role in developing the local construction base, and they invest resources in providing amenities. Of course, their money alone would not be enough for this. But just this year, State capital investment funds have been earmarked for the USSR Ministry of the Coal Industry to begin construction of cooperative housing in a number of oblasts in Russia and the Ukraine. Finally, the ministry will also put up State housing in the central zone for people from Vorkuta in exchange for the vacating of apartments in the Arctic.