

Q. "How then must we develop the North in order to avoid the previous mistakes?"

A. "We need a comprehensive approach to northern development. Development must be accompanied by sound ecological expertise and measures aimed at protection of nature must be respected. Only then is it possible to decide whether development should proceed. When irreversible processes of destruction commence it is too late to take action. The sad fate of the Aral has already demonstrated this. And so I repeat yet again: to avoid the mistakes of the past we must quickly transfer real power to the soviets."

Q. "You are the director of the press centre for the Congress of Minority Peoples of the North. We know that an Association of Peoples of the North is to be created at the congress. What do you think of this idea?"

A. "We, a group of writers, raised the question of an association in a letter to M.S. Gorbachev as early as 1987. Then the decision was made to create the association, the goal of which was to protect the political and economic rights of the indigenous population. An administrative structure will be created both in Moscow and in the local regions. Plans call for sending representatives to UNESCO. The association will become a serious barrier to mismanagement of northern regional development."