

FROM DOBROLYOT TO AEROFLOT

Tikhonova, Tatyana Yu., Russian University of Transport, Moscow, Russia.

ABSTRACT

Air transport arose due to man's persistent desire to fly. It evolved from eccentricity, through experiments to regular communication between the most distant corners of the planet. Passenger air travel is a little more than 100 years old. Aeroflot, the legendary company that connects cities and villages, continents and

countries, stands at the origins of civil aviation in Russia. The biography of Aeroflot is the history of development of domestic aircraft construction, development of once dangerous and risky routes, rapid technical progress and competition with the largest aviation companies in the world. The author describes some curious facts from the history of Aeroflot company.

Keywords: air transport, civil aviation, history, Aeroflot, transport market, corporate culture.

Background. In March 2018 Aeroflot, one of the oldest and largest airlines of the planet, celebrated its 95th anniversary. But Aeroflot is not only a passenger airline having a global route network. At different stages of its history, it was a means of solving social and political problems, ensuring international cooperation and cultural dialogue. The modern history of Aeroflot demonstrates and reflects a certain philosophy of our life, harmony with people and nature.

Objective. The objective of the author is to describe some facts of the history of the Russian largest airline – Aeroflot.

Methods. The author uses historical retrospective method, general media reviewing tools.

Results.

Fixed wing origins

Of all modes of transport, perhaps, none takes up such a special place as air transport. It was the desire to fly and the search for realization of the possibility of flight that were for mankind a kind of super-ideal, moving the best minds to creativity. Air space is once the most inaccessible space for human movement.

Remember the words of the song from the story of M. Gorky «Vorobyishko»: «Oh, wingless man, you have two legs, although you are very large, you are eaten by midges», they reflect the complete impotence of a wingless man even in front of small, but winged creatures.

Wings were the first means by which a man tried to conquer the air. Mythology and ancient written sources of different peoples generously inform us about the wings made using various materials – silk, feathers, rods, leather, paper, with the help of which the first researchers and testers attempted to fly. Man modeled wings for himself following the principle of moving wings of a bird. Not the last place in the conquest of air was also occupied by kites and gliders, as vehicles with one fixed wing.

As for the first prototypes of modern aircraft, we find them in the writings of Leonardo da Vinci and Mikhail Lomonosov. Acting independently of each other, they came to the idea of creating flying machines «heavier than air», moving with a screw. Unfortunately, their projects have long remained unclaimed. The era of aeronautics was opened with





flights of balloons and aerostats and they were the first to carry out passenger transportation.

But the enthusiasts of the flight business continued their studies. Admittedly, their main focus was on providing a simple flight opportunity, which was not enough. Only Wilbur and Orville Wright in the early 20th century were able to solve the problems of controlling a flying machine. The successes of the Wright brothers inspired designers around the world.

A new stage in the conquest of air was the construction before the First World War in 1913 under the leadership of I. I. Sikorsky of a biplane «Russian Knight», and then on its basis of a more perfect aircraft «Ilya Muromets». In fact, «Russian Knight» made the first transportation of passengers, and «Ilya Muromets» was the first passenger plane in the world [1].

So the ancient cultural idea of conquest of the air was combined with satisfaction of no less ancient human need for travels around the globe. But all the same, initially aviation as a branch received its development in the army. And «Ilya Muromets» was also very quickly converted to military needs.

The idea to make civil aviation an independent mode of transportation and a branch of national economy was first considered in the United States. The company St. Petersburg Tampa Airboat Line in 1914 for the first time in the world organized regular passenger transportation and created a flight schedule between the American cities of St. Petersburg and Tampa. At this time the world war continued in the Old World and aviation was solving





military tasks. Only the establishment of peace allowed to think about creation of civil aviation and companies involved in transportation of mail and passengers.

The official birth date of Aeroflot is March 17, 1923, when the commercial joint-stock company «Dobrolyot» appeared, which solved the tasks of organizing and developing civil aviation inside the country. But the activities went beyond domestic needs. The earliest origin of Aeroflot, which laid the foundation for its international image and experience, was Deruluft, Deutsch-Russische Luftverkehrs A. G., a joint German-Russian aviation company established on November 11, 1921. On the German side, Deruluft included the leading German airline Aero-Lloyd, and from the Soviet side – the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade of the RSFSR and the People's Commissariat of Railways. From the German side, P. Fette was appointed director of the company, from the Soviet side the company was headed by E. I. Guaita. The Dewau airfield in Königsberg was chosen as the base. It was within Deruluft that Aeroflot was formed as the future largest international carrier.

«Pilots – greatest persons»

Evgeny Ivanovich Guaita was not only the director of an international civil airline, he was at the origins of Russian aviation, took part in war hostilities and, even as a director, remained a «playing coach» – he continued to fly. In 1922, the pilot made a direct flight on a sports single-seat aircraft «Avro», because of its small size called «baby», from London to Moscow.

The history of the Guaita family goes back to the time of Peter I. It was then that the ancestors of the future aviator arrived to the Russian Empire. «Evgeny Ivanovich Guaita was born in the spring of 1896 in the village of Bakhmatovka in the Podolsky province. ... Father, Johann Gustav Guaita, was engineer, forester. Mother, Natalia Sofia Brehmer, was a housewife. After his father moved to a new place of work (approximately from 1904–1905 to 1910–1911), the family lived in Libava (now Liepāja, Latvia). During this period, the

parents divorced. On the eve of the World War, the mother with children (Evgeny and his younger sister Vera) moved to Warsaw» [2].

It is noteworthy that Evgeny began his higher professional education at Moscow Institute of Railway Engineers (MIIT), but, not having completed his studies, wished to transfer to military service. He was fluent in German and English, often went abroad. In the atmosphere of his time, he could not help but arouse distrust, given his origins. In the end, Guaita did not escape the fate of many talented and significant people and was repressed.

The place of his detention was first SLON (Solovetsky Special Purpose Camp), and then, in the early 1930s, he was deported to Karaganda. In absentia he graduated from MADI Road Institute. Returned to Moscow in 1935, he enrolled to Ph.D. studies, defended his Ph.D. thesis. When the war broke out, he managed to join the army. For military merits, the conviction was dropped. But after returning from the fronts, E. I. Guaita lived for a short time, he died in 1946. Today the name of the first top manager of the passenger airline is almost forgotten. Only through individual research we can learn its history [2].

The first air line from Königsberg to Moscow, with a length of 1300 km, was opened on May 1, 1922 by the flight of the German five-seater passenger aircraft Fokker F III, which was piloted by the Soviet pilot Ivan Filippovich Voedilo. The brave pilot was then 27 years old, a year older than the director of the company E. I. Guaita.

The future pilot-pioneer of the international passenger air service was born in 1895 in a noble family, his father Philip Dmitriyevich Voedilo was an engineer. His son Ivan, like Guaita, began as a military pilot. But unlike him lived a long life, died in 1975 and was buried with his wife at the Novodevichy Cemetery.

In 2014 Aeroflot brought into operation its fifteenth Sukhoi Superjet 100 (registration number RA-89045) produced by CJSC «GSS» in the expanded «FULL» package. The liner was given the name of Ivan Filippovich Voedilo, «the discoverer of regular flights



on the international postal and passenger line Moscow–Koenigsberg (Kaliningrad)» [3].

There were three intermediate points on the route: in Smolensk, Polotsk and Kovno (now Kaunas). Flights Moscow–Koenigsberg became regular, but first only officials and mail were transported. The first planes were built in the Netherlands: Grulich V1 and nine F III [4]. Later the fleet was supplemented by German Junkers F 13, Rohrbach Roland and Albatros L 58.

Company logo

Only on August 27, 1922 transportation was open to the public. Originally the route from Koenigsberg to Moscow was serviced by five German and Soviet crews, flights were first carried out twice a week, from 1923 three times a week and a year later daily. In 1925 Berlin–Moscow line was opened. In 1926, Deruluft for three months cooperated with Ukrsoyuz on the route Moscow–Kharkov. At the same time, Aero Union as a partner in Deruluft was replaced by the new airline Deutsche Lufthansa, formed in January by merging the transport group Aero-Lloyd and the industrial concern Junkers.

The advertising slogan of Deruluft then read: «From any corner of Germany in 15 hours to Moscow!». In August 1926 Deruluft joined IATA.

A new route from Berlin via Riga and Tallinn (then Revel) to Leningrad was established on June 6, 1928. This route, like Koenigsberg–Moscow, operated until March 31, 1936. At that time, the route network covered 2640 kilometers. From 1922 to 1934, the airline carried 39168 passengers on German-Soviet lines, overcoming 9800000 km [5].

Since 1929, the early Fokker F III was replaced by Dornier Do.B Merkur I. In addition to German aircrafts on the routes of Deruluft domestic aircrafts began to

appear. The first PM-1 was a five-passenger one-and-a-half-plane created under the guidance of the aircraft designer Nikolai Polikarpov. At the beginning of 1931, the Tupolev ANT-9 was added to the air fleet, which was in no way inferior to Western analogues. It was a passenger airliner with three engines, capable of transporting nine passengers and two pilots to 700 km. And then in 1934 five Junkers Ju 52 / 3m supplemented the aircraft fleet of now Aeroflot.

The new company logo appeared naturally. On February 25, 1932, responsibility for all civil aviation activities in the Soviet Union passed under the control of the Main Directorate of the Civil Air Fleet, and on March 25 the civil air fleet system was officially named Aeroflot.

If Deruluft successfully conquered the airspace and in the 1930s continued to regularly raise its aircrafts into the sky, then the political space was not going to be conquered. With the advent of Hitler in Germany, the Soviet government considered it impossible to continue conducting joint business with the Germans. In 1936, current agreement between Aeroflot and Lufthansa within Deruluft expired. On June 28 Aeroflot officially notified the German partners of its termination by an official letter. As a result, on April 1, 1937, the operations of the Deruluft joint venture were terminated.

On that day, Aeroflot began work on the route Moscow–Stockholm and started operation of the ex-Deruluft route from Leningrad to Riga, using DC-3 and Tupolev's ANT-35. Flights from Moscow to Berlin via Koenigsberg were suspended until 1940. They were later restarted by Aeroflot and Lufthansa after the signing of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact and lasted until the beginning of the war in 1941.





The airline Deruluft lasted 15 years. Its activities determined the emergence not only of the world's first regular passenger airlines, but also of two aviation giants existing up to the present day – Russian Aeroflot and German Lufthansa.

Air bridge Moscow–New York

In the post-war period, when intercontinental communications became more active, flights to the United States and the USSR across the ocean became of primary importance. And it should be noted that the world's first TU-104 jet passenger airliner, tested in 1956 on domestic routes, set out to explore foreign routes to New York. This happened in September 1957 and, of course, the ability of non-stop and high-speed flights demonstrated by this airliner influenced a client impressively.

However, at about the same time the idea arose not just to cooperate with airlines on an ongoing basis, but to establish joint flights. But the implementation of this idea was preceded by a long process of negotiations. The first steps to create an airline between the countries were undertaken in 1956 by Juan Trippe, the founder of the legendary Pan American World Airways. He specially flew to Russia to discuss with Aeroflot the possibility of joint flights to the cities of the Soviet Union. Their basic provisions were formulated in January 1958. But the main stumbling block was the official language of the flights and the citizenship of the crew members.

The possibility of joint flights was considered by the leaders of the countries Khrushchev and Eisenhower in 1959 during the negotiations at Camp David, then in Paris in 1960. Only after President Kennedy came to power, this question was finally solved. The agreement on direct flights between New York and Moscow, served jointly by Pan Am and Aeroflot, was eventually concluded. The parties agreed that the crews would include representatives of both countries, but in the airspace of the Soviet Union the working language of the flight would be Russian.

On March 15, 1968 Pan American World Airways and Aeroflot Soviet Airlines opened a passenger communication between New York and Moscow. The Pan American Boeing 707 departed Kennedy Airport in the evening, with a stop in Denmark, arriving in Moscow the next day.

It was a historic event during the Cold War. Later the cover of the LIFE magazine on July 28 showed how Susan Sikari from Pan Am greets Aeroflot flight attendant Natasha Arutyunova at the JFK airport.

When the Pan-Am-44 flight landed in Moscow, the focus was on Miss Elsie Hill, an 85-year-old passenger.

She decided to make such a landmark flight because of the interest in Russia of her father, a congressman from Connecticut. It is noteworthy that in 1901 he made one of the earliest trips via the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Thanks to Moscow–New York flight, Aeroflot and Pan Am from competitors turned into partners, some kind of ambassadors of the peace, which allowed two antagonistic worlds to get to know each other more. The iron curtain was raised, now tourists, businessmen, members of scientific and cultural expeditions could arrive. However, after a decade, relations between the US and the USSR deteriorated. And this affected the cooperation of airlines, they again became competitors, although it cannot be said that they are tough. Their competition involved more service and design.

Later, as a result of the collapse of the USSR, the empire of Aeroflot collapsed. However, the Pan Am empire also collapsed, as it could not adapt to changes in the world. Nevertheless, in post-Soviet times, Aeroflot was reborn into a new company, which has already become half private, and Pan Am has remained a story. This is the story, filled with romance in the 1950s, when the seats were wider, the service was better, and the companies seemed to think about the interests of the countries, not just about the incomes.

As probably keeping in memory these traditions of service of the 1950s Aeroflot pays nowadays much attention to meal on board, raising it to the level of high cuisine, showing that the flight can be an art.

Five stars in the global alliance

Modern Aeroflot appeared in 1992 as a result of privatization of the former air carrier-monopolist. The new era began when, in 1999, McKinsey Co, a leading international management consultancy company, was hired to help update the image and corporate structure. Aeroflot began to rebuild. It got rid of unprofitable flights, e.g. to Jakarta and Miami, and at the same time increased the flow of passengers to Paris and Los Angeles. It sought to enter into an alliance with Western airlines, for example, Delta and Air France. The plans included changes in the management team. For the first time, in particular, a foreigner was invited to the board of directors – David Hern of the United States. And in November 2000 Aeroflot presented its shares in the quotation list on the London Stock Exchange, which no one expected.

A year after the adoption of the new corporate strategy, the airline's profit amounted to \$30 million – this was a high result compared to 1999, when the loss was 60 million. The company said then that it

seeks to show on all flights the true Russian hospitality, cordiality and kindness.

But what is the use of smiles and cordiality, if you fly on a plane being twenty years old? In response to this question, Aeroflot undertook to update its fleet. Every year, starting from 1992, when the first aircraft built abroad was introduced, the company refused to use old aircrafts. In the majority they were planes of Russian production IL and TU. They were replaced by Boeing 767 and 777, Airbus A310. Today, Aeroflot has one of the youngest aircraft fleets in the world, which accounts for 228 aircrafts.

In addition, according to new plans, in the 2000s Aeroflot began renovating two terminals at Moscow Sheremetyevo Airport. Renovation included restructuring of the check-in area, waiting rooms and introduction of a new luggage system. In February 2001, Sheremetyevo-3 project started with its own Aeroflot terminal, the construction of which was one of the conditions for the official entry of the airline into the SkyTeam alliance, where Delta, AeroMexico, Air France, Korean Air, CSA Czech were present. At the same time, Sheremetyevo announced the construction of the long-awaited high-speed rail track that will connect the airport to the center of Moscow.

Today, Aeroflot is the leader of Russia's air transport, a member of the global aviation alliance SkyTeam. The route network of the alliance totals 1074 points in 177 countries. In 2017, Aeroflot transported 32,8 million people, and taking into account the airlines of the Aeroflot Group – 50,1 million. But the Soviet time Guinness record of 120 million passengers a year in the 1980s, cannot be broken by the current Aeroflot team. No one in the world has surpassed this record yet.

Aeroflot was the first Russian company to become the owner of the high-ranking «four stars» of Skytrax in terms of service quality. In 2017, for the sixth time, it received the prestigious international award Skytrax World Airline Awards in the category «Best airline in Eastern Europe». In the same year it was awarded the highest rating «five stars» in the most prestigious category – «Global airline» – from the American aviation association APEX.

In 2017 Aeroflot was recognized as the strongest brand of Russia and the strongest aviation brand in the world according to the international agency Brand Finance. It became the best airline in Europe by the version of the world's largest travel site TripAdvisor and was awarded the title of «Favorite foreign airline in China».

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that in 2017 Aeroflot took the first place in terms of air traffic in the most competitive market of world civil aviation – the transit direction between Europe and Asia, increasing the corresponding indicator of 2016 by 12 % [8].

Aeroflot is among the world's leaders in ensuring the safety of flights. The program's coefficient of the European Commission SAFA corresponds to the level of the leading world airlines.

Aeroflot became the first of the Russian carriers included in the register of IOSA operators, and it constantly confirms this certificate. The airline has successfully passed an ISAGO ground safety audit. The integrated management system of PJSC Aeroflot-

Russian Airlines is certified according to ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2004 [9].

Conclusion. The corporate culture of Aeroflot promotes a high responsibility to the society. The company's goal is not to make a profit at all costs, but to take care of people, social needs and the environment by continuously improving energy and environmental efficiency, using a modern fleet of aircraft and the most advanced technologies, actively participating in socially significant and charitable projects, developing the Russian air transport network, creating new jobs in the regions.

From its inception to the present day, Aeroflot is not just a carrier. This is a phenomenon of the social life of the Soviet Union, and now the Russian Federation, simultaneously solving political, social, cultural and communicative tasks. It provided mobility to the population, united peoples, helped them to get to know each other better, and helped to strengthen peace.

Today Aeroflot is an air gateway to Russia for many foreign tourists. It is from the steps on the plane that their first steps begin in our country. And Aeroflot confirmed that it represents Russia with hospitality.

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Information about the author:

Tikhonova, Tatyana Yu. – Ph.D. (Philosophy), associate professor of the department of Service and tourism of Russian University of Transport, Moscow, Russia, umago@mail.ru.

Article received 31.03.2018, accepted 06.04.2018.

