

## Flight to Nowhere

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*Note: This is a challenge to read in English as the translation is poorly done. No attempt has been made to clean up punctuation syntax, spelling, etc. None the less it holds important information and comments.  
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History of Arctic research holds many tragic secrets. We know little about the death of Franklin expeditions, DeLong, Sedov, Toll, Rusanov, Brusilov ... The same fate befell many expeditions and explorers of the Arctic sky. Disappeared into polar expanses crew balloon "Eagle" Swede Andre, Arctic last forever hid fate of the airship "Italia" and half of his team, and they rushed to the aid of the great Norwegian Roald Amundsen. And finally, one of the largest and most mysterious Arctic tragedies - the disappearance in 1937 during the flight over the North Pole to America Levanevskogo crew ...

In the last decade "theme Levanevskogo" periodically illuminated the pages of newspapers and magazines. Not once in these obuzhdeniyah participated and me. Yury Kaminsky first to pose the question in a completely different plane. Indeed, perhaps the essence of disaster not only for cyclones, icing and technical malfunctions, and as preparation? I remember in 1938 in Moscow, we met with the outstanding American polar explorer and Aeronavigator Herbert Wilkins party searches Plane "USSR N-209." In an interview he said that the Arctic - the harsh arena battles with the human element unaware of mercy and crew Levanevskogo - its next victim: to engage in such a struggle, need a perfect moral and material readiness.

Me party almost all high-latitude air expeditions 30 -60 - ies, it is well known how often for propaganda purposes lost importantly - human ...

V.I.Akkuratov,

navigator of the USSR Honored

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In recent years, much has been written about the mysterious disappearance of the crew of Sigismund Levanevskogo. And discussed mainly where the plane fell and how to find it ... Expressed different hypotheses. Some believe that the death machine found in the ice of the ocean, the other - in the mountains of Alaska, and others - that she was off course and need to look

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for it in Yakutia ...

All these versions are worth exploring. In another case. Never raised the question: why the plane "of the USSR N-209" did not reach the American continent? Maybe severe weather conditions and technical problems - the LRA rather a consequence than causes of the disaster?

### **Flight, which was doomed**

The flight was accomplished by car "USSR N-209" ... Originally plane called DB-A (long-range bomber-Academy). In 1934, when the standard was built Tupolev heavy airplane TB-3, it was decided to radically modernize the design and use it to create a new machine having significantly higher rates. Work undertaken by the group of teachers and engineers of the Air Force Academy under the guidance V.F.Bolhovitina. The plane was built in late 1935, in the spring of next year passed factory and state tests. According to the recollections of old aviators, he was very handsome: the first Soviet heavy four-engine aircraft not with corrugated and smooth skin of the fuselage, wings and tail. Showing a number of advantages over the TB-3, he was found to be quite successful.

And then, as befitted a while, it's time to set records ...

- With the DB-I met when he was still being built - says the Hero of the Soviet Union General- Air Force Colonel George Philippovich Bajdukov. - After our trip to Levanevskogo failed over the Pole to America on the ANT-25 in 1935, I was sent to chief pilot in an aircraft factory Gorbunov where built DB-A. Experienced its magnificent pilot Nikolai Kastanaev. I, as chief pilot, allowing factory test machine and somehow decided to try it myself. In flight, I found that the aircraft has - lack of longitudinal stability. Do Kastanaeva had the same opinion. Paid attention to it Bolkhovitinov as troubleshooting required engineering improvements. But for a more complete picture of the capabilities of the machine had to try it on the itinerary. May 14, 1937 we Kastanaevym, navigator-radio operator Kerber, flight engineer Godovikova flew on the route Moscow - Melitopol - Moscow took the five tons of cargo.

During the flight, I noticed that Kohl Kastanaev, actually, a great master, it is not able to fly "blind . " In storm fronts and dense clouds he piloted very matter ... Especially that the longitudinal instability remained. In normal mode, the plane suddenly spontaneously began to climb. Gaining, gaining, losing speed ... Lowers the nose and starts to accelerate ... It seems it is time to print it, but it's not so easy to do.

And again, once overheated engines, denied candles. So we went to three motors, alternately giving rest to the fourth.

In the hop we have established two international speed records, but still left with a feeling of dissatisfaction ...

In those days George Philippovich fixed the flaws as a specialist. Now, looking through the prism of events unfolded unexpectedly soon after trip to Melitopol. In fact, so it is necessary to factory test pilot possession of a "blind" flight? But after three (!) Months Kastanaev fly over the North Pole to America, and in this way will not be a clear sky. And motors that can not be trusted? .. But the instability of the aircraft? .. ... Fate Levanevskogo Sigismund was such that he always had to catch himself. His name became known after distillation in 1933 seaplane

"Dornier Val" of Sevastopol in Khabarovsk. In those days it was a significant flight. Then he took out (not "saved," as we wrote romantic) from Anadyr to Alaska crashed American pilot Mattern, who unharmed finds in the Chukchi yaranga. Ambiguous and uncertain environment in the flight position Levanevskogo was after he was awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union, number 2 of the other

six pilots who rescued Chelyuskinites. This first set is given a high rank "for salvation", in which he was not able to participate: Once in severe weather conditions, he crashed the car near Kolyuchinskoy lips. There were other pilots managed to fly "almost" to Chelyuskinites floes, but did not achieve his goal for different reasons. Among these "unlucky" was, for example, an experienced pilot V. Galyshev who made difficult flight from Khabarovsk to Ouellet, but due to breakage and repair aircraft latecomer to evacuate people. Hero of them was only one ... According Baydukova, the news about this Levanevsky experienced painful spotlight weighed on him. On the platform Belosrusskaya where the train arrived with the characters, he was immediately noticed the chairman of the government commission Kuibyshev and publicly kissed.

"We came to Red Square and stood in a line - he wrote later Levanevsky. - And here comes a group of people I know well their names . That is they see me for the first time. Ahead was Stalin. Smiling, he greets all. I stepped aside so as not to interfere ... But suddenly I hear - Stalin calls "Levanevsky"

I'm amazed - how he did knows!

- What are you hiding and being modest - said Stalin. came up to me and offered his hand "- For Levanevskogo when elevated pride began turbulent times. One had something very important to confirm the unexpected nation-wide fame.

Great pilot Mikhail Gromov told me that even during the ANT-25 test his idea non-stop flight across the North Pole. After setting the world record for duration closed route plan firmed. However, permission to carry out the first such flight was caught in a surprising and inexplicable location leader Levanevsky Sigismund. August 3, 1935, he flew from Moscow to co-pilot and navigator Bajdukov Levchenko. After a few hours of flying over the Barents Sea pilots noticed the oil leak. Levanevsky decided to go back.

- Shortly after returning crew was summoned to the Politburo - recalls Bajdukov. - Attended by Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov and Tupolev. Stalin asked about the reasons for the failure Levanevskogo. And then something unexpected happened. Levanevsky expressly stated that he will never fly on Tupolev aircraft that he does not trust him. Such planes, he said, can only do pest and enemy of the people. Voroshilov tried to interrupt him, but Sigismund, seeing Molotov writes something, and for some reason decided that he writes the course of conversation, even more incensed and jabbing leaflets repeated: "Yes, Tupolev - a pest, and I demand is shorthand! "

When Levanevsky accused Kolmogorov - he blanched when he repeated his absurd accusation - that has become quite so good. Caused Poskrebyshev Tupolev and sent home.

conversation continued. Stalin, recalling that Levanevsky is not only a hero of the Soviet Union, but also a national hero in America (for the removal Mattern. - Ed.), Offered the crew to go to the U.S. and see what you can buy there for the planned flight over the North Pole.

There was a painful pause, during which Stalin was pacing back and forth across the carpet. Then I asked to speak. (A Voroshilov quietly under the table showed me a fist that I "do not vstreval.")

- What do you have? - Firmly asked Stalin.

- Comrade Stalin, in my opinion, such a trip would be fruitless.

- Why? Where such a conceit? - He lost his temper.

- I - test pilot, also interested in special literature and information on foreign aircraft construction.

Therefore I can confidently say that the machines with such data, as in the ANT-25, in the capitalist countries is not ...

- What do you suggest?

- In view of the failure of such a trip request permission to stay and fulfill their direct duties ...

really Levanevsky could not find a replacement overseas ANT-25 . Bajdukov also made every effort to "rehabilitate" wrongly rejected aircraft. In 1936, together with Chkalov and A. Belyakovym in flight

through the arctic regions of the island Udd it again - after M. Gromov's - proved that this remarkable machine can beat the record. Levanevskogo for this, no doubt, was another painful blow to the ego. Not only that his flight ended in failure at the very beginning, he has loudly and relentlessly for the time (and, as it turned out, completely unfounded ) accused the designer and airplane. Anyway Levanevskogo had to catch up again and again approved. But on what?

- May 25, 1937, ie ten days after the trip to the DB-A and back in Melitopol, Chkalov and I was summoned to the Kremlin - continues Bajdukov. - There also was invited Levanevsky. It was yet another of our meeting with him on "Summit" and also not without "surprise." We Chkalov was finally allowed to fly over the North Pole to America on the ANT-25.

- Do you want to fly with anyone? - Suddenly turned to Stalin Levanevskogo apparently mindful of the failure in 1935.

- Here Comrade Bajdukov ... - Sigismund began. - What are you - sit on two chairs? - Stalin stared at me.

Startled, I was taken aback. Said that we have already formed a crew headed by Chkalov and other work crews are not going to.

- What is going to fly? - Stalin Levanevskogo again.

- I do not know ...

Then Voroshilov, closely followed me about the conversation, suddenly nodded in my direction

- Well memory! You and Kastanaevym just set a record at Melitopol. What did you say something?

- This machine can not fly, - I replied, immediately guessed where tends Commissar. - She did not have enough range for this trip. It is generally created for other purposes - it's a bomber ...

- You do not explain to us what and why - Stalin interrupted me. - You - the chief pilot plant, show plane mate Levanevskogo acquaint with the designer.

On the way home we Chkalov long been impressed conversation in the Kremlin.

- Listen, Egor - suddenly said Valery - Offer Sigismund fly with us through the pole America in the fourth.

- As?

- Commander. Fulfill your dream - Levanevskogo hurray! Only warn him that we will fly as much as we need.

Chkalov was not a vain man, and I realized that it all worked out and says earnestly. I tried to dissuade from Levanevskogo venture with DB-A and gave him an offer Chkalov.

- George, you know me well. My character is solid - I said, I will never fly on Tupolev aircraft ...

When the factory opened the hangar and saw the plane Sigismund, he admired them. I asked to come Bolkhovitinov, said that the car was found "buyer."

- What is it? - He asked immediately upon his arrival.

- Business - nothing - tried to laugh it off me. - Hero of the Soviet Union Levanevsky wants to fly on your machine through the pole. Well, in America at once, probably will not work, and Alaska - exactly. And then across Canada you can already in the States.

- What do you mean!

I immediately phoned Commissar M.Kaganovichu aviation industry. Described the situation, said that the designer opposed. Commissar demanded to Bolkhovitinov phone and gave him a uniform spacing. It became clear that the decision "upstairs" is already taken, and no reverse ...

Before the trans-Arctic flight over the North Pole in an airplane, which received the designation "USSR N-209" had a little over two months. How did the preparation for it and if she could be successfully implemented at all for such a fantastic short term?

- In the thirties, I happened to be a test of radio-famous for ANT-25 aircraft, - says deputy byvschy A.Tupoleva, Lenin Prize winner, Dr. Technical Sciences Leonid L. Kerber. - The same as I worked

with the N-209 aircraft. I participated in the flight to Melitopol, many other flights on this machine. Expert Opinion was uniform: the machine "raw", it still needs to, as they say, to bring to mind. And suddenly such a decision - to fly over the North Pole!

After discomfiture with ANT-25 Levanevsky was certainly obsessed with the new Instant trip, but it was making preparation time negligible. August - the beginning of the Arctic winter, then fly or the first decade of the month, or, speaking sensibly, to postpone for the future. But it was not in the nature Levanevskogo, especially because his eyes were made two brilliant trip - Chkalov and Gromov - in America.

- Modern historians and experts see the main cause of the disaster in motor failure, - continues the story Kerber. - But is it only in this case? Pay attention to the crew. Command - Levanevsky, copilot - Kastanaev, navigator - Levchenko, flight engineers - yearlings and Pobezhimov, radio operator I was appointed. Who knew a car? Kastanaev and Godovikov - factory experts - and to some extent I have, quite a lot on it and fly it engaged in radio equipment. Were completely unfamiliar with the aircraft Levanevsky, Levchenko and Pobezhimov. Moreover, Levanevsky appeared only under a curtain of flying training. Prior to that he worked quite another matter - taken from the U.S. flying boats.

On what he had hoped? Apparently, his indisputable skill, and therefore does not delved into the wisdom of training. Thus, the crew did not have this competent commander, as it was in Chkalov and Gromov carriages. We called them monolithic built at full coherence and interchangeability. Gromov, Yumashev and Danilin understand each other even *spolusova*, and I would say, with *semihard*. Monolith of six people had no time to emerge, and "get ground" possible in extreme situations they would in flight.

Besides cohesion crew largely prevented arrogance of the commander. Between him and the crew has always existed a certain distance. For example, during lunch Levanevsky with his faithful navigator Viktor Levchenko always sat at the same table, the others - for others. Hand he greeted only with co-pilot and navigator of the same. Details small, but quite eloquent. But especially bright lordly nature Sigismund Alexandrovich revealed in this episode. When we were involved in preparation in Monino, emerged seemingly simple question: what color to paint the plane?

Levanevskogo us was not there, and it requested through a commission on long-haul flights. Came the answer: "In my color." That's all. Without explanation, as if all that was known. Began the search for an answer to "supremely important" for business question, what is this "its color." Through relatives found out that he has a family coat of two colors - red and blue. I remember with what thoroughness and meticulousness preparing machines for Chkalov and Gromov, what the struggle was for weight reduction. And there had to repaint the entire plane with the red and blue colors lay on the old paint military-style: it was not a rip off time. Only these "painting" work gave two extra pounds.

All this rapid preparation deposited in my memory as a random, haphazard, much like the rush work. Amazing things happen. In his rare flying at 209th Levanevsky car never took off with full weight. After our trip to Melitopol commander with Kastanaevym and Levchenko also committed flight ... the Sea of Azov. Not in Arkhangelsk, not to the New Earth, and again to the south.

As a specialist, I dare say that the change radio operator before the flight, the more such a responsible - not always the best solution. But exactly what happened: for 4 - 5 days before the start I was replaced by Galkovskii. Little did I know that I have prepared for the NKVD, like many others, a place in the logging (very soon it happened) and that replacing explained by this. I remember that I, in particular, had to move to a new radio operator and his suit made personally, as well as other members of the crew in the studio Commissariat. Sew again, of course, did not have time, but we Galkovskaya - completely different height and build! In general, everything was already



in a pretty haphazard. Some incompleteness, anxious uncertainty felt throughout. Departure from Moscow took place August 12, 1937 in 18 hours and 15 minutes in the evening. This is explained by the necessity arrival in Fairbanks during the daytime. In the morning papers the next day there were reports on the start. Leading "Truth" was published under the headline "Happy Way". It said: "... Our glorious Falcons - thunder, Chkalov Vodopiyanov Molokovo, Levanevskogo - showing the world the beauty of the spirit of the Soviet people, discover new lands, win huge, hitherto uncharted space, carried on the wings of their cars implementation great designs great people. " - remember all my life, as they saw off - says Bajdukov. - It was a sad farewell. - Goodbye, Yegor - gave me his hand, Victor Levchenko - goodbye forever. Now, if you were with us, then it would be more ... Kohl Kastanaev - the same thing - you know, to be honest - no no confidence. Few trained ... - You all options practiced with motors in case of failure? - No. - What Levanevsky? - Yes we almost never seen. He appeared at the last moment. Nikolai Godovikov - our oldest and most experienced mechanic - hugged me and kissed me on the cheek - Goodbye, Yegor probably not see you again ... - What do you mean? - I try to cheer him up. - So many children had done (he had ten sons), and now they decided nonsense. Those were seeing ... Sigismund Aleksandrovich kept a stiff upper lip, apparently looked quite calm. He was a man of resolute, stubborn and proud.

What is left?

### **Searches, or the story of the lost time**

So, in the middle of the day August 13, 1937 communication with the aircraft Levanevskogo interrupted. The crew was unable to "adequately complete" series of long-haul flights, begun by Valery Chkalov and Mikhail Gromov. Unprecedented achievement played an important place in the grand parade "the triumph of socialism." Another victory of Soviet aviation was to provide international accompaniment benevolent "victories" complete collectivization of the Second Five Stalin Constitution, the 20th anniversary in October, and finally defeat all kinds of "conspiracy" a variety of left-right-dodgers.

"In the history of aviation is not yet cases was that one country in the short term and shells produced three long-distance non-stop flight - wrote Levanevsky before the start of the aircraft "USSR N-209." - 1937 will go down in the history of world aviation bright - never forget the page. " At this time the victory did not happen.

This tragedy humanly shocked many in the world, and especially Americans, whose continent was laid course aircraft. August 14 (the next day) from Fairbanks to search for the H-209 flew three aircraft. One of the best pilots in Alaska, Joe Crosson led his "Lockheed Electra" to the north. Robins pilot co-pilot Clyde Armstidtom (he and Levanevskogo in 1934 tried to reach Alaska camp Chelyuskinites) to "Feyrchalde" went to the north-west. In northeastern direction flew second "Feyrchald" piloted by Stuart Murray. Examining the huge space and found nothing, these aircraft are back. At the fourth light aircraft from the mouth of the Mackenzie River along the northern coast of Alaska flew Robert Randall. The island Barter he saw working on, shore Eskimos and sat down with them. Here is how this meeting the American polar explorer, Stefansson Vilyamur - in his book "Unsolved Mysteries of the Arctic":

"Randall could not ask direct questions, because it is the custom among the Eskimos say questioner only nice things ... So they talked about small everyday trivialities . Inquiries Randall yielded nothing, except one. Aug. 13 people paid attention to what they then took a motorboat noise. They listened and decided that it must have been flying in the clouds plane. Many of them

had their own motor boats, and they were able to notice the difference . Aircraft noise were heard from the sea and stood deep in the land. If it really were the case, meant that came on Levanevsky Apyasku somewhat to the east of the meridian of Fairbanks. Randall A few days back flying inland and leading search along the foothills of the territory adjacent to the island Barter. He saw nothing. "



Lot of trouble and a famous American polar explorer and Aeronavigator Herbert Wilkins. With pilot Canyon he flew on a large flying boat "Consolidated" before the onset of the polar night. Since spring flew again. Senior researcher, Wilkins did not believe in forced landing aircraft Levanevskogo in Alaska. Therefore, the sphere of his quest was primarily ocean. But his plane lacked the necessary range, and the ice were in constant drift, so the search area had all the time to change. Airmen flew 10,000 miles, but also to no avail.

universal confusion in those days caused behavior Pilot James Mattern, the same Mattern, who after the accident in 1933 Chukatke Levanevsky found and brought to Alaska. Laws aviator solidarity now demanded from Mattern action. On inquiry, he replied that he was ready to participate in the search, but on a tight budget. The Soviet Union provided it gained U.S. plane. In an interview with the pilot stated that he forgot Levanevskogo action and ready to help him. Mattern promised to circumnavigate the entire area between the pole and the American coast. In fact, he made only one flight up to 70 ° north latitude and returned. By vospominanyyam

Soviet trade representative in the U.S. A.Vartanyana after arrival Mattern said: "Do you know what is the Arctic? It's a horrible country! Fly in it - this is crazy But I do not intend to die!" Public opinion was piqued. Eyewash Mattern made another flight, and that his participation in search operations ended.

Either nache can assume that the American pilots did everything possible in the eastern sector of the Arctic. And most importantly - they are included in the search immediately after the disappearance of the aircraft. So we can safely assume that the plane of the Americas "USSR N-209" is not reached.

were sent to Alaska and three Soviet aircraft, which, unfortunately, no significant contribution to the search operations have not, and could not make. V.Zadkov pilot made several flights to the old, built in the 20s flying boat "Dornier Val" that during one of the landings in the cul-de-sac was crushed by ice. A.Gratsiansky long flown on a comfortable passenger amphibian C-43, it is not adapted for such use and has besides a small radius. Finally, it is unclear why the icebreaker "Krasin" brought to Alaska U-2 - a small plywood training aircraft with a flight range of 3:00 and about 400 kilometers.

Such was the case in vostochnomh Arctic. Well, in the west?

From the message of the government commission on the organization of long-haul flights, published in "Pravda" August 15:

"... the western sector, based on Rudolf Island airbase and station" North Pole "Papanina that , given the following instructions:

1. Prepare to fly three ANT-6 returning from the North Pole to Moscow. These aircraft under the

command of Hero of the Soviet Union, vols. Vodopiyanov Molokov Alekseeva sent to Rudolf Island and thence to the North Pole.

2. Polar station that will be turned into Papanina airbase - the starting point for searches by transferring fuel from Rudolf Island at the ANT-6 ... " - After landing four Papanin our ANT-6 "of the USSR N-169" was left on the island of Rudolf Franz Josef Land to support scientific drift station "SP-1", - says the former flag-polar aviation navigator, navigator of the USSR honored Valentin Akkuratov. - In addition, we were Stewards for fixing passage through our area of Chkalov, Gromov Levanevskogo make flights over the North Pole to America. Radio operators wintering Stromilov Nikolai and Boris Anoufrieve were on watch continuously communicating with aircraft Levanevskogo. At 13.40 the plane reported that "passed pole. Height 6000, temperature minus 35. deep cyclone. strong headwind - to hundred kilometers per hour." Why do they flew at such time and in such weather? This puzzling question my colleagues and I constantly asked and ourselves and each other. Every little bit knowledgeable polar aviator understood that this season in the Arctic - not for such events. 14.32 In came the message: "The extreme right engine out of action due to damage oil line. Height 4600, go to overcast. Wait." More radio Levanevskogo we did not hear. Ether was silent. In Fairbanks plane arrived. On the eve of our trip Mazuruk commander flew in on a small bay Silent single-engine aircraft. And there is a hurricane - the plane smashed, the relationship with the Silent ceased and there Mazuruk stuck. Upon receiving the news of the missing crew Levanevskogo, we were ready to fly immediately to seek the co-pilot - an experienced polar pilot Matthew Kozlov. Moreover, we considered erroneous decision to organize an air base on the ice at Papanina. In my opinion,

it was necessary to fly over the pole, and there, two hundred kilometers along the meridian to Fairbanks in the area likely forced landing N-209, to create a support base with a reserve fuel for Vodopiyanov link. Bazirovka have Papanina lengthens the path of 600 km. Same with Rudolph searches this time of year might be fruitless. All that we outlined in the telegram that was sent to Moscow.

From the conversation with the chief NSRA Schmidt ("The Truth", on August 21 - a week after the loss of communication with the H-209):

"All in all search operations moved 9 large and 6 single-engine aircraft - the subsidiary. This includes four-engine ANT-6 - participants trip to the North Pole. One of them (pilots Mazuruk and Kozlov) is on Rudolf Island. However, we consider it inappropriate to send in search of isolation, as success better off, if the flight is a large group of ... "

How to "ensure the success of" detachment Vodopiyanov?

- Searches Levanevskogo aircraft in the western sector - the story of the LRA catastrophically lost time - continues Valentin Akkuratov. - On our telegram we received a response Sheveleva polar aviation chief: "You are forbidden to depart. Your task - to ensure drift papanintsev. After four days, will you three aircraft." Soon the story affects ... With the entire organization, taxes, and then because of the weather detachment Sheveleva - Vodopiyanov appeared on Rudolph exactly a month after the disappearance Levanevskogo - September 13! Thus, time was lost. Our whole idea was to go on the trail Goryanov. By experience it was known that the Arctic quickly hides the traces of their tragedies.

weather was getting worse. The sun went below the horizon - advancing polar night. Only 7 October (!) One of the aircraft managed to fly arrived in search. Vodop'yanov in bad weather still managed to fly close to the route to the area Levanevskogo probable accident in pole. But what could he see? .. It was the only flight group. Soon she is not fitted to the search, recalled to



Moscow.

"Pravda" newspaper, October 7: "The air armada sent by the Soviet government in search of zkipazha Levanevskogo significantly enriched. yesterday from Moscow to the North Pole flew a new detachment of heavy ships, headed by the famous polar pilot t.Chuhnovskim. Conduct comrades came members of the Government Commission on the organization of flights USSR - USA: Deputy Commissar of Defense Commander 2 rank Alksnis and Hero of the Soviet Soyuaa that Schmidt. Otto Schmidt reiterated that the indication Chukhnovsky Stalin work quietly, considering every detail of flight deep into the Central Arctic Basin. "

- We flew the second squad, specially trained, equipped, even spotlights for night searches. With him the accident occurred, which probably seemed like a bad anecdote. Detachment flew not to Rudolph, and to the Bay Quiet. Rudolph then open, then close - the weather is terrible. Get the message that half an hour all the planes - Chukhnovsky, Grandma, and Moszkowski Farih - sit on Rudolph. Soon - New message: due to fog on the island took Jackson, 40 kilometers south of our island. When we flew to them, on the island of Jackson aircraft ... was not there. Going day after day, took valuable time. There was a connection, but there was no aircraft. But where are they? It already looks like some political devilry. Someone from wintering got the idea to include a powerful ceiling spotlight. It will be visible for a hundred miles, and will only flown notch his bearing and let us know. When lit spotlight (he was directed horizontally), we suddenly in his beam at 4 kilometers saw siluaty aircraft. Almost a month squad sat at the end of our airport!

Time was lost completely - November 19 - about any "flying deep into the Central Polar Basin" is not out of the question, any "guidance of Comrade Stalin," now were not feasible. In general, I still can not understand why us in the night, winter Arctic sent Chukhnovsky group.

B.Chuhnovskogo radiograms from 31 October (two and a half months after the disappearance of the H-209): "The fifth day aircraft are in one of the covered ice islands of Franz Josef Land. Prognosis not fly until we can not continue. "

This radiogram was the last news story about the search for the crew Levanevskogo. By the time the six-week supply of food available at the N-209 has been exhausted ...

- Only six months later - says V.Akkuratov - ended when the polar night, Jacob Moszkowski made even a single flight for the pole, but, of course, found nothing there. I think this is a few people were interested ...

And yet there was another news story about the tragic events related to the search for the aircraft "USSR N-209", although this is not directly stated. May 20, 1938 "Pravda" and "Izvestia" reported that during takeoff from an airfield near Arkhangelsk crashed (?) Plane H-212. Of the 16 crew members died Head Squadron HSU M.S.Babushkin, bortinzhvner I.I.Zhutovsky doctor E.M.Rossels and mechanic???. A.Gursky. The remaining injured.

- Yes, - concludes his story V.Akkuratov - Cancelled gamble worth of new victims. First landing on Rudolf Island Chukhnovsky car crashes, then Grandmother crashes on the island and Hooker gets broken both legs. When it comes to stop and search for the disposal of all returning to Moscow, there is no accident, as the newspapers, but a real disaster. Moszkowski takeoff from Archangel could not stand straight, go left. Heavy machine wheels hit an obstacle. Struck fuel tanks, petrol flushed and burning plane fell into the river. Grandma drowned wounded and a few others ... And it was done during these "grand" searches, in general, only two flights.

... And - a few more thoughts about the failed hop N-209. Why Levanevsky after the failure of the motor is not turned on Rudolf Island? There was a beacon - they would find in any weather. And even if the machine broke, but would still be alive. The calculation is simple: to Agaski were two thousand kilometers before us - a thousand ... Levanevsky could not go back.

When in 1935 did not get the first flight over the North Pole advertised on ANT-25, he apparently

managed to convince Stalin that the second will be a success for sure. And Stalin again helped him in every way. And now that - again with nothing? But unless you can abuse the trust of the leader? And Levanevsky continued flying. Heavy aircraft hit a fierce cyclone ... Closer us to the supposed catastrophe there was no one. From Alaska, as I have said, "reach out" to the area was impossible. For us it was quite achievable. Always believed deeply flawed solution manual banning us fly. Though even today put forward a lot of versions of the death of the crew Levanevskogo and even attempts to search the plane, confident that this tragic flight will forever remain a mystery ...

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