



Tupolev Tu-114: The First Soviet Intercontinental Airliner, Vol. 31 (Red Star)

By Yefim Gordon, Vladimir Rigmant

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In the early 1950s, OKB Tupolev, the Tupolev design bureau, was instructed by the Soviet government to design a civil airliner with an intercontinental range. Based upon the earlier four-engined Tu-95 strategic bomber, the resulting aircraft was the largest airliner constructed at that time, providing accommodation for up to 220 passengers.

The Tu-144 confounded experts by being able to fly at speeds similar to those achieved by jet aircraft, while still using turboprop technology. The Tu-114 set a number of records, including the speed record for a turbo-prop aircraft that still stands 50 years later.

A total of 31 Tu-114's entered service with Aeroflot, operating over long distance internal services and international services to cities from Tokyo to Havana. Gradually replaced from 1971, the last Tu-144 Aeroflot service was withdrawn in 1975. However, a number of the Tu-114's were subsequently converted into AWACS aircraft as the Tu-126 "Moss" for operation in the Soviet navy.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Yefim Gordon is one of Russia's leading aviation writers and publishers. He is the author of many books on Soviet aviation and currently lives in Moscow.

Vladimir G. Rigmant, born in 1945, has been working in the Soviet/Russian aircraft industry since 1963. He graduated from an aviation technical school in 1964, and then in the mid 1980s graduated from the All-Union Correspondence-Education Polytechnical Institute (VZPI), where he majored in automatic control and remote-control systems. Since 1986 he has worked for the Tupolev Design Bureau (later known as the Tupolev Aviation Scientific & Technical Complex and then as the Tupolev Public Limited Co.), starting his career at the company's operational support department. Currently he is the company president's press aide and director of the company museum. Rigmant has authored more than 10 books, including some English editions, and more than 200 magazine features.

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