

MISCELLANEOUS

Reikh's Flag at the North Pole

Moscow, 10 May. The flag of the Russia painter Nikolay Konstantinovich Rerikh, symbolizing the painter's call to the nations of the planet: "Peace Through Culture," was placed in the centre of the North Pole where it flapped in the wind. And thus ended the skiing expedition, fraught with difficulties, that had left Shmidt Island (Severnaya Zemlya Archipelago) on 4 March.

In difficult weather and ice conditions, fully self-sufficient, using only the food and fuel they could take with them, a handful of daredevils skied approximately one thousand kilometres and set a new record for the history books of Arctic conquest. Though spring was approaching in the Arctic, temperatures at times dropped to minus 45°C. Blizzards, crevasses, hummocks, frequent ice movements, strong drifting headwinds -- all this strained the resources of the expedition to the utmost.

"The progress of the expedition was very stressful and even dramatic," Vladimir Churakov, staff leader of the expedition, explained to our TASS correspondent. "Unpleasant as it is to say, I must report that in the final stages of the expedition, tragedy occurred. One of the members of the expedition, Aleksandr Rybakov, an experienced adventurer, who had participated in northern expeditions on many occasions, died. According to preliminary medical reports, the cause of death was lung and heart insufficiency.