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ALEXANDRE ANANOFF (1910-1992): 30 YEARS TO PROMOTE ASTRONAUTICS BEFORE
SPUTNIK

Abstract

2012 marks the 20th anniversary of A. Ananoff's death.

Born in 1910 in Tbilisi, Georgia, the Russian-French space enthusiast Alexandre Ananoff is known for being the organizer of the first International Astronautical Congress at the Palais de la découverte, Paris, in September-October 1950, as well for authoring the famous book "L'Astronautique" (1950) and advising fellow author Hergé for his book adventures of Tintin on the Moon. The purpose of our paper is to present his complete works to promote space, from his first public presentations after discovering the works of Tsiolkovsky in the late 20's to his analysis of the first Sputnik launch in the popular French magazine "Paris Match" in 1957.

A. Ananoff was a real ambassador for space and probably the first in France to be one. He built a unique collection of books and novels about space travel (donated before his death to the French Air and Space Museum of Paris-Le Bourget), wrote dozens of articles, gave numerous lectures and corresponded with most of the space pioneers around the world. However, he was criticized to be an autodidact and was very disappointed by the lack of consideration within its own country. Then after the Sputnik launch, he totally stopped his space activities to become a specialist of the 18th century French painter Fragonard. He published his "Memoirs of an Astronaut" in 1978 and gave a last lecture at IAC in September 1979. He died in Paris on 25 December 1992, aged 82. His last wish was that his ashes could be sent on the Moon, a goal of all his efforts.

"L'homme parviendra à s'arracher à la Terre, à prendre possession de son domaine solaire. . . Puisse-t-il alors élever son cœur à la hauteur de son savoir !" Alexandre Ananoff, "L'Astronautique", 1950