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MARCEL KLAJN, DREAMER OF SPACE, BUILDER OF SATELLITES: THE UNTOLD STORY OF  
ISRAEL'S SPACE PROGRAMS PIONEER

**Abstract**

Dr. Marcel Klajn (1937-2008) was one of the very few pioneers of Israel's bold space program. Dr. Klajn held various positions, among them the director general of Israel's space agency, Chief scientist at RAFAEL advanced defense systems. In the late 1970's, together with Dr. Yonatan Mass of Rafael, Marcel Klajn designed the first Israeli satellite, named ABIR (Knight). After enormous efforts – both in budget and man power, a dramatic decision was made within Israel's MOD – to avert the design effort of the nation's first indigenously designed and built satellite – from RAFAEL to IAI (Israel aerospace industries Ltd.). Although Klajn was Rafael person all his career days, he was asked to join IAI as project director at its space design house – MBT space.

Marcel Klajn was responsible not only for the satellite, but also played a prominent role in the development of Israel's launch vehicle, the Shavit (Comet). The author was granted access to the personal archives of Klajn and to documents from his years at RAFAEL and IAI. He served his country in numerous positions within the defense establishment and also as public servant – as the head of the Israeli space agency – in its formative years.

The paper will portray the role of this unsung pioneer of space programs, and it will be a continuation of the author's works on the history of Israel's space program, especially the papers that were presented in previous congresses of the IAF.