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Author: Mr. Virgiliu Pop
Romanian Space Agency (ROSA), Romania, virgiliu.pop@gmail.com

THE ZAMBIAN SPACE ODDITY

Abstract

In the 1960s and 1970s, the race to the Moon between the USA and the URSS had a third unlikely contender – Zambia’s “National Academy of Science Space Research and Philosophy” chaired by Colonel Edward Mukuka Nkoloso. The ill-fated attempts of this former freedom fighter to beat NASA and the Soviets in their race to the Moon – closely followed by the international media - were a source of discomfort to President Kenneth Kaunda, who later declared that the Zambian Space Program wasn’t a real thing ... It was more for fun than anything else”.

This paper will present the story of the “Zambian Space Program”, documented both from the international and Zambian press of the day, as well as from a video interview I took in March 2010 of Mr. Mukuka Nkoloso Jr, the son of Collonel Mukuka Nkoloso and one of the original “Afronauts”.