

PREFACE

ABOUT THE PUBLICATION “ROMANIAN COURIER”.

Thirty six years ago, on May 19th, 1980, my husband and I started the publication CURIERUL ROMÂNESC in Gothenburg, Sweden. From the beginning, we, Octavian Ciupitu and Silvia Constantinescu, have been the owners and editors of the publication, assisted by our four children (Mariejeanne Atanasia Ciupitu, Anne-Marie Theodora Ciupitu, Marc Paul Veniamin Ciupitu, and Theo Alex Christian Ciupitu) who started their “journalist” activities by attaching stamps to envelopes, then by publishing their own articles in the pages of the magazine, and ultimately by sponsoring the publication.

We never hoped to have, nor did we ever have, any monetary gains from this activity. We never depended financially on anyone other than our family income; editing of the publication took place every evening after our regular day jobs: Octavian is an architect and I a teacher, librarian, translator, reviewer, correspondent for the BBC, Free Europe, etc. We donated the publication to those who wanted to read it.

The publication has never been subject to, nor directed by, any authority or political party! We tried to make room for a large number of speakers of the Romanian language in exile, as well as some representatives of the Romanian and Swedish societies, regardless of their political leanings, ethnic or religious affiliation, and without censoring any ideas, because we considered, and continue to consider, that the role of the journalist is to correctly inform readers and give them the opportunity to form their own opinions, and not to be the propagandist in the service of those who pay better!

When we started this publication, our hope was to connect with other politically exiled people from Romania, to let us share our experience of living in the country of Sweden, with a remarkably different way of thinking and behavior from that in Romania, and to learn as much as possible about this country in which we lived

TO THE STARS
Conversations with Astronauts and Cosmonauts.
Preface.

with our children, but doing so using the Romanian language. In time we also connected with Romanians in France, Germany, Canada, USA, and even Australia. Octavian Ciupitu presented the cultural work from Sweden, "Cultural events in Stockholm", but also from other parts of the world, book reviews, etc., and I conducted interviews with exiles from Romania - Constantin Mareş, Ion Raţiu, René Théo, Horia Georgescu, Christian Mititelu, Emilian Hurezeanu, Mihail Korne, Radu Portocală, Uli Friedberg-Vălureanu, Ştefan, Racoviţă, Constantin Roman, Solo Juster, Radu Negresco-Soutzo, Shlomo Leibovici-Laiş, etc. and also interviews with various figures in Swedish society - Gusaf Piehl, Alf Svensson, Göran Persson, Inga Gottfarb, Eric Belfrage, Johan Hirschfeldt, Bo Berggren, Björn von Sidow, Lorică Baeckström, Claes Eklundh, Stikkan Andersson, Salomo Berlinger, etc. We expanded the subject matter further with articles and interviews about auctions in Stockholm, about jewelry, about the European Union, about the Nobel Prize, etc.

WHY ABOUT SPACE TRAVELS?

I have the belief that we, the people of Earth, are not alone in this immense Universe. I gained my faith and passion for the Universe from the very beginning by reading science-fiction literature that started to appear in Romania in the 1960s, from Erich von Däniken "Erinnerungen an die Zukunft (Memories of the Future)", to ufology, to "Tid och Evighet" (Time and Eternity) by Clifford D. Simak, etc. to the movies "Ommicron", "Star Trek" and "Stargate".

I wanted to become an astronaut or to be professionally tied to space research, but, to paraphrase Wernher von Braun, you have to "...learn physics and mathematics, in English and in the United States."

I transmitted my belief, and even passion, for the Universe to our oldest son Marc Paul, and through enormous financial sacrifices by us, his parents, we sent him to school in the USA, where he studied English, physics and mathematics, followed by aerospace engineering, and eventually, he was hired at NASA. I can say that

TO THE STARS
Conversations with Astronauts and Cosmonauts.
Preface.

part of my dream was coming true! And even though the theme of the CURIERUL ROMÂNESC was not directly related to the Universe theme, we initiated a series of interviews with astronauts and cosmonauts.

We started with Dumitru Dorin Prunariu, the first Romanian cosmonaut in space, whom I met in Bucharest. Then I asked Marc if he could forward some questions to several astronauts and cosmonauts. For example, just when astronaut "Bill" McArthur Jr., the 12th commander of the International Space Station and today the Director of Safety and Mission Assurance at the Johnson Space Center, was "up there" he sent him my questions.

He also sent my questions to cosmonaut Yuri Pavlovic Gidzenko, who today is a department chief at the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center. And I called Swedish astronaut Christer Fuglesang on the telephone. That's how these articles appeared in the CURIERUL ROMÂNESC.

We also sent Theo, the youngest of our children, to school in the USA, again through great sacrifice, where he studied English and completed his law studies. And now he is sponsoring the making of this book from the articles that appeared in the CURIERUL ROMÂNESC.

In 1995 we began editing the volume of interviews with Romanians in exile: "Exile – People and ideas", volume 1.

In 2012, 17 years later, we continued editing the volume of other published articles in the CURIERUL ROMÂNESC, such as: "Travels in the Land of the Rising Sun" (2012), "Jewelry of dreams – About precious stones and meetings with Swedish jewelers", "Exile – People and ideas" volume 2, "I knew a hero – Meetings with Corneliu Coposu" (2013), "Alfred Nobel - His life, work and legacy" (2014), "Sleep of reason breeds monsters" (2014), "Aftermath of the ousted Communist mentality - Meetings with H.M. King Mihai of Romania" (2014) "Sweden - People and ideas" (2014), "Romania - People and ideas" (2015).

This year we collected into one volume the interviews and articles published in the CURIERUL ROMÂNESC about the Universe. *

Silvia Constantinescu