

# TWENTY YEARS OF THE ODESSA CORRESPONDENCE ASTRONOMICAL COURSES

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**ABSTRACT.** The work of the Odessa Correspondence Courses is briefly described.

**Key words:** Astronomical education, amateur astronomy

The Odessa Correspondence Courses were initiated by Prof. V.P.Tsessevich, the famous scientist and popularizer of science, whose books and popular lectures attracted to science few generations of young people. These courses were initially based on the replies to the letters of the amateurs and scholars who often ask for a various astronomical information. However, in addition to the consultations, V.P.Tsessevich proposed to send also home tasks on astronomy, mathematics and physics, and the work started. For each class at the school, five parts of samples from 10 home tasks were elaborated. The solutions by the scholars were checked, their errors marked and correct solutions and answers sent back.

This work started when the number of pupils of this correspondence school was about a dozen or two. However, it's popularity grewed within the whole Soviet Union and even other countries. The peak of activity occurred in mid-80-ies, when the annual number of letters exceeds 3200! One may note, however, that these courses were not a separate official structure inside the University and had no special funding for salary, thus it was something like a public organization for introducing astronomical knowledge to the scholars. However, the postal expenses were covered, as well as the publication of the booklets for amateur astronomers and students, and we succeeded to publish a series of booklets on instructions for observers, theoretical reviews and sample computer programs. These materials have been published by the Odessa State University, Odessa Institute for the Extended Teaching of Pedagogues and the Ochakov Lyceum. The teachers of these courses are listed as co-authors in the alphabetical order. Some part of work (about 10 per cent) was done by students.

This work was made in close collaboration with the groups teaching the pupils in the Planetarium and the

Region Station for Young Technicians (ObISUT). Moreover, during 2 years (1994–95) the courses were supported financially by ObISUT in addition to the existing section of astronomy of the "Small Academy of Sciences" "Prometheus". Now the courses still exist again as a public organization, the aim of which is to help young people to "find their own star".

### Brief list of popular articles and booklets by the members of this group.

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Andronov I.L., Kudashkina L.S.: 1988, *The instruction for visual observations of variable stars*. - Odessa University Press, 8pp.

Andronov I.L.: 1991, *Visual and photographic observations of variable stars*. - Odessa University Press, 84pp.

Andronov I.L.: 1991, *Structure and Evolution of Variable Stars. Part 1*. Textbook for the school astronomical groups.- Odessa Inst. for the Extended Teaching of Pedagogues, 86pp.

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Kudashkina L.S.: 1990-96, *The Atlas of Amateur Astronomer, parts 1-5*.

Kudashkina L.S., Rudnitskij G.M.: 1988a, Long-periodic variable stars, *Zemlya i Vselennaya* (Earth and Universe), N 2, 17-24.

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