

TRIBUTE TO ALEXANDER HERBERT IMICH (02.04.1903, Czestochowa, Poland – 08.06.2014, New York, USA)*

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ABSTRACT: This article* seeks to pay a tribute to Alexander Imich, a Polish-born American, parapsychologist, and writer, from a Jewish family with a strong interest in parapsychic phenomena since a very young age.

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MINIBIOGRAPHY

Alexander Herbert Imich was born on February 4, 1903, in Czestochowa, Poland, in a Jewish family with a good financial and cultural background. His father was an active and respected member of the community. He was educated at home until the age of 10, by preceptors who introduced him to literature, with novels about adventures and discoveries, matching his neophilia and his constant desire for knowledge, which are two of his characteristics. According to Waldo Vieira (see the previous interview), Imich had the opportunity to visit an advanced extraphysical community in the intermissive period prior to his resoma, which deeply impacted his parabrains, and was determinant throughout the rest of his existence. His unceasing and unflagging determination for understanding the consciousness in all its different states of manifestation, would be an effect of this visit. A proof of this is Imich's interest in parapsychic phenomena ever since he was 13 years old, the same age a Jewish boy is considered grown up and responsible before Judaism, assuming an alleged alliance to his people. This early search for the paraphenomenology indicates contrasting paragenetics with the Jewish majority, affiliating himself to the universalist conception of human transcendence, instead of religious and sectarian dogmatism. At the age of 16, he informed his mother about his intentions of becoming a *yogi*, an accessible representation for him of his ideal. Until the end of his life he continued affirming that enlightenment was his biggest existential objective. He practiced multiple sports in his youth becoming even a swimming champion. Refused by the Polish Navy due to its current anti-Semitism, he went on to study zoology at the

University of Krakow and obtained his doctorate with an original study about aquatic worms. He took advantage of his stay in the University to study several subjects such as chemistry, physics, botany, geology, mineralogy, crystallography, optics, philosophy, psychiatry, mathematical logics, and astronomy, feeding this way his unceasing appetite for knowledge. At this time, he held his famous experiments with the medium Matylda, which are registered in his book *Incredible Tales of the Paranormal*, written in 1995. After obtaining his title, and with no possibility of becoming a teacher at the University, he decided to use the training he did and become a chemist. At the age of 24, he married a chemist colleague, but unfortunately, she left him. During the conflict derived from this situation he even considered suicide but given the fact that his older brother had also committed this act due to matters of the heart, he abandoned the attempt and overcame the problem.

Sometime later, he married for a second time, after some difficulties, with a young woman called Wela, from an orthodox Jewish family. They were very happy, and together passed through the World War II, immigrating after it to the USA, where Wela worked as a clinical psychologist until her death in the middle of the 80's. At the beginning of the World War II, he joined the Polish Armed Forces, and during a campaign at the borders, he was invited by the Russians to work as an industrial chemist. Soon his wife joined him, but when they refused Russian citizenship, they were taken to a prisoner's camp close to the White Sea. Imich considered everything an adventure, but the situation was extreme. There was lack of food, of medical supplies, and the temperature was minus 50 degrees Celsius. A year and a half later, the

couple was released, and they chose a city in Kazakhstan, on the border with Iran, to live. Imich worked in a factory and soon became its manager. Two years later, they returned to Poland and became aware of the holocaust. Many of their family members had died on concentration camps.

They picked up Wela's sister in Germany and then immigrated to the USA. Imich continued working as a chemist and parapsychologist until his retirement. He published many papers on parapsychology, in many different journals. He eventually offered an annual prize, approximately between 1989 and 2004, for the best original essay on parapsychology, as per the list below. His attempt was to foster new ideas in a field which he considered practically inert. At this time, he was introduced by Patrice Kean, from the ASPR, to Waldo Vieira and both became good friends, according to the following interview. At the age of 95, he obtained his degree in Healing Arts. He lived 111 years, many lives in one, completely focused on personal and also scientific evolution. Alexander Imich left a legacy of brilliance, erudition, courage, scientific forward thinking and, last but not least, good humour.

ALEXANDER IMICH ESSAY PRIZE (1989-2004)

1989 - Society for Psychical Research (SPR), London, UK. Winner: Joseph H. Rush.

Essay: How the scientific establishment's acceptance of ESP and PK would influence contemporary society? JASPR, vol. 83(3), 1989, p. 241-249.

1990 - Winner: James McClennon.

Essay: Parapsychological legitimacy and social change, JASPR, vol. 84(2), 1990, p. 127-143.

1991 - Theme: What more does the scientific establishment require to accord parapsychology full recognition? Winner: Susan Blackmore.

Essay: Psi in Science, JSPR, vol. 57 (823), 1991, p. 404-411.

1993 - Society for Psychical Research (SPR), London, UK. Winners: Nils O. Jacobson and Jens A. Tellefsen.

Essay: Dowsing along the PSI track – A novel procedure for studying unusual perception, JSPR, vol. 59, n. 834, Jan. 1994, p. 231-339.

1994 - Center for Frontier Sciences, Temple University, Philadelphia, USA. Theme: Are all crop circles merely hoaxes?

1995 - Exceptional Human Experience Network (EHE).

1996 - Rhine Research Center, Durham, USA. Winner: Dean Radin.

1997 - Winners: Michael Levin and Michael Grosso.

1999 - IM School of Healing Arts, New York City, USA. Winner: Patricia B. Corbett.

Theme: What evidence is needed to convince mainstream scientists – and perhaps yourself – that the UFO phenomenon is real and worthy of serious study?

Essay: UFOs – A challenge to mainstream science.

2000 - Exceptional Human Experience Network (EHE). Winner: Theresa M. Danna.

Essay: A link of love.

2001 - Exceptional Human Experience Network (EHE). Winner: Deirdre Quiery.

Theme: Exceptional human experience autobiographical essays.

2002 - Anomalous Phenomena Research Center, New York City, USA.

Theme: How would the undisputed recognition and acceptance of paranormal phenomena transform present religious movements and accelerate the spiritual progress of Western society?

2004 - Winner: Vernon M. Neppe.

Theme: Why parapsychology is among the most important science?

Essay: Why parapsychology is amongst the most important of the sciences, Australian Journal of Parapsychology, vol. 5, n. 1, 2005, p. 4-22.

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