

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Calling Planet Earth - Space Outreach to the General Public (6)

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AFTER SYROMIATNIKOV'S APOLLO-SOYUZ IN 1975, REACHING OUT IN REUNION ISLAND
WITH A GATE OF THE WORLDS SPACE MONUMENT AND A LEGEND FOR OVERVIEW

Abstract

During the 70's, while Soviets and Americans were competing for power, for the first time in history, spaceships of both nations were to meet in orbit for a "handshake in space". At a time when docking systems were of the "male-female" type, which created a psycho-political difficulty for the Apollo-Soyuz encounter, Vladimir Syromiatnikov went around the problem with the invention of the symmetrical APAS androgenous system, which precluded a power fight and facilitated a meeting between people in mutual respect.

In 1997, Vladimir Syromianikov, who was also one of the designers of Sputnik-1 along with Serguei Korolev, gave valuable assistance to students in Reunion Island to design the first high-school satellite in the world, a functional scale replica of Sputnik-1, together with young Russian colleagues. In recognition, the City of Saint-Denis, in Reunion Island, gave the name of Vladimir Syromiatnikov to a round-about on one of the main avenues of the city, and erected a 4-meter high monument in the center of the place, where it can be seen by thousands of automobilists every day. The monument, called the "Gate of the Worlds" features a giant symbolic representation of the APAS system.

Reunion Island is a unique place on Planet Earth, originally uninhabited, where people have come from Europe, Africa, Madagascar, India, China, etc.. to live and beautifully mix together, living in modernity and sharing their diversity in mutuel respect without forgetting their multiple origins, very much in the same overview spirit which was the base for the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project.

A short movie, called "The Legend of the Gate of the Worlds", was made around these symbols, linking historical facts with philosophical, scientific and artistic concepts, to show human diversity, with different original musical instruments, clothing or weapons, and unification processes around food and transmission of knowledge. The movie, in French and English, shows how harmony would be possible, when there are no longer attempts for domination and when respectful symetry in relationships becomes a rule, as was technically demonstrated in space with Vladimir Syromiatnikov's invention.