

SOVIET-INDIAN COOPERATION SERIES



*Friendship of  
nine hundred  
millions*

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# FRIENDSHIP OF NINE HUNDRED MILLIONS

*Compiled and Edited*  
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## SOVIET-INDIAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

*...In essence, the entire Soviet people are collective members of the Society of Friendship with India. The entire Soviet people are your friends—trusted, sincere and reliable friends.*

From L.I. Brezhnev's speech at the meeting with the activists of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society on November 28, 1973.

The Society of Soviet-Indian Cultural Relations was formed on January 24, 1958 at a meeting dedicated to India's Republic Day. Among the initiators of its formation were Indologists A. Dyakov, V. Balabushevich, poetess Zulfia, Academician N. Tsitsyn, film actor N. Cherkasov, diplomat N. Firubin and others.

“Striving for further development of mutual understanding, friendship and relations of goodwill among peoples, we, the representatives of Soviet society who have gathered here, take the decision to launch the Society whose main purpose will be the all-round development and strengthening of friendship, mutual understanding, trust and cultural cooperation between the Soviet Union and India,” said the decision of the meeting on the formation of the Society. It was signed by 320 participants.

## TWO DECADES OF FRIENDSHIP

By N. V. Goldin

*President SIFS, USSR Minister*

Soviet-Indian friendship, a friendship of 900 million peoples, has several-centuries-old traditions. From mutual attraction and good-neighbourly liking for each other, it developed into mutual understanding and cooperation in diverse fields of modern life. This friendship has become more intimate after India achieved independence.

In October, last year, speaking at a Kremlin luncheon hosted in honour of India's Prime Minister Morarji Desai, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, L.I. Brezhnev, said: "Our relations are a good example of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems and are an important factor of peace and stability in Asia and the entire world. In the process of their development, the deep friendship between the peoples of the two great countries—the USSR and India—which is based on mutual respect and mutual trust, is shaping and strengthening. And we are confident that this friendship will last for ages!"

In the field of politics the common striving for durable peace, relaxation of international tension and the struggle for disarmament, against imperialism and colonialism, became the basis for cooperation between the two countries. It should be especially noted here that Soviet-Indian relations were never marred by conflicts. They are a good example of fruitful cooperation between two states with different social systems. The most important documents signed by the state leaders of the USSR and India—such as the Treaty of



Peace, Friendship and Cooperation of 1971, the Joint Soviet-Indian Declaration of 1977—demonstrate a high level of maturity of relations between the two countries and determine the main trends of their development.

Soviet-Indian relations are strengthening, developing and are being raised to a new level. The Soviet people keenly follow the life of the friendly country and rejoice at the successes which India achieved over the period of independence. The Indian people scored them through hard labour in a tense struggle against the difficulties left over from the colonial past.

Today India possesses the industrial basis which is capable of ensuring the country's advance along the road of strengthening economic independence. The Soviet people are glad to note that they have made a substantial contribution to these successes.

A good basis for fruitful development of economic relations between the USSR and India was provided by the agreement on further development of economic and trade cooperation signed in New Delhi in 1973. These relations were highly assessed by the Prime Minister of India, Morarji Desai, who stressed that "the cooperation with the Soviet Union helped India advance along the road of achieving economic independence and to occupy a place among the leading states of the world".

Soviet-Indian cultural ties are also developing successfully. There is an increased exchange of spiritual values and riches of our ancient cultures, and the ties and contacts are strengthening and expanding between social, women's, sports and other organisations.

An especially great role in carrying out the noble mission of bringing together the two great peoples is played by the two fraternal societies—the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society (SIFS) and the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society (ISCUS).

It is not possible to overestimate the importance of the tremendous and multi-sided activity undertaken in our two countries by the thousands of activists of these societies. Today the friendship between the peoples of the USSR and India has crossed the boundaries of official relations and become a peoples' cause.

Very recently, in 1977, we observed the 25th anniversary of the ISCUS whose rich history obviously reflected the growth of friendship of the Indian people towards the USSR, their striving to get acquainted with the experience of the Soviet state as closely as possible and with its history and culture. And in January 1978 we

marked another event—the 20th anniversary of the formation of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society.

Today the SIFS, which has grown beyond recognition over the years, is one of the largest mass social organisations of the Soviet Union. It comprises 21 Republican and city branches—in the Republics of the RSFSR and the Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Kirghizia, Turkmenia and Tajikistan, Bashkiria and Buryatia, in the cities like Moscow and Leningrad, Kiev and Tashkent, Ashkhabad and Irkutsk...About 350 industrial enterprises, collective farms and state farms, scientific research institutes, universities, schools, theatres, publishing houses, editorial boards of journals and newspapers are collective members of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society. These branches are located all over the broad expanses of the USSR—from the Baltic Sea to the Far East, from the Arctic Ocean to the sun-baked sands of the Kara-Kum desert. It is difficult to list them all. Among them are Moscow's "Hammer and Sickle" plant, Tashkent's cable plant, the collective farm named after the 40th anniversary of the Turkmenian Republic and Leningrad works "Elektrosila", the Moscow Boarding School where children learn Hindi, the Bashkir branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences, the Central Children's Theatre and the Gypsy Theatre "Roman"... Millions of Soviet people are in the ranks of the SIFS: prominent statesmen and public figures, scholars, writers, musicians, broad masses of workers, collective farmers and representatives of the intelligentsia.

In its work the Society enjoys wide support from the Soviet state organs and public organisations, and all its activities acquire with each passing year a greater mass character.

The entire activity of the SIFS is directed at the further development and strengthening of friendship, mutual understanding and all-round cooperation between the peoples of the Soviet Union and India. In its activities the society is guided by the provisions of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between the USSR and India, the Joint Soviet-Indian Declaration of 1977, and other documents signed by the governments of the two countries.

Over the two decades, the Society has diversified its activities jointly with Indian friends. Since 1963, friendly ties have been established between the Republican branches of the SIFS and State branches of the ISCUS, and between many Soviet and Indian cities. There is a twin-relationship between the Ukraine and West Bengal,

Uzbekistan and Punjab, Kazakhstan and Kerala, Tajikistan and Uttar Pradesh, Lithuania and Orissa, between Moscow and Delhi, Leningrad and Bombay, Volgograd and Madras, Ivanovo and Ahmedabad. Since 1972 ties have been established between the Autonomous Republics of the Russian Federation and Indian states: between Bashkiria and Haryana, Dagestan and Jammu and Kashmir, Buryatia and Manipur and Tripura, etc.

Over the years, the SIFS has done tremendous work in acquainting the Soviet people with the history, culture and contemporary life of India. Hundreds of evenings and meetings dedicated to India are held to mark the national holidays and important events in the history of Soviet-Indian cooperation. A large number of lectures, art- and photo-exhibitions, film festivals and other activities are organised every year all over the country. Since the signing of the Soviet-Indian Peace Treaty in 1971, it has become a tradition to organise every year months dedicated to this historic event. The Society especially undertook wide-ranging work in 1977 when our people marked the 60th anniversary of the Great October Revolution, the adoption of the new USSR Constitution and the 30th anniversary of India's independence. In all, in 1977, the SIFS organised more than 600 functions dedicated to Soviet-Indian cooperation. Millions of Soviet people participated in the Month of Soviet-Indian Friendship dedicated to the 30th anniversary of India's independence and the 6th anniversary of the Treaty and in the festival of Indian art and culture. While, in India millions participated in various functions in honour of the 60th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The number of Soviet and Indian delegations paying visits to the country of the other is increasing with every year. Scientific symposia, seminars and conferences on various aspects of Soviet-Indian cooperation, and on memorable dates in the life of our countries, organised by the SIFS and ISCUS, have become events of considerable significance.

The SIFS has nine committees: women's, youth, medical, law, culture and on the work of collective members, on information and scientific contacts, on pen-friendship and on the work with delegations.

The everyday work of the committees is quite purposeful and effective. Their activities help establish professional contacts.

Addressing the activists of the ISCUS in Delhi in 1973, L.I.

Brezhnev said: "Nobody would dispute that the better the people are acquainted with the history, traditions and culture of other people, the more they can understand today's aims and cares of each. And this creates an atmosphere of trust, mutual understanding and goodwill. In this atmosphere the crown of the friendship tree becomes all the more luxuriant and rich."

Today, in the 21st year of the ISCUS, everyone—including its leaders and rank-and-file members—sees in it his main task and strives so that this activity would lead towards the development of good-neighbourly relations between the peoples of the USSR and India, the strengthening of peace and security and new successes in the struggle for happiness of the peoples.

## FESTIVAL OF INDIAN ART

The curtain goes up slowly. On the stage appears Uma Sharma. Her movements in Kathak dance are swift. When the performer starts improvisation as if in competition with the tabla player, the hall freezes for a moment and then bursts into a stormy applause. They go into ecstasy again after the performance of Sonal Mansingh, Alamel Valli's dance and Hariprasad Chaurasia's flute recital.

For the first time in the history of Soviet-Indian relations, a festival of Indian culture and art was held in the USSR in 1977, and on the day of its opening the Indian envoys sang and danced on the best stage of the country—at the Bolshoi Theatre of the USSR.

"I am fortunate today," says Uma Sharma. "The concert of Indian artists started with my dance on the Bolshoi Theatre stage, I have been to the Soviet Union thrice, but this is the most wonderful visit. My fondest dream has come true, to dance on the famous stage for the distinguished spectators."

"I can't imagine a better audience than this," chimes in Sonal Mansingh. "I knew that friends were awaiting me. But once again meeting their sincere and attentive attitude to our art, I can't but respond to this with all my heart."

Dozens of concerts were given by the participants of the Festival in Moscow, Leningrad, Yerevan, Sochi, Riga, Irkutsk, Novosibirsk, Frunze, Samarkand, Tashkent, Dushanbe, Ashkhabad and Baku. And in all these cities their activity was not just confined to performing on the stage. The SIFS invited them for a meeting with the activists, acquainted them with the activity of enterprises and cooperatives which are their collective members and arranged meetings with the public. Thanks to these measures involving thousands of people, there were many who were fortunate enough to acquaint themselves with the Indian art during the Festival.

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A couple of dozen of people are seated at a round table in a small, comfortable hall of the House of Friendship. Nobody is presiding and there is no formal time-table, though a meeting of the cultural committee of the SIFS is on. This is an evening from the series "Literature Brings Peoples Closer".

"It seems to me that poetry is as ancient a concept as bread," says poet Alim Keshokov. "In India I had a chance of participating in wonderful poetic meets called 'mushaira'. We, the Soviet poets, are spoilt by the public attention. Poetry collections in our country are brought out in 50 thousand or 100 thousand copies. Poetic meets are organised at stadiums : in order to accommodate all the interested people, it is simply not possible to get a suitable hall. Nevertheless, I was impressed in India by the number of the people gathered at a mushaira and their readiness to hear the poetry all through the night.

"There is so much that binds our two countries. But as a poet I am especially glad that among these binding factors is the love of our peoples for poetry."

Alim Keshokov recited on that evening his new verses inspired, as he said, by the lines from the "Mahabharata". "Gods dwell there where women are revered." Poet Anatoly Sofronov shared his impressions about his meetings with Indian poets and writers, writes Valentin Sidorov, who has just released his book on the poetic works and aesthetic views of Nikolai Roerich, acquainted the participants of the evening with his latest works.

Alim Keshokov called this meeting a "little mushaira"; but the mushaira is supposed to be a competition of poets : So the guests accepted the challenge. And taking the initiative was Mrs. Gujral, wife of the Indian Ambassador in the USSR, who read out her new poems. She was followed by poet and translator Madhu who acquainted the participants with new translations of works of Russian poetry in Hindi.

"Such meetings," he said, "are extremely useful. They are not only delightful, they inspire for future work for the good of our friendship."

\* \* \*

The visitor came late, but nobody complained—every one under-

stood well that in a crowded schedule of her stay in the Soviet Union, with literally every minute taken care of, it would be extremely difficult for Suchitra Mitra to take out time for an unplanned meeting.

The hostess, artist Vera Aralova, was bustling around the table. Her son, Jim, a poet, was autographing the volume of verses which he was going to present to Mrs. Mitra, while one of the guests—Vladimir Fedin—was putting on make-up.

The point is that Fedin is a dancer who performs Indian dances. Suchitra Mitra had casually mentioned that she would very much like to see how a Soviet artist performs Indian dances. And since Fedin did not have any concert appearance in the near future, he decided to dance specially for the guest of Vera Aralova.

Suchitra Mitra entered the studio where everyone was waiting for her. She expressed regret for her late coming, and, more than that, also because she would be there for only half an hour. One and a half hours later she was still there because the evening was in full swing and a tremendous success.

Vera Aralova recounted to the Indian guest the impressions of her visit to India, the wealth and images this country had presented her. The small woman in sari listened to her attentively and with interest, while from the canvases arranged by the studio walls, looked at her starry-eyed Indian girls, women, children—heroes of the paintings for which Vera Aralova was awarded the Jawaharlal Nehru Prize.

Vladislav Fedin danced for the guest. This time he was a little different from what he used to be at concerts: the joy he experiences while revealing the beauty of Indian dances before the spectators, was now mixed with the nervousness of an examinee. "Where did you learn?" "From whom?" asked Mrs. Mitra.

Vera Aralova's son Jim recited his latest verses. They were about how Valmiki glorified the life of Rama many centuries ago, and how his epic became the heritage of peoples living in various parts of the world. In the deeds which the Indian people accomplish today lives the great soul of their ancestors, the poet said.

Later Suchitra Mitra sang. Her low, but surprisingly expressive voice revealed to the audience a new Tagore, different from the image in the books and in the music which Soviet composers create on Tagore themes.

"Some photographs are left in the memory of this meeting," says

Vera Aralova. “But, best of all, I remember about it not when I am looking at them, but when the radio announcer says: ‘Here is a Tagore song by Suchitra Mitra, one of the best renderings of Tagore songs.’ And it is followed by her voice, then the entire meeting, till the last moment, comes alive before my eyes.”



## THROUGH CULTURE TO ABIDING FRIENDSHIP

By Prof. Y. Chelyshev

*Chairman of the Cultural Committee of the SIFS*

*The development of our friendship is like the ascent to the summit : the higher we climb, the greater horizons open before us. And one feels inclined to climb still higher, so that newer and more promising prospects would open up.*

Excerpt from L.I. Brezhnev's speech at a public meeting in Delhi on November 27, 1973

The Russian people have always evinced great interest in India and had in their hearts deep feelings for the Indian people. An attitude of admiration to its cultural heritage, a genuine interest in its past and present, and the desire to better understand all that is created by the genius of the people have always been characteristic of the Russian people.

Today we remember with gratitude and respect the names of our compatriots who had laid the foundation of friendship and mutual understanding between the two countries—merchant Afanasi Nikitin who undertook in the 15th century a journey to India and who left behind the most interesting notes about this country; traveller, musician, artist and scholar Gerasim Lebedev, who set up India's first professional theatre in Calcutta at the end of the 18th century and who published for the first time in Russia Indological works based on original sources; writers N. Karamzin and V. Zhukovsky who

translated some immortal works of Kalidasa into Russian; Russian scholars N. Novikov and A. Radishev, V. Belinsky and N. Dobro-lubov, who supported the Indian freedom movement and did much to spread objective information about India in Russia; composer N. Rimsky-Korsakov and painter V. Vereshchagin, who developed in their works the "Indian theme"; and the famous Indologists P. Petrov, K. Kosovich, P. Minayev, S. Oldenburg and F. Shcherbatsky.

It is difficult to overestimate the enormous contribution made by the great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy to the cause of popularising India in Russia and to the establishment of spiritual closeness between the peoples of the two countries. He delved deep into the Indian culture and found in it common values like the love for peace and respect for labour, and in India's rich cultural heritage. Leo Tolstoy treated the anti-imperialist struggle of the Indian people with great sympathy.

The sincere sympathy of the best representatives of the Russian society for the Indian freedom struggle was the reflection of the democratic thinking of that section of the society which waged the struggle in the country against serfdom, oppression and tyranny of the autocracy.

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The Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 opened up a new era in the relations between the two countries. Despite all the attempts of the colonial powers to isolate India from the outside world and, above all, from the revolutionary Russia, the victory of the October Revolution was enthusiastically welcomed by the Indian people. Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and many other prominent leaders of the Indian national-liberation movement treated the Revolution in Russia with great sympathy, linking its victory with the success of their own struggle in India. Many noted Indian poets like Muhammed Iqbal, Nazrul Islam, Josh Malihabadi, Subramaya Bharati and "Nirala" hailed the October Revolution with enthusiasm. Tagore and Premchand also treated the Revolution and the successes of socialist construction in Russia with great attention and sympathy. The works of V.I. Lenin and Maxim Gorky become very popular in India; especially Gorky's novel

“Mother” played a great role in spreading the socialist ideas in India.

Way back in the '30s the movement for friendship with the Soviet Union was born in India. Thus, even during the period of colonial dependence, the attention and interests of the broad strata of Indian people were directed to the Soviet Union, and this paved the way for fruitful Soviet-Indian cooperation in the post-independence period.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between India and the USSR in April 1947 heralded a new era in the relations between the two countries, a period marked by the establishment of close ties between them in various fields.

The interest and sympathy of the broad strata of Soviet society towards India, considerably intensified, the life of its people, their struggle for national and social emancipation and the wonderful Indian culture.

A number of prominent cultural figures of the Soviet Union are working in the interest of strengthening and expanding Soviet-Indian cooperation. Thanks to their efforts, the Soviet people can get a view of the fuller panorama of life of the Indian people. Modern India appears before them vividly, in all its variety and diversity. Literature plays an important role in this. Almost 800 books by over a hundred Indian writers were brought out in the time of Soviet power. These were put out in a total edition of over 30 million copies in 34 languages of the USSR.

Indian films have long been popular on the Soviet screen and Indian film festivals and exhibitions of works by Indian artists attract large crowds. Performances of dancers, musicians, singers and artists help the Soviet people to appreciate the distinguishing features of Indian art and to understand the beauty and greatness of the soul of the Indian people.

Soviet writers, painters, artists and composers often visit various parts of India, and create original works on Indian themes, many of which have become part of the golden treasury of Soviet culture. For instance, the series of poems about India by the famous Tajik poet Mirzo Tursun-Zade, written at the end of the '40s, is one of his career's best.

The initiator of the Indian theme in Soviet poetry is the veteran Soviet poet Nikolai Tikhonov. His poem “Sami” written shortly after the Revolution is about a miserable and down-trodden Indian boy who learns that somewhere in a far-off country,

beyond the Himalayas, lives a man called Lenin, who defends the oppressed from cruel sahibs. The thought about Lenin and the trust in him helps the boy to live and to emulate Lenin, further develops his character, transforms him into a revolutionary fighter. The poem written close on the heels of the Jalianwallah Bagh massacre soon became very popular.

The Indian theme was taken up after Tikhonov by S. Surkov, Gafoor Gulyam, A. Sofronov, M. Kempe, E. Mezhelaitis, V. Reimeris, Zulfia, I. Abashidze, Rasul Gamzatov, M. Mirshakar, R. Rodzhestvensky, I. Kugulchinov, V. Sidorov, E. Vinokurov and many other Soviet poets. Their poems about India recall their visits to that country, their meetings with the Indians and the deep impressions left on them. They look at India not through the eyes of a foreigner or a detached observer. Their poems are marked by a deep interest in everything that happens in the country, and the striving to get closer to the friendly people. They see how quaintly the old intermingles with the new in India, strive to acquaint their readers with what holds the future and pick out what serves in the spiritual development of the people and helps solve the complex problems on the way to a bright future.

The delineation of the image of the builder of a new India, is done so vividly in the works of Soviet poet A. Surkov who had visited India in the mid '50s. At that time Soviet-Indian cooperation in various fields of economy had just begun, and the new man in India had also started taking shape at that time. The poem "In the India of Tomorrow" acquainted the Soviet readers with this man who till yesterday was an illiterate peasant living in abject poverty, but today he is a worker to whom the complex technology obeys:

*Here is India of tomorrow ! Look  
In the faces of dexterous excavator operators...  
How bravely do they face  
The challenge of new labour.*

The Indian theme is especially widely present in the works of the poets of the Soviet East, who can, better than anyone, get into a world so close to them spiritually and traditionally, and understand the feelings and emotions of the Indians. "This country is in my heart!" exclaims the Tajik poet Mirzo Tursun-Zade in one of his first poems about India. This country entered his heart for ever. He devoted his poetic talent to it by creating ever new works about

India, and he gave away his heart and soul to it by working in the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society.

Among the Soviet artists is a whole group of masters who have been to India and who were inspired by the images and wealth of colour there to create paintings on the Indian theme.

The paintings, sketches and drawings by S. Chuikov, A. Gerashimov, N. Klimashin, D. Nalbandyan, N. Ponomarev, M. Abdullaev, V. Igoshev, M. Aslamazyan, T. Narimenbekova and many others, were on display in the Soviet Union many times. They help the Soviet viewer to have a better and fuller picture of today's India. In the centre of their attention is the man of labour, the creator of all the riches of the country. The theme of the Indian woman acquires a special meaning in the works of Soviet artists. We see a woman of the past, a victim of social injustice and religious fanaticism, doomed to a life full of humiliation and suffering. We also get acquainted with the new Indian woman. Painter S. Chuikov's work "On the Way" features a young Indian woman who displays no bewilderment or fear before the unknown. Her look is full of hope and trust in the future. This woman-mother personifies Mother India carrying her children along the road to a new life.

In each canvas about India, the viewer unmistakably sees the attitude of the painter to the subject. These paintings are permeated with respect for the common Indian, and kindle a desire to ponder over his life and destiny, to rejoice at his successes and achievements.

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The Indian theme sounds aloud in Soviet music. The Soviet composers H. Ippolitov-Ivanov, S. Vasilenko, S. Balasanyan, V. Vlasov, S. Mshvelidze, T. Kuliev, M. Ashrafi, V. Mukhatov, M. Osokin and many others created musical works based on the images of modern India and themes of Indian classical and modern literature. Plays on Indian themes are staged in many Soviet theatres: the "White Lotus" at the Pushkin Theatre in Moscow, the ballet "Chitrangada" based on the Tagore play of the same name and staged in two opera theatres of the country, and the ballet "Shakuntala" set to music by composer S. Balasanyan and staged first at the Riga Theatre of Opera and Ballet. Another play, the "Ramayana", is running for several years now with great success at the stage of

the Central Children's Theatre in Moscow. The first spectators who had seen the "Ramayana" way back in 1961, now bring their children to see it. It is difficult to imagine how this play helped in inculcating in the Soviet people the feelings of love and respect for the Indian people, and how many it attracted to work in the Friendship Society !

Soviet theatres also present stage versions of Tagore plays and plays by modern Indian play-wrights. Soviet producers and artistes strive not to allow the scenic interpretation of the works to fall in any measure into contradiction with the spirit and the national features of these works. The success of their efforts is ensured by the close cooperation of their Indian colleagues. Thus in staging the ballet "Chitrangada", the artistes were greatly helped by the grand-daughter of Tagore, Nandita Kripalani. The former Indian Ambassador to the USSR, K.P.S. Menon, and his wife participated in the preparation for staging the "Ramayana" while the Punjabi writer, Balwant Gargi, helped in staging the play "Sohni Mahiwal".

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A great role in acquainting the Soviet people with India is played by essays and books by Soviet journalists, writers and scholars who have been to India. Among these are works by M. Auezov and I. Ehrenburg, N. Tikhonov and A. Sofronov, A. Keshokov and B. Kerbabaev; journalists O. Benukh, L. Mitrokhin, N. Shaposhnikova, V. Krashennnikov, I. Shedrov; Indologists L. Alaev, P. Barannikov, N. Guseva, U. Nosenko and M. Stepanyants who give a vivid picture of the friendly people and the land.

In creating an objective picture of India among the Soviet people an important role is played by the researches of Soviet scholars. Soviet Indology has been developing especially intensively over the last few decades since the friendly ties began developing between the two countries. Soviet Indologists have published many basic works on the economy, history, philosophy, culture, literature and the languages of India.

Arousing especially great interest and attention among Soviet people are the books on Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, a 4-volume history of India, and short essays on the literature and

languages of the Indian people. Thoughts of Soviet people about Gandhi were well expressed by Prof. R. Ulyanovsky in the Foreword to the book by E. Komarov and A. Litman *World Outlook of M.K. Gandhi*, which was brought out in connection with the birth centenary of the great son of India. He, in particular, writes: "Marking together with the friendly Indian people the birth centenary of their trusted son Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the Soviet people express their deep respect for him for the great contribution he made to the anti-colonial struggle, for his disinterested and dedicated service to his people, for his noble, humanistic aspirations and for his kind feelings and sympathy for the Soviet people."

The book by M.K. Gandhi *My Experiments with Truth* and Jawaharlal Nehru's *Discovery of India* and *Autobiography* were published in the Soviet Union in large editions.

In their work the Soviet Indologists maintain closest contacts with Indian scholars. The collective researches on various Indian problems, which are published in the Soviet Union, provide an opportunity to get better acquainted with India, and compare with the view-points of specialists. Of particular interest in this connection are the Soviet-Indian collective anthologies of the works of Tilak, Tagore, Mirza Ghalib, and essays on the great Indian national uprising of 1857-1859, and on problems of Indian literature.

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Much has been done in the development of cultural ties between the USSR and India. But still wider is the field for future work. During his visit to India in 1973, L.I. Brezhnev said: "Mutual acquaintance of the two great cultures is only at the initial stage. There are tremendous possibilities here and their use can be of no less benefit for the peoples of our two countries." These words guide all those whom the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society unites in its ranks.

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Passers-by are surprised: It is not often that one sees in Moscow streets a Moldavian girl in an embroidered skirt with bright ribbons and with a bunch of necklaces around her neck, a Kirghiz girl in a

velvet waistcoat and a pointed velvet cap or Turkmenian girls in long gowns with artistic embroidery on the chest and sleeves. It is not that national traditions and national costumes are being deliberately neglected. Simply they are less suitable for the modern appearance of the Soviet woman. In a long dress it is not comfortable to work at a weaving loom or in a laboratory, at a hospital or airport. And, today, for a majority of Soviet women work is as inseparable a part of life as the care for domestic comfort or a delicious lunch. They make a tremendous contribution to all the fields of life of the country, and here, whatever nationality they belong to, there is no distinction among them.

And it is that contribution of the Soviet women to the development of the country, about which spoke the Chairman of the Women's Committee of the Society of Soviet-Indian Friendship, Lydia Kibirkshtis, at a meeting of Soviet and Indian women where women dressed up in national costumes had especially come to participate. If the Indian guests had no time to undertake a long journey across the country, then there is a way out: to invite the representatives of the entire country for a meeting with them. However, meeting, perhaps, is too formal a name for such a warm, friendly get-together. There are cups of steaming-hot tea and coffee on small tables and the hostesses are persuading the guests to try their confectionary items. Each one of them had tried to prepare her favourite dish. There is a lively and interesting conversation. The guests are asking many questions and jotting down answers in diaries in order to narrate them later to their friends at home.

And, perhaps, they will remember at home this one episode of the get-together: suddenly, Munira Sadykova from Tajikistan dashed up to the centre of the hall, shook back her long plaits, flashed her dark eyes and declared to one and all: "I am the youngest here."

The women had still not digested this statement, when she hurriedly added: "I am the luckiest one here! All through my life I dreamed of meeting an Indian woman. I have seen them only in films. And now my dream has come true. I got acquainted with you and my heart is dancing with joy. I have no words, I'll better play now for you on our national musical instrument. I am no musician, I came to Moscow to become a textile engineer, but I love music. I shall call this melody. 'Reminiscences About Indian Films'."



Munira starts playing. The melody, resembling Indian and Tajik music alike, is so good that Munira herself can't stay in her place, and she invites: "Don't sit. don't sit; Dance!"

Yielding to her insistence, the women get up and form a circle. First hesitantly, and later more confidently they create a general pattern of dance. Everyone has her own movements, but the friendship dance is common.

If the colleagues of these women had seen them they would have been really surprised. After all these are all such serious, working and busy women. The Uzbek woman Aidin Abbasova, for instance, is defending her Ph.D. dissertation on endocrinology at a Moscow institute. It can be mentioned here that usually the Ph.D. dissertation is defended at the age of 44 or 45. Aidin is just 29. About herself she says that she comes from a family of doctors. Two generations ago in Uzbekistan, her native Republic, there was practically no health-care system. Aidin's parents studied at a medical institute set up during Soviet power. And she is continuing the tradition.

But could not Aidin defend the dissertation in her native Taskent? She could. However, in the Soviet Union a young specialist often prepares the scientific work at a related institute in another Republic. This ensures the uniformity of requirements and methods of scientific research. This gives an opportunity of maintaining the same high level of science and quality of training of specialists.

Near Aidin is dancing a middle-aged woman. She is Zuleikha Husseinova from Azerbaijan. She heads the trade unions of her Republic which unite about one and a half million members. As a matter of fact this figure will be on the lesser side, if all the people were counted for whom, and before whom, Zuleikha is answerable. She is a Deputy to the Soviet Parliament and she is also the Deputy-Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Youth Affairs of one of the Chambers. May be, because Zuleikha has a lot of work and little free time that she is dancing now with such gay abandon.

The dance is followed up by a real concert. Lithuanian, Moldavian and Kirghiz songs are sung. On the other hand, Varvora Solomakha, a young Byelorussian woman on whose breast is shining the country's highest award—Order of Lenin—is reciting verses about the war, about the Byelorussian village Hatin which was completely burnt down by the German fascists along with its inhabitants—women, children and the aged.

“We, Byelorussians,” says Varvora, “were able to start a life worthy of people, only after the Great October Socialist Revolution. All the peoples of the country helped in the development of our Republic, so that we could be at par with them. And, later the war started with fascist Germany. Every fourth inhabitant of Byelorussia died in this war (Varvora’s own father and brother were killed). Our people survived, won and started working to make the work still more beautiful than earlier. And again they accomplished it thanks to the help of all the peoples of the country. I want to say that there is nothing stronger than people living in friendship. Let’s always be friends with you, Indian women, so that we could defend what is dearest to us—peace for our children!”

## WOMEN FOR FRIENDSHIP

By L. Kibirkshtis

*Chairman of the Women's Committee of the Society of Soviet-Indian Friendship, Asstt. Prof. at the Chair of Indian Languages, Moscow State Institute of International Relations*

The Women's Committee was formed right after the Society of Soviet-Indian Friendship was set up with only some 25 to 30 founder-members. But today it has grown into a large mass organisation, representing Soviet women from all walks of life. Among its members are doctors Yekaterina Timofeeva and Irina Batrachenko, teachers Alexandra Kulemanova and Valeria Bakova, lecturers of higher educational establishments Svetlana Trubnikova and Klara Drukova, engineers Valentina Shatalova and Galina Filippova, scientists Natalia Prussakova and Tamara Devyatkina, designers Anna Borunova and Valentina Ryabova, artists Tamara Kolesaeva, and Vera Bocharova, employees of Moscow Radio Kira Pataki and Anna Kovalenkova. Women of the most diverse professions have come together by their love for India, their interest in its culture, desire to help in the strengthening of friendship between the two countries.

The Committee chalks out its annual plan for work at a general meeting and later coordinates it with the work of the "Club of Indian Women" which unites the Indian women living and studying in Moscow.

One of the basic forms of this work is to hold seminars for Soviet and Indian women. They are as a rule held in spring, hence the name "Spring-time Readings". Indian women also read lectures at these seminars on such themes as "Family Planning", "Social Security" and "School Education in India".

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In 1976, right after the 25th CPSU Congress, the theme of our meeting was: "USSR's Policy and Strengthening of Peace and Security in the Whole World." SIFS Vice-President Prof. Filatov read a lecture while Mrs. Sinai (wife of the Minister-Counsellor of India in the USSR, P. Sinai) dwelt on "India's Policy of Peace and Non-alignment".

In September 1977, in connection with the 60th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Committee organised a visit to the Museum of Revolution and, later, a big reception was held. SIFS President and USSR Minister N. Goldin spoke from the Soviet side, and Mrs. Sheela Gujral (wife of the Indian Ambassador in the USSR) from the Indian side.

The latest seminar was on the theme "Traditions in Indian Music and Dances". Mrs. Devika Teja, Vice-President of the Club, outlined the main features of Indian dances and music while the Soviet composer M. Osokin spoke about his work connected with the study of Indian classical music and arranging it on the European musical pattern. Some Indian students of the Moscow State University demonstrated the basic movements of the classical Kathak dance form while the Soviet ballerina Vera Bocharova, who studied classical dances in India, spoke of the basic trends of this form of Indian art. The seminar ended with the screening of a film about Indian dances.

Members of the Women's Committee tell Soviet women about India, the women's movement in that country, its culture and traditions. On the other hand, they acquaint the Indian women with the organisation of education in the USSR, with the State's concern for child and maternity care, with the development of cottage industries.

Everyone knows that seeing once is better than hearing a hundred times. Remembering this, we invite our Indian friends and guests and show them how workers and peasants live. Visits are arranged for them to kindergartens, schools, museums, exhibitions, hospitals, maternity homes, etc. Our Indian friends always respond enthusiastically to the proposals of participating in such excursions. It seems to me that it is this personal acquaintance with the social achievements which the Soviet people are proud of, that gives an opportunity to understand the characteristics and advantages of socialism.

Family concerns are close to the heart of women; they understand them better. They are equally concerned about the children, their health, education, morals and aesthetics. Taking this into

account the Women's Committee tries to arrange visits to the classes at schools, participation in children's holidays, excursions to Young Pioneers' palaces, visits to museums and to the Exhibition of Economic Achievements of the USSR—this is hardly a complete enumeration of what the Women's Committee does in order to help satisfy the great interest of the Indian women in Soviet reality.

But women are women. Such things as national cuisine and fashions also interest us. Our Committee can also help in this. Many a time we organised fashion shows and in the spring of 1978, we invited the Indian women to the "Russian Cuisine". A get-together was arranged at the home of a member of our Committee Irina Batrachenko. One should have seen it to believe with what genuine interest each dish was received and how recipes were written down in detail. Such live and direct contacts greatly help us to understand each other better.

Our Indian friends also invite us to visit them. We acquaint ourselves with their families, learn about their interests, propensities and concerns. We participate in Indian festivals, especially the Holi and Diwali. Members of our Committee and school-children—collective members of the SIFS—regularly participate in the festival of the Children's Day of India, which is marked on November 14.

As far as March 8, the International Women's Day, is concerned the holiday has become common for all of us. On that day, besides a concert, a tea party is usually arranged where each of us tries to present an original dish.

## YOUTH—THE HOPE OF FUTURE

By V. Pavlov

*Indologist, Chairman, Youth Section of the Society of  
Soviet-Indian Friendship*

*It is understood, we would only welcome the all-round expansion of contacts between the workers of the Soviet Union and India—employees of enterprises, trade unions, women's and youth organisations, as also broad development of tourism.*

From L.I. Brezhnev's speech at a meeting with the activists of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, November 28, 1973

The Youth Committee, one of the nine committees of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society, was formed at the end of the '60s. Two factors were responsible for its coming into being: the number of enterprises and establishments where young people work in large numbers considerably increased. Secondly, there was also an increase in the number of Indian students, post-graduates and probationers studying at higher and secondary special educational establishments of the USSR.

The Committee consists of a chairman, two deputy-chairmen, and 22 members. Almost half of them comprises young Indologists—scientists, lecturers and students, who have taken up the study of the history, economy, culture, foreign policy and languages of India. The rest are from enterprises and establishments which are collective members of the Society. They have different professions, but they are united by their common interest in the life and culture of the

people of India. They devote their efforts and free time to deepen the acquaintance with them and to strengthen friendship between the two peoples.

Several groups work in the Committee. Each one of them has its own task: to hold joint seminars, organise competitions of students' works dedicated to various aspects of the life in the Soviet Union and India, arrange Soviet-Indian cultural evenings and offer voluntary assistance to Indian students of ten-month Russian language courses at the Moscow State University. Needless to stress that the Youth Committee works in close contact with Indian boys and girls living and studying in Moscow.

More than 400 Indians study at the higher educational establishments of Moscow alone. And in 1977, after the formation of the Indian Students Association of the Soviet Union, which unites more than 650 people, the range and breadth of the Committee's work considerably increased. It now covers Uzbekistan where 70 Indians are studying, Leningrad (more than 50) and the Ukraine (about 80).

One of the most interesting forms of the Committee's work is joint Soviet-Indian seminars. The first such seminar was organised in 1957. After long discussions, the formation of preparatory committees and a great deal of work done by them, the theme of the seminar was determined: "Problems of strengthening the unity of the multi-state and multi-lingual nation and ways of their solution."

The seminar turned out to be extremely interesting. Taking part in it were students of the People's Friendship University, Moscow State University, Institute of International Relations, the Moscow Institute of Asia and Africa and young scholars from the Institute of Oriental Studies under the USSR Academy of Sciences.

It was of great interest for the young and future Soviet Indologists to get to know the opinion of Indian students on such questions as, for instance, the process of the formation of a nation and national languages in India (speaker—Abhijit Sarkar, probationer at the Physics-Mathematics Faculty, PFU), socio-economic problems of national integration in India (Pradip Ghosh, post-graduate of the Economics Faculty, PFU), and unity of national culture of India (Kalpana Sundaram, student of the History-Philology Faculty of PFU). The Indians, in their turn, noted that of great value for them were the reports by the Soviet participants of the seminar, which gave a detailed account of the experience of the Soviet Union in

solving the nationalities and language problems. Many seminar participants described the methods of their solution with examples of those Union and Autonomous Republics from where they had come to Moscow for studies.

Another seminar was held in 1977 on the "60th Anniversary of the Great October and 30th Anniversary of India's Independence". The audience listened with great interest to the reports about the youth's role in the struggle for social progress in India, about the struggle of progressive and democratic forces in India against reaction, about the development of Soviet-Indian relations, and about the impact of the October Revolution on the development of the national-liberation movement in India.

An important aspect of the work of the Youth Committee is competitions of students' works. This kind of activity has already been organised four times and with each time its popularity is increasing. Last year the theme of the competition was "What do you know about the USSR's achievements during 60 years of Soviet power?"—for Indian students and "What do you know about India's achievements during 30 years of its independent existence?"—for Soviet students. The best works of Indian students were given the prizes of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society, and the best works of the Soviet students—prizes of the Indian Students Association and the Indian Embassy. Among the prize-winning Indian students were Naresh Kumar Gupta ("Achievements of Soviet Power During 60 Years") and Shyam Jha ("Lenin, Great October and India").

An important part of the Committee's work is the assistance to the Indian Association in holding one-day seminars for the students of various faculties. The Association suggests themes and the Committee selects the speakers, prominent specialists in their fields. These seminars are a great success with the Indian students. They heard, for instance, V. Rastyanikov, Ph.D. (Economics), on the problems of the "Green Revolution", Academician O. Baroyan of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences on the problems of microbiology and Prof. Ignatyeva on the problems of ecology.

At the request of the Indian students excursions are organised to scientific establishments and enterprises which are of their interest. Thus, they visited the Vishnevsky Institute of Surgery where the students were shown the latest laboratory and surgical equipment and were acquainted with the technique of operation on the heart, lungs and liver.



At the Central Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedics the students had a discussion with its director M. Volkov, Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences, and had occasion to witness some operations.

The Committee considers as one of the main tasks of its work the expansion of personal contacts between the youth of the two countries and deepening of their knowledge about the life in India and in the Soviet Union.

Friendship evenings which bring people closer have become traditional and extremely popular with the youth of the two countries. Often they are dedicated to memorable dates. Thus, for instance, every year in March the Youth Committee organises an evening dedicated to the spring festival of Holi.

Usually a joint concert of amateur artists is arranged at this function. Professional artists also perform there as we make it a point to invite masters of original genres—illusionists and jugglers who are extremely popular with our Indian friends. New films are also screened. For instance, the participants of our friendship evening were among the first in Moscow to see the new Soviet-Indian co-production film “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi” through the courtesy of its producer Alexander Zguridi who is also a Vice-President of the SIFS.

The Holi celebrations were attended by the USSR Minister for Construction of Heavy Industry Enterprises, N.V. Goldin, former USSR Ambassador to India N. Benediktov, pilot-constonaut P. Klimuk and People’s Artist of the USSR, winner of the Jawaharlal Nehru Prize D. Nalbandyan and others.

The Youth Committee strives for the maximum participation of the youth of the two countries in all the functions organised by the Society. Girl students working with the Women’s Committee participate in the evenings organised by it at enterprises—collective members of the Society. Indian and Soviet boys and girls participated in the Cultural Month organised in connection with the 60th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the 30 years of India’s independence, at the solemn meetings dedicated to the birth centenaries of great Indian poets Muhammed Iqbal, Mirza Ghalib, Rabindranath Tagore and the 400th birth anniversary of Tulsidas. Indian students helped in organising a literary evening “Mayakovsky in India”, where his verses translated into various Indian languages were recited.

In the spring, the Youth Committee organises excursions for

Indian students to the Soviet countryside. They could not forget for long the one which took them to the places which had witnessed fierce battles with the fascist invaders during World War II. On hand to describe them was retired Major-General V. Nikitin, member of the Executive Committee of the Society and a veteran of the battles for Mosow.

Among the Youth Committees of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the Youth Committee of the SIFS is invariably considered one of the best.

## SOVIET-INDIAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETIES IN REPUBLICS

*More than 20 branches of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society function in Union Republics and major cities of the USSR. A description of some of them will help get an idea of their activity, the kind of people they unite and what they do for the cause of Soviet-Indian friendship.*

### UZBEK FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

By **S. Mirkasimov**

*Member, Executive Committee of the Uzbek Branch of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society*

The Uzbek branch of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society was formed in 1958. At present it has turned into a powerful organisation uniting thousands of friends of India. It maintains contacts with more than 300 Indian enterprises and organisations and exchanges with them delegations, exhibitions and literary works.

Zulfia, the People's Poetess of Uzbekistan, is a permanent member of the Uzbek branch. She was awarded the Jawaharlal Nehru Prize for her contributions to the strengthening of friendship between the two peoples, which she makes through her creative works and social activity.

The fact that the Society unites peoples of various professions and occupations, reflects the diverse and all-embracing character of the ties between our two countries.

Uzbekistan is making a substantial contribution to the building of Soviet-aided projects in India. More than 70 industrial and other

projects are under construction in India with Soviet assistance. Its trade mark can be seen on more than 400 types of industrial goods, including compressors, chemical apparatus, electrotechnical equipment, textile machinery, excavators, lathes, cranes, diesel engines, pumps and cables. At present Uzbekistan occupies the third place among the 15 Union Republics in the volume of export deliveries to the friendly country.

Scientific institutions of the two countries are also maintaining contacts at various levels. The Soviet-Indian symposium on chemistry, which is held every two years, alternately in Uzbekistan and India, has become a regular feature.

There is a considerable number of peasants among those actively working in the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society. Cooperative farms and state farms, where they work, are collective members of the Society. They organise evenings dedicated to India, invite well-known people to deliver lectures and screen films. They play host to the representatives of friendly India who come to visit Uzbekistan. But what is significant is that professional contacts are successfully developing between farmers and agricultural scientists.

For Uzbekistan the main crop is cotton. The Republic has scored remarkable successes in cotton cultivation. From the plantations covering 2 million hectares it collects more than 5 million tonnes of cotton. Considering the high skill and experience of the Uzbek cotton-growers, the Indian government requested the Soviet Union to extend help to Indian farmers in the development of cotton cultivation. Now India is getting seeds of high-yielding varieties of cotton plants evolved by Uzbek selectionists.

Stable contacts have been established between viticulturists and sericulturists of Uzbekistan and India. At the request of Uzbek scientists 7 breeds of silk worms were sent to Tashkent from India, which are being used in experiments.

There are vast possibilities in Uzbekistan for deepening the acquaintance with India, for studying its history, economy and culture. Every year dozens of books about India and translations from the Indian languages are published in the Russian and Uzbek languages. Indological studies are being carried out at the academic centres of the Republic.

Performances by Indian artists are well received by the Uzbeks with usual happiness and enthusiasm. The renowned dancer Uma Sharma, who performed in our Republic during the first Festival of

Indian Art and Culture, said that the ovation she received from the lovers of Indian art in Tashkent exceeded all her expectations.

Close familiarity with Indian art has become a permanent phenomenon of our artistic life. The Novoi Opera and Ballet Theatre is staging a ballet "In the World of Legends" whose libretto was written on the basis of the novel "The Kashmir Legend" by S. Rashidov, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Uzbek Communist Party. The Hamza Uzbek Drama Theatre is also staging a play "Daughter of Ganga" based on the themes in Tagore's works.

There is close cooperation between the film people of Uzbekistan and India. It all started with the making of a documentary film about the performance-tour of the dance ensemble "Bahor" in India and about the life of the twin cities—Tashkent and Patiala. Later, with the help of his Indian colleagues the Uzbek film director, Latif Faiziev, shot a film "Sunrise over the Ganges" which tells about the contacts of the activists of the Indian national-liberation movement with the Soviet Republic immediately after the Great October Socialist Revolution.

At present Latif Faiziev together with Umesh Mehra, representative of the Eagle Studio in Bombay, is making preparations for shooting the two-part adventure film "Ali Baba and Forty Thieves."

## AZERBAIJAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY -

**By T. Kuliev**

*Chairman of the Azerbaijan Branch of the SIFS, First Secretary of the Union of Composers of Azerbaijan*

The roots of Azerbaijan's ties with India can be traced back to several centuries. Literary ties of the two peoples were first established way back in the 12th century, in the time of the great poet Nizami who glorified India in the poem "Seven Beauties". The "Panchatantra" collection was translated into the Azerbaijan language in the 18th century. Our poets and scholars Mesihi Mirza Sadiq, Ordubadi, Saif Tebrizi and Hussein Burhan, visited India in the 17th-18th centuries. It was Hussein Burhan who compiled in Hyderabad a Hindi-Persian dictionary, which retains its importance even to this day. Several centuries ago natives of India built a

temple of fire-worshippers in the outskirts of Baku. Carefully maintained to this day, it has become one of the places of interest in the city, which we show to our guests with pleasure.

Our friendship today is flourishing on the stable base of ancient affinity.

Speaking at a mass meeting in Delhi during his visit to India in November 1973, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee L.I. Brezhnev referred to the joint work of the Soviet and Indian peoples accomplishing huge tasks connected with the industrialisation of India. Citing as example the fruitfulness of their efforts in the construction of the Bhilai Steel Plant, and the oil refinery in Mathura, he said : "It is precisely in the joint work of this kind, that real friendship is forged between the Soviet and Indian peoples."

Azerbaijan extended help to India in organising its oil industry. Hundreds of Azerbaijanian oil workers shared their experience with their Indian colleagues. Indian experts were trained at the Republic's institutes. Azerbaijan also supplied equipment to India.

Today our cooperation in the field of oil extraction and refining is continuing. It is very obvious that India has made great strides over these years. Now there are not only students from the friendly country at the institutes of our Republic, but many of them are preparing dissertations and carrying out scientific work. From among them will emerge scientists who will determine the development of the Indian oil industry for many years ahead.

A cordial attitude to the envoys of India, a deep interest in their motherland and a desire to know more and more about the country, remain unchanged in our relations. I can say with full confidence that today no country in the world attracts so much attention of the cultural and social figures of Azerbaijan as India.

Suffice it to say that two citizens of our Republic, namely People's Painter of the USSR Mikael Abdullaev and People's Artist of the USSR Niazi, in whose works the Indian theme occupies a prominent place, are recipients of the Nehru Prize.

Abdullaev's paintings tell my people about the wonderful beauty of Indian monuments, about the proud and graceful Indian women who now have the opportunity of participating in the social life of the country.

It is thanks to the great help by the painter Abdullayev and the composer Niazi, that it became possible to stage Tagore's play "Chi-

trangada" on the Azerbaijan stage. Thousands of people have congratulated the creators of this splendid play which sharply brings out the characteristic features of the Indian culture combined with the achievements of classical ballet.

## DAGHESTAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

By **A. Abilov**

*Chairman of the Daghestan branch of the SIFS, Rector of  
the Daghestan University*

Out of the souvenirs from all parts of the world, the one that is dearest to me is a Kangir, a thin cane basket with a little pot for hot coal, presented to me in Srinagar by an ISCUS activist, S. Dar. It is difficult to find a more accurate expression of friendship and human warmth—the feelings which permeate our relations.

The stability and fruitfulness of the cooperation between our two countries and the unique character of friendship which has crossed the borders of official relations and become a truly people's cause, can be explained by the fact that the friendship and cooperation between the USSR and India are constantly developing, improving and finding ever-new ways of expression.

A convincing example of this is provided by Daghestan—a small Autonomous Republic, situated in the Caucasus Mountains. The Republic today has a branch of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society. Here, besides individual members, fifteen collectives of factories, schools and institutions with hundreds and thousands of friends of India are members of the SIFS. Today exhibitions at the enterprises and villages tell the citizens of Daghestan about the life in India. Colleges here have special courses on the history and culture of India. Indian films are regularly screened at cinema houses. Tourist groups from Daghestan undertake journeys to India, and the Republic receives guests from India.

Today India does not merely attract the Daghestanis. They want to know more and more about its people, their cares and achievements, as it is done between close friends. This striving found its expression in the establishment of especially close ties between the Republics and the states. In 1974 a twin-relationship was establish-

ed between Daghestan and Jammu and Kashmir. Since then several Indian public figures have visited the mountain Republic.

There are about 60 nationalities inhabiting Daghestan. Some are in large numbers, while others only of a few thousands. But all of them feel proud in telling the guests from India, how the giant Chir-keskaya hydro-power station was built in the inaccessible mountains, in recounting how the other Soviet Republics helped Daghestan in overcoming the aftermath of the severe earthquake or in showing the new buildings in the capital of the Republic, in the construction of which builders from places thousands of kilometres away from us took part

We value friendship more than anything in the world, friendship which unites and brings peoples closer and which helps them build a new life. It is these friendly ties that link Daghestan with India. We are confident that it will live and develop, and are ready to work for its sake.

## LITHUANIAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

**By V. Reimeris**

*Member of the section "Friends of India", Lithuanian Society of Friendship with Foreign Countries. Poet, recipient of the Nehru Prize*

Our Republic—Lithuania—is situated very far from India, on the shores of the Baltic Sea. Once, while looking at a map, I noted how similar are the geographical contours of India and Lithuania : they resemble the heart. An accidental affinity is supplemented by a natural one : Sanskrit and the Lithuanian language have much in common which is a proof of our ties dating back to several centuries. But today they are supplemented by the ties which we have established ourselves. Lithuania has a twin-relationship with Orissa. We receive delegations of friends and carry out cultural exchanges.

In order to know the life of friends, it is necessary to know their language. A group of Indologists has been working at the Vilnius University for quite some years now. It is headed by Prof. Richard Mironas, Chairman of the section "Friends of India". Those who study in the group are students from the philology faculty



of foreign languages as well as teachers and engineers. Of late, the subject of our study has been not only Sanskrit, but also Oriya, the language of our twin-state. An Oriya-Lithuanian book of idioms has already been prepared by Prof. Mironas.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that an ever-increasing number of works by Indian writers is being published in the Lithuanian language. The publishing houses of our Republic have brought out hymns from the "Rigveda", excerpts from "Mahabharata" and "Panchatantra" and translations of Kalidasa's "Shakuntalam" as well as novels and stories of Rabindranath Tagore, Mulk-Raj Anand and Upendranath Ashq.

Thanks to these contributions, Lithuanian readers are now in a position to know India better. I am happy to say that I too have made my humble contribution to the strengthening of the Indo-Lithuanian friendship. The anthology "By the White Taj", for which I was awarded the Nehru Prize, became a source for new verses and stories on India.

Both Lithuania and India have similar contours—the contours of the heart. But something more important than this is that in the living hearts of our peoples is a desire for peace and happiness and a readiness to strengthen the friendship for the sake of achieving those high objectives.

## TURKMENIAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

**By Bibi Palvanova**

*Chairman of the Turkmen branch of the SIFS, Academician,  
Minister of Education of Turkmenia*

On October 25, 1965 a Republican branch of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society was constituted at a solemn public meeting at the state capital Ashkhabad. At this meeting, where guests of honour—Indian Parliamentarians—were present, I had the honour of being elected as chairman of the branch.

There are many friends of India in Turkmenia. The branch unites more than 20 enterprises, institutes, agricultural cooperatives and schools. Only one of such collective members—the Turkmen State University—has more than 11 thousand students each one a

sincere friend of India. They take active part in all the functions organised at the University: in the celebrations of the Republic Day and Independence Day of India, and the birth anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore, and others.

The main task of the Turkmenian branch of the SIFS is to acquaint the people with the history and culture of India and its latest achievements. Broadening the ties with its colleagues in India and exchanges of literary, artistic and other works, the Society strives to acquaint our friends in India with the achievements of Turkmenia during the Soviet power.

Many delegations from India have visited Turkmenia since the formation of the branch; among them were state and social figures, jurists, doctors, writers and students. Representatives of our people have also visited India several times.

An important stage in the development of friendly relations was the establishment of twin relationship between Turkmenia and Tamil Nadu. At the end of 1975, a large delegation of Turkmen women visited that state. When they returned, they shared their impressions at large public meetings, spoke over the radio and television, wrote about India in newspapers and magazines, and participated in various evenings dedicated to India.

The exhibition of applied art and literature of Tamil Nadu that was recently held in our Republic was a great success.

Turkmenian poets and writers have written many works dedicated to India, paintings by Turkmenian artists on the Indian themes are exhibited in museums and musical works based on rich Indian folklore are heard in theatres.

As a historian, I can note that the roots of today's friendship between the two peoples can be traced back to the distant past. Ancient monuments discovered by archaeologists are a testimony to the fact that since times immemorial the Indians had known our country and visited it. I think it is not just coincidence that one finds in Delhi such a monument as "Turkman Gate" (Turkman Darwaza) the symbol of the centuries-old ties between the peoples of India and Turkmenia.

## LATVIAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

**By P. Erans**

*Chairman, section "Friends of India" of the Latvian Society of  
Friendship with Foreign Countries*

The shortest way to friendship, says folk wisdom, is the one along which people move to meet each other. This is fully justified by the example of the friendship of our two great peoples. The relations that have been established between them have been for quite some time serving as an example of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems.

Soviet Latvia has established friendly ties with the Indian state of Rajasthan. There is a regular exchange of delegations, and in the capital of the Republic—Riga—evenings dedicated to the important dates in the life of the friendly country are held regularly. Besides, the Society of Friends of India organises lectures, exhibitions and film festivals devoted to India.

Of late, about 50 books by Indian authors in a total edition of over 400,000 copies have been brought out in the Latvian language. Among them are the works of Rabindranath Tagore in 9 volumes and novels by Kishan Chander.

Publication of books by Indian authors, organisation of evenings and other solemn functions, are only part of the activities of the Friends of India in Latvia. To this can be added the exhibitions of photographs, graphics and children's drawings. Latvian children regularly participate in Shankar's International Painting Competition. At one of these competitions a gold medal was won by Raul Tsitman, a school child from Riga.

Thousands of albums, books, brochures and coloured slides are sent to friendly Rajasthan, which help the Indian people to know more about the achievements of Soviet Latvia.

## SIBERIAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

**Ry B. Shmakov**

*Deputy Chairman of the Irkutsk branch of the SIFS*

The Irkutsk branch of the SIFS was formed just 6 years ago. But the Siberians have the same desire, as the rest of the Soviet

peoples, of friendship with India and to know about the country and the people.

Though contacts between Siberia and India started developing comparatively recently, today they have a diverse character. For quite some time now, the Irkutsk Heavy Machine-Building Plant has been delivering blast furnace equipment to the heavy industry enterprises in India.

Geologists maintain regular contacts with their colleagues. It has been established that there are common features in the structure of the Indian platform and the ancient earth coverings in the Pre-Baikal region.

Anything connected with India gets an invariable response from the Irkutsk people. The exhibition of ancient Indian frescos, for instance, was a great success recently. At the initiative of the Society's activists a hall of Indian art was opened at the local art museum.

## MEET THE SIFS MEMBERS

Surendra Prasad Singh, Deepak Kumar Das and Khwaja Ahmad Asif live in Tashkent, the capital of Soviet Uzbekistan, and study at the Tashkent Polytechnical Institute. Literally, since the first days, the Indians had friends among the course-mates. Besides, there are the SIFS members who also look after them. They are invited by friends to their homes, to friendship evenings, theatres, excursions and museums. And on that memorable day when they received the students cards, they were guests of the Tashkent cable plant which is among the collective members of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society.

What impressed the friends first was the plant's courtyard resembling a park. There is no trace of smoke, ear-splitting noise or metal clanging, which are associated with the word "plant". Tree tops intertwine to form a sort of canopy over pathways, birds are chirping and flowers are in bloom. Employees of the plant are not in a hurry to take the guests to the shop. They want the guests to properly see this garden as well as the bright spacious buildings.

The plant came into being during the difficult days of World War II. In the threatening war days of 1941, when the Soviet Union was treacherously attacked by the German-fascist hordes, a small cable plant in Central Russia was shifted to the deep rear, to Uzbekistan. Straight from the wagons the machinery was unloaded in the vast open field, on the outskirts of Tashkent. Soon the plant buildings were erected and, despite the difficult conditions, just after three months, the country received its first goods which were very much needed.

After the war the plant experienced its second birth. The outdated lathes were replaced by modern machinery and new buildings went up. The assortment of its products also became complex. And

the Tashkent cable plant started turning out about two thousand most complex types of modern cables and conductors. Some of the largest industrial projects, at home and abroad, became the consumers of its products : the Bratsk Hydro-electric Station in Siberia and the Aswan hydro-power complex in the UAR, the automobile plant in Togliatti on the Volga and the steel plants in Bhilai and Bokaro.

The Tashkent cable today is exported to 30 foreign countries : states of the socialist community, the USA, France, Italy, the FRG and the developing countries— Iraq and Morocco. Along with the numerous items, the Tashkent cable plant manufactures special cables for carrying out geological research, cables which have won world reputation.

The Indian students showed keen interest in the shop where the cables are manufactured. Here one can follow all the stages of the manufacture of the most complex types of cables. Workers with pleasure show the equipment, tell the fine details of the manufacturing but do not miss the chance to question the boys about India.

The students watch with interest the huge vats with smoking polyethylene of high viscosity : it is used now in place of resin for insulation. The technology of this process was evolved here at the plant and it made it possible to considerably increase the durability and longevity of the products.

The armouring unit looks real impressive. Here gigantic wheels which roll the steel thread at a terrific speed, cover the cable with impregnable armour.

The students hold with admiration the ready product in their hands: the multiple, armoured and insulated cable is capable of withstanding high temperatures. It is this cable that the Soviet geologists use while drilling super-deep wells to explore the earth's bowels.

The plant delivers such cables to India. And the Tashkent cable plant is a collective member of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society. It means that often friendship meets are organised here with the Indians who have come to the Soviet Union. Those who have been to India recount their experiences to their friends and show amateur films. It has become a tradition at the plant to mark the holidays of the friends.

Production contacts help the Tashkenters to follow the successes of Indian industry. People here rejoice at the achievements of India no less than on their own successes and feel proud to help the friendly country in building an independent economy.

“We know,” says Zoya Lachugina incharge of the technical bureau, “that Bhilai and Bokaro are equipped with our control, light and power cables, and that our special cable is used in the mining, coal and oil industries in India. We believe that the deposits near Cambay were discovered not without the help of our products.”

The Indian students thank their hosts for the interesting excursion and say that they were impressed not only by the modern equipment, but also by the good organisation of labour. But the greatest pleasure for them was in meeting those who prepare the products for India and help it to move along the road of progress.

...At the exit of the shop are standing huge wooden drums with the product ready to be dispatched. The Indians read the addresses: the USA, France, Vietnam...And here is what they were looking for...On the drums is an inscription: “To the Secretary, Oil and Natural Gas Commission, Bombay Port, India Sender’s name: Tashkent Cable Plant.”

#### AT THE FOOT-HILLS OF KOPET-DAG

The collective farm named after the 40 years of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic is one of the largest in the Republic. Here, guests often come from various parts of the world. Though the farmers here are acquainted with the representatives of almost the entire world, they choose the Indians as their closest friends. The entire collective farm is a collective member of the Society of Soviet-Indian Friendship.

“A friend can be a person, with whom you have a lot in common,” says the Chairman of the collective farm, Karim Ahmedyarov. “Every time we meet the Indians, we are impressed by the fact that there is so much in common between us in traditions and customs. But that is not all. Our affinity, based on ancient ties, is now raised to the state level. The Soviet Union and India act side by side when it is a matter of the most important problems worrying all the people: peace, disarmament, security and struggle against imperialism. And there is yet another—we, who accomplished the Revolution, had to cover the path from centuries-old backwardness, poverty and illiteracy to the achievement of full economic independence, all-round development and to the world of knowledge. Now, when we have much and do a lot, we are glad to share our experien-

ces with the friends who are faced with similar tasks. This is what brings us closer to the Indians." There is something the inhabitants of this collective farm can share. The guests who come here may have read any number of books and may have the best idea of a collective farm, all the same, they would be impressed to see how modern Soviet farmers live.

...Straight and extremely clean streets are lined with trees. The masonry of the building is solid. Noisy children are at the doors of the two-storey school which is in no way different from an urban one. A mini-bus carries children to the nursery, where they, while their parents are busy in the fields, will spend their "working day"—playing, eating delicious food, sleeping in clean bed-rooms. and the same bus will carry them home at the end of the day.

There are many cars in the streets, since farmers possessing private cars are not a rarity here. Everything in the settlement looks new and modern.

By the way, a piece of antiquity is carefully preserved. In a garden, in the centre of the settlement, stands a round yurta (light tent) covered with dark felt. It used to be the home of a nomad Turkmen. The Chairman of the collective farm Karim Ahmedyarov himself gives the explanation about the yurta. The youth cannot imagine how their parents and forefathers could live in such a "house", without electricity, water, radio and television.

But Ahmedyarov remembers it. He is 60 and his fate is typical of his generation. The Revolution gave education and a speciality to him, the son of a poor man. As a young boy he had participated in setting up the first collective farms in Turkmenia.

"It was just a 'wasteland' then," he recalls. "Only a few villages were clustered up near the water—rivulets, springs and underground storage water tunnels—which the Turkmen could build with great skill. Here it can be mentioned that the archaeologists have established that in ancient times skilled masters in water-tunnel construction came to Central Asia from India. That shows how old is our cooperation.

"The first cooperative was set up in this very wasteland. A 'Red Yurta' with a library and a reading room was opened here, where peasants learned how to read and write. The first small hospital was built and the first tractor was received from the state. To the modern-day farmers that cooperative would seem insignificant and small, but it was a gigantic step from the small and ineffi-



cient individual farm to the new life of the peasant. It would be unimaginable to achieve what we have today without collective farms.”

When the guests from India visit the collective farm, they can rest assured that they will be welcome at any home. Seeing the one- or two-storey stone houses where the Turkmen farmers live and which do not differ in any way from the buildings from the European part of the country, the guests are naturally interested in knowing whether the life-style of the Turkmen has completely changed. And they get convinced that the customs, traditions and habits of the people are preserved. Traditionally, heavy furniture is not used in homes. People eat, rest and receive guests on the floor covered with carpets. The Turkmen carpets are well-known all over the country. Here, at the collective farm, each room in any home reminds one of a museum: the floor and walls are covered with factory-made carpets, carpets woven at home and with camel skin.

The house where Begmurad Mamedsaidov lives has 10 rooms. Grown-up children who have their own families often live here with parents—it is also a tradition reminiscent of the joint family in India. The head of the family is naturally Begmurad. He is in-charge of the cattle-breeding units of the collective farm, where about 150 people work under him. The son of a shepherd, he discharges his responsibilities extremely well: he is responsible for about 50 thousand sheep, 500 camels and 80 horses of the famous Akhaltekinsk breed.

All the members of Begmurad’s family, except the youngest son, work at the collective farm. Working hands here are in great demand, since the cooperative has a vast farm. Each year the collective farm sells to the state 20 thousand tonnes of vegetables, 5 thousand tonnes of grape, more than 4 thousand tonnes of grain, 150 tonnes of honey, as well as fruits and melons and water-melons. The early seasonal vegetables are grown here in the hot-houses for the capital of the Republic—Ashkhabad—while lemons mature in solariums.

The collective farm processes part of its produce. Its processing plant is equipped with the most modern machinery and equipment.

The collective farm’s annual profit is about 10 million roubles. Monthly earnings of a farmer average about 200 roubles. The cooperative comprises 1,350 units at present. 900 of them have their own transport.

On the educational front, a third school is under construction for 1,500 students with air-conditioners and linguaphone cabinets in each class. When it comes to the improvement in labour and living conditions, the cooperative spends lavishly.

## CHILDREN'S THEATRE

The Central Children's Theatre in Moscow happens to be a collective member of the Society of Soviet-Indian Friendship.

The visit of Jawaharlal Nehru to Moscow in September 1961 was a brief one, for only two days. Each minute of the Indian Prime Minister's stay was strictly scheduled and a visit to the Central Children's Theatre was just not included in the programme. All the same, the artistes did have a hope, after all the theatre was staging the "Ramayana".

The play had begun and suddenly the hall burst into an applause on seeing Jawaharlal Nehru enter the box. The "Ramayana" is always played in high spirits, but that evening the artistes played with unusual inspiration. It seemed to them as if their play was being watched by the entire people of India.

In the interval the honoured guest came out to the foyer of the theatre, affably greeted the young audience, posed for photographs, chatted with them and then went over to the side wing. A memorable photograph has been left with the artistes—the "Ramayana" troupe in costumes with Nehru in the centre. His kind smiling eyes, a small red rose on his button-hole and a white cap on his head.

It has been 17 years since then and for 17 years the "Ramayana" has been on the stage of the Central Children's Theatre. The secret of its long life on the stage lies in the profundity and richness of the Indian epic on which the play is based, in the high skill of the artistes and directors of the theatre, and their loyalty to the realistic traditions of the Russian and world theatrical art.

Many a prominent figure of world theatre has dreamt about creating a professional theatre for children. The Socialist Revolution in Russia gave an opportunity to the Russian theatrical figures to realise this dream. The best artistic talents participated in the organisation and establishment of the Children's Theatre.

Its repertoire is unusually rich; Russian and foreign stories, plays by modern authors, works of Russian and world classics.

When Indologist Natalya Guseva brought the play "Ramayana" to the Children's Theatre in Moscow, everybody was gripped with the desire to stage it. The doubts of the sceptics, whether the complex and unfamiliar world of different creeds and beliefs would be accessible to the children, were overcome by the confidence that there would be a response in the hearts of the spectators, for instance, to such high ideals of the "Ramayana" as the faithfulness to one's duty, moral purity and capability of sacrificing oneself for the good of the people.

The best talent of the theatre was attracted to work on the play. The play was produced by S. Kolesaev, while the music was composed by S. Balasanyan, in whose works the Indian theme occupies a prominent place.

The main role of the hero, Rama, was entrusted to actor G. Pechnikov. He, at the same time, directed the play. Each actor for some time had to become an Indologist. Scores of books on Indian culture were read and the Indian exhibits in the Soviet museums and at exhibitions were studied with great enthusiasm. Each actor treated his role in his own way, but common efforts were aimed at creating a bright image of the wonderful and majestic India and her people.

The time of the first trial came when Mrs. Menon, wife of K.P.S. Menon, the then Indian Ambassador in the USSR, came to see one of the rehearsals. "I don't remember how we performed," recounts G. Pechnikov, "but I can't forget how Mrs. Menon smiled, her eyes shining and that she kept on repeating: 'Oh, so good...' We requested her to give her advice on our work. She gladly agreed'. Mr. and Mrs. Menon invited us to their place and showed us films on India's history and culture. At their place we met Indian musicians, dancers, singers and artists. It was a genuine, friendly help."

The premiere of the "Ramayana" was held on December 2, 1960. And immediately it became clear that the play had been accepted by the young and most fastidious audience, who would not tolerate falsehood, moral admonition and artificiality.

Letters started coming to the Children's Theatre, in which the young audience shared the feelings aroused in them by the play. This is what 13-year-old Natasha Tyulyankina wrote: "For many centuries 'Ramayana' inspired in the hearts of simple people the belief in the victory of the good and justice over evil and falsehood.

The wise words 'Satyameva Jayate' are close to the heart of the peoples the world over who are fighting for peace and happiness. This play teaches us to love one's own motherland and the people as deeply, as did Rama and his friends."

The "Arts Club" under the Central Children's Theatre has been functioning for quite some years. Its members listen to lectures on modern problems of the theatrical art, meet writers, dramaturgists, directors and actors and discuss plays and dramas. They bring out a journal under the name the "Cords". The greatest number of reviews and responses in it are usually dedicated to the play "Ramayana". The Club even conducted a competition for the best review. The work of the winner of the competition, Yulia Filippova, was published in one of the issues of the evening daily "Moscow By Evening".

Here is an excerpt from it: "We were quite anxious as we started out for the play. The mysterious and unfamiliar country, India, turned out to be very close and dear to us. The play, like a bright rose, consists of some of the best legends about Rama—the hero of India. The Rama who came up to us from the stage, will remain with us for ever."

The "Ramayana" has been on the stage for more than 17 years. Tens of thousands of spectators have seen it during this time. The "Ramayana" was shot on film and shown on the Central Television. That means it was seen by no less than 100 million people. A documentary film has also been made of the Central Children's Theatre's play. And, the Russian "Ramayana" at least twice has been to India, met the compatriots of Rama and, as it has become customary in its stage life, kindled in thousands of hearts the feeling of fruitfulness of the friendship between the two great peoples.

#### CLUB OF FRIENDS OF INDIA

Among the enterprises fulfilling orders for Indian industry, scientific institutions conducting researches in the field of Indology, and vessels which sail to the Indian ports, the Moscow Radio's "Club of Friends of India" is distinguished for its unique character.

It is a weekly programme broadcast by the Indian section. The broadcasts of the Club can be heard in 12 Indian languages—Hindi,

Urdu, Bengali, Assamese, Kannada, Oriya, Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil, Punjabi, Marathi and Gujarati.

The Club was organised in 1973. Ivan Benediktov, former USSR Ambassador to India and Vice-President of the SIFS, was elected as its President. It is written in its charter that any "listener of Moscow Radio can become a member of the Club, who wishes to get closely acquainted with the life of the Soviet people and who is interested in the expansion and deepening of Soviet-Indian friendship. At the same time membership is open to all the aspirants. Members can be not only individual listeners, but also whole collectives : students of an educational institution, residents of a village, etc."

The members of the Club separated from Moscow by thousands of kilometres take the most active part in organising of its programmes.

At their request programmes are organised which tell about the life in the Soviet Union and, specifically, of its younger generation. The Club broadcasts interviews with and impressions of those who are making a considerable contribution to the strengthening of political, cultural, economic and scientific ties between the two countries. They tell about how work is going on at the joint Soviet-Indian projects, how India's orders are being fulfilled in the Soviet Union, how Soviet and Indian scientists are carrying out collective research work and how cultural exchange is developing between the two countries.

The listeners of the Moscow Radio's "Club of Friends of India" participate with great interest in the contests organised by it.

Thousands of letters come to Moscow Radio from India. Many of them contain words of gratitude for those who prepare the programmes of the "Friends' Club". This is what Ambika Devi from Kerala has to say : "I regularly tune in to this broadcast. I like it because it provides a lot of knowledge about the Soviet Union. The programmes are easy to understand and interesting." Prakash Joon from Assam writes : "I am a regular listener of the programmes of the 'Friends' Club.' We are proud of the friendship with the USSR. This friendship helped us strengthen India's independence and sovereignty and set up our own powerful industry. The USSR which has always supported us at difficult times, has earned in our country the name of the 'genuine friend in thick and thin'."

Many letters come from Moscow Radio's Listeners' Club which have been set up in India. The 'Friends Club' maintains active cor-

respondence with them and send them literature about the USSR, discs of Soviet music, picture post-cards and periodicals. From India it receives the most valuable responses and suggestions to make the broadcast more interesting.

## NEW GENERATION

When Rabindranath Tagore came to the Soviet Union in 1930, he included in his programme visits to schools. In the book "Letters from Russia", he emotionally tells about his meeting with the pupils of a children's commune. In 1961, Jawaharlal Nehru took out from the busy programme of his visit to Moscow, some "spare time" to be able to see the "Ramayana" at the Children's Theatre.

Of course, this attention to the children is not just accidental. Both Tagore and Nehru, who are today called the architects of the friendship between the two great peoples, had thought about the future. They wanted to see and know those who would take up the cause to which they had devoted so much effort and energy.

With the same intentness we, too, look into the face of the rising generation: "What kind of people are you children? Are you worthy of receiving the tree which we have been lovingly and persistently growing for many years—the tree of our friendship?"

Reply. "Yes, we want to participate in this work, we are ready for it and, look, how much our little hand can do?" is what sounded clearly and confidently, when the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society organised a meeting with the children of the schools which are members of the SIFS.

It may be assumed that such schools are not few in the USSR.

And one could not but be astonished on the day of the opening of the meet at the Friendship House. The white and golden hall of the House, where the most solemn meetings take place, was filled with boys and girls full of anxiety and pride. They had a reason to be proud: Just imagine how these 10-15-year-olds were assembled and given a send-off in the family, in the school and at home. They travelled to Moscow, thousands of kilometres away from their homes, to tell about how much the children on their part appreciate friendship with India, and to know what is interesting in other schools and clubs of international friendship.

Here, in Moscow, it was apparent how widely the tree of our

friendship has spread its branches all over the country. The Ukrainian girls in garlands and in bright aprons with a multitude of ribbons were followed on the stage by Kirghiz boys in dark jackets decorated with age-old tracery. While the Uzbek girls in bright national costumes gave way to the Kazakh boys with plumes on their caps. They told about their friendship with India, about how they organise museums and evenings in their schools dedicated to its national festivals and heroes. They also told how they organise exhibitions of Indian architecture and paintings, read and discuss works of Indian writers and even try their hand at translation, how they maintain friendship with their coevals from India—children whose parents live and work in the Soviet Union; how they love Indian films and how they sing Indian songs and dance Indian dances.

The rally continued for five days and for five days its participants were the dearest one of Moscow. They were invited by the best museums, including, naturally, the Museum of Oriental Art which has a splendid exposition of Indian art. They visited the best theatres, met scholars at the Institute of Oriental Studies under the USSR Academy of Sciences. That day the Indologists put off their most important work in order to tell the young guests about their researches.

Such a meeting was necessary for both the sides. It was important for the children to know much, and for the scholars to be certain that they had continuers.

On the last day of the rally the children were given a reception at the Indian Embassy. Speeches about friendship, dolls in Indian national costumes recived as gifts, meeting with Indian children, dances and songs sung in Russian and Hindi—that is how the meeting in Moscow concluded.

One writer justifiably noted that all the great people of the year 2000 were already born. We have among us great writers, artists, painters, cosmonauts and social figures of the near future. Among them are those who would work in the year 2000 for the strengthening and development of our friendship. It is heartening, that among them are so many of those who would be able to say: "The interest in India, the desire to know more about it and to strengthen friendship with the Indian people, have been with me since my school days."

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“For everybody to have a real friend is too much, it is something that enriches one’s whole life.” said L.I. Brezhnev, speaking at an ISCUS meeting in Delhi.

The friendship of our peoples is so firm and inviolable especially because it has united in its ranks people of the most diverse professions, ages and nationalities. Everybody, in fact, can find for himself a real friend.

Nikolai Goldin, a Soviet Minister, heads one of the most powerful branches of Soviet economy: Construction of Heavy Industry Enterprises. Ivan Korolkov is a worker of the metallurgical plant “Hammer and Sickle”. Boris Petrovsky—the USSR Minister of Health Care. Yeketrina Semenova—a nurse of a Moscow Hospital. Semen Skachkov—Chairman of the State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations under whose guidance all the Soviet-Indian cooperation projects were built or are under construction. Gennady Klochenko—a turner at the Orsk Machine-Building Plant, who has worked for several years on the construction of the Ranchi Plant. Pyotr Klimuk—a cosmonaut. Abutaliv Abilov—Rector of the Daghestan University. Nikita Savoyarov—a student, recipient of the prize of the journal “India” for winning the competition “What You Know About India?”. Lev Rovnin—Minister of Geology of the Russian Federation. Nishan Ali Avazov—Chairman of a collective farm in Uzbekistan. Taufiq Kuliev—a composer. Nazira Boronbaeva—a weaver at the Oshsky Silk Mill. Yanka Bryl—a writer. Envar Gasanov—an oil worker. Alexandr Zguridi—a film director. Nina Rtischeva—a director of a kindergarten. Ivan Benediktov—former USSR Ambassador in India and at present President of the Moscow Radio’s “Club of Friends of India”. Semen Chuikov—an artist. Erik Komarov—an Indologist. Buhador Iskandrov—Academician, Director of the Institute of History under the Tajik Academy of Sciences. Ivan Yatskov—In-charge of the tunnel team of Metro construction. Oleg Dreier—Editor-in-Chief of the Editorial Board of Oriental Literature at the Nauka Publishing House. Andrei Gusev—Director, state farm Marfino. Natalya Guseva—an ethnographer. Valeria Bokova—a teacher. Zinaida Ivanova—a pig-tender at a collective farm near Moscow. Gennady Pechnikov—an artist. Nikolai Tsitsyn—Academician, Director of the  $\frac{3}{2}$  Central Botanical Gardens of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

What unites these people—who differ in age, profession and nationality—and other millions of their compatriot-“workers” is



that they have joined the ranks of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society.

Each one of them has his own personal reasons of goodwill for that country and for its people. Nikolai Goldin left a bit of his soul there, where he worked for so many years with Indian colleagues on the construction of Bhilai—the firstling of Soviet-Indian cooperation. Boris Petrov remembers the name of the Indian woman whom he saved by performing an operation on her heart. The turner maintains correspondence with the workers in India whom he had trained. And for some, the first scholarly success or recognition by an audience or spectators, is connected with India.

And all these people are really fortunate, since their personal aspirations and affections are devoted to the cause whose importance is invariably stressed and confirmed by top state officials. “Close political and economic cooperation with India is our constant policy”—was stated at the 25th CPSU Congress, which was held in February-March of 1976.

And in the autumn of 1977, while receiving in Moscow the Prime Minister of India, Morarji Desai, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet L.I. Brezhnev thus spoke about Soviet-Indian friendship :

“Our relations are a good example of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, and a good factor of peace and stability in Asia and the entire world. In the process of their development, the deep friendship, based on mutual respect and trust, is moulded and strengthened between the peoples of the two great countries—the Soviet Union and India. And we are confident that this friendship will live for ages.”

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Friendship between the USSR and India is not confined to the governments of the two countries at official level alone. It is more abiding and rooted deep into the hearts of the nine hundred million peoples of the two great nations.

The Soviet-Indian Friendship Society (SIFS) in the USSR and the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society (ISCUS) in India have been doing for years commendable work in promoting this friendship, in fostering mutual understanding and cooperation and in introducing and interpreting the cultural heritage of the one to the other.

With over twenty branches spread all over the country, and with whole collectives of factories and farms and institutions constituting the membership, the SIFS has a very wide mass base. As L. I. Brezhnev said, "in essence, the entire Soviet people are collective members of the Society of Friendship with India. The entire Soviet people are your friends—trusted, sincere and reliable friends."

This collection of articles and reports gives a broad view of the organisation and activities of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Society in the USSR.



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