02

Dosti Druzhba

Festival of India, Ministry of Culture, Government of India.
India and the Soviet Union in Time and Space

1988

Introduction

Dosti Druzhba was more than just a project—it was the beginning of Stambh Design Consultancy's journey. Commissioned in 1987, this was our first challenge in crafting a narrative that connected India and the USSR through design. We faced hurdles tight deadlines, language barriers, and historical sensitivities but in the end, it was a defining moment that shaped our approach to exhibition storytelling.

Three pivotal agencies were selected to lead this endeavour in India: The National Archives, the Anthropological Survey of India, and the Archaeological Survey of India.

The Soviet design team initially executed the exhibition in Moscow, and the Indian design team lent support by supplying necessary materials from India. In reciprocation, they supported us with the show in New Delhi. It's important to note that the design concepts, execution, and budgets were independent, and the Indian idea is presented here.

The exhibition found its home on all three floors of Rabindra Bhawan in New Delhi. To showcase the commonalities between the two countries, it was aptly named "Dosti – Druzhba", signifying friendship in Hindi and Russian, respectively.

The following text is divided into three sections:
1. Research and Structure of the Exhibition
2. Storyline
3. Brochure

Every exhibition goes through this process before the conceptual copy is finalised, often with the invaluable assistance of a subject expert who serves as the copywriter. The complete visual representation of the

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exhibition relies on the quality of the copy provided to the designers.

Stambh Design Consultancy extends its heartfelt gratitude to Professor Madhavan K. Palat (JNU) for his extensive research and detailed instructions provided to the visualisers. We also express our gratitude to the late Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan and late Mr. Daljit Arora for placing immense confidence in the young Stambh team.

The following pages illustrate the methodology of the research, which presents a detailed stage-by-stage development of a storyline deliberately included to aid students in understanding the approach to the subject. Several letters serve to underscore the significance of keeping the advisor informed throughout the research process. This copy pertains to the Indian exhibition. The objects for display and visual displays were provided by the courtesy of the National Archives, the Anthropological Survey of India, and the Archaeological Survey of India. These were very unique and important materials to make the exhibition meaningful.
The Indian exhibition took place across all three floors of Ravindra Bhawan, Mandi House, New Delhi. The corridor leading to the entrance was also designed as a preamble to the exhibition. This marked my inaugural event experience in overseeing a complete event, encompassing everything from invitation cards, posters, and hoardings to the inauguration and exhibits. This project taught us the importance of envisioning an event in its entirety. Madhavan had undertaken remarkable research on the 'Links between India and Central Asia'.

Although we don't have many images and much information, some of the data gathered during the exhibition conceptualisation is courtesy of the National Archives, the Anthropological Survey of India, and the Archaeological Survey of India, which are reproduced for the understanding of students.

An Exhibition on Central Asian Links

Research and Text:
Professor Madhavan K. Palat, JNU

It sometimes happens that very different people are drawn towards each other by rare experiences and particular commitments. Such a past and future have brought India and the Soviet Union together in the fleeting moment of the present. We have the privilege of being witnesses, contributors, and, most of all, creators. This Exhibition is dedicated to the collective memory that has shaped us and to those projects on the horizon that inspire us.

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Structure of the Exhibition —
The theme is friendship, which sounds vacuous, so it must be translated into something substantial.

I. It will, therefore, deal with what is shared between the two countries: it will not represent the two of them. The idea is not to show everything here and everything there, so don't tear your hair out in the absence of Hinduism. It is not typical; it is unique to India.

II. It will not deal with everything familiar, which would mean talking about mountains and rivers, two-legged and four-legged animals, trees, and food grains, as the Soviet brochure initially does. That is silly. Instead, it will deal only with what is familiar and exclusive to the two countries. Even that is virtually impossible since God did not specially create India and the USSR for this exhibition. There will have to be some compromises.

III. It will show reciprocal influences, the everyday stress, not one-way flows. Therefore, nothing will seek to present us as the object and them as the subject of any one activity, even of aid and collaboration in the final section.

IV. It will also show related experiences that are not prima facie common, e.g., the 19th-century revolutionary and reform movements that were not in contact with one another but arose from globally everyday situations. In this respect, they differ from, say, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity, which were unitedly common.

The sections are as follows—

1. Entry:
This will show what is expected of the two countries in all their variety.

2. Movements of People:
Migrations, languages, and physical types.

3. Ways of Life:
Particular standard features of dress, habitat, diet, items of everyday use, etc. This is the weakest section, thanks to everybody's ignorance and FOI's pussyfooting about research and departmental red tape about bringing people like Bhan here.

4. Flow of Ideas:
Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity, with significant art displays.

5. The Sciences:
Astronomy, medicine, engineering, up to the 18th century, essentially medieval and late medieval only.

6. The Arts in Detail:
Miniature art; the Damascus sword; weaponry; porcelain. Commerce: All the rogues travelling up and down and making money.

7. The Reach for Freedom:
Common struggles against political oppression and economic deprivation in the 19th century, roughly up to the revolution of 1917 and the Gandhian phase of the national movement. It brings together colonialism in India and early capitalist development in Russia.

8. The Realisation of Freedom:
The development of the USSR in the 1920s and 1930s, its victory in the Second World War, and the Indian freedom struggle culminating in 1947.

9. Friendship:
Post-independence collaboration in international affairs, economic development, space research, and cultural matters, to culminate in the festivals and us.

Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi -110067

Tel. 658310
5 May 1988

Dr Kapila Vatsyayan,
Secretary,
Department of Arts,
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts,
Janpath, New Delhi.

Dear Dr Vatsyayan,
I enclose a more detailed outline for our exhibition, Dosti-Druzhba. Let me point out first the areas of difficulty:

1. Part I, entitled 'entry', has been left as it is. It seems more like a designer's job to think up a means of aligning the maps.
   Does it require a script at all?

2. Part III, on settled life, has turned out to be almost impossible for reasons I had suspected earlier. It covers an immense range, chiefly anthropological and historical, dealing with the most minor details of everyday life, like clothes, ornaments, utensils, houses, etc. To relate the practices in either country requires specialised knowledge for selection or then chasing their histories, in effect, to do with what we did for Buddhism. But Buddhism is more accessible as it has been so heavily researched and consists of large movements with famous names, monuments, and products. Not so minor details. These would require a lot of time and research by specialists. I attempted to search the literature in a couple of areas but came up with results that were too meagre for the time I have at my disposal now. Can we then go beyond a mere juxtaposition of the selections already made by either side?

3. Part V, on the sciences, presents comparable problems. Of the material collected so far, there is only Ulugh Beg's observatory and our Jantar Mantar for astronomy, some manuscripts on medicine, and nothing on engineering. We would need historians of medieval science and technology to select and relate the material. Architecture is perhaps the least difficult of all (as engineering), but there is surprisingly little.

4. Part VII, on the fine arts, has again almo material save illustrated manuscripts, examples of which must suffice. Jewellery is, at best, random, incus in tribal decoration, not the kind of creations envisaged for this section. For example, the jewelled daggers, interiors, glass or jade, etc.

If we had to proceed any further with these sections as we need them, we would need specialists and a huge demand for fresh items from the Soviet side. As for the other areas in which I have managed to do better, let me make the following comments:

1. In Part II, on migrations and languages, I think we could still include the contentious question of the relation of Dravidian to Altaic as a scholarly opinion. As for the whole of it appearing too academic, the visualisations can partially tackle the problem. In any case, the subject is such and is served by physical anthropology woven into it. Finally, I remember that the Kham exhibition had a heavily academic section on mathematics, which seemed to go off very well. Could this not also be in that case?

2. In Part IV, on ideas, I have tentatively included a section on Christianity. The Soviet list has a brief selection on it. Could we not exploit the fact? It might have the advantage, like Dravidian and Altaic, of getting us away from the prolonged focus on the north. While it is not our purpose to represent the whole of the country, it might be worth taking advantage of the opportunity to legitimately include different parts of the country when it presents itself in the reach for freedom. Here, I have taken the greatest liberty of all. I found the Soviet and Indian selections for the 18th and 19th centuries, especially the Soviet, unsatisfactory for being focused so intensely on Orientalism. I have excluded Orientalism altogether for the following reasons:

   a. It is unbalanced by being almost entirely a one-way flow of Russian academic and artistic interest in India without us having reciprocated at all. This exhibition is concerned with two-way flows and commonalities, not sciences.

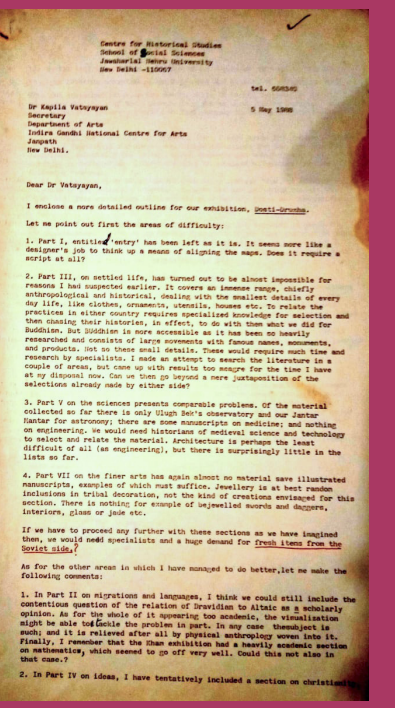
   b. More than that, Orientalism is an act of colonial hegemony in which the consciousness of the colonised was appropriated and occupied by them. It took the form of that impressive scholarship that we know only too well. But we need not be flattered by others' interest in the theory and its motivation.

   c. The Russians, in their Orientalist interest in India, were merely participating in a pan-European intellectual assault on India, coinciding with their conquest of Central Asia. As such, the Russians were the collaborators of the British colonials, with views identical to those of the British despite being political rivals and exercising no political power in India. In this, their activity was analogous to that of the Germans, who were impressive Orientalists all over the world without a formal empire most of the time. I do not see why we should glorify a colonial Russian enterprise merely because it deals with us. Certainly not for the exhibition, which concerns bilateralism, commonalties friendship, etc., not subordination and unilateralism.

Instead, I have replaced it with a substantial section on everyday struggles for freedom and against poverty. As these common struggles deal with the heroic ancestries and legitimising myths of the contemporary Soviet and Indian states and relate them in this manner, there should be no objection from the Soviet side. Indeed, they should be pleased. But since they have taboos on specific individuals, we must consult them for details. This would mean a significant new demand of the Soviet side, but they should oblige.

With warm regards,
Yours sincerely

Madhavan K. Palat



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4. Part VII on the finer arts has again almost no material save illustrated manuscripts, examples of which must suffice. Jewellery is at best random inclusions in tribal decoration, not the kind of creations envisaged for this section. There is nothing for example of bejewelled swords and daggers, interiors, glass or jade etc.

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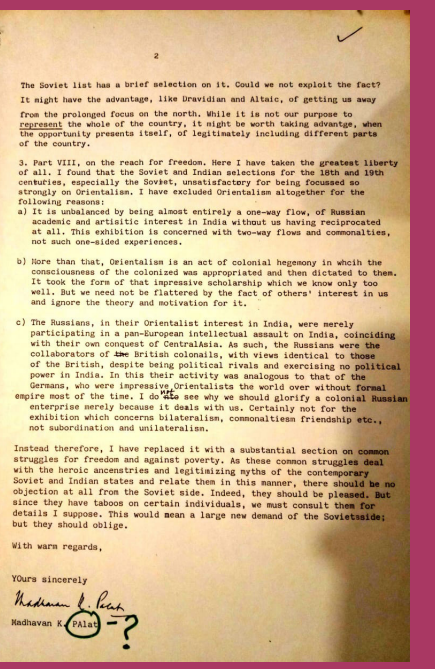

2

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3. Part VIII, on the reach for freedom. Here I have taken the greatest liberty of all. I found that the Soviet and Indian selections for the 18th and 19th centuries, especially the Soviet, unsatisfactory for being focussed so strongly on Orientalism. I have excluded Orientalism altogether for the following reasons:

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With warm regards,

Yours sincerely

Madhavan K. Palat

The responsibility of the researcher/copywriter is to keep the adviser informed.

The letter has been reproduced from the original.

The Storyline

Dosti-Druzhba

Land and People

The Bond of Diversity

India and the Soviet Union share an extraordinary degree of almost exclusive diversity worldwide. There is a bewildering multitude of languages, cultures, people, and nationalities, yet no one is in either country's majority. Uniformity and Unity have not been created or imposed by the domination of one culture or people over others, as in every other country. Using language as a criterion:

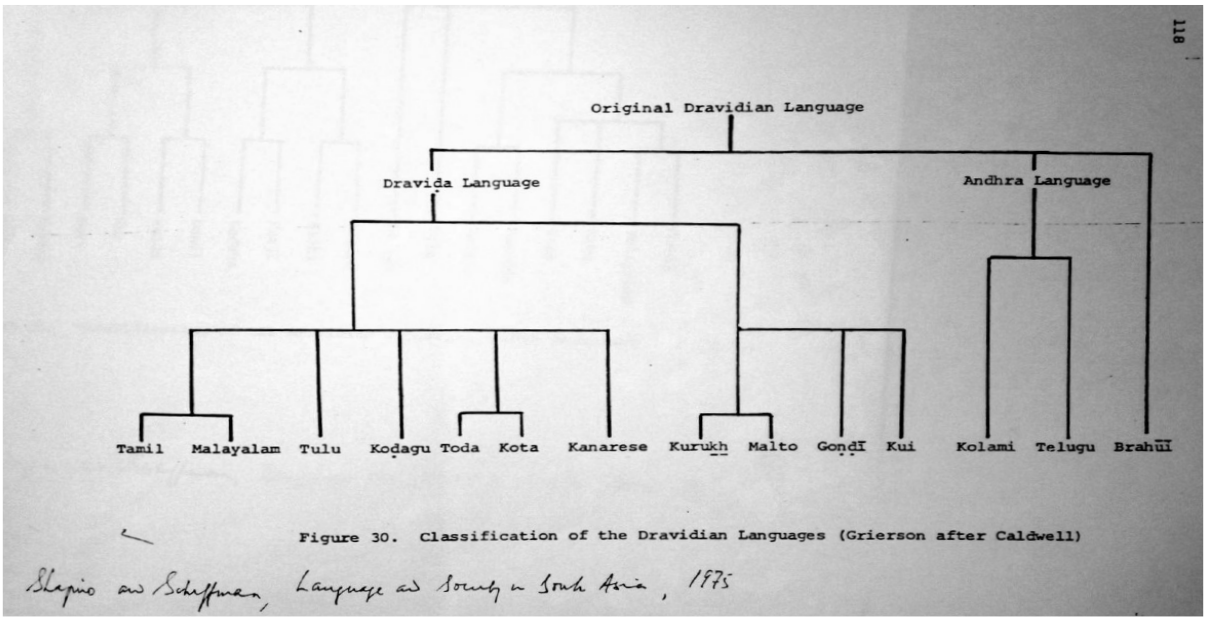


Table 1:
India: list of languages, number of speakers of each,each as a percentage of the country's total population.

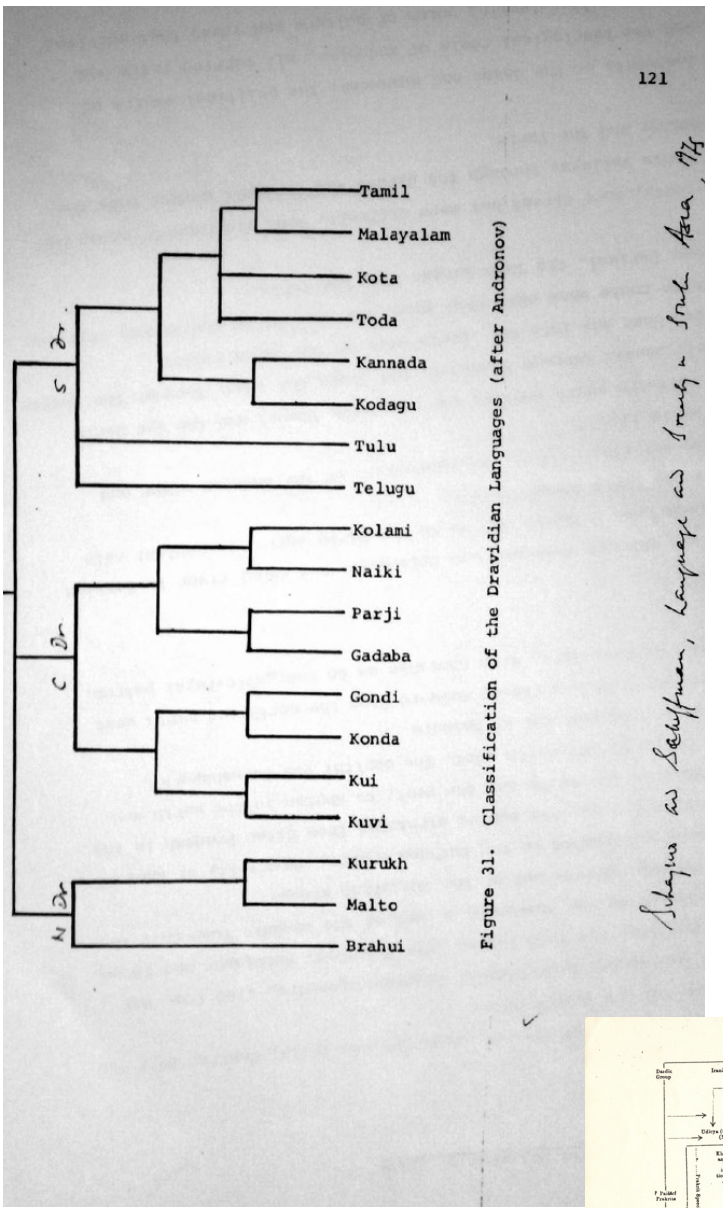
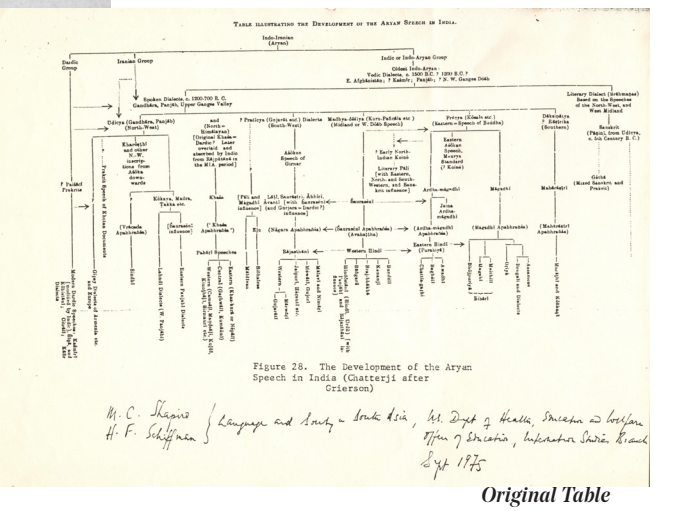


Table 2:
USSR: exact details for comparative purposes.



Original Table

They result from a complex evolution of millennia, as elsewhere in the world. Still, they have been created deliberately in the most recent past through many remarkably similar historical experiences and common approaches to critical issues of the modern world. Their political friendship today is grounded in such common attitudes; their warm cultural relations are founded on an awareness of much-shared history and their profound interest in each other's issues from their having to handle similar problems of internal composition and social development. Therefore, let us look at the foundations in the remote past, the related experiences of recent history, and the participation in each other's stories now.

For designers
1. To show the diversity of the 2 countries

2. Juxtapose radically different dress styles by contrasting only with modern Western dress, especially suits or jeans. Don't use a variety of styles other than modern because they only tend to merge into each other as uniformly picturesque backwardness.

There are 2 types of contrast:
1. The traditional with the modern

2. The traditional
Use (1) mostly, using the variety from (II) as a subordinate.

1. Juxtapose radically opposed technologies, e.g., the camel and the 747, tribal bows and arrows, the Bofors gun, the catamaran, and the deep-sea trawler.

2. Juxtapose housing: tribal huts and Bombay skyscrapers, urban slums, and urban affluence and prodigality; villages, cows, and all with South Delhi flyovers and the Calcutta Metro.

3. Similar things with the USSR were possible.

The Universe of Ideas

From the 1st century BC, the flow of ideas between India and Central Asia became swifter and deeper in the wake of major political movements.

The Sakas or Scythians, Indo-Iranian language speakers, fled from the area around the Aral Sea into India, specifically Kathiawar and Kutch. They were soon followed by the Kushanas, a part of the nomadic Yueh-Chi, who had been driven out of the Mongolian steppe.

These movements culminated in the Kushan Empire, especially of Kanishka, in the 1st century AD. This empire stretched from Uttar Pradesh in the east, the Sakas in the south and the west, Khotan in the north, and beyond the Oxus or Amu Daria in the northwest. The capital was at Purushapura, near modern Peshawar, with a second one at Mathura, which accounts for the famed Mathura School of Art.

At the same time, Buddhism flowed outward from the north and the northwest of India into Central Asia, with Kanishka as an energetic royal patron.

Thus, the movements of the Sakas and Kushanas, the political empire of Kanishka, and the ideological realm of Buddhism all married North India and Central Asia into a long-lasting union of culture and ideas that survived the extinction of Buddhism itself.

It was then the turn of the Turks and Afghans, from the 11th to the 18th centuries, to sustain the links between India and Central Asia. Islam replaced Buddhism over the same area and beyond, creating a similar cultural universe, but this time over an even larger space in Central Asia and India.

However, an unexpected and little-noticed bond between Russia proper and the extreme south of India, Kerala, has existed as long as Islam. This is Christianity of the Eastern and Orthodox variety. It dates to at least the 4th century AD in India; according to the legend of the apostolic mission of St Thomas to India, it commenced in the 1st century AD itself. In Russia, it began with the conversion of Vladimir of Kyiv in 988 AD, exactly a thousand years ago this year.

It is interesting and significant that the dominant form of Christianity in India belonged doctrinally to Eastern Orthodoxy along with the Russian Orthodox Church from an earlier date.

Commerce

India and Russia had little direct contact with each other until almost the 20th century, but both traded extensively with Central Asia and, in effect, exchanged their goods there.

Enterprising Indian merchants spread out through much of Central Asia; such was their presence that the Russian colonial term for the urban population of Central Asia was Sart, derived from the Sanskrit, Sarthaka, meaning merchant. As is evident from such a Sanskritic derivation, the Indian commercial presence in Central Asia was centuries old.

The usual limit of the travels of Indian merchants was Astrakhan at the mouth of the Volga and Baku in Azerbaijan, after which Russians took over directly. Hindu Indian merchants in Baku account for the fire temples there, reminiscent of worship in places like Jwalamukhi, where gas issuing from the earth may be kept alight permanently. The same occurred in Baku, which virtually floats on oil. Some Indian merchants did, however, penetrate as far as the fairs of Nizhnii-Novgorod (modern Gorky) and even Moscow. Russians who reached India were fewer, but 2 are famous for their travel accounts. Afanasii Nikitin, a merchant of Tver (modern Kalinin), just northwest of Moscow, travelled through Iran into India in 1466-1472 and left an invaluable and vivid account of his experiences here. Another merchant, Semen Malenkii, came to India at the end of the 17th century and was treated favourably by Aurangzeb.

Shortly thereafter, Armenians came in great numbers, linking up with their trading operations in Russia and Central Asia. From the 17th century, they set up colonies in Surat and Agra and, with the rise of the British, in Calcutta.

The items traded were Indian textiles, dyestuffs, cotton prints, and shawls, especially from Kashmir and sundry exotica, all in high demand in Central Asia and Russia. Trade was not just about goods; it was a cultural exchange. Every piece of fabric or artwork carried stories between civilisations, just as exhibitions today carry narratives between audiences. Such trade was entirely independent of political relations, which were quite marginal.

Exhibits:

Travel accounts from both sides, account books of Astrakhan and Baku, state documents, photographs of Armenian tombs, 2 Kashmir shawls from the 19th century, coming from the Soviet side; a separate story on the Kashmir shawl, with specimens, and a large colonial drawing of the Shawl Goat!

The Reach for Freedom

The 19th century was marked by darkness and light in either country: the night of oppression by the state, autocratic in imperial Russia, colonial in India, and the hope of the revolutionary struggles for liberation. The intelligentsia in India and Russia were fashioned through their radical critique of this oppression and poverty. India saw the careers of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vidyasagar, Bankim, Vivekananda, Viresalingam, Gokhale, Tilak, and others, culminating in Gandhi; Russia gave to the world Radishchev, Herzen, Belinskii, Chernyshevskii, Lavrov, Mikhailovskii and others to end in Lenin.

Political Freedom

The 19th century witnessed innumerable heroic and tragic struggles for freedom and risings against the state and its oppression. The most famous were the Decembrist Rising and the movement in Russia in 1825 and the Great Revolt in 1857 in India. Both were preceded and followed by numerous other similar events of lesser magnitude.

The 20th century then saw remarkable coincidences of political upheavals. The Partition of Bengal in 1905 led to the Swadeshi Movement in 1905-1907; at the same time, there occurred a full-scale, if only partially successful revolution in Russia in 1905-1907, often considered the dress rehearsal for the great one of 1917. Both of these were, of course, only the culmination of numerous upsurges that built up slowly and took long to subside.

The next coincidence was the beginning of the political emancipation of either country. Between 1917 and 1921, Russia saw the 2 revolutions of February and October, a bitter civil war, and a series of foreign invasions. The Bolsheviks and the Soviet State emerged triumphant and have remained without challenge ever since. Virtually those same years saw the beginning of the mass or Gandhian phase of the national movement in India, with the Champaran Satyagraha of 1917, the Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919, Non-Cooperation 1920-1922, and the Khilafat Movement 1919-1920. The Soviet Union was free of tsarism but threatened by the international and hideous fascist menace. India was already clearly on the road to freedom but had yet to shake off the vestiges of imperialism.

Exhibits:

I. Decembrists and 1857

II. 1905-07 and Swadeshi

III. 1917-21 and the 1st phase of the Gandhian leadership

Terrorism

Impatience in the political struggle often leads to terrorism. It was a constant theme of the Russian revolutionary movements from the 1870s until after the Revolution of 1905-1907. In one such conspiracy of 1887, Lenin's elder brother, Alexander Ulianov, was discovered and executed. In India, it flourished in the 20th century, subsiding in the 1930s.

Prison Systems

Both regimes, the tsarist and colonial British, were notorious for their prison and exile systems and related political horrors. The dungeon of the Alexis Ravelin in the Peter and Paul Fortress in St Petersburg (now Leningrad) enjoys the same sombre renown as the Cellular Jail in the Andamans, and Siberia has become as famous as Ahmadnagar and Yeravada for, amongst other things, their distinguished victims and for the great works of political literature composed there.

Female Emancipation

The Russian revolutionary and Indian reform and national movements were nothing if not libertarian in the best sense of the term. The emancipation of women, their equality with men, and their human dignity were all burning issues, treated on a par with the plight of the serfs, the peasants, and the starving millions. They are also unique for the 'woman's question' not having been relegated to a 'woman's department', as it were, of these movements: men took as much if not more initiative.

The central questions in India were sati, widow remarriage, and the age of consent. In Russia, equality was more general, and the woman's freedom to choose, especially in love, developed into a major campaign in the 1860s, with even a special woman's journal, Rassvet, a scientific, literary, and artistic periodical for young ladies.

The typical presentation of the problem is to be found in N. G. Chernyshevskii's novel, What is to be Done? Lopukhov marries Vera Pavlovna who then falls in love with Kirsanov. The husband, Lopukhov, does not obstruct her sovereign right to free choice, and she marries Kirsanov. Lopukhov then meets another, falls in love, marries her, and they all live happily ever after.

The Realisation of Freedom

Both the Indian people and revolutionary Russia had been awakened to great tasks by Gandhi and Lenin. India moved inexorably towards independence through 2 other great mass movements, the Civil Disobedience of 1930-1933 and Quit India of 1942, the most significant movement since 1857.

The Soviet Union had to struggle hard to retain its new liberty. It's first task was to develop from a predominantly agrarian and mixed economy into a fully socialist, planned, and industrial society. This transition occurred during the twenties and the thirties, with collectivisation and planning. With this newfound strength, she could defend herself against the Nazi

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onslaught of 1941-1945 and rebuild herself after the appalling human and material loss. But both societies emerged triumphant from the ordeals, with India winning independence in 1947 and the Soviet Union guaranteeing her security, reconstructing and recasting Europe in a saner mould.

Description of Exhibits
I. Migration of People

Text
The great migrations of history up to the end of the 1st millennium AD were of language speakers, not of racial types: Aryan, Slavonic, German, all denote linguistic entities, not race.

Such migrations had, by the beginning of the 1st millennium BC, already established a profound and ineradicable link between the Indian subcontinent and the territory of the modern Soviet Union.

The most obvious and famous is that of the Indo-Aryan languages of India and the Eastern Slavic languages of Russia (Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian). All these, along with the Baltic languages (Lettish and Lithuanian), belong to the Satem group of the Indo-European family of languages.

Exhibits
Tree chart of the Indo-European languages of India and the Soviet Union, all of them, not just those drawn up by the Anthropological Survey of India.

Charts of identities of Sanskrit and Russian, with a text of explanation, even at the risk of being slightly academic.

Text
The speakers of these languages belong overwhelmingly to the Caucasoid family of the races of mankind. List of the various subtypes to follow, to be done by the Anthropological Survey of India.

Exhibits
Racial types. Use as little as possible of the standard ethnic photographs.

Works of art, historical figures, and even exotica are preferred.

For India:
Use Ajanta frescoes, famous sculptures, and paintings, especially portraiture, to show the racial types.

For the Soviet Union:
Use especially Gerasimov's reconstructions of historical faces, Yaroslav the Wise, the Scythian, and Ivan the Terrible, then from icon paintings, chronicles, and finally, 19th-century portrait paintings.

Text
Whereas the Indo-Aryan and Balto-Slavonic speakers have little direct contact with each other, those of the Dardic group still do, as neighbours on the roof of the world, the Pamirs. This group consists of Kashmiri, Tina, Kohistani, Chitrali, and Kafir, and they are a branch of the Indo-Iranian.

Exhibits
Maps of distribution and text on languages and scripts if viable.

Text
Little known as it might be, there is a Dravidian link as well. The Brahui tongue is spoken in the neighbourhood of Mari in Turkmenistan.

Exhibits
Map of distribution chart or tree charts of similarities

Text
The story does not end there. There is scholarly opinion that the Dravidian and the Altaic (Turkic and Tungusic) groups are related owing to ancient pre-historic proximity somewhere in Eurasia before they migrated to India and the eastern and central portions of the Asian continent. If so, the languages of Soviet Central Asia (i.e. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kirghizia, and parts of Tajikistan) being Turkic are related to the South Indian Dravidian languages.

II. The Universe of Ideas

Text

From the 1st century BC, the flow of ideas between India and Central Asia became swifter and deeper:
1. The Scythians, Indo-Iranian language speakers, moved from the area around the Aral into the west and to Kathiawar and Kutch. They were followed by the Kushanas, a part of the nomadic Yueh-Chi, who had themselves been driven out of the Mongolian steppe.

2. These movements culminated in the Kushana Empire, especially of Kanishka, in the 1st century AD. This empire stretched from Uttar Pradesh in the east to Khotan in the north and beyond the Amu Darya in the northwest. The capital was Purushapura (Peshawar), and there was a second one in Mathura.

3. At the same time, Buddhism flowed outward from the north and northwest of India into Central Asia, with Kanishka as an energetic royal patron.

Buddhist routes

The main one was through Peshawar and Jalalabad, the Kabul River to Bamiyan across the Hindu Kush to Balkh, and on to the Tarim Basin; in Central Asia, the routes to the Tarim were:
1. Qizil Su to the Alai Valley, the headwaters of the Kashgar River, and into the oasis itself;

2. The more northern route crossed the Amu Darya (Oxus) and the Syr Darya (Jaxartes), passed through Tashkent, Issyk Kul Lake, the passes of the Tien Shan, and into the northwest of the Tarim basin,

3. The southern route went east from Balkh via Badakhshan and Wakhan over the Pamirs into Sarikul and via Tash Kurgan into the Tarim.

The lesser route, more direct but more difficult, went via Kashmir along the Gilgit and Yasin valleys, through the Darkot and Baroghil passes into the Wakhan valley and the Tarim.

Thus, the movements of the Sakas and Kushanas, the political empire of Kanishka, and the ideological realm of Buddhism all married India and Central Asia into a long-lasting union of culture and ideas that survived the extinction of Buddhism itself.

Exhibits
Map of the movements of the Yueh-Chi, the Kushanas, the Sakas, the empire of Kanishka, and the Buddhist routes. (To be made)

1. Indian exhibits: Arch. S.I. list, items nos. 33-40, 43, 44, 47, 48, 49, 52.

2. Soviet exhibits: From the Soviet list pp. 21, 23, 24, 25, 26.

Note: The Soviet selection is extensive, ours limited. The Archaeological Survey of India should perhaps be selected for the Saka-Kushana exhibition of coins, sculptures, and excavation sites. The Sangol site and objects should be ideal. Why has it not been exploited?

Section 2 on Buddhism alone
Soviet items, from pp. 10, 20, 21, 22, 23. There seems to be nothing from the Indian side. Can the Archaeological Survey of India supply more Buddhist items from Central Asia?

Section 3 on contemporary Buddhism:
Soviet side on p. 11; should we keep it and include one on the Dalai Lama, Sikkim, etc., Ambedkar, and the Dalits?

Text
It was then the turn of the Turks and Afghans, from the 11th to the 8th centuries, to sustain the links between India and Central Asia. Islam replaced Buddhism in the same area, creating a similar cultural unity, but this time over a more extensive territory.

Exhibits
Maps of Turkish, Afghan, and Mughal movements into India. Structures are a theme, with emphasis on the dome, the arch, and decoration.

Items on the Soviet list, p. 10, nothing Indian as yet. Theme: cultural contacts:
Indian list, items 1-8A
2nd Indian list, items 1-5
Soviet list pp. 26, 28-32.

Note: Most of the exhibition, except Soviet p. 10, consists of manuscripts; the others are fine works of art which might be better placed in section VII if retained. From the Soviet side, there are no such fine works other than manuscripts, and from both, little or nothing on architecture, which should be a major medium in itself.

Christianity
The Soviet list, p. 12, has strange and eclectic selections, with nothing on the most important orthodoxy. If we wish, we can have it combined with Syrian Christianity in Kerala. It will also be a welcome departure from the eternal North India-Central Asia axis, but it will be an equally major fresh effort of collection.

III. Commerce

Text
India and Russia had little direct trade with each other until almost the 20th century, but both traded extensively with Central Asia and, in effect, exchanged their goods there.

Enterprising Indian merchants ventured throughout much of Central Asia; such was their presence that the Russian colonial term for the urban population of Central Asia was Sart, derived from the Sanskrit Sarthaka, meaning merchant.

Exhibits
All from India list, Sections III-V
Travels of Ordhbahu, 11 & 11a Izatullah account of sarais used by Hindus from Shikarpur in Bukhara, 15; bills of exchange, account by Izzatullah.

1871: Ibrahim Khan's account of Bukhara visit, 26; list of traders, 42; mobile map of Ordhbahu's travels.

Text
The usual limit of their travels was Astrakhan, at the mouth of the Volga, and Baku in Azerbaijan, after which Russians took over directly. But some penetrated the fairs of Nizhny Novgorod (modern Gorky) or Moscow.

Exhibits
Indian List: Add section III-V, 1715, an account of Indians in Astrakhan.

Soviet list: 4 Item 7 nos, p. 35, Indians in Astrakhan.
2 items, Indian books from Astrakhan, p. 36.
3 items, p. 37.
1 item, Pavlov on Indians in Astrakhan, p. 39.
1 item, p. 40, Astrakhan governor's project for trade with India.

Baku: Soviet list, p. 38, 4 items
Indian, add. Sections no. 9, Robert Ker Porter's account of the fire temple

Text
Russians who reached India were fewer but more famous for their travel accounts. They are Afanasii Nikitin and Semen Malenkii. Afanasii Nikitin came to India in 1466-1472 and left behind one of the most valuable travelogues and accounts of India. A merchant from Tver (today Kalinin), just north of Moscow, travelled through Iran en route to India.

Commerce
Exhibits
Soviet list, pp. 33-34
Map of travels
Translations of interesting excerpts from a book

Text
Semen Malenkii, a merchant, came to India at the end of the 17th century and was issued a duty-free permit and passage through India by Aurangzeb.

Exhibits
permit, 1696
account, Soviet list, p. 37

Text
Shortly thereafter came Armenians in ever larger numbers, linking up with their trading operations in Russia and Central Asia. From the 17th century, they set up colonies in Surat, Agra, and, with the rise of the British, in Calcutta.

Exhibits
Armenian tombs for ASI.
Manuscripts made in Surat and Agra, Soviet List, pp. 36-39.
Indian list, sections II-IV, items 10, 20, 34, 35, 36, 37.

Text
Items traded were Indian textiles and dyestuffs, cotton prints, and embroidered items like shawls from Kashmir, all of which found a ready market in Central Asia and Russia.

Exhibits
Soviet List, pp. 35-38; details of goods and accounts of such merchants.
Indian list, sections II-IV, nos. 19, 21, 43; add list 10, 12, 13.

Text
Such trade was quite independent of political relations, which were relatively marginal as of yet.

IV. The Reach for Freedom
Text

The 19th century was marked by darkness and light in either country: the darkness of oppression by the state, autocracy in the Russian empire, colonialism in India, and the hope of the revolutionary struggles for liberation. The intelligentsia in Russia and India were fashioned through their radical critique of this oppression and poverty. India saw the careers of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Vivekananda, Viresalingam, Gokhale, Tilak, and others culminate in Mahatma Gandhi; Russia gave to the world Radishchev, Herzen, Belinskii, Chernyshevskii, Lavrov, Mikhailovskii, etc. to end in Lenin.

Political Freedom:

The century witnessed innumerable heroic and tragic struggles for freedom and uprisings against the state. The most famous of these were the Decembrists in Russia in 1825 and the War of Independence in India in 1857.

Exhibits
Decembrists
Facsimile of Russkaia Pravda
Engraving of the uprising in Senate Square
Medallions and memorabilia of the 5 hanged.
Places of exile
Sample of literature on the Decembrists, especially Nechkina

1857
Accounts of the events
Maps of the risings
Memorabilia of the heroes, Tantia Tope, Rani Laxmibai, Kunwar Singh, Hazrat Mahal, and Maulavi of Faizabad.
Engravings of executions, especially blowing from guns, and other horrors
Events like the battle at Kashmiri Gate and the execution of the Mughal princes.

The Revolution of 1905-1907 in Russia follows the same pattern as above.

Jallianwala Bagh
Subsection: Terrorism
Preceding or accompanying mass action, terror was directed exclusively against the state, and despite its futility, it inspired the next generation.

Russia
Narodnaia Volia, Assassination of Alexander II in 1881.
Execution of the hero, life history, and execution of Alexander Ulyanov, Lenin's brother, in 1887.

Subsection
Russia: Exile System; Siberia; hard labour in Nerchinsk; life in Irkutsk; famous places of exile; famous escapes, especially Lavrov; and Stalin's publications Katorga i Ssylka, by the Exiles' Association.

India: The Andamans, Mandalay (for Bahadur Shah), notorious British prisons, and the great works composed there, e.g. Nehru and Lenin masterpieces.

Freedom of the Mind

Text
Political freedom meant nothing if it did not mean enlightenment: Education and self-preparation were a grand obsession in the 19th century.

Exhibits
India
Akshay Kumar Datta: Excerpts from Publications
1. Free and compulsory education in India, from Dharmaniti, 1855, p. 144.

2. Types of primary education, Dharmaniti, pp. 124-129.

3. Use Indian languages instead of English, Dharmaniti, and Patrika.

4. Others will be selected from the many reform movements.

Russia
From Chernyshevskii, Dobroliubov, Lavrov, Tolstoy.

Freedom of Women

Text
The 'woman's question' was a burning issue among the progressive intelligentsia of both countries, on par with the reform of the state and the peasant problem. The oppression of women took very different forms: the focus in India was sati, widow remarriage, and the age of consent; in Russia, there were the questions of equality in general, with a large number of women taking part in the revolutionary movements, even in terrorism.

Exhibits
India

Rammohun's Sati writings:
'Brief Remarks Regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females', 1828;

'Hari Keshavji's tract of 1839';

'An essay on the promotion of female education in India', Edinburgh, available in Bombay University Library, no. 105337, p. 9;
Vidyasagar:Marriage of Hindu Widows, quote from the preface.
Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856.

Bankim: Ch. 5 of Samya, on the equality of the sexes.
Viresalingam and Dayanand

Freedom from Want

Text
Reflecting the optimism of industrial technology, every social thinker and activist was aware that poverty was no longer necessary and that the State flourished on it.

Exhibits
India
Petitions against the Permanent Settlement, the Ryotwari, and other systems.
Famines: Photos, Descriptions, Statistics
Bankim: Peasants of Bengal
Dadabhai Naoroji: Poverty and Un-British Rule in India, Theory of the Drain
The source of India's underdevelopment

Russia
Petitions by peasants and workers of state factories in the Ural;
Famines, especially in 1891, but also statistics, photos, etc.
Selections from Bervi-Flerovskii, other accounts, paintings of the Peredvizhniki, and Burlaki development plans of people like Admiral Mordvinia, especially their utopian quality.

V. Freedom or Liberation

Text
Many of these aspirations were eventually realised in the first half of this century. Russia went through the revolution of 1917, consolidated it by 1921 after a vicious civil war and foreign invasions, consummated it with collectivisation and planning in the 1930s, and defended it heroically in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. India developed new strategies of struggle in the mass or Gandhian phase of the national movement through Non-Cooperation 1920-1922, Civil Disobedience 1930-1931, and Quit India in 1942 to culminate in Independence in 1947. During these years, adumbrating the present, personal and political contacts ripened.

Exhibits
October Revolution and Civil War
Indian Revolutionaries and the October Revolution
Collectivisation and Planning
Nehru and planning, Nehru's writings on the Soviet Union, Tagore and USSR, War, 1947.

VI. Freedom and Friendship

Text
India and the Soviet Union had forged diplomatic links before independence in April 1947. Their mutuality of interest and friendship was marked by their close collaboration in economic development, especially in heavy industry, space research, and trade, and fertilised by numerous cultural contacts.

Exhibits
Themes
Korean War
Exchange of Visits, 1955
Heavy Industry, steel plants
Space research
Trade Agreements
Culture, culminating in the festivals.

Unearthing Gems:

Discoveries in Research and Story Building

Courtsey of the following departments, Anthropological Survey of India, Archaeological Survey of India, National Archives Of India.

The Harrapan story

The Harapan civilisation, flourished around 2600 to 1900 BC. This ancient civilization is one of the world's oldest urban societies, characterised by its advanced urban planning, sophisticated drainage systems, and intricate trade networks. The lifestyle of the people of the Harapan civilisation offers a fascinating glimpse into their daily lives, social structure, economy, and cultural practices.

The Harappan people were skiled artisans and craftsmen, as evidenced by the numerous artefacts unearthed from archaeological sites. They produced exquisite pottery, intricately carved seals, jewellery made of gold and precious stones, and finely crafted tools and implements. Trade played a vital role in the Harappan economy, with evidence of long-distance trade networks extending to Mesopotamia, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. This trade not only facilitated the exchange of goods but also contributed to the cultural exchange and diffusion of ideas.

Religion and spirituality were integral aspects of Harapan life, although much about their religious beliefs remains speculative. Archaeological findings such as terracotta figurines, seals depicting deities or mythical creatures, and ritualistic artefacts suggest a pantheon of gods and goddesses, possibly associated with fertility, water, and agriculture. Despite the achievements and sophistication of the Harapan civilisation, its decline remains a mystery, ranging from environmental factors such as climate change and natural disasters to socio-political upheaval and the influx of nomadic tribes.

The Babur Nama

Babur Nama is a memoir written by Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire in India. Babur chronicled his life, conquests, and the tumultuous political landscape of Central and South Asia during the early 16th century.

Babur, born in 1483 in present-day Uzbekistan, was a descendant of both Genghis Khan and Timur, renowned conquerors of Central Asia. From his early years, Babur displayed a keen interest in literature, poetry, and military strategy, traits that would shape his character and influence his actions throughout his life.

The Babur Nama begins with Babur's childhood and upbringing in the Ferghana Valley, a region marked by political instability and rivalries among local chieftains. Despite being a prince by birth, Babur faced numerous challenges, including the loss of his father at a young age and the constant struggle to assert his authority over his fractious relatives.

As Babur matured, he embarked on a series of military campaigns to expand his territories and secure his position as a regional power. His conquests, chronicled in vivid detail in the Babur Nama, spanned across Central Asia, encompassing regions such as Samarkand, Kabul, and Kandahar.

One of the most significant chapters in the Babur Nama is Babur's conquest of India and the establishment of the Mughal Empire. In 1526, Babur defeated the Sultan of Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi, at the Battle of Panipat, laying the foundation for Mughal rule in the Indian subcontinent. The 'Babur Nama' provides a first-hand account of this historic battle, offering readers a glimpse into the fierce clashes, the strategic manoeuvring, and the personal triumphs and tribulations of Babur and his soldiers.

Beyond its military narrative, the Babur Nama also offers rich insights into the cultural and social milieu of Babur's time. Babur was a patron of the arts and literature, and his memoirs are replete with poetry, anecdotes, and observations on customs and traditions. Through his writings, Babur emerges not only as a formidable warrior but also as a refined scholar and connoisseur of beauty and intellect.

Through his memoirs, Babur invites readers into his world, offering a compelling narrative of ambition, courage, and cultural exchange in an era of profound historical transformation. The Babur Nama remains an indispensable source for scholars and enthusiasts alike, providing a window into the life and times of one of the most influential figures in South Asian history.

Dosti Druzhba, 1988

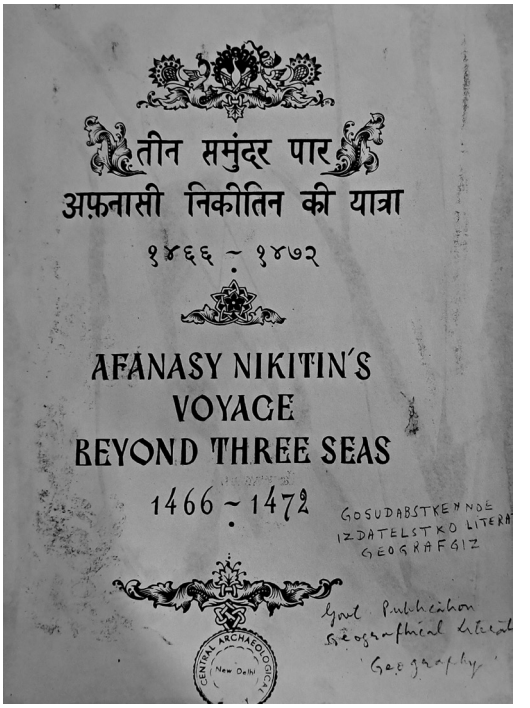
Dosti Druzhba, 1988

Afanasy Nikitin's Voyage Beyond Three Seas (India)

India 1466-1472

Vast distances and the highest mountain ranges in the world separate the Soviet Union from India. But from old times, the people of the 2 great countries have lived in friendship, showing a keen interest in each other. More than over the centuries, Russian travellers, scientists, writers, and artists have visited the faraway southern country washed by the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. And we find many a heartfelt comment, full of sympathy for India and her people, in their diaries and recollections. Afanasy Nikitin was the first Russian to reach India.

The noted traveller was born in Tver (now Kalinin), an old Russian town situated where 2 small rivers, the Tvertsa and the Tanaka, join the Volga. It is first mentioned in the chronicles of the early 13th century. In the latter half of the 15th century, the town was the capital of the sovereign Principality of Tver, one of the numerous independent principalities into which Russia was divided in those days. Few Russian towns could live with it in terms of population or wealth. Nor did it lose its importance as a major trading centre when, in the late 15th century, it became part of the centralised Russian state. There was little in the outward appearance of Tver to distinguish it from other Russian towns. Its central part was taken up by a kremlin, or citadel, where the Golden-Domed Cathedral of the Redeemer, the Prince's palace, the houses of his retainers, and other buildings stood. Outside the kremlin walls lived traders, handicraftsmen, and other townspeople. There was also an arcade there, where visiting merchants put their goods on sale.



The more enterprising of the Tver merchants engaged in foreign trade. In the 15th century, Russian merchants were frequent visitors to the West European, Middle Eastern, and Central Asian markets. Afanasy Nikitin, too, seems to have travelled far and wide, for in his notes, he compares Rue to Crimea, Georgia, Turkey, and Wallachia. Podolia is someone well familiar with those regions.

One day, Hasan Beg, Ambassador of the ruler of the Khanate of Shirvan, arrived at the court of Ivan III, Grand Duke of Muscovy. He brought valuable gifts with him. Ivan III sent his ambassador, Vasily Papain of Tver, to the court of Shirvan. Hearing of this, Nikitin and some other merchants set out for Shirvan to trade

there. They sailed down the Volga on ships. And thus began a great voyage whose story has come down to us as recorded by Nikitin.

After many dramatic adventures, Nikitin found himself in Baku. From there, he set out across the whole of Persia for the seaport town of Hormuz, one of the biggest trading centres of the East. The description of the journey through Persia is extremely laconic. Nikitin confines himself to little more than a list of the places which he chanced to visit on his way; his notes on the voyage from Hormuz are more detailed and colourful.

While in Persia, Nikitin heard that no horses were bred in India and that they were, therefore, very expensive in that country, or so rumour had it. This led him to decide on a voyage to India. He bought a horse and, with it, boarded a dabba, a small sea-going ship. He sailed to the coast of Hindustan, hoping to sell his horse there and to buy goods that were sought after in Russia. It took a man of great courage to venture on a voyage across the stormy Indian Ocean aboard so frail a craft. Six weeks later, the dabba carrying Nikitin put in at Chaul, on the Malabar coast of India. "And that is where the land of India lies," Nikitin recorded in his journal.

Nikitin's description of what he saw in India is striking evidence of his gift of keen observation and his ability to discern the typical aspects of the way of life of a people he had never known before. He not only kept a strict account of facts but also analysed them, drawing interesting parallels.

India in the mid-15th century consisted of independent Hindu and Muslim states. The earliest Muslim conquests in India date from the 7th century. In subsequent centuries, Muslim invasions became more and more frequent, and the 14th century saw the rise of many Muslim principalities in the Deccan. The most powerful of them was the Bahmanid state, which comprised 4 regions and had Gulbarga as its capital. Within a hundred years of their accession to power, the Bahmanids had doubled their possessions, and the seat of government

was transferred to Bidar. They held a large territory in the central and western areas of the Deccan Plateau, on the Hindustan peninsula, inhabited by numerous people speaking different languages, such as Marathi, Telugu, etc. Persian, however, was the official language, and it was also used by a substantial section of Muslim immigrants. Ethnic variety was combined with religious distinctions. Most inhabitants professed Hinduism; the Muslims, who belonged mainly to the upper crust of society, were a minority. The Bahmanids waged continuous wars against the neighbouring Hindu estates, of which Vijayanagar, situated in the southern part of Hindustan, was their chief rival.

During his wandering in India, Nikitin saw many towns and villages of the great country. He visited seaports on the west coast, crossed the Ghats, and reached the heart of the Deccan Plateau. His notes tell us about Junnar and Gulbarga, Bidar and Golconda, the market in Alland, the diamond mine at Raichur, the temple of Parvat, and the fortress of Vijayanagar. They also furnish information on places which he did not visit, such as Ceylon, Pegu, etc., but which he knew about from what others had told him.

No aspect of life in India, no detail worthy of note, escaped Nikitin's attention. His notes describe the outward appearance of Indians,

their clothing and food, the cost of living, rites, customs, caste distinctions, interrelations, legends, and so on. He recorded everything with a dispassionate pen, making, however, interesting comments. He gives a detailed description of the Sultan's solemn processions, of his untold riches and dazzling splendour. On the other hand, he was the only traveller of that time who saw the shady side of the opulence and fabulous luxury of the life led by the Sultan and his courtiers, 'The countrymen are very poor, but boyars are rich and live in luxury,' we read in the notes. This alone places him above many other authors who have described 15th-century India.

Nikitin's stay in India coincided with a great campaign by Muhammad III, the Barmaid Sultan, launched against Vijayanagar.
The campaign, which entailed enormous expenditure and took a heavy toll on human lives, failed after the initial successes and the exhausting siege of the fortress of Vijayanagar. It virtually marked the beginning of the decline of the Bahmanid empire, which, at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, disintegrated into 5 independent feudal states. The evidence supplied by an eyewitness such as Nikitin is most valuable because it amends much of what has reached us in the way of descriptions of the events of those days. Our knowledge of the past of India, which in the 15th and 16th centuries had no historical records, is gleaned only from the writings of Muslim scholars, which leaves out facts showing the Muslim conquerors at a disadvantage. Nikitin was the only chronicler who recorded the events of the Bahmanids' abortive war against Vijayanagar.

Nikitin spent almost 3 years in India. But his love for his homeland urged him back to Russia, to his people. 'May God protect the Russian land! There is no land in the world like it, although the boyars in the Russian land are unjust. May the Russian land be well-ordered, and may there be justice there. These lines indicate Nikitin's deep patriotism and show him as a man whose views were highly progressive for his time.

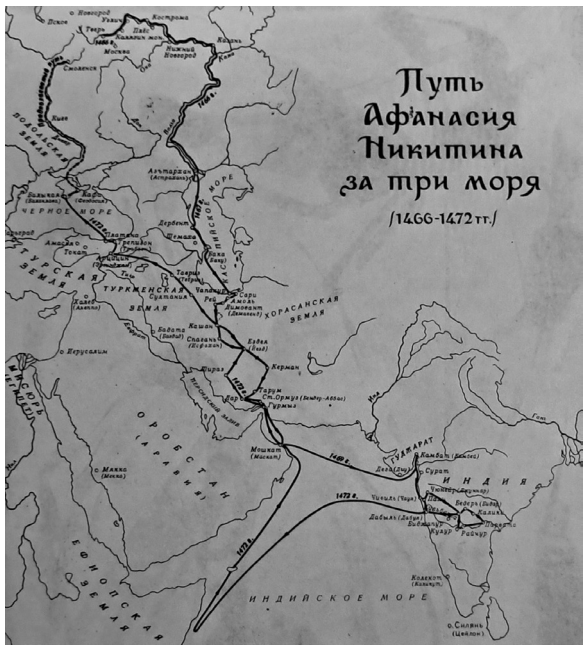
It took Nikitin many long months to make his way to the port of Dabhol on the Malabar coast, from where he left for his own country. His homeward route lay through Muscat and Hormuz, across Persia to Asia Minor, and from there to the Crimean port of Kaffa (modern Feodosia), where there was a large Russian inn. He never reached his hometown of Tver, however; according to a chronicler, he died before reaching Smolensk.

That is how Afanasy Nikitin's 'Voyage Beyond Three Seas' ended. His notes, written in the 15th century, or almost 500 years ago, still appeal to and excite us. They stimulate us with the frankness and sincerity of the writer's comments and amaze us with the abundance of enlightening data on the Indians' way of life. They show the sources of Russian-Indian friendship and are a testimonial of the depth of that friendship.

All the information provided here is courtesy of the following departments and will be used in developing the exhibition concept.

**Anthropological Survey Of India,
Archaeological Survey Of India
National Archives Of India**

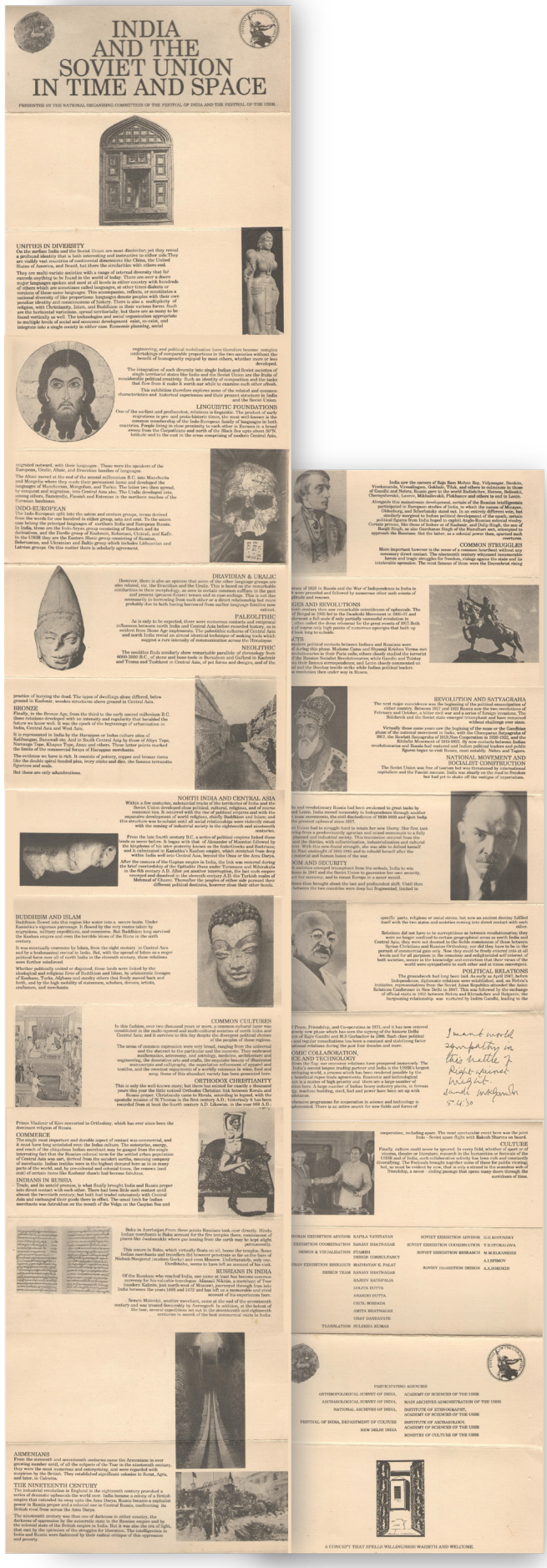
**Academy Of Sciences Of The Ussr
Main Archives Administration Of The
Ussrinstitute Of Ethnography, Academy Of
Sciences Of The Ussr**



The Brochure Dosti-Druzhba

Unity in Diversity

On the surface, India and the Soviet Union are most dissimilar, yet they reveal a profound identity that is both interesting and instructive to either. They are visibly vast countries of continental dimensions like China, the United States of America, and Brazil, but there are similarities with others. They are multi-variate societies with a range of internal diversity that far exceeds anything to be found in the world of today. There are over a dozen major languages spoken and used at all levels in either country, with hundreds of others that are sometimes called languages, at other times dialects or versions of these same languages, niceties that may be left to linguists and politicians to dispute among themselves. This accompanies, reflects, or constitutes a national diversity of like proportions: languages denote peoples with their own peculiar identities and consciousness of history. On this multiplicity has been superimposed that of religion, of Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism in their various forms, with only Hinduism being unique to India. Such are the horizontal variations, spread territorially, but there are as many to be found vertically as multiple layers of society. The technologies and social organisation appropriate at one end to the food-gathering tribal community and the other end to the age of nuclear energy and space travel exist, co-exist, and integrate into a single society in either case. Economic planning, social engineering, and political mobilisation have, therefore, become excruciatingly complex undertakings of comparable proportions in the two societies without the luxury of homogeneity enjoyed by most others, whether developed or otherwise. The integration of such diversity into single Indian and Soviet societies of single territorial states is a marvel of political creativity that few have dared to attempt and, when they have done so, have failed miserably. Such an identity of composition and the tasks that flow



Dosti Druzhba, 1988

from it make it worth our while to examine each other afresh. This exhibition, therefore, explores some of the identities of related and shared historical experiences, their present structuration, and their political consummation in the post-war, post-colonial world of independent India and the Soviet Union.

Linguistic Foundations

One of the earliest, profoundest, and longest-lived relations is linguistics. The product of early migrations in pre-and proto-historic times, the most well-known is the common membership ofthe Indo-European family of languages in both countries. People living close to each other in Eurasia in a broad sweep from the Carpathians and north of the Black Sea up to about 50°N latitude and eastward all of modern Central Asia, migrated outward, with their languages of course. These were the speakers of the Indo-European, Uralic, Altaic, and Dravidian families of languages. From the end of the third millennium to the beginning of the second millennium B.C., the Indo-European speakers moved southward and south-eastward, driving a wedge into the Uralic and the Altaic; the Uralic moved north, the Altaic east, and the Dravidian southward into India. The Uralic developed into, among others, Samoyedic, Finnish, and Estonian in the northern reaches of the Eurasian landmass. The Altaic moved at the end of the second millennium B.C. into Manchuria and Mongolia where they made their permanent home and developed the languages of Manchurian, Mongolian, and Turkic. The latter two then spread, by conquest and migration, into Central Asia.

Indo-european

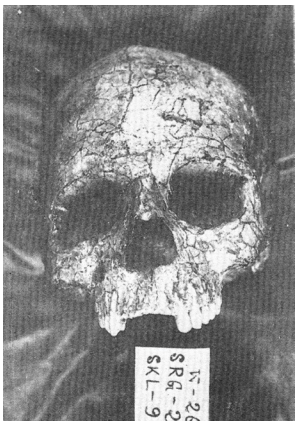
The Indo-Europeans split into the Satem and Centum groups, terms derived from the words for one hundred in either group. The Satem group belongs to the principal languages of European Russia and northern India. In India, these are the Indo-Aryan group consisting of Sanskrit and its derivatives, and the Dardic group of Kashmiri, Kohistani, Chitrali, and Kafir. In the USSR they are the Eastern Slavic (Russian, Belorussian, and Little Russian) and Baltic (Lithuanian and Latvian) groups. On this matter, there is scholarly agreement.

Dravidian & Uralic

However, there is also an opinion that some of the other language groups are also related, viz., the Dravidian and the Uralic. This is based on the remarkable similarities in their morphology, as seen in certain common suffixes in the past and present (present-future) tenses and case-endings. This is not necessarily due to borrowing from each other or a direct relationship but more probably due to both having borrowed from earlier language families that are now extinct.

Paleolithic

As is only to be expected, there were numerous contacts and reciprocal influences between northwest India and Central Asia before recorded history. In Palaeolithic times or the early Stone Age, these are traced to the common features of stone tools found in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and northwest India. The Borykazghan and Soan cultures in Central Asia and India, respectively, reveal a remarkable identity in the technique of making tools and their evolution, due possibly to a migration



from the Soan culture north-west across the Himalayas in the middle Pleistocene epoch.

Neolithic

The Neolithic finds similarly show remarkable parallels: of chronology from 6000 ~ 3000 B.C. of stone and bone tools in Burzahom and Gufkral in Kashmir and Tesma and Tashkent in Central Asia, of pot forms and designs, and of the practice of burying the dead. The types of dwellings alone differed, below ground in Kashmir and wooden structures above ground in Central Asia.

Bronze

Finally, in the Bronze Age, from the third to the early second millennium B.C., these relations developed with intensity and regularity that heralded the future we know well. It was the epoch of the beginnings of urbanisation in India, Central Asia, and West Asia. It is represented in India by the Harappa or Indus culture sites of Kalibangan, Banawali, etc., and in South Turkmenistan by those of Altyn Tepe, Namazgan Tepe, Khapuz Tepe, Anau, and others. These latter points marked the frontier of the commercial forays of Harappan merchants.

The evidence we have is rich. It consists of pottery, copper, and bronze items like the double spiral-headed pins, ivory sticks, and dice, the famous terracotta's, beads, and the plain seal. But these are only adumbrations.

North India and Central Asia

Within a few centuries, substantial tracts of the territories of India and the Soviet Union were locked in an embrace, political, cultural, religious, and economic. It occurred with the rise of political empires and with the expansive development of world religions, chiefly Buddhism, and Islam, but marginally also Hinduism; and this structure was to subsist until all social relationships were violently recast with the coming of industrial society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.From the fourth century B.C., a series of political empires linked these lands as never before. The first of them was that of Alexander of Macedon, then of his later posterity known as the Indo-Greek Bactrians of the second century B.C., and finally of Kanishka's Kushan empire, which stretched from deep within India well into Central Asia, beyond the Oxus or the Amu Darya. After the caesura of the Guptan Empire in India, the link was restored during the brief overlordship of the Ephthalite Huns (also known as White Huns) under Toramana and Mihirakula in the 6th century A.D. After yet another interruption, the last such empire emerged and dissolved in

the eleventh century A.D., the Turkish realm of Mahmud of Ghazni. Thereafter the people of either side pursued their different political destinies, however, closed their other bonds.

Buddhism and Islam

Buddhism flowed into this region like water into a secure basin. Under Kanishka's vigorous patronage, it flowed by the very routes taken by migrations, military expeditions, and commerce. But Buddhism long survived the Kushan empire and even the terrible blows of the Huns in the sixth century. It was eventually overcome by Islam in the eighth century in Central Asia and by a Brahmanical revival in India. But, with the spread of Islam as a major political force over all north India in the eleventh century, the broken Buddhist bond was repaired, now with the Islamic resin.

Whether politically united or disjointed, these lands were linked by the ideological and religious force of Buddhism and Islam, by aristocratic lineages of Kushans, Turks, Afghans, and sundry others that freely moved back and forth, and by

the high mobility of statesmen, scholars, divines, artists, craftsmen, and merchants.

Common Cultures

In this fashion, over two thousand years or more, a common cultural layer was constituted in the multi-layered and multi-cultural societies of north India and Central Asia; and it survives to this day despite the divergent political choices of the people of these regions.

Given the identities of world religion and political empire, the areas of common expression were necessarily infinite, ranging from the universal and the abstract to the particular and the concrete. They embraced mathematics, astronomy, astrology, medicine, architecture and engineering, decorative arts and crafts, the exquisite loveliness of illustrated manuscript and calligraphy, the finest refinements of apparel and textiles, and the sweetest enjoyments of worldly existence in wine, food, and song. Some of this abundant variety has been presented here.

Orthodox Christianity

This is only a well-known story, but it existed for exactly, precisely many years. This - noticed the Christian link between Kerala and Russia properly. Christianity came to Kerala, according to legend, with the apostolic mission of St Thomas in the first century A.D.; historically, it has been recorded from at least the fourth century A.D. After the Christological controversies of the first millennium A.D., it finally settled for a version of Eastern Orthodoxy. In the year 988 A.D., Prince Vladimir of Kyiv converted to Orthodox, which has ever since been the dominant religion of Russia.In these different ways, the people of India and Central Asia, Russia, the Caucasus, and South India, belonged to a common fold over time.

Commerce

As must be evident by now, the single most important and durable aspect of contact was commercial, and it must have long antedated even the Indus culture. The enterprise, energy, and reach of the ubiquitous Indian merchant may be gauged from the single interesting fact that the Russian colonial term for the settled urban population of Central Asia was Sart, derived from the Sanskrit Sarthaka, meaning merchant. That Indian staple, textiles, was in the highest demand here as in so many parts of the world, and by pre-colonial and colonial times, the renown (and cost) of certain items like Kashmir shawls had become fabulous.

Indians in Russia

Tade and its untold promise are what finally brought India and Russia into direct contact with each other. They had little such contact until almost the twentieth century, but both had traded extensively with Central Asia and exchanged their goods there in effect. The usual limit for Indian merchants was Astrakhan on the mouth of the Volga and Baku in Azerbaijan, from where Russians took over directly.

Hindu Indian merchants in Baku account for the fire temples there, reminiscent of places like Jwalamukhi, where gas issuing from the earth may be kept alight permanently. This occurs in Baku, which virtually floats on oil, hence the temples. Some Indian merchants and travellers did, however, penetrate as far as the fairs of Nizhny-Novgorod (modern Gorky) and even Moscow.

Russians in India

Russians who reached India were fewer, but one name at least has become common currency for his valuable travelogue. Afanasii Nikitin, a merchant of Tver (modern Kalinin, just northwest of Moscow), journeyed through Iran

into India between the years 1466 and 1472 and has left us a vivid account of his experiences here. Semen Malenkii, another merchant, came at the end of the seventeenth century and was treated unfavourably by Aurangzeb. In addition, at the behest of the Russian emperor, several expeditions set out in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in search of the best commercial route to India.

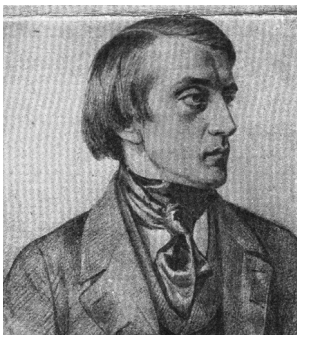
Armenians

From the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries came the Armenians in ever-growing number until, of all the subjects of the tsar in the nineteenth century, they were the most numerous, enterprising, and of course, regarded with suspicion by the British. They established significant colonies in Surat, Agra, and later, Calcutta.

The Nineteenth Century

The Industrial Revolution in England in the eighteenth century provoked a series of dramatic upheavals all over the world. India became a colony of a British empire that extended its sway up to the Amu Darya; Russia became a capitalist power in Russia proper and a colonial one in Central Asia, confronting its British rival from across the Amu Darya. The nineteenth century was thus one of darkness in either country, the darkness of oppression by the autocratic state in the Russian Empire and the colonial state of the British Empire in India. But it was also the era of light, that was cast by the optimism of the struggles for liberation. The intelligentsia in India and Russia were fashioned by their radical critiques of this oppression and poverty. India saw the careers of Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Vidyasagar, Bankim, Vivekananda, Viresalingam, Gokhale, Tilak, and others to culminate in those of Gandhi and Nehru; Russia gave to the world Radishchev, Herzen, Belinskii, Chernyshevskii, Lavrov, Mikhailovskii and others to end in Lenin. Alongside this mainstream development, certain of the Russian intelligentsia participated in European studies of India, in which the names of Minayev, Oldenburg,

and Shcherbatsky stand out. In an entirely different vein, but similarly marginal to the Indian political development of the epoch, specific political figures from India hoped to exploit Anglo-Russian colonial rivalry. Certain princes, like those of Indore or Kashmir, and Dalip Singh, the son of Ranjit Singh, as well as Gurcharan Singh of the Namdhari sect, tried to make overtures to the Russians. But the latter, as a colonial power then, spurned such moves.



Common Struggles

More important, however, is the sense of a common heartbeat without any necessary direct contact. In the nineteenth century, I have witnessed innumerable heroic and tragic struggles for freedom and risings against the state and its oppression. The most famous were the Decembrist Rising of 1825 in Russia and the War of Independence in India in 1857. Both were preceded and followed by numerous events of lesser amplitude and renown.

Upsurges And Revolutions

The twentieth century then saw remarkable coincidences of upheavals. The Partition of Bengal in 1905 led to the Swadeshi Movement in 1905-1907. Russia underwent a full-scale, if the only, partially successful revolution in 1905-

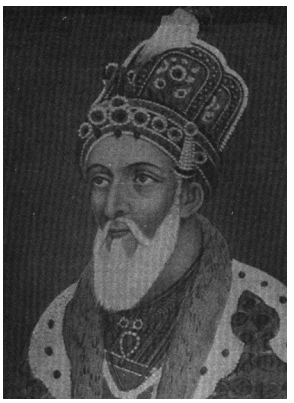
1907, often called the dress rehearsal for the great events of 1917. Both these were, of course, only the culmination of numerous upsurges that built up slowly and took longer to subside.

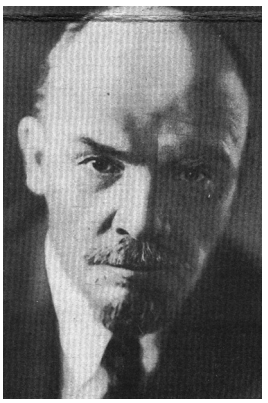
Contacts

The first modern political contacts between Indians and Russians were established during this phase. Madame Cama and Shyamji Krishna Verma met Russian revolutionaries in their Paris exile; they closely studied the terrorist methods of the Russian Socialist Revolutionaries; Gandhi and Tolstoy entered into their famous correspondence just as Gorky similarly contacted others; Lenin closely commented on Tilak's trial and the Bombay textile strike just as Indian political leaders assessed the revolution, then underway in Russia.

Revolution and Satyagraha

The following significant coincidence was the beginning of the political emancipation of





either country. Between 1917 and 1921, Russia saw two revolutions in February and October, a bitter civil war, and a series of foreign invasions. The Bolsheviks and the Soviet state emerged triumphantly and have remained without challenge ever since. Virtually those same years saw the beginning of the mass or the Gandhian phase of the national movement in India, with the Champaran Satyagraha of 1917, the Rowlett Satyagraha of 1919, Non-Cooperation in 1920-1922, and the Khilafat Movement of 1919-1923. By now, contacts between Indian revolutionaries and Russia had matured, and Indian political leaders and public figures began to visit Russia.

National Movement And Socialist Construction

The Soviet Union was free of tsarism but threatened by international capitalism and the hideous fascist menace. India was clearly on the road to freedom but had yet to shake off the vestiges of imperialism. Both India and revolutionary Russia had been awakened to significant tasks by Gandhi and Lenin. India moved inexorably to Independence through another two great mass movements, the Civil Disobedience of 1930-1932 and Quit India of 1942, the most significant movement since 1857. The Soviet Union had to struggle hard to retain its new liberty. Her first task was to develop from a predominantly rural and mixed economy into a fully socialist, planned, and industrial society. This transition occurred in the twenties and the thirties, with collectivisation, industrialisation, and planning. With this newfound strength, she could defend herself against the Nazi onslaught of 1941-1945 and rebuild herself after the war's appalling material and human losses.

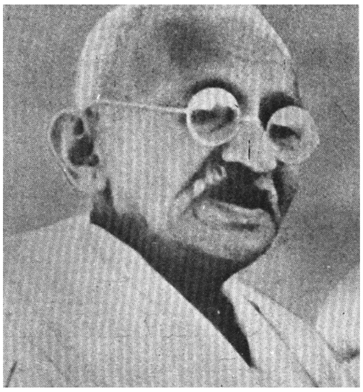
Freedom and Security

Thus, both societies emerged triumphant from the ordeals, with India winning Independence in 1947 and the Soviet Union guaranteeing her security, reconstructing her economy, and recasting Europe in a saner mould.

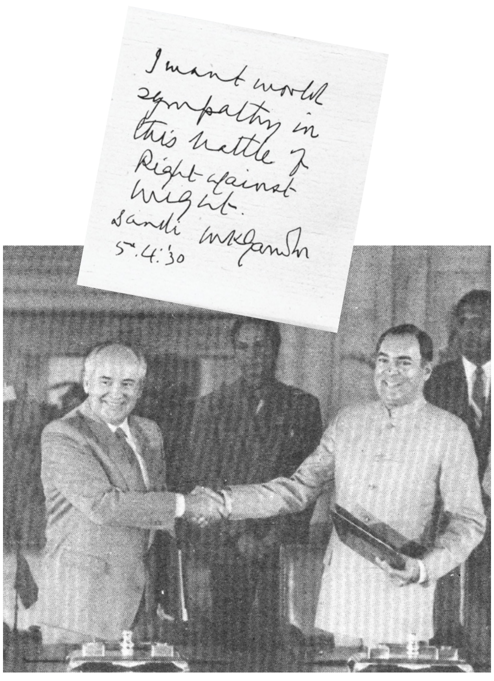
Independence then brought about the last and profound shift. Until then, relations between the two societies were fragmented, but now, the two states and communities were in direct, wholehearted, and untrammelled contact. Associations did not have to be surreptitious as between revolutionaries; they were no longer confined to some geographical regions such as north-west India and Central Asia; they were not doomed to the feeble remoteness of those between Syrian Christians and Russian Orthodoxy; nor did they have to be in the pursuit of filthy lucre only. Now, they could be freely entered into at all levels and for all purposes in both societies' conscious and enlightened self-interest, secure in the knowledge and conviction that their world views were sympathetic to each other if not convergent.

Political Relations

The groundwork had long been laid, as early as April 1947, before Independence, diplomatic relations were established, and on Nehru's



initiative, Soviet representatives attended the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in 1947. This was followed by the exchange of official visits in 1955 between Nehru Bulganin and Khrushchev. Such fruitful cooperation in various aspects of international relations culminated in the Treaty of Peace, friendship, and co-operation in 1971, and it has been further supplemented by the Delhi Declaration of Rajiv Gandhi and M. S. Gorbachov in 1986. Such close political relations and regular consultations have been a constant and stabilising factor of international relations during the past four decades and more, and they have had an essential bearing on regional and domestic issues.



Dosti Druzhba, 1988

Economic Collaboration, Science and Technology

As is usual, trade follows the flag: our economic relations have prospered immensely. USSR is India's second-largest trading partner, and India is its most significant in the developing world, a process which has been rendered possible, stimulated, and lubricated by the special rupee trade agreements. Economic and technological development is a matter of high priority; these are the areas of the most significant collaboration. Many Indian heavy industry plants in ferrous metallurgy, machine building, steel, fuel, and power have been set up with generous Soviet assistance. For development in science and technology, innumerable joint ventures have been undertaken in various fields, the most spectacular of which was the space flight of Rakesh Sharma and Ravi Malhotra with Soviet cosmonauts.

Culture

Finally, culture can never be ignored. In every field, whether of sport or cinema, theatre or literature, research in the humanities or festivals of India and the USSR, such collaborative activity has been rich and constantly diversifying. The celebrations brought together some of these for public viewing, but as must be evident by now, that is only a strand in the seamless web of friendship, a never-ending saga that opens many doors through the corridors of time.

Dosti Druzhba Press Coverage

DESIGN

THE ECONOMIC TIMES NEW DELHI THURSDAY 4 MARCH 1993

Designs on empty spaces

As trade fairs at Delhi's Pragati Maidan show, exhibition design has marked out its turf in India. **Jyoti Thapa** *on the evolution of an important design specialisation.*

tising, but that it is the only medium which offers a feedback system which no other publicity medium affords, and the possibility of transactions that can be fixed on the spot.

This is Pushkar all over again, but with the canniness of corporate PR thrown in. The cost per personal contact with a customer, rather than sending salesmen on calls, works out not only much cheaper but is more convenient. Mohammed doesn't need to go to the mountain: the mountain will come to him.

Now, how do you design a spacetime in order to, first, attract the moun-

reasons, they eventually end up as ashtrays or dustbins.

Sanjay Bhatnagar, owner-designer of Stambh Design Consultancy, is extremely conscious of details like these and personally uses plants and pots in his layouts to provide visual relief.

He has also used clusters to create a seating park in his exhibitions. Bhatnagar prefers to do a complete job from designing right up to fabrication. He doesn't want to be in a position where he is told that his woodwork or photographs were not good enough.

STAMBH

preventing the waste of wood and allowing reusable systems come to the fore. However, he laments the lack of attention to details in India. Stalls are manned by staff/guides provided by the trade authorities with only an hour's briefing under their belts.

Binu N. of Pavilions & Interiors says that the trend has also changed due to the availability of certain materials. The advent of exportable materials like plastics and fibreglass has made it possible for them to conceive and fabricate a massive fibreglass Konarak Sun temple for

exhibitors have not got over the tendency to write copious texts which no one has the time for in a fair. Exhibitors also attach a lot more importance to facades rather than the interior, in the hope of attracting visitors.

But there are various constraints exhibition designers here have to work under: apart from a paucity of time—and exhibition design, being spread out over a large area, demands nitpicking time and finicky inch-by-inch attention—and the usual, money. The Indian market has no concept of a "rejec-

Times of India 24.x.'88

Art that enforces spiritual union of people

THE Dosti-Druzhba exhibition — described as the finale to the Soviet Festival in India (Rabindra Bhavan) — gives the Lalit Kala galleries the look of a well-kept, carefully arranged museum. The Indian and Soviet advisors to the exhibition, such as Stambh who executed the design of the display, have done an excellent job. Without a great deal of scholarship, and imagination, the given concept of mutuality—between the subcontinent and what is now described as the Soviet Union — would not easily have been translated into evidence for the senses.

Now, though the exhibition partakes of both, popular media—descriptive photographs, films, legends — as well as art works (sculptures, crafts, icons, miniatures), the blend is wholesome. Still, if you are not intrinsically serious you will have missed the salutary reflection that the purposive event elicits. Such reflection goes beyond the parameters of art, or art objects, so narrowly defined. But how, in intellectual terms, is one to separate the temporal and the timeless, of art?

It is the really experiencing individual who is ushered into art's privileged moment claimed as timeless. For the rest, there is only the inexorable process, of red-hot present moments rapidly cooling, greying, becoming indecipherable; else elevated to the rank of proven facts, precious manuscripts in the custody of national archives or national libraries. This exhibition is trying hard to make mere facts and art objects of all description (linguistic, ethnic, climatic, demographical, archeological) serve a cause, i.e. engender warmth between two presently distinct collectivities.

As one sees the wall paintings on the Mahabharata from ancient Tajikistan, the Armenian or eastern religious church service objects (crafted in Calcutta or Kerala), one not only lingers over their handsomeness or picturesqueness but is convinced that though there is contiguity between peoples and much contact, familiarity is not necessarily love. Even without familiarity, and despite ignorance of outward knowledge, will come closeness, if only individuals have another kind of knowledge—that which makes

ART

one automatically disregard all antecedents of heredity, or caste rule. This is what enables artists to create anew, though with due respects to tradition, and it is for this that true love will cut across all boundaries.

What, therefore, the exhibits succeed in doing is remind us of the seamless biological oneness of the human creature. Art, and not religion, here is the main spiritual agent, enforcing spiritual union of people. It is art which gives the sacred work the material what emotive life it has. Despite its special pleading, the exhibition does hint that there are no real boundaries, that these are in the main arbitrary or tentative, not normative. It rightly blurs the identities — of the art, as of the self—making us less cocksure. All to the good.

* * *

CITY BLUES

After seeing the above — a spatially

wonder our modern architects are lost in thought.

* * *

THE OLD IN THE NEW

The exhibition of Contemporary Chinese paintings (Art Heritage) is made up of scroll work. If some of this appears influenced by the unavoidable oil media of the West, in the main the traditional forms, ink and wash techniques, and indeed the very aesthetic rapport with nature, and nature alone, is still intact.

This homogeneity or concord would seem uncommon to those who live in societies which have to accommodate discordances in beliefs and styles of life. Thus the unpredictable is not to be met with even in these so recent Chinese works. Each one of the artists remembers the tradition, though he may not imitate actual works of other days. Such habitual recapitulation or subscription to the past, prevents the coming of the artistic rebel.

With Indian art there is too easy an adoption of ill-fitting stylistic clothes. Here, on the other hand, there appears an inborn refusal to examine alien artistic worlds. And this, despite what Zuoren, a doyen of Chinese art, says in the preamble to the show, namely that western influences have made their mark on Chinese paintings of the day. Possibly Zhen Rui-Zhang's Oranges in Bloom, with full-bodied, strongly emphasised fruit, is so influenced. But even he limits himself, thematically, to flora and her innocence. The area of darkness — call it the human mind — is circumvented. Maybe rightly so.

LIFE AND WILD LIFE

The two women artists Bharti Singh (Gallery Aurobindo) and Ann Vinck of Luxembourg (India International

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DESIGN & VISUALIZATION- STAMBH DESIGN CONSULTANCY
INDIAN EXHIBITION RESEARCH -MADHAVANA K. PALAT

DESIGN TEAM- SANJAY BHATNAGAR
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SOVIET EXHIBITION DESIGN - A.A. SOROKIN

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA
NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF INDIA
FESTIVAL OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE NEW DELHI, INDIA

ACADEMY OF SCIENCE OF THE USSR
MAIN ARCHIVES ADMINISTRATION OF THE USSR
INSTITUTE OF ETHNOGRAPHY, ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE USSR

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY,
ACADEMY OF SCIENCE OF THE USSR
MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE USSR

A CONCEPT THAT SPELLS WILLINGNESS, WARMTH AND WELCOME