

# **Soviet Public Diplomacy Campaign of Influencing Indian Politics in the 1960s**

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## Abstract

USSR-India relations had been extensively studied in Western academia until the end of the 1980s. Although, this topic dropped out from scholars' interest after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This paper is based on declassified documents from Russian, British, American, and Indian archives on the interaction between Soviet and Indian experts: Soviet Committee for Cultural and Scientific

Ties, Societies of Friendship with Foreign Countries, correspondence between the Communist Party of The Soviet Union and the Communist Party of India. Indian leaders were keen on keeping its distance from Communist ideology and at the same time needed Soviet economic aid. From the 1950s the USSR had its specific development model for the newly decolonized countries of Asia and Africa that aimed at providing aid in building large scale state-owned industrial projects.

The Indian ruling Congress Party wanted to take votes from the Communist Party of India by presenting itself as left enough political force that worked with the Soviet Union. This is why by 1960 Nehru's government allowed opening more than Indo-Soviet Cultural Societies that became "neutral" civil society organizations for Soviet influence without hardcore Communist background, by 1972 India had more than a thousand of them.

## Author information

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**Wednesday, 16th June** - Session 5 - **10.30-12.00 CET (Webex)** - Panel - *Beyond Traditional Cold War Understanding: Economic and Cultural Elements in East-West Interactions*

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