

August 01, 1953 Indira Gandhi's Unofficial Visit to USSR in July 1953

Citation:

"Indira Gandhi's Unofficial Visit to USSR in July 1953," August 01, 1953, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, RGANI f. 5, op. 28, d. 94, l.78. Translated by David Wolff.

<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119270>

Summary:

L.D. Kislova recounts, in a diary entry, a conversation with Indira Gandhi, daughter of Prime Minister Nehru, on the night before her departure from Leningrad. Gandhi discusses the difficulties Nehru faces in his rule of India, arguing that nobody could replace Nehru and continue the democratic reforms he has put in place.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from the MacArthur Foundation.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

From the Diary of Secret Copy # 1

VOKS Board Member 1 August 1953

L. D. Kislova

Memorandum from Conversations

With the daughter of the Prime Minister of India, INDIRA GANDHI

Indira Gandhi rarely, and usually only in passing, spoke of her father, Prime Minister Nehru. Once, she referred to him, however, [in noting that] she often accompanied him on trips around India. On another occasion, she said that, at her father's directive, she receives all visitors who come to Nehru with personal requests. She referred to herself jokingly as her father's "adjutant."

However, on 27 July, on the eve of her departure from Leningrad to Helsinki, Indira Gandhi during a conversation with me on general topics, having fallen silent for a moment, said without any connection to the previous conversation: "My father has lots of difficulties. You probably can't imagine this." I. Gandhi underlined that Nehru does everything "to direct the country along a progressive path" both in domestic and foreign policy, but that he is "alone" and that essentially he receives no support. He is strongly opposed by large and influential groups of "rich people and conservatives" whom he has not been able to overcome on several occasions. Therefore, both in foreign policy and in domestic reforms, he is not always successful in doing all that he considers necessary.

Furthermore, I. Gandhi said that in India, in her opinion, at the present time, there is no one who could replace Nehru and continue his democratic reforms. "Without Father," noted I. Gandhi, "all that has been done will turn to dust."

On 28 July, on the day of her departure from Leningrad, I. Gandhi expressed her gratitude for the reception she received in the Soviet Union and said to me: "I have no way to show my gratitude (*otblagodarit*), other than to work for you in India."

"For our shared interest in peace and friendship?" I [Kislova] asked.

"Yes, I wanted to say just that." [replied Gandhi]

L. Kislova

[Distribution]

TsK KPSS Comrade Suslov, M. A.

MID SSSR Comrade Zorin, V. A.