

From the diary of Anastas I. Mikoyan

At 14:15 on March 27, the second conversation between A.I. Mikoyan and J. Nehru took place. Present during the conversation were Sh. A. Rashidov and M.A. Menshikov. From the Indian side, present were Mrs. Indira Gandhi and General Secretary of the MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] Pillai. The conversation lasted about two hours.

A. I. Mikoyan sent the following information [memo] about this conversation to Moscow:

“CC CPSU.

On March 27, [I] had a meeting with Nehru.

Nehru started the conversation by asking me to tell him, as he put it, “about new developments in the Soviet Union connected to the work of the XX Congress of the CPSU.” They followed the work of the Congress with great interest and attention, but their sources of information were limited to what was published in the press.

I told Nehru that the work of the Congress was mainly conducted openly and all the materials were published. In the end, there was one closed session, where only Congress deputies were present. That session was devoted to an internal party issue regarding the cult of personality. Comrade Khrushchev, on instruction from the CC [Central Committee], made a report on this issue, which was fully approved by the Congress. We did not consider it possible to publish the materials about this session, because they could be used by our enemies against us. Party members and unaffiliated citizens are being informed about this report in their organizations.

Then I stated that considering the fact that Nehru is our good friend, we could, in a completely confidential manner, inform him about the main contents of this report.

Having presented the main points of comrade Khrushchev’s report, I said that if Nehru had any additional questions, I would be glad to respond to them.

Nehru listened to me all this time with a tense attention and did not try to hide his interest, and when I finished, he thanked me warmly. Then he asked me several questions.

Nehru asked whether the agreement concluded between the USSR and Germany at the beginning of World War II was a result of the cult of personality or not. He asks this question, said Nehru, because many people spoke negatively about that agreement.

I responded that that agreement would not have happened if not for the stupid policy of the English and French before World War II. Their behavior during negotiations with us, the goal of which was to agree on collective defense against Fascist aggression, was demonstratively provocative. They simply laughed at our serious determination to agree on that important issue. As is known, comrades Voroshilov and Molotov represented our side in the negotiations. The English, however, did not find it possible to send anybody but Strang [Foreign Office, William Strang] and some little-known general, who had insignificant authority [to negotiate]. To our statement about readiness to send a large number of divisions for the fight against Fascist aggression, the English and the French responded that they would be able to supply obscenely insignificant forces. Besides, the Poles, who were under their influence, would not give permission for our troops to move through Polish territory to meet the enemy in case Germany launched an attack.

Such behavior on the part of the English and the French could not but create doubts in our minds about the goals they pursued in conducting those negotiations. Then we received a proposal from the Germans to conclude a pact about non-aggression and neutrality. In those conditions, it appeared reasonable to conclude that pact with the Germans because in doing so we gained 2-3 years in which to prepare our country for defense. That question was considered by all the members of our government. The decision was not made by Stalin alone. Of course, after the Germans attacked the Soviet Union, the issue was raised about the wisdom of such a decision. But we were forced to make that decision because of the position taken by the English and the French.

Nehru said that long before Stalin there were cases when all the power was concentrated in the hands of one individual, and gave the example of Napoleon, who crushed the French revolution. He hinted about the importance of preventing situations like that.

I told Nehru that as I had already informed him at the beginning of our conversation, the main goal of addressing this issue at our Congress was exactly that—to not allow a repetition of that situation in our country in the future.

Nehru then said that he personally was especially interested in statements at our congress to the effect that violence was not necessary, that tolerance must be practiced.

He, Nehru, understands it in the following way—that social changes inside each country could be achieved by peaceful methods, including the parliamentary way. The Congress also accepted the possibility of different ways of building socialism in different countries.

I told him that we indeed prefer the peaceful way, without violence, but there are circumstances where use of violence becomes inevitable. It is known that Lenin, who argued in favor of violence before the February revolution, spoke against violence after [the revolution]. It is also known that we were forced to resort to violence later in order to repel the internal and foreign counterrevolution that rose against the young Soviet republic. Lenin also said that every country would come to socialism by its own path. He even pointed to the possibility that some underdeveloped countries might achieve socialism by skipping the capitalist stage.

Nehru noted that in the light of these new statements the final picture of socialism should represent a variety of systems, and not complete uniformity.

To that, I replied that this was indisputable because the historical background of each country alone gives it features that are different from others.

Nehru then mentioned that Marx and Lenin, even great as they were, could not, of course, have taken into consideration the unexpectedly fast development of science and technology, which we are experiencing now, and which could not but influence the process of society's development.

I said that Marx and Lenin always emphasized the importance of the goal; as far as the ways of achieving the goal, they allowed for a great variety of those depending on the concrete conditions in a particular country at a particular point in time. I cited as an example that while we were forced to send the kulaks to Siberia and Kazakhstan, the Chinese comrades, considering their specific circumstances, find it possible to allow loyal kulaks to join collective farms—of course on certain conditions. Moreover, if we, after the October revolution, had to nationalize almost all the industrial enterprises because the capitalists who owned them took the road of counterrevolution and sabotage, the Chinese Communists have successfully conducted a policy of state-capitalist enterprises, in which the national progressive bourgeoisie cooperates with the state. In the present circumstances in China, this is the correct way.

I also cited the example that while we, after the revolution, completely nationalized the land, the Bulgarian and the Polish comrades, due to the specific circumstances in those countries, considered it possible to cede ownership of the land to the peasants.

Nehru asked whether the break-up of normal relations with Yugoslavia was also Stalin's mistake.

I responded that it was Stalin's whim, that other government members did not share that opinion, but they could not do anything.

Nehru, touching on Soviet-Turkish relations, said that he had an impression that [we] treated Turkey without due attention, as a result of which it was essentially thrown into the arms of other countries.

I said that after Ataturk the Turkish leaders started worsening relations with us. Of course, that did not mean that we also had to aggravate those relations. It was Stalin's mistake, as comrade Khrushchev stated in his report. At the same time, I noted that we did not have any aggressive intentions against Turkey; even Stalin did not want anything like that. Everybody knows that the Soviet Union gave every manner of support to Ataturk.

Nehru said that, judging by the press, the French Communists were not very happy with the latest decisions of the Congress.

I told him that was incorrect, that I spoke with comrades Torez and Duclos, who attended the Congress, during a reception for foreign delegations, and they completely share the decisions of the Congress.

Nehru mentioned that the newspaper *Humanite* avoided publishing materials about the Congress, and in particular, published my presentation in an abridged form and put it somewhere in the corner.

I said that can be understood; one has to consider the fact that all these statements were unexpected for them.

Nehru noted that it seems that Communist parties in non-communist countries should conduct their work differently.

I said that we expressed our point of view that each Communist party should search for its own way, and not just imitate the Soviet [way]. I gave him as an example Togliatti's speech, in which he spoke about the need for an Italian way.

Nehru then asked whether the Cominform will continue to exist. I responded that this is now being discussed between the involved parties, but I added that the Cominform was bringing little benefit now, because it was almost not functioning.

Nehru, having apparently exhausted his questions, said in a warm tone that he was very grateful for the trust that we showed him and for the information I gave him about the important decisions of the XX Congress of the CPSU.

Following that, I, on my part, asked Nehru if he could tell me something interesting for us in connection with the recent visits to India by state officials from Western countries.

Nehru said that he was ready to do it and asked when it would be more convenient for me—right now, or during the next meeting.

I replied that it could be done at the next meeting.

We agreed that our next meeting would be on March 28.

Nehru did not hide his satisfaction with our conversation. At the dinner hosted by the Minister of Trade and Industry of India, Nehru said, raising his toast, that relations between India and the Soviet Union are getting closer and closer, that he was happy about my visit there, which was not planned in advance but was a very pleasant surprise for them. Notwithstanding the very short duration of my

visit, Nehru said, we were able to discuss in detail issues that are of interest to both sides, and to lay down a basis for future economic cooperation.

A. Mikoyan

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