

January 15, 1950

Record of the Conversation between I.V. Stalin and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

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Summary:

Stalin and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan discuss India's policy of neutrality regarding cold war issues, India's relationship with Pakistan, and potential agrarian reforms within India.

Credits:

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English

Contents:

Transcript - English

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O. T. P.

Telegram: SECRET.

FROM □Embassy of India, Moscow

□Foreign, New Delhi

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DTR. Jan 151600

No. 3. From Radha Krishnan to K P S MENON.

The Ambassador, accompanied by the Counselor, interviewed Generalissimo Stalin today at 9 P.M. at the KREMLIN. Vyshinsky was present at interview. The Ambassador began by expressing hope that good relations between two countries would be strengthened, to which Stalin assented. The Ambassador affirmed India's anxiety to do everything possible to work for peace, which was essential for building up the country and improving living standards. India's policy of neutrality was real and positive, and in Colombo, Pandit Nehru had reaffirmed India's anxiety to avoid cold war tactics and anti-communist pacts. Stalin said he did NOT hear about it, but seemed to approve. The Ambassador spoke of the essential need for big powers to do their utmost to put an end to the cold war and to place an embargo on propaganda against each other, in which Generalissimo Stalin should take a lead [for the] larger interest of humanity. Stalin replied that it did NOT depend upon him alone. The Ambassador replied that Stalin should take the initiative and thus help suffering humanity. Stalin said that two days ago he was informed that when Pandit Nehru was in London he wanted to return to India via MOSCOW, but he was NOT sure if MOSCOW would favor this trip* and inquired if the Ambassador had heard about* this. The Ambassador answered in the negative and added that he knew Pandit Nehru would be glad to visit MOSCOW if time and* opportunity permitted. Stalin asked several questions regarding India's position in the Commonwealth and seemed anxious to know if she was more or less independent than, say, Canada. The Ambassador explained [India's] position, especially in light of India's forthcoming declaration as a Republic. Stalin asked if India was entitled to have her own army without any restriction and also if there was a navy. He NODDED approval when informed that that was case; the commander-in-chief was Indian and there was also an Indian Air Force. He enquired if relations with Pakistan were still bad and about the language they spoke there. He was told that relations were rather strained, as Pakistan was of the view that wherever there were Muslims they must be with them. Of the languages of India, he inquired which was dominant and expressed satisfaction that Hindi was PHONETIC and NOT HIEROGLYPHIC as it would thus be easier to liquidate illiteracy, unlike the [case]* in China, where even reading a newspaper requires five years of study. He enquired* if the government proposed to carry out agrarian reforms and added that something has to be done as peasants are in very poor condition. The Ambassador assured that landlordism was being abolished and [sic] essential land reforms were being carried out. India had a hard time solving all problems in these two years when it had to clear up feudal RELICS and the effects of partition. Stalin asked if Ceylon was a separate state and whether its separation was so necessary and LAUGHED. He further enquired if court* language* had any AFFINITY with any Indian language and was informed of position. On parting he wished the Ambassador good health.

The interview was pleasant and lasted half an hour. PAVLOV, the Head of North Europe Division of Soviet Foreign Office and former Counselor in London, acted as interpreter. Stalin smoked cigarettes continuously and LAUGHED occasionally. He appeared in quite good health and was alert and attentive. The interview took place in a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere. Ends.

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D(20) [Signature]
15th JAN. Superintendent CCB.