

Business Standard

When Karan Singh suggested that Indira Gandhi should quit!

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Veteran [Congress](#) leader Karan Singh has come out with a book on his meetings with "remarkable women", which has several tidbits like his suggestion to [Indira Gandhi](#) to quit after the Emergency and Morarji Desai offering to nominate Rukmini Devi Arundale for the post of President.

"Meetings with Remarkable Women" offers a glimpse into the lives of extraordinary women including late Prime Minister Gandhi, Congress chief [Sonia Gandhi](#), Edwina Mountbatten, Vijay Lakshmi Pandit, M S Subbulakshmi, Helen Keller and Gayatri Devi.

Mentioning about the Emergency in his chapter on Gandhi, Singh says after the [Allahabad High Court](#) judgement of June 12, 1975 holding the then prime minister guilty of two corrupt practices and declaring her [election](#) to the [Lok Sabha](#) void, there was a furore.

"The Opposition saw this as a golden opportunity to attack and unseat her, and the whole national was in turmoil," he writes in the book, published by Palimpsest.

"One evening, I sat at my desk and wrote a personal handwritten letter, which as I mentioned, was not in my capacity as a Cabinet Minister, but in my personal capacity. I suggested that she should offer to resign, send in her resignation to the President who need not accept it on the grounds that the final decision was to be taken by the Supreme Court on her appeal," Singh recalls.

"This, I felt, would not only be the correct thing to do but may also have obviated the endless criticism that followed. I happened to have kept a photocopy of the letter which has been published in my correspondence with her. She did not reply nor was the matter mentioned hereafter," he writes.

In his chapter on Arundale, he mentions how after the Janata government assumed office, Desai suggested that the danseuse would be a good candidate for the presidency. Arundale, however, refused the offer saying she was devoted to art.

Singh says the book is the result of an advice by his daughter Jyotsna.

"Taking off from the 19th century Greek-Armenian mystic G I Gurdjieff's 'Meetings with Remarkable Men', however, my daughter Jyotsna had for long been urging me to write about my meetings with remarkable women. At last I decided to accept her advice; hence this book," he says.