

**Volume 5**

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**Indira Gandhi - I**

**Lead: Born of a political family prominent in the movement for independence, Indira Gandhi became a leader in her own right as Prime Minister of India**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: The daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister after independence, after education in Switzerland and Oxford, she returned home, married a lawyer, Feroze Gandhi, then served her widowed father as hostess. By 1955 she**

**had her own seat in the Indian Parliament and four years later became President of the Congress Party, the nation's strongest political alliance.**

**At Nehru's death, she served as Information Minister in the cabinet of his successor, Lal Bahadur Shastri. Shastri's death two years later threw the Party into a leadership struggle and Indira emerged as a compromise candidate. Her backers thought she would be easily manipulated. In this they were sadly mistaken. Indira quickly established firm control over her Party and then India.**

**Employing a ruling style considered by many observers as borderline**

**authoritarian, Gandhi was Prime Minister from 1966 until 1977, and in 1980 returned for four more years. The nation made great strides in food yields and in industrial production. Despite these creative efforts, however, by the mid-1970s her popularity was suffering. Corruption, a troubled economy, efforts at birth control which went contrary to ancient religious traditions, all served to undermine her rule. When she was convicted of illegal campaign practices she declared a national emergency. These tactics were resented by most Indians and her party suffered badly in the next election. Next time: Assassination.**

**At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

Resources

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**Moraes, Dom. *Indira Gandhi*. Boston, MA: Little Brown and Company, 1980**

**Vasudev, Uma. *Indira Gandhi: Revolution in Restraint*. New Delhi, India: Indraprastha Press, 1974.**

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