

J. V. Stalin

Replies to the Questions of Ralph V. Barnes

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1st Question: Certain circles in America are intensely discussing at the present time the possibility of Bending to Moscow an unofficial American trade representative, accompanied by a staff of specialists, for promoting the establishment of closer trade connections between the United States and the USSR What would be the attitude of the Soviet Government to such a proposal?

Stalin: In general, the USSR gladly receives trade representatives and specialists of countries which maintain normal relations with it. As regards the USA, I believe the Soviet Government would look favorably upon such an undertaking.

2nd Question: If certain of the obstacles existing on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean to an expansion of Soviet-American trade were removed, what would be the approximate volume of orders that the USSR would be in a position to place in the United States?

Stalin: It is difficult to name a figure in advance without the risk of making a mistake. In any event the growing requirements of the USSR and the vast possibilities of the industry of the USA fully warrant the belief that the volume of orders would increase several times over.

3rd Question: Certain responsible circles in the USA are under the quite definite impression that obvious similarity has been revealed in the reaction of the Soviet and the American Governments to events in the Far East during the last seven months, and that in general as a consequence of this the divergence in policy between the Soviets and America has become less than hitherto. What is your opinion in this regard?

Stalin: It is impossible to say anything definite, since unfortunately it is very difficult to grasp the essentials of the Far Eastern policy of the USA As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, it has adhered, and will continue to adhere, to a firm policy of maintaining peace both with Japan and with Manchuria and China as a whole.

4th Question: There is a great difference between your country and mine, but there is also obvious similarity. Each occupies a vast territory in which there are no such obstacles to trade as tariff barriers. Stupid traditions, of course, interfere less with economic activity in the USSR and the United States than in other first-rate powers. The process of industrialization in the USSR is more like the same process in the United States than that in other West-European Powers. In my preceding question I already indicated that in some cases policy in Moscow and Washington is not so much at variance as might have been expected. Lastly, there is undoubtedly a deep friendly feeling between the American and Soviet peoples despite all the obvious difference between them. In view of

these facts, would it not be possible to inspire the conviction in the minds of both peoples that no armed clash between the two countries should ever under any circumstances be allowed to occur?

Stalin: There can be nothing easier than to convince the peoples of both countries of the harm and criminal character of mutual extermination. But, unfortunately, questions of war and peace are not always decided by the peoples. I have no doubt that the masses of the people of the USA did not want war with the peoples of the USSR in 1918-19. This, however, did not prevent the USA Government from attacking the USSR in 1918 (in conjunction with Japan, Britain and France) and from continuing its military intervention against the USSR right up to 1919. As for the USSR, proof is hardly required to show that what its peoples as well as its government want is that "no armed clash between the two countries should ever under any circumstances" be able to occur.

5th Question: Contradictory reports have been spread in America concerning the real nature of the Second Five-Year Plan. Is it true that between January 1, 1933, and the end of 1937 the daily needs of the Soviet population will be satisfied to a greater extent than hitherto? In other words, will light industry really develop to a greater extent than before?

Stalin: Yes, light industry will develop to a much greater extent than before.

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