## *That Duranty Interview*

# Stalin Speaks on World Politics

**by Will Herberg**

We have hitherto made no comment upon the now famous Stalin interview with Duranty (*New York Times*, December 1). All the while we waited for an official interpretation of this remarkable interview. We scanned the American Party press very carefully. Nothing in the *Daily Worker!* A very curiously garbled republication of the *Times* story in the *Freiheit*. Nothing else! No articles! No explanations! And yet some comment is surely necessary. We will proceed to make it now.

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### The World Economic Situation

> "The present world economic depression is very heavy and will be heavier yet. It is the worst of the periodic crises that mark the progressive decay of the capitalist system but I do not think that it will last or that it is the culminating crisis."

Allowing a charitable interpretation of what Stalin means by "periodic crises" this characterization is quite correct. But isn't this "Lovestoneism"? The crisis "will not last." It "is not the culminating crisis." No wonder that in republishing the interview from the *Times*, the *Freiheit* carefully omitted the last part of the last sentence! Olgin setting himself up as the censor of "Russian propaganda in America"!

But—if Stalin is permitted to say that the crisis "will not last", why is Lovestone a blood-relation of Hoover and Morgan when he speaks of the "transitory nature of the crisis"? (See Browder's article in *Daily Worker* of December 27). Who will answer this question?

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Stalin next addresses himself to explaining the economic basis of the crisis:

> "Capitalism is still strong and may recover, but this last year has exposed its fatal weakness—capitalism cannot exist without markets, and the mutual rivalry of the capitalist states bars them from each other's markets."

But where are the "internal contradictions" that were supposed to be the "fatal weakness" of capitalism? Isn't it curious that thruout his entire interview, not one word is mentioned of these "internal contradictions"—all emphasis is placed upon the "external contradictions"? Isn't this Bukharinist "organized capitalism"? Isn't this "Lovestoneism"? Where have we heard of the "primacy of the internal contradictions" before?

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### "The Big Ones Gobble Up the Little Ones"

But whatever Stalin, the "theoretician", touches he vulgarizes beyond recognition. He hit upon the correct idea that the contradictions of the world economy are decisive in the present period, but what does this correct idea become in Stalin's hands:

> "Thus the stronger states are forced to bring pressure upon the weak ones . . . The stronger powers must seek an issue of their own difficulties at their (the weaker powers) expense . . . It is inevitable that the efforts of the stronger powers to overcome the economic crisis will force them to crush their weaker rivals."

Who ever heard of such nonsense? Stalin, the "realist politician", declares that first England will "crush" Belgium, France will "crush" Poland, etc. and then perhaps there will be a war between France and England. Stalin should know that the present historical period is characterized precisely by the emergence of many small puppet states (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, etc) rather than by the "crushing" of small states. Stalin just simply doesn't know what he is talking about.

The danger of this weird phantasy of Stalin's lies in the fact that it completely misses the real source of the war danger at the present time—the sharp contradictions between giant imperialist powers and the antagonisms between the imperialist world and the Soviet Union. The relations with the small powers are of real significance primarily as they are interwoven with the basic antagonisms in world politics.

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### "Rash" and "Far-sighted" Imperialists

Stalin's utter confusion on the fundamental questions of world politics shows itself in the most ludicrous form when he comes to discuss the war danger directly. That there are objective forces making for war, Stalin, of course, recognizes altho he doesn't seem to be very clear as to what they are. But war actually does not break out because *"there are other elements in strong countries—more far-sighted men who calculate more cautiously and fear that war.... They restrain the hotheads and there comes a sort of balance of forces between the two groups . . ."* Thus the outbreak of war comes, according to Stalin, not as a result of the confluence of social-political forces but as the outcome of a struggle between "sober" and "far-sighted" capitalists, on the one hand, and the "hot-heads" on the other!

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### The War Against the USSR

But absolutely unbelievable is what Stalin has to say about the danger of an imperialist war against the USSR.

> "They (the imperialists) might have tried it (a war) against the USSR five or six years ago but they waited too long. Now it is too late!"

It is hard to believe one's eyes! Did Stalin really say that it is now too late for the imperialist powers to make an armed attack on the USSR? That *there is really no danger of a war against the USSR?* Yet the official Communist press neither denies nor explains away these words—apparently they must be authentic.

That Stalin actually did express such absolutely false and dangerous ideas about the relations between the USSR and the imperialist world is shown in the following astonishing conversation that passed between the *Times* reporter and Stalin:

> "You see then," the writer asked, "no reason why capitalist and Communist system should not exist side by side without fighting?"
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> "They have not fought for ten years," said Stalin drily, "which means they can co-exist. We don't want to fight and some of their people don't either and it is a fact that we 'put water in their mill.'"

It is necessary to emphasize that this idea of Stalin's is directly contrary to the most elementary ideas of Leninism on the question? Is it not shameful that the general secretary of the CPSU and the "unquestioned leader" of the Comintern should say such things? Or—if he didn't say these things—why hasn't the Duranty interview been repudiated in the official Party press?

These are not the only gems of the Stalin interview—but space forbids! That Stalin is a political ignoramus—this we knew long ago. But that he should harbor such absolutely incredible ideas for one who claims to be a follower of Marx and Lenin and should not hesitate to give public expression to them is certainly something that deserves the concern of the Communists and revolutionary workers of all countries.

# THE CRISIS IN CAMP NITGEDAIGET

**by George Halpern**