Wilson Center | Digital Archive
International History Declassified
digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org

December 21, 1946
Interview Transcript of Stalin's Interview With Elliot Roosevelt

Citation:

"Interview Transcript of Stalin's Interview With Elliot Roosevelt", December 21, 1946, Wilson Center Digital Archive, I.V. Stalin, Sochineniia, vol. 16, pp. 45-48. https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/134376

Summary:

Roosevelt conducts an interview with Stalin and discusses US-Soviet relations and problems facing the post-war world.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Interview With Elliot Roosevelt

December 21, 1946

Roosevelt: Do you consider it possible that a democracy like the United States can live peacefully side-by-side with a communist form of government such as exists in the Soviet Union, and that neither side will make an attempt to interfere with the internal political affairs of the other?

Stalin: Yes, of course. This is not only possible. This is reasonable and entirely feasible. During the tensest times of the war the differences in the forms of government did not hinder the two countries in allying and defeating our enemies. Preserving these relations is possible to an even greater extent during peacetime.

Roosevelt: Do you consider that the success of the United Nations depends on the agreement of the Soviet Union, England, and the United States concerning essential matters?

Stalin: Yes, I think so. In many respects the fate of the United Nations as an organization depends on these three nations achieving harmonious relations.

Roosevelt: Do you consider, Generalissimo, that reaching a broad economic agreement on mutual exchange of manufactured goods and raw materials between our two countries is an important step towards general peace?

Stalin: Yes, I suppose that this would be an important step towards general peace. Of course, I agree with this. The expansion of international trade in many respects favors the development of good relations between our two countries.

Roosevelt: Does the Soviet Union support the rapid creation by the United Nations Security Council of an international police force that would, with the participation of all of the United Nations, quickly appear wherever military endeavors threaten peace?

Stalin: Of course.

Roosevelt: If you consider that the United Nations must control the atomic bomb, then mustn't this be done by way of inspection, the establishment of control over all research institutes and industrial enterprises manufacturing all manner of weapons, as well as [control over] the peaceful utilization and development of atomic energy?

Here Elliot Roosevelt notes in parentheses: (Stalin quickly posed the question, "In general?" I said, "Yes, but in particular does Russia agree with such a plan?").

Stalin: Of course. On the basis of the principle of equality, no exclusions must be made for Russia. Russia must be subject to the same rule of inspection and control as any other country.

At this point, Roosevelt notes in parentheses: (There was no wavering in his answer. And he didn't even mention the matter of reserving the right of veto).

Roosevelt: Do you consider it beneficial to call a new conference of the Big Three for discussion of the international problems presently threatening the general peace?

Stalin: I consider that there must be not one conference, but several. If several conferences are convened, they would serve a highly useful purpose.

Here Roosevelt notes in parentheses: (At this moment my wife asked if he thought that such conferences would contribute to establishing tighter relations at lower levels between the representatives of the countries involved. She also asked if this was accomplished as a result of the wartime conferences. Stalin answered, smiling at her, "There is no doubt about it. The wartime conferences and the results achieved considerably aided the establishment of cooperation at lower levels").

Roosevelt: Sir, I know that you study many political and social problems of other countries. Therefore, I would like to ask if you consider that the elections taking place in the United States in November are evidence of the people's departure from belief in the policy of Roosevelt [in the direction of] the isolationist policies of his opponents?

Stalin: I am not such a great authority on the internal life of the people of the United States, but it seems to me that the elections prove that the present government is wasting the moral and political capital created by the deceased president, and, therefore, it made the victory of the Republicans easier.

At this point, Roosevelt notes in parentheses: (The Generalissimo responded to my last question with great emphasis).

Roosevelt: To what do you attribute the weakening of friendly ties between our two countries since the death of Roosevelt?

Stalin: I consider that if this question relates to the ties between the Russian and American peoples, then there has been no worsening. As regards relations between the two governments, a misunderstanding has arisen. A certain worsening [of relations] took place, and then [the alarmists] made a lot of noise and began to cry out that in the future relations would become even worse. But I do not see anything horrifying in the sense that it harms peace or [threatens] armed conflict. No great power, even i f its government strives towards it, can send out a large army to fight against another allied power, another great power, since in the present day no one can wage war without their own people, and the people don't want to fight. The nations [of the world] are tired of war. Moreover, no purposes have been propounded that could justify a new war. No one would know what they were fighting for, and thus I don't see anything terrifying in the fact that certain representatives of the United States government speak about a worsening of relations between us. In light of these considerations, I think that a threat of a new war is unrealistic.

Roosevelt: Do you support a broad exchange of cultural and scientific information between our two countries? Do you support an exchange of students, artists, scholars, and professors?

Stalin: Of course.

Roosevelt: Must the United States and the Soviet Union work out a general, long-term policy concerning for the peoples of the Far East?

Stalin: I consider that this would be beneficial if it were possible. In any case, our government is prepared to conduct a common policy with the United States concerning matters in the Far East.

Roosevelt: If an agreement was reached between the United States and the Soviet

Union concerning a system of loans or credits, would such an agreement be of benefit to the United States economy over the long term?

Stalin: A system of such credits, doubtless, is of mutual benefit to both the United States and the Soviet Union.

At this point, Roosevelt notes in parentheses: (Thereupon I posed a question that would elicit obvious dissatisfaction in many European countries) .

Roosevelt: Does the fact that no program of de-Nazification was conducted in the American and English occupation zones of Germany give the Soviet Union serious cause for unease?

Stalin: No, this is not a reason for serious unease, but, of course, it is unpleasant to the Soviet Union that this part of our common program was not carried out.