

February 02, 1947
Record of Conversation between I. V. Stalin and Romanian Leaders G. Gheorghiu-Dej and A. Pauker

Citation:

“Record of Conversation between I. V. Stalin and Romanian Leaders G. Gheorghiu-Dej and A. Pauker,” February 02, 1947, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, APRF, f. 45, op. 1, d. 361, 1. 62-66. Published in *Vostochnaia Evropa*, edited by G.P. Murashko, et al, vol. 1, pp. 564-68. Translated for CWIHP by Svetlana Savranskaya.
<http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118460>

Summary:

Stalin and Romanian General Secretary Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Foreign Minister Ana Pauker about the situation in the Communist Party of Romania and the situation in the country in connection with the signing of peace treaties

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from the Leon Levy Foundation.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

- English Translation

Record of I. V. Stalin's Conversation with G. Gheorghiu-Dej and A. Pauker about the Situation in the Communist Party of Romania and the Situation in the Country in Connection with the Signing of Peace Treaties

Moscow

2 February 1947 2100 hours

SECRET

Present: Comrade Molotov, USSR Ambassador to Romania Kavtaradze, General-Colonel Susaikov, Major Skoda (interpreter).

After congratulating the Romanians on the victory in the elections, comrade Stalin asks Dej,^[1] what is the Romanian Communist Party doing now.

Dej responds that the Communist Party is engaged in testing of its cadres along the party lines, promoting people, who distinguished themselves during the elections, and is planning to eliminate the regional committees, keeping only the district committees that are directly connected with the Central Committee.

Comrade Stalin asks Dej, whether they have any differences of opinion in the Politburo of the Romanian Communist Party, and, if there are any, what are they, and what are their causes?

Dej responds that as a matter of fact, there are no serious arguments among the leaders of the Romanian Communist Party, but there was one case with Patrashkanu, who was offended that he was not elected to the Secretariat of the Central Committee, and he was subjected to sharp criticism. He wanted to submit his resignation and leave the government. Later, he admitted his mistakes and promised not to repeat them. However, already some time later Patrashkanu made a speech in Kluzh, which was directed against the Hungarians living in Transylvania, and his speech was filled with the Romanian nationalistic spirit. Patrashkanu later explained that he was hoping to attract the Romanians, living in Transylvania, to the Groza government's side with this speech, believing that it would be very important, because the Romanians represent the majority in Transylvania. Dej says that on this question, the Romanian Communist Party took the correct position, gave the necessary explanations, and forced Patrashkanu to reject those unhealthy ideas. Patrashkanu submitted, but was unhappy.

Comrade Stalin asks Dej, whether there were other contradictions in the Romanian Communist Party, and whether there were any grounds in reality for the rumors, which reached him, about the fact that there is a faction in the Romanian Communist Party, which would want to have only Romanians as members of the party, i.e. specifically speaking, so that Ana Pauker and Luka, who are not Romanians by nationality, would not be able to occupy leading positions in the party. Comrade Stalin emphasizes that in this case, the party from a social and class-based party would turn into a party based on race. If it preserves its social and class character, it will develop and grow stronger; however, if it has a racist character -- it will inevitably perish.

Dej responds that there is no such faction in the party, but there were, frankly, separate statements to that effect (Vidan - Kluzh), but that is not a general phenomenon in the party.

Comrade Stalin says that if it is true, it is good.

Comrade Stalin asks about cooperation within the bloc.

Dej responds that cooperation within the bloc of democratic parties is working, but that the Social Democrats have a right wing, which is trying to create difficulties for cooperation. The liberals are making similar attempts.

Comrade Stalin stresses that the Romanian Communists will face a task to work for strengthening their own positions, and for weakening the positions of the rest of the parties-members of the bloc. In the sense that Communists put in the word "ally," it means brother; however, the bourgeois parties see today's ally as possibly tomorrow's enemy. Therefore, in order not to lose and not to be naive, the Romanian communists should begin this serious work.

Dej says that the elections showed the strength of the reaction, which has grown especially strong in the villages, and has substantial influence among the peasants.

Comrade Stalin notes that we need to pay special attention to win the peasants over to our side, and that we need to think about creating a party of working peasants, and to counter the village bourgeoisie with this party. Comrade Stalin emphasizes that Maniu is strong, because they did not pay sufficient attention to the struggle with the village bourgeoisie, because they did not explain sufficiently the importance of that struggle, did not split the village. That is why the peasants do not see any difference between the peasant parties that exist in Romania. When in each village poor peasants and middle class stand up against the bourgeoisie, then the peasants will understand who their enemies are, and why they need this struggle against the *kulaks* (village bourgeoisie).

Comrade Stalin draws a parallel with Poland, where Mikolaichik's party is becoming a party of village bourgeoisie, since the working elements are leaving that party.

Pauker says that creating a party of working peasants would lead to a conflict with Groza.

Dej emphasizes that the plan was to direct all their effort to defeat Maniu, and only then to concentrate on the campaign against Tatarescu and other parties, who are members of the bloc of the democratic parties. Dej says that it would be advisable to expel the *kulaks* from the "Ploughmen's Front" and to attract poor peasants to that party.

Comrade Stalin notes that in order to do this, first of all, they need to ensure the consent of the leadership of the "Ploughmen's Front," and, first of all, Groza's.

Pauker confirms that Groza, Zarone, Milio Bella and other leaders of the "Ploughmen's Front" will not agree to this.

Comrade Stalin says that they need to fight the village bourgeoisie boldly, and that it would only strengthen the positions of the Communists in the village.

Pauker points out that the Romanian Communist Party now has 200 thousand members from the peasantry.

Comrade Stalin asks, whether they pay membership dues, and whether they understand what it means to be a member of the Communist Party.

Pauker responds that not everybody pays their membership dues, and that the explanatory work among the peasants is still quite weak.

Turning to the questions of economic character, Dej says that the Romanian Communist Party made a courageous step forward, having taken the responsibility for the economic situation in the country upon itself.

Comrade Stalin notes that it was a very brave step and he, personally, would not dare to do something like that.

Dei says that, anyway, the Communists are in charge of the country's economy, because they have the majority in the parliament and in the government.

Comrade Stalin asks, whether the Romanian Communists also consider Groza a Communist.

Pauker responds negatively.

Susaikov states that Groza is willing to join the party at any moment.

Comrade Stalin says that then he will want to be the leader of the Romanian Communist Party.

Pauker emphasizes that Groza entertains such ideas, and that Groza is dreaming about becoming the leader of all the Balkan countries and considers himself the decisive factor.

To comrade Stalin's question, what is the nature of their request for economic assistance, Dej lists the following issues: (1) providing Romania with a loan in the form of delivered goods and equipment for 82 million dollars; (2) reconsideration of prices, according to article 12 (by April 1 or after April 1); (3) releasing the sums of money, which were spent under article 10, to count them under article 11 of the armistice agreement; (4) providing financial assistance to the Romanian Communist Party. Dej says that he is raising the question about article 12 as a request, and is not trying to justify it in legal terms.

Molotov refutes Dej's statement. He cites two documents, which were handed by Dej to Vyshinsky, from which it is obvious that the Romanian government believes that it has a right to challenge the decisions, made by the Soviet government, under article 12, and accuses the Soviet government of the unjust collection of money from the Romanian government in connection with the reparations and restitution.

Molotov explains the wrong position of the Romanian government on the issue of occupation expenses, i.e. the expenses for the maintenance of the Soviet Army in Romania. From the legal point of view, the state of war between the Soviet Union and Romania will end at the moment, when the peace treaties are ratified by the three powers. After this, the Soviet Union will maintain their own troops, those who stay in Romania to protect communications with Austria. The Romanians are trying to prove that they were obligated to provide for the Soviet troops only until the moment of the cessation of the military activities. Therefore, they are demanding that all expenses under article 10 were to be counted under article 11, naming the sum of 160 million dollars.

,

Dej says that he does not consider that document official, that he presented it without "any reason", and that he is withdrawing it.

Molotov points out to Dej that, since the document had been presented, we cannot exclude the possibility that it is known to the outside world, and therefore we should respond to it.

Comrade Stalin agrees that we should give a response to that document, and then pose the question of cutting 300 billion leis under article 12.

Pauker informs comrade Stalin that the Americans are willing to give the Romanians 45 thousand rail cars of wheat and com on the condition, that the Romanian government publicly states that it takes this bread only for the Romanian population, and that it guarantees to pay for this bread with gold, and if it also makes a statement regarding the German gold.

Dej and Pauker ask for advice.

Comrade Stalin says that they should accept the American demands, because the population needs this bread. He emphasizes that, when the Soviet Union had an opportunity to do so, it loaned bread to the Romanians, and refused to take the gold, which Tatarescu offered to the Soviet Union. However, now the Soviet Union cannot give Romania any bread, because of this year's poor harvest.

Comrade Stalin gives his agreement to provide assistance to Dej with specialists, financial experts and economists, and recommends preparing for monetary reform by printing new money and exchanging it for the old. He recommends doing this after the harvest.

Comrade Stalin emphasizes that this measure is important, because it will deal a blow to the capitalists and financial groups, but it would strengthen the lei and will give the working class an opportunity to have fixed salaries. Falling currency leads to the impoverishment of the working class, and it is in the interest of the Romanian capitalists to lead the country to ruin in order to undermine the bloc, and especially the Communist Party.

Recorded by Major Skoda.

Record of the conversation was proofread and corrected by S. Kavtaradze

[1] As in the original. Should be Gheorghiu-Dej