

On the British Road to Socialism

J.V. Stalin

Copy
Top Secret

To Comrade Stalin

In his letter addressed to you the General Secretary of the CC of the Communist Party of England, Harry Pollitt, who had been to the Soviet Union for treatment, requests advice on the tactics of the Communist Party during the coming elections to the Parliament that in his opinion may take place during the fall of the current year.

H. Pollitt is of the opinion that the basic tactical task of the Communist Party in the coming elections must consist in preventing victory of the Conservatives. H. Pollitt writes that in these elections the Communist Party should somewhat reduce the number of its candidates (in elections conducted during February this year the Communist Party put forward 100 candidates); to recommend to the electors to vote for Labour candidates where the Party has not put forward its candidate and where the leaders of the Labour Party are not contesting. While doing so, a demand shall be put before the Labour Party candidate to support the major demands of the working class movement of England (scrap wage freeze; development of trade with the Soviet Union; prohibition on nuclear weapons etc.)

In connection with the questions raised by H. Pollitt, the Foreign Policy Commission puts forward the suggestion to direct Com. Suslov to receive H. Pollitt and put before him the following opinion of the CC AUCP (b) regarding the questions touched upon by him in his letter:

(a) In case of elections for the Parliament during the fall of 1950 it would be imperative for the CP to widely explain, as in her pre-election Programme so also during the entire conduct of the election campaign, that there is no substantial difference between the politics of the Labour and of the Conservatives as the politics of this and the other party is directed towards the preparation for a new war, an attack on the living standards of the working class and of all the workforce, putting on the working class the great burden of military expenditure and subordination of the politics of the

Labour government to the interests of the American Imperialism. In this context the Communist Party does not support the Labour candidates for Parliament:

(b) The Communist Party must use the Parliament elections for the purpose of carrying out a wide and active struggle for peace, establishing the struggle against the threat of a new war as the foundation of their election platform. Safeguarding peace and the question of the threat of a new war should be closely linked with the struggle for the improvement of the living standards of the workers and other toilers of England, against a freeze on the wages, for the solution of the housing crisis, for equal pay for work among men and women, than during earlier elections.

(c) For the purpose of maintaining the independent line of the CP in the elections and distinguishing it from the programme of the Labour and the Conservative parties, the Communist Party must put forward her own candidates in a number of election constituencies, and in many others but in lesser numbers than in the earlier elections.

Communist candidates should also be put forward in those constituencies where the leaders of the Conservative Party and the Labour Party would be standing for election, using the presence of the candidates of the CP for the purpose of the exposing the reactionary essence of the Labour politics.

The Communist Party should pay special attention to those areas where the Communists and other progressive forces have significantly more influence so as to try, even if in a few constituencies, to get the Communist candidates elected to Parliament.

(d) In those constituencies, where the CP shall not put forward her candidates, she should announce its support to Labour candidates under conditions that the Labour Party expresses commitment to support the Communist candidates to the Parliament.

In case of a rejection by the Labour Party of this suggestion of the Communist Party a demand should be put forward on behalf of the electors to the Labour candidates to fight for peace and speak against the dangers of a new war, support the demand for prohibition of nuclear armaments and declaring that government as a war criminal that first uses such arms, for struggle for better relations with the Soviet Union, countries of Peoples' Democracies and Democratic China, to struggle for the improvement of living conditions of the working masses.

If the Labour candidate refuses to accept these suggestions, then one should refuse to support to such a candidate.

(e) The CP should support independent Labourites (Platts-Mills, Pritt etc.) putting before them the demand for the protection of peace, prohibition of atomic armaments, struggle for the betterment of relations with the Soviet Union, improving the living standards of the working people (increase in salaries, betterment of housing conditions, condemnation of the pro-American politics of the ruling circles of England, etc.);

(f) It is necessary to try electoral alliance with grass-root trade unions and cooperative organisations, and also organisations of the Labour Party for support to the Communist candidates, independent Labourites and also with Labourites who give an undertaking to support democratic demands of the electors;

(g) The most significant condition for the successful conduct of the election campaign for Parliament and for the fulfillment of the most important tasks that stand before the CP of England, is the decisive turn of the party to the carrying out on a wide scale political and organisational work among the masses, strengthening of the struggle against the remnants of reformism, strengthening the links with trade union organisations, decisive reorganisation of work of the primary party organisations and of the party press for the purpose of strengthening and widening of links of the party with the masses.

Request your direction.

Annex. Letter from H. Pollitt.

Chairman of Foreign Political Commission, CC,VCP(b) (Signed) (B.Grigoriyan)

23rd May 1950

Copies sent to
Comrades:

Malenkov
Molotov
Beria
Mikoyan
Kaganovich
Bulganin

No. 25-S-849

RGASPI, Fond 558, Opis 11, Delo 287, Listy 22-24.

Meeting Between Comrades Stalin and H. Pollitt

31st May 1950

Present: Com. Malenkov and Pavlov (Interpreter).

Pollitt says that he had had for the first time met Comrade Stalin 29 years ago, when Comrade Stalin had expressed his wish to meet the future Secretary of the English Communist Party.

Comrade Stalin answers that he remembers this and asks Pollitt what questions he has.

Pollitt says that his questions of interest regarding tactics of the English Communists in the coming elections to Parliament have been sent in detail in his letter addressed to the CC AUCP (b).

Comrade Stalin says that he has received the letter of Pollitt. He, Comrade Stalin, considers the position of Pollitt concerning the tactics of the English Communists for the coming elections to Parliament as correct. It is necessary, says Comrade Stalin, in so far as possible not to permit a victory of the Conservatives. Certainly the Labour Party is better, though only a little bit better than the Conservatives. However, one should consider that the working class of England considers a Labour government as their government.

Comrade Stalin asks whether the elections have taken place in Dumbarton and whether the Communists had put up any candidate in the elections.

Pollitt answers that the by-elections in Dumbarton have already taken place. The Communist Party did not put forward its candidates in these elections so that there may not be any division of votes that would have permitted the Conservative candidate to get through. The Labourites won the election in Dumbarton.

Comrade Stalin asks would there have been re- elections in case the candidate had received equal votes?

Pollitt answers that re-elections are held in case the candidate elected in the main elections had died. The majority system of elections in England, observes Pollitt is extremely unfavourable for English Communists. The rightist parties in France are at the moment conducting a struggle for the introduction of a similar system in France.

Comrade Stalin says that within the English working class there are taking place certain processes that are seen but which are unnoticeable from the outside, that explain the fact that the Conservatives managed to amass such a large quantity of votes in the last elections.

To illustrate the processes taking place in the English electorate that are not observable for an outside observer, he, Comrade Stalin, could cite the fact that the results of the elections in 1945 in England were unexpected for Churchill and Eden as well as for Attlee and Bevin. Labourites as well as Conservatives have an apparatus, informing the leadership of the party about the mood of the electors. In 1945 Churchill was confident of his victory in the elections, and Attlee did not expect the victory of the Labourites. The information providing apparatus let them down. Apparently in 1945 in the mood of the electors there took place some hidden internal processes, as a result of which the Labourites unexpectedly emerged victorious. And at the present time too something is happening to the mood of the British working class.

Pollitt answers, that in 1945 nobody expected the victory of the Labourites because every worker out of millions of English workers who had lived through the hard years of depression, when the Conservatives were in power, took a decision for themselves that they shall not permit the Conservatives to come to power.

Comrade Stalin comments, that neither the leaders of the Labourites nor the Conservatives could understand this.

Pollitt answers that this happened because the leaders did not continue with the contacts with the masses of the English people. As also, during the war years the working people of England openly talked among themselves in bomb-shelters and in the Metro, where they used to take shelter from bombings that they shall never again permit the Conservatives to come to power.

Comrade Stalin asks - how would Pollitt characterise the mood of the English working class.

Pollitt answers, that the mood of the English working class could be characterised, firstly, a fear of the onslaught of unemployment in England, secondly, fear of war. Such mood is especially widespread among those workers who have not experienced the massive unemployment during the pre-war years.

Comrade Stalin asks – why did the Conservatives get such a large number of votes?

Pollitt answers that the number of votes cast for the Labourites on the last elections in industrial regions of England has grown significantly and on the whole as a party the Labourites got unprecedentedly more votes in the history of England.

Comrade Stalin observes that none the less the Conservatives also got a large number of votes.

Pollitt answers that Labour party got a record number of votes in the last elections. In 1945 the Labourites attracted the middle classes to their side. In 1950 the Labourites lost the support of the middle classes who were not happy with the taxes, rationing of benzene and other steps of the Labour government that hurt the interests of the small shopkeepers. However, the miners, ship-builders, workers in the heavy machine building industry, textile workers, metallurgists, they all together voted for the Labourites. All these sectors of the working class had experienced the years of depression during pre-war days when the Conservatives were in power. Now they think that the Labour government shall save them from the onslaught of a new depression. Similarly, this fact also requires attention that England has millions of voters who are between 25 and 35 years of age. These voters have never known unemployment, have not experienced on their own skin the effects of lock-outs and have not participated in the demonstrations of the unemployed. Their salaries today are higher than ever earlier. To the same one may add that factually at the moment there is no unemployment in England.

Comrade Stalin again asks if at present there is no unemployment in England.

Pollitt answers that the general quantity of unemployed in England at the moment consists of 350 thousand, while the unemployed in the main are the old people. The concentration of unemployed has the following distribution: Liverpool – 40 thousand; South Wells – 35 thousand; Scotland – 50 thousand; all these in the main are old people.

Pollitt says that the English workers obsessed by the danger of Conservatives coming to power, do not vote for the Communists as they do not want a division of votes of those candidates who are inclined against the Conservatives. English workers think that there is no sense in voting for the English Communists as the English Communists have no chance of coming to power.

Comrade Stalin says, in any case in the mood of the electorate certain changes are taking place that favour Conservatives.

Pollitt answers, that taking recourse to all sorts of demagoguery the Conservatives have organised a strong youth movement.

Comrade Stalin says that certain sections of the English electors have been disillusioned from the Labourites. It is not just chance that the Conservatives got such large number of votes in the last elections.

Pollitt answers that the middle classes have left the Labourites which the Conservatives captured to their side by promising change in a number of limitations including the rationing of benzene. Conservatives were also succeeded in gathering to their side a large number of votes by playing on the mood for peace among the people. As is well known, during the election campaign Churchill made the announcement that in case of the Conservatives being elected he will personally talk to the Soviet leaders. This trick of Churchill put the Labourites in confusion. Bevin very messily replied to this speech of Churchill.

Pollitt said that some workers were influenced by the announcement of the Conservatives that with a more close relationship with the Americans, which they could support after coming to power, the English working class shall be guaranteed against unemployment.

Comrade Stalin says that such a strong union with the Americans, as that of the Labourites, the Conservatives never had. The Labourites are simply subservient to the Americans.

Pollitt says that this is completely true. However, the Conservatives had announced during the last elections that they, if they come to power, would support the union with the Americans on conditions that are less harsh for England. Some electors believed the Conservatives as they thought that Churchill shall not so easily submit to the Americans.

Comrade Stalin asked has the CP of England got its own Programme calculated for a long period.

Pollitt answers that the CP of England has no such Programme.

Comrade Stalin says he would like to know how the English Communists would counter the Labourite plan of nationalisation of industry and the establishment of socialist society. It is important to

give direction and an ideal to the English masses. The Labourites are giving a direction to the English masses.

Pollitt answers that the Party Line is given in the brochure entitled '*British Road to Socialism*'. Labourites have their Programme titled '*Labourites Believe in England*' and the Conservatives have titled their published Programme as '*The Correct Path for Britain*'.

Pollitt says that in their Programme the English Communists have put forward demands: pay enhancement, betterment of residential conditions, trade with the Soviet Union and with the countries of Peoples' Democracies, and also demands nationalisation of all important branches of English industry under conditions that the representatives of the English working class should manage these.

Comrade Stalin asks how do the English Communists counter the Labourite plan of nationalisation. As much as we know, says Comrade Stalin, in branches of industry that have been nationalised by the Labourites, the capitalists have remained in their posts, their profits are rising, but the pay of the workers remains frozen. Do the English Communists criticise this situation?

Pollitt answers that the English Communists do criticise the Labourites for this, considering the struggle against freezing of pay as their major line of struggle.

Comrade Stalin states that as he thinks, the Communist Party of England takes a very soft and completely unprincipled position in the struggle against the Labour Party. The English Communists should have told the Labourites that they, the Labourites, are not at all Socialist but the left wing of the Conservative Party. This is not done. This needs to be openly pronounced. English Communists must state that under the Labour government the capitalists feel very fine, that their profits grow. This one fact speaks out that the Labourites are building no socialism.

In England the workers want that they be involved in the management of the nationalised branches of industries. It appears that in the nationalised industries in England the capitalists continue to direct the economy and get huge profits. This situation is incomprehensible for the Soviet people who under nationalisation understand that if any branch of industry is nationalised, the capitalists are removed from there and it is managed only by the representatives of the working class. Soviet people cannot visualise any other nationalisation. In England, the capitalists continue to manage it and as a consequence, their profits grow.

Comrade Stalin further states that, in the elections the defeat of the Labour Party should certainly not be permitted, but one should criticise the Labour Party from the principles of socialism. Such criticism impresses the workers as the workers see that nationalisation brought about by the Labourites does not give them, the workers, any benefits and, on the contrary, secures for the capitalists all sorts of profits. It does not happen that the profits of capitalists grow and at the same time the conditions of the working class also improve. If the profits grow then the condition of the workers does not improve but goes down. This is how we, the Soviet people, understand this and the British workers shall also understand such agitation.

Comrade Stalin says that without a Programme meant for a long period of time, the Party cannot grow, develop and increase the number of its supporters among the working class.

English Communists are accused in England that they have put before themselves the aim of establishing Soviet power in England. The English Communists must respond to this in their Programme that they do not want to weaken the Parliament, that England shall reach socialism through its own path and not through the path traversed by Soviet power but through a democratic republic that shall be guided not by capitalists but by representatives of peoples' power i.e. a coalition of workers, working intelligentsia, lower classes of the cities as well as farmers. Communists must declare that this power shall act through the Parliament.

Comrade Stalin continued to say that the Communists in Anglo-Saxon countries are inclined to concentrate their forces on current everyday tasks of purely practical character and not looking far ahead. This shortsightedness of narrow practicality has led to the Communist parties in Anglo-Saxon countries being weak. The Communist Party of England should provide to the English people a perspective of a long term development of England and her future.

Comrade Stalin continued to state that it should be pointed out in the Programme that only a coalition of the working class, working intelligentsia, lower strata of the cities and of farmers can guarantee

to the English people peace, increase in salaries and the supply of raw material for English industries and markets for English goods. If the English Communists give this perspective to the English people and shall propagate their programme without demagogy then the best among the working class shall return from the Labourites to the side of the Communists.

Comrade Stalin said that the talk should be of a Peoples' Democratic path for the movement of England to Socialism and not of the Soviet path but of that path on which the countries of Peoples' Democracy are moving towards socialism.

Pollitt said that English Communist Party has no such programme that could open before the English people the perspective for the future of Britain.

Comrade Stalin said that among the workers there are thinking people who would like to listen to the British Communist Party regarding where the CP of England wants to take England. If the English Communists prepare such a programme opening a perspective of development of England to Socialism then such a programme shall be understood and supported by the English working class.

Comrade Stalin continued to state that such is our opinion about the working of the CP of England and that he, Comrade Stalin, has expressed it as a matter of advice. It is the job of the English Communist party to decide how to proceed further. If Pollitt could postpone his departure so that the main points of the programme could be put on paper, then he, Comrade Stalin, and other leading comrades from the CC AUCP (b) could see the document prepared by Pollitt and would be able to give advice.

Pollitt announces that he is fully in agreement with what Comrade Stalin has said about the Programme. However he, Pollitt, thinks it to be imperative that such a document is collectively prepared in England together with other comrades from the English Communist Party, in particular, as he desired, together with Dutt.

Comrade Stalin said that this certainly was good. However, he, Comrade Stalin does not propose that Pollitt prepare the draft of the Programme immediately. It would be desirable if Pollitt could put in writing the major formulations of the programme so that one could be convinced that he, Comrade Stalin, and Pollitt properly understood each other.

Comrade Stalin said that in their programme the Communists of England should also respond to the accusations that they are trying to destroy Britain. Communists must make it clear that it is not they but the Conservatives and Labourites who are destroying Britain. He, Comrade Stalin, is convinced that the British Communists not only should not destroy Britain but must strengthen it on its own basis, putting to an end the present abnormal mutual relations between peoples that are now under the British Empire. We, continued Comrade Stalin, also had colonies in the East and South of Russia. However, we established a new relationship; a relationship of friendship with the erstwhile colonial people of Russia and today, not one of the earlier Russian colonies wants to exit from the Soviet Union.

Comrade Stalin continued to say that the English Communists are shying away from these questions. However, these must be answered.

Comrade Stalin asks as to what are the left Labourites like Platts-Mills, Pritt and others.

Pollitt answers that Platts-Mills, Pritt, Hutchinson and Solly are people who vote for the Communists. They try to join the Communist Party but he, Pollitt, restrains them from doing so. Desirous to similarly join the Communist Party is the well known physicist Professor Bernal who is conducting very big and very useful work for the struggle for peace in Britain. He, Pollitt, has also not recommended Bernal to join Communist Party.

Comrade Stalin asks as to why Pollitt does this?

Pollitt answers that enlisting such persons who command high influence in such strata of the people which the Communist Party is not in a position to influence. If Bernal, Pritt and others join the CP then they as members of the CP may lose their influence.

Comrade Stalin says that for such persons the English CP could establish an institution of sympathisers. Among the sympathisers there could be persons who do not fully agree with the Programme of the CP but sympathise with it as a whole. The institution of sympathisers could also act as verification of those who want to join the Party as its members. We have, continued Comrade Stalin, an institution for the Candidate members of the Party. We sometimes verify the candidates over a period of ten years before

accepting them as members of the Party. Candidates and sympathisers are not so linked as members of the Party. This is why he, Comrade Stalin, would recommend introducing the institution of sympathisers.

Comrade Stalin asks as to what position the English Communists have in the Trade Unions and in the Cooperative movement.

Pollitt answers that the Communists have some position in the cooperative movement but this is not significant as the cooperative organisations as a norm do not permit election of Communists in leading positions. In the Trade Unions the English Communists have, and continue to hold, a sufficiently wide field of activities.

Comrade Stalin asks if the Cooperative Party puts forward its candidates in the Parliament elections.

Pollitt answers that the Cooperative Party puts forward its candidates in elections in agreement with the Labour Party.

Comrade Stalin comments that in this manner the Cooperative Party in fact is a branch of the Labour Party.

Pollitt supports this comment.

Comrade Stalin says that it is imperative to break this link between the Cooperative and the Labour Parties so that the Cooperative Party became more independent and more objective.

Comrade Stalin says that there are indications that the system of rationing on some categories of goods in England causes harm to the workers. During the war there was such a system of rationing in the Soviet Union. The prices of some so rationed goods in the Soviet Union were lower and the people liked it. However, the norms of the supply of goods were never high. This is why the workers were compelled to buy supplementary supplies from the free market where the price of the products were a number of times higher than in the chain of state trading. When the workers calculated their budget, they were convinced that the rationing system was very harmful for him. The state then changed the system of rationing but without limiting the supply of products. After this the state started to reduce the price of various products and at present the worker may buy any amount of products on reasonable price.

Comrade Stalin asks if the English worker is not compelled to buy supplementary products from the free market as the distribution of products as per norms is not sufficient as the British norms of distribution of such products as meat and butter are quite low.

Pollitt answers on the whole the English worker does not buy his products from the free market as for him and his family the products supplied as per norm are sufficient though the norms for such products as meat and butter in fact are extremely low. The matter, however, is that the price of rationed commodities go on continuously rising. This is especially so after devaluation. The prices of those commodities are sharply rising whose distribution is no longer covered by rationing. For example till the month of May this year when oranges were given on cards, the price of oranges was 8 pence per pound. In the beginning of May rationing of oranges was abolished and its price increased three times. Sometimes back the government changed rationing on confectionery and sugar. This led to the situation that in shops the prices of confectionery and sugar increased.

In the beginning of May similarly the government withdrew the rationing on fish and as a result the price of fish sharply increased. The house-wives organised a boycott of the fish vendors and did not buy fish from them at such prices. After three days after the announcement of the boycott the shopkeepers were compelled to reduce the price of fish.

Pollitt said that in the light of the facts stated by him the rationing system in Britain is not unpopular.

Comrade Stalin commented that the rationing system is not a healthy step.

Pollitt said that he considers the rationing system as a type of game of dice in itself that the Labour government is playing.

Comrade Stalin said that he has no more questions to ask **Pollitt**.

Pollitt asks if he has correctly understood that Comrade Stalin approves of the tactics of the English Party for the coming elections as he, **Pollitt**, put it in his note addressed to the CC A-UCP (b) as he, **Pollitt**, expects the elections to the Parliament to be held in September.

Comrade Stalin answers that he considers the tactics, put forward by Pollitt in the note as correct.

Pollitt says that unfortunately he has not kept a copy of his note for himself.

Comrade Stalin promises to give copy of the letter of Pollitt to him.

Pollitt asks if it will be proper for the CP to give first place to the struggle for peace in its election campaign.

Comrade Stalin answers that it will be proper in so far as the discussion is about foreign policy. Besides this, in the field of internal affairs they should speak out for the improvement in the living conditions of the working class.

Pollitt thanks Comrade Stalin for the discussion and for the good advice that he gave. He, Pollitt, is fully in agreement with what was said by Comrade Stalin about the Programme. The draft of such Programme he, Pollitt, shall certainly prepare though he thinks that it would be better if it is done in England. After a month he, Pollitt, shall send the draft of the Programme to Moscow.

Comrade Stalin answers that this could be done.

While taking leave of Comrade Stalin, Pollitt said he is confident that the English workers desire that he, Pollitt, say to Comrade Stalin: Big thanks to you Comrade Stalin for all that you have done for finishing the Second World War, for victory in the Second World War and all that you are doing at the present moment for the preservation of peace.

Comrade Stalin said that it would be good if the English people supported the efforts of the Soviet government for the protection of peace.

Pollitt says that he will do everything that he can to this end.

The discussion continued for one hour and twenty minutes.

Noted by (Signed) V. Pavlov

RGASPI, Fond 558, Opis 11, Delo 287, Listy 41-56.

Translation from English

**Communist Party Executive Committee,
London, W.C.2, King Street-16**

11th July 1950

Dear Comrade Stalin!

On 31st of May in your comments you made a suggestion that probably it would be sensible to prepare the draft of a Programme calculated to cover a long period, so that you may be convinced whether we correctly understood each other in the process that you consider to be very significant for our future work.

Already I had exchange of opinion with my friends and am sending to you the draft in order to get your advice and suggestions.

I noticed that during our discussion in London about different drafts the necessity of having something linked with the 'Workers' in the heading of it was always underlined.

There is a suggestion that, possibly the heading 'For a Progressive Workers' Government and a Peoples' Democratic England' would be better than the one present in the suggested draft.

For me it would be a matter of great happiness to meet you again.

With best wishes
Fraternally Yours
(Harry Pollitt)

Translated by Nekrasov.

**RGASPI, Fond 558, Opis 11, Delo 288, Listy 4.
To Comrade Harry Pollitt**

Received your letter with the draft of the programme 'For Peoples' Parliament and Peoples' England' annexed to it. Having acquainted myself with this document, I fulfill your request and give my comments on the draft of the programme sent by you.

1. A half-hearted criticism of the politics of the leadership of the Labour Party is a serious shortcoming of the document. Criticism of the Labourites in the draft programme is timid and insufficiently concrete. The English Communists in the programme of their party should openly say that the Labourites are not at all socialists but in fact are the left-wing of the Conservative Party. It is necessary to say more clearly that under a Labour government the capitalists feel very good and their profits go on increasing and that this one fact itself tells that the Labourites are in no way about to build socialism.
2. The draft programme does not answer the charge that the English Communists, as if, are trying to destroy the British Empire. This question, from which it is not possible to shy away and which should be given a direct answer has exclusive significance. It is necessary to directly announce that Britain is being destroyed not by the English Communists but by the Conservatives and the Labourites who by their repressions and colonial loot are weakening Britain and are leading to its dissolution; that the Communists, on the contrary put forward before them the objective to strengthen Britain on a new democratic foundation, putting an end to the earlier abnormal relations between peoples constituting the British Empire, establishing friendship of the English people with them on the basis of equality.
3. The draft of the programme correctly puts forward the task of utilising the traditional English institutions (Parliament) in the struggle for socialism. It is well known that the English Communists are being accused that they will establish Soviet Power in England. Hence it is imperative that in the draft of the programme it should be very clearly and definitely stated that the English Communists are not going to delegitimise Parliament, that England shall come to socialism through its own path and not through Soviet Power, but through Peoples' Democracy that would be guided by peoples' power and not by capitalists; peoples' power representing a coalition of working class as the leading force of the coalition, working intelligentsia, small and middle strata of the cities as well as farmers. The Communists must declare that this power shall act through the Parliament. The programme must underline that only this given coalition can provide to the English people peace, higher wages, and raw material for English industry and markets for English products. The Programme must talk about Peoples' Democracy as the path for

- the movement of England toward the path to Socialism, the path on which the countries of Peoples' Democracy are moving towards socialism.
4. The draft of the Programme insufficiently underlines the task of the struggle of the Communist Party for national independence of England from American Imperialism. It is necessary to show in the Programme that the English Communists are real defenders of the national interests of the English people, as they forcefully and persistently participate in exposing the exploitative politics of the Labourite leadership, directed towards subordination of the country to American capital. It is especially important to underline in the Programme that even the Conservatives did not have such a strong alliance with the capitalists of America as the Labourites. Labourites are directly subordinated to the imperialist groups of America and openly betray the national interests of England.
 5. It is essential to explain in detail in the draft Programme the questions regarding a stable and prolonged peace, explaining that the politics of the arms race, the conversion of England into an American front for a new world war goes against the national interests of England and is laden with very serious consequences for the English people. It is necessary to show that the achievement of the ultimate goals of the struggle mentioned in the draft of the Programme is inseparably linked with the over all-struggle of the peoples for peace and against the threat of a new war.
 6. The Draft of the Programme correctly explains the essence of Labour's nationalisation policy which is based on the policy of bestowing huge compensations paid to earlier owners of the 'nationalised' branches of industries.

In this part of the Programme it should be stated that the English workers want socialist nationalisation; they want to be involved in the management of the nationalised industries and the system is ended in which the capitalists continue to manage the so called 'nationalised' industries while getting grandiose profits.

XXXXXXXXXX

It should be noted that the draft Programme in its structure and characteristics of presentation more significantly reminds one of an election platform with which the English Communist Party often enters the Parliament elections and not a Programme of the English Communist Party that is calculated for a long period of time and provides direction and ideal to the masses of the English people.

In order to overcome these shortcomings in the Programme it would be appropriate to introduce in part the following sections after a general introduction.

1. Tasks of the Party in the struggle for lasting peace and against the threat of a new war.
2. English Communists are the only rightful champion for the national independence of England and for the strengthening of the British Empire on a democratic foundation.
3. England shall come to socialism through its own path – not through Soviet Power, but through Peoples' Democracy.
4. We do not want capitalist but socialist nationalisation headed by the working class of England.
5. The immediate task of the Party is achieving a wage raise for the workers.

It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the character of the above mentioned presentation be clear and understandable for the wide masses of the English people.

The Programme of the English Communist Party worked out by you would undoubtedly help in the growth and development of the Party, for the strengthening of its position in the masses of the workers of England and in an increase in the number of supporters of the English communists among them. Such a Programme shall provide to the English working class masses sharp and clear direction and shall point to the path of the struggle for the vital interests of the English people.

With respects
Your co-discussant
28th September 1950.

RGASPI, Fond 558, Opis 11, Delo 288, Listy 84-87.

Translation from English

Bucharest, 18. 10. 1950

Dear Comrade Stalin

I received your letter dated 28th September and thank you for your advice and help.

I assume that you should be informed about the happenings that took place after our last meeting on 31st May.

On 9th July I spoke in the meeting of the Executive Committee of our Party *concerning the struggle for peace and unity, about the necessity of the Programme of the Party and about our election tactics in the next general elections.*

In the speech I tried to do serious self-criticism and it was published for the members of the Party as a separate brochure and its 30,000 copies were sold.

In this lecture, I put forward some political formulations that we had discussed on 31st of May and about which you again recalled in your letter of 28th September.

My July speech was discussed by our Party and by the end of August the overwhelming majority of the members of the Party supported the criticism and self-criticism as well as the policies put forward in the speech.

In the July session, the Executive Committee of the Politbureau was given the task of preparing the Programme of the Party calculated for a long period of time and to present it for discussion in the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

A Commission was constituted for drafting the Programme. The Politbureau a number of times discussed different versions of the draft Programme that were prepared by the Commission.

I sent to you a version that we considered possible for adoption as a basic text. In the meeting of the Politbureau held on 20th September we again, while discussing the draft of the Programme, decided to reject it as *we considered that it appears as the reading of an election programme and not as a Programme meant for over a long period of time and that it appears to be resting between two stools.*

We got down to re-writing the new draft that should be presented for discussion of the Executive Committee on 25th November.

Later I was informed about the necessity of going to Bucharest for getting your letter. As the urgent extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee regarding the final mobilisation of the Party for the preparation of the Second World Congress of the Supporters of Peace was scheduled for *14-15 October*, I assumed that it would be better to go to Bucharest *after* the meeting of the Executive Committee.

I very attentively read your letter and shall yet more deeply study it in the next few days. It shall render us big help from the point of view of form as well as from the point of view of the content of the new Programme of the Party. Now we are beginning the preparation of this Programme with a view to discuss the new draft on *25th November.*

I assure you that we are doing everything possible to guarantee exclusive success to the Second World Congress of the Supporters of Peace to be held in Sheffield.

I thank you once again and send you best wishes.

With fraternal greetings
(Harry Pollitt)

Translated by Andreeva

RGASPI, Fond 558, Opis 11, Delo 288, Listy 94-5.

Transcript of the Meeting of Comrade Stalin with Harry Pollitt

5th January 1951

Present: Comrades V.M. Molotov and Pavlov (Interpreter).

Comrade Stalin said that the document (Draft of the Programme of the Communist Party of England) has come up well.

Pollitt answered that it is the final draft and was prepared in accordance with the September letter of Comrade Stalin.

Comrade Stalin said that he has made some amendments to the draft and he wanted to know the opinion of Pollitt about these amendments. He, Comrade Stalin, brought to attention the fact that the draft talks about equality of nations that enter the Commonwealth of Nations. In the press or in public speeches one may talk about equality of nations. However, this is not scientific. It will be more appropriate to talk about the equal rights of nations and not of the equality of nations. One nation cannot be equal to the other in the same way as one man cannot be equal to the other. For example, irrespective of what concessions the Malayan nation may get from the English government, the Malayan nation shall not immediately become equal to the English nation as the cultural level of the English nation is higher than that of the Malayan nation. Besides, the English nation commands incomparably more significant quantity of prepared cadre than the Malaysians. Consequently, we may talk about providing to the nations not equality but equal rights which one nation may use better than the other. He, Comrade Stalin, would like to know whether Comrade **Pollitt** agrees with it.

Pollitt answers that he fully agrees with this amendment.

Comrade Stalin says that in the Programme the question of nationalisation is not put forward clearly. Basing on what is stated on this count one may conclude that the entire landed property shall be nationalised. We, says Comrade Stalin, think that the landed property of the small landholders in agricultural regions should not be nationalised. If Comrade Pollitt wants to establish a coalition with the working class, working intelligentsia, lower and middle strata in the cities and small property holders in the villages then one has to deny nationalisation of small landed property. In this there is nothing dangerous. In the countries of People's Democracies, for example, small landholdings have not been nationalised.

Comrade Stalin further continues that he wanted to propose an amendment regarding the question of compensation to the owners of the property which would be nationalised. The draft of the Programme does not visualise any compensation with the exception of compensation for those property holders who are found to be in a difficult material condition. He, Comrade Stalin, thinks it is necessary to think about such partial compensation for those property holders who shall have loyal relationship with the people's government but denying compensation to those owners of nationalised property who shall resist the people's government.

Comrade Stalin jokingly commented that just as Comrade Pollitt may notice, Comrade Stalin criticises the draft of the Programme from the rightist position.

Pollitt laughed and said that the criticism of the draft made by Comrade Stalin is fully justified as here and there we have certainly introduced elements of Leftism in the draft.

Comrade Stalin reads out that the section from the part titled '*People's Democracy – The Way to Socialism*' in which it is said that, as experience has shown, it is possible to march towards socialism through the path of People's Democracy just as it is being done in the countries of People's Democracy in Western Europe and in the People's Republic of China.

Comrade Stalin says that this statement is not precise as the People's Republic of China has not yet reached the stage of People's Democracy. In China the national bourgeoisie yet remains untouched; nationalisation has encompassed only the property of the Japanese. The Chinese think it to be correct that for the present they have not touched

the national bourgeoisie. Consequently, if the draft wants to cite the People's Republic of China then there shall be no harmony as the draft foresees the nationalisation of the big private property of the English bourgeoisie.

Pollitt answers that he understands the erroneousness of mentioning the example of People's Republic of China.

Comrade Stalin says that it would have been proper to forewarn the English people in the Programme that the capitalists shall not voluntarily give up their property and their disproportionate profits for the benefit of the English people. It would be more proper to propose that they shall actively resist the decisions of the people's Parliament and shall fight with all means for the preservation of their privileges including the use of force. This is why the English people and the people's government should be ready in self-defence to give a befitting reply to such attempts. This should be said in the Programme.

Pollitt answered that he agrees with this.

Comrade Stalin said that in the section titled '*Socialist Nationalisation*' where it is said that small shopkeepers and managers shall be freed from the limitations imposed by the monopolists, he suggested that after the word, 'small shopkeepers and managers', words 'and also the small property holders in agricultural regions' be added.

Comrade Stalin added that in the section titled '*Social Service*' where equal pay for work to men and women is discussed, the words 'for equal labour' should be added.

Comrade Stalin continues, that at the end of the draft of the Programme where the establishment of a free and happy Socialist Britain is mentioned, he would remove the words 'and for the liberation of mankind' and proposed that the sentence should end with the following words, 'establishment of a free and happy, strong and powerful socialist Great Britain'. Recalling in the draft only about Britain may create a feeling that the CP of England renounces the dominions and other English ownerships.

Pollitt said, that as Great Britain includes only England, Wales and Scotland, it would be better to mention about the establishment of free and happy, strong and powerful Socialist Britain and Commonwealth of Nations. In so far as the words 'liberation of mankind' is concerned, these are rhetorical and these should in fact be excluded.

Comrade Stalin says, he agrees that the word 'Great Britain' should be changed by the words 'Britain and Commonwealth of Nations'.

Comrade Stalin says, that in the section titled '*National Independence of the English People and of all the Peoples of British Empire*' where it says that, 'All Relationships Between the Peoples of Contemporary Empire that are based on political, economic and military domination should come to an end and be transformed into new relationships based on complete national independence and equality. This requires the recall of all military forces and of English administrative personnel from the territories of the colonial and dependent countries, handing over of sovereignty to governments freely elected by the people and return of the wealth and of the natural resources to the people of these countries that have been appropriated by industries, traders and by monopoly banks'. He, Comrade Stalin, would have excluded the words, 'and return to the people of these countries their wealth and natural resources that were these were appropriated by industries, traders and bank monopolies'. In the present formulation a very complex question has been raised. It is hardly possible to have a complete solution of this problem if only for the reason that it is impossible, for example, to return to the people of the colonial and dependent countries those resources that have already been consumed by the metropolis. Certainly if the pocket of Comrade Pollitt be full of money, then he may compensate the countries exploited by British imperialism. However, he, Comrade Stalin, has his doubts on this count.

Pollitt answers that Comrade Stalin is perfectly right. Certainly, the people's government shall not have sufficient resources for the satisfaction of the task suggested in the Programme. He, Pollitt, thinks the suggestion of Comrade Stalin to have the concerned formulation mentioned above to be removed from the Programme to be correct. He, Pollitt, would like to know the opinion of Comrade Stalin as to whether the formulation regarding the return of the English administrative personnel from the territories of colonial and dependent countries as discussed in the passage discussed earlier. The fact is that the governments, to

whom the sovereignty over these territories shall be handed over, shall ask the people's government for help by English cadre.

Comrade Stalin said that he has doubts whether it is worthwhile to discuss at this moment the return of English administrative personnel. It is possible that the Americans may want the return of the English administrative personnel recalled by the people's government to put in these territories under discussion their own administrative personnel. This is why he, Comrade Stalin, thinks that may be it is better to talk about the return of the English bureaucratic apparatus. However, he agrees with Comrade Pollitt that one should not at all talk about the return of the English administrative personnel and exclude the words 'and English administrative personnel'.

Pollitt asks how Comrade Stalin evaluates the draft of the Programme as a whole.

Comrade Stalin answers that the draft has been well prepared and says that the appearance of the Programme of the Communist Party of England occupies a turning point in the history of the working class movement of the Anglo-Saxon countries. This Programme in its essence is a suitable document for the Communist Parties of USA, Canada, Australia and other Anglo-Saxon countries. The Communist Party of the USA at the moment is in a hard situation; they have a lot of confusion. One should, however, recognise, says Comrade Stalin, that however much the Americans may take pride in their democracy, in monarchist England there is more freedom than in the USA.

Pollitt says that he is in full agreement with it.

Comrade Stalin asks when the Programme is expected to be passed and published.

Pollitt answers that the Plenum of the Executive Committee is fixed for 13th of January where the Programme must be discussed and approved. Thus the Programme would be published by the end of January.

Comrade Stalin says that the Programme should be published in as large numbers as possible and be sent to the USA, Canada, Australia and to other Anglo-Saxon countries. If help is required for the publication of the Programme then we, says Comrade Stalin, shall help.

Pollitt says that he has taken on himself the responsibility to send the draft of the Programme to Tim Buck in Canada.

Comrade Stalin said that he has put before Pollitt the main amendments to the draft. There are other less significant amendments. All these have been put in the text of the draft and shall be translated in English and tomorrow morning these will be delivered to Pollitt.

Pollitt thanks Comrade Stalin for the help.

Comrade Stalin answers: 'This is our duty'.

Recorded by V. Pavlov.

RGASPI, Fond 558, Opis 11, Delo 289, Listy 1-9.

Published by kind permission of the authorities of the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History.

Translated from the Russian by Jaweed Ashraf.

This Translation © Revolutionary Democracy.