

November 8, 1956

**Letter of the CC UCY to the CC CPSU with an
exposition of the views of the leadership of the UCY
on the events in Hungary**

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Summary:

In this letter, the Central Committee of Yugoslavia responds to the CC CPSU over questions concerning Yugoslavia's decision to provide shelter to Nagy and his group at their embassy. The letter begins by expressing agreement on the weakness of Nagy's government, the need to form a new government under Kadar, and the existence of "honest communists" in Nagy's government that could assist Kadar. The letter relates that Yugoslavia cannot hand Nagy and his group over to authorities because of the domestic consequences of such an action. The correspondence ends with both the suggestion of amnesty for Nagy and Yugoslavia's disavowal of any connection to Nagy or the uprising.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Letter of the CC UCY to the CC CPSU with an exposition of the views of the leadership of the UCY on the events in Hungary

8 November 1956, Brioni

To the first secretary of the CC CPSU,
comrade KHRUSHCHEV

Dear comrades!

We received your letter in which you stated the point of view of the Presidium of the CC CPSU on the issue of Imre Nagy and others who took refuge in our embassy in Budapest. We understand some of your arguments which are put forward in the aforementioned letter, and [we] consider them logical, but all the same we must sincerely say that in your letter we were deeply moved by the lack of understanding of our position and, especially, the lack of understanding of our readiness to resolve this issue in the spirit of reciprocal friendly relations, and not to the injury of the international reputation of Yugoslavia as a sovereign country. You agreed with us that Yugoslavia plays and in the future should play a very useful role in the world thanks to the reputation which it has acquired.

We will explain in detail to you here, which circumstances led to the current state of affairs, so that our position on this issue becomes clearer to you.

It is true that, during our conversations at Brioni, we agreed on the assessment that the weakness of Imre Nagy's government and the series of concessions made by that government to reactionary forces led to the risk of the destruction of the existing socialist achievements in Hungary. We agreed that the Hungarian communists should not remain in such a government any longer and that they should rely on the laboring masses and resist reaction in the most decisive manner. There is no need to remind you that from the very beginning, and also throughout our entire conversation, we expressed our doubts as to the consequences of open help from the Soviet Army. But bearing in mind that, in accord with your evaluation that such help had become unavoidable, we considered that nonetheless it would be necessary to do everything possible in order to minimize harm to the task of socialism. You recall that we first stated our opinion that in such a position it would be best of all to create a government there in which people who had not compromised themselves during the regime of Rakosi would take part, and at the head of which would be comrade Kadar as a prominent communist who enjoys influence among the Hungarian laboring masses. We considered that it would be good if this government made a public appeal, and subsequently this was done. We agree with this appeal and for this reason in our public statements we gave full support to the government and the program which it announced. We believed that you agreed with this, that only such a government could once again restore contact with the laboring masses and gradually eliminate at least the serious [tiazhelye] consequences of the events in Hungary. You yourselves could see here [u nas] that in all of our arguments we were guided only by deep concern that the victories of socialism be preserved in Hungary and that the restoration of the old order, which would have had far-reaching consequences for all countries located in this part of Europe, including Yugoslavia, be prevented. In particular, in connection with all of this we put forward our thoughts on trying to keep communists, and perhaps Nagy himself, out of this government, in which different anti-socialist elements were located and which for this very reason was not in a condition to halt the [forces of] reaction on their path to power. Comrades Khrushchev and Malenkov did not reject these thoughts. On the contrary, they agreed with them, with some exceptions as to Nagy. We considered that in this government and around it there were honest communists who could be very useful in creating the new government of Janos Kadar and in liquidating the activity of anti-socialist forces. On the basis of this conversation at Brioni, we took some measures in Budapest on

the afternoon of Saturday, 3 November of this year.

On November 2, Zoltan Szanto spoke with our representative in Budapest. In the course of this conversation, Szanto expressed the desire that he and some communists, if it were possible, could leave the building of the government and the CC and could find sanctuary in our embassy, since their lives were being threatened by reactionary bands of rioters. In the spirit of this conversation, our representative answered Szanto that we were ready to give them shelter if they made their escape immediately. We expected that they would answer on Sunday, the fourth of the month. However, on the morning of the same day, the Soviet Army began its actions, and our conversations were ended. Instead of that, early in the morning of the same day, on the basis of previous conversations, Nagy and 15 other leaders of the government and the party together with their families arrived at our embassy. When we received the first report about this event from Budapest, we did not know whether the announcement which had been read, which you cite in your letter, was in fact Nagy's announcement or whether it was published without his knowledge. And so, Nagy and his group arrived on the basis of the conversations which had taken place earlier, before we from Belgrade could react to his announcement, for the authenticity of which we had no proof. As soon as we received word that Nagy and the others had taken refuge in the Yugoslav embassy, comrade Kardelj invited the counselor to the Soviet embassy in Belgrade, comrade Griaznov, and told him this fact. Despite the absence of such information, all the same, we then considered that an appropriate announcement by Nagy, if essentially in favor of the Kadar government, could still assist an easing of the situation in Hungary, as we proposed to you. Having not received an urgently requested reply from you in this regard throughout November 4, we refrained from further actions in that direction.

If attention is paid to all of this, then it becomes obvious that only as a result of the speed of events, matters were not clarified and problems were created, which it is now necessary to resolve. We believe that the question of whether our embassy in Budapest behaved correctly or not is now irrelevant, but that it is important that we jointly resolve the problem in the spirit of friendly relations, which we have already restored between our countries and our parties, since [the problem] in the final analysis appeared as a result of our conversation in Brioni, although, because of events which occurred during the night from Saturday to Sunday, things have developed in a different way than we proposed. After this, essentially, only their personal issue in regard to their request for asylum will remain to be decided.

We do not dispute some of your arguments as to the fact that granting asylum in Yugoslavia to members of the former Hungarian government, whose chairman has not resigned, could be negative, and do not think that we do not realize that all of this has also brought us some unpleasantness and complications. As we see from your letter, you have not accepted our proposal that Nagy and the rest of the group be transported, with your permission, to Yugoslavia, and that puts us, understandably, in a very difficult position. Specifically on that point, we would like you to treat the search for a joint way out of all of this with great understanding, since neither by the stipulations in our constitution on the granting of the right of asylum, nor by international custom, nor by other considerations which we cited earlier, can we break the word we have given and simply hand over these people. Here we must especially emphasize that such an action by us would provoke farreaching consequences in our country.

In your letter you say that this could have negative consequences for our relations as well, but we consider that this should not hinder the development of friendly relations between our parties and countries, [relations] which of late have already brought significant results. We consider that this issue can be resolved in such a way that it not harm either our country, or the Soviet Union, or the development of socialism in Hungary. We consider that the very friendship which exists between our two countries demands that the government of the Soviet Union regard the international

prestige of Yugoslavia with great understanding, as it regards the prestige of the Soviet Union itself. If we did not behave in this way, the masses of our people could not understand either the politics of the Soviet Union or the politics of their own Yugoslav government. If we regard matters in this way, then we must believe that with the aid of the good will of both countries it is necessary to find a resolution which would not have a harmful influence on our friendly relations.

Bearing in mind such a state of affairs, it is difficult for us to believe that you, despite this, will not try to find another solution, all the more since we consider that, aside from transportation to Yugoslavia, there are also other possibilities for resolving this problem in keeping with international law, like, for instance, amnesty or something similar. We hope that you in the spirit of everything we have set out will once again examine your position.

In conclusion we would like once again to return to one argument from your letter. Despite the fact that some malevolent persons can interpret our relationship to Nagy and to the rest of the group in Budapest, we want to emphasize that we have absolutely no connection with this group, nor with the events in Hungary. Moreover, we reject the hint about our imaginary connection with the Petöfi club. Yugoslavia exists just as it is, with all its revolutionary past, with all its experience and understanding of socialist construction. If separate people in Hungary spoke about her [i.e. Yugoslavia], that does not give anyone the right to impute responsibility to Yugoslavia for internal events which have entirely different sources and other culprits. Precisely because we saw all of the dangers hidden in the stormy [events] in Hungary, we were extremely restrained and did all we could to act in a calm manner. This is evidenced by the arrival in Yugoslavia of the delegation of the Hungarian Workers' Party headed by Gerö. On the same principle we agreed with you in your assessment of the course of events in Hungary and publicly gave our support to the revolutionary workerpeasant government headed by comrade Kadar from the very first day. Accordingly, if someone now tries to accuse Yugoslavia of the events in Hungary, for which it bears not the slightest responsibility, we consider in such a case that it is in our common interest, and in the interest of socialism to repudiate such rumors.

With a comradely greeting

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Union of Communists of Yugoslavia
(I.B. Tito)