

September 23, 1954

**Letter from Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of
the Central Committee of the Communist Party of
the Soviet Union, to Tito and the Executive
Committee of the Central Committee of the League
of Communists of Yugoslavia**

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Summary:

Nikita Khrushchev's letter to Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito concerning the possibility of improving relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. The Soviet leader suggests that rapprochement between the USSR and Yugoslavia can only be accomplished if both parties continue the exchange of views regarding mutual non-interference in the internal affairs of the other country, peaceful coexistence, equality among parties, and world peace. Khrushchev goes on to suggest that a summit between party representatives should meet in order to further rapprochement.

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To the Executive Committee,
Central Committee of League of Communists of Yugoslavia
To Comrade Tito

The CC of the CPSU discussed the letter from the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia of 11 August, and notes with satisfaction the agreement expressed in it with the proposal for improvement of relations between Yugoslavia and the USSR, presented in the letter from the CC CPSU of 22 June.

Your opinion regarding the necessity of investing greater effort towards full clarification of our relations and elimination of negative elements still spoiling those relations is receiving full support from our side.

We agree that normalization and improvement of relations between the USSR and Yugoslavia should not be conditioned upon [consensus regarding] issues of internal development and ways of resolving them. We also agree that development of these relations should support the enhancement of the international positions of our countries. We underline with satisfaction the existence of unanimity of views on a variety of foreign policy issues, such as: equality and non-interference into affairs of other countries, acceptance of the possibility of peaceful coexistence and cooperation between countries with different political systems, struggle for prevention of war and consolidation of peace. As is well known, the policy of the Soviet Union is aimed at the consolidation of peace in Europe and the whole world. We do not doubt that Yugoslavia will contribute towards the goal of the consolidation of peace.

As there now emerges a unity of outlook recognizing the necessity of radical improvement of relations between our countries, based on the exchange of views between us, we believe it possible also to proceed toward mutual, practical elimination of negative occurrences that obstruct rapprochement between Yugoslavia and the USSR. We are ready, in every way, to ensure that every proposal from your side, aimed at strengthening friendship and cooperation between the USSR and Yugoslavia receives due attention from Soviet government organs. From our side, in the interest of normalization of relations between Yugoslavia and the USSR, we have explicitly confronted the Association of Yugoslav Patriots[1] with the question of the appropriateness of the continuation of their activity.

We hope that rapprochement between the USSR and Yugoslavia will reflect favorably on relations between Yugoslavia and countries with which Yugoslav relations deteriorated after 1948. The CC CPSU will inform the leaderships of the fraternal parties of your expressed wish to normalize relations with those countries. We believe that success in this respect will be achieved sooner, should necessary steps be undertaken from your side as well.

We wish to know what further practical measures, according to you, need to be undertaken in the nearest future, on both sides, for the purpose of contributing toward the establishment of mutual understanding and genuine cooperation between our countries.

As it can be understood from your letter, in principle, you are not against the renewal of contacts between the LCY and the CPSU, but regard the meeting between representatives of two parties to be premature. We do not insist on such a meeting at this moment, as the already exchanged letters represent a foundation for the clarification of our relations. At the same time, we are of the opinion that lengthy postponement of the meeting between representatives of the CPSU and the LCY would be inopportune because personal contact would undoubtedly assist in the speeding up of normalization of relations between the CPSU and the LCY, and

between our governments. Expressing our agreement with your proposal that normalization of our relations should start with government relations, at the same time we believe that fundamental interests of our countries, interests of the international workers' movement, and the great cause of peace and socialism obligate our parties to invest all efforts so that established friendly relations are not limited to government relations only.

In its foreign policy, the Soviet Union aspires toward establishing and maintaining normal relations with all countries, including the capitalist ones, irrespective of their socio-economic system. By sending you a proposal for the renewal of our relations, we considered it self-evident that in the course of their harmonization a full normalization of relations between our governments would be achieved. But, we have always believed and believe that normalization of relations between governments should only be taken as a beginning, and that there exist objective conditions not only for the improvement of bonds between Yugoslavia and the USSR, in accordance with universally accepted norms of relations between states, but for achieving mutual understanding and cooperation between the CPSU and the LCY.

The resolve to protect the socialist character of the Yugoslav state, expressed in your letter, represents an important prerequisite for establishment of mutual understanding and sincere cooperation between our parties. Unlike all other parties, the struggle for the victory of socialism and the building of a communist society are the ultimate goals of true Marxist parties. To reach these great goals, they could and should attain mutual understanding. Cooperation of our parties, based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, is vital not only to the interests of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, but in the interest of consolidating the international workers' movement and unifying all forces fighting for the victory of socialism. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, created by great Lenin, considers these principles to be above all else.

Relating to your opinion with regard to those responsible for the break-up in 1948, we too believe that this question is not important if both you and we have agreed that we should aspire towards the improvement of political, economic, and other relations between our countries. In regard to the mention in your letter of decisions of the Fifth and the Sixth Congresses of the LCY, we deem it important to openly state our opinion. We believe that decisions of the Fifth Congress reflected mostly the relations between our parties as they were then constituted, and confirm our regret, as expressed in our letter of 22 June, that all opportunities available have not always been used to avoid misunderstandings. With regard to the decisions of the Sixth Congress, they appeared in different circumstances, and one cannot deny that they had the imprint of then existing hostility and grave, often unjust, mutual accusations to which the logic of confrontation in those years had led both sides. One should admit that, unfortunately, such accusations still appear from time to time in both the Yugoslav and the Soviet press, as an already known result of relations between our countries in those years. From our side, we are taking measures to ensure the needed clarification of questions related to Yugoslavia in the Soviet press, journals, and books.

We are fully aware that elements of mistrust and prejudice, accumulated in previous years, cannot disappear at once. But, at the same time, we are firmly convinced that now that the existence of mutual good will and aspirations towards improvement of our relations based on equality and mutual advantage has been manifested, the cause of the Soviet and Yugoslav peoples coming together is moving forward because thus demand the interests of both countries and interests of peace and socialism.

The Secretary

Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Union
Moscow, 23 September 1954

N. Khrushchev

[1] Moscow-based association of Yugoslavs who supported the COMINFORM Resolution against Tito in 1948 and have since emigrated to the USSR. It was run by the KGB. The CPSU CC member charged with overseeing this association was Mikhail Suslov. These "true Yugoslav communists and patriots" served as the "Fifth column" in the Soviet propaganda campaign and covert operations against Yugoslavia after 1948.