**Hungarian Revolution** *October-November 1956*

**2022**

‘Events in Hungary in 1956 were a serious threat to Soviet control over Eastern Europe.’ How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

**2021**

Describe Imre Nagy’s role in the Hungarian Uprising. (4)

Why did Khrushchev order Soviet soldiers into Hungary in 1956?

**2020**

Why did Hungarians rise up against Soviet control in 1956? (6)

‘Events in Hungary in 1956 were a serious threat to Soviet control over Eastern Europe.’ How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. (10)

**2018**

Describe the reaction of the Soviet Union to events in Hungary in 1956. (4)

**2017**

By 1956, what made Hungarians unhappy with Soviet control? [4]

What reforms did the Nagy government plan for Hungary? (4)

Why were the Soviets concerned about events in Hungary in 1956? (4)

**2016**

What aspects of Soviet control were hated by the Hungarian people by 1956? (4)

Describe the methods of control exercised by the Soviet Union over Hungary before the 1956 uprising. (4)

**2015**

Describe events in Hungary on the days immediately following the outbreak of

revolution against the government on 23 October 1956. [4]

Why did many Hungarians oppose the Communist regime in 1956? [6]

**2014**

Describe the events in Hungary in October and November 1956. [4[

What changes did Nagy want to make to Communist rule in Hungary? [4]

**2013**

Describe the impact on the people of Eastern Europe of Soviet control in the 1950s and

1960s. [4]

What actions did the Soviet Union take against the Hungarian people in 1956? [4]

Why did the Hungarian Uprising take place? [6]

Why did the Soviet Union react in such an aggressive way in Hungary in 1956? [6]

**2012**

What actions by Nagy’s government in Hungary alarmed Khrushchev? [4]

What restrictions had the Communist leader Rákosi imposed on Hungary? [4]

**2011**

Why did Khrushchev order Soviet soldiers into Hungary in 1956? [6]

**2010**

Describe the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. [4]

Describe the Soviet response to events in Hungary in 1956. [4]

**2008**

Describe events in Hungary in October and November 1956. [4]

**2007**

Why was there a rising in Hungary in 1956? [6]

**2006**

Describe how the Soviet Union reacted to events in Hungary in 1956. [4]

*Take a Highlighter and sort out the notes under the four basic questions.*

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**Rakosi’s Hungary**

* The Communists never had widespread support in Hungary and only had 17% of the votes in the only legitimate elections held in November 1945.
* Over 2000 Hungarians were executed and 100,000 imprisoned by the secret police or AVO. 200,000 lost their jobs for not having sufficient Communist credentials.
* The leading Catholic, Cardinal Mindzsenty was tortured and imprisoned. Church land was nationalised and schools were secularised. Russian was also made compulsary and Hungary’s traditional links to the West were not taught.
* The economy was poorly managed with collectivization proving unpopular and ineffective (goods were forced to be sold for less than the cost of productions) and led to widespread famine.
* 99% of workers were employed by the government.
* Consumer goods were in short supply as focus was placed on heavy industry.
* Rakosi joined Comecon which saw the USSR control Hungary’s air and river transportation as well as its bauxite and oil refining industries.
* Rakosi had renounced his Judaism, but many anti-semites felt there was an unacceptable Jewish influence in his government.

**What Changed?**

* In 1953, Stalin died and Rakosi was brought to Moscow where he was criticised for Hungary’s poor economic performance by Beria.
* Rakosi was forced to accept Nagy as his Prime Minister. He immediately began a programe of economic liberalisation, which saw the size of collective farms halved and the reduction of heavy industry by 41%.
* By 1955, the initial economic growth had slowed and Khrushchev and the economic conservatives had gained hold of the Kremlin. Rakosi used this to attack Nagy and have him removed from the party.
* While Rakosi was back in power, he did not have the support that he had enjoyed from Stalin and intra-party criticism was strong.

**Foreign Changes**

* Communism relied on the assumption that it was always correct – Khrushchev destroyed this and it would never recover.
* Khrushchev’s speech sent shockwaves throughout Eastern Europe. In Poland the Communist leader Bierut, had a heart attack when he read it and died. After his funeral the Communist party began releasing political prisoners and removed Stalinists from power. “Faced with incidents all over the country in which ordinary people demanded free elections, religious freedom, and the withdrawal of Soviet troops, Gomułka promised an end to repression and a more open society, including talks with the church. He also wanted to remove Soviet advisers from Poland and increase food subsidies for workers.”
* The resulting riots saw Gromulka who was a purge victim of Stalin’s gain power. Khrushchev was furious that Gromulka did not have his approval and flew to Warsaw to threaten Soviet intervention. But Gomułka would not give in, and both sides realized that an open break would imperil the position of both. With the situation tense, and with Polish youth chanting anti-Soviet slogans in the streets, cheering Gomułka on, the Red Army units in Poland were put on full combat readiness.
* Khrushchev also normalised relations with Yugoslavia, issuing the Belgrade Declaration which said that each country ‘could chose it’s own path to socialism.’ This further unsettled Rakosi who was a big opponenet of Tito.

**Moscow Makes Changes**

* The death of Stalin led many Hungarians to hope that Hungary also would be 'de-Stalinised'. Rakosi continued to be heavily criticized for his purges in the Stalinist era. Rakosi blamed the secret police for the arrests which saw him lose their support. After students began to mobilise, Rakosi was removed from power.
* Many felt that the removal of Rakosi was not enough and a bad harvest, fuel shortages and a cold autumn saw students, workers and soldiers in Hungary attack the AVH (the secret police) and Russian soldiers, and smash a statue of Stalin.
* On October 23rd 1956, students and workers took to the streets of Budapest and issued their Sixteen Points which included personal freedom, more food, the removal of the secret police, the removal of Russian control. Poland had already been granted rights in 1956, which had been gained, by street protests and displays of rebellion. Hungary followed likewise. Gero (Rakosi’s replacement) called in the Hungarian Army, but they joined the protestors and distributed weapons.
* On October 24, crowds emptied the prisons (including Cardinal Mindszenty) and hung members of the Secret Police
* On 25 October 1956 Imre Nagy - a moderate and a westerniser - took over as prime minister with Janos Kadar as his foreign minister.
* Nagy asked Khrushchev to move the Russian troops out. Khrushchev agreed as a gesture and on 28 October 1956, the Russian army pulled out of Budapest, while at the same time moving forward armoured divisions from Russia.
* For five days, there was freedom in Hungary. The new Hungarian government introduced democracy, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion.

**Crushing the Uprising**

* Then, on 1 November 1956, Nagy announced that Hungary was going to leave the Warsaw Pact and asked Western Countries to protect Hungary’s neutrality. However, Khrushchev was not going to allow this. Kadar resigned in disgust and moved to where the Red Army was based in Eastern Hungary, in order to seek their help.
* Khrushchev agonised over the decision but in the end under pressure from Mao, he ordered troops to re-enter Budapest and crush the rebellion. Khrushchev also percieved this rebellion to be different in nature than Gromulka’s recent rebellion (which was against the USSR not Communism). Khrushchev was also determined not to look weak in front of the West and hardliners in the Kremlin. Nagy was far from a natural leader and had not connected with the crowds in the streets. Khrushchev believed that a decisive blow could extinguish the revolution.
* At dawn on 4 November 1956, 1,000 Russian tanks rolled into Budapest. They destroyed the Hungarian army and captured Hungarian Radio the last words broadcast were "Help! Help! Help!".
* There was implied help on Radio Free Europe from America, but this was cruelly exagerrated. Eisenhower was not prepared to use Nuclear Weapons to oppose Communism and there was little physically the USA could do. The western powers were also preoccupied with the Suez Crisis.
* 20,000 Hungarians and 1500 Soviets were killed in the fighting and the reluctant leader Nagy was executed in 1958. 100,000’s tried to flee to the West. The repression was particularly brutal with reports of bodies being dragged behind tanks.
* It was clear that repression was the only way that the Soviet Union could rule. Khrushchev put in Kadar as prime minister.
* In western Europe, as a direct result of Hungary, the Communist parties lost strength, some of them irrevocably. And in the east most opponents of the regimes concluded that they could not win through open rebellions against Moscow. Unless international circumstances changed, the road to reform would have to be gradual.
* Eastern European Communist regimes also drew lessons from Hungary. Repression would have to be balanced against real improvements in people’s living conditions. Subsidies for food, housing, and health care had to be stepped up. Any increase in work quotas had to be avoided, even if it meant borrowing money abroad to offset low productivity.
* In 1957, Khrushchev admitted that being a Communist was inseparable from being a Stalinist. The Hungarian uprising showed the weakness of the Soviet control over Eastern Europe.

**Video Questions**

When was the Hungarian uprising?

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Who was the first leader of a one party Communist state in Hungary? Why was he so pro Communist?

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What where the Hungarians first experiences of the soviet army in 1945?

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What were the three social classes you could register as in Communist Hungary? Which was considered dangerous and why?

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Describe the pre-Communist Hungarian economy? How did the Hungarian economy change under the Communist?

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What were the Pioneers, what was their role?

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How did the ARVO maintain order in Communist Hungary 1945?

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When did Stalin die, how did people react?

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Why was the period immediately after Stalin’s death called the thaw?

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What was the so called ‘Secret Speech’ of 1955?

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How was the idea of the ‘thaw’ received in eastern block countries such as Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia?

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How did the Hungarian uprising begin?

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Give examples of the early success of the Hungarian uprising?

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What were the i**mmediate** and then **secondary** responses of the Soviets to the Hungarian uprising? …………………………………………………………………………

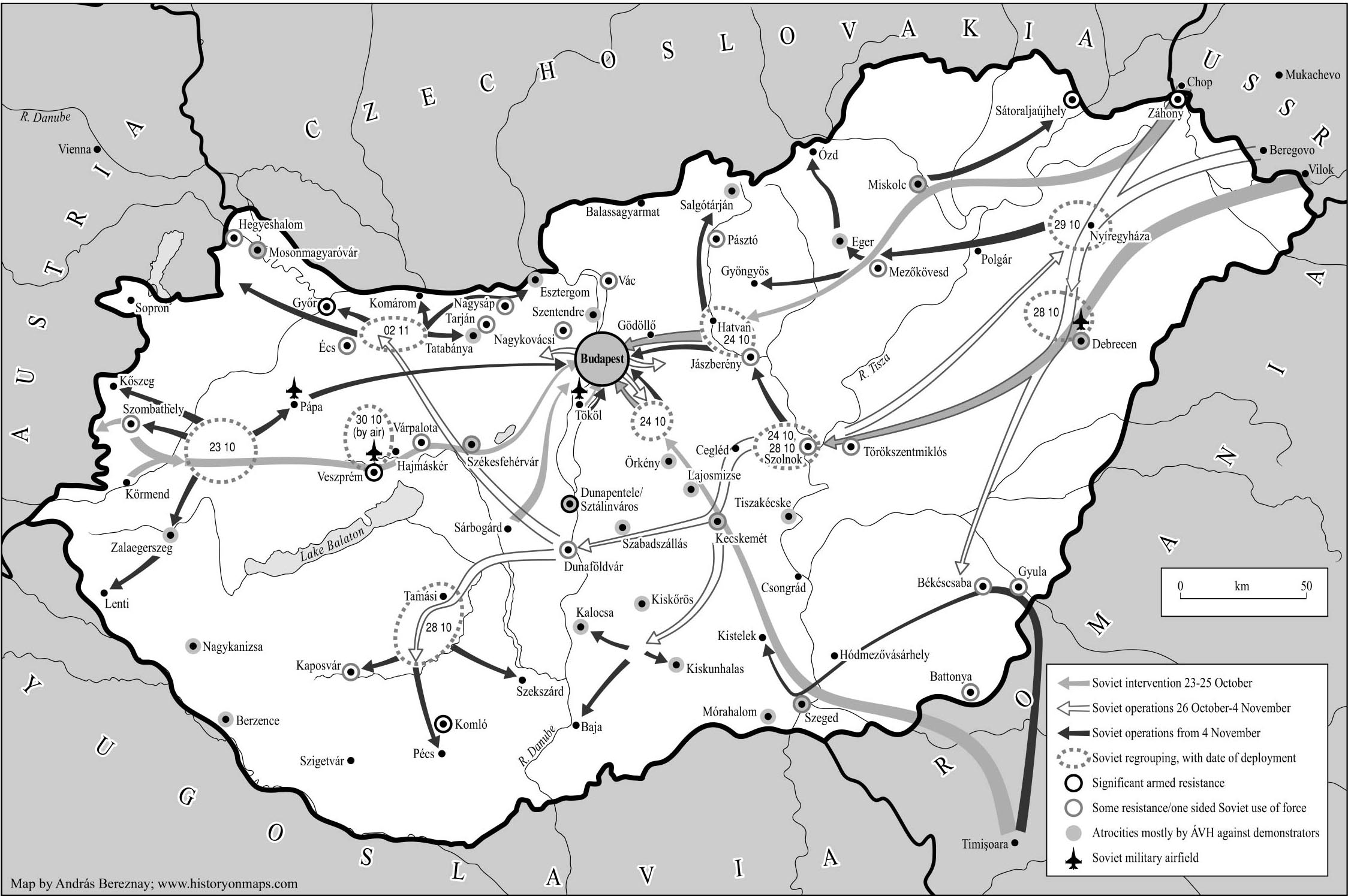
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Why do you think the West not send military aid to the Hungarians when they requested it?

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