

## How similar were the Hungarian and Czech rebellions?

	Hungary 1956	Czechoslovakia 1968
Why was there discontent with the Soviet regime?	Many in Hungary hated Russian control, including the secret police, censorship and control of religion. The economy was weak making most Hungarians poor. They hoped 'de-Stalinisation' would lead to change.	Many resented Soviet control. Living conditions were poor and the economy was weak. The Czechoslovakian leader, Antonin Novotny, had no control over his own country.
When did change begin?	When the USSR removed the deeply unpopular dictator Rakosi from power (and eventually replaced him with the moderate Imre Nagy).	When the USSR removed the deeply unpopular dictator Novotny from power and replaced him with Alexandr Dubček. He went against Moscow in favouring reforms.
What did people do to revolt?	They tore down statue a statue of Stalin in Budapest. There were widespread student protests. Thousands of people organised themselves into militias and fought the secret police. During the Soviet invasion, Hungarian people (including children) fought fiercely using machine guns.	Protests were initially peaceful and welcomed 'socialism with a human face'. Later, after the Soviet invasion, people engaged in 'passive resistance'. They stood in front of Soviet tanks and put flowers in the soldiers' hair. Once the Soviet occupation was established, a student called Jan Palach burnt himself to death in Wenceslas Square in protest.
What reforms were made?	Imre Nagy's government enjoyed a brief period of freedom. They introduced freedom of the press and radio. Non-Communists were allowed to participate in government. Freedom of religion was announced and imprisoned Catholic Cardinal Mindszenty was released from prison. When Nagy announced that Hungary would leave the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet backlash began.	Dubček allowed Communist party members to challenge policy and decisions. He ended censorship, allowing newspapers to report on corruption in the government. Opposition parties were allowed and some democratic reforms were planned. He also planned to increase trade with the West. He did stress, however, that the Warsaw Pact would stay intact.

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How long did the reforms last?	Five days.	Four months.
How did the Soviets respond?	After Nagy's reforms Khrushchev's government responded with overwhelming force: 1,000 tanks were sent into Budapest. Nagy was overthrown and executed. He was replaced by hard-line Communist Janos Kadar.	At first they were threatening. There were Red Army manoeuvres on the Czech border and talks were held with Dubček, which he ignored. When these failed to bring Dubček into line, 2,000 tanks and half a million Soviet troops were sent in. They took control of Prague's airport and made their presence clear on the streets. Dubček was arrested, forced to sign a declaration of loyalty to Moscow, then briefly returned to office in Prague. Within a year he was removed.
How many were killed?	Deaths are estimated in the thousands - Walsh claims 3000.	Around 70 civilians are believed to have been killed, but the precise number was kept secret for many years. There were 47 arrests.
What was the response of the West?	Nothing was done. Britain and France were pre-occupied with Suez and the USA was unwilling to risk war.	Nothing was done. The West was unwilling to risk war with the USSR.

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What reforms were made?		
How long did the reforms last?		
How did the Soviets respond?		
How many were killed?		
What was the response of the West?		
<b>Bonus task!</b> Add your own question here:		



Hungarian Uprising. 1956. A Budapest Crowd Destroys A Statue Of Josef Stalin After It Was Pulled Down. / Credit: Sovfoto/Universal Images Group / Copyright © Universal Images Group / For Education Use Only. This and millions of other educational images are available through Britannica Image Quest. For a free trial, please visit [www.britannica.co.uk/trial](http://www.britannica.co.uk/trial)

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