

Why did the West let Hungary down?

Tasks

1. Describe Hungary's place in the world in 1956 (the map should help).

Challenge: Why might the West not help Hungary to rebel against Communism?

2. What do the sources below suggest about why Hungarians rebelled against communist rule in 1956?



... Wearing clothes patterned after western styles, showing interest in jazz, expressing liberalism in the arts - was considered dangerous in the eyes of the people's democracy. To site a small example, let us take the case of my university colleague, John. He showed up at lectures one day several weeks before the revolution in a new suit and a striped shirt and necktie, all of which he had received from an uncle in the United States through gift-parcel channels. His shoes were smooth suede and would have cost a month's wages in Hungary. After class John was summoned by the party officer. He received a tongue lashing and was expelled.

Written by Laszlo Beke, a student who helped lead the uprising, in *A Student's Diary: Budapest October 16 - November 1, 1956*

Living standards were declining and yet the papers and radio kept saying that we had never has it so good. Why? Why these lies? Everybody knew the state was spending the money on armaments. Why could they not admit that we were worse off because of the war effort and the need to build new factories?

... I finally arrived at the realisation that the system was wrong and stupid.

A Hungarian student describes the mood in 1956

3. What happened during the uprising?

Use the 10 stages of the uprising to create a story board describing the different stages of the rebellion.

<p>Stage 1</p> <p>Soviet control in Hungary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the secret police arrested and tortured people Hungarian history was not taught in schools no freedom of speech taxes paid for communist troops signs were all in Russian. 	<p>Stage 2</p> <p>Soviet control in Hungary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> low standard of living and food shortages manufactured goods sent to the USSR elections were rigged (20% voted communist in 1945) Hungary was Catholic; religion was banned. 	<p>Stage 3</p> <p>June 1956:</p> <p>A group within the Communist Party in Hungary opposed Rakosi.</p> <p>Rakosi appealed to Moscow for help (he wanted to arrest 400 opponents).</p> <p>Moscow would not back him.</p>	<p>Stage 4</p> <p>23 October 1956:</p> <p>A huge student demonstration was held. A giant statue of Stalin was pulled down in Budapest (the capital).</p>	<p>Stage 5</p> <p>The USSR allowed a new government to be formed under Imre Nagy. He was well respected in Hungary. Soviet troops and tanks began to withdraw from Hungary.</p>
<p>Stage 6</p> <p>Nagy's government in Hungary started making plans for free elections and fair courts in Hungary. They also planned to leave the Warsaw Pact (an agreement between Communist states) and declare Hungary as neutral in the Cold War.</p>	<p>Stage 7</p> <p>Khrushchev wanted to accept some of the reforms. But he would not allow Hungary to leave the Warsaw Pact. In November 1956 he moved thousands of troops and tanks into Budapest (the capital).</p>	<p>Stage 8</p> <p>The Hungarians did not accept that the Soviet Union had moved tanks and troops into Budapest and rebelled against them.</p> <p>Soviets and Hungarians fought for 2 weeks. Around 3,000-4,000 Hungarians and 7,000-8,000 Russians were killed.</p>	<p>Stage 9</p> <p>The people in Hungary who fought the Soviets were crushed within two weeks. The Western powers protested but did not send anyone to help the Hungarians.</p> <p>Around 35,000 anti-communist supporters were arrested and 300 were executed.</p>	<p>Stage 10</p> <p>Nagy was tried and executed.</p> <p>No other country tried to rebel against Russia until 1968.</p> <p>Mistrust and suspicion from the US increased. 200,000 Hungarian refugees fled to Austria.</p>

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10