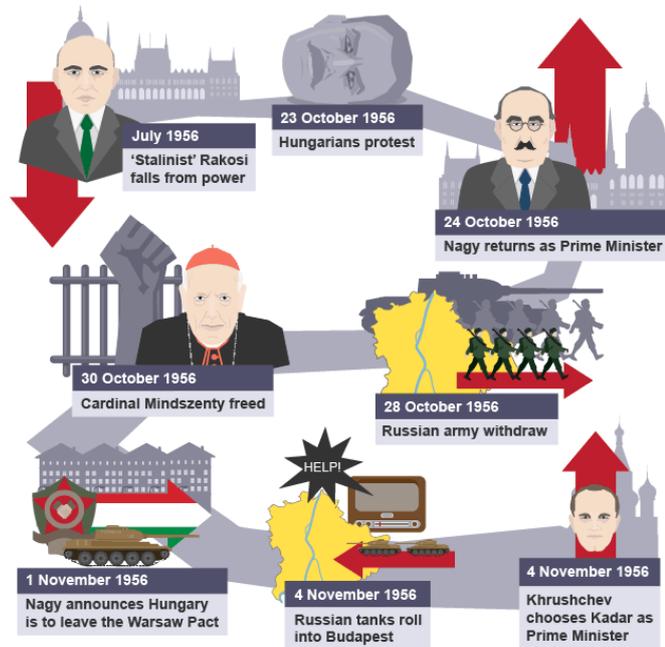


# The Hungarian Uprising

## Collapsible Revision

- Remind yourself of the key information
- Simply read the question / statement – answer it in your own head, then click on the prompt to get the answers.
- Do it in pairs with a friend to test each other.



### 1. When was the Hungarian Uprising? What was it?

- Originated in June 1956: protests against the hard-line communist regime of Matyas **RAKOSI** (A cruel and brutal leader)
- After much rioting / protesting the leadership was changed briefly to **Ernst Gero**
- Gero was not much more popular! He was replaced by **Imre Nagy**.

### 2. What made Hungary think they could be more independent from the USSR?

- **Leadership CHANGE:** Stalin died in 1953 and was replaced by Nikita Khrushchev
- 1955 Khrushchev met with Tito in Yugoslavia and talked of **'Peaceful coexistence'** (Note that Yugoslavia was not part of the Soviet bloc – it was an independent communist state)
- 1956 Khrushchev allowed the Poles to appoint a more moderate communist leader after protests – Gomulka. They thought they could do the same.
- 1956 February - Khrushchev made a speech (Known as the 'Secret Speech') to the Communist Party denouncing Stalin's regime. (Became known as **de-Stalinisation**). This gave the impression Khrushchev was easing off on Soviet control over the satellite states.

### 3. Did talk of 'peaceful coexistence' mean an end to the cold war?

- **No** – it really meant **'peaceful competition'** with the West. The arms race continued for example.
- Khrushchev remained committed to socialism – he just thought capitalism would self-destruct in time. (So why have confrontation?)
- Also – it did not mean he would allow the security of the Soviet Union to be compromised in anyway (Which explains his response to the Hungarian Uprising)

### 4. What the Hungarian's disliked about communist (Soviet) control.

- The suppression of their religion – they were Catholic
- Poor standard of living / poor housing
- The presence of the Red Army
- No freedom of speech
- The secret police (The AVO) – over 100,000 in prison
- Imposition of Russian language and culture (They were a proud nation that had fought against the Soviets in WW2)

5. What was the name of the much-hated Hungarian leader? What happened to him?
  - Matyas Rakosi (Leader from 1947) – ‘Stalinist’ in his approach
  - Moscow forced him to retire (June 1956) – replaced him with Ernst Gero
6. What happened on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1956?
  - **Students** in the capital, Budapest demanded an end to Soviet occupation.
  - They called for ‘true socialism’
  - They chanted, ‘Russians go home’, ‘Away with Gero’, ‘Long live Nagy’
  - Statues of Stalin were pulled down.
  - The Police made arrests and opened fire on the students
7. What happened on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1956?
  - The Soviet (Red Army) troop presence increased - Soviet troops guarded key buildings and roads.
  - **Soldiers and workers joined the student protesters.**
  - Moscow tried to ease tensions by appointing **Imre Nagy** (moderate socialist)
8. What did Imre Nagy call for?
  - Reforms to the communist party system
  - Free elections
  - Impartial courts
  - The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary
9. What did Imre Nagy do to ‘upset’ Khrushchev?
  - On November 1 - He called for Hungary’s removal from the **Warsaw Pact** (The Eastern European defensive alliance established in 1955, eastern equivalent of NATO) – this was a ‘huge step’
10. Why was this demand unacceptable to Khrushchev?
  - It would compromise the USSR’s security – creating a ‘hole’ in the ‘buffer zone’
  - Khrushchev feared this would lead to other Eastern (satellite) states wanting to withdraw which would destabilise the Soviet bloc’. (Domino effect!)
11. How did the Soviet authorities respond to Nagy’s calls to leave the Warsaw Pact?
  - November 4 - Soviet tanks (1000) ordered in to fight the ‘rebels’
  - They claimed they were justified to defend the Soviet Bloc (He probably had a point!)
12. What was the outcome of events?
  - **Two weeks** of fierce fighting
  - 3,000 Hungarians killed
  - 200,000 fled the country
  - Hungary remained a member of the Warsaw Pact
  - Imre Nagy was arrested and executed 2 years later (He had tried, but failed to flee to Yugoslavia)

### 13. What was the response of the West to events in Hungary?

- It did nothing more than 'condemn' Soviet actions.
- The West was distracted by the Suez canal crisis between Egypt, Britain and France (Fighting over control / access rights)
- President Eisenhower was distracted by the US Presidential election
- The US policy was 'containment' – they could do little as this was a satellite state of the Soviet Union, behind the 'Iron Curtain' – intervention would most likely lead to war