

What was the significance of the Hungarian Uprising, 1956?



July 1956 Stalinist prime minister, Rakosi, falls from power

October 1956 In Budapest, protests against communist rule turn to riots

- Lack of political freedom
- Fuel shortages
- Bad harvests

24 October 1956 Khrushchev agrees Nagy can now be prime minister

28 October 1956 Soviet troops withdraw from Budapest

- Promises of free elections
- Promises of freedom of speech

3 November 1956 Nagy announces Hungary is leaving the Warsaw Pact

4 November 1956 Soviet troops return, after a bloody street battle, Soviets regain control





Rakosi

Very pro Stalin, believed in controlling the freedoms of the people

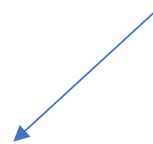
His actions as leader led to the riots and protests



Nagy

Believed that within a communist regime there should still be personal freedoms

Khrushchev hoped appointing Nagy would end the riots



Within days of his appointment, Nagy introduced a series of reforms:

- Reorganised the government to include non communist members
- Ended the one party state in Hungary
- Immediate release of political prisoners
- Persuaded Khrushchev to remove Soviet troops from Hungary

What is Eisenhower (USA) thinking about all of this?



1 November 1956:

Nagy announced Hungary would leave the Warsaw Pact.

Khrushchev could not allow this – WHY? (Think about Brexit effect)

If Hungary broke away, others might follow too which would undermine communism as well as the buffer zone of pro soviet governments surrounding and protecting Soviet Union.

Khrushchev ordered on 4th November:

- 1000 tanks into Budapest
- Nagy supporters put up an almighty fight, leading to the term 'Hungarian Uprising'.
- Nagy begged for Western support, but none came.
- Soviets acted brutally killing up to 20,000 Hungarians
- A new pro-Soviet government was set up with **Kadar** as its leader



Why do you think the West did not help?

Radio Free Europe – a US funded radio station had regularly broadcast messages encouraging the people of Eastern Europe to rise up against their communist regime. **As a result**, the people of Hungary and Nagy, assumed that the US would support their uprising as they had offered Marshall Aid, why not military support?



We are prepared to offer military support to stop the spread of communism, but not to any such events happening within already communist satellite states. The outcome of that, being Nuclear war, we believe would be worse than leaving the Hungarian rebels to fight the Soviets alone.

NATO nations will take in Hungarian refugees, but that is as far as we'll go.

Exam-style question, Section A

Explain **two** consequences of the Hungarian Uprising in 1956. **8 marks**

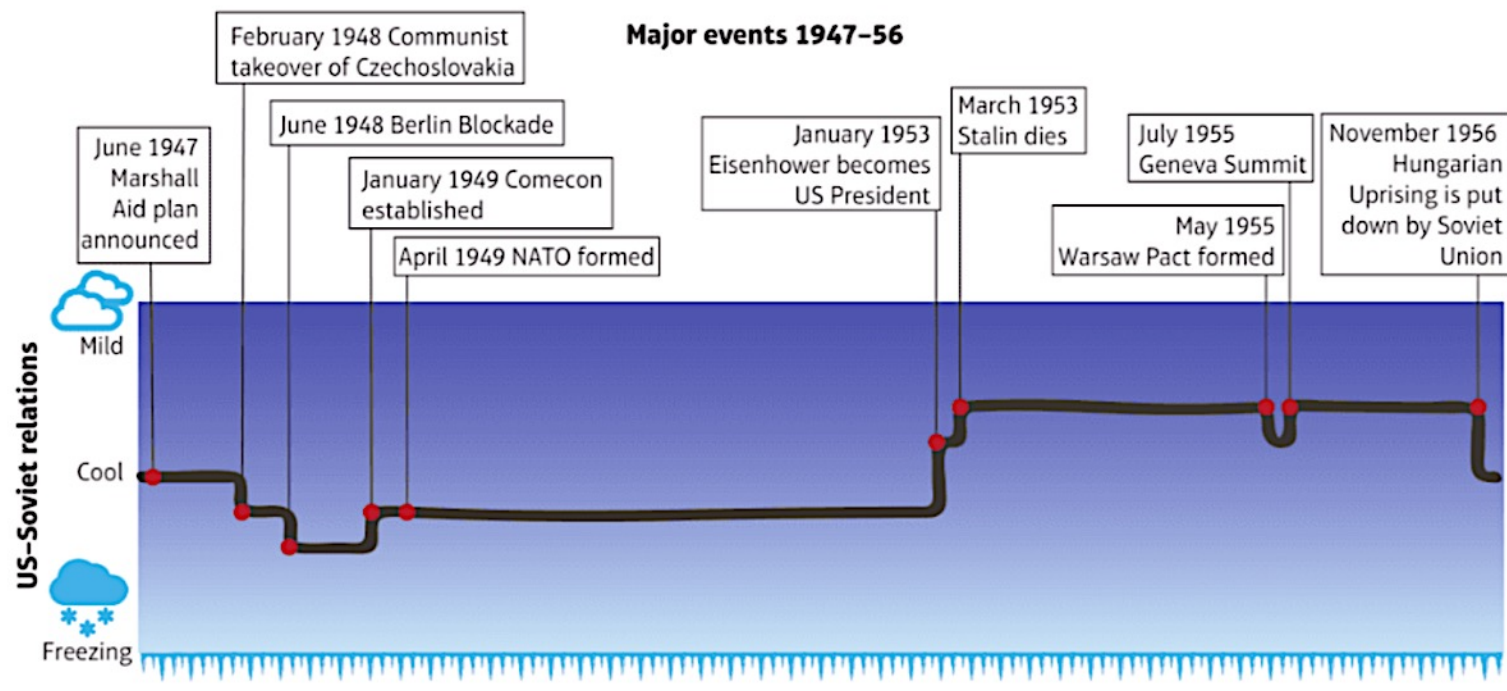
Exam tip

Remember this question is about consequences, not events. So don't spend time saying what happened during the uprising. Focus on explaining what happened as a result of the uprising.

Do you agree with Eisenhower?

What was the impact of the Hungarian Uprising on international relations?

- The Hungarian Uprising made Khrushchev's position more secure and gave him a stronger position in the Warsaw Pact, members must obey Moscow's orders and wishes
- Warsaw Pact members knew they would receive no Western support in an uprising
- Khrushchev became more confident in his dealings with the West and USA as he knew they were unwilling to engage in military action
- The Hungarian uprising made the West look bad, they had encouraged these uprisings but then didn't help, or "back up their words" making them look weak
- The USA did however STRONGLY oppose the Soviet invasion of Hungary and as a result, any strengthening relations between USA and Soviet Union had disappeared once more



Summary

- In the 1950s, the arms race between the USA and the Soviet Union accelerated, with a massive build-up of nuclear arms on both sides. Both sides had enough weapons to destroy each other and the world several times over.
- In 1953, the election of Eisenhower and the death of Stalin seemed to reduce tension in the Cold War.
- When West Germany joined NATO, the Soviets set up the Warsaw Pact.
- A rebellion against Soviet domination of Hungary in 1956 was put down with armed force. The Hungarian Uprising did serious damage to East–West relations.

Checkpoint

Strengthen

- S1** What new types of weapons were developed in the 1950s?
- S2** What is meant by 'deterrence' in the Cold War?
- S3** When did West Germany join NATO?

Challenge

- C1** Why did people think there might be an end to the Cold War after Stalin died?
- C2** If both the USA and the Soviet Union already had the capability to destroy their rivals by 1950, why did they keep creating new weapons?
- C3** Why did Hungarians think their uprising would receive outside support?

How confident do you feel about your answers to these questions? If you're not sure you answered them well, form a group with other students, discuss the answers and then record your conclusions. Your teacher can give you some hints.