DOUBLE OCCUPATION

Hungary emerged from World War I **on the losing side**. Once a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, she had possessed a territory larger than Italy or England. However, under the terms of the Treaty of Trianon wich settled the war, **the empire was carved up**, reducing its territory by two-thirds.  As a consequence of the redrawn borders, more than three million Hungarians found themselves living in a foreign state. After the war, the following revolution and **the Bolshevik putsch**, Hungary was faced with a hopeless economic situation. Politically isolated, militarily disarmed, and **in the grip of hostile countries**, Hungary became Central Europe´s smallest and weakest state. At the time, the focus of politics was the implementation of a peaceful territorial revision and the restoration of Hungary´s historical borders. The millions of Hungarians who found themselves outside of the country´s borders in the wake of Trianon considered themselves oppressed by governments which viewed them largely as enemies within their borders.

In the mid-1930s, Hungary found itself in the crossfire of an increasingly aggressive Nazi regime in Germany as well as a **menacing** and powerful Soviet Union. First allies and then enemies, the Nazi and Soviet dictatorships began a life and death fight to create a new European system of client and subordinated states, where there was no room for an independent Hungary. After the outbreak of WWII, Hungary made desperate attempts to hold maintain its fragile independence and democracy, and maneuvered to prevent the worst: Nazi occupation. Significantly, Hungary managed to resist occupation until March 19, 1944 in the fifth year of the war.

On June 26, 1941, air raids bombed the cities of Kassa and Rahó in Hungary. Reports of that time indicate that it was the Soviet air forces which carried out the attack. (However, **this question has yet to be resolved even to this day**.) Regent Horthy announced Hungary´s participation in the war against the Soviet Union. In the aftermath, two hundred thousand Hungarian soldiers fought on the Eastern Front where they suffered heavy losses in 1943 against the Red Army.

Until the Nazi occupation in 1944, Hungary had a legitimately elected government and parliament, where opposition parties functioned normally and members of the National Assembly sat in Parliament. Despite the wartime restrictions, press freedom still existed. Hungarian citizens lived better and freer than their neighbors. Beginning with the Nazi occupation of March 19th, however, **the country got a taste of just what they could have been expected had the Nazis won the war.**

Nazi troops occupied Hungary in order to make unlimited use of her natural and human resources to support its war effort. (The actual power was coordinated with German Ambassador and plenipotentiary, Edmund Veesenmayer.) A **puppet government** was established in March 1944, which began the decapitation of Hungarian society.

With the cooperation of the puppet Hungarian authorities appointed by the Nazis occupiers, the National Socialists began their assault on western civilization’s value structure through the horrific and so-called, “final solution program”. With record speed, the Nazi experts of Jewish persecution, the Judencommando, began to round up and capture Hungarian Jews and on May 15, 1944, the deportation trains began running.  In a period of two months, 437,402 Jews from the Hungarian countryside were sent to forced labor or extermination camps in the Third Reich.

On August 27, 1944, Soviet troops crossed the Hungarian border.  **The country became the scene of life and death clash between the Nazis and the Soviet Union**. **The short**, yet extremely brutal Nazi occupation during World War Two was then replaced by two generations of occupation of the Soviet Union.

Hungary´s sovereignity **came to an end** on March 19, 1944.  For more than four decades, Soviet occupation troops remained on her territory.  The last Soviet soldier left Hungary on June 19, 1991.

**TASKS**

· Hungary emerged from World War I on the losing side.

· the empire was carved up

· in the grip of hostile countries

· menacing

· this question has yet to be resolved even to this day

· the country got a taste of just what they could have been expected had the Nazis won the war.

· puppet government

·The country became the scene of life and death clash between the Nazis and the Soviet Union

· The short, yet extremely brutal Nazi occupation during World War Two was then replaced by two generations of occupation of the Soviet Union.

**INVESTIGATION TASK**

Here are answers to the **investigation tasks** based on the document and historical context:

**1. What kinds of resources was Hungary plenty of at that time?**

Hungary was rich in **agricultural products, natural resources, and manpower**. It had fertile lands that provided grain, livestock, and other agricultural goods. The country also had some industrial capacity and was strategically important due to its location in Central Europe.

**2. How many Hungarians joined the Nazis during WWII? What was the name of the Hungarian party that supported the German regime?**

While an exact number is difficult to pinpoint, thousands of **Hungarians collaborated with the Nazis**, especially after 1944. The **Arrow Cross Party**, led by **Ferenc Szálasi**, was the main Hungarian fascist party that supported Nazi Germany. They took power in October 1944 and actively participated in deportations and war crimes.

**3. What were the differences between the Nazi and Soviet occupations of Hungary?**

* **Nazi Occupation (March 19, 1944 – 1945):** Short but extremely brutal. Nazis exploited Hungary's economy, installed a **puppet government**, and **deported 437,402 Hungarian Jews** to concentration camps in just two months. The occupation ended with intense battles against the Soviet Red Army.
* **Soviet Occupation (1945 – 1991):** Lasted for over four decades. Hungary became a **communist satellite state** under Soviet influence. The economy was **nationalized**, political **opposition was suppressed**, and the country was isolated from the West. The **1956 Hungarian Revolution** against Soviet rule was violently crushed.

**4. What are the most visible consequences in current Hungarian society after four decades of communist occupation?**

* **Politics:** A lasting skepticism toward foreign control and communism. Hungary shifted toward nationalism and right-wing politics after the fall of communism in 1989-1991.
* **Society:** Distrust in government institutions and bureaucracy due to years of communist surveillance and repression.
* **Education:** Heavy emphasis on communist ideology during the Soviet era affected historical narratives. After 1991, Hungary reformed its education system to remove propaganda.
* **Architecture:** Many **brutalist-style buildings** from the Soviet era still remain, especially in Budapest. Monuments celebrating communism were mostly removed after 1991.

**5. How did the Treaty of Trianon impact Hungary’s territorial integrity, economy, and national identity?**

* **Territorial Loss:** Hungary lost **two-thirds** of its territory and millions of ethnic Hungarians were placed under foreign rule (in Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia).
* **Economic Impact:** The country lost key industrial regions, natural resources, and trade routes, leading to **economic instability**.
* **National Identity:** Many Hungarians saw the treaty as a national tragedy. Even today, it influences **Hungarian nationalism** and foreign relations, especially with neighboring countries that gained territory.

**6. What geopolitical challenges did Hungary face in the 1930s, and how did its position between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union shape its decisions?**

* Hungary was **politically isolated** after WWI and sought to **revise the Treaty of Trianon**, leading it to align with Nazi Germany, which promised territorial gains.
* At the same time, the **Soviet Union posed a communist threat** to Central Europe. Hungary was wary of Soviet influence.
* To avoid direct confrontation, Hungary **tried to maintain some independence** while gradually being pulled into Nazi Germany’s sphere of influence.

**7. What were Hungary’s motivations for joining the war against the Soviet Union in 1941? How did it affect the country?**

* **Motivations:**
  + Retaliation for an **air raid on Hungarian cities (Kassa and Rahó)**, believed to be Soviet-led.
  + Pressure from Nazi Germany to join the Eastern Front.
  + Desire to regain lost territories from Romania (which had also joined the Axis).
* **Effects:**
  + **200,000 Hungarian soldiers** were sent to fight, suffering devastating losses, especially at the **Battle of Stalingrad (1943)**.
  + Many Hungarian civilians faced hardships due to military drafts and economic strain.
  + The war left Hungary vulnerable to occupation by both the Nazis (1944) and later the Soviets (1945).

**8. How did Hungary maintain a degree of independence and democracy until 1944, and what changed after Nazi occupation?**

* **Before 1944:** Hungary had a **legitimate government and parliament**, and despite wartime restrictions, there was some **press freedom** and opposition parties.
* **After Nazi Occupation (March 19, 1944):**
  + The **German military took control**, appointing a **puppet government**.
  + The **Arrow Cross Party** later took power, escalating **Jewish deportations and repression**.
  + Hungarian sovereignty **ceased**, and the country was fully exploited for Nazi war efforts.

**9. What role did the Nazi-installed puppet government play in the Holocaust in Hungary?**

* The **puppet government, under German Ambassador Edmund Veesenmayer**, collaborated in the **deportation of 437,402 Hungarian Jews** to Auschwitz between **May and July 1944**.
* The **Arrow Cross Party** (October 1944 – April 1945) continued persecution, executing Jews in Budapest and forcing death marches.

**10. How did Soviet occupation shape Hungary’s political, economic, and social landscape, and what led to the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1991?**

* **Political Impact:**
  + A communist dictatorship was established under **Mátyás Rákosi**.
  + Political opposition was **eliminated**, and a **secret police (ÁVH)** terrorized citizens.
* **Economic Impact:**
  + Soviet-style **central planning** led to inefficiency and shortages.
  + **Agriculture was collectivized**, harming production and private ownership.
* **Social Impact:**
  + Soviet propaganda dominated education, media, and culture.
  + The **1956 Hungarian Uprising** was crushed by Soviet tanks.
* **Withdrawal of Soviet Troops (1991):**
  + As the **Soviet Union weakened**, Hungary transitioned to democracy.
  + The **last Soviet soldier left on June 19, 1991**, restoring full sovereignty.

This covers all the questions with historical context. Do you need further details or sources on any point?