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**

Read the text and try to find the meaning of the underlined words and sentences, taking the context into account.

**INVESTIGATION TASK**

* What kinds of resources was Hungary plenty of at that time?
* How many Hungarians joined the nazis during WWII? What was the name of the Hungarian party who supported the German regime?
* From your point of view, what were the differences between the nazi’s and soviet’s occupations of Hungary?
* What are the most visible consequences in the current Hungarian society (in terms of politics, society, education, architecture….) after four decades of communist occupation?
* How did the Treaty of Trianon impact Hungary’s territorial integrity, economy, and national identity, and what were the long-term consequences for Hungarian citizens living outside the new borders?
* What geopolitical challenges did Hungary face in the 1930s, and how did its position between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union shape its political and military decisions leading up to World War II?
* What were Hungary’s motivations for joining the war against the Soviet Union in 1941, and how did its involvement on the Eastern Front affect the country’s military and civilian population?
* How did Hungary manage to maintain a degree of independence and democracy until 1944, and what changed when Nazi Germany occupied the country in March of that year?
* What role did the Nazi-installed puppet government play in the Holocaust in Hungary, and how did the deportation of Hungarian Jews unfold between May and July 1944?
* How did Soviet occupation shape Hungary’s political, economic, and social landscape after World War II, and what were the key events leading to the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1991?