



THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION-UPRISING, BUDAPEST 1956

A synoptic treatise of a major political event of the 20th Century, a historically tragic period in the life of a nation commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Revolution and the fallen brave

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"October 23, 1956, is a day that will live forever in the annals of free men and nations. It was a day of courage, conscience and triumph. No other day since history began has shown more clearly man's eternally unquenchable desire to be free, whatever the odds against success, whatever the sacrifice required." – *Senator John F. Kennedy, later USA President, Jan.1961 - Nov.1963, on the first anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution.*

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Introduction and Foreword

The son of pioneer industrialist family settled in Turkey since 1933, the author is a Hungarian national like his parents were, but by quirk of fate, was born in Istanbul, the cosmopolitan cultural and industrial capital of that country. At the time of the Hungarian Revolution-uprising of 1956, he was an 18 year old 1st year student attending the State Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul. After that traumatic exposure to Western foreign news media that reported in detail the events in his homeland Hungary, he was deeply affected and consumed by the unfolding shocking revelations when the perpetrators were squarely condemned by the free world. His burgeoning interest in international politics and current affairs developed after that weighty experience of exposure to foreign news from abroad, from that vantage point of Istanbul. With the tragic sequence of events etched in his memory, and a lifelong preoccupation in foreign affairs and international politics, the author revisited the shattering photos and articles of 50 years ago which resulted in this publication based upon his extensive research and collation material. The author wishes to express profound gratitude to *savant* in history Mr. A. Milne of Hobart and to the archives staff of the state Library of Tasmania for the generous help provided.

This treatise highlights the lesser known aspects of the crisis, adding reports of the corps of journalists, news reporters and staff correspondents who witnessed these events and were representing leading media agencies like United Press News, Reuters International, British Associated Press, BBC World Service News, American Associated Press and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. To this blend of sources were added research based personal interpretation distilled from countless publications from the free world media (specialised editorials, political analysis literature, United Nations reports etc.) brought together chronologically to make up a truthful, practical and handy account. An excellent additional source of reference material, A.K. Ambrosy's book "A Brave Nation" (*Hungarian Life Edition, Melbourne 2001*) was consulted on the finer points with deeper detail for some corroboration. Extracts of political statements, proceedings and debates, the extraordinary diplomatic machinations that were taking place between superpower advocates provide a clear account of news as they unfolded from the august world headquarters in New York of the United Nations.

Delivering a condensed overview of the most significant aspects of the then world shaking conflict, the author has in mind as the general reader, the otherwise well informed, rational, most probably a Hungarian-descended enthusiast rather than a specialist historian. The aims are a contribution to a better understanding of the Revolution-uprising itself, widening of the general knowledge on the subject with the wisdom and clarity of hindsight, limelighting the *realpolitik* on the international forum played out in at the United Nations and, last but not least, to commemorate the fallen heroes in the Hungarian Revolution-uprising of 1956, who made the ultimate sacrifice for liberty.

Among Hungarians there were very many who had argued at the time, that the West and particularly the USA had let down Hungary as they should have intervened militarily to free the country. In the heat of the “Cold War” between the democratic and free West and the Communist camp of nations in Europe, disregarding established international UN conventions and moreover discounting the absolute risk of a global nuclear disaster such an armed intervention could have precipitated did not even make sense then as today, when the nuclear war had been accepted by all as a no-option due to the sure annihilation of humankind and civilisation. The superpower arms race in full swing, their psychological warfare at its threatening worst, and the certainty of MAD “Mutually Assured Destruction” in the event of a nuclear war, had to put to rest the disingenuous option of military intervention by the West.

The only open option was moral support through broadcast (Radio Free Europe), diplomatic struggle at the UN, heaviest international pressure and protests to Moscow, for a free and democratic Hungary.

In retrospect, the painful collapse of the short lived Hungarian Revolution by 4 November 1956, the warm welcome by the West of the 200.0000 Hungarian refugees to their midst proved the genuine support of the free world and galvanised world opinion against the totalitarian Soviet system. International communism had received its severest blow since inception but was not knocked out yet. It took 33 years to reach the economic bankruptcy and global demise of Soviet style tyranny, when late in 1989, Hungary came out as one of the main victors as a free, democratic and independent country, now an integral part of the Western-alliance in Europe.

Going back to the root cause, it all began at the Yalta Conference of February 1945, where the soon would be World War II main victors, the “Big Three” Allied Nations: the USA, Great Britain and the Soviet Union (Russia), allocated “spheres of influence” over territories liberated from Nazi Germany’s occupation. Hungary was one of the Eastern European countries whose military control was, by that tripartite agreement, handed over to communist-bolshevist Soviet Union for their exclusive governance in the post-war era. This empowerment gave the Soviet their chance to manipulate, deceive the Hungarian public to install a puppet Government, a copy of their own totalitarian and ruthless communist-socialist State system with no respect for human rights, democracy or political freedoms.

A not much aired fact, a little known clause of the Hungarian Peace Treaty of 1947, stipulated that the Soviet Union was required to vacate her occupation troops from Hungary when they withdrew their occupation forces from Austria in unison with the USA and the UK. The Soviet Union, the UK, the USA and other Allied powers were party to the peace treaty. So, when in 1955 the Allies left Austria, the Soviets never honoured their obligation under the clear international agreement with respect to Hungary. The Warsaw Pact Treaty between Communist-block countries, planned and underwritten by the Soviet Union, which was signed between the Communist-block countries before the end of the Peace Treaty of 1947, made sure that Hungary remained in the Communist camp thus gave justifying legal grounds to the Soviet military presence.

For years Moscow had claimed that Red Army divisions were stationed in Hungary in order to protect her satellite State from Western aggression by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) when in fact their true role was to enforce the Stalinist rule in Hungary through home-bred communists. The Soviets would never let any Western nation interfere with the “internal affairs” of a Warsaw Pact Treaty nation, so as not to risk their hold on their communist satellites for maintenance of ideological dogma, subservient economics, security interests and political alignment, all to perpetuate the tyrannical system. With Soviet veto rights enshrined at the UN’s Security Council through their Permanent Council Membership, how could that usurpation of Hungarian sovereignty been settled by the West peacefully in post-war Europe, when the “Soviet installed” collaborating communist governments were in power in Hungary?

The world at large knew of the first day of events on October 23 marking the beginning of the Hungarian Revolution-uprising, on the following day when foreign correspondents reports from Hungary appeared in detail in the worldwide media, with extensive coverage in the Western press. The level of oppression and persecution in the Soviet occupied, communism imposed country had built up to such an intolerable level that the people rose to challenge the Establishment, to protest against the institutionalised injustices and inhumanities and to seek freedom and liberty of the nation run by a subservient government, a proxy of the Soviet Union. The intelligentsia, especially writers and journalists, voiced their dissatisfaction against totalitarianism more boldly and frequently, particularly through a forum known as the Petöfi Circle-Writers Union.

University students who had neither political experience nor a power base, and who were nurtured or indoctrinated under the communist system, became the vocal protesters against that very regime. Social ferment had begun...At the beginning of October 1956, students at one Hungarian university after another drew up demands for radical change. The most active were the students of the Budapest Technical University who, with patriotic fervour, articulated their 16 points demands in a manifesto at a meeting on the night of October 22. On the following day, the government did outrage the unresting public assembled in mass protest by rejecting their demands, which act led to the start of the historic Hungarian Revolution of 1956. From October 24, the world media focussed on reporting daily about the ongoing struggle for democracy in Hungary soon set to be scene to brutal and implacable violation by the invading Soviets-Russians. Following the ill fated Revolution-uprising, the countless trainloads of deportations to the USSR, the mass executions, wholesale arrests, imprisonments, confiscations and purges are documented, later all revealed facts that once upon a time had captured newspaper headlines in Europe. The resulting exodus of 200,000 Hungarian refugees is common knowledge. A good portion of them is still around as yesteryear’s migrants who integrated well into the life of their adopted homeland in the West, to include Australia and New Zealand.

The following notes are, in the main, the progressive events dominating the foreign news of the ill fated 1956 Hungarian Revolution-uprising that were widely reported abroad.

The beginnings of the struggle to gain the freedoms and rights denied to the nation

23 October

Articulating the clear objectives, the now famous 16 point manifesto was read out by large crowd of students assembled, demonstrating at the Petőfi and Bem statues in central Budapest. Later on, peacefully marching to the Parliament House, they were joined by people swelling to a crowd estimated to be 100.000 strong milling around the Parliament Square. An immediate installation of the popular Imre Nagy as head of Government was demanded following the Stalinist hardliner Communist Party Secretary Ernő Gerő's rebuking of the crowd. Slogans such as "Down with Gerő!", "Russians go home!" were shouted amid social turmoil in the nation set to topple the communist regime. Although students in their thousands were the initiators of protest demonstrations, they soon were joined by workers and the ordinary people of Budapest to present a sea of highly vocal and resentful crowd which portrayed nation-wide discontent.

At around 9.00 PM, a large crowd of protesters assembled around the Radio Budapest Building, the totalitarian system's irksome daily propaganda centre that was always well guarded by crack agents of the State Security organisation (ÁVH) which was well known for its inhumanity and torture. The detested ÁVH was the organisation formed to uphold the system ruthlessly through spies and countless secret informers, its network planted in the daily life of the nation. At the Radio Building the first shots were fired against unarmed protesters, men and women, young and old, by the much hated ÁVH when the angry crowd's request to broadcast their 16 point demand was rejected. The conflict deepened with this indiscriminate and horrifying bloodbath.

The university and tertiary college students' 16 point demand

- 1. We demand the immediate evacuation of all Soviet troops, in conformity with the provision of the Treaty of Peace.*
- 2. We demand the election by secret ballot of all Party members from top to bottom, and of new officers for the lower, middle and upper echelons of the Hungarian Workers Party. These officers shall convoke a Party Congress as early as possible in order to elect a Central Committee.*
- 3. A new Government must be constituted under the direction of Comrade Imre Nagy: all the criminal leaders of the Stalin-Rákosi era must be immediately relieved of their duties.*
- 4. We demand a public enquiry into the criminal activities of Mihály Farkas and his accomplices. Mátyás Rákosi, who is the person most responsible for all crimes of the recent past as well as for the ruin of our country, must be brought back to Hungary for trial before a people's tribunal.*
- 5. We demand that general elections, by universal, secret ballot, be held throughout the country to elect a new National Assembly, with all political parties participating. We demand that the right of workers to strike be recognised.*

6. *We demand revision and re-adjustment of Hungarian-Soviet and Hungarian-Yugoslav relations in the fields of politics, economics and cultural affairs, on a basis of complete political and economic equality, and of non-interference in the internal affairs of one by the other.*

7. *We demand the complete reorganisation of Hungary's economic life under the direction of specialists. The entire economic system, based on a system of planning, must be re-examined in the light of conditions in Hungary and in the vital interest of the Hungarian people.*

8. *Our foreign trade agreements and the exact total of reparations that can never be paid must be made public. We demand precise and exact information on the uranium deposits in our country, on their exploitation and on the concessions accorded the Russians in this area. We demand that Hungary have the right to sell her uranium freely at world market prices to obtain hard currency.*

9. *We demand complete revision of the norms operating in industry and an immediate and radical adjustment of salaries in accordance with the just requirements of workers and intellectuals. We demand that a minimum living wage be fixed for workers.*

10. *We demand that the system of distribution be organised on a new basis and that agricultural products be utilised in rational manner. We demand equality of treatment for individual farms.*

11. *We demand reviews by independent tribunals of all political and economic trials as well as the release and rehabilitation of the innocent. We demand the immediate repatriation of prisoners of war (WW2) and of civilian deportees to the Soviet Union, including prisoners sentenced outside Hungary.*

12. *We demand complete recognition of freedom of opinion and of expression, of freedom of the press and of radio, as well as the creation of a daily newspaper for the MEFESZ Organisation (Hungarian Federation of University and College Students' Associations).*

13. *We demand that the statue of Stalin, symbol of Stalinist tyranny and political oppression, be removed as quickly as possible and be replaced by a monument in memory of the martyred fighters for freedom of 1848-49.*

14. *We demand the replacement of emblems that are foreign to the Hungarian people by the old Hungarian arms of Kossuth. We demand for the Hungarian Army, new uniforms conforming to our national traditions. We demand that 15th of March be declared a national holiday and that the 6th of October be a day of national mourning on which schools will be closed.*

15. *The students of the Technological University of Budapest declare unanimously their solidarity with the workers and students of Warsaw and Poland in their movement towards national independence.*

16. *The students of the Technological University of Budapest will organise as rapidly as possible local branches of MEFESZ, and they have decided to convoke at Budapest, on Saturday October 27, a Youth Parliament at which all the nation's youth will be represented by their delegates.*

24 October

The first Soviet tanks in Budapest - Imre Nagy's "Cease Fighting" speech. The first Soviet tanks despatched from permanent bases inside Hungary were seen rolling into Budapest as early as 2.00AM on that day, positioning at strategic crossings and guarding the Radio and the Parliament buildings creating shock and outrage in the

population who by daytime became aware of the previous night's carnage at the Budapest Radio building precinct. The armed combat for freedom actually started when the mass of workers, police and the military joined the ranks of the predominantly young freedom fighters manning the street corners, the barricades, etc. Captured firearms by the freedom fighters plus some of the handed over police and military armoury was the source of their much needed weapons. The Hungarian national flag with the communist-socialist emblem torn out of it, the holed tricolour became instantly the symbol of the patriot revolutionaries.

Later on, a solemn voiced Mr. Nagy addressed the nation over the radio with a solemn tone, and appealed for the laying down of arms in the interest of avoiding further bloodshed. Mr Nagy announced that he now has taken over the leadership of the Government as Prime Minister (Chairman of the Council of Ministers). He stated that as soon as possible and by all means at his disposal, the new Government shall implement the shelved program of June 1953, a national program which he had expounded in Parliament at that time. He promised the systemic democratisation of the country, in every sphere of Party, State, political and economic life. He pleaded to the return to peaceful and productive work. The new Prime Minister asked for the trust of the broad masses of the people, acknowledged that lessons were learned from the mistakes of the past and that they shall find the way to democratisation and prosperity...

25 October

When the massive public protest meeting was taking place in Parliament House Square to demand the evacuation of Soviet forces, some ÁVH agents who were positioned at the roof of the Ministry of Agriculture started shooting indiscriminately into the crowd, killing many amongst them. The Soviet tanks, there to guard the Parliament House, the status quo and the remnants of the ÁVH, mistook the volleys as being directed to themselves from rooftop shooters, and in retaliation, unleashed a barrage of fire. From that point onwards, a state of shock, panic and confusion reigned supreme in the Square which did not help clarify the perpetrators of the horrific injuries and massacre. Several differing accounts were reported, rumours were spread about this event. It has since been unequivocally established that before the ÁVH's firing had started the commotion, the Soviet soldiers manning the tanks were sympathetic to the crowd, allowing some of the patriotic demonstrators to climb aboard their war machine and even display the holed Hungarian tricolour, symbol of the Revolution.

However, this sympathy did not last long. This murderous act of innocent victims shocked and horrified the nation and from then on, the streets of Budapest became scenes of violent bloody battles between freedom fighters and the Soviet forces, while the hunt for the murderous ÁVH agents continued on relentlessly.

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General Amnesty declared over the radio....To those laying down their arms by 10 pm, the National Government declared full amnesty. Few heeded the call, but the overwhelming rest did not. Revolutionary Councils were established right across Hungary, in counties, cities, towns and villages, taking over the total civilian administration of their area.

26 October

A crowd of 4000 demonstrated in front of the British Legation in Budapest, shouting “We want liberty from the Russians and the Communists!”, “Why doesn’t the United Nations help us?” Then, they marched to the American Embassy where a similar scene took place. Foreign correspondents had arrived in great numbers to Budapest to witness, record and report the street warfare, death, destruction in the capital. Western newspapers, tabloids, monochrome radio-photo illustrated publications and other media agencies started reporting, in great detail, these horrific events to a stunned world. These developments started causing serious fracture in the Communist parties of the free world. Mass resignations occurred worldwide, particularly in France and Italy, the countries with the largest Communist parties.

27 October

With the Soviet military units everywhere in the capital continually engaged in street battles against freedom fighters, confusion reigned supreme in the country as to who was in actual control of the Government. The apparent intrigue, distrust and power play among the ruling party elite, the control of the Armed Forces, and the composition of new Ministers selected the extent of the influence of both Soviet authorities and the Hungarian Communist Party leadership, the retaining of communist ideals versus the adoption of democratic values were issues adding to the bewilderment of the people. Last but not least the burning question remained: who was responsible for calling in of the Soviet troops garrisoned in the country? Budapest streets were by then littered with knocked-out tanks, burnt vehicles and lined with shell-shattered buildings, once palatial inner city ones turned into pathetic ruin and rubble as bloodshed continued unabated. Injury, death and destruction caused by fierce fighting had already claimed a very severe toll.

Hungary dominated the major international daily news worldwide, instilling shock, horror and agony among readers. Condemnation of the Soviet Union for its attack on Hungary was universal. By the end of the day, Prime Minister Mr Nagy renewed his Hungarian Government which comprised this time a Cabinet composed of Communist and non-Communist Ministers in order to meet in full, public demands.

28 October

The UN Security Council met in an emergency session to consider Soviet intervention in the Hungarian revolt. Britain, France and the USA had asked for the meeting in a note to October month’s Council President Mr. Bernard Cornut Gentile (France). Western officials conceded that any draft was bound to run into a Soviet veto. The United States initiated the move to bring the subject before the United Nations. America’s Chief UN Delegate Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge said that UN members (of whom Hungary is one) must assert their serious concern and consider how best they

might discharge the obligations which they have assumed under the Charter. Sir Pierson Dixon (G. Britain) said that “the situation in Hungary concerns us all”, “foreign forces are in action inside the country”. “Hungarian men, women and children are being killed and wounded”. ”The rights of Hungarian people are being violently repressed by foreign troops”.

He went on to state that: “Article 34 of the UN Charter says the Security Council may investigate any dispute or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to dispute in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of peace and security”.

On the same day a “Declaration of the Government of the Hungarian People’s Republic”, distributed to the Security Council at the request of Dr. Péter Kós, then the Permanent Representative of Hungary, protested against the consideration by the Council, of the Hungarian Question and stated that “the events that took place on 22 Oct.1956 and thereafter, and the measures taken in the course of these events, were exclusively within the domestic jurisdiction of the Hungarian People’s Republic and consequently do not fall within the jurisdiction of the United Nations” (UN Report).

A logical assumption is that Dr.Kós would have been instructed to hang on to established, hitherto declared Hungarian policy by his Government which naively believed in not antagonising the Soviets while negotiations for Soviet withdrawal had already or were about to commence.

In Hungary, Prime Minister Nagy announced the start of the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Budapest except from certain strategic points, following successful negotiations with Soviet authorities. Understandably he was in a most dangerous predicament, torn between loyalty to the long suffering, trusting populace to whom genuine promises were made and were to be kept, and on the other hand, by further angering the Soviet Union, lose all that had been gained so far through overwhelmingly popular nationalistic revolt.

29 October

According to testimony of witnesses, Mr. Nagy denied ever calling in the Soviet troops, and the very first speech he delivered as Prime Minister on 24 October he made was under the threat of the gun. He also stated that unbeknown to him the official request to call in the Soviet troops was apparently signed in his name.

Much later on 19 November, Mr. Dmitri Shepilov, the Foreign Minister of the USSR, would state before the UN General Assembly that a telegram was received by the Council of Ministers of the USSR, in which it was requested by the Hungarian Prime Minister that the Soviet Union send troops to restore public order and quell all unrest and disturbance in Budapest on that day, Oct.24. Although the identity of the signatory to the telegram was never revealed the Russians had thus implied that Mr. Nagy was the signatory. It became absolutely clear with the passage of time that such a possibility could not have arisen due to the time of the invasion of Budapest taking place well before Mr. Nagy’s taking over the Prime Ministership.

A conjecture was that Mr. Nagy was the victim of a coup perpetrated by the hardliner clique in the Cabinet headed by Kádár János, the staunch communist loyal to Moscow who took over the reins of Government later on, in 5 November. Another conjecture was that this request could well have been made by his predecessor Mr. A. Hegedûs or by the much-hated another Stalinist Ernő Gerő (these two were in the inner Cabinet at that point in time), or with an outside chance, a self engineered Soviet ruse executed without any collaboration or knowledge of anyone in the Hungarian Government or leadership, to exploit the confusing political situation in order to maintain communism in Hungary by force.

The mystery remained unsolved for many decades until a few years ago, when an aged and frail Mr. Hegedûs, long in retirement, owned up to signing the request order issued in secrecy, claiming that his subservient role in the conspiracy was played under extreme duress (threat to his own life). This appeal to the Soviet forces was done before his handing over of the Government to his successor Mr. Nagy on 24 Oct. who was totally unaware of the plot, as the Soviet troops and tanks rolled into Budapest.

Calm appeared to have been restored by 29 Oct. whilst the Soviet troops, by then badly mauled, continued their general disengagement and evacuation back to their permanent barracks in the country, following negotiations between the National Government under Mr. Nagy's Prime Ministership and the Soviet authorities.

Some action-packed drama started to be shown across the world through cinema newsreel film footage taken directly by Western war correspondents at the scene of the bloody street battles in ravaged Budapest. Exposure to the outside world was complete.

30 October

Reports arrived that Russian troops were leaving Hungary, a jubilant nation overtaken by exhilarating joy that only such a painful victory can produce. Western diplomats were awaiting developments inside Hungary before planning their next UN move on the Hungarian Revolution termed internationally a popular uprising. At a six-hour meeting of the UN Security Council, the Western Powers denounced the use of Russian troops to put down the rebels. The debate was held in the face of vehement Russian and Hungarian protests that the "rebellion" was a Hungarian domestic affair. The President of the Security Council was to decide when the session on Hungary was to resume in consultation with other members.

Delay sought by the Soviets at the UN through diplomatic manipulation tactics while Argentina, Ireland, Italy, Siam and Turkey sent messages supporting the Council's urgent consideration of the Hungarian situation. However, the Security Council first dealt with a Soviet request for a 3-4 day postponement of the debate. The Soviet Delegate Mr. A. Sobolev sought to delay the discussions on the grounds that the UN was not authorised to interfere in the internal affairs of any country.

The Council rejected this proposal by a 9-1 vote, with Yugoslavia abstaining. The French Delegate and Council President Mr. Gentile said everything indicated that Russia's intervention took place before any call from the Hungarian Government.

Mr. Sobolev then delivered a 26 minute blast against the West. “The events in Hungary” he said, have clearly shown that a reactionary underground movement, well armed, has acted against the Government with the assistance of the United States”. He said that Russia had intervened at the request of the Hungarian Government.

In Moscow, the Soviet Defence Minister Marshal G. Zhukov said that Russian troops could be withdrawn from Hungary only by common agreement among the member states of the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet bloc’s defence alliance. He told reporters that Russian troops intervened in Hungary in the spirit and letter of the Warsaw Pact, “The Hungarian Government asked for aid and we were thoroughly justified in giving it”.

31 October

Hungary’s Prime Minister Mr. Nagy announced the end of the single party rule, that all wrongs that had occurred since 1945 would be put right, and stated officially that he knew nothing about the decision to call in Soviet forces to put down the popular uprising. Complete political neutrality in international affairs, as well as Hungary’s abrogation of the Warsaw Pact Treaty membership, effective immediately, was declared during the same broadcast. This historic and crucially important announcement must have sealed the fate of the Revolution-uprising in Hungary.

In Moscow, the Soviet Foreign Minister Mr. D. Shepilov said Soviet forces would withdraw as soon as the insurgents had laid down their arms and there was no danger to Soviet troops. He did not give an answer as to whether the Soviet troops would evacuate the whole of Hungary nor did he spell out who actually invited the Soviet forces into Hungary. The enigma surrounding this question thus persisted. In London the British Foreign Secretary Mr. Selwyn Lloyd told Parliament that Russia was pouring more tanks and troops into Hungary.

In Australia, the Prime Minister Mr. R.G. Menzies told the House of Representatives that the recent revolt in Hungary appeared to be a popular protest against Soviet domination. He said that the Australian Representative in the Security Council had expressed in strong terms Australia’s sympathy with the Hungarian people.

Mr. Menzies said that the post-war Hungarian Peace Treaty of 1947 provided that Hungary would take all measures necessary to secure to all persons under her jurisdiction, the enjoyment of human rights, and of the fundamental freedoms. The Soviet Union had circumvented the withdrawal of her forces from Hungary by creating the Warsaw Pact of May 1955, which provided for the use of Soviet troops to repel foreign aggression against Member States. Mr. Menzies said that Australia, as a party to the Hungarian Peace Treaty of 1947, was consulted and believed that the United Nations should investigate the serious situation with a view to preventing further bloodshed. The Australian Government and he was sure all honourable members would welcome any steps which would lead to the establishment of Hungary as a truly independent nation, guarantee democratic and human rights to her people, and remove any shadow of foreign domination from a people who had made such a notable contribution to the history and culture of the free world.

The Leader of the Opposition Dr. H.V. Evatt agreed that the events in Hungary were not essentially a domestic affair outside the jurisdiction of the UN. Dr. Evatt said that if the veto was used in the Security Council, the matter should be put to the General Assembly where there was no veto. (ABC News, Canberra)

1 November

“The powerful uprising of the democratic forces has brought us to a parting of ways” Hungary’s Prime Minister Mr. Nagy said in a broadcast.. He was announcing once more the replacement of a one-party communist rule, the formation of a “little cabinet” including men from five (resurrected) political parties to run the country while the national election is being prepared. He proposed the formation of a true coalition government similar to that established in 1945, just after the end of WW2. The absolute neutrality of Hungary and the withdrawal of Hungary from the Warsaw Pact were reiterated.

The international distraction in the Middle East.

Meantime in the UN, an unprecedented Anglo-French veto was cast against USA’s attempts to stop or isolate the fighting over the Suez Canal where UK and France had engineered and landed lightning fast military strike forces into the Canal Zone in full collusion with Israeli forces then at just 15km. from the zone on the Sinai Peninsular. The objective was to retake the unilaterally nationalised Egyptian Canal so as to ensure free passage to all international shipping and safeguard Anglo-French and Israeli interests. President Eisenhower and the US secretary of State John Foster Dulles viewed the basically Anglo-French venture as a dangerous and desperate gamble against Egypt’s popular strongman leader, Colonel Nasser. The US found itself in odious agreement with the Soviet Union in the violation of the UN Charter by force in the Middle East.

At the General Assembly of the UN, for 13 hours Britain and France battled to defend the Anglo-French decision to move into the Canal zone to enforce and ensure freedom of navigation denied by Egypt, appealing twice to the US Delegate not to insist on a vote on the US Resolution which sought the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces from Egyptian territory. In relation to Hungary, the implication was clear: the US would maintain consistency in foreign affairs by opposing military occupation of a sovereign country whether by ally or Cold War enemy.

2 November

The war in the Middle East had shadowed the precarious situation in Hungary where the communist order had its back to the wall with the nation ridding itself of foreign and domestic oppressors. While the apparent Soviet acceptance of defeat seemed a final monumental achievement, a source of public jubilation, some unconfirmed reports filtering through stated the massing of Soviet troops just outside the Hungarian borders. Battered Budapest was in the hands of cockaded, arm-banded nationalist patriots, and started coming back slowly to life again.

At the UN the Anglo-French action against Egypt continued amid worldwide condemnation of their military action. The General Assembly met in an extraordinary emergency session to consider Israel's attack on Egypt and the Anglo-French armed intervention. There is no veto in the Assembly. On the other hand the Assembly can not issue orders but can only make recommendations to the Security Council, depending on world opinion which was mainly hostile against the UK and France for use of force. One must be cognizant of these UN ground rules when studying Hungary's case.

Russians Pouring Troops into "Neutral" Hungary

3 November

After massing their forces just outside Eastern Hungarian borders since about 31 October, a full scale surprise offensive was launched by the Soviets, to retake the country shocked once more by the latest development. The new Hungarian Government cabled the Secretary General of the UN, Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, that it had renounced the Warsaw Pact and called on the Big Four Powers (USSR, USA, UK, France) to defend its neutrality. Mr. Nagy said that further Soviet troops were invading Hungary in face of Government protests. He said he protested to the Soviet Ambassador and requested their immediate withdrawal from Hungarian soil. The new regime in Hungary had ousted Hungary's Permanent Representative to the UN Péter Kós, as his position became untenable, owing to credibility factor created when a diametrically opposite change of diplomatic tack had to be pursued in the world forum, this time in a final effort to save Hungary. A Second Secretary Dr. János Szabó represented Hungary in the Assembly.

In Budapest where the Roman Catholic spiritual leader, staunch anti-communist Primate of Hungary Cardinal J. Mindszenty was released from prison a few days earlier, described the situation in Hungary as extremely serious. Mr János Kádár the Hungarian communist leader, who was also freed a few days earlier from prison, said over free Budapest Radio that a new Hungarian Communist Party had been formed which he claimed had nothing in common with the old party of Mátyás Rákosi and his associates. Forlorn refugee masses continued fleeing into Austria. Unconfirmed reports were coming that fresh and massive Soviet invasion troops and tanks were crossing the border and pouring into eastern Hungary, also said to be assaulting the towns of Miskolc, Tokaj, Szolnok and Debrecen in a drive towards Budapest.

Budapest Radio announced the total mobilization of the Hungarian Army and introduction of a blackout. Brigadier General Pál Maléter, the commandant hero of the Nationalist forces' one armoured division in the capital fighting the occupiers, was appointed Minister of Defence, as Mr. Nagy's demand for the immediate withdrawal of all Soviet troops was broadcast. The announcement of flagrant Soviet invasion destroyed the nation's mood of relief and optimism after a week long bloody street battles. People gathered around radios with grim, gloomy faces agonised by the prospect of subjugation and denial of liberty, once more...

Austrian sources had reported that Russian tanks had sealed off the Austro-Hungarian frontier from Bratislava in the north to Nickelsdorf on the main Budapest-Vienna road. A Hungarian Army Division was dug-in inside Budapest and available heavy artillery had been rushed to strategic positions in the city to meet the Soviet thrust if and when it came.

Defence Minister Brigadier General Maléter said the Army's further support of the Government depended on whether the Government would fulfil its promise to end the Warsaw Pact, under which Soviet troops were stationed in Hungary. He thus wanted to force the hands of the Government as the new cabinet member with the full trust of the Hungarian military. Formal "peace talks" had begun between the Russians and Hungarian leaders at Tököl, near Budapest. All along the big Soviet lie had claimed that its advance was purely to rotate their exhausted permanent forces in Hungary as well as to ensure safe evacuation from the country. At the beginning, the Hungarians had announced that they were progressing well towards arranging the withdrawal of all Soviet forces from Hungary. Within a few hours, the so called "peace talks" turned out to be an immoral and cowardly Soviet ploy since the Hungarian Delegation which included the Minister for Defence Mr. P. Maléter, ended up arrested and taken to an unknown destination. In 1958, a sham and secret trial later, their fate was to be execution in Romania.

At the United Nations, surprisingly, communist China officially approved the struggle for democracy in Hungary whilst the military action in Egypt continued to divert the world's attention from Hungary.

The fatal end of the Hungarian Revolution-uprising

4 November

These were the day's headlines in the world press: "Hungary faces bloodbath!", "Reds pour-in big forces", "the big Soviet invasion starts", "Hungary invaded", etc. In massive numbers fresh Russian tanks, motorized troops and armoured trains have streamed into Hungary at the border town of Záhony while bombers and jet fighters scrambled into Hungarian airspace. Radio-photos of Nov.3 in the foreign press appearing that day, had shown long Soviet tank columns making their way, towards the capital.

At the UN, Hungary charged in a new Note received by the Secretariat while the UN Security Council was in session, that Soviet military units were "marching toward" Budapest. Signed by Prime Minister Nagy, the Note urged that the Secretary General to "call upon the Great Powers" to recognize the neutrality of Hungary and ask the Security Council to instruct the Soviet and Hungarian Governments to start the negotiations immediately. Towards the end of the 11 Nation Security Council debate, the Soviet Delegate Mr. A. Sobolev accused Britain, France and the USA of bringing up the Hungarian crisis "as a smokescreen" for Anglo-French intervention in Egypt. The Delegates of the three Western Powers (Britain, France, USA) spoke out against the Soviet "imperialism" in Eastern Europe.

In the evening, Major-General Károly Béla, commander of the Budapest area Army Division, reported that the revolution scarred capital was enclosed in a “steel triangle” of Russian tanks and troops.

Media reported events of Sunday 4 Nov.1956, the day of infamy, signalled the “beginning of the end” of the Hungarian Revolution-uprising, with following reconstruction of happenings in Budapest:

At 5.20AM, Prime Minister Nagy’s very first address to the nation and to the free world was broadcast from Free Radio Kossuth. He announced that Soviet troops had invaded the country and attacked the capital to overthrow the legal and democratic Government of Hungary and that Hungarian troops and the people were defending and resisting valiantly. Free Radio Kossuth made several announcements on Mr. Nagy’s behalf in which the legitimate fight for freedom by the Hungarian people against Soviets crushing intervention was denounced. In both Hungarian and Russian requests were made for Russians not to shoot and stop the ongoing bloodshed. With impassioned pleas, Mr Nagy the Prime Minister, appealed to the Western world for help. He reiterated that his neutral country which no longer was a member of the Warsaw Pact Treaty was being attacked by the Soviet troops to overthrow the free and legal Government.

At around 8.00 AM Free Radio Kossuth went off the air. At that very moment, Russian armoured forces had overrun Budapest and were fighting for the rest of Hungary. The heroic defenders of Budapest had no ammunition for the artillery left and were relying on light weapons, Russian made long rifles, some carbines, few anti-tank guns and hand grenades. They soon ran out of ammunition. Some people were jumping on the Soviet tanks, throwing in hand grenades and then closing from outside the drivers’ narrow viewing window. Some others were standing at the doorways waiting for the right moment to attack the passing Soviet tanks with home made petrol bombs, a.k.a. Molotov cocktails.

Budapest Radio which broadcast for the Nationalist Government, also went silent in that morning, but returned to air on that night (4 November), changing hands, becoming the mouthpiece of the new Soviet backed illegally formed Government. It communicated repeated appeals to the Hungarian people to stand by the new Government of Mr. Kádár, repeated orders to the population the immediate surrender of arms, no more than 2 persons would be allowed to stand together in the street, and that counter-revolutionaries (renamed patriots still resisting) were the cause of all evil in the country. The ruse of labelling and besmirching of the nationalist revolutionaries, the patriot Hungarians as “counter revolutionaries” occurred that day with the coming to power of the Soviet installed new Hungarian regime. It was another immoral psychological tactic to attempt to justify and validate the illegality of Mr. Kádár’s puppet Hungarian Government. Mr. Kádár had announced that negotiations with Russia for the removal of Soviet troops would commence after order was restored and the “counter revolutionaries” were crushed. (Time showed that the so-called “counter revolutionaries” were crushed, but the Soviet forces never withdrew).

5 November

Just before noon, Moscow Radio interrupted its programme to announce that the Hungarian “counter- revolution” had been crushed. Hungary was sealed at the borders and strict marshal law with curfews was imposed by the invaders.

The bodies of Hungarian patriots were hanging from the bridges over the Danube, in shattered Budapest. Captured revolutionary Hungarian Army officers and NCO’s who had aided the resistance for freedom, were summarily executed. Thousands of civilian rebels, mostly teenagers, were rounded up and herded into railway stations at gunpoint. The first mass deportations to Russia in sealed cattle trucks started.

At the United Nations, Mr. H. Cabot Lodge, the US Delegate, informed the Security Council that Cardinal Mindszenty the staunch anti-communist spiritual leader and his Secretary were granted refuge in the American Legation in Budapest. Both in Budapest and at the UN in New York, Soviet representatives sought to calm suspicions that no more forces would cross into Hungary when in fact the country was already criss-crossed by overwhelming Red Army units. By late evening, the Soviet forces were in full control of Hungary, yet some pockets of armed resistance continued. Heroic battles raged on for another 4 to 5 days in some quarters of Budapest against the invaders. The fierce resistance at Corvin Köz, at Móricz Zsigmond Square, at Castle Hill in Buda, to name a few, have since entered the annals of Hungarian bravery. On 12 November the very last stand of courageous resistance occurred near the city of Dunapentele about 67km south of Budapest. Factory workers from whom the communist system had previously drawn its support base, particularly the ones at the heavy industry complexes in Csepel on the Danube, were the hardest hitting element in the Hungarian armed resistance movement and caused massive Soviet losses. They even managed to shoot down a Soviet warplane. According to Western military attachés stationed in Budapest, the Russians had used up to 200,000 troops with over 4000 tanks in 15 divisions and another 4 mechanised divisions in Hungary.

The establishment of Mr. Nagy’s rival Government

After quitting the National Government on about 1 November, well before the fall of Budapest to Soviet invasion on Nov. 4, Mr. Kádár, in collusion with Soviet authorities, had formed a pro-Soviet, puppet Government calling it the Hungarian Revolutionary Workers-Peasant Government in Soviet-occupied Szolnok. The chilling, unimaginable coup, the betrayal of his old National Government colleagues and of the Hungarian nation by Mr. Kádár, together with some half dozen Moscow oriented hardliner-communist comrades, was a classical act of high treason and perfidy. The villains had announced their new pro-Soviet Hungarian Government through Szolnok Radio on 4 November, at the very time Prime Minister Nagy was making his emotion filled last plea from Free Radio Kossuth calling for Western help to save his country. The Soviets occupation forces recognised the traitors’ clique installed by them as the legal Government of Hungary on 4 November. On 5 November, simultaneous radio proclamations in Budapest and Moscow, announced to the world the new pro-Soviet Hungarian Government headed by Mr. J. Kádár, the new Prime Minister of Hungary.

At the UN, the General Assembly called on the Soviet Union to halt its armed attack on Hungary and withdraw all its forces without delay. The Assembly which had an emergency session, instructed the Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld to investigate the situation in Hungary with Observers appointed by him and report back as soon as possible on methods to end foreign intervention. The Assembly crushed the Soviet objections by a vote of 50 to 8, with 15 abstentions. Seven communist countries supported Russia. The abstainers were the so called “neutral block” countries: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen (the Arab sub-block) Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Nepal, (Asian sub-block), Finland and Yugoslavia (European sub-block).

The Hungarian Delegation announced that it could not take part in the debate because it lacked instructions from its Government. Mr. Sobolev, the master of double speak Soviet Delegate at the UN Assembly, got up to denounce the “cruel extermination of the Egyptian people” (referring to the Anglo-French Suez Canal landing) at the very moment his own Government was crushing the Hungarian revolt with ruthless ferocity. The Assembly met again after Russia had vetoed a similar Resolution in a pre-dawn meeting of the Security Council. Mr H. Cabot Lodge (USA) had submitted the Resolution after consultations with President Eisenhower, announcing that he had appealed to the Soviet Premier Marshal Bulganin, to get the Russian troops out and to give the Hungarian people their freedom. He said “We, who are striving for peace in the Middle East, can never forget this Soviet cynicism”. Two hours after the Soviet attack began in Budapest, the new puppet group, installed following the arrest of the Hungarian National Government engaged in peace talks, appealed to the Soviet Union to come to its assistance...when in fact the “assistance” arrived well before the call!...”

In an effort to divert the Hungarian issue from the agenda and exploit the Middle East crisis, the Soviet Delegate Mr. Sobolev said that it was no accident that France, Britain and the USA had pressed for General Assembly discussion of Hungary, at the very moment when the Assembly had to face the pressing task of taking immediate and effective action in order to put an end to aggression in Egypt.

6 November

World-wide condemnation of Russia’s action was reported. Angry crowds in Amsterdam attacked the Soviet commercial mission building and bombarded it with stones. Later more than 60,000 Catholics marched in silent prayer through the city. In Rome, Pietro Nenni, leader of Italy’s left wing Socialists and a former Stalin Prize winner, denounced the Soviet intervention in his party newspaper “Avanti”. The West German press was unanimous that Anglo-French policy in Egypt encouraged Russia’s attack on Hungary. The independent “Die Welt” of Hamburg said “it is a dirty policy which is carried out in Hungary and Egypt”. Most French newspapers expressed horror, grief and indignation. The conservative “Le Figaro” said: “we are mute with horror..Stalin is resurrected...his law has been re-established”. The right wing radical “L’Aurore” said: “Men die, but not the ideal for which they sacrifice themselves”. The “New York Times” denounced Russia in these words: “ we accuse the Soviet Government of murder...we accuse it of the foulest treachery and the basest deceit known to man...we accuse it of having committed so monstrous a crime against the Hungarian people that its infamy can never be forgiven nor forgotten”.

The Soviet Foreign Office at a press conference in Moscow, disclosed that the Soviet Premier Marshal Bulganin had sent letters to the Prime Ministers of Britain, France and Israel to warn the West of a World War risk if the Suez Canal crisis is not settled. On the night of 6 Nov., the General Assembly in emergency session adopted a Resolution calling on the Soviet Union to cease immediately its military operations against the Hungarian people and to withdraw its forces from that country. The Soviet Union voted against the Resolution as it had vetoed an earlier Resolution in the Security Council. The US President's reply to Mr. Bulganin pointed out the Soviet Union's defiance of the UN Resolution which was taken to secure peace and justice in the world, urged that the Resolution be observed, that the military repression of the Hungarian people be ceased and that the Soviets withdraw their troops.

The White House went on to cite the President as saying in his letter to Mr. Bulganin that: "the US had been inexpressibly shocked by the apparent reversal of the earlier Soviet policy which had been generally understood as promising the early withdrawal of Soviet forces from Hungary". "It was especially shocking that this renewed application of force against the Hungarian Government and its people took place while negotiations were going on between your representatives and those of the Hungarian Government for the withdrawal of Soviet forces".

7 November

Mr. R.G. Menzies, the Australian Prime Minister said in Parliament that "It comes as a shock to civilised onlookers that at the very moment when the Soviet Union has by brute force and savage rapacity, crushing the flame of independence in Hungary with the loss of so many thousands of lives, it should have the effrontery to pose as the defender of Egyptian liberty and to issue the wildest threats (World War) against the Western Powers.

Thereafter, the Western press concentrated and widely reported on the Suez Canal crisis brought on to the UN. This switched world attention to and fear originating from the Middle East, owing to the nuclear war threat utterance by the Soviet strongman, their Politburo 1st Secretary and arch-rival of the West Mr. N. Krushchev, that if the issue remained unsolved, the Soviet Union would send to Egypt "armed Soviet "volunteers" to help defend Egyptian territory against the invaders.

The Hungarian question being an international "fait accompli" situation, daily coverage on the subject became mere informative statements from the UN, when it was debated at future dates.

13 November

The Soviet installed bolshevist Hungarian Government rejected the United Nations request that UN Observers should be allowed to enter the country to examine the situation. The refusal was made in a cable from the Acting Hungarian Foreign Minister Mr. István Sebes to the UN Secretary General Mr. Hammarskjöld. The cable also reiterated the old Communist claim that a settlement of the situation was a purely Hungarian affair and should not be considered by the General Assembly.

Reliable sources said that Mr. Nagy and other members of his ousted Government had sought asylum and taken refuge in the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest, and that they have been there since 4 November. Mass deportations from Hungary continued.

In their thousands, the refugees pouring out daily from Hungary kept on crossing into Austria risking death and capture. As a result of the renewed Soviet repression in Hungary, the Communist parties of Italy, France and Great Britain were in serious crisis losing members in great number since the outset of the Soviet invasion.

15 November

In Washington, President Eisenhower denounced Soviet Russia's repression of the Hungarian freedom revolt as "flouting of every concept of right and justice".

The newly re-elected President made it clear that the USA has no intention of intervening militarily, despite the pleas of the Hungarian freedom fighters. Mr. Eisenhower said the US "does not now and never has" advocated armed rebellion of the people of the Communist dominated satellite country against "force over which they can not prevail". "Such a revolt against overwhelming odds" he said, "could only bring about disaster to our friends". The President's statement was evidently designed to answer protests of some Hungarian rebels that the US encouraged satellite countries to throw off the Communist yoke, but failed to help them when they tried.

At the UN, a specially convened General Assembly approved 3 separate Resolutions:

- 1- The immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary
- 2- The holding of free elections under UN supervision
- 3- The admittance of UN Observers to investigate the situation

In Hungary, the puppet Kádár Government was trying desperately to win the support of workers, miners and the general public while a nationwide anti-Russian general strike continued. Hunger crisis, an acute shortage of food in Budapest was another serious blow to affect morale. Rampant starvation had been affecting particularly the people of Budapest caused by then few weeks old breakdown in means of food production, transport and distribution as a result of the national upheaval. Those who had any family connection at all in the country, became the luckier ones as supply from backyard farms, sometime with bartering of goods for food, eased their sorry plight.

20 November

India, leader of Neutral-block countries, asked Hungary to admit a team of UN Observers. During the debates which condemned the abductions and deportations, India made its appeal in a Resolution tabled with the UN General Assembly, with Ceylon and Indonesia as co-sponsors. The Indian Resolution noted that the Assembly had been informed by certain member States that Hungarian nationals had been forcibly deported from their country to the USSR and yet the Hungarian Foreign Minister had categorically affirmed in the Assembly that no such deportations had taken place. It urged Hungary to accede to the request of the UN Secretary General, "to co-operate with the great majority in the clarification of the situation".

The US Delegate Mr. H. Cabot Lodge said that the Soviets had deported 16,000 from Budapest alone. The Soviet and Hungarian Foreign Ministers Mr. Dmitri Shepilov and Mr. Imre Horváth took most of the morning session with lengthy denunciation of the UN interference in Hungarian domestic affairs and denials of the alleged deportations. They blamed the non-communist world, especially the US for the Hungarian uprising. They insisted the UN should keep out and called an end to the debate. On the question of withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary, Mr. Shepilov said: "The Soviet troops by agreement with the Government of Hungary will be withdrawn from Budapest as soon as the situation there, is normalised. At the same time the Soviet Government will start negotiations with the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic as a party to the Warsaw Treaty, with regard to maintenance of Soviet troops on the territory of Hungary".

The Australian Delegate Mr. R.G. Casey expressed "horror and disgust" of Australia at what was happening in Hungary during the debates for approval for demand on Russia to stop deporting Hungarians.

The abduction of ex-Prime Minister Imre Nagy

24 November

President Tito of Yugoslavia sent a strong protest to Russia and the puppet Hungarian Government against the abduction of ex-Prime Minister Nagy by Soviet security forces, in breach of international law. Diplomatic observers said the kidnapping that had just been revealed to the public in detail, seriously strained the relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. President Tito had offered asylum in Yugoslavia when the Yugoslav Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Vidic conferred in Budapest with the Hungarian Prime Minister Mr. Kádár about the fate of Mr. Nagy and 40 other men, women and children sheltering in the Yugoslav Embassy.

The deceitful Mr. Kádár who deposed Mr. Nagy with Russian aid, initially agreed with the Yugoslav Government to give the asylum seekers immunity and allow them safe passage to Yugoslavia. From all accounts, it appeared that during negotiations, Mr. Kádár offered the group immunity from prosecution if they chose to remain in Hungary, and after that formal guarantee was obtained, they decided to leave their refuge to go home.

According to Yugoslav authorities, the party had left the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest on the night of 22 November in buses, with Yugoslav officials.

Shortly after, Russian armoured cars surrounded them, the Yugoslav diplomats were forced off and buses were driven to an unknown destination. Their fate remained a mystery until the victim of grand-conspiracy, martyr Prime Minister Mr. Nagy's trial and execution was carried out in 1958 with secrecy in Romania. Today, his grave in Budapest is a point of pilgrimage and a place of national commemoration.

25 November

In a speech to renamed Workers Council representatives and factory managers, Mr. Kádár declared that the Government “can not give-in, and will not be soft” with the “counter revolutionaries”. His audience put to him various demands including the reinstatement of Mr. Nagy in a new coalition Government, free elections and the withdrawal of Soviet troops. Mr. Kádár said that only when order was restored would the Government concern itself with the withdrawal of Soviet forces. Only then could there be any question of reconstructing the Government on a coalition basis. He claimed that Mr. Nagy and his entourage had gone to Romania “for their own safety”.

In the most unfortunate and serious coincidental issue of the Suez Canal crisis, the United Nations ordered Britain, France and Israel out of Egypt on that day.

29 November

Hungary rejected the UN plea. The Secretary General of the UN had requested compliance with the Resolution from the Hungarian Foreign Minister Mr. Horváth in Budapest. The Soviet dominated Hungarian regime flatly refused the UN request to Hungary to admit UN Observers.

3 December

The Hungarian Government announced publicly that it would not admit UN Observers into the country despite repeated requests for admission of UN Observers as per Resolutions passed. The UN General Assembly, the then 79 nation body, had a resolution sponsored by the US and 13 other countries asking the Soviet and Hungarian authorities, their consent to receive UN Observers no later than 7 December. By that time Hungary had refused and had ignored all of the past Resolutions, hitherto demands, except the acceptance of humanitarian relief offered.

4 December

Russia in a note to Yugoslavia, disclaimed responsibility for the abduction of Mr. Imre Nagy and his party after they left the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest on 22 November.

6 December

At the United Nations the UN Delegates saw the rejection of the Hungarian Government to let-in UN Observers into the country, as a personal affront to the UN Secretary General and a “slap in the face” for the United Nations. The Australian Delegate Sir Percy Spender said that Hungary’s action was further justification for pressing forward with the earlier 14 Power sponsored and passed Resolution giving the Soviet and Hungarian authorities until the next day (7Dec.) to consent to the entry of UN Observers.

8 December

At the UN's General Assembly, Secretary General Mr Dag Hammarskjold, reported continued failure to get UN Observers into Hungary.

10 December

In Hungary new armed risings had flared up in many parts of the country. The Soviet backed Kádár Government declared martial law and outlawed Workers Councils in a drastic attempt to quell the revolts and prevent another wave of strikes. The repressive law of confiscation of refugee properties and assets was introduced. In New York, in the strongest statement he had yet made on the Hungarian situation, President Eisenhower said that the terror imposed on Hungary repudiated and negated almost every article in the Declaration of Human Rights and the violation of the UN Charter.

11 December

The Hungarian Delegation at the UN, walked out of the General Assembly in protest against "continued UN interference" in Hungary's internal affairs.

23 December

At his traditional Xmas message broadcast, Pope Pius XII, head of the world's 470 million Catholics, among other evaluations and appeals, expressed the wish that Hungary be ousted from the United Nations for refusing to admit UN Observers. The Pope gave a warning against a repetition of the fatal error of Munich.

He said the exercise of the United Nations member's rights should be denied to the States which refused "even the admission of UN appointed neutral observers. Their contempt and miscreant use of the State sovereignty threatens the very foundations of the United Nations".

27 December

The Indian Ambassador to Moscow, Mr. Krishna Menon who had arrived in Budapest earlier, began a series of meetings with Hungarian Government leaders.

Mr. Menon led a three men team named by the UN Secretary General in Hungary to look into conditions in the country in accordance with UN Resolution. They soon suspended their preparatory operations upon refusal of the Hungarian Government to allow them to investigate official documents, take evidence or travel within Hungary. They later reported these facts to the Secretary General who then tabled it at the General Assembly.

30 December

New York. Major General Béla Király of the Hungarian Army, one of the leaders of the nationalist rebels who held out against the Soviet forces in Budapest, had reached safely the United States. Within a few days, he appeared before the UN Assembly to give his account on how the Russians, aided by the Hungarian traitors, crushed the

less than 12 day old Imre Nagy Government. General Király had fled across the countryside to Austria when all hope was lost. US Intelligence agents brought him to the United States to testify.

11 January, 1957

Australia was selected as one of the 5 nations which would investigate conditions in Hungary, this time on behalf of the United Nations according to another Resolution passed. Ceylon, Denmark, Tunisia and Uruguay were the others. The fresh Resolution called upon the Soviet and Hungarian authorities to co-operate and allow the Special Committee to travel freely in Hungary to carry out the investigative, mandated assignment. The General Assembly approved the move by 59 vote to 8, after a 2 day debate.

Epilogue

The very last Resolution to send the Special Committee of UN Observers into Hungary proved to be a futile exercise. The Soviet backed recalcitrant Hungarian Government did not allow them on Hungarian soil and therefore their mission was not aborted but carried out outside Hungary through countless testimonials by the refugees as well as the investigation of any relevant evidence available. The Special Committee's fully detailed, comprehensive findings were submitted in a Report to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The gist of the UN Special Committee's Report

- The events of 23 November 1956 in Hungary were the manifestations of a spontaneous national uprising of a proud people due to the denial of freedoms and justice, the anger felt against the ÁVH- the State Security Organisation's terror and torture agents, and deep resentment against the continued presence of Soviet forces in the country.

- The Committee could find no evidence whatsoever that the uprising was engineered and fomented from abroad, by the so called Western" Imperialists", (this was a baseless allegation perpetrated by the Soviets and their Communist-camp countries). The uprising was led by students who soon were joined by workers, the ordinary people, soldiers and intellectuals. The common aspiration was the change to democratic socialism but without violence or bloodshed.

- The uprising was not premeditated but a chain reaction of events caused by the bitterness and indignation of the masses. It appeared that a measure of greater freedoms granted to Poland by the Soviet Union a few days earlier was instrumental in bringing the student movement together, to articulate their demands. When those demands were not met by a belligerent Mr. Ernő Gerő, the First Secretary of the Hungarian Workers' (Communist) Party who was the Government leader on 23 October, the masses revolted.

- It appeared that the Soviet authorities had contingency plans for armed intervention in Hungary since 20 October. Although clear signs of opposition had indicated trouble to come since the events in Poland, there never was a hint that Soviet troops would intervene. A fact was that no clause of the Warsaw Treaty provided a legal basis for armed Soviet intervention to impose political change within any signatory country.

-The initial demonstrations were peaceful in nature by unarmed students and joining crowds. With the angering of protesters by Mr. Gerő's speech and the opening of fire by the dreaded AVH's on the unarmed demonstrators outside the Radio Building, the deployment of the much resented Soviet soldiers in their midst as enemies were the sparks that ignited the insurrection.

-The re-appearance of Soviet tanks and troops in the streets of Budapest at about 2.00AM on 24 October, many hours before Mr. Imre Nagy assumed control of the Nationalist Government as Prime Minister, were proof that Soviet help could not have been requested by himself, the victim of grand conspiracy. There was also abundant evidence that prior to the second armed intervention of the Soviet forces which occurred on 3-4 November, they were massing inside and outside Hungary since late October, in preparation for a speedy invasion.

- Although Mr. Nagy was a communist of long standing, seeing that his long suffering countrymen were strongly united to gain more freedom, justice and the departure of the Soviet Army from Hungary, he did change sides. His gradual and careful acceptance of public demands, made him a symbolic figure of the revolution, a national hero.

- In the short few days of freedom experienced by the Hungarians, the public enjoyed a free press, and radio. With the disbanding of the dreaded AVH there was general rejoicing and a great uplift of national morale.

- A number of beatings and lynchings by angry crowds did take place during the uprising. The subjects were members of the AVH or their collaborators.

-During the uprising, workers were given more control of their national enterprises, inhuman productivity norms were abolished, secret trade agreements with the Soviet Union came under public scrutiny, and the insurgents had agreed to be part of the new National Guard force which would have been responsible with the Army and Police for the maintenance of public order.

- The basic human rights of the Hungarian people were violated prior to 23 October 1956 and same violations continued on after 4 November. The Committee was convinced that perpetration of terror and human torture by the AVH were true, also that mass deportations in many thousands to the Soviet Union did take place.

- Following the second Soviet armed intervention of 4 November, there was no evidence of popular support for Mr. Kádár's Government. He abandoned the revolutionary program laid down by his predecessor. On the question of Soviet troop withdrawal from Hungary he went from initial acceptance to total refusal to discuss

the issue. Capital punishment was introduced to punish strikers. The infant multiparty system was abolished, elections postponed and communist repression recommenced.

- The Special Committee, in accordance with its Terms of Reference, considered whether the United Nations was the legally proper and competent authority to investigate and report on the Soviet armed intervention in Hungary. The request for help came from Prime Minister Nagy then head of the legal government of Hungary (a member State of the UN)) when his country was being invaded. In the matter of human rights, Hungary had accepted specific international obligations under the Peace Treaty of 1947 and therefore the Committee regarded any objections as to validity in the present case having no merit. A massive invasion by a superior Power with the avowed intention to interfere with the internal affairs of another country was, even by the Soviets' own definition, an act of international aggression.

The full text of the Special Committee's Report was tabled at the General Assembly of the United Nations by the Secretary General. Concerted further international diplomatic efforts to save Hungary made no difference in outcome. UN reference numbered all Resolutions concerning Hungary remained unobserved, international appeals unheeded and thus, all debates on the issue had come to an end. The Soviet troops remained entrenched in Hungary and no free and fair elections under UN supervision, were ever held. A major political event of the 20th Century thus became part of history. After extinguishing the new born, short lived freedom in the country, the well known tyrannical communist system in Hungary was reimposed. Gradually over the years, this metamorphosed into a milder form of totalitarianism to somehow placate the demoralized and long suffering public.

"October 23, 1956, is a day that will live forever in the annals of free men and nations. It was a day of courage, conscience and triumph. No other day since history began has shown more clearly man's eternally unquenchable desire to be free, whatever the odds against success, whatever the sacrifice required." – Senator John F. Kennedy, later USA President, Jan.1961-Nov.1963, on the first anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution.