



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on November 13, 2006

## Betrayal “Made in the U.S.A.”

Fifty years ago, Hungary’s people made a brave stand against Soviet tyranny. They failed to win their freedom because they were betrayed by the U.S. government.

Most Americans know little about the nation of Hungary. Few know anything of the heroic 1956 attempt to cast off the tyranny imposed on its people by the Soviet Union. And only a very small handful of contemporary Americans have any appreciation of an immense betrayal that first stimulated the Hungarian people’s uprising but then left them defenseless at the mercy of their oppressors. Before dwelling on that horrible betrayal, we briefly recount the story of a remarkable people’s brave attempt to be free.



Hungary endured a none-too-pleasant Nazi occupation during much of World War II. In early 1945, the nation found itself “liberated” by an occupation force of several hundred thousand Soviet troops. Life for the ordinary Hungarian immediately went from bad to worse as the newly arrived liberators robbed, raped, and pillaged from one end of their nation to the other.

The Soviets and their hand-picked Hungarian collaborators speedily conducted elections in the fall of 1945 and, even though loyal Hungarians won overwhelmingly, communists used their control of the police and their domination of the media to undermine the result. Over the next three years, as James Drumme reported in this magazine in 1986, Moscow-trained puppets “collectivized agriculture; nationalized industry, banking, and trade; took over all residential property; and controlled all employment.” Democratic government ceased to exist and, by 1949, the hard fist of communist rule had taken total control. The communists then proceeded to outlaw religion in the heavily Catholic country, closing monasteries and convents, deporting priests, and creating the “peace priest movement” made up of traitorous clergymen willing to cooperate with tyranny. As had occurred in the other Soviet satellite nations in Eastern Europe, communist-style hell had completely triumphed.

Seven years later, many thousands of incredibly brave Hungarians decided that they’d had enough of living under the heel of their Soviet occupiers. On October 23, 1956, growing numbers of students, workers, women, and children filled the streets of Budapest demanding relaxation of the ironclad rule under which they were suffering. Ordered to disperse by the ruthless Soviet-led security police, they refused and were immediately fired upon. When the ethnic-Hungarian tank crews demanded that the Soviet forces cease killing civilians, they too were slaughtered and more demonstrators were attacked. But from this modest beginning, the revolt only grew in numbers and in its admirable determination.

On October 25, an even larger crowd of unarmed civilians filled Budapest’s main square. Soviet tanks and security police responded by firing into the throng, killing many hundreds. Angered by such brutality, numerous Hungarian officers and soldiers left their posts, joined the freedom fighters, and



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supplied the people with small arms. James Drummey recounted some of what followed:

The bravery of the Hungarian children, some of them not much bigger than the rifles they were carrying, was astounding. They were able to stop many Soviet tanks by spreading liquid soap or grease on the narrow streets causing the vehicles to slide into trees or buildings. Some youngsters would dash out of hiding and stick a length of pipe into a tank's treads, bringing it to a halt. Others would then attack with Molotov cocktails or stuff rags soaked in gasoline in the [tank's exhaust] system so it would catch fire. When the tank crews jumped out, they were shot down. One 12-year-old boy tied grenades to his body and ran into the tracks of the lead tank in a column, blowing himself and the tank's tracks to pieces, but stopping the column so others could attack the remaining tanks.

This burst of freedom had been accomplished with little more than small arms and bare hands. But it lasted only three weeks. On November 4, Hungary's freedom fighters woke to find themselves facing an invasion of 2,000 Russian tanks and 140,000 Soviet troops. They struggled against huge odds until the last of their outnumbered, outgunned, and overwhelmed numbers capitulated on November 13. During those three desperate weeks, 25,000 Hungarians paid the ultimate price and 100,000 suffered wounds. In the ensuing days, approximately 40,000 were rounded up and deported to Soviet slave labor camps. Moscow-directed oppression again ruled, and it continued until 1989 when the Soviet Union curiously collapsed and the Soviet enforcers departed for Mother Russia.

It is certainly worthwhile recalling the love of liberty that impelled mere students, women, and workers to rebel against a military-enforced tyranny. There will, of course, be some mention of their bravery in the press and on television if only to recall that the 50-year-old event occurred. But it is relatively certain that any mention of the U.S. betrayal of the Hungarians will be omitted. It is that betrayal that ought to be aired.

### **Hungary Betrayed by America**

Hungary's brave citizens had acted on repeated encouragement to revolt supplied by America's Radio Free Europe broadcasts. All they had to do, said the broadcasts, was rise up and needed help would arrive. Charles Legedy, a student in Budapest at the time and now an American citizen, recently told the *New York Times* what he remembered the early days of the revolt: "It seemed we could change the system. Russian troops were ordered to put down the uprising, but were inefficient, hesitating. We were almost sure America would intervene. After all, we were being attacked for being pro-American, and Radio Free Europe was encouraging us to end the regime." Instead, as was later revealed by a courageous congressman and others, Legedy and fellow Hungarians were betrayed. What actually happened is something no real American can be proud of.

In a July 20, 1960 speech delivered in Buffalo, New York, Congressman Michael Feighan (D-Ohio) told a stunned audience:

You will recall the revolution broke out on October 23, 1956, and that by October 28, the Hungarian patriots had rid their country of the Russian oppressors. A revolutionary regime took over and there was a political hiatus for five days.

Then the State Department, allegedly concerned about the delicate feelings of [Yugoslavia's] Communist dictator Tito, sent him the following cable assurances of our national intentions in the late afternoon of Friday, November 2, 1956: "The Government of the United States does not look with favor upon governments unfriendly to the Soviet Union on the borders of the Soviet Union."



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It was no accident or misjudgment of consequences which led the imperial Russian Army to reinvade Hungary at 4:00 AM on November 4, 1956. The cabled message to Tito was the go-ahead signal to the Russians because any American school boy knows that Tito is Moscow's Trojan Horse.

A quick look at a world map will show that the northeastern part of Hungary shares a border with Russia, then known as the Soviet Union. It didn't take long for Tito to share the message with his communist patrons in the Kremlin.

While the State Department was sealing Hungary's fate, President Eisenhower publicly declared that "the United States deplores the intervention of Soviet military forces." He said that those forces had invaded "not to protect Hungary against armed aggression but rather to continue an occupation of Hungary by the forces of an alien government for its own purposes." And he told a hastily assembled press conference that "the heart of America goes out to the people of Hungary," adding that America would "do all within our peaceful power to help them." The president had correctly described the Soviet purpose but he failed to follow through on the promises given to Hungary's 10 million people. Hungarians didn't need America's "heart," and they had assuredly been led to believe by Radio Free Europe that the promised help would be other than "peaceful."

Worse yet, while their short-lived success was still alive, Spanish leader Francisco Franco decided to send real help to the Hungarians in the form of weapons. He contacted German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and obtained permission for his planes to refuel in Germany while on their mission to Budapest. But, as then-popular commentator Fulton Lewis, Jr. reported on March 27, 1957, "It took Eisenhower's prestige as President to bring enough pressure on Franco and Adenauer" to cancel the arrangement. The desperately needed arms from Spain never reached Hungary.

The United States then turned the matter over to the United Nations. As author Frank J. Johnson concluded in his 1962 book *No Substitute For Victory*, "Hungary died because the only nation capable of saving it, the United States, chose to let it die — pretending that we could default on our own responsibility by calling on an organization incapable of handling such a situation." The United States, of course, knew without question that any action contemplated by the United Nations on behalf of Hungary would promptly be vetoed by the USSR. The UN would never act to thwart Soviet designs in such a crisis, and anyone who understood the world body's structure knew that it wouldn't.

The mid-1950s was a period when the Soviet Union's domination of much of Europe had generated strong rumblings of discontent among its victims. The peoples in the USSR's satellite nations were uneasy to say the least. There had been food riots in Czechoslovakia and in the Western Polish city of Poznan. In the early hours of the Hungarian revolt, a fairly large number of Russian troops stationed in Budapest defied orders to suppress the rebellion and joined the rebels. Even Soviet-appointed leaders — Prime Minister Imre Nagy, General Pal Maleter, and others — turned on their Soviet masters and sided with the revolt.

Although he had been trained in Moscow and was thought to be loyal to his Soviet masters, Nagy immediately appealed to the U.S. government for help, even asking for diplomatic recognition for the new Hungarian government. But all was in vain. Placed on trial by the Soviet puppets who succeeded him, Nagy was executed along with General Maleter and others in 1958.

Had the Hungarians succeeded, there would have been similar uprisings in other European captive nations. But it was not to be. Unlike important news regularly denied the captive peoples all over Europe, details about the U.S. betrayal made its way throughout the communist-dominated world.



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There were no more rebellions during the next three decades. Then, in 1959, Nikita Khrushchev, the very Soviet leader who ordered the rape of Hungary, toured the United States as a guest of President Eisenhower. The message to Eastern Europe's captive peoples was clear: America is not your friend.

## A Pattern of Betrayal

Over the years, many have learned that if you have America for a friend you'll soon have no need to search for an enemy. A dwindling few might recall a classic example of U.S. perfidy when 1,400 anti-Castro militants were sent ashore at Cuba's Bay of Pigs in 1961. Their invasion had been planned, financed, and controlled by America's CIA. The patriotic Cubans had even been trained by American experts at a secret location in Central America. But once they landed, promised air support and the expectation of help from Cuba's underground anti-Castro groups never materialized. Planes with Cuban pilots strapped into their cockpits were ordered to remain grounded, and it was later learned that the rebel groups within Cuba had never been notified about the planned operation. The invasion failed completely with the result that Fidel Castro became an international hero throughout the communist and leftist world. After all, he had successfully repulsed what everyone knew was a U.S.-backed operation. What happened in Cuba in 1961 fit a pattern of conduct.

Fidel Castro had actually seized control of Cuba at the end of 1958 with critically important help supplied by the U.S. State Department and America's liberal media. As Castro was gathering his forces, U.S. Ambassador Arthur Gardner warned Washington superiors that the bearded revolutionary was a communist. Gardner was speedily replaced and kept from having any contact with his successor, Earl E.T. Smith. But Smith too learned the truth about Castro, warned the State Department of his discovery, and was himself replaced. A third U.S. ambassador in a period of less than three years was on the scene when Castro triumphantly took control of the island nation only 90 miles from the tip of Florida. Ambassador Smith wrote about his experiences in his 1962 book *The Fourth Floor*. All during this period, critically important depictions of Castro as a glorious, freedom-loving patriot appeared in liberal U.S. publications.

Other instances of betrayal would fill many pages in an article such as this. The following is a list of American betrayals and the names of books documenting the perfidy:

- The delivery of Poland to the communists: *I Saw Poland Betrayed*.
- The U.S. betrayal of the Free Chinese in favor of Mao Tse-tung's bloody-handed forces in the late 1940s: several good books on the subject such as *While You Slept*.
- One columnist sarcastically noted that in Korea we had "snatched defeat from the jaws of victory": *None Dare Call It Treason*.
- In 1958, Lebanon's pro-Western, anti-communist president Camille Chamoun sought help from the United States to thwart insurgency within his nation and found himself forced out of office: *The Actor: A Study in Deception*, a thorough look at the career of John Foster Dulles.
- The Belgian Congo's valiant Moise Tshombe faced a U.S.-backed attack by United Nations forces that decimated his region: *46 Angry Men*.
- During the late 1960s and early 1970s, success in Vietnam was made impossible by incredible restrictions placed on our own forces by individuals in Washington who never wanted the communists to lose anything: *Background to Betrayal* covers the undermining of anti-communist groups in Vietnam, and *Kissinger: The Secret Side of the Secretary of State* points out that the peace arrangement which



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finally ended the conflict allowed the communists to leave 150,000 fully equipped troops in South Vietnam.

- America had no better friend in all of Latin America than West Point graduate Anastasio Somoza. But our government sided with the communist Sandinista movement and Somoza was forced into exile: *Nicaragua Betrayed*.

### **Do Not Forget Hungary's Sacrifice**

Both before and after the Hungarian revolt, the pattern of American duplicity was there for all to see. But our diplomats correctly expected that America's image as the greatest opponent of communism would shield their treachery. The ruse worked.

The full truth about the Hungarian revolt should not remain swept under one of Washington's many bulging rugs. The men who betrayed that small nation, and those who similarly betrayed other nations and peoples, have never been held to account for their treachery. Read about the betrayals and find out the truth of this tragic tale. While you're at it, check the backgrounds of the men who instigated all of these betrayals, find the name of the organization that they all belonged to, and learn that these betrayals weren't based on bad political decision-making, but were intentionally done. Sad to say, the same organization, the Council on Foreign Relations, the group of American elites who shape our foreign policy, still dominates our government, mass media, foundations, academia, and even the military. Having betrayed so many others, they are now busily betraying our nation itself with sovereignty-compromising pacts, subservience to the United Nations, and rejection of the limitations placed on them by the U.S. Constitution.

During the first week of November 1956, while the battle for Budapest raged, an unknown voice appealed via radio to mankind. In desperate tones, the freedom fighter begged: "People of the world, listen to our call. Help us — not with advice, not with words, but with action, with soldiers and arms. Please do not forget that this wild attack ... will not stop. You may be the next victim."

History shows that freedom can be lost because of armed might. But freedom can also be lost through steady usurpation and eventual consolidation of total power. This is betrayal from within. The unknown freedom fighter from Budapest warned that those to whom he was appealing "may be the next victim" of a future tyranny. As our own government's already frightening power continues to grow almost daily, his is a warning that no American should ignore.



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