

HISTORY Project



Revolutionary Years 1848/1849 in
Austria- Hungary

Causes of the Revolution

Years 1848/1849 are also known as „the Years of the Revolution“ or „Spring of Nations.“ During this period took place many revolutions around almost whole Europe. Main causes and events leading to these revolutions were dissatisfaction of smaller nations with their positions and requirement of abolition absolutistic system of government and serfdom.

Some larger and stronger nations were too powerful and their dominancy over other weaker nations was untouchable. Old royal families and houses did not want to lose their positions anyway. The Congress of Vienna should direct to democracy, equality and stability, but situation of some peoples got worse after the congress, so it was possible to expect development and revolutions like these. The most of the society was very conservative and did not want to allow any changes in those times, but there started to establish new political organizations with new ideas and ideals there.

Revolutions had national sound primarily, but most of them were not successful unfortunately. The rest of the countries within Europe, that fought against revolutions: France, German states, Denmark, Italian states, Switzerland, Poland, Wallachia, Ireland, Belgium and also the largest country of the South America, Brazil.

The Revolution and its Point

National ideas started to figure in Austria – Hungarian political life about 1830, more Slovak, Polish, Czech and Hungarian national movements were formed. Radical chancellor Klemens von Metternich did not like these phenomenon and efforts, he tried to suppress them. The pressure and tension primarily of Hungarian politicians got still stronger and their requirements graded.

Powerless and scary emperor Ferdinand I. forced Metternich to resign and then new government started to rule. 15th March 1848 Habsburgs agreed with 12 political requirements of Hungarians: Freedom of press and the abolition of censorship, Establishment of the Ministry responsible for the Hungarians in Budapest, The annual council meeting in Budapest, Equality before the law, Establishment of National Guard, General taxation, Abolition of serfdom, Establishment of judicial and jury's representation, Establishment of National Bank, Sworn soldier of Hungary Constitution and ban sending home soldiers abroad and foreign to Hungary, Liberty for political prisoners, Creation of the personal union.

15th March is also one of the most significant national holidays in Hungary nowadays. After these events was created independent Hungarian government with Prime Minister Lajos Batthyány, but it was the start of next violence and battles. Only Hungarians gained dominancy and they suppressed other nations like Slovaks. On 28th september (after the murder of Austrian diplomat) Habsburgs mobilized army and Ferdinand I. was substituted by Francis Joseph I. New Emperor abolished some Hungarian requirements, joined with Slav nations and made a deal of intervention with Russian emperor.

Battles of the Revolution

These are the most important battles of the Revolution in Austria – Hungary. Austrian army (including Russians and allies) lost about 30, 000 men and Hungarians 2 times more (including allies). Austria gained also Croatians, Serbians, Romanians and Russians. Hungarians joined with Polish, Germans, Italians, part of Slovaks and Jews.

- Battle of Pákozd – 29th September 1848
- Battle of Schwechat – 30th October 1848
- Battle of Mór – 30th December 1848
- Battle of Kápolna – 26th and 27th February 1849
- Battles of Komárom – 26th April, 2nd July and 11th July 1849
- Battle of Segesvár – 31st July 1849
- Battle of Szőreg – 5th August 1849
- Battle of Temesvár – 9th August 1849

The Failure and Suppression of the Revolution

Firstly, Hungarians fought well and were successful, they defeated army of Croatian Josip Jelačić in the Battle of Pákozd. Hungarian generals Görgey and Bem won also some next battles. They gained control over the Pest and Budin and declared the independence again, Hungarian national hero Lajos Kossuth became the governor of the country.

After these events Austrian government and emperor realized, that they need a help from abroad. Russian army got into the Hungary, Transylvania and whole Carpathians, they defeated Hungarians in many battles and towns together. Finally, in the Battle at Világos on 13th August 1849, Hungarian army and its leaders were forced to surrender.

After the Revolution and War there were executed more than 300 leading persons of the Hungarians there. Also many of them got into the prison or exile. Hungary lost certain areas – Croatia, Serbia (Vojvodina), Transylvania, but not Slovakia. It is need to mention, that national problems and questions were not solved.

Leaders of the Revolution

Hungarian leaders:

Lajos Batthyány – politician, Prime Minister, executed after the Revolution

Lajos Kossuth – originally Slovak, opponent of L. Štúr due to national questions (allies due to political and economical affairs), later minister of Finance, were forced to go to exile (Turkey and USA)

Sándor Petőfi – writer, Hungarian activist and hero, died in one of the Revolutionary Battles

Artúr Görgey – military leader, general

Austrian leaders:

Josip Jelačić (Croatian) – military leader of army

Alfred Windischgrätz – Austrian military officer

Francis Joseph I. – Austrian emperor

Julius Jacob von Haynau – Austrian general

Stevan Knićanin (Serbian) – duke and commander

Ivan Paskevich (Ukraine - Russian) – military leader, Prussian and Austrian field - marshal