

## John P. C. Matthews - Explosion: The Hungarian Uprising of 1956

Explosion is a completely different kind of history. Day to day it takes you through the Hungarian revolution of 1956 -- beginning with college students in towns and cities in Hungary deciding independently to free themselves from a communist and Russian dominated student organization to set up a democratic group. They were exhilarated with what they had done. After a decade of Russian domination, they were free at last! The AVO -- the Hungarian secret police -- did not take the student's independence lying down. They began to fight and kill students and workers. The students retaliated by capturing several Russian tanks. Soon there were thousands of students, workers, and others involved in a mass revolution. Matthews is an excellent writer. He takes you behind the scenes in Hungary and also in Moscow where Khrushchev and other Russian leaders had to decide what to do with this uprising. They finally ordered their army to crush the revolution -- arresting and executing thousands of those who participated in this brief attempt at freedom. Meanwhile the Americans -- who were partly responsible for the tragedy -- did nothing to help the students. The US had advocated the liberation of Eastern Europe through radio broadcasts -- but when the Hungarians listened and tried to liberate themselves, the US did nothing-- no food, no medicine, no support troops. This book is truly a page turner. Every page is filled with fascinating details. You will get involved with it, as I did, hoping against hope that these young people would succeed in winning their freedom. They failed and died or were imprisoned as a result of it. This is certainly one of the most exciting history books you will ever read. It is too bad that such books have not been written about other historical periods. It is a big book -- 700 pages. There are plenty of pages of notes -- which I did not read. It was comforting to know that they were there and that what I was reading was the real stuff. I can highly recommend John Matthews book to anyone who loves history.