

# Hungarian sludge disaster darkens mood

## 1 Before you read

Fill in the 'K' column <i>before</i> you read, and then use the 'L' column to take notes while you read.	
K	L
What do you KNOW about Hungary's heavy industry during the Socialist era	What did you LEARN about Hungary's heavy industry during the Socialist era
What do you KNOW about the general attitude of the Hungarians in time of disaster	What did you LEARN about the general attitude of the Hungarians in time of disaster
In your opinion what kinds of other 'disasters' will people refer to in the text that have hit Hungary recently	What did you LEARN about other 'disasters' that people refer to in the text

## 1 Vocabulary

1. arrear-(n) - A debt; something that should have been paid for but wasn't.
2. cataclysm-(n) - Sarcastic and severe.
3. caustic-(adj) - To leave and give up ownership or control.
4. endanger-(v) - Chaos and disorder.
5. potential-(adj) - Any overwhelming natural disaster.
6. reservoir-(n) - Destroy completely.
7. euphoria-(n) - A feeling of extreme happiness.\*
8. overcome-(v) - To put something in a dangerous position
9. devastate-(v) - Succeed despite difficulties.
10. abandon-(v) - To get an illness or disease.
11. pessimism-(n) - Hold tightly.
12. contract-(v) - A place to store a liquid; often a community's drinking water.
13. turmoil-(n) - The belief that things will go badly.
14. grip-(v) - Possible.

## Hungarian sludge disaster darkens mood

By George Jahn

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KOLONTAR, Hungary - The disaster that buried three Hungarian villages in caustic red sludge last week is deepening the gloom of a country gripped by recession, polarization and the near-ubiquitous feeling that its people are doomed to be victims of calamity.

Gyoergy Hoffmann, a coal miner in Ajka, a city near the spill, called it "just the latest stroke of fate" for a country dominated for centuries by foreign powers - first the Turks, then the Austrians and finally the Soviets, who turned the country into the communist bloc's main producer of alumina.

For decades, Hungary made the aluminum ingredient and shipped it to Russia, which sold the metal back to Hungary and other Soviet bloc nations at world market prices.

Swept by euphoria and national unity after the collapse of communism, Hungary considered itself ahead of its neighbors in cleaning up the environmental sins of the Soviet era. Rusting, polluted factories and abandoned garbage dumps, once common along Hungary's back roads, have become a rare sight.

But alumina plants remained active, including the factory outside the village of Kolontar, where the rupture of a wall holding waste sludge dumped as much as 184 million gallons of highly polluted water and mud onto three villages in about an hour Monday. At least seven people were killed by the caustic muck and hundreds were injured.



Such worries add to the burdens of a people whose national psyche has been formed by centuries of foreign domination, internal turmoil and economic hardships.

"There have been too many national cataclysms for Hungarians to be able to overcome their pessimism," says sociology professor Antal Bohm. "This catastrophe is simply one more in the series."

Some of the recent gloom is understandable. Hungary's economy contracted by almost 7 percent last year and the country has been forced to draw on about two-thirds of a lifeline of 20 billion Euros - nearly \$28 billion - thrown by the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank two years ago.

Nearly 2 million people are groaning under growing debt as the strong Swiss franc makes their loans in that currency insupportable. Hungarian households' foreign currency loans equaled 26.2 billion Euros - \$36.46 billion at the end of June, with nearly 80 percent in Swiss francs, says the National Bank of Hungary. Of the 1.8 million people with such loans, 400,000 are behind on their payments - with 100,000 in arrears by three months or more.

### 3 Vocabulary

1. The sailors had to \_\_\_\_\_ the sinking ship.
2. The earthquake \_\_\_\_\_ the city.
3. He \_\_\_\_\_ his lack of education and became a famous artist.
4. His \_\_\_\_\_ spoiled the party.
5. You must \_\_\_\_\_ the tennis racket tightly.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the war left people wanting peace.
7. He \_\_\_\_\_ malaria while working in the jungle.
8. She had few friends because her \_\_\_\_\_ personality made people uncomfortable around her.
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ destroyed the country's water supply.
10. He did not pay rent for three months and was in \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Driving too fast \_\_\_\_\_ other people on the road.
12. The \_\_\_\_\_ they felt after surviving the crash ended when the police arrested them.
13. The city's \_\_\_\_\_ is in the mountains, and all the water must come over 100 miles.
14. Smart, kind, funny, rich and beautiful. Hmmm, she's a \_\_\_\_\_ wife.

## 4 Focus on Grammar

### A Identify

Identify the word or expression which 'that' refers to in the following sentences.

1. Hungary's prime minister said Saturday that the cracking wall of the reservoir could collapse at any moment and send a new wave of caustic red sludge into the devastated towns.
2. KOLON TAR, Hungary- The disaster that buried three Hungarian villages in caustic red sludge last week is deepening the gloom of a country gripped by recession, polarization and the near-ubiquitous feeling that its people are doomed to be victims of calamity.
3. Environmental groups, meanwhile, are warning of other potential disasters, among them seven storage ponds about 60 miles northwest of Budapest that hold 12 million tons of sludge accumulated since 1945- more than 10 times the amount that spilled last week.

### B Practice - Sentence Writing

**Rewrite the original sentences using –ed or –ing clauses instead of 'THAT'.**

1.

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2.

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3.

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**Now write sentences using –ed or –ing about the tragedy.**

4.

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5.

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6.

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