Power and Property

Compare political ideas in three postwar nations

SS24.WH.13b "Compare political ideologies that existed within the United States, the Soviet Union, and People's Republic of China after World War II."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB In each paragraph, circle a phrase about political power and underline a phrase about economic control; label two phrases 1 and 2 that show how Soviet and Chinese communism differed.

Who Held Power After the War?

1. In the years after World War II, a worker in the United States could vote in elections where competing parties sought power. American leaders defended representative democracy, individual rights, and capitalism, an economy in which private people or businesses own most farms and factories. Government still set rules and provided services. These ideals did not reach everyone equally: racial segregation denied many Black Americans equal political power. Compared with the communist states, the United States allowed more private ownership and party competition.

2. In the Soviet Union, Communist Party leaders argued that private ownership of major industries let owners profit from workers' labor. They promoted socialism under a one-party state as a route toward a classless communist society. The state owned major factories and planned production rather than leaving most decisions to private businesses. Elections did not let rival parties take power, and officials restricted criticism. Unlike the United States, Soviet leaders placed economic planning and the party's control above political competition.

3. After the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, Mao Zedong's Communist Party also rejected capitalism and rival parties. Mao stressed the revolutionary power of peasants, while Soviet communist theory had focused more on industrial workers. Chinese leaders redistributed land, then organized farming into collectives during the 1950s. Like the Soviet Union, China used a one-party government to guide the economy and limit opposition. Yet China's focus on peasants reflected its largely rural population and gave its revolution a different path.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did control of major factories differ between the United States and the Soviet Union?

2. How were Soviet and Chinese approaches to political power and the economy alike?

3. How did political competition differ between the United States and China? What limit on political power in the United States does the passage name?

4. Which group did Mao emphasize, and which group had Soviet communist theory emphasized? What helps explain China's focus?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence caption for a museum exhibit called "Who Gets a Say?" Explain how each country's political ideas shaped a choice about political power or the economy, then explain why the two communist governments should not be treated as identical.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

In each paragraph, circle a phrase about political power and underline a phrase about economic control; label two phrases 1 and 2 that show how Soviet and Chinese communism differed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did control of major factories differ between the United States and the Soviet Union?	**In the United States, private people or businesses owned most factories. In the Soviet Union, the state owned major factories and planned production.**
2	How were Soviet and Chinese approaches to political power and the economy alike?	**Both had one-party communist governments that limited opposition and directed the economy.**
3	How did political competition differ between the United States and China? What limit on political power in the United States does the passage name?	**Competing parties sought power in US elections, but China's one-party government rejected rival parties. Racial segregation denied many Black Americans equal political power.**
4	Which group did Mao emphasize, and which group had Soviet communist theory emphasized? What helps explain China's focus?	**Mao emphasized peasants, while Soviet communist theory had emphasized industrial workers. China had a largely rural population.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In the United States, competing parties sought votes while private owners controlled most businesses. In the Soviet Union, one party held power and the state planned production. In China, one party also ruled, and leaders organized farms into collectives. The two communist governments were not identical because Mao stressed peasants, while Soviet communist theory had focused more on industrial workers.

Accept comparisons that accurately distinguish private ownership from state planning or farm collectives, and party competition from one-party rule. Responses should not suggest that US political rights were equally available to everyone.