Aid and Influence

How economic ties shaped postwar Europe

SS24.WH.14b "Analyze how economic aid expanded spheres of influence, including the Marshall Plan and Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the economic links each program created. Circle the words that show how those links expanded American or Soviet influence.

The Power of Economic Ties

1. In 1947, Czechoslovakia first showed interest in American recovery aid. Soviet leaders pressed its government to reject the offer. The episode showed that rebuilding Europe after World War II was not just about money. A **sphere of influence** is a region where a powerful country can shape other governments' choices.

2. Starting in 1948, the United States offered Marshall Plan funds to European countries for supplies such as food, fuel, and machinery. Recipients worked together on recovery plans, which increased cooperation among Western European countries and strengthened their ties to the United States. The aid helped rebuild economies while extending American influence without direct rule.

3. In 1949, the Soviet Union and several Eastern European countries formed the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, or COMECON. Rather than distributing aid like the Marshall Plan, COMECON organized trade and economic planning among members. Those arrangements tied Eastern European economies more closely to the Soviet Union. Both programs used economic links to expand influence, but they worked differently.

TWO APPROACHES TO ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Program	Economic link
Marshall Plan	US funds and joint recovery plans
COMECON	Trade and economic planning among members

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Czechoslovakia's rejected offer show Soviet influence over economic choices?

2. How did Marshall Plan funds and joint recovery plans strengthen US influence?

3. How did COMECON's trade and planning expand Soviet influence?

4. What was one difference between the economic links the two programs used to build influence?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise a European government in 1949. In three sentences, recommend an approach to economic cooperation and explain how links to each program could affect the government's freedom to choose partners.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 9 · SS24.WH.14b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the economic links each program created. Circle the words that show how those links expanded American or Soviet influence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does Czechoslovakia's rejected offer show Soviet influence over economic choices?	**Soviet leaders pressed Czechoslovakia to reject American aid, showing they could shape its government's choice.**
2	How did Marshall Plan funds and joint recovery plans strengthen US influence?	**The funds supported recovery, while joint plans increased cooperation and strengthened recipients' ties to the United States.**
3	How did COMECON's trade and planning expand Soviet influence?	**They tied Eastern European economies more closely to the Soviet Union.**
4	What was one difference between the economic links the two programs used to build influence?	**The Marshall Plan provided US funds and encouraged joint recovery plans; COMECON organized trade and economic planning among its members.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would advise the government to seek Marshall Plan funds because supplies could speed recovery and joint plans could build Western ties. Those ties might also make it harder to act independently of the United States. COMECON trade could support recovery, but closer Soviet ties could limit the government's choice of partners.

Accept supported explanations that connect an economic link to increased influence. For Part 3, students may recommend either program or neither, but they must address both programs and the freedom to choose partners.