Three Paths Forward

Compare political responses to Europe's interwar crises

SS24.WH.8a "Compare and contrast political ideologies that emerged in Europe following World War I, including communism, fascism, and social democracy."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one phrase about property or business in each paragraph, and circle one phrase about political power or elections in each paragraph. Use your marks to compare the three ideologies.

Competing Answers After the War

1. After World War I, economic hardship and anger at old rulers made competing political ideas attractive across Europe. Communists argued that private owners profited from workers' labor. They wanted factories and farmland held collectively, with an economy planned for workers' benefit. In Russia, revolutionaries took power in 1917, and the Soviet state later claimed to rule in workers' name. In practice, its Communist Party banned rival parties and directed much of the economy. Communists called for workers across national borders to unite. Their goal of ending class divisions differed sharply from fascists' stress on national unity.

2. In Italy, Benito Mussolini's fascists seized power in 1922 after promising order amid unrest. Fascists treated the nation, not the worldwide working class, as the main political community. They demanded obedience to a strong leader, crushed opposition parties, and used violence against critics. Unlike communists, they generally kept private property, but the state directed businesses toward national goals. German Nazis later adopted a related dictatorship and built their program around racist ideas of a supposed 'master race.' Fascists rejected both communist class struggle and social democrats' belief that rival parties should compete in free elections.

3. Social democrats also wanted to reduce inequality, but they rejected revolution and one-party rule. They sought better lives for working people through elections, unions, and laws passed by elected representatives. In countries such as Sweden, social democrats supported public services and aid for unemployed people while allowing many businesses to remain privately owned. That mixed approach differed from communist plans for collective ownership and fascist direction of business for national power. All three movements promised answers to economic and social turmoil. Yet their choices about ownership, political freedom, and whose interests came first could lead a family to very different futures.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did communist and social democratic ideas about business ownership differ?

2. How did fascists and social democrats differ in their treatment of political opposition?

3. Whom did communists call on to unite, and what community did fascists put first?

4. What concern did communists and social democrats share, and how did their approaches to political change differ?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you edit a newspaper in a European city in 1932. Write 80 to 110 words recommending a response to unemployment: compare what all three ideologies would mean for economic power and political freedom, defend one choice, and name one risk of it.

ANSWER KEY

Three Paths Forward

GRADE 9 · SS24.WH.8a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one phrase about property or business in each paragraph, and circle one phrase about political power or elections in each paragraph. Use your marks to compare the three ideologies. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did communist and social democratic ideas about business ownership differ?	**Communists wanted collective ownership of factories and farmland, while social democrats allowed many businesses to remain privately owned.**
2	How did fascists and social democrats differ in their treatment of political opposition?	**Fascists crushed opposition parties; social democrats supported free elections in which rival parties could compete.**
3	Whom did communists call on to unite, and what community did fascists put first?	**Communists called on workers across national borders to unite. Fascists put the nation first.**
4	What concern did communists and social democrats share, and how did their approaches to political change differ?	**Both wanted to address inequality. Communists came to power through revolution in Russia, where the Communist Party banned rivals; social democrats sought change through elections and laws.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our city needs jobs, but it also needs a government people can challenge. Communists would replace private ownership with collective control and a planned economy, yet Soviet leaders have banned rival parties. Fascists would keep many businesses private while directing them toward national goals, but they silence opponents. I recommend the social democratic approach: keep many businesses private, provide aid to unemployed workers, and let parties compete in elections. Its risk is that business owners may resist laws they dislike, slowing change. Even so, debate and voting give people a way to revise policies that fail.

Accept comparisons that distinguish an ideology's stated goals from the actions described in the passage. For Part 3, accept any defended choice that accurately compares all three ideologies and identifies a plausible risk.