Shifting Soviet Alliances

Foreign policy choices and their effects, 1920s to 1945

TOT.C.8.3 "Describe interwar Soviet foreign policy and the effect of World War II, including the support for foreign Communist parties and popular fronts opposition to reform socialists that catalyzed the rise of fascist governments support for..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the three turning points in Soviet policy in 1935, 1939, and 1941, and number them in time order. Underline one effect of each change on another country or its people.

Partners, Enemies, and Occupied Lands

1. In the 1920s and early 1930s, Moscow used the Communist International, or Comintern, to support Communist parties abroad. Its leaders called moderate socialist parties enemies rather than allies. In Germany, this division weakened opposition to the Nazis, although many other forces also helped Hitler gain power. By 1935, Soviet leaders changed course. Facing fascist expansion, they promoted popular fronts, alliances of Communists, socialists, and other antifascists. Soviet aid also reached Chinese Communists, but Moscow sometimes backed China's Nationalist government when it sought a united front against Japan. Soviet foreign policy shifted with perceived threats, even as its leaders claimed to defend revolution.

2. In August 1939, the Soviet Union signed a nonaggression pact with Nazi Germany. A secret agreement divided parts of Eastern Europe into spheres of influence. Germany attacked Poland from the west; Soviet forces entered from the east in September. Soviet authorities annexed eastern Polish territory and later occupied and annexed the Baltic states. They deported many residents of these seized lands. The Soviet Union also invaded Finland in the Winter War of 1939 to 1940, gaining territory but not conquering the country. In 1940, Soviet security forces murdered thousands of Polish officers and other prisoners in the Katyn massacre.

3. Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, ending their cooperation. The Soviets joined the Allied fight and suffered immense losses while pushing German forces west. Stalin's government also deported entire ethnic communities it accused of disloyalty, including the Crimean Tatars. As Soviet troops advanced into Eastern Europe, some soldiers looted and abused civilians; Soviet authorities imposed harsh controls in occupied areas. After Germany's defeat in 1945, Soviet troops remained across much of Eastern Europe. Moscow helped install Communist-led governments there and limited political opposition. Victory brought security against another invasion, but it also brought repression to countries under Soviet influence.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Soviet policy toward moderate socialists affect opposition to the Nazis in Germany?

2. Why did Soviet leaders promote popular fronts in 1935, and how did this differ from their earlier policy?

3. Describe two effects of Soviet cooperation with Nazi Germany on Eastern Europe or its people.

4. How did Germany's 1941 invasion change Soviet policy, and what were two later effects of Soviet power on people in Soviet-controlled areas?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence museum label that explains how Soviet leaders changed partners as threats changed and assesses whether Soviet victory meant freedom for Eastern Europe. Use at least one example from before 1941 and one from after 1941.

ANSWER KEY

Shifting Soviet Alliances

HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.8.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle the three turning points in Soviet policy in 1935, 1939, and 1941, and number them in time order. Underline one effect of each change on another country or its people. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Soviet policy toward moderate socialists affect opposition to the Nazis in Germany?	**Soviet leaders treated moderate socialists as enemies, dividing groups that might have opposed the Nazis together.**
2	Why did Soviet leaders promote popular fronts in 1935, and how did this differ from their earlier policy?	**Facing fascist expansion, they encouraged alliances with socialists and other antifascists instead of treating moderate socialists as enemies.**
3	Describe two effects of Soviet cooperation with Nazi Germany on Eastern Europe or its people.	**After the pact, Soviet forces entered eastern Poland and Soviet authorities annexed territory. They also annexed the Baltic states and deported residents of seized lands. Accept any two supported effects.**
4	How did Germany's 1941 invasion change Soviet policy, and what were two later effects of Soviet power on people in Soviet-controlled areas?	**The Soviet Union ended cooperation with Germany and joined the Allied fight. Its government deported ethnic communities, and Soviet authorities imposed harsh controls and limited political opposition in occupied Eastern Europe.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As fascism spread, Soviet leaders encouraged popular fronts with socialists they had once rejected. In 1939, they instead made a pact with Nazi Germany and took territory in Eastern Europe. After Germany attacked in 1941, the Soviet Union joined the Allies and helped defeat Hitler. Yet Soviet deportations and harsh controls in occupied areas harmed many civilians. The victory ended Nazi control in much of Eastern Europe, but Soviet-backed governments then restricted political freedom.

For the marking job, accept effects linked to each circled shift, such as broader antifascist alliances, annexations or deportations after the 1939 pact, and Soviet occupation or political controls after the Allied victory. For the museum label, accept a supported judgment that distinguishes defeat of Nazi Germany from political freedom under Soviet influence.