

EXEMPLAR ESSAY (6/6)

539 Words

Between 1945 and 1989, the most important changes in Europe's economy were Soviet domination of Eastern Europe and European integration in Western Europe. The Soviet control of the Eastern Bloc resulted in slow economic growth, while Western Europe experienced rapid economic growth because of the European Economic Community and cooperation with the United States.

After World War II, the Soviets took control of Eastern Europe, including countries such as Poland, Hungary, Romania, and East Germany. The economies of all of these countries were subjected to Soviet control, and their economies grew more slowly as a result. Eastern Europe had already been behind Western Europe economically ever since the Age of Exploration. They were the last countries to industrialize and some of them even had serfdom in the 1800s (Western European countries had not had serfdom since the 1300s). Soviet control of these economies made the situation even worse. In Poland, the Solidarity movement rose up in the 1970s because the trade unions in Poland wanted to control themselves instead of having Soviet control of the labor unions. Communism was supposed to be about power for the workers, but under the Soviets, the labor unions were just another way for communists to control everything.

Meanwhile, in Western Europe, the economies of these countries grew because of European integration and help from the United States. While Eastern Europeans had to struggle to have basic necessities, Western Europeans got a welfare state that included things like government-funded healthcare, such as Britain's National Health Service (NHS) that turned quality healthcare into a basic right. The United States gave Western European democracies millions of dollars of Marshall Plan money, which helped them to rebuild their economies after World War II. Germany experienced an "economic miracle" with postwar growth that was much different than Germany's struggle to pay reparations in the 1920s. American military forces in Western Europe allowed for European governments not to have to spend much money on their own militaries, which gave their governments more money for welfare programs.

Western Europe also benefited from European integration that took place after World War II. The European Economic Community (EEC) was founded in order to create a free-trade zone between countries that did not have any tariffs. This was part of neoliberalism, which was about spreading the free-trade policies advocated by Adam Smith. The EEC started with France, Germany, Italy, and the smaller "Benelux" countries, and then spread to other countries in Europe. After the fall of communism in the Eastern Bloc in 1989 and the fall of the Berlin Wall, it opened the door for Eastern European countries to join the European Union in the 1990s. Today, the European Union includes most countries in Europe, many of which have also adopted the Euro as a common currency. The failure of communism resulted in the spread of liberal economic policies in Eastern Europe, so that those countries could begin improving their economies, as well.

The most important economic changes in Europe between 1945 and 1989 were Soviet domination of the Eastern European economies under communism and the integration of Western European economies that cooperated with each other and the United States. As a result, Western Europe experienced economic growth and Eastern Europe remained poor.

ABOVE-AVERAGE ESSAY (5/6)

349 Words

The most significant economic change in Europe between 1945 and 1989 was the communist takeover of Eastern Europe, which resulted in a communist economic system being set up in the Eastern Bloc. This limited economic growth in Eastern Europe and created a bigger gap between Eastern Europe and Western Europe.

Soviet control of the Eastern Bloc countries was a result of the peace settlement from World War II. At the Yalta Conference in 1945, Stalin insisted on a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe so that he could protect Russia from future attacks by Germany. In the first half of the twentieth century, Germany attacked Russia not once, but twice, and Russia paid a high price in both World Wars while fighting against the better-supplied German military. Nazi Germany even betrayed Russia during World War II, first promising to be neutral and divide Poland, but then attacking the Soviet Union by surprise. The Allies also decided to divide Germany into sectors that became East Germany (Soviet-controlled) and West Germany (controlled by America, Britain, and France). The Eastern Bloc countries included Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. While Western European countries had market economies, the Eastern Bloc countries had to have planned economies in the Soviet style of communism.

Soviet control of the Eastern Bloc resulted in economic problems in Eastern Europe. West Germany, for example, had an “economic miracle” where their economy grew and grew for several years after World War II. Meanwhile, the economy of East Germany barely grew at all because the Soviets stole from the area after the war and heavily regulated their economy. The Soviets had to deal with several uprisings, such as the Hungarian Revolt and the Czech Spring, which opposed Soviet control of their countries. The Solidarity movement in Poland opposed communist rule and wanted to replace it with Polish control of their own economy.

The most significant economic change in Europe between 1945 and 1989 was the Soviet control of the economies of the Eastern Bloc countries after World War II, which put Eastern Europe farther back than it already was before the war.

CONTEXTUALIZATION	1	<i>Specific references to events from WWI and WWII give useful background.</i>
THESIS	1	<i>The thesis is historically defensible and is followed by a clear line of reasoning.</i>
EVIDENCE I	1	<i>Multiple pieces of evidence are presented that are relevant to the prompt.</i>
EVIDENCE II	1	<i>The evidence is used to clearly support arguments presented in topic sentences.</i>
REASONING	1	<i>The essay compares the economic situation in Eastern and Western Europe.</i>
COMPLEXITY	0	<i>This is a great essay, but not quite sophisticated enough to warrant this point.</i>
TOTAL	5	<i>Widening the essay’s scope could demonstrate complexity.</i>

AVERAGE ESSAY (3/6)

158 Words

Between 1945 and 1989, the biggest economic change that occurred in Europe was that women became a bigger part of the workforce and had better access to high-paying jobs. This is because of the feminist movement with women advocating for more rights. Simone de Beauvoir wrote *The Second Sex* to highlight the discrimination that women faced in Europe. She believed that women should have the same opportunities as men. Birth control became available to women during this time. This helped them to have careers and be able to decide when they wanted to have children. Before 1945, women were either staying at home or working jobs that women were expected to work (like secretaries and maids). By the end of the 1980s, women got to attend universities and work high-paying jobs, like doctors and lawyers. Britain even elected Margaret Thatcher as prime minister. She was the first woman to be elected to lead a government in European history.

CONTEXTUALIZATION	0	<i>Vague references to women staying at home pre-1945 don't meet the threshold.</i>
THESIS	1	<i>The thesis makes a defensible claim that is backed by a line of reasoning.</i>
EVIDENCE I	1	<i>Multiple pieces of evidence are presented that are relevant to the prompt.</i>
EVIDENCE II	0	<i>Evidence is presented in a scattered way that is not clearly argumentative.</i>
REASONING	1	<i>The essay minimally, but clearly, demonstrates change over time.</i>
COMPLEXITY	0	<i>This essay flies far below the complexity radar.</i>
TOTAL	3	<i>This essay would benefit from more organization and evidence.</i>