



Pluriliteracies making meaning happen

# A Pluriliteracies Approach to Teaching for Learning

## Arguing History III - The Cold War

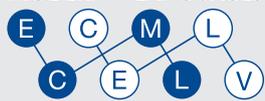


Advanced  
learners

Patrick Roth

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## 4.4 The Outset of the Cold War

### Historical Context

Ever since the communist revolution of 1917, relations between the Soviet Union and the USA had been tense. This changed profoundly with the German attack on the USSR in June 1941. The governments in Washington and London regarded the survival the Soviet Union as vital to their own interests and granted substantial support for the Russian war effort. Together, the “Great Three” managed to wear the German *Wehrmacht* down. Still, tensions among the unlikely allies never entirely subsided. At a major conference at Yalta in February 1945, the three allied leaders, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, tried to overcome their conflicts and map out a common settlement for European affairs. They agreed upon a “Declaration on Liberated Europe,” which promised self-determination and free elections for the countries formerly occupied by Nazi Germany. However, it was only a matter of a few more months before the Cold War broke out for good.

In this unit, it is your job to find out and argue to what extent either the USA or the USSR is to be blamed for this course of events.

The Russian point of view: the American spider approaches



Soviet satirical magazine “Crocodile”, 1950

(Source: Sam Keen (ed.): *Faces of the Enemy. Reflections of the Hostile Imagination.* San Francisco 1986, p.114.)

Embedded text: Western Europe (in Cyrillic letters)

The American point of view: the Russian woodcutter at work



New York Times, August 20, 1950

(Source: Wolfgang Marienfeld (ed.): *Die Geschichte des Deutschlandproblems im Spiegel der politischen Karikatur.* Bonn 1991, p.75.)

## Step 1: Collecting Arguments

### Assignments

- 1) In your group, analyze one of the Sources A to E and find out arguments about who was to be blamed for the beginning of the Cold War. Sum them up in one sentence each on the bottom of Worksheet No.5. Use **nominalization**.
- 2) Tell the class about your source and present the argument(s) you have found.
- 3) Write both your argument and those which other students have found out into the list on Worksheet No.6.

### Source A1: Speech by Former British Prime Minister Churchill at Fulton, Missouri, March 1946

*Concerned over Soviet policy, Churchill (1874-1965) delivered this address in President Truman's home state, Missouri.*

A shadow has fallen upon the scenes so lately lighted by the Allied victory. Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its Communist international organization intends to do in the immediate future, or what are the limits, if any, to their expansive and proselytizing tendencies. [...] From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste on the Adriatic, an Iron Curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Sofia, all those famous cities and the populations around them lie in the Soviet sphere and are all subject, in one way or another, to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow. [...]

In a great number of countries, far from the Russian frontiers and throughout the world, Communist fifth columns<sup>1</sup> are established and work in complete unity and absolute obedience to the directions they received from the Communist center.

(Quoted by: Edward H. Judge (ed.): *The Cold War. A History through Documents*. New Jersey 1999, pp.15 f.)

<sup>1</sup> Fifth column: any group of people who undermine a larger group - such as a nation or a besieged city - from within.

### Source A2: Europe in the Late 1940s

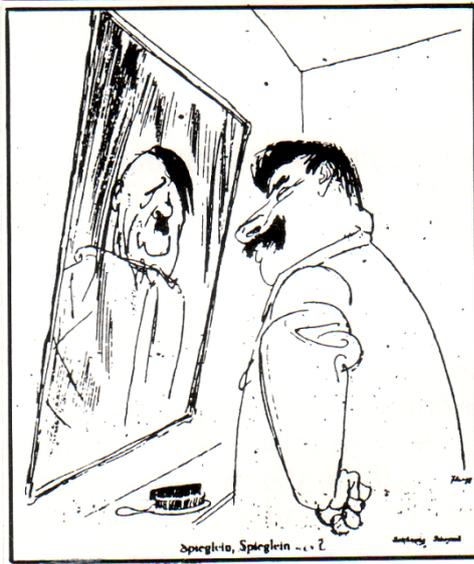


(Source: Nigel Smith: *Russia and the USSR 1900-1995*. Oxford 1996, p.68.)

*proselytizing* = bekehrend  
*Iron Curtain* = Eiserner Vorhang

Source B1: A Reflection in Snow White's Mirror

This cartoon was published in the German weekly magazine "Die Zeit" on October 7, 1948.

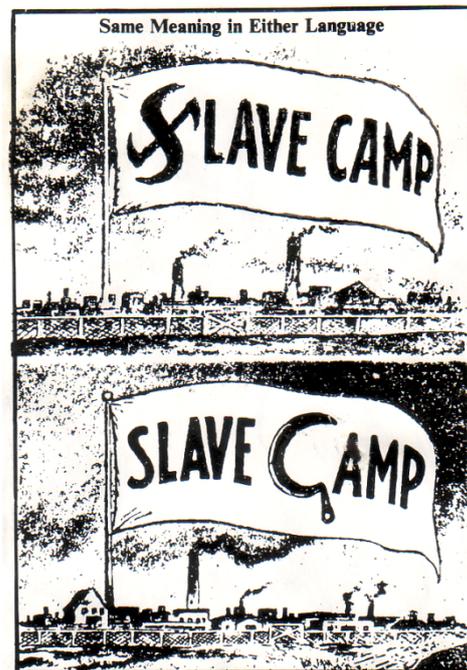


(Source: Wolfgang Marienfeld (ed.): Die Geschichte des Deutschlandproblems im Spiegel der politischen Karikatur. Bonn 1991, p.54.)

Caption: Spiegeln, Spiegeln ...

Source B2: Counterparts

This cartoon was published in the New York Herald Tribune on March 9, 1949.



(Source: Wolfgang Marienfeld (ed.): Die Geschichte des Deutschlandproblems im Spiegel der politischen Karikatur. Bonn 1991, p.15.)

Caption: Same Meaning in Either Language

Source C: Comment by Soviet leader Joseph Stalin on Churchill's Speech, March 1946

Excerpt from an interview with the Russian newspaper Pravda.

The Germans carried out an invasion of the USSR through Finland, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary. The Germans were able to carry out the invasion through these countries by reason of the fact that these countries had governments inimical to the Soviet Union. As a result of the German invasion, the Soviet Union has irrevocably lost in battles with the Germans, and also during the German occupation and through the expulsion of Soviet citizens to German slave labor camps, about 7,000,000 people. In other words, the Soviet Union has lost in men several times more than Britain and the United States together. [...] One can ask, therefore, what can be surprising in the fact that the Soviet Union, in a desire to ensure its security for the future, tries to achieve that these countries should have governments whose relations to the Soviet Union are loyal? How can one, without having lost one's reason, qualify these peaceful aspirations of the Soviet Union as "expansionist tendencies" of our Government?

(Quoted by: Edward H. Judge (ed.): The Cold War. A History through Documents. New Jersey 1999, pp.18 f.)

*inimical* = feindlich gesinnt  
*irrevocably* = unwiderruflich, endgültig  
*expulsion* = Vertreibung  
*aspirations* = Bestrebungen

Source D1: Speech by President Harry S. Truman before Congress, March 1947

*This address establishes the “Truman Doctrine”, a long-time guideline for US policy towards the USSR.*

The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian<sup>1</sup> regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Yalta agreement, in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments. [...]

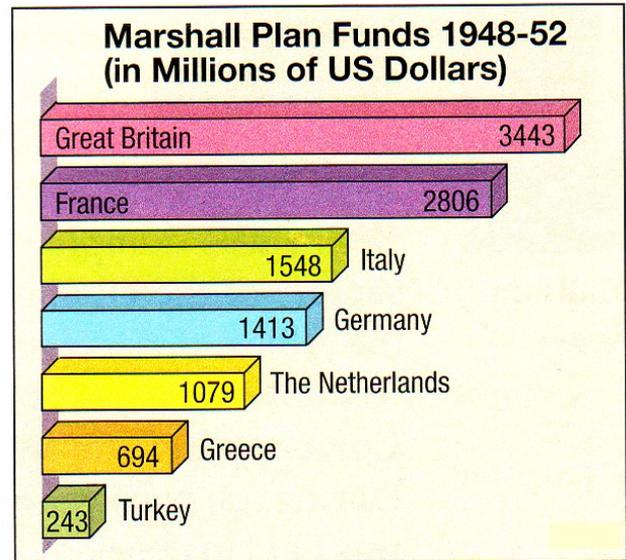
I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. [...]

The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive. The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world -- and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation.

([http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/trudoc.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp))

Source D2: The Scope of the Marshall Plan

*The European Recovery Program (= Marshall Plan) was a vast set of US loans to rebuild the economies of the nations of war-torn Europe. The USSR (and, on its request, the countries of Eastern Europe) declined to take part in it.*



(Source: Christa Lohmann (ed.): *Exploring History, Vol.2. Braunschweig 2009, p.85.*)

<sup>1</sup>Totalitarianism is a political system in which the state holds total control over the society and seeks to control all aspects of public and private life wherever possible. It is a term to characterize both communist and fascist regimes.

*coercion* = Nötigung, Zwang  
*intimidation* = Einschüchterung  
*subjugation* = Unterwerfung  
*to nurture* = nähren, hegen und pflegen  
*want* = Mangel und Not  
*strife* = Konflikt  
*to maintain sth.* = etwas aufrechterhalten, behaupten  
*to falter* = schwanken, zögern  
*welfare* = Wohlergehen

Source E1: Speech by Andrej Vyshinsky, Soviet Representative at the United Nations, September 1947

*Vyshinsky (1883-1954) expounds the Soviet view on the Marshall Plan.*

It is becoming more and more evident to everyone that the implications of the Marshall Plan will mean placing European countries under the economic and political control of the United States.

5 Moreover, this plan is an attempt to split Europe into two camps and, with the help of Britain and France, to complete the formation of a bloc of several European countries hostile to the interests of the democratic countries of Eastern Europe and most particularly to the interests of the Soviet Union. An important feature of this plan is an attempt to create a bloc of Western European states, including Western Germany. The intention is to make use of German heavy industry as one of the most important economic bases for American expansion

10 into Europe.

*(Quoted by: Nigel Smith: The USA 1917-1980. Oxford 1996, p.56.)*

<p><i>evident</i> = offensichtlich <i>implications</i> = Auswirkungen <i>hostile</i> = feindlich gesinnt</p>
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Source E2: Uncle Sam and his New Allies

*This cartoon was published in the Soviet satirical magazine "Crocodile" in 1947.*



*(Source: Thomas Bailey and David Kennedy: The American Pageant. A History of the Republic. Lexington<sup>10</sup>1994, p.895.)*

Embedded text: loans (in Cyrillic letters)

Here you can write down your solution for Assignment No. 1:

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<b>A) The Soviet Union is to be blamed</b>	<b>B) The United States is to be blamed</b>





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### Step 5: Grading Arguments - Modals

Thanks to connectives, the arguments have been smoothly linked in Step 4. However, they mostly lack academic standard, because they derive from biased, partisan contexts. In academic language, you show awareness of your limited knowledge and of other perspectives and perceptions by using **modals** to soften your message. For instance, the phrase “the Berlin blockade was a provocation” establishes a fact. However, for people with a different attitude, this statement might be quite off the point. Thus, an academic writer is much more likely to say “the Berlin blockade might be considered a provocation.” You will find pertinent modals in Word Bank 3.

#### Assignment

Re-write the reasoning of Step 4 A), using **modals**.

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## Step 7: Thesis, Conclusion and Appraiser Voice

### Assignments

1) In order to argue persuasively about the extent to which either the USA or the USSR was to be blamed for the course of events, it is useful to include **appraising adjectives and adverbs** in your **thesis** and **conclusion**. Connect words of this kind (list on the right) with a suitable phrase on the left.

to be \_\_\_\_\_ responsible

to play a/an \_\_\_\_\_ role

to deserve \_\_\_\_\_ blame

outstanding
fully
a good measure of
tremendous
thoroughly
utterly
quite a bit of
minor
major
exceedingly
most ____ of all
partly
feeble
no ____ at all
pivotal
partly
slightly

2) Turn the two lines of reasoning in Step 5 and Step 6 into proper expositions by adding a **thesis** and a **conclusion** to each one. Resort to **connectives of consequence and conclusion** (cf. Word Bank 2) and take a stance using **appraising adjectives and adverbs**.

Here you can write down your solution for Assignment No.1, part A:

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Here you can write down your solution for Assignment No.1, part B:

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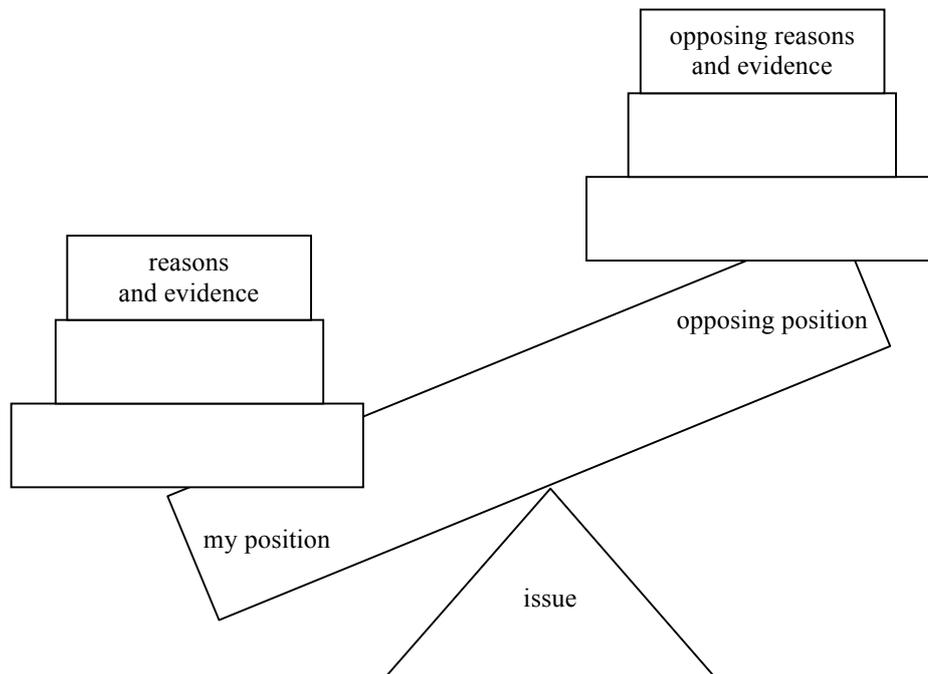
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## Step 8: Visualizing a Historical Controversy

Now that you have written two expositions, you are fully able to take a personal stance. Who do *you* think is to be blamed for the outset of the Cold War?

### Assignments

1) Find a suitable way to display the historical controversy of this unit by a personal, yet objective stance. Below, you will find an idea for visualizing your concept, but feel free to come up with your solution. Use **nominalization** and **appraising adjectives and adverbs**. You may use Microsoft Office or any other electronic device.



2) Send your result to your teacher. The most interesting results ones will be published on our international learning community platform in Edmodo.

3) Comment on two of the works published. Be *polite* and *constructive*.

4) Feel free to respond to comments. Always be polite and constructive.



## Model solutions

### Step 1: Collecting Arguments

- **Source A:** • The countries of Eastern Europe were forcefully turned into Soviet satellites.  
• Even beyond the Soviet sphere of influence, Communist forces undermined the independence of nations.
- **Source B:** • Soviet policy and rule closely resembled those of National Socialism.
- **Source C:** • Given the fact that the USSR had been attacked from the West, the country had a legitimate interest in having some influence on its neighbor countries to ensure its security.
- **Source D:** • Turning the nations of Eastern Europe into Soviet satellites was a breach of the Yalta agreement.  
• For the sake of peace and its own integrity, the USA had to support free nations threatened by a Communist takeover. (Consequently, the USA procured considerable financial aid to consolidate Western Europe.)
- **Source E:** • The Marshall Plan was a scheme to entangle Europe into the US sphere of interest.  
• The USA aimed at turning Western Europe into a bloc of dependent nations pitted against the USSR.

### Step 2: Identifying Nominalizations in a Speech

1)

The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian<sup>1</sup> regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States has made frequent protests against coercion and intimidation, in violation of the Yalta agreement, in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. I must also state that in a number of other countries there have been similar developments. [...]

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. [...]

The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive. The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world -- and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation.

2)

Effect of his use of nominalization:

- to use the authoritative voice
- to avoid lengthy explanations
- to use figurative language (The seeds of totalitarianism regimes are nurtured...)

3)

Answers are up to the students.

### Step 3: Finding more Arguments

- The USA was suspicious of communism and the ideology of a world revolution.

- The USSR was suspicious of liberal democracy and capitalist economy.
- President Truman put an end to his predecessor's obliging policy towards the USSR.
- In September 1947, the Soviets created *Cominform*, whose purpose was to enforce orthodoxy within the international communist movement.
- In 1948, the USA embarked on a policy of setting up a West German state, splitting the nation into two.
- From June 1948 to May 1949, the USSR blockaded West Berlin in order to obstruct the American effort to consolidate Western Germany.
- Instigated by the USA, the military alliance of NATO was founded in April 1949.

Overview of all arguments

A) the Soviet Union is to be blamed	B) the United States is to be blamed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The countries of Eastern Europe were forcefully turned into Soviet satellites, in violation of the Yalta agreement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Marshall Plan was a scheme to entangle Europe into the US sphere of interest.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even beyond the Soviet sphere of influence, Communist forces undermined the independence of nations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The USA aimed at turning Western Europe into a bloc of dependent nations pitted against the USSR.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soviet policy and rule closely resembled those of National Socialism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given the fact that the USSR had been attacked from the West, the country had a legitimate interest in having some influence on its neighbor countries to ensure its security.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the sake of peace and its own integrity, the USA had to support free nations threatened by a Communist takeover.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• President Truman put an end to his predecessor's obliging policy towards the USSR.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The USSR was suspicious of liberal democracy and capitalist economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The USA was suspicious of communism and the ideology of a world revolution.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In September 1947, the Soviets created <i>Cominform</i>, whose purpose was to enforce orthodoxy within the international communist movement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 1948, The USA embarked on a policy of setting up a West German state, splitting the nation into two.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From June 1948 to May 1949, the USSR blockaded West Berlin in order to obstruct the American effort to consolidate Western Germany.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instigated by the USA, the military alliance of NATO was founded in April 1949.</li> </ul>
<p>...</p>	<p>...</p>

Step 4: Connecting Arguments

A) The USSR was to be blamed

**Firstly**, the countries of Eastern Europe were forcefully turned into Soviet satellites, in violation of the Yalta agreement. **Moreover**, in September 1947, the Soviets created *Cominform*, whose purpose was the enforcement of orthodoxy within the international communist movement. **Likewise**, they blockaded West Berlin from June 1949 to May 1949 in order to obstruct the American effort to consolidate Western Germany. **What is more**, the

USSR was suspicious of liberal democracy and capitalist economy. **Above all**, Soviet policy and rule closely resembled those of National Socialism.

#### B) The USA was to be blamed

**To start with**, the USA aimed at turning Western Europe into a bloc of dependent nations pitted against the USSR. **In addition to that**, the Marshall Plan was a scheme to entangle Europe into the US sphere of interest. **Besides**, the USA was suspicious of communism and the ideology of a world revolution. **Furthermore**, President Truman put an end to his predecessor's obliging policy towards the USSR. **Finally**, the USA embarked on a policy of setting up a West German state in 1948, splitting the nation into two.

#### Step 5: Grading Arguments - Modals

##### The USSR was to be blamed

Firstly, **one could argue that** the countries of Eastern Europe were forcefully turned into Soviet satellites, **which might be seen** to have happened in violation of the Yalta agreement. Moreover, in September 1947, the Soviets created *Cominform*, whose purpose **should be** to enforce orthodoxy within the international communist movement. Likewise, they blockaded West Berlin from June 1949 to May 1949. This step **can be considered** an attempt to obstruct the American effort to consolidate Western Germany. What is more, the USSR **can be regarded** as suspicious of liberal democracy and capitalist economy. Above all, Soviet policy and rule **might be perceived** to resemble those of National Socialism.

#### Step 6: Grading Arguments - Qualifiers

##### The USA was to be blamed

To start with, the USA **apparently** aimed at turning Western Europe into a bloc of dependent nations pitted against the USSR, which **presumably** alienated the Soviet Union from its major war-time ally. In addition to that, the Marshall Plan was **supposedly** a scheme to entangle Europe into the US sphere of interest. This **implies** that Washington followed selfish interests. Besides, the USA was **potentially** suspicious of communism and the ideology of a world revolution. This attitude **possibly** impaired relations with Moscow. Furthermore, President Truman **tended** to depart from his predecessor's obliging policy towards the USSR. **Perhaps** it was this very change that increased the rift between the two superpowers. Finally, the USA **seemingly** embarked on a policy of setting up a West German state in 1948, splitting the nation into two. **Maybe** the USSR considered this political hostile to itself.

#### Step 7: Thesis, Conclusion and Appraiser Voice

- 1) to be **fully / thoroughly / utterly / partly / slightly / exceedingly** responsible  
to play a/an **pivotal / tremendous / outstanding / major / minor / feeble** role  
to deserve a **good measure of / quite a bit of** blame / **most blame of all / no blame at all**

2)

A) Taking into account the political events of the late 1940s, there are quite some indications that the Soviet Union was mainly responsible for the outbreak of the Cold War.

→ *line of reasoning of Step 4*

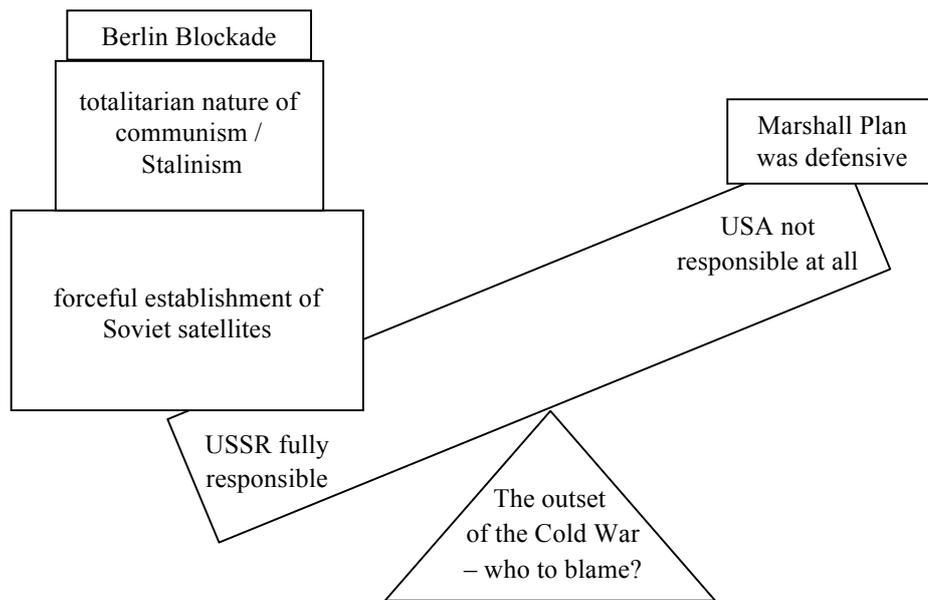
In conclusion, one can hardly close one's eyes to the fact that the USSR played a major role in the breakdown of the war-time alliance.

B) Taking US policy in the late 1940s into consideration, one is likely to conclude that Washington deserves a good measure of blame for the outset of the Cold War.

→ *line of reasoning of Step 5*

It results from all this that the post-war policy of the USA alienated its former communist ally and precipitated antagonism between Washington and Moscow.

### Step 8: Visualizing a Historical Controversy





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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It includes 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union.

All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

