

## The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan

During World War II the Soviet Union and the United States were allied against their common enemies, the Axis powers. Shortly after the end of the war, animosity began to reappear between the former allies. By 1947 that animosity had risen to the point where it was formalized in government programs and international policies; the Cold War had broken out. In the United States this was most clearly announced in two policy decisions excerpted here. The first is a speech delivered by President Truman on March 12, 1947, to Congress, concerning proposed aid to Greece and Turkey, which appeared in danger of falling under the influence of the Soviet Union. The principles contained in this speech became known as the Truman Doctrine. The second is a statement made by Secretary of State George C. Marshall on November 10, 1947, to Senate and House Committees on Foreign Relations, proposing massive aid to Europe. This proposal became known as the Marshall Plan.

**CONSIDER:** *The American perception of the Soviet Union and its allies; the purposes of this foreign policy; how the Soviet Union would probably perceive and react to this foreign policy.*

The peoples of a number of countries of the world have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will. The Government of the United States had 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.

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guaranties of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

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.

I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid, which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.

As a result of the war, the European community which for centuries had been one of the most productive and indeed creative portions of the inhabited world was left prostrate. This area, despite its diversity of national cultures and its series of internecine conflicts and wars, nonetheless enjoys a common heritage and a common civilization.

SOURCE: U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *A Decade of American Foreign Policy: Basic Documents, 1941-1949* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), pp. 1270-1271.

The war ended with the armies of the major Allies meeting in the heart of this community. The policies of three of them have been directed to the restoration of that European community. It is now clear that only one power, the Soviet Union, does not for its own reasons share this aim.

We have become involved in two wars which have had their origins in the European continent. The free peoples of Europe have fought two wars to prevent the forcible domination of their community by a single great power. Such domination would have inevitably menaced the stability and security of the world. To deny today our interest in their ability to defend their own heritage would be to disclaim the efforts and sacrifices of two generations of Americans. We wish to see this community restored as one of the pillars of world security; in a position to renew its contribution to the advancement of mankind and to the development of a world order based on law and respect for the individual.

The record of the endeavors of the United States Government to bring about a restoration of the whole of that European community is clear for all who wish to see. We must face the fact, however, that despite our efforts, not all of the European nations have been left free to take their place in the community of which they form a natural part.

Thus the geographic scope of our recovery program is limited to those nations which are free to act in accordance with their national traditions and their own estimates of their national interests. If there is any doubt as to this situation, a glance at the present map of the European continent will provide the answer.

The present line of division in Europe is roughly the line upon which the Anglo-American armies coming from the west met those of the Soviet Union coming from the east. To the west of that line the nations of the continental European community have been grappling with the vast and difficult problems resulting from the war in conformity with their own national traditions without pressure or menace from the United States or Great Britain. Developments in the European countries to the east of that line bear the unmistakable imprint of an alien hand.

## The Cold War: A Soviet Perspective

**B. N. Ponomaryov**

*The Cold War and indeed modern history were seen differently in the Soviet Union than in the West. The following excerpt is from History of the Communist Party of the*

SOURCE: B. N. Ponomaryov et al., *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Andrew Rothstein, trans. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960), pp. 599, 606-12.

Soviet Union (1960), an official publication of the Soviet government. Here the focus is on the end of World War II and the early Cold War period.

**CONSIDER:** *The elements of this interpretation most likely to be accepted by Western non-Marxist historians; how this interpretation differs from Truman's and Marshall's perceptions; how these differences help explain the existence of the Cold War.*

As a result of the war the capitalist system sustained enormous losses and became weaker. The second stage of the general crisis of capitalism set in, manifesting itself chiefly in a new wave of revolutions. Albania, Bulgaria, Eastern Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania and Yugoslavia broke away from the system of capitalism. . . .

In their relations with the People's Democracies the Communist Party and the Soviet Government strictly adhered to the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs. The U.S.S.R. recognised the people's governments in these States and supported them politically. True to its internationalist duty, the U.S.S.R. came to the aid of the People's Democracies with grain, seed and raw materials, although its own stocks had been badly depleted during the war. This helped to provide the population with foodstuffs and also to speed up the recommissioning of many industrial enterprises. The presence of the Soviet armed forces in the People's Democracies prevented domestic counter-revolution from unleashing a civil war and averted intervention. The Soviet Union paralysed the attempts of the foreign imperialists to interfere in the internal affairs of the democratic States. . . .

The U.S.A. decided to take advantage of the economic and political difficulties in the other leading capitalist countries and bring them under its sway. Under the pretext of economic aid the U.S.A. began to infiltrate into their economy and interfere in their internal affairs. Such big capitalist countries as Japan, West Germany, Italy, France and Britain all became dependent on the U.S.A. to a greater or lesser degree. The people of Western Europe were confronted with the task of defending their national sovereignty against the encroachments of American imperialism. . . .

The radical changes that took place after the second world war substantially altered the political map of the world. There emerged two main world social and political camps: the Socialist and democratic camp, and the imperialist and anti-democratic camp. . . .

The ruling circles of the U.S.A., striving for world supremacy, openly declared that they could achieve their aims only from "positions of strength." The American imperialists unleashed the so-called cold war, and sought

to kindle the flames of a third world war. In 1949, the U.S.A. set up an aggressive military bloc known as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). As early as 1946, the Western States began to pursue a policy of splitting Germany, which was essentially completed in 1949 with the creation of a West German State. Subsequently they set out to militarise West Germany. This further deepened the division of Germany and made her reunification exceptionally difficult. A dangerous hotbed of war began to form in Europe. In the Far East the United States strove to create a hotbed of war in Japan, stationing its armed forces and building military bases on her territory.

In 1950, the United States resorted to open aggression in the Far East. It occupied the Chinese island of Taiwan, provoked an armed clash between the Korean People's Democratic Republic and South Korea and began an aggressive war against the Korean people. The war in Korea was a threat to the People's Republic of China, and Chinese people's volunteers came to the assistance of the Korean people.

The military adventure of the U.S.A. in Korea sharply aggravated international tension. The U.S.A. started a frantic arms drive and stepped up the production of atomic, thermonuclear, bacteriological and other types of weapons of mass annihilation. American military bases, spearheaded primarily against the U.S.S.R., China and the other Socialist countries, were hastily built at various points of the capitalist world. Military blocs were rapidly knocked together. The threat of a third world war with the use of mass destruction weapons increased considerably.

## The Berlin Wall

### Jens Reich

*Perhaps the most striking symbol of the Cold War that divided Europe was the Berlin Wall. In 1961, the East German government, under orders from Moscow, erected a 100-mile heavily armed wall in Berlin to keep its citizens from fleeing to the West. Berlin had served as an escape route for 2.6 million people, especially professionals and the well educated who sought a higher standard of living and broader cultural options in West Berlin and Western Europe. In the following selection, Jens Reich, a 22-year-old student in East Berlin in 1961, describes his reactions when the wall went up.*

**CONSIDER:** *What Reich means by "Wall-Sickness"; the significance of the Berlin Wall to people such as Reich.*

SOURCE: Jens Reich, "Reflections on Becoming an East German Dissident, on Loosing the Wall and a Country," in *Spring in Winter, The 1989 Revolutions*, ed. by Gwyn Prins (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1990) (Dist. by St. Martin's Press), pp. 75-77.

I was a student in East Berlin before 13th August, 1961, before the day of "The Wall." I came to Berlin in 1956, as a boy of 17. I had lived in a rather dull provincial town and after Halberstadt, Berlin was like a revelation for me. . . . And then we had West Berlin. What a thrill! Cinemas, theatres, the Philharmonie. . . . I took everybody who came to visit me in Berlin. And I remember the coming of The Wall.

I mention all these details, which I remember so clearly, in order to give a sense of the shock that we suffered when The Wall came upon us one night. There we were in Berlin, at the crossroads between East and West, at the juncture of two fundamentally different cultures, and suddenly we were locked up like canaries in a cage. Literally from one day to the next, from being a vibrant and cultured city, Berlin subsided into the drowsy torpor of a midsummer afternoon in the provinces. We were imprisoned in a dull, flat country.

In the first years no foreign earth was available to us at all. Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Soviet Union could only be visited by professional people. Bulgaria and Romania opened for tourists in the mid-sixties; but prices were steep and they were holiday resorts rather than centres of European culture. To reach West Germany was a venture that most probably ended in prison for *Republikflucht*, or worse, for the Border Guards shot mercilessly at people trying to climb over "The Wall."

To call it a wall doesn't really do it justice. It was an entire system of watch towers, barbed wire, searchlights, pierced steel plate (to call it "wire mesh" gives the wrong impression of what was called "The Wire" within "The Wall"), strips sown with land-mines, free-fire zones covered by automatic guns, dog runs with ferocious, hungry dogs, armed Border Guard launches on the river to stop swimmers—all this apparatus of containment as well as concrete walls and passages. . . .

"Wall-sickness" was the eternal, lamenting analysis of our life blighted and circumscribed by *Die Mauer*. It came from being in a cage in the centre of Europe. Wall-sickness was boredom. We felt condemned to utter, excruciating dullness, sealed off from everything that happened in the world around us. Wall-sickness was loneliness, the feeling that you were condemned to die without having ever seen Naples, or Venice, or Paris, or London.

Some people could not stand the prospect of a life of such tedium and literally went mad. People would sometimes do crazy irrational things. You might go to the border, for example, draw your identity card and announce that you wanted "to be rid of this shitty country," a gesture with the guaranteed outcome of years in prison, but done in the hope that West Germany would buy you out sooner or later (often later!). Wall-sickness was the anguish of deprivation of a whole generation born between 1930 and 1950. We knew what we had lost.