II
Selling the Marshall Plan

At Home

Warren Buffett's father, Howard, represented Nebraska's Second Congressional District in 1948. Like many Midwesterners whose civic bible was the *Chicago Tribune*'s editorial page, the Republican congressman embraced and preached a hard-shell gospel of isolationism. His was the sensibility of an older America. In Howard Buffett's faith neither America's prosperity nor its security depended on what transpired in Europe. A strident foe of the Marshall Plan, he belittled it as "Operation Rathole," condemning as well the "barrage of propaganda . . . drench[ing] this country" and assailing the "tricks of political terrorism" supposedly being employed to gain its passage.[1]

About one of his criticisms Congressman Buffett was correct. The Republican 80th Congress and the public were in fact targets of a prodigious outpouring of propaganda, the purpose of which was to guarantee that the uninformed, along with the isolationists and pro-Communists, did not defeat Marshall Plan legislation. Another angry opponent of the Marshall Plan, Representative Fred Busby of Illinois, agreed with Buffett. "Never," he complained, "has Congress been so bombarded with propaganda." Since the conservative Class of 1946 had campaigned successfully on shrinking big government, slashing federal spending, cutting taxes, and rolling back the New Deal, a Democratic administration faced a daunting task in winning approval for its unexampled foreign aid program.

Marked by a proliferation of committees and lobbies, both public and private, the ensuing campaigns of education and manipulation constituted the second of America's two containment policies in the late 1940s. The first, dating from George Kennan's pseudoanonymous article signed "X" in the July 1947 issue of *Foreign Affairs* and embodied in the Truman Doctrine, was directed at containment of communism abroad. The second, less known, was aimed at political isolationists, like Buffett and his brethren, at home. Before the Marshall Plan could mold a "New Europe," a "New America" had to be promoted. Voices of an "Old America," loudest in the heartland, had to be marginalized. At the kickoff of the campaign the power of the isolationist opposition was considerable and the public's apathy not inconsequential.[2]

After World War II, with the exception of the eastern seaboard, America's sense of world responsibility still suffered from stunted development.

Witness the popular philosophy of Robert R. McCormick, then owner and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune,* herald of the country's most isolationist region. McCormick comingled national aloofness with illusions of invulnerability and omnipotence. "We can work out our own [national] salvation," he declared, "independently of what happens elsewhere in the world." The Truman administration and friends of the Marshall Plan could not have disagreed more. But to implement and sustain their grand foreign policy, Truman and Marshall first had to master common domestic politics. In one of America's most unusual feats of leadership, they made the latter servant to the former. Harmonizing means and ends proved as crucial as it was rare. By summer of 1947, they were organizing coast-to-coast efforts to convince the people and their elected representatives about the feasibility and rightness of their cause, and to accept, instead of a promised federal tax cut, the likelihood of higher taxes. Mobilizing favorable public opinion and bipartisan support thus began and ended in Washington.[3]

The Government Campaign

Overseen by Under Secretary Robert Lovett, a Republican, the State Department went to work independently, and in concert with various interdepartmental working committees in the Executive Branch, collecting economic and financial information. A European recovery program acceptable to a Congress full of isolationists and fiscal conservatives presupposed an immense amount of knowledge, as well as a sound basis on which to make cost projections. A Herculean effort of research, documentation, and analysis, led by Charles Kindleberger, Paul Nitze, and others, produced the legendary "Brown Books." Deciding to err on the side of too many rather than too few statistics, government officials simply overwhelmed skeptical Congressmen with detailed country studies on commodities, balance of payments, and trade that measured three inches in thickness. The scale and thoroughness of the State Department's homework and preparations helped to overcome some of its unpopularity on Capitol Hill, "amazing," in particular, Republican Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan, a former isolationist whose support was indispensable.

After Secretary Marshall's Harvard speech, President Truman also appointed three bipartisan governmental advisory groups to examine the feasibility of massive foreign aid to Europe. He asked Julius Krug, Secretary of the Interior, to chair a committee to assess its impact on America's natural and national resources. He nominated Edwin Nourse, head of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, to investigate its consequences for the health of the domestic economy. The third set of advisers he called into existence was put together from a list of prominent Americans compiled by Dean Acheson and chaired by the Secretary of Commerce, Averell

Harriman. Their charge was to review the CEEC proposal and determine the limits and appropriate shape of Marshall's ideas. How much, for example, could the United States spend without bankrupting itself?

In terms of laying the groundwork and influencing Congress and the press, contemporaries regarded the Krug and Nourse committees as minor players. The third committee, however, the "President's Committee on Foreign Aid," better known as the "Harriman Committee," complemented Foggy Bottom's marketing and was by far "of very great importance." Working from late August 1947 until publication of its results in early November, it cooperated behind the scenes with State Department working groups and utilized their expertise. Its essential findings that European self-help was mandatory, the expense was not prohibitive, and a "new" Europe "with a common economic market and strong political ties" had to replace "the old, compartmentalized pre-war Europe" were greeted by widespread applause and accolades in the press. More than any other government document, the final report of the Harriman Committee converted the press to the cause of the true believers.[4]

The Harriman Committee consisted of around twenty members. Representing business, labor, and academia, its personnel "inspired confidence" in a Congress that largely lacked confidence in the State Department.[5] According to the MIT economist who, as the committee's executive secretary, directed its research and deliberations, and collaborated in drafting its final report, the group was "rather conservative" and, in at least one crucial way, well prepared for its task. The attitudes of many members had already been molded by "experience in governmental policy" in World War II. Their service in wartime agencies with limited purposes and life spans left two fortunate legacies: inoculation against simplistic, clichéd thinking and sloganeering about the federal government often heard in the private sector and a good understanding about how a government adhocracy functioned.[6]

Not only did the committee's bipartisan makeup and recommendations impress journalists and legislators alike, but two of its leading participants, Averell Harriman and Paul Hoffman, went on their own personal crusades to win acceptance of the Marshall Plan in the business community. Although he was a poor public speaker, appearing to some as inarticulate, no one was more zealous in promoting the objectives of the Marshall Plan, or more committed to its congressional passage, than Harriman. After his committee's report was finished, he flew all over the Midwest and West drumming up support in the months leading up to the vote in Congress. Flying great distances in an unpressurized DC-3, he adhered to what one of his companions considered a superhuman speaking schedule. Every day for several weeks he made three stops—in unglamorous cities like Fargo, Boise, and Walla Walla, bastions of isolationism.[7]

Also delivering scores of speeches to audiences in need of conversion was Paul Hoffman, head of the Studebaker automobile company and one of

the founders in 1942 of the Committee for Economic Development (CED), an organization of liberal businessmen. Six years later, his connections with the CED turned highly beneficial. According to an associate, a determined and tactful Hoffman "kept the business community behind the Plan . . . in the beginning," using "liberal businessmen as the cutting edge to get united support."[8] Public relations was Hoffman's great gift. Some who knew him well deemed him "little short of a genius" in its employment. To Dean Acheson, he was an "evangelist" spreading the gospel.[9]

In the Truman administration's self-appointed mission to awaken the American public from its isolationist slumber, World War II's organizer of victory, General Marshall, led by example. In October 1947 he broke with precedent and, in search of organized labor's backing, he addressed the annual Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) convention. From January until May 1948 he campaigned as virtually a one-man talkathon. An impeccable reputation as a nonpartisan aided his arguments immensely. Marshall's whirlwind swing around the country took him to a chamber of commerce here and a church group there, as well as to business councils, university faculties and student bodies, farmers' associations, and women's clubs. Besides testifying regularly on the Hill, he carried the State Department's message coast-to-coast: from New York, Pittsburgh, and Atlanta, to Chicago and Des Moines, and on to San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Portland.[10]

There were businessmen and congressmen, like Everett Dirksen of Illinois, who were persuaded neither by the torrent of speeches nor by George Marshall's prestige. Rather, they underwent self-conversion, switching from an isolationist to an internationalist faith by the baptism of first-hand experiences. In the late summer and fall of 1947 not a few Representatives and Senators, particularly members of the fact-finding House Herter Committee, traveled to Europe to take the measure of the continent's misery. What Dirksen and others observed of life among the ruins moved them profoundly. Unmediated observations abroad exceeded in power any abstractions that Harriman or Hoffman or even Marshall might discuss at home.

The Quasi-Private Offensive

The spearhead to reeducate the nation on the grand scale was the ad hoc "Citizens' Committee for the Marshall Plan to Aid European Recovery" (CCMP). Established in late October 1947 by prominent liberal Eastern internationalists and members of the Council on Foreign Relations, the CCMP had its headquarters in New York City, a busy office in Washington, and regional and local chapters in places like Baltimore and Philadelphia. From there it ran a massive, well-organized assault on unfavorable domestic sentiments towards the Marshall Plan. Top-heavy with corporate and labor leaders in provisional alliance with one-time government officials—Robert

Secretary Marshall and Under Secretary Lovett testify in favor of the emergency aid bill—$597,000,000 for France, Italy, and Austria—November 10, 1947.

Patterson and Dean Acheson, for instance—CCMP epitomized bipartisanship. While more than half of its general membership were businessmen, in contrast to only 6% labor union officials, its National Council was divided evenly between Democrats and Republicans.

Though ostensibly a nongovernmental organization, and though bankrolled by big donors like John D. Rockefeller as well as by small private contributions, in many ways the distinguished private citizens who led the organization actually fronted for a State Department legally barred from engaging in propaganda. To sway public opinion, the CCMP ran ads, press releases, and editorials in both big city and country newspapers, paid for radio broadcasts, and hired its own news and speakers bureaus. Publicity entailed sending spokesmen to women's clubs, church councils, and public affairs groups. Dean Acheson followed in the footsteps of Harriman and Hoffman, undertaking his own speaking tour of the Midwest and West. He addressed audiences in Palo Alto, Portland, Spokane, Minneapolis, and Duluth. Will Clayton stumped parts of the country as well. In January and February 1948 a CCMP field staff visited additional areas of the Midwest to

mobilize local support. Winning the hearts and minds of fellow Americans also meant circulating more than a million pieces of pro–Marshall Plan publications—booklets, leaflets, reprints, and fact sheets. The primary focus was frequently on elite opinion, but the grassroots were cultivated, too.

The preliminary bout on the legislative fight card was an Interim Aid bill. After the warm-up, congressional debate and committee hearings on the Marshall Plan began in earnest in January 1948. The main attraction lasted for six months, until June. Thanks to the fair-minded leadership of Vandenberg in the Senate and the elderly Representative Charles Eaton in the House, neither steamroller nor filibuster occurred. Early on, however, reluctant members of Congress made it clear that their vote for passage depended on the ultimate shape of the program. Finding the Harriman Committee report particularly handy, the CCMP assembled and briefed a cross-section of private organizations as witnesses. In all, twenty-six members of the CCMP testified before congressional committees, representing organized labor, farmers' associations, industry, and religious groups.[11]

Clearly, President Truman, Secretary Marshall, and their advisers wisely decided to commit the citizenry to an ambitious, unprecedented public policy before committing the nation to sacrifice money and manpower on its behalf. Selling the Marshall Plan at home required compelling arguments as clinchers. Those used by the administration's front, the CCMP, appealed, sometimes indiscriminately, to America's idealism, self-interest, and ideology. Humanitarian and economic reasons predominated, while an ideological consideration surfaced much less often, at least until troubling events took place in Czechoslovakia in late February. Before then, the notion that the Marshall Plan might serve as a "bulwark against Communism" was mentioned but not dramatized.[12]

Interestingly, in its press releases and talking points the CCMP did not play heavily on an anti-Communist theme; indeed, it forsook the shrill, hard sell. Allen Dulles, among the organization's founders and most active members and a future head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), suggested in coaching his congressional witnesses that the Marshall Plan could in fact speed up the decline of communism already underway in western Europe, adding to some recent setbacks. To Dulles, the mere prospect of the Marshall Plan had inflicted "a body blow" on the Communist parties in France and Italy "from which it is staggering." As cause for optimism, he pointed to the failed Communist-led strikes in France and Italy in December 1947, especially the fact that French Communists called off their strikes, opening fractures in the French labor movement. Dulles eschewed scare tactics, recommending instead ample forethought and proper planning. "We should not embark on a Marshall Plan program," he cautioned, "until we have counted the effort, the cost, and the sacrifice that we are disposed to put into it."[13]

After February 25, when a coup in Czechoslovakia put Communists in power, fear supplanted prudence—and emotion suppressed reason—in public

discussions of the Marshall Plan. A war scare swept the country for a while. Prague was perceived as another Munich. With resounding thuds, Josef Stalin had a knack throughout the early Cold War years for regularly slamming down the wrong card on the table. Once proponents of the Marshall Plan picked up the first "Uncle Joe" card, they held a winning hand. In the Soviet dictator the CCMP, along with the State Department, had found perhaps its most effective salesman. Over the duration of the Plan Stalin repeatedly misplayed his hand in Yugoslavia, Germany, and Korea, on each occasion with maximum beneficial effect on Washington's goals abroad.

The shrinking percentage of Americans who had not heard of the Marshall Plan clearly reflected the impact of the CCMP's first-rate public relations and publicity blitz. Between July and December 1947, as measured by Gallup Polls, the number of Americans unaware of the Plan fell from 51 to 36% nationwide. Suggestive of the combined effect of CCMP activities along with the release of the Harriman Committee report in November, the percentage of Americans who favored it jumped from 47 to 56% between November 1947 and February 1948. Then, before Stalin lent his helping hand, only 29% of Americans still had not heard of the Marshall Plan. By the time of the first congressional vote in late March, one major pollster determined that three-fourths of the public with an opinion preferred the Plan, which was only slightly higher than among business executives. Farm organizations backed it strongly while the press, both editors and reporters, provided powerful support as well. Dissenters in the fourth estate made for strange bedfellows, with the *Daily Worker* joining the McCormick, Hearst, and Knight newspaper chains as the most notable opponents.[14]

An intensive five-month campaign of discussion, debate, and persuasion won for the Marshall Plan broad public endorsements. The exertions of good salesmen with good selling points sold their product. Of course, the Truman administration's willingness to concede a great deal to the concerns and biases of Congress in jointly crafting the final, compromise version of the ERP bill secured additional votes. Congress was always actively engaged in the process of revision, and the enabling legislation bore numerous congressional fingerprints: the program would not be run out of the State Department, its director would be a respected businessman from the private sector, appropriations would be for one year only with annual reviews of how money was spent, guidelines and safeguards for disbursing funds would be imposed, aid would be denied to governments which went Communist, counterpart funds would be required, and American shipping would be employed. When the House and Senate approved the Foreign Assistance Act, 329–74 and 69–17 respectively, Marshall Plan supporters stretched across occupational and political spectrums. Powerful interest groups closed ranks around it. An unusual feat had been achieved: the American Bar Association in common cause with the United Auto Workers, farmers organizations united with Americans for Democratic Action, and the hands of the

American Legion joined with those of the National Planning Association. Even an unenthusiastic National Association of Manufacturers went along with the shift in opinion. "The CCMP's work," Michael Wala has written, was "crucial in passing the Marshall Plan."[15]

When time finally arrived to implement the Plan, the ideal in America's foreign affairs had been realized: a genuine consensus with the people, the press, the Congress, and the administration unified and committed to the same policy. Because of lengthy, open debate and tough congressional questioning, the nation undertook the Marshall Plan with eyes wide open. In the history of the republic, it was a rare moment. As some illustrious public servants have maintained, the propaganda campaign that took the issues straight to the rank-and-file as well as to elites perhaps best explains "the broad and deep interest" that Americans invested in foreign affairs during the early Cold War era, in sharp contrast to both earlier and later periods in the nation's history.[16]

As the final congressional votes approached, with passage a certainty, Congressman from Vermont Charles Plumley offered his own assessment of why isolationism was a spent force and the curtain was falling on an older, inward-looking, provincial America. Echoing his Republican colleagues, Howard Buffett and Fred Busby, Plumley felt he was living in unexampled times. "There was never," he groused to fellow members of the House, "such propaganda in the whole history of the nation as there has been for the Marshall Plan." Unbeknownst to Representative Plumley, a novel sales campaign all across the United States was just a rehearsal, a warm-up, for an even bigger sales campaign that attended the implementation of the Marshall Plan in western Europe. In the idiom of vaudeville, the distinguished gentlemen from Vermont, Nebraska, and Illinois hadn't seen nothin' yet.[17]

Abroad

A most knowledgeable European historian has called the Marshall Plan "the largest international propaganda operation ever seen in peacetime."[18] While credible, a question his claim does raise is whether its author has ever had access to Cominform records in Moscow. The Marshall Plan may not deserve its first-place standing. After all, to the Plan's American architects and implementers, the Information Divisions that attached themselves to every country mission were simultaneously involved in a sales campaign and a counteroffensive. The latter originated in the October 1947 announcement by Stalin's favorite henchman, Andrei Zhdanov, that the Comintern had been resurrected. Renamed the Cominform—Communist Information Bureau—the heir to the agency for exporting Communist revolution soon functioned as a conduit for Soviet funds and the latest party line to Moscow-directed Communist parties in western Europe. No longer could Georges Bidault insist, as he did in a conversation four months earlier with the chief foreign correspondent of the *New York Times,* that "neither [Maurice] Thorez nor

"Sixteen in a Circle"—Pravda *satirizes restrictions on the amount of Marshall Plan aid the U.S. was willing to extend to CEEC nations in mid-1947.*

the French Communist Party worked on direct orders from Moscow." ECA headquarters in Washington considered Zhdanov's public pledge to destroy the Marshall Plan with propaganda the first shot fired in the propaganda wars. The need to counteract Soviet distortion of American actions justified the magnitude and cost of the counterattack.[19]

With its own wire service linked to a network of hundreds of Communist daily newspapers and magazines, the Cominform was directing an empire of misinformation and disinformation long before the Office of the Special Representative (OSR) opened for business in Paris. Integral to the Cominform's enormous effort to defeat American objectives were attacks on American motives, tactics that proved effective, particularly among receptive French workers and peasants, Parisian intellectuals, and students at the Sorbonne. With political and cultural animosities combining, the ERP, in Tony Judt's view, "faced the greatest popular criticism" in France. Shortly after the Cominform launched its anti-American offensive, the National Security Council in Washington adopted the view that a revived Comintern had selected Italy rather than France as its highest priority in a strategy of spreading communism westward.[20]

The head of the ECA's Information Division in Rome appraised the Cominform's investment in Italy as a "stupendous effort" with its goal to "undermine the Marshall Plan by distorting our objectives and procedures."[21] ECA Washington actually believed that, in the propaganda contest in western Europe, the Cominform's budget exceeded its own. What lends plausibility to the notion that the Soviets outspent the Americans on the propaganda front are recent revelations by a former Central Intelligence Agency official that in the months prior to the April 1948 elections in Italy, the Soviet compound in Rome transferred $8–10,000,000 per month to Palmiro Togliatti's Communist Party, the PCI. The Cominform's "black bags" are alleged to have been even bulkier than the ones the CIA delivered to four anti-Communist parties.[22]

Whether Marshall Planners merit first or second place in the annals of peacetime propaganda is at least arguable. What should not be is that their own undeniably stupendous effort was part of the dynamic that drove much of the Cold War, an escalating cycle of rhetoric and response, and of action and reaction. Subversives begat countersubversives, while disinformation necessitated information. Largely on the defensive at first, they eventually constructed a vast counterpropaganda machine, perhaps the envy of the Cominform. The information branch grew steadily until it ranked as one of the two largest staffs at OSR, Paris. By 1951, out of 600 Americans employed by OSR 180, or 30%, were in propaganda. To advance Washington's purposes, and to thwart Moscow's, they enlarged the battlefield in countries which were picked for psychological struggle, particularly Italy. They assembled a bigger arsenal, with more and better weapons.[23]

And they brought greater ingenuity to bear. One combatant in the war of words and images recalled the American campaign as "rather free-wheeling" and his cohorts as "in the main, [with] very little bureaucratic experience." Supposedly "greenhorns" in the field of foreign propaganda, with little to unlearn, they developed "fresh, invigorating, and oftentimes wonderfully effective techniques." In fact, Thomas Flanagan and Lawrence Hall, who ran the Information Division in Ankara, regarded the "ECA propaganda machine" as "far superior to anything previously developed by the US government." The non-civil service personnel involved, especially the large number of professionals from the working press, explained why.[24]

The leaders of America's information campaign were, in most respects, anything but novices in the dissemination of news and ideas. With its value recently demonstrated on the homefront, the importance of winning hearts and minds in Europe was recognized almost immediately. Only accomplished professionals were hired for leadership positions. The men put in charge in Washington and Paris, as well as those selected as heads of the Information Divisions in the country missions, possessed outstanding qualifications. Paul Hoffman later boasted that "we recruited talent from the top American newspapers, magazines, radio networks and movie concerns." Credentials in courting public opinion overseas were difficult to come by, so trained and experienced print and broadcast journalists, along with successful advertising executives, filled the ranks.[25]

At age thirty-six, in mid-1948, Alfred Friendly was appointed initial Director of Information at OSR, Paris, with Wally Nielsen as his Deputy. After a year, Friendly was replaced by Roscoe Drummond, a respected columnist for the *Christian Science Monitor,* who retained Nielsen as his own Deputy. During the ECA's final year an experienced Nielsen ran the Office of Information. A brief look at the first of the three commanding officers should capture the assets and advantages the American side brought to the battlefield.

Beginning his thirty-five-year newspaper career as a cub reporter with the *Washington Daily News* in 1936, Friendly switched to the *Washington Post*

President Truman, Secretary of State Marshall, ECA Administrator Paul Hoffman, and W. Averell Harriman, ECA's Special Representative in Europe, confer on the Marshall Plan in the White House Oval Office, November 29, 1948.

three years later. In the late 1930s his reputation grew as he covered extensively America's preparedness and mobilization for World War II, an event that drew him into probably the most secret and select of all wartime operations, ULTRA. Formally attached to the Army Air Forces, the Amherst graduate spent most of the war at Bletchley Park in England, "involved in the breaking of sophisticated German military codes" encrypted by the Enigma machine. After V-E Day, with his brilliance certified, he returned to the *Post,* where his erudition, investigative skills, and lucid writing caught the publisher's attention. Alfred Friendly is best remembered, however, for his association with the *Post* after his one year of active service in the Marshall Plan. In 1952 he became Assistant Managing Editor. Three years later, he rose to Managing Editor, a position he held until 1965. A Pulitzer Prize for international reporting awaited him in 1967. Since his death in 1983, ten fellowships per year for print journalists in the developing world have been named in his honor.

So when Friendly arrived in Paris, his career was on its rapid, upward trajectory—yet he was still without any managerial or administrative training. What he brought to the workplace amounted to the newsroom atmosphere of the *Post* wedded to the informality and semichaos of a Bletchley Park hut. The loose structure turned out to be an ideal incubator of ideas. About the content of his craft the Director knew a great deal. The arts of

spreading, leaking, and concealing information he had already mastered. He could grasp and convey the big picture. Keeping secrets was another of his specialties. And he spoke German well and French passably. Until he resigned in mid-1949, Friendly did double duty. One responsibility was to win the battle in Europe by keeping Europe's public sufficiently informed and in receipt of enough favorable publicity to assure their cooperation and conversion. The second was to keep the homefront apprised in order to sustain congressional and political support—with ample funding—for the continuation of American generosity abroad.[26]

During the Plan's crucial first year, Friendly's British connections from wartime served him well. His Anglophilia may not have. In his later recollection, and in disregard of the terms of the bilateral treaties that all recipients signed, "Britain alone was willing to do a reasonable information program about the Marshall Plan." Having lived in Paris throughout the Marshall Plan years, Theodore White corroborated Friendly's version of events. "What the Plan was, and what it was doing," White lamented, "was scarcely ever reported factually in the Paris press." Not until 1950 did the French government "embark on any extensive publicity campaign" on the Marshall Plan's behalf. The rest of the ECA countries basically reneged on their legal requirement, leaving the Americans to carry the brunt of the propaganda load for the first two years. It all struck Friendly as a "damn shame." There was, however, another way of looking at the situation that bothered Friendly. Since all ECA expenses involved in the information campaign were defrayed out of the 5% set aside by law from counterpart funds for administrative expenses—5% of $8,600,000,000, or approximately $430,000,000—the other fifteen countries might have simply regarded their obligations as satisfied in full and their promises invalidated.[27]

High-caliber recruits also filled up the staffs of the Public Information Division. Press, radio, and documentary film sections were generally thought to have done superb jobs. Quality individuals provided a quality product. The press section effectively cultivated relations with and planted news stories in the local press. It targeted American readers, too. While serving as second head of OSR's Information Division, Roscoe Drummond wrote a weekly column, entitled "State of Europe," that appeared every Saturday in the *Christian Science Monitor*. The radio section put on popular weekly radio programs and occasionally special programs broadcast in the vernacular by local stations in sixteen countries. They attracted a regular European listening audience in the millions. Its challenge also entailed satisfying the demands of ECA Washington, which never lost sight of the need to retain public support for the Marshall Plan at home.

The radio section consequently produced programming in English—updates on ECA progress on the continent—for consumption via transmissions from Paris to NBC and CBS hook-ups for rebroadcasts back in the States. The Mutual Broadcasting System ran another weekly radio program

Marshall Plan publicity—a parade in the Netherlands.

which was recorded in France and aired there first. Robert Mullen, ECA's Information Director in Washington from 1949 to 1952, quickly adjusted to the new technology of television by arranging with ABC to televise for two years a series on the Marshall Plan. Supplying information to junketing Congressmen could also be a fulltime job for mission chiefs. In 1949, between June and December, 166 Senators and Representatives visited London with questions about ECA operations. All received personal briefings from John Kenney, head of mission. Such continuous, vigilant attention to domestic opinion had its desired results. Between 1949 and 1951 popular approval of the Marshall Plan ranged from 61% to 79% in the United States.[28]

The propaganda war's true hero was the documentary film section which was run, in succession, by Lothar Wolff, Stuart Schulberg, Nils Nilson, and Albert Hemsing. Its productivity, personnel, policies, and practices placed it on the front line of the conflict and made the visual medium the most effective. The foremost authority on Marshall Plan films has put their output at over three hundred. A few fiction and technical information films were commissioned, while two monthly newsreel series, "ERP in Action" and "Marshall Plan at Work," were produced in 1950 and a third, "Changing Face of Europe," the following year. But the great majority of the celluloid weapons used in battle with the Cominform were documentaries on specific ECA projects. In keeping with the injunction that only Europeans could save

Europe, most were made under contract by Europeans, with guidelines and supervision provided by American superintendents and their staffs. Certainly, the defining feature of Marshall Plan films was that they were made by and for Europeans. This decision ranks among the shrewdest in the life of the Marshall Plan, for the local directors, cameramen, and producers who were hired tended to be either Europe's finest documentarians or else gifted stars on the rise. Victor Vicas, the expatriate Hungarian John Halas, Holland's John Ferno, Vittorio Gallo and the Vitrotti brothers of Italy, Peter Baylis (head of Associated British Pathé) and Cliff Hornby of England are but a small sample of the deep well of cinematic talent that was drawn upon.

Some creations were country specific. Others were "trans-European." Most were reminders that the Marshall Plan was making a difference. About half of the films played in countries other than the subject country. Not only was distribution widespread, reaching tens of millions, but exceptional technical artistry added to the allure of Europe's most popular postwar art form. It can still be appreciated in *The Shoemaker and the Hatter,* a prize-winning animated cartoon that pitched free trade and mass production and was distributed in 1950 in eleven languages to movie houses throughout western Europe; or in *The Story of Koula,* about a Greek boy and his American mule, another favorite that circulated in nine languages. *The Island of Faith,* about reconstructing the dike system in the Netherlands, played to audiences in nine nations and was dubbed in eight languages. A moving French production, *The House We Love,* was viewed in eight countries. Typically eleven to fifteen minutes in length, almost all played as shorts alongside features, usually American-made, in local cinemas, a format that maximized their viewers as well as their intended impact. The generally favorable impression of daily life in the United States conveyed by Hollywood directors reinforced the ECA's message.

One source of the films' popularity, their artistic qualities, derived from two inspirations: the creativity of the European filmmakers and the sophistication of their American supervisors. If one's political aim in the pretelevision age of the late 1940s were to mold the consciousness of millions and to sway mass opinion, then imaginative techniques like special effects, animation, original musical scores, and Technicolor made for receptive moviegoers. So, too, did the subtlety of the essential messages. The genius of the Americans in charge was their eye for talent in very different nations and cultures, while their true good sense was in their realization that subtlety can be best achieved from within those diverse cultures. Americans established the agenda—the themes of self-help, solidarity, and cooperation; of a consumer ethos of "more, bigger, better" and greater prosperity; of optimistic and can-do attitudes; of improving conditions and rising expectations. Homegrown directors had to figure out how, through European symbols, images, and accents, as well as the pace of the film itself, to enter regional psyches and thereby overcome varieties of resistance in Rotterdam, Florence, and Cherbourg to the producers' messages. Sometimes, as in Italian director Jacopo Erbi's

neorealist *Aquila,* a new film aesthetic solved the problem.[29]

Surely to the chagrin of numerous Congressmen who expected their constituents' generosity to have the highest profile, Americans in Paris instructed their European partners in the keys to maximum effectiveness: understate and underplay the ECA's role, render the ECA a subtle presence, put a premium on good taste, and do not push their underlying purposes too often or too hard. "An unwritten ECA law," Stuart Schulberg later acknowledged, "stipulate[d] that the Marshall Plan . . . will not be mentioned more than twice in a one-reeler and three times in a two-reeler." America's penchant for hype was in fact curbed. How, prior to sallying forth in their culture war, did those American supervisors acquire such valuable insights?[30]

An answer can be located in their distinctive backgrounds. None of them were plucked out of Zanesville, Ohio, and dropped into Paris. Neither Babbitts nor philistines who arrived across the Atlantic wide-eyed and innocent from small-town America, they had instead a European outlook and sensibility, much like the Marshall Plan's inspirators—Harriman, Acheson, Lovett, and Kennan. In the manner of Evan Thomas and Walter Isaacson's *Wise Men,* Wolff, Schulberg, Nilson, and Hemsing were Euro-Americans, or Europhiles, or cosmopolitans, a word unfortunately debased by both Hitlerism and Stalinism. They all spoke several Continental languages, had lived in Europe for years, and understood the tones, textures, and taboos of its cultures. The patriarch of the motion picture branch, Lothar Wolff, was born in Germany and immigrated to the United States in 1936 after working as an editor and publicist in Germany and France. A Jewish émigré in flight from nazism, Wolff was soon hired as chief film editor of the monthly "March of Time" newsreel series. The genre he came to know most personally in the late 1930s, the fifteen-minute short, later became the Marshall Plan's signature film. And it demonstrated that Wolff "understood how to address European audiences."

Wolff's successors and protégés were all in their late twenties or early thirties with promising futures when employed by the ECA. His deputy and replacement, Stuart Schulberg, though a native Californian, was schooled in Switzerland where he acquired fluency in French and German. After World War II, he worked in Berlin for the Office of Military Government, U.S. (OMGUS), running for several years their film unit and producing two first-rate documentaries, *Nuremberg* on the war crimes trials and *Me and Mr. Marshall.* From Berlin he went to Paris to assist Wolff. Schulberg's own deputy, Nils Nilson, also worked for OMGUS after the war in its Information Office. He too personified America's rich diversity and multiculturalism and the ways they can be exploited in foreign crises. The melting pot had its extra hidden benefits. With a Swedish father and German mother, three points of view coexisted in Nilson's makeup. When Nilson succeeded Schulberg, he elevated Albert Hemsing to his second-in-command. Like Wolff, Hemsing was born in Germany. Like Nilson, his parents and their heritages—a French mother and a German father—broadened his perspective

after the family immigrated to the United States when he was a child. During wartime Hemsing had worked in the Motion Picture Branch of the Office of War Information (OWI). Afterwards, he was an independent filmmaker and professor at City College of New York's Film Institute. Under the collective aegis of the four directors of ECA's Documentary Film Section in Paris, America's propaganda offensive made its greatest advances.[31]

Only around the ECA's pioneer program of Labor Information did controversy swirl. Setting itself clearly apart from the State Department, which lacked a "labor information" officer abroad, Marshall Planners had actually "invented the title."[32] Some labor historians, Anthony Carew among them, regard its activities as having had a profound long-term impact on the self-image of Europe's organized labor movement.[33] Critics, however, have been strident. Indeed, nobody has expressed greater disappointment, and administered lower marks, in response to its allegedly poor performance than did Alfred Friendly. According to its overseer, the Labor Information branch did not carry its weight in the campaign for European acceptance of facets of The American Way. Friendly's unfriendly verdict was: "a shameful boondoggle and waste of time and money," for while "they may have had entrée to . . . I doubt that they had any influence on European labor thought."[34]

Whatever Labor Information's proper grade might be, an ECA-sponsored opinion poll in mid-1950 revealed that 75% of those polled "approved" of the Marshall Plan. In all, two thousand Europeans residing in six countries—France, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Austria, and Italy—were interviewed. The results suggested that ECA propagandists had bested their competitors in the Cominform. The striking exception was France, where interviewees registered widespread disapproval and 40% of Parisians opposed the Marshall Plan. A reasonable inference to draw from such figures, notwithstanding their skimpiness, is that the sequel to the prodigious American campaign to sell the Marshall Plan at home also succeeded abroad.

Closer inspection of the results, however, raises reservations, for among workers and peasants, the primary targets of Cominform propaganda, the Marshall Plan garnered its least support. The consensus fashioned in large part by the domestic offensive did not fully materialize in its foreign redux. In one sense, the 1950 poll validated an earlier impression shared with his colleagues in the General Counsel's office at OSR headquarters by Henry Reuss, Harvard Law School graduate and future fourteen-term congressman from Wisconsin. "The European worker listens listlessly," Reuss observed, "while we tell him we are saving Europe, unconvinced that it is his Europe we are saving."[35] Did Marshall Plan propaganda fail to erode the support of workers for communism? Might the polling data have been otherwise? What more could have been done in publicity and public relations campaigns? At the very least, the Marshall Plan's impressive but qualified success in a very costly struggle with the Cominform for western Europe's hearts and minds invites analyses of the Plan's overall strengths and weaknesses.