

“A Border-free Open Road for the Marshall Plan” (1949)

Abstract

On June 5, 1947, as part of the American political strategy of containment vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall delivered a speech at Harvard University in which he offered the countries of Europe an economic aid program to rebuild their national economies. Because the program did not yet have an official name, the press called it the Marshall Plan. As a precondition, the U.S. specified that the Europeans were responsible for coordination and cooperation among themselves, whereupon the interested countries assembled at the Conference on European Economic Cooperation and worked out a common economic program. The Eastern Bloc countries were invited to participate but were pressured to decline. On April 3, 1948, President Truman signed the Economic Cooperation Act, putting the European Recovery Program (ERP) – as the Marshall Plan was now officially called – into motion. The plan provided for approximately thirteen billion dollars in aid. On April 16, 1948, the Organization for European Economic Cooperation emerged from the Conference on European Economic Cooperation. Its purpose was to coordinate the distribution of aid funds. The Marshall Plan was accompanied by an elaborate media campaign. Through films, newsreels, and traveling exhibitions, European audiences were informed of the origins, goals, and effects of the ERP. Posters like the one pictured below were supposed to make people aware of the advantages of the Marshall Plan – in this case, the cooperation of Western European governments across international borders.

Source



Source: Poster Advertising the European Recovery Program, 1949.

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