

‘Aid for Europe’ from Die Welt (11 November 1947)

Caption: On 11 November 1947, in connection with the Marshall Plan, the German daily newspaper Die Welt gives details of the aid granted by the United States to Europe.

Source: Die Welt. Überparteiliche Zeitung für die gesamte britische Zone-Veröffentlicht unter Zulassung durch die britischen Behörden. 11.11.1947, Nr. 134; 2. Jg. Hamburg: Die Welt. "Europahilfe", p. 2.

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Aid for Europe

The US Secretary of State, George C. Marshall, has submitted the US aid plan to the Committees on Foreign Relations of the Senate and to the House of Representatives. The final report from Paris estimated the European deficit to be 22 billion dollars. Marshall is close to this figure with his plan, requesting that Europe receive between 16 and 20 billion dollars in aid. In doing this he surpasses the Harriman Report, which estimated US aid at between 12 and 17 billion dollars.

If the Harriman Report has already aroused cautious optimism in Europe, then Marshall's approach will meet with full approval. His proposals come extremely close to those in the final report from Paris. The difference between the total sum required and the proposed amount is so small that it no longer bears any serious consequence for the far-reaching plans to rebuild Europe. However, there is still a long way to go, from Marshall's proposal to the Committees on Foreign Relations to a decision taken by Congress. If, however, Marshall's recommendations are followed, then it seems that Europe can be saved.

The enormous scale of the US aid is made clear by the fact that in the first 15 months alone, from 1 April 1948, 7.5 billion dollars is to be approved. This sum is more than twice that given to England in a loan to cover the cost of the entire reconstruction project for the country.

Amongst the countries due to receive this aid in Europe, Germany is relatively high on the list. While France, Italy and Austria will receive 597 million dollars, West Germany will be allocated 300 million dollars of emergency aid. This means that the key phrase of the Harriman Report has become a reality: 'Germany's role in the recovery of Europe is more important than that of any other country'.

The fact that Germany will also benefit indirectly from the reconstruction of other European countries should be clearly emphasised. All countries involved in the Marshall Plan are obliged to increase production in their food and industrial sectors so that they are able to satisfy the requirements of other countries, as well as their own. The Marshall Plan countries should also trade with each other and work towards lowering trade barriers. If these measures are successful then the strain on the global market will be lifted and this is absolutely vital for Germany.

However, Germany is not restricted to indirect aid only. It too is to receive a share of the aid for Europe, and we are pinning a great deal of hope on this loan. We hope to be able to increase imports of foodstuffs so that the cost of providing the population with sufficient food can at last be reduced. Furthermore, Germany will use imports of raw materials to boost the economy so that an effective monetary reform can be implemented. The mutual dependence which exists between monetary reform and boosting the economy is clear. The report from the Harriman Committee expressly calls for the stabilising of currencies as a consequence of US aid.

The Harriman Report does not establish any political conditions. It enables the people in the participating states to determine their own economic system. This will give the Socialist parties of all Western European countries a considerable boost for their willingness to cooperate in implementing the Marshall Plan. Respecting the freedom of all people as regards socialisation is the best weapon in the fight against a propaganda which condemns the Marshall Plan as 'dollar imperialism'.