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The Marshall Plan Summer

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BOOK REVIEWS

Bailey, Thomas A. *The Marshall Plan Summer*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1977. 246pp.

This book represents a distinct departure from Thomas Bailey's other works. The author begins his Foreword with the statement that "This book is not a scholarly monograph on the Marshall Plan. It is primarily a journal that describes in intimate detail conditions in the sick countries of Europe at the time the Marshall Plan was struggling to be born. The emphasis is on the patients, not the doctor." The dean of American history never cloaks his position and his 1941 observations are simple and straightforward with no implied symbolisms.

Traveling under the auspices of the National War College from June through August 1947, Bailey presents a very personal, rare historic Baedeker of the year that spawned the Economic Recovery Act for Western Europe, gave birth to the postwar containment policy, and formally announced the beginnings of the cold war. The fast moving text is punctuated with cartoons and pictures that accurately captured the temper of the time, and Bailey's recorded observations are well mixed with hundreds of personal interviews and official documents that have only been recently released.

Because of the unique "journal" style of the book, Bailey is able to give the reader an insight into the broad issues of general continental concern: food, education, government, economics and displaced persons in addition to lesser issues that illuminate the social conditions at the time: prostitution, architecture, standards of living, the media, American ethnocentrism, discrimination and political disposition of the intelligentia. *The Marshall Plan Summer* is not a chronological forced march through facts and does not rely on the traditional means of compartmenting

information. Rather, it is a whistle stop tour in which the traveler shares his 30-year old observations frankly and honestly and puts them into a casual country by country historical perspective. This is thorough history of the postwar climate in Europe without the mechanical facts that often make reading histories in general such a chore.

In his final chapter, Bailey suggests that the cold war was the inevitable product of clashing ideologies and misunderstood intentions, beginning with the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the articulation of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of world domination. The Epilogue puts the Marshall Plan into present day context and briefly discusses its place in history. That it gave the recipients the means to shorten the postwar trauma is without question. That it forestalled the westward movement of communism is probable. Thomas Bailey has added an important book to his works, one that will allow meticulous students to fill the voids that are created by the obligation many historians feel to keep history in the third person, avoiding all the unique, colorful, and descriptive sensory information they might receive firsthand. As a layman often disappointed with the cold, articulate, and erudite histories on which we are forced to subsist, I found *The Marshall Plan Summer* to be a pleasant change. Even erudite historians can get something out of it.

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Berman, Robert P. *Soviet Air Power in Transition*. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1978. 82pp.

With the widespread attention devoted to the Soviet buildup of nuclear weapons and increasing involvement in the Third World, relatively little public discussion has focused on the more