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Marshall plan: 20 years after

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COMMENTS

Marshall Plan

20 Years After

Twenty years have passed since George C. Marshall took the initiative, on 5th June, 1947, in a speech at Harvard University, for an aid programme which started up just one year later and which has gone down in Atlantic history as the Marshall Plan.

\$ 13,900 million—\$ 6,000 million less than were appropriated in the 1966/67 fiscal year for the Vietnam war—flowed to Europe between 1948 and 1952, and this was enough to create the incentives for a new economic development. Marshall Plan aid was an important basis for European reconstruction, and in Germany, in particular, it helped to overcome the feeling of hopelessness which made people doubt whether the damage caused by the war ever would be repaired. The success of this reconstruction effort is probably the best thanks the United States could have for assistance given.

What remains after 20 years is the appreciation of that politically far-sighted and humanly unique action, whose value is certainly not diminished because it was also definitely in the interest of those who contributed the funds. Contrary to 1947, however, we no longer have America's engagement, its forward-looking initiative in the political formation of divided Europe. America now seems to show signs of being weary of Europe; this is partly due to its engagements in the Far East, but may as well result from the feeling that the Continent is tired of American aid. At the same time, however, initiative and political activity are threatening to pass increasingly to the Communists, whose influence in Europe was to be effectively restricted not least by the Marshall Plan.

re.

Expo '67

The Supershow on the St. Lawrence

Expo '67, the world's latest supershow on the St. Lawrence, will not escape the fate of its predecessors. In spite of its marvellously organised harmony, which comes through its overriding theme, "Terre Des Hommes", that runs through the whole exhibition, it seems unable to get away from a vast panorama of national displays. A lot of trouble has been taken in Canada—not only financially—and a great deal of fantasy has gone into everything, particularly the so-called theme-pavilions which, in accordance with the motto chosen, show man in his various guises as moulder of his environment. The 63 participant coun-

tries have also been determined to avoid the self-glorification which usually dominates such events; most of them have shown originality and charm in the shaping of their buildings. But the efforts made to win the favour of visitors and have the satisfaction of a full building have destroyed many of these good intentions.

What has resulted is not a vision of man who—regardless of nationality—forms the future rationally and knows himself to be responsible for our world; it is rather a giant amusement park—a fair with astounding, delightful and rubbishy things to be seen—just like we find on earth. It is not the coming to terms of man with his environment which gives the tone of the exhibition, but national conceits and envies.

So not much more will remain of this International Exhibition—apart from the usual deficit—than a well-earned prestige success for a country which is hungry for prestige and which has found in this exhibition a setting worthy to fête its hundredth anniversary. Were it merely concerned with presenting national characteristics and achievements, no such costly function would be needed—particularly in a country so far from the important centres of population; this could be broadcast better—i.e. more completely, in better doses and much more cheaply—by individual nations via modern mass media.

mre.

Development Aid

Franco-German Co-operation

The talks held in Paris in May between the German Minister for Economic Co-operation, Mr H. J. Wischniewski, and his French colleague, Secretary of State Yvon Bourges, on how their countries could co-operate over development aid, seem to have been successful.

The Minister went to Paris intending to speed co-operation between the two countries in the sphere of development envisaged under the January 1963 Elysée Agreement; during the years of deteriorating Franco-German relations this co-operation was never put into practice. The aim of the government talks, inter alia, was to improve the synchronisation of the two governments' development policy. In the course of the negotiations, it was said that, apart from general principles, it would be desirable to achieve greater practical co-operation than had previously been the case, both on government and private industrial levels. The Germans persistently insisted that the existing imbalance between Federal Germany's contribution to the EEC Development Fund (34 %) and orders to German firms which were financed from this (9.1 %)