

## Introduction

In Billy Wilder's 1948 motion picture *A Foreign Affair*, a delegation of U.S. congresspersons visits occupied Berlin. Due to rumors that the GIs stationed there engage in frivolous behavior and have an all too casual attitude towards the local women, the delegation has come to evaluate morale – and morality – among their military personnel in Germany's former capital city. Twelve years of fascist rule and almost six years of war have left their mark on the once thriving metropolis. People roam the streets in search of food, offering their valuables on the black market for a loaf of bread or a piece of butter, squatting in what little shelter they find in the ruins. Looking down upon the destroyed city from their airplane cabin, the politicians begin to discuss the best possible way to treat the remnants of the Third Reich. Some insist on thorough deindustrialization and a hard peace, like the one negotiated in Versailles in 1919, that would eradicate the country's war potential once and for all. Others argue that only a democratized and economically revitalized Germany can guarantee enduring peace on the European continent.

Soon, the conversation shifts to the responsibility of the United States government to sustain the occupied population. "I'm all for sending food, only let 'em know where it's from," exclaims one member of the delegation. "I object to dollar diplomacy," counters another. "If you give a hungry man bread, that's democracy. If you leave the wrapper on, it's imperialism."<sup>1</sup> This last comment, questioning the extent, purpose, and impact of U.S. engagement in postwar Europe, reverberates throughout the film. Upon the delegation's arrival in the city, a comedic but acerbic take on German Fräuleins and lonely GIs in dingy

1 Billy Wilder, *A Foreign Affair*, DVD, Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures Inc., 1948.

night clubs, on former Nazi mistresses, upright all-American girls, and, of course, love unfolds before the viewer, played by lead actors Jean Arthur, John Lund, and Marlene Dietrich. Amidst quick laughs and fast-paced dialogues, hunger and distress prevail as the crosses the German people must bear for the atrocious crimes their government had committed all over Europe. But the film does not build a simplistic narrative of virtuous conquerors and starving defeated enemies. Wilder's Berliners are also steadfast, resourceful, and often too proud to admit any complicity in Hitler's doings. Their U.S. American counterparts are not exactly heroic role models, either. GIs happily partake in the black-market economy, which their own military government has rendered illegal, to offer the Germans food in exchange for valuables and physical favors. They behave, as Ralph Willett calls it, like "materialistic colonizers of a citywide slum."<sup>2</sup> Wilder's story is a tale not of heroism or imperialism but of human imperfection.<sup>3</sup>

And yet, with the mere mention of imperialism, Billy Wilder pointed to a central challenge in postwar U.S.-German relations that concerned not only congresspersons but also large parts of the U.S. public. Food, and the lack thereof, was an indicator for the success of the United States as an occupation power and as a herald of democracy. If the German people were starving and needed food urgently, was it so bad for them to know where it came from? Would it be wrong of the United States government to use food aid as an image booster? Were goodwill and self-interest mutually exclusive, or could they form a synergetic relationship? In short, could and should food do something other than feed people?

Food has always been intrinsically connected to power. It shapes dominant discourses on regional or national identification by proclaiming a unique, and often superior, culinary culture that becomes a signpost for belonging. Eating, displaying, boycotting, providing, and withdrawing food are politicized practices of cultural transmission, reward, or discipline. Domestically and transnationally, such practices can enforce or erode ideals and stereotypes of class, gender, and race; they can shape behavior, influence everyday lives, and change cultural norms according to the power that actors exert on and through food.<sup>4</sup> Providing food aid to people in foreign countries, especially if it came with Wilder's metaphorical wrapper, consequentially had broad societal and

<sup>2</sup> Ralph Willett, "Billy Wilder's 'A Foreign Affair' (1945–1948): 'The Trials and Tribulations of Berlin,'" *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 7 (1987): 5.

<sup>3</sup> David Bathrick, "Billy Wilder's Cold War Berlin," *New German Critique* 37 (2010): 43.

<sup>4</sup> On the interconnection of food and power, see Jürgen Martschukat and Bryant Simon, "Introduction: Food, Power, and Agency," in *Food, Power, and Agency*, ed. Jürgen Martschukat et al. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017); Helen Zoe Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food: Self-Control, Science, and the Rise of Modern American Eating in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 58–76; Katharina Vester, *A Taste of Power: Food and American Identities* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 1–5.

political implications. The wrapper signified a cultural environment to which both provider and consumer attached meanings, hopes, and intentions. Food aid transcended mere subsistence, as it exported cultural signifiers and often imposed them on its recipients.

Released in U.S. cinemas on June 30, 1948, *A Foreign Affair* addressed political concerns that had never before been so important in the United States. Three years into the military occupation of Germany, the grand alliance between the governments of the U.S., Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union lay in ruins, and all Allies had abandoned any hope of a continuing East-West partnership. In April, the U.S. government had launched the European Recovery Program (ERP), or Marshall Plan, to revive the shattered industries of the European continent and to express U.S. American commitment to leadership in a Western democratic alliance. The Soviet Union, meanwhile, emerged as the hegemon of an Eastern Bloc of socialist states. In between, divided Germany became the stage on which both camps tested their strengths. Just six days before the release of Wilder's film, the Soviet government had blocked all land and water routes to West Berlin, prompting the Western Allies to supply the city via air for the next eleven months. An entirely new geopolitical situation would develop before the end of the 1940s. Germany transformed from an occupied enemy territory into two sovereign states divided geographically and in their allegiance between East and West. In this terrain of the early Cold War, both U.S. policymakers and the U.S. American public searched for ways to make sense of their place in a new world order.

This study investigates the stories of people who provided food aid to Germany after World War II not just to feed the hungry abroad but precisely to make sense of the new geopolitical situation and their place within it. Like Wilder's film, it is not a tale of right or wrong, virtue or flaw, democracy or imperialism. It is a story of individuals and groups within the U.S. public who understood that food was much more than just material relief. Labor unionists, women's book clubs, university professors, immigrant organizations, preachers, and birth control activists – all of them understood that humanitarian aid for distant sufferers held many benefits for others as well as for themselves.<sup>5</sup> They could provide much needed assistance to people in dire need and, at the same time, satisfy their own desires, further their own agendas, and partake in their country's quest for political hegemony in the early Cold War – if they so pleased.

<sup>5</sup> “Humanitarian aid” is understood according to Esther Möller et al. “as a field that covers a broad range of activities, including emergency relief, longer-term development and active response to famine, ill-health and poverty”: Esther Möller, Johannes Paulmann and Katharina Stornig, “Gendering Twentieth-Century Humanitarianism: An Introduction,” in *Gendering Global Humanitarianism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Esther Möller et al. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 2.

Right after the end of armed conflict in Europe, the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe (CARE) came into existence in New York City. In 1946, CARE started sending its soon-to-be famous food packages across the Atlantic to provide humanitarian assistance to the needy of the war-struck continent. The financial means for this endeavor came from private U.S. American donations. For a US\$ 10 check, U.S. donors could have a CARE package sent not only to a country of their choice but to a specific recipient whose name they put on their order. This could be a friend or relative back in Europe, but it could also be someone unknown whose name the donor had received from neighbors or from local charities with contacts abroad. If they had no specific person in mind, donors could either ask for names at their local CARE office or they could just put down the profile of a person – like an orphan in rural Bavaria or a war widow in Paris – and let CARE find someone in need who fit the description. The packages, ready-made by the organization, contained an assortment of U.S. consumer goods, ranging from canned meats and dried dairy products to sweets and sanitation equipment.<sup>6</sup> Each of these parcels carried the name and address of the U.S. American donor and, upon receipt, CARE encouraged the beneficiaries to write a letter of appreciation to their benefactors. As a result, Europeans not only received desperately needed provisions, but they forged personal bonds with their benefactors in the United States, learning how they lived and how they thought.<sup>7</sup> In the case of CARE, the bread indeed came with a wrapper.

CARE soon turned out to be a major success – especially in Germany. U.S. Americans from all walks of life and across the country gave financial resources to aid the recently defeated enemy. In its first five years of operation, CARE shipped a total of ten million packages across the Atlantic, six million of which went to the four occupation zones and, after 1949, the two newly formed German states. This amounted to more packages than the total of all those received by the other sixteen European countries in which CARE operated.<sup>8</sup> On average, one out of fifteen Germans had received a CARE package by the fall of 1948.<sup>9</sup> When the organization closed its last German field office in West Berlin in 1963, the former war enemy had received aid worth more than

<sup>6</sup> For an overview of the content of the earliest CARE packages, see “The Famous CARE Food Package,” *The Washington Post*, October 4, 1946, 13.

<sup>7</sup> Heike Wieters, *The NGO CARE and Food Aid from America, 1945–80: ‘Showered with Kindness?’* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 43–44.

<sup>8</sup> CARE pamphlet, *Ten Million Ambassadors of Goodwill*, 1951, Papers of the Senats-Registrator Bremen, Staatsarchiv Bremen, Germany (hereafter Staatsarchiv Bremen).

<sup>9</sup> Charles Bloomstein, German Mission Draft for the *History of CARE*, 37, 1949, CARE Records 1945–1985, Box 2, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, New York: NY, USA (hereafter cited as CARE Records).

US\$ 80,000,000 from private donors in the United States.<sup>10</sup> Evidently, many people in the U.S. were eager to spend their money on Germany in this way.

But why was that so? Donating through CARE was not the same as dropping spare change in a collection box outside your local department store. Giving to a designated recipient in a specific country was a deliberate decision that could not be made in passing. It meant sacrificing financial resources for a faraway person that you might not even know, and it demanded a careful assessment of this person's physical need and worthiness. And still, people in the United States thought of feeding hungry Germans as a cause worthy of this financial sacrifice.

Uncovering the "why" is the purpose of this study. It treats humanitarian aid as an essentially reflective practice that not only considers the distant sufferer but pushes just as much, if not even more forcefully, for a reevaluation of the giver as an actor in a specific sociopolitical and transnational historical moment. Aid crosses spatial and cultural distances, which is why this study proposes two intertwined sets of motivations to investigate humanitarian giving: outbound motivations that targeted German hunger as well as social and political developments in Germany; and inbound ones that aimed at the consolidation or change of the actors' position within U.S. society, or the confirmation of their personal beliefs and ideological convictions. This distinction highlights a multifaceted dynamic in the ways people perceived and resorted to relief aid as a form of transatlantic engagement. Donors did not just understand CARE as a way to feed starving Germans but also as a means of engaging in the foreign policy interests of the United States' government. Some thought that humanitarianism could transform and bind Germany (which mostly meant West Germany) to the U.S. sphere of influence in the early Cold War. Others used CARE for their own purposes rather than as part of a grander political strategy. They found that the organization's unique person-to-person approach satisfied personal desires, offering direct access to a group of recipients that matched their own interests. In many cases, this form of aid was concerned with the donor at least as much as with the recipient.

CARE has not escaped the attention of other scholars who have contributed partial explanations for its popularity and its elevation to iconic status in the U.S. and Europe. In her history of CARE's development into a global humanitarian enterprise up to the 1980s, Heike Wieters argued that the organization owed its success to a quick adaptation to free market logics that focused on organizational efficiency, self-preservation, and strong government ties.<sup>11</sup> Karl-

<sup>10</sup> This figure includes only the donations given to West Germany up to 1960, when CARE closed all but the West Berlin offices. Including the figures for West Berlin and East Germany would likely add US\$ 10,000,000. See Press Release "CARE Will Close Service to West Germany June 30," April 24, 1960, CARE Records, Box 7.

<sup>11</sup> Wieters, *The NGO CARE and Food Aid from America, 1945–80*.

Ludwig Sommer equally stressed CARE's perseverance in legal and political struggles with occupation authorities and later the two German governments. He further credited its success to the tremendously positive psychological impact the packages had on German recipients and on public opinion towards the United States.<sup>12</sup> In his 1963 classic *American Philanthropy Abroad*, Merle Curti suggested that CARE's personalized package philosophy simply institutionalized the U.S. American tradition of "neighbor-helping-neighbor."<sup>13</sup> Godehard Weyerer and Philip Baur, by contrast, saw the success grounded in a large and compassionate German-American immigrant community, in CARE's potential use as a propaganda and re-education tool, and in a media image that shifted from Germany as a victim to Germany as a reformed transatlantic partner.<sup>14</sup>

While all these works hold great merit in their own right, this study aims to complement their findings with a much-needed perspective on individual donors and their motivations as reasons for CARE's success, thereby going beyond the purely organization-based approach. It seeks to demonstrate that the grassroots perspective of the giving individual allows for fascinating insights into how members of the U.S. public understood their own role and responsibility within the culture of their country and its proliferation across the Atlantic. People used CARE in ways that highlighted various pertinent debates on the virtues of the United States and its democracy and on the significance of these virtues in the endeavor to integrate Germany into a Western value system. Through their aid, donors reflected their understandings of education, religion, consumer capitalism, and political activism onto their transatlantic audience in the hope that it might serve their own, their country's, and their counterparts' interests. The diverse mélange of personal, public, domestic, and foreign objectives that donors pursued shows that they evidently understood humanitarian involvement as a form of active participation in debates on Germany's future. The reasons, as will become evident over the course of this analysis, were diverse. Goodwill intersected with reformist purposes, engagement in foreign policy clashed with personal gain and domestic interests, and paternalistic exertions of power overshadowed good-faith attempts at transatlantic cultural understanding. The decision to use CARE had not one "why" but many.

**12** Karl-Ludwig Sommer, *Humanitäre Auslandshilfe als Brücke zu atlantischer Partnerschaft: CARE, CRALOG und die Entwicklung der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen nach Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs* (Bremen: Selbstverlag des Staatsarchivs Bremen, 1999).

**13** Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad: A History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1963), 498.

**14** Philipp Baur, "From Victim to Partner: CARE and the Portrayal of Postwar Germany," in *Die amerikanische Reeducation-Politik nach 1945: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf "America's Germany"*, ed. Katharina Gerund et al. (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2015), 117, 126–37; Godehard Weyerer, "CARE Packages: Gifts from Overseas to a Defeated and Debilitated Nation," in *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945–1990: A Handbook*, vol. 1., ed. Detlef Junker et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 524.

Historians have so far shied away from investigating individual donors and their motivations. Gabriele Lingelbach argues that individual reasons for giving are difficult to analyze not only because they are poorly documented but also because archival documents might not reveal “true” motivations. A dominant consensus on charitable giving postulates compassion, pity, goodwill, and altruism as the only virtuous motivations, tempting people to conceal their potentially self-interested reasons for humanitarian engagement behind an idealistic façade.<sup>15</sup> Despite this well-founded concern, scholarly hesitancy to involve donors overlooks the manifold possibilities that their motivations offer to aid understanding of public and political debates at a crucial historical moment. A close reading of this moment and its determining social, cultural, and political structures can very well point to the motivations that lie beneath the donor’s own written word. If we investigate donors not as a homogeneous entity but as individuals with specific biographies, regional and educational backgrounds, and personal convictions, we uncover underlying motivations that those people did not reveal on paper. These motivations in turn show how members of the public understood their role as partakers in debates on cultural values, national identification, or foreign policy objectives. They also tell us how these actors perceived their own sense of agency, as well as which means they employed to gain maximum influence. A study of CARE uncovers how people of diverse backgrounds, with different financial capabilities, of different classes, gender identifications, and ethnicities slipped into the role of the donor and used their transatlantic agency from a distance.

Certain motivations in humanitarian aid, be they the genuine desire to do good or a deep religious belief in charitable duty, may prevail over long periods of time. But it is important to point out that changing historical contexts perpetually redefine those motivations and produce new ones. In this regard, postwar Germany was an especially ambiguous and dynamic case. The country of the former fascist enemy quickly developed into the contested ideological battle ground of a new enmity. A developing Cold War consensus rallied U.S. American political and public opinion behind the front lines of the battle between democracy and communism.<sup>16</sup> Someone who, in early 1947, aided a hungry West German boy out of pity may have used CARE to recruit that

<sup>15</sup> Gabriele Lingelbach, “Spenden als prosoziales Verhalten aus geschichtswissenschaftlicher Sicht,” in *Prosoziales Verhalten: Spenden in interdisziplinärer Perspektive*, eds. Frank Adloff et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2016), 28–29, 34.

<sup>16</sup> The Cold War consensus is understood as a bipartisan agreement, supported and publicly fostered by government-controlled and independent media outlets, emphasizing the need for a coherent U.S. foreign policy strategy towards communism that should take precedence over the opinions of the different political camps. See Daniel L. Lykins, *From Total War to Total Diplomacy: The Advertising Council and the Construction of the Cold War Consensus* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 109; Wendy Wall, *Inventing the “American Way”: The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 8–9.

same boy as a cold warrior in the battle for democratic freedom just two years later. This is to say that any glance donors cast across the Atlantic was necessarily also a reflection of their self-understanding as U.S. Americans, and we can only understand their humanitarian engagement within and because of these historical developments.<sup>17</sup>

Among the flood of works since the 1990s that have analyzed the origins and geopolitical facets of the Cold War and that have inquired into Germany's role in the conflict, a subset has increasingly focused on hunger, hygiene, and disease control in postwar Germany in the last decade.<sup>18</sup> Scholars like Atina Grossmann, Jessica Reinisch, and Alice Weinreb point to the connection of starvation and devastation to Allied occupation policies and public opinion.<sup>19</sup> The United States, as the only nation to come out of the Second World War economically stronger than it was before, became the central Allied power in debates on food supply and responsibility.<sup>20</sup> If the U.S. government failed to provide for its occupied subjects, it risked losing credibility within the emerging bipolar conflict, meaning that the proliferation of an entire political, economic, and cultural world view was at stake. For the U.S. government, Kaete

**17** On the idea of foreign policy and foreign engagement as reflective practices that reveal domestic political and cultural understandings, see Thomas Reuther, *Die ambivalente Normalisierung: Deutschlanddiskurs und Deutschlandbilder in den USA, 1941–1955* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000), 19–20.

**18** The number of historical studies on the origins of the Cold War and the U.S. occupation of Germany are too vast to elaborate on in detail. On the U.S. presence in Cold War Germany and its political, economic, military, social, and cultural aspects, see Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, Axel Frohn and Hermann-Josef Rupieper, eds., *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945–1955* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Carolyn Woods Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line: The American Decision to Divide Germany, 1944–1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Junker et al., eds., *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945–1990*; James McAllister, *No Exit: America and the German Problem, 1943–1954* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), Chs. 1–4. On the emergence of the Cold War with regard to security policy, economic interest, the influence of the main actors' biographies, and the role of emotions, see Frank Costigliola, *Roosevelt's Lost Alliances: How Personal Politics Helped Start the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); John Lambertson Harper, *American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

**19** On U.S. public health work in occupied Germany, see Atina Grossmann, "Grams, Calories, and Food: Languages of Victimization, Entitlement, and Human Rights in Occupied Germany, 1945–1949," *Central European History* 44 (2011): 118–48; Jessica Reinisch, *The Perils of Peace: The Public Health Crisis in Occupied Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 188–219; Alice Weinreb, "For the Hungry Have No Past nor Do They Belong to a Political Party': Debates over German Hunger After World War II," *Central European History* 45, no. 1 (2012): 50–78. For debates on Allied responsibility and postwar German lobbying for food as a human right, see Weinreb, *Modern Hungers: Food and Power in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 88–121.

**20** Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 2.

O'Connell argues, postwar Germany served as an initial testing ground for the later success of U.S. food aid in containment policy during the 1950s.<sup>21</sup> The German people, diseased and hungry, became a focus of geopolitical struggles and domestic U.S. American deliberations on responsibility and leadership in the early Cold War.

Taking over responsibility for hungry Germans in this context meant maintaining or developing agency in transatlantic relations. But agency, as Donna Alvah, Petra Goedde, and others pointed out, works in different spatial and relational dimensions. Occupation officials, U.S. American military personnel, and their families interacted with Germans on site, establishing direct dialogue with the “other” and stimulating cross-cultural communication and even changes in occupation policy.<sup>22</sup> This direct relationship produced a power imbalance between the wealthy and militarily powerful U.S. American victors and their defeated, demoralized, and hungry German counterparts. U.S. actors often expressed their power in paternalistic or, at times, even suppressive behavior and applied tropes of vulnerability and femininity to objectify or belittle the local population.<sup>23</sup>

These relationships shared a proximity of the parties involved. Humanitarian donors, by contrast, present a physically detached group of actors that experienced Germany in a quite different way. Only a few documented donors went to visit their European recipients themselves. Transatlantic distance consequently left those who gave with a distinct and indirect set of sources for relating to Germany, including media coverage and thank-you notes from recipients. But, as this study will show, humanitarian aid created power struc-

21 Kaete M. O'Connell, “Weapon of War, Tool of Peace: U.S. Food Diplomacy in Postwar Germany” (PhD diss., Temple University, 2019), 5.

22 Donna Alvah, *Unofficial Ambassadors: American Military Families Overseas and the Cold War, 1946–1965* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 2–5; Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender and Foreign Relations, 1945–1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), xiv–xxiii; Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 19–21, 25–29; Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 5–14; Thomas W. Maulucci and Detlef Junker, eds., *GIs in Germany: The Social, Economic, Cultural, and Political History of the American Military Presence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Adam R. Seipp, *Strangers in the Wild Place: Refugees, Americans, and a German Town, 1945–1952* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 97–108. As Robert Abzug showed, similar dynamics of on-site interaction and opinion-making were visible in the last days of World War II, as U.S. soldiers who liberated German concentration camps were directly confronted with the extent of the Nazi atrocities and took those impressions home, shaping public debates on the defeated enemy. See Robert H. Abzug, *Inside the Vicious Heart: Americans and the Liberation of Nazi Concentration Camps* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 154–55.

23 On paternalism and gendered language in humanitarian reasoning that excludes men and victimizes women and children as generally innocent, see R. Charli Carpenter, *Innocent Women and Children: Gender, Norms and the Protection of Civilians* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 1–2.

tures from a distance that closely resembled on-site contact. Donors, often knowingly, had the upper hand over their recipients. From a distance, the ability to provide or withhold aid gave donors the chance to exert power on their counterparts across the Atlantic.

How intrinsically donors, recipients, and media outlets connected CARE to notions of transnational agency becomes apparent in the fact that they often mentioned the organization in the same breath with the Marshall Plan, frequently perceiving both programs as one and the same. In 1947, for example, the *Saturday Evening Post* commented that through CARE, “every American can launch a Marshall Plan of his own.”<sup>24</sup> Although both programs worked independently of one another, with one being a private and the other a state-driven venture, they did have similarities. The Marshall Plan, several scholars have argued, was only one factor among many that contributed to West Germany’s economic rehabilitation after the war. But it bore psychological value in tying Western Europe to the United States economically and ideologically, creating a common sentiment of reliance and cooperation.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, CARE could only be a meager and mostly symbolic form of support given postwar Germany’s immense food shortage; it could never solve existing problems single-handedly. It was not in terms of quantity but quality that CARE and the Marshall Plan were very alike: they offered influence, the former on a private level and the latter on a political one.

In the past thirty years, a fair amount of scholarship on U.S. cultural diplomacy in the early Cold War uncovered how state and nonstate actors tried to promote U.S. American conceptions of democracy, consumer capitalism, and cultural practices abroad. U.S. policymakers and cultural diplomats often tried to convey overtly idealized images of the United States that evoked criticism at home and abroad. European audiences would only adopt the parts of U.S. culture that followed their own preformulated ideas of the country, while cultural elites on both sides of the Atlantic would voice their disdain for U.S. mass culture. More often than not, cultural diplomats had difficulty reconciling European and U.S. American ideas of what culture actually meant.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Henry F. Pringle, “The Nicest Gift You Can Buy,” *Saturday Evening Post*, November 29, 1947, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Werner Abelshauser, *Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland 1945–1948: Rekonstruktion und Wachstumsbedingungen in der amerikanischen und britischen Zone* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt GmbH, 1975), 19–31; Alan S. Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945–51* (London: Methuen, 1987), preface and 56–61. For a brief but thorough historical and historiographical overview of the Marshall Plan in Germany and the research conducted through the early 1990s, see Charles S. Maier, “Issue Then Is Germany and with It the Future of Europe,” in *The Marshall Plan and Germany: West German Development Within the Framework of the European Recovery Program*, ed. Charles S. Maier (New York: Berg Press, 1991).

<sup>26</sup> Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 95–115; Volker R. Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe: Shepard Stone Between Philanthropy, Academy, and Diplomacy*