

# MARSHALL PLAN 3

## Interviews:

Agnelli.

Gianni

Debouzy.

Marianne Geiger.

Theodore Mcghee.

George Modin.

Yuri Ivanovich Sum.

Antonin Warren.

James Wyatt.

Mark

## ***INTERVIEW WITH MARK WYATT, 15/2/96***

### **Continue**

**INT: So how did this support for the Christian Democrats and the other parties, how did that manifest itself, how was that organised?**

MW: Well, I wish I could say it was better organised. I was in that branch of the CIA at the time that had to rush into the breach without training in covert action. The OPC, the Office of Policy Co-ordination, under Mr Wisner, was... was not formed at the time; so those of us that worked in what we had a charter on, were going beyond our charter, and we had bags of money that we delivered to selected politicians, to defray their expenses, their campaign expenses, for posters, for pamphlets, what have you. And, we did many things to assist those selected Christian Democrats, Republicans and... and the other parties as well that were complreliable,

that could keep the secret of where their funds came from. They were talked to by CIA experts: "What do you say if all of a sudden you have in Turin the greatest extravaganza of propaganda? Who pays for it? Does the Fiat Corporation pay for it, or what? You've got to have some reason for your munificence at this time, and we don't want an indication that it's black bags of young Americans that are passing the money to you." So that was the big thing; but we did many, many other things at that particular time, harping at the chinks, the weaknesses that we felt that the Communist Party and the Communist labour union had. We worked in... in that regard. But it was financial support above all. OPC men that came in in the Fifties... there were big elections after '48, in '53 and then in '56, and so it should have been a thing that just continued on. The shocking thing... in 1953, the Christian Democrats lost 2,000 votes.

SOMEONE IN B/G: The clerical parties...

MW: I'm sorry. The secular parties as well went down. The Communist Party went way up, and the danger was there again. And we learned one thing: you don't win elections abroad with democratic groups if you just come running through with bags of money before the... just before the election. You have a continuing campaign of following these parties that are pro-American, that are trustworthy, and that can keep the secrets and keep it out of the tabloids and out of the Chamber of Deputies. In short... in those days before '48, I contend... as I said, some of the OPC people [said] "Well, those guys that picked it up in '47, they didn't know about covert action; they just passed black bags - that's all there was to it." That's not true. We did the best that we could at that time, and I think that we did do it judiciously, and that it didn't blow, and it... it was successful, the results of the election... well, it was very gratifying - there's no question about it. All indications were the Communists might well form a government. There was no way they could, because of the votes of those four parties that we helped.

**INT: I'm just going to ask you to...**

(End of roll)

**INT: So, Mr Wyatt, in 1948 how did you help win an election with only a few months to go? Oh, I'm sorry, just at this point we've got an aircraft.**

(A bit of non-interview talk, not transcribed)

**INT: So, I'll ask the question again. How did you help win an election with only a few months to go?**

MW: Well, the time factor was critical. We would like to have done this in a more sophisticated manner. Passing black bags to affect a political election, is not really a terribly attractive thing. But we only had a few months to do this, and that was the principal thing that we did. But so many things were going on. I recall... I had many contacts with prominent Italian-Americans in this country: bankers, industrialists, that were full of ideas, and some of them were very aberrant ideas. Powerful men - Giannini of the Bank of America... there were so many prominent Italians, and they would say, "Well, it's terrible. They're bums, the Communists. I

wish I could do more. I'm doing all I can: I write letters, I'm on the telephone, I fly to Italy, I'm constantly talking to them. But, you know, Mr Wyatt, if the Communists win that election and form a government, there'll be a coup d'etat." I was absolutely struck by this. I said, "You would feel that a coup d'etat would be a good thing in a democratic country like Italy? Who's going to lead the coup d'etat, what...?" You know, I mean, I had always been trained, "Let's keep stability [Laughs] in the world, above all, and don't encourage this great prominent banker, let's say, to say, 'Oh, well, what the hell, we'll have a coup d'etat'." We did everything in our power to discourage that. We said, "No, let's focus on the fact that those four parties have to increase their vote, and that the Communists have to be embarrassed somehow. We have to have some method." And these were the things that we did. We made contact with powerful political leaders in this country, not just Tammany Hall in Cook County, Illinois, but outstanding ones that knew how to win elections, and many of them were Italo-Americans that could speak Italian and could be introduced to leaders who were close to De Gasperi or close to Saragat, and they could go there and they could sit down and say, "Now this is what I think is going to be important, in winning the election that you want." And our support to anti-Communist newspapers was very strong. Also, in that early period, we discovered that there were remarkable anti-Communist cartoonists, and there were organisations that ridiculed the Communists. Some of the stuff was outrageous; Communist apparatchiks in cartoons had three nostrils in their nose; they wore huge moustaches like Joe Stalin - and the word for "moustache" in Italian is "baffi", and "baffi" is like "buffo", and Stalin, with that great moustache of his, became known in Italy as "Il Buffone", which means he was a silly, outrageous clown. And everybody... they never mentioned the name Joe Stalin, they just simply said, "Oh, Il Buffone is over there in Moscow," and this was very degrading (Laughs) to Mr Stalin. We fostered this for all it was worth. But the ideas came really from Italians - whether they were journalists or cartoonists or whatever - they had the ideas; they were brilliant. They destroyed the Communist apparatchiks in their caricature of them, saying "I obey, I trust," and up there was Joe Stalin, "Il Buffone". And this was effective propaganda, and that happened early in the game, and then continued after.

### **INT: How did you know which politicians to support?**

MW: I think guidance came from men like De Gasperi. But our embassy in Rome had been effective, certainly, and they knew the players very well. One interesting thing is... and we relied a lot of upon their intelligence, what came through Washington, on the fact that Mr Gronchi was extreme left of the Christian Democratic Party, Mr Pella was of the extreme right, who were the comers in these four parties, and men that really deep down felt very strongly about democracy. It's an interesting thing that when we started to make the payments in this hastily done covert operation of black bags and certain other help that I've described, the American Ambassador in Italy did not know it, which is kind of a startling thing. It took John F. Kennedy actually to say, "My number one representative abroad for the United States is the Ambassador." That's when (Sighs) CIA got its hand in the cookie jar a time or two. And... but General Marshall made the decision that James Clement Dunn, the Ambassador in Italy, would not know in 1948 that we were given money. Maybe we were protecting Ambassador Dunn. I knew Ambassador Dunn, and I rather think that he didn't want to know, that he was

safer as a top diplomat - and he was one of the four or five top diplomats in the entire American foreign service. But at any rate, people are shocked and say, "You mean the American Ambassador didn't know that we were passing out black bags to Christian Democrats? What if one of them came to the Ambassador and said, 'Gee, thanks a lot for that last payment.?' " Well, they were told that they didn't do that sort of thing. I'm sorry, I deviate there, but...

