

Indices of Cost of Living and of Workers' Wages (1913/14-1943)

Abstract

This chart presents data that helps us assess the consequences of changing economic policy and climate on a working-class family of five. We see first that real wages struggled to rebound in the years following the First World War. Only in 1928 did a German worker take home more to his family in terms of real wages compared to 1913/14. The Depression brought an end to this return of stability, and it would be almost another decade before real wages would surpass the 1928 levels. In the years following, full employment due to rearmament and war meant that wages remained relatively high compared to the cost of living, but consumer goods supplies remained low.

Source

Indices of cost of living (prices)^[1] and of workers' wages, 1913/14-1943 (1928=100)

Wages^[2]

Year	Hourly	Weekly	Cost of living	Real wages ^[3]
1913/14	53	61	66	93
1924			86	
1925	77	75	93	81
1926	82	78	93	84
1927	90	88	97	89
1928	100	100	100	100
1929	106	103	101	102
1930	103	95	97	97
1931	95	84	89	94
1932	80	69	80	86
1933	77	71	78	91
1934	79	76	80	94
1935	80	77	81	95
1936	81	80	82	97
1937	83	83	82	101
1938	86	87	83	105
1939	89	90	83	108
1940	91	93	86	108
1941	95	99	88	113
1942	96	100	90	111
1943	97	101	91	109

NOTES

[1] Calculated for working-class family of 5 (1934) with averages for food, drink, rent, heating, electricity, clothing.

[2] 'effective wages' per hour and per week.

[3] Calculated on basis of cost-of-living index per week.

Source: Volker Berghahn, *Modern Germany: Society, Economy and Politics in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Cambridge, 1987, p. 290.

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