

Confiscation of Living Space by the British Occupying Power (1947)

Abstract

In the face of supply difficulties and a dramatic housing shortage, the confiscation of living space, goods, and services by the Allied military governments was a source of conflict. In the heavily damaged city of Cologne, the Occupation Office acted as an interface between German and British authorities and made sure that British demands were smoothly implemented.

Source

The Occupation Office that was set up immediately after the occupation of Cologne quickly developed into an important link between the city administration and the citizens, on the one hand, and the military government, on the other. It also developed into a procurement office for the military government and the occupying army, whose orders had to be carried out in proper form and on time. In the beginning there was a lot of improvising. It was only after the consolidation of the city's administrative apparatus and that of other administrative apparatuses as well that part of the necessary work could be handed over to other offices and agencies.

The following confiscations were carried out: for the British military government – 66 houses and apartments (950 rooms), 23 single rooms, 16 garages, 4 tennis courts, and one soccer field; for the Belgian occupying army – 140 houses and apartments (800 rooms), 50 single rooms, 3 garages, 3 gas stations, 2 cold storage cells, and part of the stadium (2 swimming pools, 4 tennis courts, 2 soccer fields).

In the beginning, the requisitions of goods and services occurred without any orders; the requisition form was introduced only in August 1946. The confiscation of goods and services reached a value of 2.5 million RM. Four barracks, the stadium, and 250 individual quarters had to be repaired on orders from the occupying powers. By March 31, 1947, 300 applications for restitution of personal damages and 10,000 compensation applications for property damage had to be processed. [...]

Source: Administrative Report of the City of Cologne 1945–1947, p. 59; reprinted in Christoph Kleßmann and Georg Wagner, *Das gespaltene Land. Leben in Deutschland 1945–1990. Texte und Dokumente zur Sozialgeschichte*. Munich: C.H. Beck, 1993, p. 64.

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