

OMGUS Survey of German Reactions to Expellees and DPs (December 3, 1947)

Abstract

One of the biggest social challenges in all four occupation zones was the integration of Displaced Persons and ethnic German expellees from Eastern European regions that had belonged to Germany before the war. Surveys conducted in the American occupation zone between March 1946 and September 1947 point to massive tensions between native residents and newcomers. The results also show that both sides were skeptical about the possibility of successful integration.

Source

Sample: a cross-section of native residents and expellees in the American Zone.

Interviewing dates: March 1946, November 1946, June 1947, and September 1947. (9 pp.)

Expellees and native Germans were almost unanimous in the belief that the expulsions were unjustified. Dissatisfaction among both groups increased, with seven per cent of the expellees saying in March 1946 that they were not satisfied with the way they had been treated and 45 per cent expressing this view by September 1947; among native residents, in March 1946 a fourth (25%) predicted that the expellees would not get along with the native population and in September 1947 almost half (46%) made this prediction. Six out of ten native Germans (59%) considered the expellees to be German citizens; they were also the respondents most likely to think that the expellees would adjust to their new surroundings.

A vast majority of the expellees (85%) would go back to the place of their birth if they had a chance; nine out of ten native residents (91%) also felt that the expellees would go home if they could.

Two-thirds (66%) of AMZON residents predicted that the displaced persons would not be able to get along with the native population, and as few as three per cent of those interviewed considered DPs to be German citizens. About one in seven (25%) thought that Germany should be responsible for the support of the DPs, with one-third (32%) placing this responsibility at the door of the DPs' native country.

Source: A. J. and R. L. Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany. The OMGUS Surveys*. Urbana, IL, 1970, pp. 186–87.

Recommended Citation: OMGUS Survey of German Reactions to Expellees and DPs (December 3, 1947), published in: German History in Documents and Images,
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:document-4141>> [July 02, 2025].