

OMGUS Survey on German Opinion toward the Prospective Peace Treaty (June 1947)

Abstract

In June 1947, the vast majority of Germans still hoped for the speedy conclusion of a peace treaty, despite the recent failure of the foreign ministers' conference in Moscow, where the Allies had been unable to agree on either the establishment of a centralized German administration or on reparations questions. It was expected that a treaty would bring numerous economic and political improvements. But half of Germans were of the opinion that such a treaty would not be concluded within a year.

Source

German Opinion toward the Prospective Peace Treaty

Sample: 2,986 respondents in the American Zone and in the American and British Sectors of Berlin.

Interviewing dates: June 1947. (10 pp.)

A majority of the public, looking back at the Moscow Conference, condemned the Russians for obstructionism. A fourth of those questioned felt that the Conference definitively outlined the separate points of view held by the Allies or, at least, were conducted with good will on all sides.

A very large majority of AMZON Germans (82%) thought that a peace treaty would mean an improvement in Germany's situation. This feeling was so general throughout the population that there were no significant differences among any of the major population groups. Among those who credited the United States with giving aid to German reconstruction, however, an even larger majority (88%) looked forward to an improvement in their lot after a peace treaty. Those denying the existence of such aid were less apt (76%) to expect improvements.

About half (49%) the people did not expect that the Allies would complete a peace treaty by the summer of 1948, although a large minority (35%) did believe that Allied unity on the matter would be achieved by then. Those expecting agreement tended to be drawn from the broad masses of the population, whereas critics and skeptics were much more often upper class, well-educated men, or former NSDAP members.

The most important thing hoped for by all population groups was a revival of German trade and commerce. Higher socioeconomic status groups suggested, as the next in importance, provision for widened national boundaries, a unified democratic government, and relief from financial difficulties, including reparations payments. Lower socioeconomic status groups spoke in more simple terms, stressing the return of prisoners of war, relief from the burden imposed by the presence of evacuees, and an improvement of the food situation.

Source: A. J. and R. L. Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany. The OMGUS Surveys*. Urbana, IL, 1970, pp. 166–67.

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