

OMGUS Survey on Worries and Hardship in Germany (May–October 1946)

Abstract

Life in Germany in 1946 was still characterized by great material hardship. Surveys conducted in the American zone between May and October 1946 show that food shortages were still the most pressing concern. There was also concern about other materials needs, such as clothing and housing. Concerns about prisoners of war and other missing persons played an important role, too, especially in rural areas.

Source

The Trend of Cares and Worries in Germany

Sample: summary of seven surveys in the American Zone between May and October 1946, with sample sizes of 1,427 in May, 1,485 and 1,524 in June, 1,536 in July, 2,969 in August, 2,985 in September, and 2,983 in October.

Interviewing dates: 8 May, 7 June, late June, 1 July, 9 August, early September, and 4 October 1946. (8 pp.)

Between May 1946 and October 1946 there was a shift toward greater material distress among the concerns of the general population. The concerns mentioned in May in order of frequency were lack of food (34%), anxiety over prisoners of war and missing persons (18%), and general insecurity (9%). The concerns mentioned in October in order of frequency were lack of food (36%), lack of clothing and shoes (23%), unemployment (22%), anxiety over prisoners of war and missing persons (15%), housing and furnishing problems (9%), and lack of implements of production (7%).

Comparing the three *Laender*, residents of Wuerttemberg-Baden reported difficulties, particularly regarding food, more frequently than did residents of Bavaria or Hesse. Even rural areas (under 2,000 population) in Wuerttemberg-Baden reported greater concern over food than rural areas in Bavaria and Hesse, but, in all three *Laender*, lack of food was mentioned by increasing percentages of the population as the size of the community increased. More people in smaller villages and towns reported lack of clothing and shoes than in larger cities. Worry about missing prisoners of war and other missing people was centered in the rural areas. Lack of housing and furnishings was more widespread in the large cities than in towns and villages.

Source: A. J. and R. L. Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany. The OMGUS Surveys*. Urbana, IL, 1970, pp. 112–13.

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