

Rural Housing Conditions (1929)

Abstract

Article 155 of the Weimar Constitution formulated the government's goal of "ensuring every German a healthy home and all German families, especially those with many children, a residential and economic homestead appropriate to their needs." Accordingly, social housing projects were implemented from the mid-1920s to alleviate the housing shortage that had existed since the nineteenth century, particularly in urban working-class neighborhoods. Hyperinflation and the global economic crisis, however, dealt a blow to publicly financed housing construction, and mass unemployment meant that many impoverished people in both urban and rural areas became homeless. The 1927 housing census showed that at least one million households in Germany did not have their own home.

These images are taken from a publication titled *Die Wohnungsnot und das Wohnungselend in Deutschland [The Housing Shortage and Dire Living Conditions in Germany]*, which was published in 1929 by the German Association for Housing Reform under its managing director Bruno Schwan. The association was committed to improving the housing conditions of workers in particular and called for government measures to promote housing construction instead of leaving it to private developers alone, as had been the practice during the *Kaiserreich* period. Schwan and his colleagues had traveled to 150 German cities, towns and communities and documented the cramped and often unhealthy living conditions they found all across Germany. The three images shown here were taken in Blaschewitz (Upper Silesia), in eastern Germany; in Papenburg (Emsland), in northwestern Germany, near the Dutch border; and the mining town of Waldenburg (Lower Silesia), near the Czech border.

Source



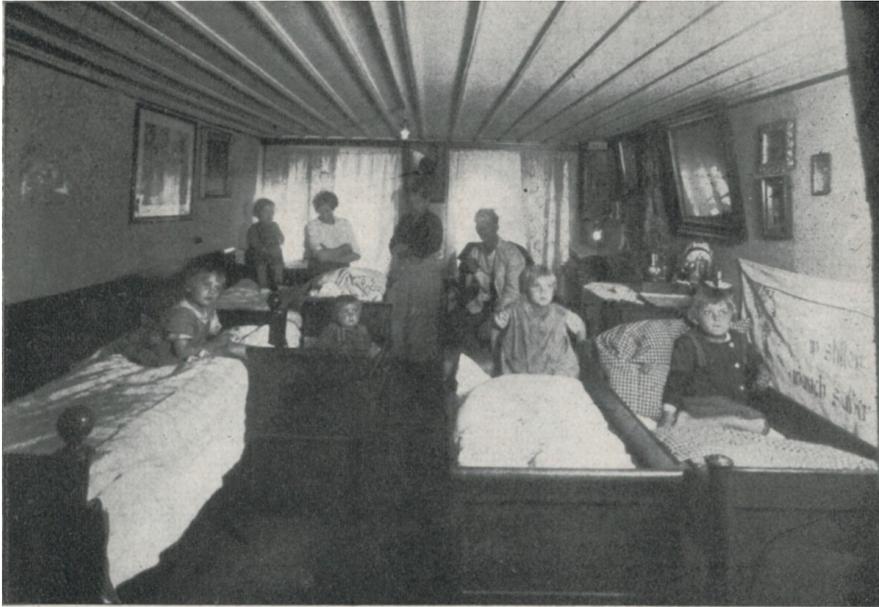
Wohnhaus in Blaschewitz, Kr. Neustadt O.S., bewohnt von kinderreicher Familie.



Papenburg. In dieser Hütte hausten sieben Personen 13 Monate lang in einem einzigen Raum, der Küche, Schlaf- und Wohnzimmer zugleich darstellte.



Kreis Waldenburg.
Inneres eines schadhaften und unzulänglichen Wohn- und Küchenraumes.



Schmiedeberg. Gartenstraße 33. Bewohner: Familie Maler J. Drei Erwachsene und sechs Kinder. Je zwei Personen in einem Bett. Schlechter Bauzustand des Hauses; Schindeldach ist regendurchlässig.

Source: From: Bruno Schwan, *Die Wohnungsnot und das Wohnungselend in Deutschland*, Berlin, 1929.

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