

### 1000 Germans Ponder

# THE BLACK MARKET



The black market is getting a substantial share of blame for the current shortages of consumer goods by Germans in the American Zone, but most of them feel that the military and civil authorities are doing everything possible to eradicate the evil. This was one of the main conclusions of an OMGUS public opinion survey.

Almost half the public thinks that there is some black marketing in their community although most of these people do not regard it as being serious. The study made by Information Control's Surveys Unit (ICSU) on the basis of interviews with 1000 adult Germans carefully selected from communities of all sizes also uncovers important differences in attitudes among different groups and areas in the American Zone.

### BARTER vs BLACK MARKET

The report evaluating the survey emphasizes that Germans generally distinguish between organized black marketing, which is strongly condemned, and informal bartering between individuals to cover their own needs, which is accepted and widely practiced. This survey covers attitudes toward black markets, not toward barter.

Despite specific aspects of black markets in larger cities, especially in Berlin, there is little evidence to show that black markets in Germany ever reached the stage of "institutional organization" which they attained in other European

countries. The traditional German respect for authority is one of the reasons given for the limited number engaged in flagrant types of illegality.

There is no widespread acceptance of the black market as a 'way of life' in Germany. This basic attitude leads most Germans to favor strict measures against black marketers and makes the control problem easier for the authorities," concludes ICSU.

A large plurality of the sample population (45 percent) said that a black market is operating in their community. One in every six people interviewed believe the black market extensive, while one in four think it is unimportant.

Residents of large cities report such activities more frequently than residents of small towns. For example, in Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Munich — the three largest cities in the Zone — 96 percent of those interviewed agree that illegal trading exists in their cities. More Bavarians (55 percent) than residents of the other two Lands (36 percent) say that a black market is operating in their community.

### ECONOMIC EFFECTS REALIZED

The influence of the black market on general economic conditions is recognized by a solid majority (64 percent) of those questioned. Only 13 percent assert that there is no real influence; and about one in five was too uninformed or unsophisticated to make any reply. A majority (56 percent) believes that the black

1000 Germans were asked:	And they replied:		
	Yes	No	Don't know
1. Do you believe a black market exists in this community? . . . . .	45%	55%	0
2. Do you believe that black markets exercise an important influence on economic conditions? . . . . .	64%	13%	13%
3. Do you believe that black markets are responsible for the fact that you cannot buy as many things as you used to buy? . . . .	56%	24%	20%
4. In your opinion, are the authorities doing everything possible to remove the black markets? . . . . .	60%	14%	26%

market is responsible for their inability to purchase things which were formerly available.

Men, apparently better informed on such matters, realize the economic implications of black market more often than women. Although better educated people were more likely to realize general economic implications than less well-educated ones, they are less apt to hold that present shortages are caused by black marketing. "Better educated people," the report adds, "know more about technical economic relationships, but they also are more apt to realize

that present shortages are primarily a product of the economic dislocation caused by the war."

A vote of confidence in the authorities was given by 60 percent of the public who feel that everything possible is being done to put an end to black marketing. However, one in seven (14 percent) deny this and urge more drastic control measures: Severer punishment for black market operations and more careful surveillance of farmers. The integrity of the police themselves is questioned on the grounds that big operations can be carried out only with their complicity.