

# US ZONE GERMANS OPTIMISTIC ON FUTURE

## Survey Shows Three Out of Five Persons Believe Their Situation Will Improve in 1949; Currency Reform Overwhelmingly Approved

**G**ERMANS in the US Zone have considerable confidence in the future—three persons in five believing they will be better off in 1949—according to the results of a public opinion survey released by the Information Services Division, OMGUS. Moreover, the Germans have given overwhelming approval to the recent currency reform measures instituted by the three Western Powers, the survey revealed.

The study, conducted in the US Zone, including the Bremen-Bremerhaven area, by ISD's Opinion Surveys Branch to measure public reaction to monetary reform, disclosed that 90 percent of the southern zonal residents and 96 percent of the Bremen area citizens recognized its necessity.

However, 57 percent of those who voiced approval criticized its timing, the majority believing that the corrective action should have been taken earlier than the date of its inauguration on June 20. The division of German opinion on the matter is indicated in the following table of percentages:

Best time	South States	Bremen
When it took place . . . . .	27	39
Sooner . . . . .	53	53
Later . . . . .	4	4
No opinion . . . . .	6	—

An indication of German confidence in the immediate economic future was the expressed intention of seven persons in every 10 to buy more clothing, shoes, household utensils and furniture than they had bought in the six months preceding currency reform. In addition, the study disclosed that 55 percent of the southern state residents and 77 percent of the Germans in the Bremen area contemplated no reduction in purchases of any sort within a six-month period.

Despite the general feeling of optimism, 38 percent of the zonal Germans and 23 percent of those in the Bremen area admitted planning to cut down purchases of certain items, including coffee, spices, beer, ex-

pensive foods and ersatz products. This, according to MG analysts, indicated an intention to buy more discriminately with the new "hard" currency than with the old, more plentiful Reichsmark.

**T**HE SURVEY further indicated that a large majority of Germans expected currency reform to reduce the black market appreciably. Along with general questions regarding the existence of a black market, interviewers made this inquiry: "In your opinion, will the black market be overcome by currency reform, will it be somewhat limited, or will it continue on unchecked?" The percentage of opinions of the German respondents was:

	South States	Bremen
Overcome . . . . .	14	8
Limited . . . . .	71	73
Continue as before . . . . .	9	18
No opinion . . . . .	6	1

Evidence of the effect of currency reform on the black market was found, the survey explained, in opinions concerning the existence of local illegal trading. Only one-half of those interviewed after the currency change stated that such trading existed locally, while three persons in four held such belief before the advent of reform. The majority of those replying affirmatively to the question, "Do you believe there is a black market in this community?" held that it was unimportant in extent.

One of the significant aspects of the survey concerned Germans' opinions on the food situation in the first month following the change in German currency. One-half of those interviewed in the southern states declared that they were doing better than formerly in obtaining food supplies; 43 percent claimed to be getting along as usual, while only six percent reported an adverse food condition. In Bremen, the figures were: "better," 78 percent; "the same," 21 percent, and "worse," one percent.

Parallel evidence of the improved food situation was provided in the

continuous MG survey of trends in German public opinion. Asked this question, "What at present are your chief cares and worries?" the proportion of Germans mentioning food as their chief anxiety dropped from more than 50 percent to about 13 percent.

**A**DDITIONALLY, the survey pointed up the importance of food in postwar German thinking. Thus, the report explained, people who said their rations had improved tended to attribute it to changes brought on by currency reform and to express favorable attitudes. In contrast, considerably fewer of the smaller group whose rations had not improved were inclined to view the changed conditions with favor. The percentage of relationship between food supplies and attitude toward currency reform is shown in the accompanying percentage table:

	Food Supply in Past Few Weeks Was:		
	Better	Worse	Same
Currency reform was:			
Necessary . . . . .	53	6	41
Not necessary . . . . .	28	16	56
If necessary, currency reform:			
Came at right time . . . . .	49	4	47
Should have been done sooner . . . . .	58	6	36
Should have been postponed . . . . .	32	16	52
During coming next year will:			
Get along better . . . . .	62	4	34
Get along worse . . . . .	38	12	50
Get along the same . . . . .	33	8	59
Intend to buy certain goods . . . . .			
Do not intend to buy more . . . . .	54	5	41
42	11	47	
Through currency reform, black market will:			
Be overcome . . . . .	52	4	44
Be limited . . . . .	54	5	41
Go on as before . . . . .	45	13	42

### Spanish Consul in Frankfurt

An office of the Spanish consulate general has been established at Frankfurt with Don Eduardo Garcia Comin, in charge.