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THE MANAGEMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND
FOOD SUPPLIES IN GERMANY, 1944-47

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SUMMARY

During the period of National Socialist government in Germany the country came close to self-sufficiency in food. Once the war was over the victors attempted to maximise domestic output in order to restrict imports of foodstuffs, and essentially this paper tries to explain why this policy did not succeed. Even before the end of hostilities soil fertility was in sharp decline (due largely to a lack of artificial fertiliser). This was to continue after the war, which may be attributed to an overall lack of farm requisites of all types. The partition of Germany into four zones (on a quite arbitrary basis in economic terms) made this much worse, at a time when refugees were coming into the western zones in large numbers.

Allied attempts to convert pasture land into arable, and so produce food for direct human consumption, were frustrated by a number of related factors, in addition to the two named above. Farmers were reluctant to run down pig and cattle stocks, which limited the amount of land available for growing cereals, potatoes and sugar-beet, which yield far more calories per hectare than does animal husbandry. Sowing targets for such products were therefore never reached in any zone. Land reform in the Soviet Zone certainly lowered output there still further, and both the Russians and the French did take some available foodstuffs for their own occupation forces. In the British and American Zones the failure to achieve desired production levels was accompanied by the inability of the occupiers to enforce the delivery of food from the farms to the urban areas; this was especially the case once the Germans themselves took on the supervision of this from 1st January 1947. This was to some extent due to negligence, but also to the fact that de-nazification lowered the efficiency of German agrarian administration.

The crucial factor in Germany from 1945 to 1949 was the link between coal and food. Shortages of the second held back output of the first, which limited industrial activity in general. As this inhibited an adequate supply of farm requisites peasants were obliged to resort to barter food illegally to obtain them. Thus from an initial lack of proper food supplies the whole German economic revival was retarded.

INTRODUCTION

"The world had never before known a situation in which four peoples lived and tried to co-operate in a country inhabited by a fifth."⁽¹⁾

This quotation adequately summarises the problems for the Allies involved in the management of agriculture and food supplies in Germany after the National Socialist surrender. During the war Germany was supplied mainly from indigenous resources when only approximately 10-15% of its food consumption came from outside pre-war frontiers.⁽²⁾ After the end of hostilities the Allies were faced with the same question of how to maximise domestic production, and distribute it evenly among the population, as had been the Hitler regime. This chapter, therefore, will not deal with Allied food imports into Bizonia except briefly, since these only arose through failure in domestic output and deliveries.

Although the occupying powers experienced familiar problems in agriculture there were now important differences in degree, some of which the National Socialists had already begun to feel prior to 1945, due to the effects of the war. These included the lack of machinery and spare parts, of fertiliser for the soil, the destruction of farm buildings and transport facilities by fighting and bombing, and the presence of minefields on agricultural land. Additionally, after 1945 the Allies had to cope with the Zonal divisions consequent upon surrender. Before an analysis of Allied food policy can be attempted a brief survey has to be given of the state in which German agriculture found itself by 1944, to put the problems in some kind of perspective.

The lack of equipment and of artificial fertiliser sharply increased as hostilities dragged on. As agriculture in Germany was heavily dependent on the latter commodity this was a serious

matter, and began to affect crop yields quite considerably.⁽³⁾ Overall soil fertility was down by 1944 to about 80% of prewar, according to one investigation.⁽⁴⁾ There is little doubt that this was due principally to lack of nitrogen and phosphate, the supply of which by 1944 - 45 came to only about 50% of the prewar figure.⁽⁵⁾

As the war increasingly reached Germany itself the total areas sown with principal crops also declined; the net result was catastrophic in terms of indigenous production.⁽⁶⁾ Since yields were also down, the total available supplies had fallen quite sharply by the 1944 harvest.⁽⁷⁾ Thus the occupying powers were faced with a grim situation in 1945, as German food output was dropping sharply on exhausted soil in a country devastated by war.⁽⁸⁾

In addition, Four Power control presented a new problem, that of Zonal division, which had serious implications for both east and west Germany, as agriculturally they had been complementary prior to 1945.⁽⁹⁾ That this might be difficult to continue after the war had occurred to the British in 1944, when it was estimated that if eastern surpluses were not forthcoming, North West Germany would have a food deficit of about 1 million tons in bread grain, $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ million tons of potatoes and $\frac{1}{4}$ million tons of meat and sugar.⁽¹⁰⁾ This was exacerbated by the decision of the Four Power Council in November 1945 to return 6,500,000 ethnic Germans back into the old Reich. By January 1st 1946 the population density by zone varied greatly, from 268 in the US Zone and 270 in the French, to 285 in the Soviet Zone and as high as 370 in the British.⁽¹¹⁾ In sum, the British Zone was the most seriously disadvantaged of all the occupied areas.

ALLIED PLANS

The concept of maximising agrarian output laid down at Potsdam was underpinned by a number of quite specific principles, of which the

first was the need to concentrate on direct consumption crops. This rationale already underlay the Hot Springs International Food Conference, Resolution XII, in 1943. It was agreed there that the best way of combatting post-war world food shortages would be to produce grain and potatoes directly for human consumption, rather than by concentrating on animal husbandry and dairy farming.

The Allies were therefore following a precedent laid down both by Hot Springs and the NSDAP in Germany. To obtain additional land for grain and potatoes etc, it would probably be necessary to reduce livestock herds so that the land normally used for grazing or growing root fodder could be utilised for produce for direct human consumption. Hence quadripartite objectives included an increase in sown areas of direct consumption crops of 15% in 1945-6, as compared to the previous year.⁽¹²⁾ Unfortunately these targets were not attained. Overall only 89.4% of the 1938 sown acreage was reached, against the target figure of 97.0%. Although the goals had been reached in respect of grain, this was not the case for pulses, oil seeds, and potatoes, most important of all. Zonally the level of success for overall sowings varied considerably, with the Soviet Zone (94.8%) and the UK Zone (92.6%) best, and the US Zone (83.8%) and the French (72.8%) some way behind to give the national average of 89.4%. In addition what diminished supplies of indigenous food still further was the fall in actual yields per Ha, which were virtually duplicated in the following year.⁽¹⁴⁾

Before the war Germany had been able to guarantee about 83% of its foodstuffs from within its own borders, or the equivalent of 2500 calories per head daily to the non-farming population. The drop in both the extent of cultivated areas and of yields clearly threatened to reduce the rations available to an amount well below prewar consumption, and the failure to implement the Four Power programme

has to be seen as a serious setback and one which applied in varying degrees to all four zones. The question has to be raised as to how and why this came about. Undoubtedly partition was the reason, as it left the implementation of allied targets to each zonal authority as the Soviet delegate on the quadripartite Food and Agriculture Coordinating Committee insisted.⁽¹⁵⁾ This meant that the provision of the Potsdam Agreement that Germany should be treated as one economic unit was already dead.

Levels of Modernisation in German Agriculture and the failure to attain targets.

There are various factors to be examined under this heading. To restore German agriculture by 1949 to full prewar production levels which was the medium-term objective of the occupying forces, an ample supply of farm equipment was required. Here, the problem of wartime damage to industry, and the permitted level of industry in post-war Germany became vital. Overall, if the steel required for the manufacture of machinery is included, agriculture's yearly need in the US and British Zones amounted to 681,000 tons, at a time when their annual quota was only 76,835 tons.⁽¹⁶⁾

An additional problem was artificial fertiliser, on which the food output depended to a large extent.⁽¹⁷⁾ Here the partition of Germany was a decisive area as the various zones were complementary. The Soviet area had, for example, 60% of all national potash deposits.⁽¹⁸⁾ So although the allocation of fertiliser requirements for the whole country was done on paper jointly by the allied powers, the actual supplies made available fell far short of those needed, as the distribution of 75% of 1938-9 use was in principle only, rather than in practice. In fact, actual supplies available never attained the 75% target.⁽¹⁹⁾ The real crux of the matter was a lack of co-operation in general among the various occupying powers, coupled with coal short-

ages, which also hampered fertiliser output.

In effect the British were caught in a dilemma: if they sent coal to other zones to make fertiliser they earned \$9 a ton or a sterling equivalent.⁽²⁰⁾ If they retained the coal in the Ruhr to make fertilisers the savings in extra grain output was far greater since it cost so much to import. 4 tons of coal sold abroad paid for 1 ton of imported wheat, but had the fuel stayed in Germany, the nitrogen it made would enable an additional 10 tons of grain to be produced at home.⁽²¹⁾ As one official put it "if we had not had to export so much (coal) we should be better off for fertiliser manufacture."⁽²²⁾ The British continued to export coal under pressure from their European allies, whilst the grain shortfall thus produced inside their zone forced UK taxpayers to subsidise food sent to Germany.⁽²³⁾

In June 1946 the UK zone commander, Air Chief Marshal Sir Sholto Douglas, proposed a moratorium on coal exports for 4 months at least to enable more steel, consumer goods and fertiliser to be made in the British Zone, which would have had a really beneficial effect on food output. This proposal was debated by ministers when Hynd, the British Minister for Germany, admitted that the idea "would pay substantial dividends" economically. But he accepted nevertheless that the Foreign Office, the Treasury and the Americans were against any suspension of Ruhr exports on political grounds: as he put it, "we must be prepared to accept a policy of deliberate impoverishment of the British Zone for the sake of the liberated countries, and consequently; therefore, a continuation of the financial burdens on the UK".⁽²⁴⁾

However accurate a summary this might have been of the British position, it had to be borne in mind that the benefits of a

moratorium on coal exports in favour of more deliveries to other zones in Germany was not raised. If a genuine Four Power regime had existed in Germany the UK would have given priority to coal shipments from the Ruhr to other zones, instead of to European allies. Since the British were caught in a web of international relations their zone in Germany had to suffer, which continued to entail less fertiliser etc, and therefore less food, for the whole country.

Of almost equal importance for food supplies was the lack of seeds in the immediate postwar era, especially in the west, since prewar the east had been the seedbed for the whole country, and zonal division was therefore of crucial importance in this matter as well.⁽²⁵⁾

This meant that a great deal of land ploughed up for crops could not be planted, as there were no seeds available. In the British Zone alone there was a shortfall for 1945-6 of 200,000 tons of seed potatoes, 30,000 tons for green vegetables and 225,000 tons for cereals.⁽²⁶⁾

The failure to convert even larger areas of grazing in order to plant direct consumption crops is partly attributable to this shortage and represented a further restriction on farm output.

Other factors inhibiting output and inter-zonal food transfers

Thus a whole row of technical problems prevented maximisation of output in Germany. To these must be added three other factors,

two of them political and one socio-economic. The first political decision was the Zonal division of the country, which cut right across the normal patterns of German agriculture, and militated against bigger output, and against inter-zonal food exchanges. The real crux of the matter was the failure to obtain a central agrarian administration for the whole country, for which both the British and Americans had pushed initially;⁽²⁷⁾ Neither the French, nor the Soviets, would accept this idea without reservations. In particular, Sokolovsky, the Soviet delegate, laid down that the question of a central agency for food and agriculture could only be considered in the general context of similar organisations for all economic sectors, and therefore could not be discussed in isolation.⁽²⁸⁾ This dragged the discussions on so that no effective instrument was set up before the onset of the "Cold War" which precluded any overall supervision of food exchanges.

Another question is the extent to which any surplus supplies did exist in the Soviet Zone in view of the comment made by Sokolovsky to Robertson. When the exchange of steel from the UK Zone against food from the Soviets was mooted, their representative pointed out that there were not enough food reserves in the Soviet Zone to enable it to be executed anyway.⁽²⁹⁾ Here the second political factor in the food equation has to be considered, the effect of land reform in the Soviet Zone.

The Soviet Zone Land Reform

In the latter area "Agriculture was dominated from the first by the proposed land reform".⁽³⁰⁾ The western allies were certain that the way in which it was carried out would lower production, since

under the slogan "Junker land in peasant hand" large estates were split up into allegedly uneconomic units. There are two factors to consider here, the first being delivery to the market. Broadly speaking, the larger the farm unit the higher the percentage of its produce which it sent for general consumption outside the farm itself.

Secondly, what the western allies also believed was that breaking up of estates into smallholdings without adequate supplies of seed, fertiliser, tools or even proper farm buildings would diminish overall production as well. As they said, "No competent German agriculturist would deny that the way in which the reforms have been carried through will have a serious effect on the efficiency of farming for several years in eastern Germany."⁽³¹⁾

However, it has to be underlined that output also fell in the 1946 harvest for the western zones. The crux of the matter is, did production fall more heavily in the east than in the west, and if so, was land reform at least partly responsible? To the first question the answer certainly seems to be affirmative.⁽³²⁾ Decline in the Soviet Zone was clearly greater than in any western zone, especially in grain, which as Nettl implies (for technical reasons) meant that organisational changes had been responsible.⁽³³⁾; this would suggest that the land reform was in itself at least partly to blame. But the whole issue is clouded by the presence of other factors.

One farm expert reported very adversely on the general state of the Zone in October-November 1945, at a time when land reform had been scarcely implemented. It is clear that the actual policy of living off the land by the Red Army and its requisitioning was largely

responsible for this, especially in respect of livestock, including draught horses. As he put it "the general picture of the farming areas east of the River Elbe is that of an industry which is going through a deep economic and social depression."⁽³⁴⁾ The loss of livestock in itself meant that natural manure was lacking. When the shortage of artificial fertilisers, seeds, etc., is added it was clear that a serious fall in output would take place in any event. Overall it seems reasonable to infer that gloomy predictions of the results of land reform were probably accurate to a large degree. But other factors also existed, such as general shortages and Red Army occupation. The net effect was that little food was available for delivery to the over-populated west.⁽³⁵⁾

Food Collection

The third factor which inhibited a better food supply in post-war Germany was food collection, rather than production as such: here the main problem was inducing German farmers to part with their products via the legal means of distribution, rather than exchange them on the Black Market, against consumer goods, or articles needed for production. There seems little point in accusing German farmers of a lack of discipline. Not only had National Socialist control gone, but also the patriotic motive of winning the war for their country had disappeared with its defeat.⁽³⁶⁾ Moreover, for those who still had confidence in the Reichsmark, they could sell produce illegally for inflated returns, since the occupying powers fixed farm prices to prevent inflation. (Note circulation in Germany stood at 13 billion R.M. in 1939 and 70 billion in 1945.)⁽³⁷⁾ Richer returns could be obtained therefore on the Black Market. For the majority of peasants who had lost confidence in the currency and needed certain articles, exchanging food for barter was an easy way out. As early as September 1945 an "evident reluctance to

dispose of goods for cash" was reported..... "the barter of commodities in short supply is widespread."⁽³⁸⁾ A further point was the reluctance of peasants to cull their livestock as the western allies wished. Peasants tended to use animal herds as a criterion of wealth, and wanted therefore to diminish this asset as little as possible as particularly this type of farming paid better than arable. Additionally the reduction of pig holding by the National Socialist regime brought down stocks from 27 million in 1938-39 to 18.6 million in 1944.⁽³⁹⁾ The last thing owners now felt like doing was to cut numbers still further, especially as pork and pig fat could be traded for consumer goods. Culling cattle herds also foundered on the structure of peasant farming in the south and west based on relatively small units. A military government ordinance to reduce herds by 10% sounded like common sense in principle, but how could it be applied in practice on smallholdings? In Bavaria, 80% of cattle owners had six head or fewer; and in Württemberg-Baden, about one half had fewer than four cows.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Reductions therefore constituted a serious threat to their livelihood, and they consequently fought the Anglo-American demand for a full 10% cut. This had three consequences.

In the first place, it wrecked the whole rationale of replacing pre-war deliveries of grain, beet and potatoes from the east by ploughing up grassland to grow such staples in the west. The British conceded that a livestock-slaughter policy was hard to enforce, as farmers insisted on regarding it as a punitive occupation measure, "and its implementation requires stringent supervision and heavy penalties for non-compliance."⁽⁴¹⁾ In the US Zone the same type of evasion resulted in an estimated loss of 306,000 tons of wheat equivalent for human consumption.⁽⁴²⁾ It was clear to the occupiers even at the time that farmers were understating sown areas

in order to disguise from the Allies that they still possessed more head of cattle than they showed on official returns.

For the 1947 harvest, British sources estimated that although farmers should have sown $2\frac{1}{2}$ million Ha. with bread grain against $1\frac{1}{2}$ million Ha. for fodder, the real results were 2 million and 1.8 million respectively; they saw no reason for this other than the need to feed the illegally-high herds of cattle.⁽⁴³⁾

Similar reports had already emanated from the US Zone, where sample checks showed actual seeded areas in general to be understated.⁽⁴⁴⁾ In other words, what German peasants were really interested in was growing fodder for animals, many of whom they should have killed.⁽⁴⁵⁾

The outcome was a loss equivalent to 1.6 million tons of flour from the 1947 harvest. The British administration also failed to reach targets for sown hectareage for potatoes. Ministry of Agriculture experts from London required either 1 million Ha. sown, or 750,000 Ha. in the event of further live-stock reductions; the 1946 actual figure amounted to only 469,000 Ha.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Since the normal yield in the UK Zone in 1946 was 127 Dz. per Ha. (=12.7 tons) the shortfall of 280,000 Ha. (even if the modest target of 750,000 Ha. had been adopted) represented over $3\frac{1}{2}$ million tons of potatoes for one zone in one year. In retrospect it is interesting to note that the tendency among peasants to understate the amount of land used for animal feeding-stuffs had already begun before the end of the war.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Under the western allies the practice of feeding grain, potatoes and even milk to animals went on increasingly, which seriously diminished supplies for human consumption.

Another important aspect of the allied failure to reduce livestock has to be considered, as the continued presence of large herds furnished farmers with exactly the means required to engage in Black Market dealings. Milk and butter are clearly easily exchangeable commodities.

Of course, the food so traded still found its way to the non-farming population who were the counterpart to the peasants in Black Market dealing. But the essential point here is that evasion prevented the fair and equitable distribution of supplies. In sum, animal husbandry is an inefficient way of producing food in an emergency, and therefore it has to be borne in mind that the continuance of large cattle herds, contrary to Allied wishes, lowered the overall calorific yield of German agriculture.

Despite cattle stocks, ironically enough the Allies were never able to get an adequate supply of milk in the west, since it disappeared in the making of illegal butter. This in its turn lowered the quantity of fats available to the non-farming population. Since this trend continued into 1947, the fats ration remained low for Bizonia at the miserable level of 200 grammes per 28 day ration period, a wholly derisory figure, the equivalent of only 51 calories per day.

If the presence of over large cattle stocks was one problem, the illegal (or "black") slaughtering of pigs was another. Again, the official culling programmes were carried out more efficiently in the UK Zone than in the US area.⁽⁴⁸⁾ But in both zones peasants were concealing large numbers of pigs from the authorities, in order to use the meat and fats on the Black Market. Reports to this effect were frequent for both areas.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Infractions of the law in the US Zone were on such a scale that a special report was compiled on the subject. It suggested that through illegal slaughtering from December 1945 to the same month of 1946, 49% of all pigs, 72% of sheep and 23% of cattle were being killed outside stated regulations.⁽⁵⁰⁾ The estimated loss in supplies to normal channels of distribution amounted to 138,000 tons of meat and 9,000 tons of fats in 1945 - 6 alone, a huge loss in calorific terms. So the western allies had the worst of all possible worlds: the over-sized pig and cattle

stocks diverted food from direct human consumption, and even when killed, the meat, fats and milk went on a large scale to the Black Market.

Distribution

A further issue which concerned food supplies was the problem of how to control the movement of foodstuffs within districts and regions, or from these with a surplus to deficit areas. This was clearly affected by the inability of the occupying powers to agree to a new central agency following the breakdown of the National Socialist centralisation in the shape of the Reichsnährstand.⁽⁵¹⁾ What the allies found on arrival in Germany was a reversion to agrarian autonomy in each district. (Kreisautarkie). Each ally dealt with this in his own way in his own zone.

The British had decided in 1944 to continue with the Reichsnährstand (RNS) as far as possible.⁽⁵²⁾ A report made by an official investigator sent from the UK in early 1945 supported this intention by saying of farmers "Many of them are asking if this system is to be continued. It appears to have satisfied them and brought the food off the farms."⁽⁵³⁾ This was the crux of the matter for the British : their point of departure was wholly pragmatic. Thus existing officials of the RNS were to be left in office for administrative reasons, and should not be dismissed merely in virtue of being members of the RNS, but only if they were proven National Socialists of long standing.⁽⁵⁴⁾ An impending food crisis therefore took precedence for the British . Initially they restored the RNS at district and village level under their own Regional Food Teams of specialist British officers. Eventually they were forced to set up a central agency staffed by Germans for their own zone, known as the German Interregional Office for Food and Agriculture (Gifac), which early in 1946 assumed executive powers in a zone where no regional government existed.⁽⁵⁵⁾ Its head was Schlange-Schöningh, a former Osthilfe Commissar. From Gifac grew

the Central Office of Food and Agriculture for the British Zone (ZEL) also under him, charged with overall supervision of food in all its aspects, but still using the old RNS (albeit purged) as its local organ.

In the US Zone (as in the French) a somewhat different system applied in that the individual regions (Länder) were given responsibility for food and agriculture eventually with an overall plenipotentiary for the zone as co-ordinator: this was Dr. Dietrich, onetime Agriculture Minister and an ex-member of the Liberal DSP. His office was unlike Schlange-Schöningens, in that he had to cope with regional authorities. Once the British and US Zones merged economically from 1 January 1947 a new organisation for what was now Bizonia came into being, the office for Food, Agriculture and Forestry (VELF), first at Stuttgart and then at Frankfurt. Its initial head was Dietrich who ceded his position on health grounds in mid-1947 to be replaced by Schlange-Schöningens. So in principle a bizonal agency now existed for both production and the centralised distribution of foodstuffs. Theoretically the two western allies had found the next best solution to an all German administration. Unfortunately four things impeded its efficient operation in practice.

For the Länder still retained the last word: VELF could issue instructions to them, but had no means of implementing them itself, and was dependent on Länder good will. This was not the arrangement that the British and North Germans desired, but in preliminary negotiations they were overruled by the Americans and South Germans. (56) The result was crucial since at a time of short supply the food surplus regions were reluctant to comply with instructions to send foodstuffs to deficit areas, such as the Ruhr. In Bavaria, the chief agricultural area for the south, the erection of VELF was greeted by a broadcast by the Food Minister Baumgartner, which appeared to suggest his region would not bow to any central authority. (57)

It soon became clear that VELF directives were not being followed in the south, where it was suggested that to forego food in Bavaria in order to send it elsewhere would merely encourage regional separat-
(58)
ism. Failure to send supplies north naturally evoked sharp criticism there where Robertson the Deputy Military Governor deprecated open attacks on "the alleged selfishness of the southern Länder",
(59)
which he felt would make things worse. Indeed, public bickering between Baumgartner and Lübke, Food Minister in North Rhine-Westphalia became commonplace, and others joined in the mutual recriminations .

Particularism was not confined in any way to the southern Länder but represented a general tendency of the times: the "Meat War" ~~between~~
Bavaria and the north was paralleled by a "Potato War" in late 1947, due to non-delivery of this staple item from Lower Saxony to other areas. The net result was less food for the non-farming population, in the latter instance the amount being 558,000 tons of potatoes below delivery quotas, two thirds of which had been due from
(60)
Lower Saxony. Overall the British authorities estimated that collection and distribution failures in Bizonia diminished the official
(61)
supply of meat and fats by 25% for the urban consumer.

But the second factor which affected collection was at least equally important, namely, the attitude of individual districts or even villages. Particularism existed at this level as well, so that it would be an error to suppose that low deliveries from Bavaria or Lower Saxony necessarily meant that the urban population in those areas lived well: broadly speaking, it was only the farm population who
(62)
did in any region. Thus VELF complaints that their directives were not carried out by the Länder usually meant in practice that the districts and parishes were ignoring those from regional govern-
(63)
ment in their turn. In Bavaria it was said that district officials (Landräte) and parish chairmen were openly opposed to regional

policy, and justified it with the word "democracy" as they were all
(64)
locally elected and looked after their own areas first.

Since this also happened in North Rhine-Westphalia it was difficult to see how officials there could complain about non-arrival of supplies from other Länder, when they were not making full collections
(65)
in their own area. In May 1947 the British accused North Rhine-

Westphalia of being the worst region for grain deliveries in the UK
(66)
Zone. In the case of potatoes, however, farmers had a convincing excuse for non-fulfillment of quotas for delivery: many were
(67)
simply stolen by the hungry urban population.

A third issue was German goodwill in executing allied orders: how greatly its lack affected deliveries is difficult to determine in retrospect, but certainly it contributed to general difficulties. The British complained of the regional Food Ministry in North Rhine-Westphalia that it did little to pass on to the general public information about world food shortages.
(68)

In another region inability to obtain statistics from the local food administration led a British officer to report "The German official can be very evasive indeed
(69)
when he likes, and in this matter he does like."

Food difficulties in general led to a huge row between the Anglo-US authorities and Germans in April 1947 when an American Food and Agriculture official, Colonel Hester, accused the Germans of poor administration.

He was supported by the British Minister Hynd, who alleged the period of National Socialist rule had brought in its train the lack of personal initiative which so many German officials showed.
(70)

Such criticism makes it hard to determine to what extent non-compliance with the orders of the occupying powers, who oversaw all German agencies,
(71)
was due to lack of goodwill or simple inefficiency. Here a factor was de-nazification, which cannot be fully examined, but has to be
(72)
borne in mind as it reduced the number of experienced German advisers.

In the Reichsnährstand many officials charged with food collection were themselves peasants and had little intention of employing coercion against their professional colleagues for the sake of the allies or even for the urban population of their own country.⁽⁷³⁾

Ultimately this was why so many peasants were able to evade their duty in delivering food for distribution through normal channels and use it for Black Market dealings. In the US Zone, with a different system, elected local officials had to please their constituents, a point noted early when complaints about collection were made. As one speaker put it, "parish chairmen and district leaders (Landräte) don't press home orders as they are elected every two years and are apprehensive about public opinion."⁽⁷⁴⁾

The allies were then left with a choice; in the UK Zone the RNS organisation was carried on in principle by people geared to rural and not urban interests who would not act against friends or relatives in the village and in the US Zone by elected officials, fearful of losing votes. Neither system was satisfactory.

Their deficiencies were compounded by two other matters; the first was the need for the Germans at whatever agency to obtain allied approval for directives. This slowed up the whole administrative procedure, and consequently afforded both at Länder and at local level, the opportunity for evasion of regulations.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Moreover, allied personnel themselves were not especially numerous, nor in many cases, particularly efficient.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Criticism in the UK itself of British zonal administration was frequent during the whole occupational period.⁽⁷⁷⁾ Above all, the real failure it was suggested was lack of any overall policy and of contact between Berlin and the Zone.⁽⁷⁸⁾

It is therefore only right to remember when reading allied criticism of the Germans that complaints were not all one way. In the US Zone

the main problem again was the lack of supervisors: in summer 1946 there were only 8 US officers in the entire agrarian administration in Bavaria (which had 2/3rd of the total hektarage of the US Zone).⁽⁷⁹⁾ Obviously they had virtually no chance whatever of ascertaining if anyone was carrying out their directives or not. That US supervision was in general inefficient was known to the British in late 1945, as currently nearly 1/4 of the potato crop in the American occupation area was being used as fodder, which the administration seemed unable to prevent.⁽⁸⁰⁾

This leads to a comparison between occupation policy in the west in general and that in the Soviet Zone. There German Communist émigrés trained in Moscow came in with the Red Army, and on the whole, their subsequent administration seems to have been quite satisfactory.⁽⁸¹⁾

The Russians swept away all National Socialist organisations and began from the bottom up, with the intention of giving responsibility for their own affairs back to the Germans. So the Reichsnährstand went and a new Department of Agriculture set up: at lower levels the administration was handled by local government. Special food committees were set up locally, on which consumers, as well as farm interests, were represented.⁽⁸²⁾

As well as abolishing the RNS, the Soviet authorities ended the system of demanding compulsory delivery of all produce (which the western allies retained). Instead, a new arrangement based on previous Russian experience was brought in, whereby delivery quotas per Ha. left the peasant the chance to sell any produce over that figure on the free market (freie Spitze).⁽⁸³⁾ Apparently, this did not immediately meet with farm approval: it was certainly regarded with some scepticism by the CDU in Berlin.⁽⁸⁴⁾ Apparently late in 1946 punishments, sometimes arbitrary, were being inflicted by the authorities for failures in delivery, though often on larger farmers for more political reasons. But even non-Communists accepted that the total

delivery as practised in the west had failed and that some new incentive had to be found.

The whole question occasioned a lively debate in the west over the merits of abolishing the existing system, and initiating the Soviet model, on which some favourable views were held. On the other hand it was often reported that even in the Soviet Zone difficulties were being experienced in food collection.⁽⁸⁶⁾ In January 1947 the Minister of the Interior in Thüringia appealed to peasants to do their duty, and fight the concept of the urban population procuring food illegally from farms (Hamstern) : he demanded that the delivery system be run more honestly.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Clearly this seems to imply irregularities were widespread.

In retrospect it seems clear that the western allies continued too long with the National Socialist system of demanding total delivery of everything produced. Not until 1948 was a new arrangement brought in, whereby the "freie Spitze" was used for some commodities. Similarly it was a long time before any incentive scheme was adopted, namely, the concept of giving farmers premiums to encourage delivery, which the National Socialists had employed during the war.⁽⁸⁸⁾ The whole problem was bedevilled by two factors, firstly, what are the criteria for good deliveries? An inefficient peasant surrendering 90% of his output gives less to the market than the good producer who sends in 75%. It was for this reason that the Ministry of Food and Agriculture had opposed Hitler's wish to give financial incentives during the war, which he over-ruled.⁽⁸⁹⁾

The allies in the west wanted incentives in kind. If peasants were forced to barter food for necessities on the Grey Market, why not give them what they wanted as a legal reward for delivery? After this suggestion to VELF, months went by and nothing seems to have happened.⁽⁹⁰⁾ Unfortunately the whole question was complicated by differences of

opinion within the military governments themselves. There is no doubt that the food administration officials wanted new incentives, but in September 1947 these were rejected as impracticable by the Commerce and Industry Branch due to shortages of consumer goods.⁽⁹¹⁾ So despite the quadripartite law of 20th March 1947 which imposed heavy penalties on anyone dealing unlawfully in rationed goods, the Black Market continued to impede the equitable distribution of foodstuffs to the urban population.

It is clear that the use of the stick did not work, however, or as the military authorities put it, "the notion of combating compensation trade by inspection and judicial action alone has proven a complete failure."⁽⁹²⁾ Eventually a piecemeal incentives scheme was set up in Bizonia, giving sugar in exchange for potato deliveries.⁽⁹³⁾ By then the urban population had been short of food for three years.

Conclusion

It is clear that on the production side targets were not achieved in respect of sown areas in 1945-7 in Germany as a whole.⁽⁹⁴⁾ In the Soviet Zone this may have been due at least partly to land reform, and in the western zones to failure to reduce pig-cattle herds, and prevent food needed for human consumption being utilised as fodder; the general inability to control the Black Market was significant. Shortages of fertiliser, tools, machinery and spare parts held back sowing and meant either that ploughing could not be done, or that nothing could be planted or fertilised in some farm land even when it had been converted from pasture. Failures in production were accompanied by shortcomings in the collection system, especially in Bizonia. Above all, the political decision arrived at during the war to divide Germany arbitrarily cut off the eastern food-surplus areas from the deficitary

western zones. The problem of refugees accentuated this problem of supply to urban areas in the west especially.

That the occupying powers were, however, able to prevent both mass starvation and disease at a time of world food shortages reflects credit on them: this point is not necessarily modified to any great extent by the fact that the British and Americans had to resort to imports in order to achieve this. Here their inability to enforce deliveries, true apparently also in the Soviet Zone at least to some degree, was crucial. Peasants and food-distributors in Germany had lived under National Socialism for 12 years prior to the arrival of the Allies, and by 1945 they were sick of controls.⁽⁹⁵⁾ There is some evidence that attempts to enforce delivery quotas and oversee the farm population by representatives of other sectors were actually counter-productive in the postwar era.⁽⁹⁶⁾ Given this, and the general shortage of consumer goods, a Black Market was unavoidable, as was the inability to reduce livestock herds: by 1943 at the latest 1 million tons of grain were already being used unlawfully as fodder per annum.⁽⁹⁷⁾ If National Socialist discipline and appeals to patriotism were unable to prevent this, foreign occupiers would have little chance of success.

Finally, two matters should be mentioned which have been omitted here. Firstly, the financial position of the farming population. In an era when economic activity frequently was reduced to barter, estimates of monetary income are pointless. Not until after the currency reform of June 1948 is an examination worthwhile. Secondly, no attempt has been made to deal with land reform, other than with its effect on food production east of the Elbe. Whatever effect it had on this, land reform was a long-term restructuring of social and economic relations in the then Soviet Zone.⁽⁹⁸⁾ In the western zones, partly due to the inability of the Germans of differing political persuasions to agree among themselves, no such measure took place, in any real sense.⁽⁹⁹⁾ Since

land reform in the Soviet Zone has been followed by collectivisation to some extent, a long-term contrast was created with West Germany, where the structure of agriculture in 1949 was similar to that in 1933 and 1945.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ there the period of occupation saw no basic change in property relations on the land.

NOTES

1. Balfour Michael and Mair John, Four Power Control in Germany and Austria 1945-6, O.U.P. 1956, p.116.
2. Klatt Werner, Food and Farming in Germany, in A. and V. Toynbee (Eds) Hitler's Europe, O.U.P., 1954, p.214, estimates that about 25 million tons of flour equivalent were imported during the war.
3. See Hanau Arthur and Plate Roderich, Die deutsche landwirtschaftliche Preis - und Marktpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg, Gustav Fischer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1975, p.44 for figures.
4. Professor E. Woermann, cited in Clauss Wolfgang, Erfahrungen aus 50 Jahren Agrarpolitik, pub. by Schleswig-Holstein Peasant Association, Kiel, 1979, p.21.
5. Klatt Werner, Food and Farming in Germany, in International Affairs, 1950, vol.26, part 1, p.196.
6. Ibid memo, 27 Nov.1945. The decrease overall in cultivated areas varied by zones as follows: Soviet Zone - 22.8; US Zone - 8.4; French Zone - 24.9; UK Zone - 13.2
7. Hanau and Plate, op.cit, p.44ff.
8. In 1944-5 potato output was only about 80% of the pre-war average, ibid p.44.
9. The three western zones had taken yearly between 1935 and 1938 1.6 million tons of food from the future Soviet Zone, plus the land east of the Oder-Neisse, of which 1.1 million tons were grain and 420,000 tons potatoes. British Control Commission Report for Jan.1947 (Vol.2 No.1) PRO-FO 371/64495.
10. Minister of State (R.Law) to Armistice and Postwar Committee of Cabinet 26 June 1944. Public Record Office (PRO)- CAB 87/67.
11. Zahlen zur Ernährungslage. pub. by Econ.Inst.of Trade Unions in British Zone, (undated) West German Archives (BA) Nachlass Blücher (NB) 374.
12. Hanau and Plate, op.cit p.5.
13. FACC memo 27 Nov. 1945. PRO-FO 1005/977.
14. ACA Report to Council of Foreign Ministers 10 Feb.1947, Section IV Part IV: PRO-FO 1005/980.
15. Minutes of FACC meeting Dec. 1945, PRO-FO 1005/978
16. Minute 19 Nov.1946. PRO-FO 371/47036.
17. 1 ton of Nitrogen added to the soil produced 10 extra tons of grain. Anglo-US Bipartite Econ. Panel paper 24 May 1947, PRO-FO.943/147.

18. Control Office for Germany and Austria (COGA) London to Trade and Ind. Dep. of British Control Commission, 24 June 1946, *ibid.*
19. Allied Control Authority (ACA) Econ Directorate memo 24 Jul. 1946 *ibid.*
20. In 1945-6 coal represented half of W. German exports by value, and in 1947 over 40%.
21. For this arithmetic, see Die Zeit, 1. Aug 1946.
22. COGA to Foreign Office 12 Dec. 1946 PRO-FO. 943/147.
23. The total cost of foodstuffs for Bizonia from Jan. 1947 to June 1948 was \$860 million, approximately half paid for by the UK. Mil. Governor UK Zone to Foreign Office 12 Jul. 1947. PRO-FO 943/615
24. Minutes of Overseas Reconstruction Committee (ORC) of Cabinet 19 Jun. 1946, PRO-CAB 134/596.
25. See, for example, Dietrich to Schlange-Schöningen, 13 May 1946 expressing alarm about the seed shortages in the US and UK Zones. BA-ND/466. Dietrich was Food Plenipotentiary for the Regional Council in the US Zone and Schlange-Schöningen head of the Central Office for Food, Agriculture and Forestry in the UK Zone.
26. Minutes of World Food Supplies Committee of Cabinet 5 Nov. 1946 PRO-FO 943/452.
27. FACC Meeting Minutes, 29 Aug. 1945, PRO-FO 1005/973.
28. FACC minutes of meetings 28-9 Mar. 1946, 16 Apr. 1946, 17 May 1946 and 14 June 1946 PRO-FO 1005/974.
29. Minutes of ACA meeting 4 Mar. 1946 PRO-FO 942/442.
30. Nettl John, The Eastern Zone and Soviet Policy in Germany 1945-50 O.U.P., 1951, p.168.
31. Food and Agric. Branch 31 Jan. 1946. PRO-FO 942/442.
32. For the exact figures, Roesler Jörg, Einige Charakteristika der Wiederherstellungsperiode in Ungarn und der DDR, Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte, 1980, pt III, p111.
33. Nettl. *op.cit.* p.178
34. W.Klatt (COGA) Report on a visit to Germany, Nov. 1945. Sec.V. The Russian Zone: PRO-FO 942/145.
35. An additional factor here was the use of potatoes to distill alcohol in the Soviet Zone. Nettl. *op.cit.* p.180 points to the high amount of alcohol planned to be produced in the first quarter of 1947.
36. The British forecast "difficulty in maintaining the discipline of peasant producers" after the war. Paper to APW 26 June 1944 PRO-CAB 87/67.

37. Hynd paper ORC 26 July 1946 PRO-CAB 134/596
38. Finance Division of British Mil. Govt. monthly report 26 Oct.1945 PRO-FO. 371/46738
39. Riecke Hans-Joachim, Ernährung und Landwirtschaft im Kriege, in Bilanz des Zweiten Weltkrieges, Stalling Verlag, 1953, p.343.
40. Bavarian Ministry of State to State Council, US Zone 23 Dec.1946 BA Nachlass Dietrich (ND) 497 and 7th Meeting of Food Agriculture and Forestry Committee 20 Feb.1947 PRO-FO 1005/181.
41. British Control Commission Report Jan.1947, PRO-FO. 371/64495.
42. Certain Shortfalls in German Performance in Food and Agriculture through March 1947, Table 1, J.B.Canning and W.Ellington BA-Z6 1/24.
43. Notes on Mr. Rank's conversations in Germany, June 1947: the statistics quoted came from the British Food and Agriculture Division, PRO-FO 943/803
44. Monthly Report of Military Governor, US Zone, No.16 Sept.-Oct.1946 p.3.
45. Report by D.Garvin of US Zone June 1948, PRO-FO 943/648
46. From a discussion on the foodstuffs situation in the UK Zone in general COGA meeting minutes 19 Aug.1946, PRO-FO 943/362.
47. Hanau and Plate, op.cit. p.45
48. In Dec. 1946 sow holdings in the US Zone were 10% higher than the average for 1935-9, whereas in the UK Zone the corresponding comparison showed a decrease of 37%. ZEL to Food and Agric. British Control Commission. 4 Dec. 1946. BA-Z6 1/6
49. See Agric. Chamber Hanover to ZEL 24 July 1946 BA Z6 1/180 and Monthly Report of Military Governor, US Zone No.22 Mar.-April 1947 p.1
50. Certain Shortfalls, op.cit. especially Tables VIII and I.
51. On the outbreak of war the production side of the Reichsnährstand was taken over by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and food distribution was organised by local authorities.
52. Vide Llewellyn, the Minister of Food to Attlee, Minutes of APW 20 July 1944, PRO-CAB 87/66.
53. Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries report May 1945 PRO-FO 371/46884
54. See Sir Percy Mills (of Economics Directorate of British Control Commission) (Appendix L) on a de-nazification proposals draft. 7 May 1945. PRO-FO 1005/456.
55. For the origins of Gifac see Passarge Karl, Ein Rückblick. Copy in BA Z6-1/4b.
56. In August and November 1946, at Bad Kissingen and Hamburg respectively BA-NP/8 and PRO-FO 1005/148.

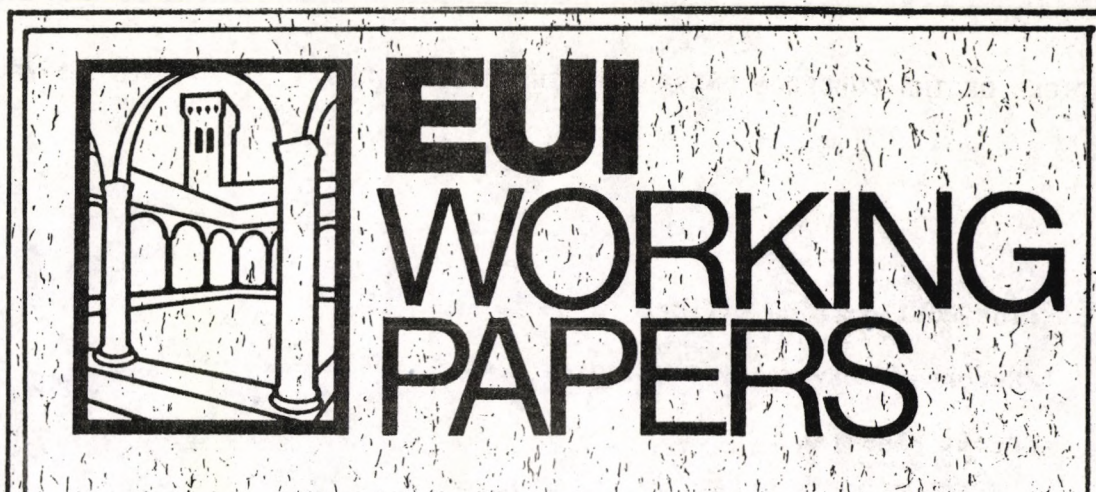
57. Minute 10 Jan.1947 BA-Z6 1/16.
58. Cited in Gimbel John, The American Occupation of Germany Stanford U.P. 1968, p.115.
59. At policy meeting of Deputy Mil.Governor. 17 May 1947, PRO-FO 371/64440.
60. Bipartite Control Group circular 26 Feb.1948. PRO-FO 1005/166. See also correspondence Sept.-Dec.1947 BA-Z6 1/190.
61. British Deputy Mil. Governor's (Berlin) Conference 12 April 1947. PRO-FO 371/64441.
62. Cf. Food and Agric. Minister of Schleswig-Holstein at State Council (Länderrat) meeting 30 April 1948, who pointed out that 75% of the population of the province enjoyed no special rations although it was an agricultural area in general. BA-Z6 1/39.
63. See 8th sitting of VELF Food Committee. 30 May 1947, BA-ND/485.
64. Conference between Dietrich and Food Mins. of southern Länder, 26 Aug. 1946. BA-ND/497.
65. VELF Food Committee 16 April 1947, BA-ND/485.
66. Note May 1947, BA-NP 9
67. As much as 40/50% in one district according to Schlange-Schöningen, *ibid.*
68. British Control Commission Report June 1947, p.55 PRO-FO 371/64496.
69. Regional Commissioner Lower Saxony Monthly Report Jan.1948. PRO-FO. 371/70874 B.
70. See Telegraf (Berlin) 2 April 1947.
71. In the UK Zone the Germans took over complete responsibility under supervision on 1 Aug. 1946, but in Bizonia as soon as the merger took place on 1st January 1947.
72. See Schlange-Schöningen to Passarge, 12 Feb. 1946 pointing out that of the 60 personnel at Gifac most were National Socialists and would have to go, BA-Z6 1/1
73. Schlange-Schöningen to Economic Council 21 Nov. 1947 admitting that collection bodies at village level had become mere instruments of local self-supply, BA-Z6 1/188
74. Main Committee of Regional Council (Länderrat) US Zone, 30 Sep.1946 BA-ND/485.
75. In Bizonia, VELF was supervised by an Anglo-American Control Group at Frankfurt, under a US/UK Bipartite Panel in Berlin. Obviously this was cumbersome.
76. See COGA to F and A Div. 17 April 1946 for the statement that the head of F and A Div. in the UKZ itself (Hollins) had no idea of what was going on, as his office was so under-staffed. PRO-FO 943/452
77. e.g. The Spectator, 1 Nov. 1946. One German food official cited

- Churchill in the House of Commons, calling British occupation policy 'a first-class job handled by second-class men', BA-NP 9 July 1947.
78. CCG (BE) Berlin to Foreign Office 9th Aug. 1945, PRO-FO 371-46934
 79. Walston Harry, Notes on a tour through the Four Zones of Germany July 1946. BA-26 1/18.
 80. CCG (BE) to War Office, 14 Nov. 1945 PRO-FO 942/145
 81. According to a COGA minute Sept. 1946 PRO-FO 371/55578
 82. See Klatt Werner, Report on a visit to Germany, Section V Dec. 1945, PRO-FO 942/145
 83. H.D. Walston, op.cit. p.4 said about 25% of produce was being sold on the free market in July 1946.
 84. Minutes of Agrarian Committee of CDU Berlin 15 Oct. 1945. Konrad Adenauer Foundation Bonn, I-090-16
 85. Ibid. 5 Dec. 1946 and 10-11 July 1947
 86. Der Sozialdemokrat (Berlin) 15 Nov. 1946, reporting sanctions against peasants in the Soviet Zone.
 87. ZEL Press service 28 Jan 1947. BA-26 2/45
 88. Hanau and Plate, op.cit. p.14
 89. ibid. p.14
 90. The British and American Food and Agriculture officials agreed to ask VEF for a scheme 'within six weeks' as despite the difficulties involved, 'no really serious effort has so far been made by the German administration to overcome them'. Memo 9 Nov. 1947, PRO-FO 943/886
 91. Bipartite Control Group memo. 18 Nov. 1947. Ibid.
 92. Report of Commerce Branch CCG (BE) Oct. 1947 - Jan. 1948. ibid.
 94. In 1948 it was pointed out that Germany was lagging hopelessly in overall agrarian recovery. If 1938/39 were 100, then production in 1946/7 in the UK was 105, France 98, Holland 90, for Germany only 40. Pakenham to Bevin, Foreign Secretary 9 Feb. 1948. PRO-FO 943/437.
 95. Cf. Maier Reinhold, Ein Grundstein wird gelegt. Rainer Wunderlich Verlag Tübingen, 1964, p.359 for an account of how well-meant efforts at supervision by US officials annoyed local peasants.
 96. This was especially true when union representatives were put on to inspection teams (Hofbegehungskommissionen) to oversee farm deliveries. See correspondence July-Dec. 1947 for Bremervörde district (Lower Saxony), and peasant protests about what they called 'snoopers' (Schnüffelkommissionen). Landesarchiv for Lower Saxony. Nds 2600 313-1/3 Vol.2

97. Hanau and Plate, op.cit. p.45 ff.
98. 2.852 mill. Ha. of land were redistributed altogether in the Soviet Zone, taken from 10,614 existing properties. ACA report to Council of Foreign Ministers, Section IV, Part IV, Section G. PRO-FO 1005/980.
99. For an account of efforts at reform in the UK Zone Trittel Günther, Die Bodenreform in der britischen Zone, 1945-1949. Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, Stuttgart, 1975.
100. In May 1949 there were still nearly 2 million separate holdings in West Germany, 3037 of which were over 100 Ha. embracing c. 4% of all agriculturally-used land. Statistik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Vol.22. Bodenbenutzung in den Land - und Forstwirtschaftlichen Betrieben, Heft 1, p.8.

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