

**“Economic Organization of a POW Camp”
R.A. Radford**

Discussion Questions

1. What, according to Radford, accounts for the development of an exchange system in a POW camp?
 - a. Can the development of the system be explained by the equality or lack of equality in the distribution of supplies?
 - b. Were prisoners generally unhappy with their particular allotment of supplies and thereby motivated to develop an exchange system?
 - c. Which force does Radford think was most important in accounting for the evolution of the exchange system?
 - d. In what sense does the "extent of the market" matter in the POW camp exchange system?

2. According to Radford, did cigarettes function well as money in the POW camp?
 - a. Was it important to their use as currency that cigarettes had intrinsic value?
 - b. Why would individuals re-roll their machine-rolled cigarettes?
 - c. What is the significance of the fact that a halving of Red Cross parcels changed prices?
 - d. What accounts for the fall in the value of the "bully mark"?

3. Why, according to Radford, were traders (middlemen) disliked?
 - a. Does Radford regard traders as social parasites?
 - b. In what sense did traders take advantage of pricing discrepancies?
 - c. Why did the British officers attempt to regulate prices in the POW camp?

4. In your view, did the POW exchange system produce a just distribution of goods?
 - a. Is there such a thing as a “just price” for a good? If so, why? If not, why not?
 - b. Would you have favored regulation of the exchange system? What sort?

Unfamiliar Expressions Used in Radford

Radford uses British expressions that were in common use after World War II. Some of these are still in use in Britain. Others are not. **Bully** is canned beef. **Treacle** is molasses. **Oflags**, short for Offizierslagers, are POW camps for officers. The **BRCS** is the British Red Cross Society. Money is **clipped** when metal is trimmed from the edges of coins. It is **sweated** when heat is applied to remove the metal. **Points** are electrical contacts.