

The Coffee Tax (1784)

Abstract

The Seven Years War (1756-1763) pushed Prussian resources to the limit. In response, Frederick II (“the Great”) pursued an intensified mercantilist policy to foster economic growth and rebuild state finances. Part of this effort involved the establishment of state monopolies – for instance, on the import of coffee in 1760 and the roasting of coffee in 1780. Monopolistic measures were also combined with a strict system of indirect taxation. The piece of paper hanging from the table in the overcrowded living room depicted below reads: “Five pfennigs for every lot of coffee.” The tobacco tin on the left is a reminder that coffee was neither the only state monopoly nor the only pleasure subject to excise taxes.

Source



Source: Etching by Johann Gottfried Schadow, 1784.

bpk-Bildagentur, image number 30028946. For rights inquiries, please contact Art Resource at requests@artres.com (North America) or bpk-Bildagentur at kontakt@bpk-bildagentur.de (for all other countries).

© bpk

Recommended Citation: The Coffee Tax (1784), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/the-holy-roman-empire-1648-1815/ghdi:image-2716>> [July 16, 2024].