

Inflation Songs: Bohème Orchester, *Pleite, pleite* (1924)

Abstract

The song “Pleite, pleite” [Broke, broke], by the composer Viktor Corzilius and the lyricist Hans Pfanzer, came out just after the period of astronomical hyperinflation had come to an end in November 1923 and Germans reckoned with the devastating consequences of that economic upheaval. The lyrics succinctly expressed the way in which many people felt after a decade of rising prices that had already started during the war and then accelerated during the five years after it, leaving wiped-out savings accounts, confusion, and bitterness in its wake. By the time the Bohème Orchester recorded this song in 1924, though, the government seemed to have put the national economy on a path to recovery. The central bank had introduced a new currency, the Rentenmark, which it initially tied to a basket of economic assets and then to gold, which quickly stabilized the German currency and restored it to its prewar value on the international exchange. The financial upheavals of the previous years may have disappeared, but the psychological effects of those upheavals lingered, as this song sharply underscored.

Source

Source: Bohème Orchester, “Pleite, pleite,” Shimmy (Viktor Corzilius), BEKA 1924.

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