

Inflation Songs: *Wir versaufen unsrer Oma ihr kleins Häuschen* (1922)

Abstract

Written by comedian Robert Steidl in 1922 for the annual Cologne Carnival, the catchy song “Wir versaufen unsrer Oma ihr kleins Häuschen” [We’re frittering away our grandma’s little house] channeled, through its sardonically funny lyrics, the cultural shock felt by many Germans at the desperate and sometimes callous measures that people resorted to, in order to stay afloat during the early postwar years of soaring inflation. It also became a hit dance tune, enjoyed by millions. Drawing on the fact that tangible assets, such as houses, had greater value in times of inflation than money in the bank, which lost its value on a daily basis, this song zeroed in on what people leveraged, sold, and bartered to survive, even things of great sentimental and familial value that represented a lifetime of hard work. The song exposed the generational differences in how people responded to skyrocketing inflation, whereby older Germans, in particular, who had dutifully squirreled away money in their savings accounts for their whole lives, watched in utter bewilderment as that money lost its value almost overnight. Moreover, the song suggested, even those older Germans who had invested their money in building familial assets, such as a house, now confronted a younger generation—grown cynical by the plummeting currency—that sacrificed that life’s work in order to live for the moment.

Source

Wir versaufen unser Oma ihr klein Häuschen,
ihr klein Häuschen, ihr klein Häuschen,
wir versaufen unser Oma ihr klein Häuschen
und die erste und die zweite Hypothek.

Unsre Oma fährt im Hühnerstall Motorrad,
Ohne Bremse, ohne Lampe, ohne Licht.

Warum soll sie nicht, wenn sie nichts andres vorhat,
Denn im Hühnerstall bemerkt man sie ja nicht.

Und da kann ich mich so schrecklich drüber argem,
Weil Erich mit dem Charlie nicht gut kann.

Denn das kostet schließlich alles unsre Steuern.
Die wir zahlen in das bodenlose Fass.

Source: “Wir versaufen unser Oma ihr kleins Häuschen,” Music and lyrics: Robert Steidl, 1922.
Performed by Robert Steidl and the BEKA Orchestra. BEKA 31715

Recommended Citation: Inflation Songs: Wir versaufen unsrer Oma ihr kleins Häuschen (1922), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/weimar-germany-1918-1933/ghdi:audio-5088>> [March 16, 2026].