

The Beleaguered German Mark

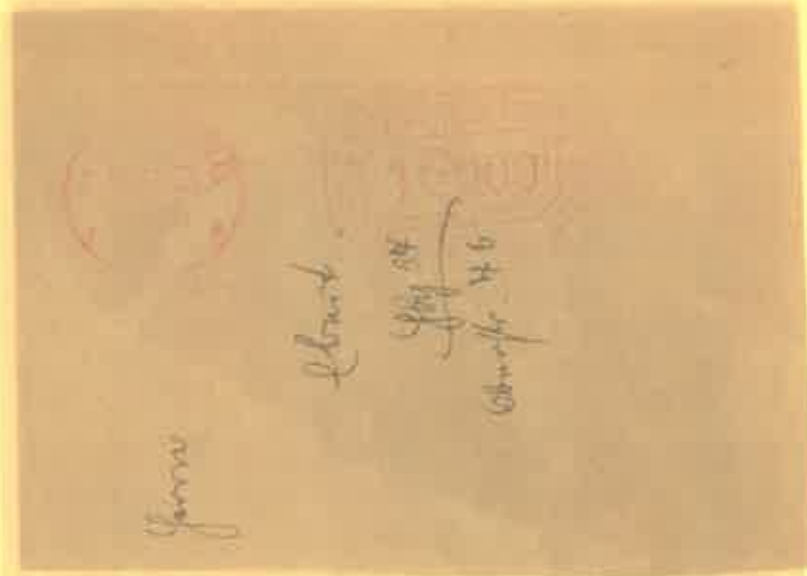
Keeping Pace with the Great Inflation of 1919-1923

Following World War I, Germany struggled with the aftermath of war, a ruined economy, crippling reparation payments, and growing civil strife. The Government tried to keep order by printing more and more currency without backing, creating conditions perfect for a devastating inflation. Many believe this crisis sowed the seeds for World War II.

The story of German Inflation is chronicled with a variety of the postal rates and fees postmarked on the first and last days of each of the twenty-three rate periods from 1 October 1919 through the Currency Reform of 1 December 1923.

The exhibit shows a variety of the local and international rates available at the time, plus the various ways these rates could be paid.

In addition, currency information is given for each rate period, to give the viewer a feel for the rapidity and magnitude of the rate increases, and the ever-decreasing value of the German Mark.



Postmarked 30 November 1923, the last day of the German Inflation, a meter franks a wrapper made from waste paper paying the 16,000,000,000 mark fee to mail < 25 grams of printed matter within Germany. Note: The meter had to omit six zeros because of size limitations