

\* FÜNFZIG \* MILLIONEN \* MARK \*



German Dr. Arnold Keller (1897-1972) undertook the monumental task of cataloging all types of German Notgeld. Between 1958 and 1961 the 1923 inflation notgeld were cataloged in eight sections totaling 1132 pages. Over 70,000 varieties from some 5,000 places were listed. This work was republished in 1975 by Battenberg Verlag München in two volumes totaling 1281 pages. All of these catalogs are now hard to find as indicated by a Jan 1997 price list of Kai Lindman's (No.39) which offered the Battenberg volumes for DM 400.

some The 50,000 varieties of 1923 notgeld were printed by several different methods. While some were printed letterpress and others by relatively primitive technologies, most were "flat printed" by some form of lithography. Although I have examined only a small percentage of all known issues, I have found only one that appears to have been printed from an engraved copper plate. This is the 50 millionen mark note issued by Meissen dated 15.8.1923. The symbolic meaning of the artwork doubtless is black crows (England and France) ripping apart the flesh of a pathetically helpless eagle (Germany). The uniface note is certainly hand numbered (842) and apparently hand signed.

From the standpoint of security printing, 1923 notgeld runs the gamut from virtually zero to a few fairly sophisticated examples. Most, however, have the appearance of being produced by adequate craftsmen on a limited budget with some time constraints. Unlike some notgeld which have the look of being ordered in the morning and delivered in the afternoon of the same day, most 1923 notgeld is a respectable product although lacking in intricate engraving, security papers and extensive anti-counterfeiting devices. At a time when the national currency (Reichsbanknotes) were steadily declining in quality, many of the notgeld issues are indeed superior by any standard of comparison and in general much more interesting and attractive to the collector.

When Dr. Arnold Keller sold his life long collection to a German bank, it was reported to contain 109,860 pieces of notgeld, 30,000 Reichsbanknotes and 3,800 notes of the German colonies.