

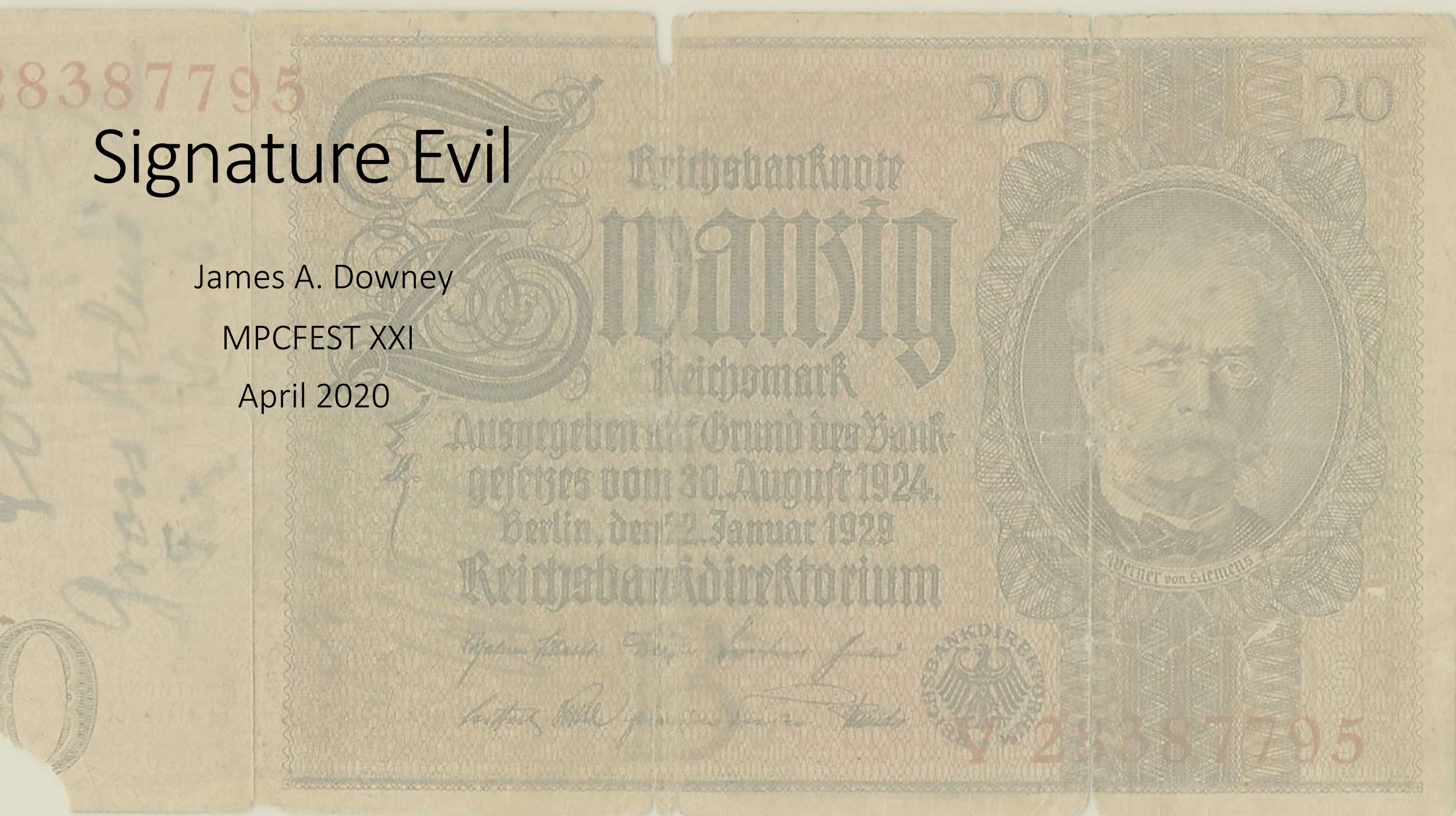
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Signature Evil

James A. Downey

MPCFEST XXI

April 2020



Preface: On Friday March 17, 2023 Danny Spungen as at the MPCFest XXIV.

Gathering of Military Payment Certificate collectors. This group includes a number of collectors that collect scrip (money) issued during the WWII by both the Allies and Axis countries.

Script, coins, tokens and other forms of payment/goods/services were produced for ghettos, concentration camps , internment camps and post-war displaced person camps.

There are many collectors of such artifacts all over the world!

Among the collectibles are “short snorters.”

Mr. Jim Downey donated an extremely rare (yet not unique) “short snorter” signed by 13 Nazis imprisoned at the Nuremberg Trials. The piece of autographed currency was owned by an American Military Police officer guarding the Nazis. After the war he folded the note into eights and kept in his wallet. After his passing, his son in New York posted it on ebay “not” knowing what he had. Jim Downey called the man and explained to some degree what he was selling. Jim Downey purchased the short snorter.

Jim had a love/hate relationship with the short snorter and decided that the Spungen Family Foundation was the best home for the piece that would be used for educational purposes only.

What is a “short snorter”?????

The Note



I purchased this note on Ebay in 2017. It is a common German 20 RM note with an uncommon history. The seller had it listed at \$1,000.00. The poor photograph of the face he used did not help.

The Note



When it got down to \$200.00 I asked the seller why he thought it was worth so much. He told me it was his father's who was a prison guard after the war. His father told him these were signatures of famous people. He did not know who they were and the image was not clear enough to read them.

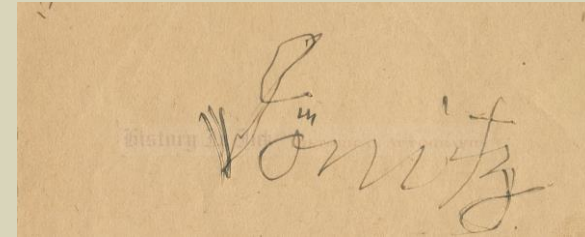
The Clue



I asked him for a better picture and he sent me one that was still out of focus. But I saw enough. This signature and title confirmed my suspicion as to the names. After some back and forth we agreed on a price.

The identities of the signers follows in alphabetical order.

Karl Dönitz



Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz (1891–1980). Under Hitler's last will and testament dated April 29, 1945, Dönitz succeeded Hitler as the German head of state, with the titles of President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, after Hitler's suicide on April 30. He was convicted of planning, initiating, and waging wars of aggression and of crimes against the laws of war. He was sentenced to ten years in prison and was released in October 1956.

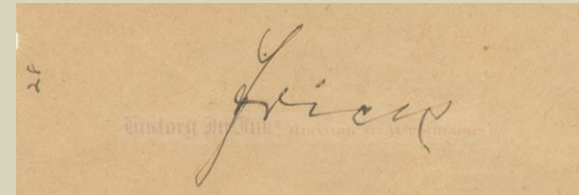
Dr. Hans Frank



Dr. Hans Frank

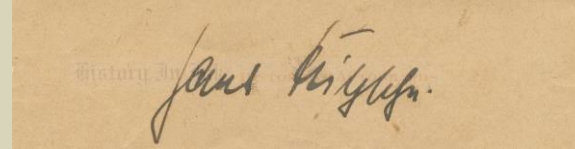
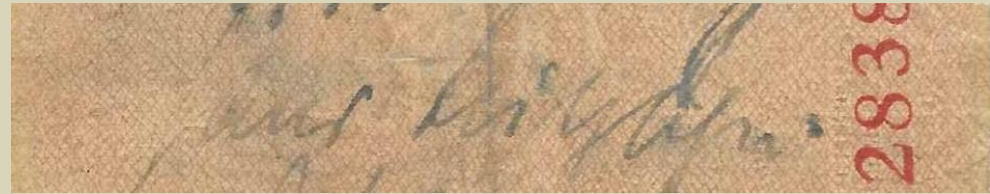
Dr. Hans Michael Frank (1900–1946). Frank, a lawyer who worked for the Nazi Party and served as Hitler's personal lawyer, was Governor-General of the General Government of Nazi-occupied Poland. He led a reign of terror against the civilian population and was directly involved in the Holocaust. At Nuremberg, he was found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity and was hanged.

Wilhelm Frick



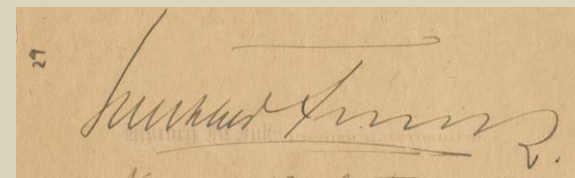
Wilhelm Frick (1877–1946). A prominent Nazi politician, Frick was Reich Minister of the Interior under Hitler for ten years, 1933–1943, and then served as Protector of Bohemia and Moravia. He was found guilty of war crimes and was hanged.

Hans Georg Fritzsche



Hans Georg Fritzsche (1899–1953). Fritzsche was the director of the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. He was present with Hitler, holed up in the Führerbunker in Berlin, during Hitler's final days. He was captured by the Red Army on May 1, 1945, when he offered to surrender the city to the Soviets following Hitler's suicide. He was acquitted at Nuremberg, although he was later convicted by a West German denazification court. He was released in 1950 and died of cancer in 1953.

Walther Funk



Walther Funk (1890–1960). An economist, Funk served as the Reich Minister for Economic Affairs, 1938–1945. Although his health was poor, Funk was tried at Nuremberg and convicted on three counts: planning, initiating, and waging wars of aggression; war crimes; and crimes against humanity. He was sentenced to life in prison and served his sentence in Spandau Prison in Berlin, where other imprisoned senior Nazi officials were held, until he was released because of his health in 1957.

Hermann Göring



A close-up photograph of a handwritten signature in dark ink on a piece of light-colored, textured paper. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and appears to read 'Hermann Göring'. There are some small, dark marks above the signature.

A close-up photograph of a handwritten signature in dark ink on a piece of light-colored, textured paper. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and appears to read 'Hermann Göring'. There are some small, dark marks above the signature.

Hermann Göring (1893–1946). Göring was Reichmarschall, the highest rank in the German military during World War II and commander-in-chief of the Luftwaffe. In 1941, he became Hitler's Deputy Führer, the vice chancellor of Germany, a post that he held until Hitler deposed him for treason for daring to ask permission to take over leadership of Germany when Hitler was pinned down in Berlin. It was Göring who, on Hitler's orders, directed Reinhard Heydrich to convene the 1942 Wannsee Conference, which decided the "final solution to the Jewish question". He was convicted of four counts: conspiracy to accomplish a crime against peace; waging a war of aggression; war crimes and crimes against humanity. He was sentenced to death by hanging. Göring committed suicide by taking potassium cyanide from an ampoule concealed in his personal belongings.

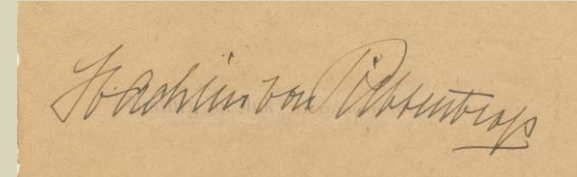
Alfred Jodl



A. Jodl
Generaloberst. a.D.

General Alfred Josef Ferdinand Jodl (1890–1946). Jodl was a *Generaloberst* in the Wehrmacht, the second highest general officer rank. He served as the chief of the operation staff of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces. He signed both the Commisar Order of June 6, 1941, under which captured Soviet political officers were to be summarily executed, and the Commando Order of October 28, 1942, under which Allied commandos, including properly uniformed soldiers, were also to be summarily executed if captured behind German lines. Jodl signed the instrument of surrender on May 7, 1945, as Dönitz's representative. At Nuremberg, Jodl was prosecuted principally for the Commisar and Commando Orders. He was found guilty on four charges, including war crimes and crimes against humanity, and was hanged.

Ulrich Joachim von Ribbentrop



Ulrich Friedrich Wilhelm Joachim von Ribbentrop (1893–1946). A confidant of Hitler, von Ribbentrop served as Germany's Foreign Minister 1938–1945. He was prominent in negotiating two major agreements in 1939: the Pact of Steel, Germany's alliance with fascist Italy, and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany. He was actively involved in planning the German invasions of Austria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia and was involved with sending Jews to death camps in the east. Although he argued at Nuremberg that Hitler had been in control and had deceived him by claiming that he wanted peace, the tribunal did not believe that von Ribbentrop could have "remained unaware of the aggressive nature of Hitler's actions." He was the first of the 10 Nazi defendants to be hanged.

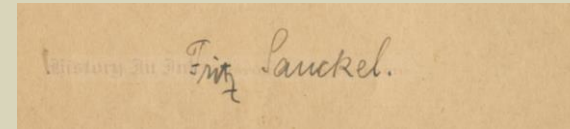
Alfred Rosenberg



A Rosenberg

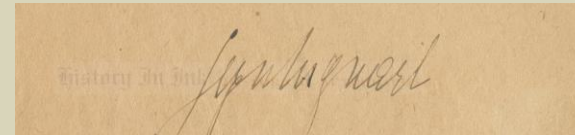
Alfred Ernst Rosenberg (1893–1946). Rosenberg was one of the principal architects of Nazi Party ideology, including its positions on race, territorial expansion, abrogation of the Treaty of Versailles, and persecution of the Jews. At Nuremberg, he denied knowledge of the Holocaust, but his representatives had attended the Wannsee Conference. He was convicted of all four counts, including war crimes and crimes against humanity. The tribunal found that he was a principal planner of the invasions of Norway and the Soviet Union and that he was responsible for the brutal conditions in Eastern Europe. He was hanged.

Fritz Sauckel



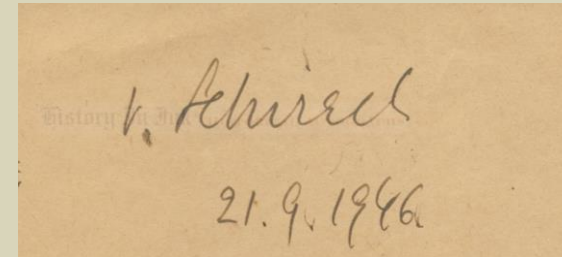
Ernst Friedrich Christoph Sauckel, known as **Fritz Sauckel** (1894–1946). As the General Plenipotentiary for Labor Deployment from 1942 until the war in Europe ended in 1945, Sauckel was directly responsible for the forced labor of some five million foreign workers, most of them from the occupied territories in the east. Concentration camp workers worked in harsh labor conditions and were allowed only starvation rations. Sauckel was found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity and was hanged.

Arthur Seyss-Inquart



Arthur Seyss-Inquart (1892–1946). Seyss-Inquart, an Austrian Nazi, served as chancellor of Austria for three days in 1938 before Germany annexed Austria following the Austrian *Anschluss*. Hitler respected Seyss-Inquart and appointed him to government oversight positions in Poland and in the Netherlands. He served as Reichskommissar in the Netherlands, where he led a brutal regime responsible for the forced labor of Dutch civilians and the internment of some 140,000 Jews in concentration camps, including Buchenwald, Mauthausen, Auschwitz, and Theresienstadt. Seyss-Inquart was convicted of crimes against humanity at Nuremberg and was the last of the 10 executed defendants to be hanged.

Baldur Benedikt von Schirach



Baldur Benedikt von Schirach (1907–1974). The Nazi Party's youth leader and the head of the Hitler Youth from 1931 to 1940. He served as the Gauleiter of Vienna from 1940–1945. He was responsible for sending some 65,000 Jews from Vienna to death camps in Poland, calling their deportation a "contribution to European culture." At Nuremberg, he denounced Hitler, claimed that he had not known about the extermination camps, and showed that he had complained to Martin Bormann about the inhumane treatment of the Jews. He was convicted at Nuremberg of crimes against humanity but received only a 20-year prison sentence, which he fully served before being released in 1966.

Julius Streicher



A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script. The signature reads 'Julius Streicher' and is written on a piece of aged, yellowish paper.

Julius Streicher (1885–1946). In 1923, Streicher founded and published *Der Stürmer*, a violently anti-Semitic weekly tabloid propaganda newspaper. From at least 1933 forward, *Der Stürmer* repeatedly urged extermination of the Jews. He was removed from his party offices in 1940 but remained on good terms with Hitler and continued to publish *Der Stürmer*, which Hitler called his favorite newspaper. At Nuremberg, he railed against the Jews, the Allies, and the tribunal judges. Streicher was found guilty of crimes against humanity and was hanged.

Some final remarks . . .

1. Fraternization between the guards and Nuremberg prisoners was prohibited. The number of autographs in the marketplace demonstrates that this was largely ignored.
2. Three notable signatures are missing. Rudolf Hess, Hjalmar Schacht and Franz Von Papen. Hess had not been returned to Germany before the original owner of the note returned to the US. Schacht and Von Papen refused to provide autographs on paper money.
3. The use of the death pictures was intentional. It is the only way these individuals should be remembered.

Dedicated to those who were lost.

