

One of the First Advertising Columns Designed by Ernst Litfaß in Berlin (c. 1860)

Abstract

In order to control the excessive posting of advertisements and announcements on buildings, walls, and trees, Berlin's police president negotiated a contract with the royal printer Ernst Litfaß (1816–1874) for the installation of 150 commercial advertising columns throughout the city. Litfaß had seen these sorts of columns in Paris, where they had become ubiquitous during the first half of the nineteenth century. Until 1865, Litfaß had a profitable monopoly on advertising columns in Berlin, in exchange for which he also agreed to publish current news on them (in addition to ads and announcements). The authorities welcomed the columns not only because they curbed the excessive postings that had once overwhelmed the city's surfaces, but also because they were able to censor placards before they were posted. Advertisers who purchased space were assured that their advertisements would remain uncovered and visible. Today, there are still about 67,000 Litfaß columns in Germany.

Source



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