

Propaganda Posters for the Planned European Defense Community (April 1953)

Abstract

With the outbreak of the Korean War in June of 1950, security, and yet more disputed rearmament, became the dominant theme of domestic politics in the Federal Republic. Taken in Bonn, this photograph shows various posters in support of the planned European Defense Community (EDC), under which all member states' militaries would be integrated, lessening fears about an independent German military. It was based on a suggestion by French Minister President René Pleven. Adenauer made West German sovereignty a condition for German rearmament. On May 26, 1952 he signed the so-called Germany Treaty between West Germany and the Western Allies that ended West Germany's status as an occupied territory and gave it the rights of a sovereign state. France, Great Britain, and the U.S. had signed the European Defense Community Treaty back on May 27, 1952. The Federal Republic had signed it a day earlier. The treaty could not take effect, however, until it was ratified by the parliaments of all three signatories. The French National Assembly ultimately refused to ratify the treaty, and the project was shelved in 1954.

Each pro-EDC poster features a Soviet soldier along with the words, "Er ist bewaffnet" ["He's armed"]. At first glance, the posters look the same, but on closer inspection, it becomes clear that the soldier is posted in front of various architectural landmarks, each belonging to a region in which these posters were displayed. (For example, the third poster from the left shows the Cologne cathedral.) The man walking on the left is Joachim Freyer, group leader in the military division of the "Dienststelle Blank," the forerunner to the Ministry of Defense.

Source



Source: “He is armed” – propaganda posters for the planned “European Defense Community” (EDC). The building motifs on the posters were from the region where the poster was to be displayed. Left: Joachim Freyer, Group Leader Army in the Military Department of the “Dienststelle Blank”. Photo: Benno Wundshammer.

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