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**Post War German Rearmament: An Army Born Out of Compromise**

**Claus Jacobi:**

Claus Jacobi was a German journalist who wrote for various publications, beginning in 1948 until his death in 2013. Born January 4th, 1927 in Hamburg, Germany, Jacobi served as a midshipman in the German Navy during World War 2 prior to becoming a journalist. Following the war, Jacobi became a journalist for *Die Zeit*, from which this source is taken. Further in journalistic career, Jacobi would become editor-in-chief for *Der Spiegel*, in which he would be arrested during the infamous scandal in 1962. After his sentence was completed, Jacobi would continue to write for other publications until he died in 2013.

**“Heimwehr statt deutscher Armee” [“Home Guard instead of German Army”] :**

Claus Jacobi, “Heimwehr statt deutscher Armee” [“Home Guard instead of German Army”], *Die Zeit*, September 14, 1950.

In Claus Jacobi’s opinion article written in response to Chancellor Adenauer’s call for the remilitarization of West Germany in response to the increased threat from the east, especially due to the Korean conflict, during a NATO conference in September, 1950. In this article, Jacobi writes that instead of creating another standing army, rather West Germany should instead create a *Heimwehr,* or “Home Army.” Jacobi’s idea is similar to what in the US is known as the “National Guard,” responsible for reacting to domestic threats rather than external, namely East Germany and the Soviet Union. Furthermore, he believes that NATO should handle all external threats to West Germany, as they are more prepared. Jacobi’s opinion, like many others of the time, is reflective of the hesitation many Germans felt towards rearmament of their country.

**Narrative:**

Following World War 2, the Allies demilitarized Germany in order to make sure that war could never waged again by the Germans. However, the end of World War did not end global conflict. In 1949, Germany was partitioned into two distinct zones, West and East, with the Allies holding the West and the Soviets holding the East. The new “Cold War” could be represented by the then split Germany. Despite the victors initially calling for non-militarization in Germany, tensions would reach the point where a rearmament of Germany would become necessary in the eyes of the West and East.

The decision to rearm Western Germany was not without controversy. Some Germans were apprehensive about getting involved again with military action, weary from the effects of two world wars. Furthermore, France, a victim of German aggression during the Franco-Prussian War, World War I, and World War II, was not a proponent of German rearmament, citing decades long grievances and concerns for territorial dispute. However, Chancellor Adenauer, as well as NATO, excluding France, believed that it would be the only way to limit communist expansion and aggression, hoping to avoid a situation similar to the concurrent Korean war.

Reaching an agreement that would satisfy a majority of parties involved with the rearmament negotiations was not a simple process. Many ideas were examined in the time on how exactly to rearm Germany. One such idea was submitted by Claus Jacobi, in which he argued for a “Home Army,” i.e. a force that would only deal with internal conflict, such as civil war or uprisings, rather than Eastern threats. This idea, although not adopted, shows how portions of Germans, as mentioned before, were apprehensive about establishing a national army again.

In the end, the *Bundeswehr*, the new army of West Germany, was created, although limited in its formation by NATO. The new army would be staffed by Germans, however NATO officials in reality had control of the army. The East responded quickly by forming their own army known as the National People’s Army, or NVA.

**Annotated Bibliography in Chronological Order:**

1."Memorandum von Konrad Adenauer über Die Sicherung Des Bundesgebietes (29. August 1950)." Resources for The Need for German Rearmament - The Organisation of Post-war Defence in Europe (1948–1954) - CVCE Website. <https://www.cvce.eu/en/education/unit-content/-/unit/803b2430-7d1c-4e7b-9101-47415702fc8e/89fc42e3-4895-476c-9cea-62173abf0bfd/Resources#77999062-f79e-41d9-9906-66cb5afb99e3_en&overlay>.

In a press conference given in September 1950, Adenauer cited multiple reasons for the need of rearmament of West Germany. Adenauer described Soviet aggression in the East as a main factor, as there were reports of well trained troops along the border. Adenauer further provided political reasons for rearmament, i.e. that the army would provide another check of power towards local police or other such corruptible forces.

2. Claus Jacobi, “Heimwehr statt deutscher Armee” [“Home Guard instead of German Army”], *Die Zeit*, September 14, 1950.

Claus Jacobi writes an opinion on the matter of rearmament. In this article Jacobi writes that a “Home Army” would preferable to a national army as the NATO allies would be capable and responsible for the protection of West Germany.

3. H. G. L. "German Rearmament: Policies and Opinions." *The World Today 7*, no. 2 (1951): 69-76. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40392412>.

This magazine article from 1951, displays various opinions on the matter of rearmament in West Germany. This article shows that the opinion on the matter was not unanimous, with differing opinions coming from the Social Democrats, CDU, and Protestant leaders in West Germany.

4. Onslow, C. G. D. "West German Rearmament." *World Politics 3*, no. 4 (1951): 450-85. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2008892>.

In this article from 1951, the international motivations and opinions are described mainly from the Western allies, being the US, Britain, and France. In this article, the US and Britain are pro-rearmament wherein France is portrayed as “hesitant” to allow Germany to remilitarize. This article shows that even on the international level, there was a drawn out process to rearm Germany that would satisfy all NATO members.

5. von dem Bussche, Axel. 1953. “German Rearmament: Hopes and Fears.” *Foreign Affairs* 32 (1): 68–79. doi:10.2307/20031008.

This article in *Foreign Affairs* describes the geographic, political, and psychological considerations that must be made in the rearmament of Germany. This article poses questions of the feasibility of having a large enough standing army that would only occupy half of the German country compared to that of the Nazi regime. Furthermore, this article discusses the implications in NATO- Soviet relations that would occur if the Germany army were to be re-established. Finally, considerations on the German public’s perception and reaction to another army are discussed.

6. Speier, Hans. *German Rearmament and Atomic War; the Views of German Military and Political Leaders*. Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1957.

In this overview of German military and political leaders opinions of German rearmament, and specifically the nuclear aspect, Speier shows that the military leaders had a much different opinion on the matter compared to the politicians of the time. Speier notes that the military officers were in support of a strong NATO that could be as capable as possible, wherein certain politicians favored the “unrealistic” path of unification that the Soviets offered at the time.

7. Large, David Clay. *Germans to the Front : West German Rearmament in the Adenauer Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

In this book Adenauer is viewed from a historical standpoint about 45 years after his involvement with rearmament. This text reviews Adenauer’s rearmament program as more of a political move than strictly military, specifically noting that it was done to strengthen relationships between NATO and West Germany. This text also analyzes the German Army after it was established, describing early troubles with internal policy and operating procedures.

8. Haftendorn, Helga. "Germany's Accession to NATO: 50 Years on." *Nato Review,* 2005. https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue2/english/history.html.

This short history given by NATO itself it describes the West Germans process of becoming part of NATO. Haftendorn describes the troubles West Germany faced when joining, i.e. the lack of military officers and poor infrastructure. Furthermore, she writes about NATO policy moving away from large conventional armies, which at the time West Germany was trying to build, to reliance on nuclear strategy.