

A RETROSPECT OF THE GERMAN ADVERTISING CONGRESS, BERLIN 1932

SUMMONS TO PROPAGANDA

Members of the Programme Committee

Since the World Advertising Congress in the year 1929 and the Advertising Exhibition connected with it, there has been no great universal demonstration for publicity until the "Deutsche Reklametag". In 1929 the World Advertising Congress took as its slogan: "Advertising is the key to world prosperity", but one may say that the economic world in general has made relatively little use of this key, and apparently it is not generally believed that any rooms which were not previously being put to their full economic uses can be opened by its means. It was therefore a step to be applauded when the organisations devoted to propaganda decided to initiate a new general appeal. The outward progress of the session was exhaustively reported in the second March number of "Die Reklame". We can therefore confine ourselves to giving a resumé of the individual appeals:

The session was opened by the reading of a telegram of greeting from President Hindenburg. The first speaker was Otto Ernst Sutter, the chairman of the German Advertisers' League. The leading idea in his speech was summed up in his own introduction: Advertise for advertising! He who would do justice to such a task must be clear in his own mind that everything he undertakes will be regarded critically from two points of view. It is above all necessary to avoid all over-emphasis in means employed and powers expended. The task of the Advertising Session must be to expound the nature, purpose, economic and cultural value of advertising in a responsible manner and to bring them to the consciousness of the broad masses of the public.

In similar form Dr. Knapp, the chairman of the programme committee, addressed the assembled hearers at the opening of the session. He said: "Our purpose is, to interpret the significance of advertising as an intellectual power in the life of the peoples and to demonstrate how indispensable and vital propaganda in its manifold aspects can be, both for commerce and for all cultural progress."

The programme committee resolved to let no experts speak in the course of the session itself; the speakers were to be those who make use of advertising. They were to report to the experts as to their experiences with advertising in their economic or business sphere. The first speaker was Dr. Adolph, professor of engineering, assistant chairman of the Berlin Power and Light Co., and the Bewag. Among other things he said that the events of the last two years had also given cause for a critical examination of the relations between advertising and industry. In the case of the electrical industry, in particular, it had been thought possible to dispense with publicity up to now, since the practical monopoly enjoyed by the firms in question to some extent determined the market possibilities. Now it had been recognized that this point of view was erroneous. In propaganda one economic moment must be afforded special consideration, and that is that electricity, economically speaking, is not a thing that can be put in store. It must be made at the moment when it is to be used. The aim of propaganda must therefore be to cause the use of the current to be diffused as evenly as possible over all hours of the day.

Herr Heinrich Grünfeld, M. d. RWR., spoke for the retail merchants. He is the chairman of the main Association of German Retailers and vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Berlin. The gist of his speech was that the preliminary for the existence of every retail merchant was the amount he was able to sell, proportionate to the extent of his business, its nature and the kind of customers appealed to, something which it should be possible to calculate beforehand with some degree of certainty. "Service" and advertising must also be in proportion. Experience must be paid for in this realm as in every other and that not only by the greenhorn but by many a merchant who had deemed himself grown old and wise in his business. Such mistakes easily lead a man into rejecting all idea of advertising or can actually cause him more damage than profit. It is therefore of great value for the practical man that advertising advice has developed into a regular profession.

The next speaker was a lady, Dr. Freiin von Watter, M. d. L. of Potsdam. She spoke on advertising and housekeeping. Eighty per cent of the German people's income passes through the hands of the housewives and it is therefore important and necessary that advertising should take account of feminine psychology in the fullest possible measure.

Professor Dr. Brandt spoke next on advertising and agriculture. He pointed out that many aspects of German agriculture were not yet ripe for advertising. The reduction to type of the products was in the main not yet developed so far that propaganda on a large scale could be undertaken with due prospects of success. Wherever this had been attempted it had led to no inconsiderable failures, and one must regretfully establish the fact that advertising men were not altogether free from blame for these failures. One of the principal conditions must be that propaganda for agriculture must be made by the producers themselves, not by some office or center having no connection with the producers. The state must help in improving the quality of produce and standardising it. Propaganda for sales, however, must be made by the producers themselves, exactly as was the case with industrial propaganda.

Herr W. Hachenburg, painter and decorator of Bremen, spoke on advertising and the artisan. He



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