

Plakat
für die
Britische
Industrie-
Messe



T O M
P U R V I S
L O N D O N



There was very little chance for expansion in poster design in England before men of vision on the railways like Mr. W. M. Teasdale and Mr. Frank Pick saw the possibilities of enlisting artistic enthusiasm to help them.

After presenting the problem to the artists, they were wise enough to leave them alone to work their own solutions with practical printing limitations as the only handicap to their efforts.

The success of this foresight has had widespread influence on design in every branch of industry in England, and I believe, in spite of the world depression, is steadily gaining ground. This improvement has not come about through any great revolution in taste amongst business men, but simply through realization of the actual economy of efficient design as well as the sales value of a harmonious setting to their products. In hard cash it has paid, and that is the most convincing argument in business.

In my own work my first consideration is the purpose of the advertiser and how to fulfil it. Design, though vital to me personally, is subservient to the initial purpose. The message must be seen clearly and instantly. No cleverness of technical skill or unusualness of treatment is allowed to blunt the sharp clarity of the fundamental message. It must be seen completely and instantly. If it is possible to establish a creed in design, mine would be: "Simplicity of mass and colour and detail, even to bareness, eliminating anything which has no useful or definite bearing on the story to be told—even at the expense of not appearing clever". Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity—out of this I am convinced comes the greatest force.

In the B. I. F. poster illustrated, the problem as given to me was this: "We want people all over the World to know that the British Industries Fair will be on; we are proud of it; we welcome all who are interested enough to come. The poster must be compelling, must be economical enough to print a very large number, must be intelligible to all nationalities, and must be essentially British in appearance; it must not include British Lions, Union Jacks, Figures of Industry, Cornucopias, or Britannias".

The solution was impossible without an essentially British Symbol, and taking the decision into my own hands, I risked using Britannia.

I think the artist's personality always will show in his work, but I believe that it is bad salesmanship to shout his cleverness at the expense of the real message of the poster, and I endeavour to live up to this belief.

The life of *Gebrauchsgraphik* has been the consolidation of the efforts of the pioneers of good poster design, and, with its fine broad international policy and marvellous standard of craftsmanship in printing, has done an enormous amount towards the establishment of the feeling of appreciation which undoubtedly exists universally towards artists in the advertising profession to-day. With all good wishes for its future.