

REUTERS AND THE OTHERS

In Bernd Reuters the German automobile industry has found an artist whose exact technical knowledge and enthusiasm has given German automobile propaganda a character all its own. Reuters began as motoring illustrator for the magazine „Sport im Bild“. He developed a very strong sense of imaginative form and invented exaggerations which pointed the way to the future. His drawings often inspired next season's models. His technique, above all, was new and peculiar, he had a light and elegant touch, treated every technical detail with perfect correctness and composed on a broad scale. Reuters drawings soon broke down the barriers of the usual machine-made and photographic motoring illustration. There is not one of the larger automobile manufacturers in Germany who has not at some time availed himself of Reuters services. It is natural that such a success must have had its influence upon other graphic artists. The method of presentation was considered so perfect that it was no longer respected as an individual achievement it became, as it were, the common

property of all designers who occupy themselves with automobile advertising. (In Germany we have already experienced a similar phenomenon with the work of Ludwig Hohlwein.)

The imitations do not confine themselves only to the method of representing the car, in the majority of cases, the composition and the landscape backgrounds are also copied in the same technique.

The worst of this phenomenon is that the same firm which gave Reuters a commission to-day is liable to give one of his imitators a commission to-morrow. Formerly, a client usually discovered only afterwards that the design he had ordered was in an imitated style. In this case, it looks to me as if these imitations had been directly commissioned. What would the automobile manufacturers say and do if Bernd Reuters were to start building and selling imitations of their newest types? Every manufacturer demands protection by law for all the work invested in the creation and production of a new type. Yet he will not recognize that the development of a strongly individual artistic style also means that the creator of it has invested years of laborious and intense intellectual and manual work in it. These imitations tend to weaken the original and deprive it of its effectiveness and value.

Even though to-day there is no proper legal redress for such infringements of an original style, one's moral consciousness revolts against such methods.

Translated by E. T. Scheffauer

