



Dr. LEOPOLD SCHREIBER:

THE LANGUAGE EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS

WE ANALYSE A BOOKSTALL

Photo: Umbo-Kind

A bookstall is uncontrovertibly a wonderful invention. Where could the imagination find a stronger stimulus than here, in front of this free miniature world exhibition? Everything the heart can desire and the senses crave is here in the rich variety of tempting advertisements which make propaganda by means of effective illustrations, for the goods their country manufactures. No interpreter is necessary to explain this international propaganda, for the pictured advertisement tells us more than any text can do, however strikingly it may be formulated. When an advertisement is really good it "speaks" to everybody, no matter where the call comes from!

How much art and ability, gathered together from all quarters of the world, is concentrated in this narrow space. If we glance through the advertisement section of the international press, we must be immediately struck by the fact that in all countries the same industries make use of about the same propaganda. Woman, represented by fashions, beauty culture and jewellery, dominates the field everywhere. If one did not know it already, one would discover in the course of this expedition among the advertisements of all the newspapers that all the world over, most of the money is spent upon the women! One fact alone serves to prove this fact sufficiently—the extraordinarily high percentage of advertisements of the cosmetic industry in the total. (cf. article by Dr. Anita Karsten in April No.)

The observant reader will find many interesting points in studying the advertisements. For instance, he notices that in both American and English papers, the advertisements of the automobile industry taking a similar outstanding position, in the German press this branch of industry is less conspicuous at the moment. Another general observation is doubtless worthy of attention; only in the well-edited, amusingly varied magazine can an advertisement have its full effect. Experience teaches us that only those magazines are read from end to end whose contents contrive to hold the reader's interest. A dull magazine is looked through in a few minutes and laid aside—but if the main portion of the paper offers new and exciting matter, then we unconsciously begin to expect to be interested and amused even by the smallest advertisement. This explains why many excellent specialized magazines—just by particularly good service in their special line—can show a relatively abnormally high proportion of advertisements.

The advertisements reproduced here were taken arbitrarily from the international press on the same day—chosen by chance. A diagonal cut through the schematically arranged material reveals plainly that methods of propaganda resemble on another strongly in all countries. Since human desires are the same everywhere, regardless of frontiers, an ideal world language, comprehensible to everyone, has been developed—and the artist who can command it will be able to make himself heard in any country . . .

Trans. by E. T. Scheffauer.