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VICTORIA DE GRAZIA

FOREWORD

From all of the hullabaloo attending the inauguration of the International Advertising Congress at Berlin on August 11, 1929, Germany looked to be the pacesetter of twentieth-century merchandising. With its booming economy, the Weimar Republic was the fulcrum of European commerce. Its fifth largest city, Leipzig, hosted the world's oldest and biggest trade fair, its twice-yearly expositions of hundreds of thousands of craft and industrial wares attracting buyers from a hundred lands. Its capital, Berlin, was home to artistic circles bubbling over with the cultural irreverence on which the new marketing professions thrived. True, the congress's logo, "Advertising: the key to world prosperity," was an American advertising man's conceit. But a Berliner had come up with the logo design in the shape of a key so palpably phallic that it gave a jolt of visual testosterone to the whole proceedings.

That 1920s Germany stood at the forefront of world advertising culture looked plausible on other grounds as well. There were those 80 million German speakers, the largest language concentration in Europe and the most literate as well, and, if a third or more didn't live in Germany itself, that was fine too, for they still promised to be good markets for the country's export-oriented economy. There was also Germany's legacy as homeland to Gutenberg's print revolution, a legacy still visible in its global leadership in the typographic arts, lithography, and packaging design. There were the vibrantly colored posters affixed to the downtown kiosks that spoke of a merchandising tradition comfortably at home on the city streets. There was the upstart *Sachlichkeit* aesthetic, superbly combining utility and modernist beauty in an iconoclastic struggle against the rhetorical conventions of academic design. Finally, there was the multitude of German artists ready to engage with modern advertising, some out of the con-