

All Out for Vitamin B

By FRANK CHODOROV

Propaganda theory undoubtedly takes into account the inertia of the human brain. Only on that assumption can we explain the use of ear-soothing phrases to induce acceptance of unpalatable ideas. If these phrases were thought out to their logical consequences, people might reject the phrases and the implied ideas.

"All out" is a current propaganda slogan. The Nazis used it as descriptive of their aerial war on England. Now it is being employed in the United States to accelerate the sending of war materials to Britain. Its connotation in America is this: quit questioning cost or consequence and act. The alliteration implies the giving of "all" without reservation, and the giving of it "out" without any thought of return.

Perhaps the exigency of the situation requires such a policy. Still, in view of experience, one cannot refrain from asking: "Who is to do the giving, labor or the privilege groups who profit from war efforts?" It is to avoid any such reflective attitude that propagandists concentrate on the repetition of the tomtom phrase.

Soon the all out acceptance of this "all out" phrase will permit its use for other purposes. Propaganda profits by its own momentum. It will not be long before the all out attitude of an unthinking people will be utilized to implement the tendency toward some fascist form of society.

In the literature of the day the insinuation that collectivization has its points is being subtly put. Newspapers which for years had opposed the New Deal have changed since Mr. Roosevelt's re-election, and are now more than tolerant toward this American apotheosis of Statism. Maybe it's the prospect of profits that has conciliated the financial pages of conservative and reactionary organs: even Wall Street news columns, which a short while ago spewed vitriol into every Washington item, have adjusted themselves to centralization and apparently see

how it can be used to advantage.

New Dealism is practically done with its controversial stage; we are being insinuated into an all out attitude toward it. But the metamorphosis of the nation from a sort of democracy to a sort of collectivism is not yet in the all out stage. In reading current articles and editorials one must have the tendency in mind, to evaluate their direction.

For instance, a few weeks ago a metropolitan newspaper which prides itself on the absence of editorialization in its news columns headlined on its first page a story that by its own standards is not news. It is the kind of stuff used to fill up space on an inside page on a day when news is scarce. What is reported did not happen the day before or even the week before. Here are the first three paragraphs.

"The housewives of the United States are soon to receive the most thorough education in how to feed their families ever provided by any nation in the world.

"They are going to get the instruction because the country is on the verge of its full defense effort, and experts here are agreed that a really all-out job of defense is impossible unless the physical health of Americans is considerably stepped up. The scientists say that you cannot put into heavy industry a man who has been subsisting on a deficient diet for ten years and get anything out of him. They hope that, as a result of the war effort the nation will learn a permanent lesson, so that never again will American families have to get along on insufficient food in a land of plenty.

"The official concern is not merely with the defense worker. They see total war and total war effort as a force placing demands on civilian population as great or greater than those put on soldiers and sailors. And they know that along with national unity and national faith in democracy there is another most potent morale builder, the name of which is Vitamin B."

Thus for a full front-page column, plus a run-over, we are told that the Good Father is preparing to look after the nutrition of his people, in war and in peace. Allah be praised!

For years such propaganda paper from Washington has been pouring down on editorial desks, toward ubiquitous waste baskets. Why now give it front page space? We know that this editor can tell a newspaper from a propaganda sheet. We also know that the editorial columns of his paper are less critical of bureaucracies than they used to be.

But this is merely a sample of what we are being fed by newspapers and magazines. The inference is plain: that we are being prepared for an "all out" signal for an "all out" acceptance of the great and glorious "all out" State.