

Uniformity - Equalitarian Paradise

OUR SOLICITOUS FRIENDS, the socialists—including those who, although holding to the same views, resent the cognomen—have long been telling us about the wastefulness of competition. There are too many brands of goods, too much duplication of services, all employing too many people in useless occupations and adding to the cost of living. Concentration (including the perfect plan) would eliminate advertising men, retailers, traveling salesmen, accountants, mannequins and similar parasites; the same amount of satisfactions would be produced in less labor hours, giving workers more time for leisure and study, perhaps the study of *Das Kapital*.

England will soon put this theory to the test. War is the quintessence of collectivism; for it is then that the seeking of individual satisfactions is repressed in favor of what is accepted as the common good. Getting along without is the order of the day.

So the British government has a scheme of concentration which, among other things, will eliminate brand names and make for uniformity in packaging and merchandising. Labor will be saved for war production, to say nothing of the economy in paper, tins, jars, tubes, bottles, all kinds of containers.

Some may cavil at such a scheme on the ground that the prestige and good will established with heavy advertising appropriations will be destroyed; we must become inured to the destruction of private property by fiat. Others may take alarm at the possibility of monopoly, for it is evident that uniformity is essential to mass production, and the larger concentrations of capital are better fitted to gobble up the business when quality and fastidiousness no longer determine sales.

This argument may be discussed on one of two hopes: (1) that after the war competitive conditions will be re-established, or (2) that these monopolies will make easy the transit to the collectivist heaven, State Capitalism.

Since the United States is speeding along the road that leads to war, and will furthermore have the benefit of England's experience in making the necessary social and economic adjustment, it is to be expected that we will soon find it expedient to adopt a similar policy of uniformity. Let us consider its benefits. There are many.

The radio program uninterrupted by sonorous announcements of the superfluity of vitamins in a breakfast food will be a pleasure indeed. With a ban

on brands your newspaper, free of advertising, will consist of not more than four pages, which will be ample for the important news, including baseball scores. You will say "toothpaste" and there will be no tedious argument with the obsequious drug clerk. Any shoe store that carries your size will serve as well as any other. You need never worry about remembering the name of the cathartic your friend recommended; just ask for castor oil.

Stores will carry not so many inventories, and there will be fewer stores. Fewer stores mean lower rentals. Expensive advertising men will be dispensed with, although government propaganda work will furnish them with a livelihood. Salesmen will be useless except, perhaps, as drivers of delivery trucks; anyhow, the demoralizing "swindle sheet" will be no more.

Think of the savings to business! Commercial artists and their immodest models, photo-engravers, printers and box makers, "idea men," sign makers and label makers, to say nothing of the consequent occupations, such as typists and errand boys—all would be released for the more purposeful occupations of making tanks and reading Marx.

Yes, the boys and girls who advocate uniformity have something.

Your Pie Comes Later

