

that. The one thing we know fully well is that a planned society cannot plan for freedom, and there will always be individuals who will resist.

But in the end it is philosophy we are talking, not economics. Ontologically, in the order of being, economics comes first, but axiologically, in the order of value, philosophy. I am not spurring men on to revolution, but to evolution. History cannot be hurried. Philosophers are needed who will work slowly but surely towards an end which is not near but remote, and yet one that will come only if they work towards it. There must be such philosophers in the world.

(This completes the instalments of Freedom The Only End. It is hoped to publish the book sometime this year. It would be helpful to us to have an indication of its likely sale among readers and we would welcome tentative orders.—Ed.)

MOTORMANIA



BY
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IT IS TRUE TO SAY that the motor-car has taken the twentieth century by surprise. While the developing countries, and those with a relatively low population in relation to the land area, have been able, to some extent, to look forward and prepare accordingly, though not always with success, the traffic problem in England is approaching the world's worst. Hitler's one great contribution to German economic life was his support for the *autobahn* programme. In England we are just beginning to accept the need for fast, safe, major road routes linking the whole of the country. We are, of course, thirty years too late.

But while our national roads are insufficient and unco-ordinated, the traffic problem reaches its height in the conurbations and large towns. It is here that we find the internal combustion engine almost defeating its own purpose of conveying goods and people from A to B. The ground-use interests of pedestrians and motorists are completely different. The frustration, annoyance and danger to life can only be examined in terms of the needs of both groups, who at the moment are in continual conflict. The modern trend in urban design and town planning is to segregate the antagonists and thus bring the war to an end. This, however, is much easier to say than perform, and much depends upon one's basic approach.

On the one hand we have the view that all but essential private vehicular traffic should be forced to remain at the periphery of the towns, while on the other we have the view that we must adapt the antiquated and congested

architectural environment to meet the consequences of ever-increasing motorisation. The Buchanan Report rightly emphasises that any solution to this problem must be a compromise between the two extremes. The report itself is the most factual, frank and detailed examination of the traffic problem in urban areas that has ever been made, and is worthy of study at length. What is most striking is the urgency of the problem.

It is estimated that motor traffic will double within the next ten years, and the implications of this in terms of space are frightening. The ramifications of any deliberate policy are going to be enormous in terms of finance. We are reaching the point where car ownership is gradually being extended throughout a community which in all probability will not be able to afford to provide an environment to meet the need.

To approach this challenge, a completely new concept of land ownership is hinted at. Wholesale purchase of land, the unification of site ownership for comprehensive redevelopment, and the costs that would be involved are staggering. On the question as to how this will be brought about there is an unwillingness in political circles to make commitments. For my part, I am sure of one thing—that the introduction of land-value taxation is more important at this stage in our history than ever before, if only to ward off talk of land nationalisation, which, unless an alternative is soon accepted, must gain more and more support as the century advances.

Under a system of land-value taxation we could expect a gradual migration from the present congested areas to newly-established, lower-density towns. While this movement of itself will not solve the problem completely, it would be a salutary step in the right direction. In the long run, a solution will have to be found within the depopulated older towns to reconcile the needs of the pedestrian and motorist. Provided, however, that the right impetus was given for expansion on the margin (which does not have to be the geographical margin of present towns), the urban problem would not only become less intense, but much cheaper to solve financially. This would be brought about by the lowering of land values in some places and the rise of new values in others.

It would still be necessary to deal comprehensively with architectural renewal and to provide for segregation and car parking. The first priority here is to establish principles. As long as it is legally permitted to park freely on the street, congestion will continue. Ultimately the motorist must be prepared to pay the cost of the facilities he requires. Roads, of course, would continue to be financed from public funds, but parking could, and should, be provided through the natural economic mechanism. The danger is that such an approach, like all truly rational approaches, will be politically unacceptable.

The problem of the motor car, like all town planning problems, is basically one of the use and misuse of land under the present system of land tenure. It is a problem which must be tackled at the land level first. To this end the introduction of land-value taxation is the essential first step.