

## THE DEAD HAND OF AUTHORITY

IT WOULD SEEM that every government in the world today considers it its duty to stamp out private initiative and personal liberty wherever it threatens to compete with the state.

The "pirate" radio stations in the North Sea are a case in point. No sooner is a ship broadcasting pop music from outside the three-mile limit than a howl of rage goes up from restrictionists. "Do something about it!" they tell the Government. "Stop them." Why they should be stopped, or what harm they are doing, is not considered. The reply that they are not breaking any law is met with the retort that a new law should speedily be passed so that they would be breaking it, and then they could be stopped!

What wrong have these stations done that they should thus be condemned and threatened with forceful removal? In the last resort, their only crime is that they have dared to do something without getting somebody else's permission. There is really no other reason. The operators have carefully chosen wavelengths that do not interfere with other stations or radio communications, and the British Government has admitted that there is no danger here.

But to the restrictionists the situation is intolerable. Radio stations must be licensed. This statement needs no justification or explanation. To them it is as self-evident as a law of nature, and just as immutable.

The Dutch Government shares this restrictionist view. For several years it has been attempting to suppress a "pirate" radio station six miles off The Hague. Now a group of Dutch businessmen plans to set up an artificial island eight miles out from Noordwijk and establish a pirate television service. The Dutch Government has declared its intention to prevent them doing any such thing — despite the fact that four out of five viewers in Holland are all in favour of the project.

Even the decision of the British Government not to take any immediate action against the radio ships *Caroline* and *Atlanta* (to which, incidentally, some six million people listen) must be seen more as a triumph for interested parties who hope to cash in on commercial radio than as a genuine concern for freedom of action.

## ILLEGAL EXERCISE OF POWER

NEW YORKERS have not given up the fight to save their city from fluoridation. After the vote of the City Council and the Board of Estimate last December in favour of fluoridating the city's water supply, four prominent citizens, including a former Water Commissioner, have filed a suit seeking to invalidate the project. The complaint, which is the first of its kind in New York City, says that New York public health law requires officials to maintain standards of purity of water, but that it is unlawful for anyone to deposit in the city's water system any matter which is not related to the pre-

vention of water-borne disease or the purification and potability of the water supplies.

The plaintiffs also charge that the defendants are "violating the constitutional right of each inhabitant of the city to drink water free of medication," that fluoridation "is arbitrary, illegal, and capricious," and that "involuntary medication for the entire populace is unreasonable and an improper, illegal exercise of power."

Meanwhile, the present Water Commissioner, Armand d'Angelo, is setting up the fluoridation equipment, at a first year cost to the city of over \$1,300,000.

## FACE THE FUTURE WITH ENTERPRISE AND SUBSIDIES!

OPENING the Gloucestershire Marketing Society's new market at Cheltenham, the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Christopher Soames, said:

"Your society has taken a bold step. . . You have reaffirmed your faith in the 'producer' market. You have invested a substantial sum in this market because you believe in the producer's ability to increase turnover and attract merchants from a wide area. . . . Your faith in the future, based as it is on the home producer's ability to compete successfully with his overseas competitor, is matched by the Government's own faith. We have announced plans which will lead, with *exchequer support*, to substantial investment in horticulture over the next few years. We want to see, and I believe will see, a horticultural industry with the most up-to-date equipment and using the most modern methods of production — indeed as modern and efficient an industry as any in the world. "This is bound to have a beneficial effect on this splendid new market of yours. So your market could not have come into being at a more auspicious time. I congratulate you on your enterprise and I wish you the greatest success in the future."

It is not quite clear from the Minister's statement whether he is congratulating the Government on its avowed support programme or the local horticulturalists' enterprise in being quick off the mark with a view to cashing in when the subsidies take effect.

The British taxpayer will be overjoyed, no doubt, to learn that Britain can lead the world in horticultural efficiency at his expense. There is always a good reason for producers combining in marketing schemes. At a cost of £100,000 this new market ought to provide those who contributed with a fair return for producing relatively expensive products inefficiently in the future.

## REFUGE OF "DOUBLETHINK"

IS THERE no escape from the continuing trend towards more and more socialism? Are there really no true liberals left? Even in the United States, which was once the "Land of the Free," socialisation seems an inevitable process.

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