

LETTERS

SERFDOM CENSUS

SIR,—The reality behind the recent census is not only the intrusion into our private lives, vicious as this may be, but the grave danger that the present, or any future government, can use the information to impose their own ideological outlook on our living conditions.

Let there be no mistake, it will be used for dictated communal purposes, otherwise the census is a completely useless exercise. To those who blindly accept and believe in a planned authoritarian order of society the warning should be clear, every step towards the resultant corporate state means greater interference with the private life of the individual.

Incidentally, when this census was being framed the inclusion of a detailed question relating to wages and personal incomes was dropped as being "too hot," but we may expect to get it in some subsequent census as they cannot effectively control the production and distribution of wealth unless they know what every individual is worth.

The price of liberty is eternal vigilance. Already great inroads have been made into individual freedom. How we live and where is dictated to an alarming degree and individual responsibility has been undermined to such an extent that "permissiveness" seems to be the social order today. The object of this serfdom census is to reduce the individual to a number on a chart or computer data-bank.

STEPHEN MARTIN
Fordingbridge, Hants.

HOW A CHARITY BECOMES A PLAGUE

SIR,—A German writer, Peter Grubbe (*Zeitmagazin*, Hamburg, April 16, 1971) describes the true effects of well-meant and well-intended help to under-privileged countries. "With German help, dams were built in order to irrigate land and to make it useful. But members

of the government" (of those under-privileged countries) "and their friends bought the cheap barren land before the development took place—for a peppercorn—and then, after that irrigation, they sublet it for tremendous rentals to poor farmers. Result: Development-aid, instead of promoting economic development, aggravated social discontent and unrest."

This is precisely the development foreseen by Goethe (*Faust I*): "Vernunft wird Unsinn, Wohetät Plage" (Reason becomes nonsense, charity a plague). Goethe, a high-ranking administrative officer, understood well enough the effects of misapplied charity.

Those people who converted technical and financial help to their countries into their own profit, are not to be blamed. The real fault is not theirs, but the missing antecedent policy!

If *land-value taxation* had been introduced in those countries prior to the erection of the dams, the nation, and not some private profiteer, would have reaped the fruit of that development; the former underprivileged state would then have enough money to carry out

further development without foreign aid.

And though "strings attached" are rather disliked, the giving nations ought to demand introduction of land-value taxation in the receiving countries; this lies in the true interest of the receivers themselves!

DAVID B. ASCHER
Haifa, Israel

PLANNED FREE TRADE

SIR,—In their efforts to construct a (partial) free trade area the EEC are trying to find out the amount of taxation and "social" charges that enter into the prices of their export goods so as to equalize and compensate them by tariffs. These costs differ of course to an embarrassing degree in the respective countries.

As many thousands of commodities are affected, this appears to be a task which, in spite of modern methods of computer feeding in our cybernetic age, will be almost impossible to fulfil; thick books of legislature and lists will have to be studied and digested by scores of experts and professors, in the process.

Great Britain, with a mass of her own complex economic and social legislation can quietly sit down and wait for the result.

PHILIPP KNAB
Vienna, Austria

Miscellany

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING BORED

WE AWAIT with growing impatience the promised Government review of the industrial training boards. Our previous convictions about these institutional bureaucracies have been buttressed by the report in the national press about a foreman floorlayer who, when attending a four-day training course run by the Construction Industry Training Board, spent an hour taking a bicycle bell to pieces and putting it together again. During the same course he also had to stand

on a platform and address an audience on the functions of a pencil.

The employer of the foreman, Mr. Arthur Beardmoor, is refusing to pay the £100 he owes in compulsory levy to the training board because he does not think it is working. Mr. Beardmoor has been threatened with legal action but he has simply placed the letter with the rest of a pile of correspondence from them standing two inches thick on his desk.

It may be claimed that the ability to express ideas on any subject must be useful to anyone like a foreman who has to train others but in