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The Libertarian

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Tax Day

April 15, that dread Income Tax day, is around again, and gives us a chance to ruminate on the nature of taxes and of the government itself.

The first great lesson to learn about taxation is that taxation is simply robbery. No more and no less. For what is "robbery"? Robbery is the taking of a man's property by the use of violence or the threat thereof, and therefore without the victim's consent. And yet what else is taxation?

Those who claim that taxation is, in some mystical sense, really "voluntary" should then have no qualms about getting rid of that vital feature of the law which says that failure to pay one's taxes is criminal and subject to appropriate penalty. But does anyone seriously believe that if the payment of taxation were *really* made voluntary, say in the sense of contributing to the American Cancer Society, that any appreciable revenue would find itself into the coffers of government? Then why don't we try it as an experi-

ment for a few years, or a few decades, and find out?

But if taxation is robbery, then it follows as the night the day that those people who engage in, and live off, robbery are a gang of thieves. Hence the government is a group of thieves, and deserves, morally, aesthetically, and philosophically, to be treated exactly as a group of less socially respectable ruffians would be treated.

This issue of *The Libertarian* is dedicated to that growing legion of Americans who are engaging in various forms of that one weapon, that one act of the public which our rulers fear the most: tax rebellion, the cutting off the funds by which the host public is sapped to maintain the parasitic ruling classes. Here is a burning issue which could appeal to everyone, young and old, poor and wealthy, "working class" and middle class, regardless of race, color, or creed. Here is an issue which everyone understands, only too well. Taxation.

TAX REVOLT IN WISCONSIN

On Tuesday, April 1, the most significant American election since last November occurred in northern Wisconsin. Mel Laird had been elevated from his long-time post as Congressman from this district to his present berth as mighty, hawkish Secretary of Defense. A special election was held on April 1 to fill the Congressional spot.

The Republicans had won this post with great ease for decades, usually amassing about two-thirds of the vote. This year, State Senator Walter Chilsen, Laird's hand-picked successor, was seemingly safe, and he made his safety even more secure by wrapping himself in the mantle of the Nixon-Laird Administration, and making the election a referendum of the supposedly popular new regime.

Yet, this April, young David Obey, the Democratic choice, defeated Chilsen handily in a stunning upset; the vote was approximately 63,000 to 59,000. Everyone is agreed on the major reason for the upset: the great

issue which Obey hammered at again and again--high and crushing taxation. Wisconsin's Republican Governor Warren Knowles had run for re-election on a platform of pride on not raising taxes; true to political form, as soon as he was safely back in, his political greed came to the fore, and the Republicans of Wisconsin swung behind a program of higher taxes. The outraged public rallied around Obey's attacks on high taxes, and taxes proved to be a hotter and more important public issue than the Nixon Administration, the Party of Our Fathers, and even love for Mel Laird. An explosion over taxes is at hand, if leaders should arise to articulate the people's deepest wishes.

"To force a man to pay for the violation of his own liberty is indeed an addition of insult to injury. But that is exactly what the State is doing."

---Benjamin R. Tucker, 1893

Letter From Washington

By Karl Hess

TAX REVOLT

For those who retain a residual, if not romantic attachment to the notion of peaceful change there is at least one Springlike sign of encouragement along the Potomac. A substantial tax rebellion is underway.

Far and away the largest share of mail to Capitol Hill as well as to the White House concerns taxes--not comments on them, but angry statements of refusals to pay either some or all of the State's lootish tribute. The same thing is happening at local levels in the 50 states where, as a matter of fact, taxation has been growing overall at a more rapid pace than even at the Federal level. Farmers in Pennsylvania, householders in Brooklyn, housewives in the southwest, all have mounted direct assaults against organized theft by the State. At the local level the success of tax rebellions is astonishing. Any group that can gather a hundred or so members seems assured of, at least, protection against flagrant suppression and has, obviously, a good chance of success. The picture is neither so clear nor so rosy at the Federal level. The number of resisters is surely growing but, because there is no organized or united force in the field, the Federals have open to them such means of suppression as the selective persecution of 'leaders' to set Spockian examples. Attorney General Mitchell's selection of just that device to deal with campus disorders could be a hint of direction but should it fail to suppress the campuses--as hopefully seems to be the case--then it may not be tried against tax resisters.

Another approach could be in the broadest social pressure, with impassioned campaigns to vilify those who resist, as near or actual traitors, and to extol for the "quiet majority" the patriotic, humble, and holy virtues of submitting to taxation without so much as a whimper and certainly not a groan. The Stakhanovites of the Nixon Administration, we may anticipate, will be quiet and eager taxpayers (let's hear it for Quiet Quentin, he didn't even claim a deduction for *himself!*) and their children, equally docile on the campus.

The tax rebellion, also, has evolutionary stages. It will pass from rebellion into revolution at approximately the moment it coalesces, either around a conscious organizing effort or spontaneously around a particular incident.

In either case there seems little that the State could do about it--as a broadly based movement rather than one in which individuals may, as at present, be picked off and/or terrorized without support or succor.

At any rate it is the nightmare of the State today.

* * *

Washington, a far cry from most cities, is provided with three competing daily newspapers, not to mention

several in the nearby suburbs of Maryland and Virginia. Freedom of the press, you might think, would be enhanced by this fortuitous situation. The truth is dreadfully different.

Washington also has an 'underground' newspaper, the Free Press. It is, as are so many of the type, a generally lighthearted mixture of psychedelic coming and aching and radical politics. It has perhaps as great as, but surely no greater, a range of explicitly sexual or scatological slang as any current best-seller.

The Free Press is regularly harassed by the police. It now must print hundreds of miles away. Persons selling it have been arrested for the possession of pornography while, in full admission of the essentially *political* nature of the paper, a judicial refugee from the Flintstones in nearby Maryland has arranged to have some of the editors charged with, believe it or not, sedition against the Free State. (Yea, Free.)

Meantime, how have the watchdogs of liberty responded? The 'open Administration' of Richard Nixon apparently couldn't care less if the paper were closed down. The journalism clubs, associations, and guilds are as silent as the grave. The Washington Post says the fuzz might as well leave the Free alone because it isn't influential anyway, thus reducing freedom of the press to a solely utilitarian level and adding a new sub-basement to the structure of The Post's morality. But the Free, bless it, still appears.

* * *

Daily there is new evidence that probing and defending the military-industrial complex is to become a major matter in Congress this session--perhaps the hottest issue of all if the war can be cooled down or, as at present, virtually ignored. In the continuing drama of disputes without difference, opponents of the welfare state now will rise mightily to man the battlements of the warfare state--and, of course, vice versa. As an American President once remarked, in another regard, one hopes neither side runs out of ammunition.

"The schoolboy whips his taxed top, the beardless youth manages his taxed horse with a taxed bridle, on a taxed road; and the dying Englishmen, pouring his medicine, which has paid seven per cent, flings himself back on his chintz bed, which has paid twenty-two per cent, and expires in the arms of an apothecary who has paid a license of a hundred pounds for the privilege of putting him to death."

---Sydney Smith, 1830

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TRANSFORMATION OF A NEWSPAPER

Since the early nineteen-fifties, the *National Guardian* was considered by many to be a firebrand radical newspaper on the furthest fringes of the left. It had been so branded for its heroic stand against the onslaught of McCarthyism. In many ways it is true that the *National Guardian* was the spokesman for "far-left" opinion. But it is equally true that beyond its outspoken anti-McCarthyism, the *National Guardian* surely was not a radical newspaper.

In a subheading under the *National Guardian's* banner was the accompanying motto which expressed both the content and the purpose of its existence. It read: "An Independent Progressive Newsweekly." Reformism, not radicalism, was indeed its intent and its history, ever since its origins in the reformist Wallace campaign of 1948.

A couple of years ago, after the New Left had begun to stir, the management and direction of the *National Guardian* began to change. As 1967 became 1968, the "coup" was all but complete. What remained was to alert the public to the newspaper's new intentions. In February 1968, the statist-patriotic term *National* was dropped from the paper's masthead; and, more importantly, the accompanying motto was changed to read: "Independent Radical Newsweekly."

Although it was from the beginning true to its announced intentions of being a genuinely radical newspaper, i. e., attacking the United States monopoly capitalist-imperialist system rather than simply trying to reform a depraved system that was beyond repair, the new *Guardian* did have its share of problems. It was indeed radical, but it could no longer truly be called a newspaper.

The new management and staff were inexperienced. The call to radicalism stepped on the ideological toes of many of the *National Guardian's* former readers. Subscriptions expired, unrenewed. Impassioned letters of disbelief and abhorrence stormed in with cries of anti-Semitism because of the new leadership's stand on Black Power and the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

Confronted with the major task of rebuilding a large part of its circulation and saddled with an inexperienced, underpaid (often unpaid), and sometimes incompetent staff, the *Guardian* hobbled along, leaving much to be desired in the area of reportorial journalism.

Most of the pages of the *Guardian* were given to editorializing. Series after series of eight and ten-part "think pieces" filled its pages for six or seven months. The only really redeeming feature of the *Guardian* during this period was the weekly report of Wilfred Burchett from Cambodia on the Vietnam War. Burchett's articles were always poignant, perceptive and uncannily correct in their predictions of unfolding events in southeast Asia.

During the last two months, and particularly in the last several issues, a happy change has been taking place. The pages of the *Guardian* have been filled with what a newspaper should contain--news. Gone are the misplaced and often incompetent "think pieces". Editorials are at a minimum. The news stories are most

"Of all debts, men are least willing to pay taxes. What a satire is this on government!"
---Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1841

often relevant, and many of them are well-written. The *Guardian* seems on its way to becoming a first-rate newspaper.

There appears to be a battle going on under the surface for ideological control of the *Guardian* between the New Left anarchists and decentralized socialists and some remaining remnants of Old Left Marxism, but it seems certain that it is a battle which the Old Left is doomed to lose. Most of the young radicals see the old Marxists for what they really are--conservative authoritarians.

In many of the news stories and some of the editorials there is a disquieting, almost inexplicable, sentimental disposition toward a working class movement. This tends to produce some news stories and editorials which are irrelevant to libertarian concerns; but, fortunately, this does not interfere with the fine reporting done in other areas.

Apart from Burchett's reports, now coming from Paris, there are many on-the-spot reports on American Imperialist activities from such places as Latin America, North Korea, and Africa. There is also excellent coverage of the accelerating student movement across the country.

The coverage of the United States military-industrial-university complex and its inner machinations has become increasingly pointed and revealing. Especially fine in this area has been the research and reporting done by the staff of the North American Congress of Latin America. NACLA is a young research group which has expanded far beyond its original intent to study the origins and effects of American Imperialism in Latin America. The NACLA people are doing the laudatory and very necessary work of finding out just which corporations and which universities are receiving government contracts and funds. They are reporting this information along with the discoverable facts on exactly which perverted project each of these corporations and universities is pursuing!

One other weekly attraction is well worth mentioning. The "Wanted" feature picks out one of the members of the state-industrial-university system and gives a brief sketch of his personal criminal activity; thereby giving us a more meaningful concrete and personal understanding of the Power Elite.

The *Guardian* is, of course, not a libertarian newspaper; but as it improves as a newspaper, it has become increasingly a better source of pertinent information which can be quite helpful to libertarians. In fact, it is the only place where one can find detailed and comprehensive reporting on all aspects of what is generally known as The Movement. As such, it now, more than ever, deserves to be read by libertarians.

---Walter E. Grinder

RECOMMENDED READING

LEFT AND RIGHT. The latest, special 1968 issue of this journal of libertarian thought features a substantial, definitive article by the late historian Harry Elmer Barnes on "The Final Story of Pearl Harbor". This was Dr. Barnes' last work, and synthesizes the "revisionist" insights over the past two decades on the *real* story of Pearl. \$1.25, available from Left and Right, Box 395, Cathedral Station, New York, N. Y. 10025.

Leviathan. Vol. 1, No. 1 (March, 1969). New monthly magazine, 56 pp. in tabloid form. New Left periodical, with high-level muckraking and insights into the current American scene. Particularly recommended is the article by Jim Jacobs and Larry Laskowski, "The New Rebels in Industrial America", a sympathetic insight into the Wallaceite trends among many industrial workers. Also Peter Wiley and Beverly Leman, "Crisis in the Cities: Part One", on government-corporate "partnership" in the ghettos, James O'Connor's overview of the linkage of State and university, and Steve Weissman's critique of the government-corporate world at Stanford.

Economic Age. Vol. 1, No. 1 (November-December, 1968). A new semi-popular, semi-scholarly English bi-monthly, published by the Economic Research Council, and specializing in free-marketish articles. Recommended in the first issue is G. Warren Nutter, "Trends in Eastern Europe". In contrast to many free-market economists whose fanatical anti-Communism blinds them to the enormous and heartening changes in Eastern Europe, Professor Nutter hails the accelerating shift from socialism to the free market in the Communist countries. He even concludes that "In a profound sense, the hope of the West lies today in the East." 2 pounds sterling per year; available from *Economic Age*, 10 Upper Berkeley St., London W1, England.

Yale Brozen, "Is Government The Source of Monopoly?", *Intercollegiate Review* (Winter, 1968-69). A good article in this ISI periodical is something

to savor. Professor Brozen shows how government is the source of monopoly in many ways, direct and indirect. Major concentration of the article is the ICC.

Gabriel Kolko, *The Politics of War: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1943-1945* (New York: Random House, 1968), 685 pp. \$12.95. Monumental and definitive. This is *it*; the first of a multi-volume study of the origins of the Cold War. Kolko is far superior to such previous leading Cold War revisionists as D. F. Fleming, because Fleming worshipped FDR and thought of Roosevelt's foreign policy as noble, only to be sabotaged after his death. Kolko is revisionist on U.S. imperialism *during* as well as after World War II, and shows that America launched the Cold War while World War II was still going on. Kolko exposes the economic interests amidst U.S. imperialism during these years, and also is the first leading historian to develop the Trotskyist insight that the "sellout" at Yalta and other World War II conferences came from Stalin selling out the Communist revolution throughout Europe and Asia on behalf of his Great Power imperial agreement with the U.S. Indispensable for understanding the history of the Cold War and of U.S. foreign policy in our time.

Marion Mainwaring, "Brittany: Revolution in a Cemetery", *The Nation* (February 24, 1969). A charming article from Brittany on a grievously neglected national liberation movement--this one from the oppressed Breton people, a Celtic people with their own language and culture, who have been ruled for over 400 years by an illegal occupation by the French. Like other national liberation movements throughout the world, the Breton movement has been growing rapidly. Eventual goal is a Celtic Federation including independent nations in: Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall, the Isle of Man, and Wales. Normans and Occitans (the southern French speaking the *langue d'oc* and akin to the Catalans oppressed by Spain) are also beginning to yearn for their freedom.

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