

Tax Day - How Government is a Gang of Thieves by Murray Rothbard

MURRAY ROTHBARD EXPLAINS HOW CONFISCATORY TAXATION IS NOTHING LESS THAN THEFT AND HOW GOVERNMENT OPERATES LIKE GANGSTERS. POSTED 4/13/07.

Tax Day By Murray N. Rothbard

This unsigned editorial, written by Murray N. Rothbard, appeared in the April 15, 1969 issue of The Libertarian (soon to become The Libertarian Forum).

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 experiment 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. "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

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.

Murray N. Rothbard (1926–1995) was dean of the Austrian School.