
The Voluntaryist

Whole Number 159

"If one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself"

4th Quarter 2013

Do You Really "Owe" Those Taxes?

By Anonymous

I recently had a short conversation with a friend about the meaning of the stealing commandment, "Thou shall not steal." His attitude was "If you owe the taxes, then the government can't be stealing from you when they collect it." However, he did recognize that if you don't owe it, then it is stealing when the government comes after you with all its might. So, do you really owe the tax money or not? Are you stealing from the government when you refuse to pay? Or is the I.R.S. stealing from you because you never agreed to pay what they claim you owe? It has got to be one or the other. Which is it?

On the one hand, government personnel pass legislation that demands compulsory contributions from the citizenry. No one is really asked to consent to this legislation, and even if one voted to select some of the government personnel that support these taxes, one could hardly be said to have agreed to its imposition. And what if one voted, but chose an opposition candidate who was defeated; or didn't vote at all? Clearly, the government does not care whether you have voted or not. They still consider you liable for your taxes.

Most people want to be upright and meet their voluntarily-assumed obligations. They willingly pay their rightful debts in order to maintain their own self-esteem and to maintain their reputation in the minds of their friends, neighbors, and countrymen. So if taxes were really voluntarily contracted debts as the Internal Revenue Service maintains, then why does the government need to rely on force and its threat to collect the money? The very fact that the government must resort to this supports my argument that taxes are not voluntarily-assumed obligations.

Is there really any evidence that you owe your taxes? Did you even enter into a contract that you would pay 'x' amount in return for government services? Is your income tax return such a contract? No, it is a document coerced from you under penalty of perjury and under penalty for not filing. Furthermore, the government does not depend on having you file a tax return in order to claim that you owe them money. Ever hear of people being imprisoned and fined for NOT filing returns? The government cannot have it both ways: you owe if you do file and you owe if you don't file. In fact, this is proof that the government is simply demanding money from you, no matter what

you do. Therefore, I think it is safe to conclude that neither filing nor not filing constitutes any kind of proof that you owe taxes. There is no evidence of any consent or agreement on your part. The government considers you under its jurisdiction and consequently claims you owe it the tax.

Most advocates of taxation justify their view that "taxation is not theft" by referring to some form of "tacit" consent that each person incurs by simply being alive. This amounts to the claim that if you were born in the United States, then your presence means that you have agreed to be taxed! But where does it say that on your birth certificate (another service controlled by the government)? And even if it did, could an infant agree to such a condition at time of birth? No: infants do not have the capacity to contract debts. Besides, what would happen to those parents if they refused to consent on behalf of their children? Would they and their infant be forced to leave the country?

Does one's use of government-provided services, such as the roads and the schools, mean you agree to be taxed to support the government? No. The government coercively monopolizes many of the goods and services some people would willingly pay for. By preventing competition, the government effectively denies them any choice in who they should buy these services from. At most, the government should present a bill for specific services rendered, not a bill for supporting all its activities. Furthermore, governments collect for such services from people regardless of whether they use, or even want, the service in question. For example, parents with no children, or, parents with children who do not attend government schools, must still pay school taxes. Pacifists are forced to pay taxes to support the police and the army. What possible justification can there be for compelling a man to accept a product he never ordered, doesn't use, and would prefer not to have? And then jailing him when he refuses to pay the bill?

But this moves the argument one further step backward. Does the State have the right to determine the conditions under which we live? It is true that there are costs expended in protecting one's property, and most people recognize that they must furnish their own protection or pay someone else to provide it. However, they should not be restricted from doing so themselves or seeking competitive bids for the provision of the services they desire. Government taxation prevents this

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Editor: Carl Watner

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Potpourri from the Editor's Desk

No.1 "Books Received"

WHY PEACE? (Edited and published by Marc Guttman, 2012) This anthology explores aggression and the evolutionary process to peace. It presents stories of war, invasion, and political repressions - from the North Korean gulag to exiled journalists, to soldiers at war. Seventy-eight people, from thirty-four countries on five continents, share their stories here. They all come to a similar conclusion: *peace is best for all and its time has come*. (Paraphrased and quoted from the back cover.) ISBN: 978-0-9849802-0-8. Available from the editor at Box 623, East Lyme, CT 06333.

LIBERTARIAN ANARCHY: AGAINST THE STATE by Gerard Casey (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012). "Most human beings for most of history have lived in a state of anarchy; most of our daily interaction with our family, friends, and neighbors and colleagues is framed by anarchy, and anarchy is the only mode of organization that is consistent with our accepting responsibility for ourselves, our families, and our communities in an adult way. ... This book includes a history of the concept of anarchy, an examination of the possibility of anarchic societies and an articulation of the nature of law and order within such societies." (pp. 147 and back cover) Highly recommended as a basic primer, arguing that the modern state is an illegitimate institution and should be replaced by voluntarism. (www.continuumbooks.com)

No. 2 "Remember, quite simply, ..."

Between men there can exist only two relations: logic and war. Always demand proof, proof is the fundamental respect you owe yourself. If they refuse, remember that you are being attacked and that every means will be used to make you obey.

- Paul Valery, MONSIEUR TESTE (1947 and 1964), (end of Chapter 6, "Dialogue") pp. 74-75.

No. 3 "Transportation Security Is Not Security"

It's not even a charade of security. It serves but one purpose: to make sure that all the little people out there know exactly who's in charge - the government. ... It's just programming, training people to submit to authority, desensitizing them to further erosions of freedom. Sometimes the tactics are blunt, sometimes far softer.

- From "Sovereign Man - Notes from the Field," August 14, 2012

No. 4 "Which way do you prefer?"

We human beings always seek happiness. Now there are two ways. You make yourself happy by making other people unhappy - I call that the logic of robbery. The other way, you make yourself happy by making other people happy - that's the logic of the market. Which way do you prefer?

-Zhang Weiyang in THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, October 13-14, 2012, p. A11.

No. 5 "Non-State Law vs. State Law"

On the surface, state law is characterized by its authority to use force, And that is the main difference from non-state law, which is unable to implement the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force to fulfill its obligations. But the fact that non-state law develops from a social agreement should not mislead one to believe that disobedience will be accepted without any consequences. Whenever someone violates accepted rules of behavior, the 'perpetrator' should always be prepared to experience various forms of social isolation as an outsider. In sum, the validity of non-state law is based on the general acceptance that certain forms of behavior are right.

- Oliver Lembcke, "Regulating the Living Will," in van Schooten and Verschuuren, INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND LAW (2008), pp. 192-193.

No. 6 "Is Ownership Just and Necessary?"

In fact, the general question as to what is just arises, and can arise, only in the context of ownership and entitlement. Where there is literally no ownership and no entitlement, then the question as to what is just simply does not arise. If no one owns anything, then a question of the form, 'Whose is this?' is irrelevant and, if even the notion of ownership is absent, meaningless. In a society where, quite literally, no one in any way owns anything whatsoever, the question as to what is just simply cannot arise. So we may ask: Is ownership just? Is it just that humans own things? The question seem at first sight clear but on reflection turns out to be very strange. If a just situation is one in which each quietly possesses what he owns, a situation in which no one owns anything cannot be just. The question of justice is irrelevant. Neither is such a situation unjust,

for an unjust situation is one in which at least one person does not quietly possess what he owns. If literally no one is entitled to anything, no one can be deprived of their entitlement and there is neither justice nor injustice; again, the issue of justice is an irrelevance.

We consider, however, that ownership of some kind is necessary for, and unavoidable in, communal human living. We take it that ownership has been and is present in all societies, that is, that humans have always owned - that is, have always been entitled to - things, although what they own and how they own them changes over time. There is no human community in which ownership does not exist, and no evidence that there ever has been. It is sometimes claimed that among such and such a people there is no 'private property' but this claim usually means that property is not owned in the way that it is owned in the writer's community. Land, for example, in a hunting and gathering community is not owned as it is in a community of nomadic pastoralists or in a settled agricultural community or in a community in which people make their living dominantly through exchanging one thing for another. But in each of these types of communities, land or property is owned in the sense that there exist various types of entitlement to it. Even when a group tries to own literally everything communally, time and use are generally, perhaps necessarily, overlooked. Is the cup of coffee that a person has just poured for himself, in no sense whatsoever, his? Are the clothes that he is now wearing, in no sense whatsoever, his for the time being? ...

The assumption is simply that humans have always owned, or been entitled to, things. ... Effectively, for a person to own something requires that both that person and others accept both the practice of ownership that prevails in the society, and the fact that the person owns this particular thing. ...

The important point is that for ownership, and indeed any entitlement or right, actually to exist it must be communally accepted.

- Garrett Barden and Tim Murphy, *LAW AND JUSTICE IN COMMUNITY* (2010), pp. 45-47.

No. 7 "Does Government Increase or Decrease the Amount of Thuggery in Society?"

If there were two gangs in a particular city, and the people of the city viewed one gang as a bunch of nasty thugs, and viewed the other gangs as a legitimate "government" with the RIGHT to boss people around and take their stuff (in the name of "legislation" and "taxation") which gang would be more effective at controlling and robbing people? The answer is obvious. What makes the state far more dangerous than any

other criminal gang is that most of the VICTIMS of the state hallucinate legitimacy to the "legal" thuggery and extortion it commits, and so they proudly COOPERATE in their own subjugation and enslavement. If tomorrow, no one imagined that the I.R.S. had the right to extort [money from] a hundred million Americans, the "income tax" would immediately fall. Does anyone imagine that a gang of 100,000 thugs, only 2,000 of whom are even armed (I'm talking about the IRS) could continually [steal from ...] a ... HUNDRED MILLION people by brute force alone? Not a chance. But when the victims believe in the lie called "government," it allows for an enormous increase in thuggery and extortion. The problem is not what the gang of thugs calls itself; the problem is what the general public IMAGINE the gang to be. When they imagine it to be "government," it will get away with a drastically higher level of robbery and assault before the victims will even consider resisting. (And no, voting between Tweedle-Dum and Tweedle-Dee is not resisting.)

- Larken Rose in an email, December 11, 2012.

No. 8 "Four More Years of Barack Obama"

Obama's second term tells us that there is not going to be anything after the welfare state. Once it is set up, there is no going back short of revolution, and revolutions usually produce something worse. Government redistribution of wealth must now be the central moral feature of our society. Somebody is always responsible and that is the government. Government will define who gets what and who pays for it. Thus, ever increasing percentages of the citizens of the country will be directly dependent on the government. This is what the government has strived for. It prevents much dissent if all livelihood originates from the state. The state is not only in the business of distributing wealth but in the business of informing us what we must do or hold to receive the largess. Little discussion of producing wealth comes up because the new state realizes its security depends not on production but on distribution. It is perfectly comfortable with shortages as they generate more power for the state.

- Father James Schall, SJ in *CATHOLIC FAMILY NEWS* (December 2012), p. 27.

No. 9 "Guess Who Said This?"

It is rather strange, that unless one has a criminal mind and no respect for other people and their property, no one claims it's permissible to go into one's neighbor's house and tell them how to behave, what they can eat, smoke and drink, or how to spend their money.

Yet, rarely, is it asked why it is morally acceptable that a stranger with a badge and a gun can do the same

thing in the name of law and order. Any resistance is met with brute force, fines, taxes, arrests, and even imprisonment. ...

Government use of force to mold social and economic behavior at home and abroad has justified individuals using force on their own terms. The fact that violence by government is seen as morally justified, is the reason why violence will increase when the big financial crisis hits and becomes a political crisis a well.

First, we recognize that individuals shouldn't initiate violence, then we give the authority to government. Eventually, the immoral use of government violence, when things go badly, will be used to justify an individual's "right" to do the same thing. Neither the government nor the individuals have the moral right to initiate violence against another, yet we are moving toward the day when both will claim the authority. If this cycle is not reversed society will break down.

- Ron Paul in his Farewell Speech to Congress, November 14, 2012.

No. 10 "What Do Coercive Schools Do to Parents?"

We cannot have a peaceful, progressive, prosperous society when too many individuals in that society shirk their responsibility. And when parents come to believe that someone else should pay for the education of their children rather than bearing the full cost or having someone voluntarily help pay the cost, then it is only natural for the parent to believe [that] coercion is the honorable way to get other things. Then it is only natural for them to believe that they should be protected against competition in their line of business. When they get into the habit of running to the state to do the most important things in their live - namely, educating or training their children - then they are inclined to run to the state ... to help them in planning their lives. Then they cease to believe in a state [which requires] the consent of the individual and tend to come to believe that the state determines right from wrong; that the state is the master rather than the servant of the citizens. Then they sooner or later come to believe that the ends justifies the means,; that might makes right and that the state that has a majority can do things that they know would not be just or honest or decent if done by an individual; that we can promote justice and peace and goodwill by coercion. Then they come to believe that evil - that coercion - can produce good.

- R. C. Hoiles, "Better Jobs," THE REGISTER, September 21, 1953.

Government ... is the power to kill. Taxes levied by that power are paid to avoid the penalty government can exact, which is ultimately death.

-T. Robert Ingram, SCHOOLS - GOVERNMENT OR PUBLIC? (1960), p.6.

The Origins of State and Government

By Tom G. Palmer

[Editor's Note: The following article first appeared in CATO'S LETTER (Volume 10, No. 4, Fall 2012), a quarterly publication of the Cato Institute. Permission to reprint was granted by the author in his email of Nov. 4, 2012. The author embraces the anarchist insight, that "the state is, at its core, a predatory institution." However, the validity of the author's observation in Paragraph 13, that the presence of stationary bandits "is a kind of progress - even from the perspective of those being plundered," is questionable. Reliance on stationary bandits to fend off "rival bandits" serves to solidify the legitimacy of the entrenched gang of plunderers.

I believe the author is wrong when he infers that "a power that is absolute" and "unconditioned" is "contrary to the rule of law." The "rule of law" is a myth used by the government to disguise its "absolute" power (see John Hasnas's masterly discussion in The Voluntarist, Issues 97, 98, and 123). Judges, congressmen and congresswomen, presidents, and bureaucrats rely on the "rule of law" to justify their exercise of political power. All government laws are enforced by individuals exercising violence or its threat. Refuse to obey and you will be dutifully killed if you resist far enough - that is an "absolute" certainty. Whatever checks and balances exist among the three branches of the United States federal government, the fact is that they serve to reinforce the government's power. So to write that "the evolution of freedom has involved a long process of bringing power under law" is to miss the point that the voluntarist goal of liberty is the complete absence of coercive - political - force. What has actually evolved is the creation of the illusion that our freedom and liberties are protected under the U.S. Constitution. Nothing could be further from the truth: how can the state possibly do anything to help us secure our rights, when it, in fact, is a predator upon society? Despite these disagreements with the article, I urge you to read it for its other valuable observations.]

Many people believe that the state is responsible for everything.

According to Cass Sunstein, a professor of law at Harvard University and administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, "Government is 'implicated' in everything people own. . . . If rich people have a great deal of money, it is because the government furnishes a system in which they are entitled to have and keep that money."

That's the academic formulation of a concept that was restated recently in a popular form. "If you've been successful, you didn't get there on your own... If you were successful, somebody along the line gave you

some help... Somebody helped to create this unbelievable American system that we have that allowed you to thrive. Somebody invested in roads and bridges. If you've got a business - you didn't build that. Somebody else made that happen." That was Sunstein's boss, President Obama.

Even a charitable interpretation of the president's remarks shows that he doesn't understand the concept of marginal contribution to output, for example, of the value added by one additional hour of labor. He doesn't understand how wealth is produced.

Sunstein and his colleagues reason that since they attribute all wealth to the state, the state is entitled to it, and those who may foolishly think of themselves as producers have no claim of their own over it.

What exactly is a state? The canonical definition was offered by Max Weber [1864-1920], who defined the state as "that human community which (successfully) lays claim to the monopoly of legitimate physical violence within a certain territory."

In fact, it cannot be the case that all wealth is attributable to the state. Historically, the existence of a state apparatus required a pre-existing surplus to sustain it in the first place. The state, in other words, would not exist without wealth being produced before its emergence. Let's explore that a bit further.

Why do people have wealth? Charles Dunoyer [1786-1862], an early libertarian sociologist, explained that "there exist in the world only two great parties; that of those who prefer to live from the produce of their labor or of their property, and that of those who prefer to live on the labor or the property of others." Simply put, makers produce wealth while takers appropriate it.

In his important book *THE STATE* [1908], the sociologist Franz Oppenheimer distinguished between what he called the economic means and the political means of attaining wealth, that is, between "work and robbery." "The state," he concluded, "is an organization of the political means."

The economic means must precede the political means. However, not all kinds of work produce surpluses sufficient for sustaining a state. You don't find states among hunter-gatherers, for instance, because they don't generate enough of a surplus to sustain a predatory class. The same is true of primitive agriculturalist societies. What is needed is settled agriculture, which generates a surplus sufficient to attract the attention of predators and sustain them. Such societies are typically conquered by nomads - especially those with horses, who were able to overpower sedentary agriculturalists. We see that happening over and over again after nomadic people erupted out of Central Asia long ago.

There is a memory of that ancient conflict preserved in the Book of Genesis, which tells the fratricidal story of Cain and Abel. It is significant that "Abel was a

keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground," an echo of the conflict between settled agriculturalists and nomadic herders.

State formation represents a transformation from "roving bandits" to "stationary bandits." As the economist Mancur Olson [1932-1998] wrote, "If the leader of a roving bandit gang who finds only slim pickings is strong enough to take hold of a given territory and to keep other bandits out, he can monopolize crime in that area - he can become a stationary bandit." That is an important insight into the development of human political associations.

The state is, at its core, a predatory institution. Yet, in some ways, it also represents an advance, even for those being plundered. When the choice is between roving bandits - who rob, fight, burn what they can't take, and then come back the following year - and stationary bandits - who settle down and plunder little by little throughout the year - the choice is clear. Stationary bandits are less likely to kill and destroy as they loot you and they fend off rival bandits. That is a kind of progress - even from the perspective of those being plundered.

States emerged as organizations for extracting surpluses from those who produced wealth. In his book *THE ART OF NOT BEING GOVERNED* [2009], the anthropologist and political scientist James C. Scott of Yale University studies regions of the world that have never been successfully subdued by states. A central concept in his work is "the friction of power": power does not easily flow uphill. When waves of conquerors moved through an area, they subjugated the valleys, while those who escaped moved up into the less desirable highlands. Scott points out that those refugees developed social, legal, and religious institutions that make them very difficult to conquer. It's especially true of mountain people and of swamp people. (It's a shame various leaders did not read Scott's book before occupying Afghanistan and promoting "state building" there.)

What are the incentives of the rulers? Overly simplistic models posit that rulers seek to maximize wealth, or gross domestic product. Scott, however, argues that the ruler's incentive is not to maximize the GDP, but to maximize the "SAP," the state-accessible product, understood as that production that is easy to identify, monitor, enumerate, and confiscate through taxation: "The ruler . . . maximizes the state-accessible product, if necessary, at the expense of the overall wealth of the realm and its subjects."

Consider (a ruler might say, "take"), for instance, agriculture. Rulers in Asia suppressed the cultivation of roots and tubers, "which has been anathema to all state-makers, traditional or modern," in favor of paddy rice cultivation. That is rather puzzling. Why would rulers care so much about what crops are planted? The reason,

Scott notes, is that you can't very effectively tax plants that grow under ground. Cultivators harvest them when they want; otherwise they remain in the ground. Paddy rice, on the other hand, has to be harvested at specific times by large concentrations of people, so it's easier for rulers both to monitor and tax the harvest and to draft the laborers into their armies. The incentives of rulers have systemic effects on many practices and permeate our societies.

State systems of social control - from military conscription to compulsory schooling - have thoroughly permeated our consciousness. Consider, for example, the passport. You cannot travel around the world today without a document issued by the state. In fact, you can no longer even travel around the United States without a state-issued document. Passports are very recent inventions. For thousands of years, people went where they wanted without permission from the state. On my office wall is an advertisement from an old German magazine that shows a couple in a train compartment facing a border official demanding, "Your passport, please!" It explains how wonderful passports are because they give you the freedom of the world.

That, of course, is absurd. Passports restrict your freedom. You are not allowed to travel without permission, but we have become so saturated with the ideology of the state—and have internalized it so deeply - that many see the passport as conferring freedom, rather than restricting it. I was once asked after a lecture whether I favored state-issued birth certificates. After a moment, I said I could see no compelling reason for it and since other institutions can do it, the answer was "no." The questioner pounced! "How would you know who you are?" Even personal identity, it seems, is conferred by the state.

Modern states also claim to be the sole source of law. But historically, states mainly replaced customary law with imposed law. There is a great deal of law all around us that is not a product of the state, for law is a byproduct of voluntary interaction. As the great jurist Bruno Leoni argued, "Individuals make the law insofar as they make successful claims." Private persons making contracts are making law.

In the 16th century, the influential thinker Jean Bodin [1530-1596] focused on the idea of sovereignty, which he defined as "the most high, absolute, and perpetual power over the citizens and subjects in a commonwealth." He contrasted that "indivisible power" with another kind of social order, known as customary law, which he dismissed because, he said, "Custom acquires its force little by little and by the common consent of all, or most, over many years, while law appears suddenly, and gets its strength from one person who has the power of commanding all." In other words, Bodin recognized that custom creates social order, but defined law as requiring the hierarchical

imposition of force, which in turn requires a sovereign - a power that is absolute, unconditioned, and therefore above the law.

That type of sovereignty is inherently contrary to the rule of law, as well as contrary to the principles of federal systems, such as that of the United States, in which power is divided among the different levels and branches of government. In constitutional regimes, the law, not absolute power, is held to be supreme.

The evolution of freedom has involved a long process of bringing power under law. The imposition of force has nonetheless left a powerful imprint on our minds. Alexander Rüstow [1885-1963], a prominent sociologist and a father of the postwar revival of liberty in Germany, meditated on the origins of the state in violence and predation and its lingering imprint: "All of us, without exception, carry this inherited poison within us, in the most varied and unexpected places and in the most diverse forms, often defying perception. All of us, collectively and individually, are accessories to this great sin of all time, this real original sin, a hereditary fault that can be excised and erased only with great difficulty and slowly, by an insight into pathology, by a will to recover, by the active remorse of all." It takes work to free our minds from our dependence on the state.

When meditating on what it means to live as free people we should never forget that the state doesn't grant to us our identities or our rights. The American Declaration of Independence states, "That to secure these rights, Governments have been instituted among men." We secure what is already ours. The state can add value when it helps us to do that, but rights and society are prior to the state. It's critical to remember that the next time someone says, "You didn't build that." ▽

Do You Really "Owe" Those Taxes?

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from occurring.

Some argue that government is a necessity, just like food, shelter and clothing. Therefore, we are obligated to pay for it, despite not having requested its services. But this is a false analogy for two reasons. First, government is not a necessity, though some of the services it provides may be a requisite for civilized living. The question then becomes: what is the most

"The question is not whether or not theft is wrong but what is considered to be theft; in the same way, murder is universally forbidden but there are great differences between peoples as to what killing is considered to be murder."

- Garrett Barden and Tim Murphy, *LAW AND JUSTICE IN COMMUNITY* (2010), p. 54.

moral and most practical method for delivering these services to those who want them? Second, even if government were a necessity, there is no reason for it to compel the purchase of its services. No one forces us to buy food, shelter, and clothing for ourselves. If a concerned third party acted like the government, they would outlaw all other providers and force us to buy from them. If we refused to do so, they would bundle us off to jail and steal our property, to boot. But that is not the way the “free” world works. If I fail to buy food, shelter, or clothing, I may die of hunger, exposure, or cold, but no one puts me in jail or confiscates my property for failure to do so.

It should be clear that government taxation is a coercive activity that introduces force and violence into an otherwise peaceful society. Those who say they haven’t agreed to pay their taxes understand that certain goods and services (food, shelter, clothing, protection) are essential to human survival and must be paid for, but realize they need not be provided by the government on a compulsory basis. What they oppose is the coercion involved in collecting taxes. They oppose the means, and take the position that the ends never justify the means. If some people think that certain government services are necessary, then they should try to collect the money to fund them in a voluntary fashion. If the people collecting this money do not think enough has been collected, then let them dig into their own pockets to make up the deficiency or do without. They do not have the right to spend other people’s money on things they think are necessary.

The whole premise of government taxation is essentially the idea that you and your property belong to the State. You are a slave of the State. Whatever the government allows you to keep or accumulate is simply attributable to its generosity. It is not yours by right. The voluntarist view is that the State is a criminal institution; and that the State accumulates its resources and wealth only by stealing from each member of the community. Consequently, failing to file a tax return, or “cheating” on one’s tax return is simply a case of outwitting the criminals and keeping your own property. How could anyone object to you hiding your jewels so that a common thief couldn’t find them? Is that any different than you holding on to your wealth so that the government can’t seize it?

The answer in both cases is the same. Neither the common thief nor the government have any right to your wealth. They have no right to object to your actions that prevent them from seizing all or part of it. What the government calls tax evasion, either not paying your taxes or paying less than it claims, is simply a person’s way of saying, “No!” or “Enough is enough!” Such actions are one way of protecting your property from government thieves and reducing the amounts the government steals from you. The non-filer

and tax evader are usually looked upon as cheats but is that really the case? No! The cheaters are those who deceive others into believing that they “owe” taxes to the government. These are the people who are trying to cheat the rest of us out of our rightfully earned property! Tax refuseniks are simply trying to outwit a criminal government by keeping what belongs to them. It is their money. It was honestly earned. They are fully justified in keeping it out of the clutches of both the thief and the tax man!

The gist of my article is to counter the belief that you are obligated to pay taxes levied by the government. Most people agree that if you “owe” somebody money, then you should meet your obligation and pay the debt. But to “owe” already assumes that you have voluntarily contracted the debt, and thus obligate yourself to its repayment.

But this is false in the case of taxes (which is precisely why the government goes to such great length to argue that paying taxes is voluntary). Taxes are a coercive demand imposed upon you by the government, just as the robber demands your wallet.

If you once admit taxes are “forced exactions,” then it follows that taxation is no different than the forced exactions of a thief. You certainly don’t “owe” the thief the contents of your wallet. “Well,” you reply, “the government provides us with infrastructure and services.” “So what?” I reply, “so does the kidnapper who forcibly abducts you and then feeds and shelters you.” Do you “owe” the kidnapper for his services in keeping you alive while he demands a ransom? Of course not!

Isn’t the government acting just like the kidnapper? - which brings us to the whole point of my argument: “How can you define taxation in a way which makes it different from robbery?” ▽

A Voluntarist Contest

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5. If chosen, a Grand Prize Winner will be announced during the month of January 2014. Carl Watner will make the final selection, although he may consult with members of his panel. The Grand Prize Winner will receive five ounces of silver, .999 fine and 1 bitcoin.

6. Those supporting this contest are encouraged to “sweeten the pot” for the Grand Prize Winner. Additional prizes may be monetary awards, books, or any other object(s) of value to voluntarists. If additional prize offers are forthcoming they will be announced on a monthly basis.

7. Please sign up for additional notifications regarding this contest by emailing the editor with “contest notification” in the subject line.

8. For answer to any questions regarding this contest, please contact the editor. Contact the editor at editor@voluntaryist.com. ▽

A Voluntaryist Contest

If you are interested in educating others about voluntaryism, if you are interested in delegitimizing the State, if you are interested in helping people understand why they must withdraw their cooperation and consent from the State, this is the contest for you!

Those of you who have followed my writings in THE VOLUNTARYIST know that taxation is an anathema to me. Why it should be so is perhaps mostly a matter of logic. As Lysander Spooner pointed out, governments are dependent on money and men. With money, it can hire soldiers and police; with soldiers and police it can enforce its edicts and collect more money to support itself. Murray Rothbard in his classic definition of the State refers both to its coercive monopolization of a certain geographic area and its forcible collection of revenues, known as taxation. Without the ability to collect taxes we would begin to see the demise of the State.

As much as I have written in opposition to taxation, I still feel much like the voice crying in the wilderness. For whatever reason, few have joined in my crusade to persuade people that the stealing commandment applies to both individuals and governments and the people working on their behalf.

It was recently pointed out to me by our webmaster, Dave Scotese, that practically all people agree that stealing is wrong, but that most of them do not see taxation as theft. This was a new way of

addressing the problem. Dave suggested I adjust my focus by finding the best methods and/or best arguments for convincing non-voluntaryists that taxation is wrong.

That is the crux of our contest:

How do we best explain the voluntaryist position and bring people to understand that taxation is theft?

Here are the rules.

1. Contest closes December 31, 2013.
2. All entrants give The Voluntaryist permission to post their entries on the worldwide web and to publish in The Voluntaryist newsletter and in any book edited by Carl Watner. Authors' names will be used unless a request for anonymity is made.
3. Please submit all entries via email to editor@voluntaryist.com. If your entry is sent as an attachment, please send as an rtf (rich text format) file. Entries may be of any length. You may submit as many entries as you wish.
4. All suitable entries will be considered for the Grand Prize Award, though there is no guarantee that a Grand Prize Winner will be selected. Entries will be screened and be deemed acceptable by a panel selected by Carl Watner. Acceptable entries will be eligible for the Grand Prize Winner prize. All acceptable entries will receive a complimentary 4 issue subscription to The Voluntaryist newsletter. Entrants please include your snail mail address if you wish to take advantage of this offer.

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The Voluntaryist

P.O. Box 275 • Gramling, South Carolina 29348



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