

PLAIN TALK *by Jerome Joachim*

"Don't look now, but I think that man behind you is a tax collector."

If the man behind you isn't a tax collector, he is an exception to what is becoming a very general rule. Whether he is a street sweeper, a store clerk, a baggage man or a bank president it is almost a cinch that part of the money he collects for his service will be an overcharge made possible and necessitated by the fact that he has been involuntarily assigned to the task of being a tax collector in addition to his regular job.

There are times when you feel like cursing him because he appears to be charging you more for his services than he should. Though government is encouraging him via this dual role to charge too much, much of his overcharge results directly from the fact that he is forced to collect billions for a government that hasn't guts enough to tell its constituents the truth about how deep its expenditures cut into income.

Tax collectors have been unpopular throughout all ages. Even in Biblical times it was fashionable to stone them to death. By surreptitiously making each of us tax collectors, the politicians help to overcome the dangers of their profession.

While our duly appointed tax collectors directly take sums that would put to shame many of those mentioned in the Bible, the sums they collect directly represent only a small part of the taxes which our government collects from us through the involuntary agents mentioned above.

Take the Illinois Bell Telephone Company as an example. One could take the railroads, the bus companies, the gas and light companies and most every other semi-monopoly and illustrate the point equally well but the figures for the Illinois Bell happen to be before me.

In 1950 this concern, as an involuntary tax collector, extorted \$81,870,000 in taxes from Illinois residents for use by the various branches of government. This was \$32.30 for each phone user. The sum was three times as much as the total the company collected from phone users for the investors who installed the multi-mil-



lions of dollars worth of equipment needed to give our people the finest telephone service in the world.

There was a time when people called the owners of monopolies "robber barons." Political parties were organized to stop their exploitations. Now our politicians are using these same organizations to extort sums triple the amount the "barons" are getting and using most of it to discourage and destroy production throughout the world. It may seem strange but this phase of governmental action, instead of decreasing the income of monopolists actually has tightened their monopolies even more than they were able to do by themselves.

When we realize that our innocent looking telephone bill carries an average annual tax of \$32.50 and to this we add the taxes collected by our butcher, baker and candlestick maker and add the local and federal taxes which we pay directly to the official tax collectors we begin to realize why a \$100 per week budget is so difficult to manage—if we are among the fortunate few who get \$100 per week to divide with the politicians!

Despite the countless billions which our politicians are already collecting they now have the gall to warn us that they have only started. *Now* we are going to be taxed until it hurts!

This change has all happened in just a few years. So far the process is only a trend. By the time we add the cost of our effort to prevent the spread of communism in Europe and adopt a few of the communistic measures which have been suggested, the only person who could keep people working in this country would be a dictator with the absolute power of death and concentration camp consignment as his weapon.

Fighting communism in the world by adopting a system of taxation that can result only in complete power over us by our politicians seems sort of futile. Much better that we prevent communism by making ourselves strong at home and by fighting those measures which permit government to steal from those who produce for the benefit of those who don't, which is the essence of communism.