

1990 INCOME TAX PROTEST REPORT  
(The Good, The Bad and The Ugly in retrospect)

By Kenneth G. Morris

The April 16, 1990 Income Tax Protests conducted jointly by the LPM and MDL certainly produced the most dramatic results to date of all our annual appearances for all the best and worst reasons.

To start off on a good note, I want to thank all the great people throughout Michigan who took the time to help out at one or more of our informational pickets at the Post Offices to get our anti-tax message out to the presumably-irate last-minute filing crowd. I would also like to extend a special thanks to Jon Addiss who sponsored 30 Libertarian TV commercials in the Lansing area.

Lynn Bellair, our state party Secretary, advises us that in the week since our demonstrations, she received 21 inquiries to our toll free number (a record high!)-due no doubt in part to that number being prominently displayed on one of our banners. We look forward to picking up both membership and votes in the November elections because of these contacts.

Unfortunately, there was also a very ugly aftermath to this year's tax protest. At 8:23 pm, as one of our groups was staging a protest at the Royal Oak post office, a letter bomb dropped into one of the canvas mail carts in the street exploded, causing minor injury to a postal worker. Predictably, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the local Gestapo wasted no time descending on the scene and immediately cordoned off a two-block area. The effect of this action was to imprison all the vehicles in a large parking lot, including three belonging to members of our group.

Later that evening, about 12:30 am, as the 3 vehicle-owners returned, the Royal Oak Police subjected all three to questioning and insisted on searching the vehicles. We assume that shoppers and other victims of circumstance who happened to have vehicles in the lot at the time were also subjected to the same despicable treatment.

It wasn't, however, until four days later on Saturday, April 21st that the **REAL** harassment of our people began. Not content with having searched one LPM'er's vehicle once, the thugs in blue descended on this person's house at 7am and seized his vehicle **a second time-to be searched again!** When he got it back two days later, not only were forms sent in by interested people taken from the vehicle, he was issued a subpoena to submit handwriting samples and be fingerprinted in front of a grand jury. Later that evening the other two LPM'ers whose vehicles were in the lot, plus a fourth (who was presumably found through literature taken from the seized vehicle) were also subpoenaed by two Postal Inspection Department henchmen to do likewise.

Not only were these four patriots forced to take time off work without compensation, but were also required to

undergo the humiliating experience of writing "THE TAX THIEVES" (the words which the Post Office claims were written on the exploded envelope which they somehow managed to miraculously reconstruct!?!)) and other assorted nonsense over and over again for approximately three hours each. Then, ink was gooped all over their hands and they were compelled to allow five copies of each finger, palm and hand print to be made.

At the time of this writing, the seized information request forms have not been returned. It is appalling to think that postal patrons who returned our forms for further information after seeing our signs may have been forced to submit to the same demeaning treatment at the hands of government officials.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is a very serious matter that is getting worse all the time. As this article was being composed on May 7th, information was received that a fifth Party member has been served with a subpoena to appear May 15th to submit to handwriting analysis, fingerprinting and photographing. One wonders where this will end. Is it really an investigation of a crime, or has it become a method to frighten individuals away from protesting taxes or from the Libertarian Party itself? Even if the letter bomb had been much stronger and had caused the death of fifty people, **it still wouldn't justify seizures of private property and subpoenas!** Libertarians have long opposed subpoenas on the grounds that it is intrinsically immoral to force a person to testify or produce evidence against their will. We must be willing to pay a certain price for living in a free country. That price is the fact that with the element of coercion removed, some (illegally) provable crimes will go unproven—and consequently unpunished. Even if abolishing subpoenas results in a 0% conviction rate for violent crimes, that is how it must be. We must reconcile ourselves to the fact that, in its zeal to get a conviction for this one crime, **the postal inspectors have committed a far greater crime** against our five compatriots and the other victims. The crime can be compared to rape. There is essentially no difference between using a subpoena to forcibly deposit ink on a citizens hands and using a weapon to forcibly deposit semen into another person's body.

If this comparison strikes you as ridiculous, then you are no doubt one of the very lucky people who has never had your civil rights violated by the government for something you didn't do. Subpoenas and search warrants don't just happen on TV—they happen to real people, and you may be next.