

present plight of the free market against this background of rights by considering a few significant figures.

The Present Plight of the Free Market

ABOUT 35 CENTS of every dollar of personal income, as nearly as I can derive the figure, is now being taken by the government.* What is more, the funds appropriated by the government to be spent during the current year — if all spent — would amount to over 40 cents out of every dollar of personal income. This figure represents the proportion of the productive effort of this nation that is being removed by direct means from the area of free choice. Those who produced it and earned it — like the slaves in our earlier history and the present victims of Stalin's rule — are denied free choice in its use to whatever extent their product and property are taken from them against their wills. A test of whether or not you have lost your freedom of choice would be to refuse to pay your taxes — in whole or in any part.

If these figures of 35 to 40 cents lack meaning as to their full import, they may be compared with some similar figures for other countries in 1929-30, at a time when a comparable figure for the United States

* Details of this calculation will be supplied on request.

was only about 14 cents out of the dollar:

	Taxes as per cent of national income*
USSR	29
Germany	22
France	21
United Kingdom	21

This means that government in the United States is now removing free choice from a far higher percentage of the livelihood of the people of this country than were the governments of Russia, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom two decades ago. And the proportion in the United States today is more than double what it was two decades ago. If the tide cannot be turned, may not the present plight of citizens in those four countries foreshadow our future here?

Let me interpret the meaning of these figures in another way. I spoke of the popular resentment that would be aroused by my murdering our esteemed Chairman or by my picking his pocket. But this taking of about one-third of the average life (livelihood) of 150 million persons is equivalent to taking in full the economic life of upwards of 50 million persons each year.

* Edmund E. Lincoln, "Sobering Realities Regarding Tax Burdens," *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, April 1, 1948. Figures expressed as nearest per cent.