

We want our

Island Back

Newsletter

December 2004



Letter from the Editor.

We are fortunate that in Jersey a large variety of groups already exist. In this second edition of our newsletter I want to encourage those groups and individuals to share their ideas so that we can all go forward together.

Large corporations and wealthy individuals are increasingly avoiding tax, shifting the tax burden onto small businesses and the rest of us. Our Government claims that they are hard pushed to find enough money in the kitty to provide decent public goods and services. Jobs are being cut and outsourcing is on the agenda. It's even being suggested that if we want to maintain our public

services then we'll have to have a Sales Tax! Just not on, is it?

At the Town Hall Tax Meeting on Wednesday 24th November I asked how much we could expect to raise by spreading taxation over a variety of alternatives – e.g. Graduated Income Tax, Corporation Tax, Development Tax, Wealth Tax, Environmental Tax ?

We need precise figures now.

Now is the time for the people of Jersey to take decisive action.

- Pick up the phone and offer to help.
- Send me an e-mail.
- Write a short article/response for January's newsletter.
- Come to one of our meetings.
- Look forward to hearing from you.

Pat Lucas

Main Problems in Jersey

ATTAC fundamentally stands for raising sufficient taxation for the aid of the Citizen. There is a need for a Tobin tax on financial transactions world-wide - an ideal solution in a free market economy.

But what of Jersey now?

To maintain health and social services, education, pensions, environmentally friendly agriculture and to facilitate economic transport links, since the abolition of Corporation Tax higher rates of taxation are needed.

But who pays and how?

The first principle is that it should be fair. I am glad to note that the fiscal authorities are at last considering a Capital Gains Tax for residents with stringent research on wealthy people's camouflage and avoidance tactics. There should be arbitrary assessments if

such information is not readily forthcoming. This should include capital gains on land sales for development. When this and an adequate income support system are addressed, we can only then talk about a value added tax.

The high cost of housing in Jersey to rent and to buy adds to the cost of living and prevents local young people from staying in Jersey or returning. Rectifying this unacceptable situation can only be achieved by stringent immigration control.

No more wealthy immigration. Their houses should be developed for hotels or subdivided into affordable flats or perhaps revert to being farms. Without lowering costs, primarily the cost of living, there is no hope of developing alternative industries to finance.

And how are we to achieve this?

We need a more representative States. At the moment, the north and the west are grossly over-represented. They no longer represent a traditional agricultural community but largely the rich, the highly paid and the wealthy business community supported by powerful parish-based cronyism.

Clothier must be implemented.

So there are four keywords:

Tax, Population, Housing, Reform.

Let's drink to this! "TPHR!" Adrian Walton

Can't be bothered to vote?

Can't see The Establishment changing?

Five reasons why **You** should vote.

Senator Terry Le Sueur and the Finance and Economics Committee have agreed to halve the two rates of corporate tax. This will create a £100 million a year hole in public revenue. They aim to fill this hole by introducing a goods and services tax although the finance industry will be exempt.

Ask yourself - who stands to gain?

Remember the Waterfront – Les Pas deal? Which politicians voted in favour of this deal in which they gave away the land of many for the benefit of the few? This deal was supported by the Finance and Economics Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee.

Ask yourself who gained from this deal?

Senator Paul Routier and the Employment and Social Security Committee are in the process of changing Social Security Benefits.

Ask yourself who this will affect the most?

Senator Frank Walker and the Policy and Resources Committee are going to implement an opinion poll to consider whether the opinions voiced in the local media are shared by the general population. Recently the Bailiff has had his un-elected position of power secured by the **States Assembly**. This is despite public feeling to the contrary which was published in two opinion polls in 2001.

Again, ask yourself who stands to gain?

Recently Senator Frank Walker voiced his opinion in the JEP that to “sustain the good standard of living that we currently enjoy” in our “inclusive society” changes to the economic structures of the Island must be made.

Ask yourself - do you have a good standard of living?

Do you feel included?

Those politicians and their committees mentioned above formulate and implement policies using research conducted by academics, civil servants, think tanks etc. The States Assembly has recently used external advisors OXERA and Crown Agents for this purpose. Due to their professional recognition their advice is assumed to be right. Therefore the general public is automatically expected to take this advice from the States Assembly assuming that it's to everyone's advantage.

What you have to ask yourself is - who is going to gain?

Who is going to have to pay for it?

So please use your vote wisely at any forthcoming elections.

Chris Steel



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Better off - how can we

measure this?

Our Island, our culture and all that we hold most dear is surely more valuable than the so-called high standard of living we're told must be maintained at all costs. What do you think?

This extreme example may help.

" Suppose an African captured and transplanted to the southern U.S. in 1800 as a slave, enjoys a clear increase in real income in the process; that is, the quantity of food, clothing, shelter and other goods and services he consumes is greater as a slave in Alabama than it was as a tribesman in Dahomey. Can we say he is ' better off ' as a slave?

We can say he is better off materially but worse off in other ways including the fact that he was not asked whether or not he wanted to become a slave. He has lost his freedom, family, friends, language, religion and society. He is uprooted and degraded. But we cannot measure degradation as we can the material goods and services he consumes, his real income. "

(Economic Systems and Society by George Dalton)

Reverse Socialism

"A kind of reverse socialism has been established where the poor subsidise companies and the wealthy elite. Companies are happy to accept public subsidies tax incentives, export credit guarantees and all the benefits of the social infrastructure but are unwilling to pay their share of democratically agreed taxes. Organised tax avoidance enables footballers, movie stars, millionaires and companies to avoid taxes while people on the minimum wage, nurses, teachers, labourers and debt-ridden graduates pay a higher proportion of their income in tax than many companies and their executives.

The tax avoidance industry poses many challenges to the very nature of democracy. Citizens may elect a government committed to investing in health care, housing, education, pensions, transport and other essentials, but the tax avoidance industry is always in a position to override that by ensuring that companies do not pay their democratically agreed share of taxes."

(Taxing the Boundaries of Corporate Social Reporting by Steven Filling of California State University and Prof. Prem Sikka of University of Essex U.K.)

Interested in what you have read?

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For more information go to

www.jersey.attac.org

Want to give a hand?

Phone Pat Lucas on 768 980
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For more information go to

www.jersey.attac.org

**“ When the bird and the
book disagree always
believe the bird.”**

**Don't just read this.
Do something about it.
Make it happen.**

Pick up a phone, speak to the kind of politician who wants to engage with the people.