

There is a joy to tax

Published: January 16, 2026, 1:10 am

From this morning's Guardian:

It was disappointing to note the Guardian publishing an article in G2 that was little more than a flippant gloss on the opinion of a tax avoider.

*There is, as the G2 cover suggested, and as I will explain in my forthcoming book, *The Joy of Tax*, (which title seems to be the only, unacknowledged, thing Stuart Jeffries took from his interview with me in connection with this article) a real joy to tax — which is that it is the mechanism that liberates us all to enjoy communal benefits such as education, healthcare, pensions, security and law and order that would be beyond the means of 99% of us to secure through the market. The article largely ignored that fact, delighting instead in promoting ideas that would undermine the idea of society itself, such as flat taxes, without in any way seeking to offer the counter-argument that might explain the harm such proposals would deliver.*

The Guardian has a proud record of reporting tax issues in a way that most of the media ignores, but this article let it down badly. I hope a more balanced feature in G2 that reflects the true importance of tax in our society might now follow to make amends for this.

Richard Murphy
Tax Justice Network