

## Gary Stevenson and the failure of the left

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As readers here will know, the weekend before last, Gary Stevenson [admitted that he did not know how to create a wealth tax and would need help in the process of doing so](#)

He asked for that help, and I offered it because I have the experience to create such a tax based on my background of over 45 years working with taxation, my success in taxation campaigning and tax reform, and the fact that for most of that period I was a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, although I am no longer a member.

I wrote a note to Gary setting out why and how I could help. I received no reply, so I sent a chaser to make sure that it had not gone astray, copying it to two addresses, and I have still had no reply.

I know that many people here posted comments on Gary's YouTube suggesting that he should talk to me, but he has not, so I think we have to presume that he does not wish to do so, whatever his reasons might be.

What I do know is that he has been working very closely with Tax Justice UK, which has not now, and never has had, any real tax expertise amongst its staff. I know this in part because I helped create it, and now I much regret doing so.

You cannot run a think tank if you know nothing about the subject it is talking about, and that is the problem with most of the UK's organisations that now work on tax justice. They might have their hearts in the right place, although they might also be most interested in preserving their own employment, but whichever it is, since the time that John Christensen and I departed the tax justice scene not one of them has come up with an idea that in any way takes the tax justice agenda further forward in a way that might have real world impact, whilst many of ideas that they do promote take it decidedly backwards.

I am, of course, aware that stating this might be the very reason why Gary does not wish to speak to me. But let's be clear about this: the wealth tax that Gary seeks to

promote is not going to happen because he has no idea how it can happen, and has no one who can explain how it might work to him or for him. As a consequence, however much noise he might make, people are wasting their time supporting his cause and that of the other organisations promoting this idea. Unless you can show your proposal works, you do not have a proposal. You have hot air, and that changes very little. Until he and others demanding increased taxation on wealth accept reality about the way in which taxes work, why they work, and how they have to function within society, they can make no progress, and there is no sign that any of them is willing to do that.

It's a shame, but until the day comes when the left decides to stop being idealistic and instead becomes pragmatic about achieving its goals in ways that can deliver for the people of this country, it has no hope of changing anything. And that is a very good reason why this country is in the mess that it is, and why people who need help and representation in this country are not getting it.