

**JERSEY'S WAY
TO SOCIALISM**

PROGRAMME OF THE
JERSEY COMMUNIST
PARTY

SIXPENCE

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The Need for Change

What does the future hold for our Island? This question is one that troubles all thinking citizens of Jersey as a result of the changes of recent years.

In the columns of the "Evening Post", at States and Parish meetings, there are warnings of chaos. Yet what sort of answer comes from the "powers that be"?

On the question of housing they have no policy except to bemoan the lack of sites and the high cost of building; to build haphazard estates and charge high rents. On the preservation of open spaces for leisure and beauty, they can only sigh for a change of heart in land speculators. On the crisis of the Island's agriculture, they can only hope for a better deal from the big London markets. On the traffic problem, they have no solution save traffic bollards and no-parking signs.

In short, a policy of drift. And with it a pandering to the low taxation and cheap luxuries needs of the rich residents.

All this, we are told, is unavoidable because Jersey is a parasitic community that cannot support itself except by attracting to its shores those who want to escape from their social duties in Britain.

The Jersey Communist Party says that these statements are a slander on the people of the Island. We are quite capable of earning a fair living, given a social system that enables this to be done.

THEY ARE AFRAID

The truth is that the present policy of drift is due to the fear of those in power that any other policy might result in them losing their special positions and privileges. They also realise that they are dependent on the ruling class in Britain for economic and political support — which shows up their claim to independence for the sham that it is.

At present the real ownership of our Island is shared between nominees of big British concerns and a small group of local families. They own the big hotels, the large farms and the large-scale commercial undertakings. Their interests are certainly not the same as those of the workers, the tenants and small farmers, the guest-house keepers and shopkeepers.

These latter classes will have to wrest political power from those who now rule us, if our Island is to prosper. For this to be achieved there must be a united campaign to press for the necessary changes. This campaign will have at its side powerful allies in Britain, to counter the British friends of the clique who now rule us.

A Britain in which the economic and financial stranglehold of the huge monopolies has been ended; where economic and State power is firmly in the hands of its working people—this is the Britain that will help us in Jersey to remove the few rich families from their controlling positions and create conditions of real autonomy that will enable the Channel Islands to enter a secure, planned future.

More and more people are realising that the changes we want will have to be fought for politically. They will not drop from the skies. Progressive change has always met with opposition from those in power. This fight for better housing, better social services, lower rents, and so on, becomes a fight to change the system that cannot give these things. A fight for a new system—a new way of life—Socialism.

What Socialism Is

As there is much confusion as to the real meaning of the word Socialism, we must define what the Communist Party, which works for Socialism, means by this system. To us, Socialism means simply that political power is held by the working people, and that all factories and workshops, transport, banks and the land are publicly owned and worked for the benefit of all.

In Jersey's conditions this would mean :

Government

The present States Assembly would be replaced by an Island Assembly of Deputies who would be paid and elected on the basis of 1 for approx. 1,000 electors. All Deputies would be required to hold report-back meetings regularly and would be subject to recall at any time by a two-thirds majority of the electors. This Island Assembly would elect a President and governing Council which would be responsible for the various State Departments.

All citizens over 18 would be able to vote and all names of electors would be placed on the register automatically. There would be full democratic control over the Island's Press.

Parish Assemblies would elect Chairmen to control their meetings. They would be open to all Parish electors. Parish Councils would be elected at least in the larger Parishes.

Planned Economy

Socialism in Jersey would owe its existence to the inspiration and protection of a Socialist government in Britain. Linked with the other Channel Islands, it would form an autonomous unit of a British Socialist republic. Its economic position, therefore, would fit in with Britain's general plan instead of, as now, being governed by the whim of British business concerns.

Apart from the few local sections of centralised British nationalised concerns, (e.g. Banks, shipping, air-transport, etc.) those large industrial and commercial undertakings that are at present mere local branches of British concerns (whether openly or more discreetly) would become the property of the Jersey people through State ownership. The people would also control through State ownership all other large enterprises (e.g. gas, water and electricity services, stevedoring, public transport, merchandising, large hotels and shops). These would all be run for the public good and not for private profit. State ownership would also mean the proper planned development of the Island's resources.

Small shops, guest houses, repair services and so on

would remain in private hands, but the owners would be encouraged to set up co-operative associations so as to develop their concerns and fit them in with the general economic plan.

Housing

All public building would be carried out by a State building corporation employing sufficient men and modern machinery to provide the necessary houses and other buildings. There would be a general plan for the rebuilding of St. Helier, so that its present chaotic huddle of cottages would be transformed into well-planned community districts containing modern houses, flats, shops, etc. All such dwellings would be let at basic rents sufficient only to repay nett cost of building and maintaining during their useful life. The newly planned town would be surrounded by a belt of parkland following the ring of hills around the town area.

Tourism

The larger hotels would be further developed, and more general and varied indoor amusement provided, such as winter gardens, concert platforms, etc.

There would be an end to the private "development" of all coastal areas so as to preserve them for public enjoyment. Some existing coastal villas, as they become unwanted, would be turned into serviced accommodation for family groups of visitors. The number and quality of guest houses would be kept under strict control.

Agriculture

There would be State ownership of large farms. Small farmers would be confirmed in their ownership, and tenant farmers of five years standing would be given the land they farm. Other land not farmed by the owner would be allocated to young farmers and others wishing to start on their own. Such small farmers would be encouraged to form co-operative associations so as to farm their land and sell their produce in the most efficient way.

The emphasis of local agriculture would be shifted on to the growing of produce for the tourist trade so as to end the dependence on outside markets.

Other produce would form the basis for a canning industry of high quality pig, poultry and dairy produce. State aid would be used to encourage the setting up of a fishing co-operative.

Education

There would be one general system of education—primary, elementary and secondary. All children would receive the same education without such obstacles as the 11+ examination. All schools would be co-educational. Victoria College and the College for Girls, together with the better private schools, would be absorbed into the system and no other private schools allowed. This would ensure that all children were given equal opportunity and would grow up together without "class distinction".

As at present a great deal of further education would have to be arranged with the help of the British educational authorities, but there would be a Channel Islands Technical College providing at least courses in agricultural sciences, accounting, catering and so on.

Social Services

There would be a complete, free health service, paid for out of State revenue. Adequate sick and accident pay would be provided. There would be paid maternity leave and grants for working women, plus day nurseries for their small children. Decent pensions and allowances would also be paid. Country manor houses would be renovated and used as convalescent and rest homes, homes for old people and so on.

Cultural Amenities

There would be far greater opportunities for all to take part and enjoy fuller lives with the provision of a live theatre and a concert hall. Young people in particular would be encouraged to join groups involved in creative activity. For instance, Elizabeth Castle could be turned over to a youth organisation pledged to transform it into a centre of hobby crafts such as wood and metal working, modelling, amateur theatre, dancing, yachting and sports training and so on; while a fully equipped sports centre could be formed at Fort Regent.

How to pay for all this

The cost of providing such amenities as set out above would of course be heavy. How would a local Socialist government find the money? It must be said firstly that part of the money would have to come from taxation. However, this would be done through a graduated Income Tax and the imposition of Estate Duties, rather than by taxes on commodities or entertainment. But a greater source of the necessary money would be the profit of the State owned enterprises, which would accrue to the public revenue instead of being drained off as private profit. Another source of financing social amenities would be the ending of the large slice of State expenditure at present devoted to highly paid positions at the top of the governing machine.

The Way Forward

That, then, is the kind of life that a Socialist government will proceed to build in Jersey. The question is how to achieve such a government and such a society.

Naturally it is impossible to offer any exact blue-print of the stages in our struggle for Socialism. However, while the details of the advance will be shaped by events, we can point to the basic features necessary for progress.

First of all it is necessary for there to be a united fight by all working class organisations around an immediate programme. Such a programme will contain the demands already well known to politically minded workers.

1. **Slum areas of the town to be replaced by flats and houses let at reasonable rents.**
2. **A comprehensive health service.**
3. **Adequate old age pensions.**
4. **Unemployment benefit.**
5. **States control of prices of all essential goods.**
6. **Full secondary education for all, with no 11+ examination.**
7. **Security of tenure for tenant farmers.**
8. **A Catering Wages Act to protect hotel workers.**

9. **Public ownership of public utilities.**
10. **Payment for States members.**
11. **An All-island Rate, in place of the present Parish Rates.**
12. **Graduated Income Tax and Death Duties.**

This is the type of programme that can unite all progressive people for political struggle. Only the organisations of the working class in joint action can lead such a struggle. But they cannot win it without drawing on the active support of all other progressive sections of the people. Such a programme is of obvious benefit also to small shopkeepers and guest house keepers, to small and tenant farmers, to all tenants and pensioners, who must all be won to play their part in the fight. A united front such as could be built up around this programme could isolate the few groups who now rule the Island in their own interests, and bring about their downfall. All types of political pressure, through leaflets, meetings, public demonstrations, petitions, lobbying of States members, and so on, will have to be organised and carried out, elections fought and won, in order to rally the maximum possible number of people.

The key to the struggle will be the election of a group of determined Deputies who will carry the fight into the States Assembly itself. Once this is achieved, a vital new stage of the struggle for a better life will begin. Working class and other progressive Deputies will be able to conduct a joint struggle with the organisations outside to transform their minority position in the States. The successful outcome will be a working class and progressive majority in the States which will be able to rally public support in starting to build a Socialist society along the lines set out in the first part of this booklet.

This struggle, of course, will be taking place at the same time as the struggle of the British people to defeat the big monopolies there. The class struggle in Britain will be one of the major influences determining the course and speed of local events. The successes of the group of socialist countries, now embracing well over a third of the world will also be a constant reminder of the superiority of Socialism over the present capitalist system.

But while Socialist success in various parts of the world, and a British Socialist revolution will make the position of capitalism in Jersey impossible, the propaganda, vilification and active opposition with which Jersey's ruling clique will undoubtedly fight Socialism, must be overcome by the Jersey people themselves.

It will be necessary, therefore, for there to be a leadership confident of the road ahead and capable of organising the majority of the people in support of it. Such a leadership will only be produced by uniting all forces that believe in our Socialist future. The present scattered and disunited state of working-class organisations is one of the major obstacles to overcome at the start.

It is by united action around specific issues that this obstacle can best be removed. Hence the need to end the bans against Communists in the largest local trade union, the T.&G.W.U., and to end the inter-union and personal rivalries in that and other organisations. Such beginnings as the existing inter-union committees could be the start of united campaigns on urgent issues.

The fight that the Communist Party has conducted to get a wage-earner in the States has aroused tremendous interest and large support. Here is another starting point from which other organisations could unite to add their strength to this work.

The Jersey Communist Party, because it was born through active struggle and has pioneered all the current demands of the local working class, and because it has already produced a leadership capable of conducting effective political action, can claim that it will have an integral part of this struggle for Socialism. But it does not claim any unique rights in this matter. It calls on all other progressive organisations and individuals to work with it in making a start along the path that will lead Jersey to our bright Socialist future.

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