

Let's not get personal - this is a matter of right or w...

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It would seem I upset one of two people who thought they might be my friends in comments on the UK - Swiss tax deal. I'm not going to apologise. This was a 'Marmite' issue - you're either for or against it.

You either think letting tax criminals off whilst only paying a small part of the tax they owe is right, or wrong. You can't be pragmatic about it. This is an issue of justice.

You either think it is right to endorse banking secrecy so that criminality may flourish, or you don't. This is about ethics.

You either think it right that the rich who coldly plan and execute their tax crimes in organised fashion should be allowed anonymity and no day in court when poor kids who acted on the spur of the moment are rushed through all night courts and get long prison sentences, or you don't. It's a matter of believing in class prejudice, or not.

You either think that encouraging an unlevel playing field for business so that the cheats get an unfair competitive advantage by not paying tax is fair, or you don't. It's a matter of believing in business or believing in fraudulent activity.

You either believe that H M Revenue & Customs has to uphold the law, or you don't. It's a matter of belief in the duty of government to uphold the law, or not.

You are either willing to let those banks and bankers who organised the handling of stolen property (for that is what tax evaded funds are) off the hook by granting them immunity from prosecution, or not. It's a matter of whether you want to know bankers arrange crime, or not.

You either, at the end of the day, believe that there is a difference between right and wrong. Or you don't.

And you either have the courage to say that doing the right thing is the only course of acceptable conduct even if there is a cost to doing it, or you don't.

It's about having ethics.

It's about standing up and being counted.

It's about saying the Emporor isn't wearing any clothes.

None of those things are personal. But people like to take criticism for being on the wrong side of all these issues personally.

Feel free to do so: that's your guilt speaking.

But it isn't intended that way. You have the option to do the right thing. It's your choice. I respect that.

But don't for a moment expect me to respect the wrong choice. That's the only requirement for evil to happen. And that's what has gone on in Switzerland.