

## There's only one explanation for the CBI tax offensive ...

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[From the Observer today](#), in its business editorial:

*John Cridland, the CBI's nerdy director general, is hardly the man for a punch-up. But in a sunny Westminster conference room last Thursday, he launched what he bullishly called a "fightback". Just as cabinet ministers have been shamed into offering to tell us about their personal finances, Britain's businesses are shouting from the rooftops about how much tax they pay.*

Why are they having to do this? As the Observer says:

*When the CBI launches a broadside about some aspect of public policy, it is usually aimed at the government. But Treasury minister David Gauke sat grinning on the stage with Cridland, and echoed everything he said about the importance of tax competitiveness and making Britain business-friendly. Instead, Cridland made it very clear why the CBI and its member companies are putting their heads above the parapet: they know they are losing the public argument.*

And who are they losing it to?

*Campaign groups such as UK Uncut and the Tax Justice Network have powerfully made the case that by exploiting loopholes, playing one government off against another and exerting considerable lobbying power, international corporations have been able to avoid paying their fair share.*

Absolutely right. We know that's true. And they're really worried. As the Observer also noted:

*The fact that Cridland was flanked by the heads of tax at BP and GE, both keen to stress how responsible they are in meeting their obligations, showed that big corporations know they need to come out fighting.*

The trouble is, that as my series of blogs over the last day or so have shown - they can't even get the facts they're using to fight back with right - and many of the errors they're

making are really very, very basic. Which does perhaps put them in sound company with their friend, Tory Treasury minister David Gauke. It seems the Treasury and CBI alike want to shoot themselves in the foot on tax right now, and have taken remarkably accurate aim given how much else they can be shown to have got wrong.