

Why the tax profession hate Margaret Hodge is that she ...

uk/Blog/2013/05/13/why-the-tax-profession-hate-margaret-hodge-is-that-she-represents-democracy

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Earlier this year Mike Truman, the editor of Taxation magazine, wrote a bad-tempered and ill-judged article in which he claimed Margaret Hodge MP was the '[tax prat of the year](#)'. Mike proved himself the rightful recipient of the aware he had created in the process of doing so.

But he did something more significant than that. What he drew attention to was the arrogance of the tax profession in the face of rightful criticism of its conduct.

And he drew attention to the courage of Margaret Hodge. [As the Observer noted yesterday](#), more calmly than Truman, and more appropriately:

Illumination about the true state of the UK's financial affairs has been helped by the work of the public accounts committee, chaired by Margaret Hodge, an invaluable fiscal watchdog.

And that is precisely what she has done, and the UK is rightly shocked by what she has found. Truman may not be, but in making his comments he said the following:

As was mentioned in the PAC, David Gauke [MP, Exchequer Secretary] was tax personality of the year at the 2011 Taxation Awards. (For reasons inexplicable to me, that got a laugh from the committee.) The citation on the night highlighted the policy of cooperation and engagement with the profession as one of the reasons for his success.

On precisely equal but opposite grounds, I have no hesitation in awarding Margaret Hodge the title of Tax Prat of the Year, for her attempts to destroy that cooperation and engagement.

And in those two comments we get to the nub of why the top of the tax profession hate Margaret Hodge: she is an obstacle to their takeover of tax policy at HMRC. And they really don't like that. After all, what has democracy got to do with their [right to set tax policy, make cosy deals and have their tax burden reduced](#)? Nothing at all in their view.

No wonder [we need to demand a moral crusade against tax abuse.](#)

Maybe we should describe it as a democratic one too.