

To whom are we answerable on tax?

Published: January 16, 2026, 6:30 am

I took part in a debate on Five Live Radio last night with a PWC partner, whose name I am afraid I did not catch.

During the course of discussion the PWC partner rather heatedly suggested we might all be answerable to God for our tax avoidance, but that we are definitely not answerable to Richard Murphy.

Now I found that an interesting comment for at least three reasons.

The first was that since quite a lot of people in this country do not believe in God it may actually be better in their cases and if these are the only two options available that they be answerable to me because that might be better than them thinking they were answerable to no one with regard to their tax.

Secondly, and joking apart, the claim is odd because I suspect that the PWC partner in question really did want to believe that I think that people should be answerable to me on tax. He is far from the first to say it. And yet, as should be glaringly obvious, I have never once, ever, suggested any such thing. All I have done is offer opinion on tax in the occasionally successful hope that I might influence debate within the democratic process in a particular direction. As far as I know that is called freedom of speech, but PWC seem to have quite a big problem with it.

But in the meantime, and thirdly, PWC have demonstrated via Luxleaks that they most definitely think they have the right to undermine whole tax systems in a process that can best be called an organised attack on the rights of democratic states to collect the tax owing to them staged from behind the veil of secrecy that a tax haven supplied.

There are more choices than God and me as to whom people should be answerable on tax. The state in which people reside and undertake the substance of their trade is, of course, the right authority to whom they are accountable, in full. PWC might like to distract attention from that fact, with which they clearly do not agree, by mounting diversionary attacks on me, but the reality is that I have the right to point out that they

are wrong, and will continue to do so. And I will as a consequence no doubt continue to upset them with my ethical and wholly legal approach to which they apparently take such exception.