Funding the Future

The Fair Tax Mark: an answer when we need one to tax ab...

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This comes from the Independent this afternoon:

At a time when public trust in business is plummeting, tax justice has been called 'the Fairtrade of our times' - a measure by which we tell a good business from the bad. And as with Fairtrade, when co-ops were the first to stock the products, co-operative councillors the first to demand fairtrade procurement, and Labour & Co-operative MPs the first to demand political support, it's the co-operative movement and social enterprises that have once again been ahead of the curve.

With so many of us outraged by the Google revelations, yesterday Labour called a debate in parliament to demand answers. Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell savaged Chief Secretary to the Treasury David Gauke for what he called a "bizarre, upside down and callous sense of justice and fairness".

So how do we fight back against it?

One solution is the Fair Tax Mark*. Launched in February 2014, it's designed to enable those of us unacquainted with the complexities of corporate balance sheets and Annual Reports to easily tell the tax dodgers from those who pay their fair share, and to change our consumer habits accordingly.*

In order to achieve the Mark, companies have to open their books to a team of experts. It's up to applicants to prove that they are making a genuine effort to be open and transparent about their tax affairs, and that they are paying the right amount of corporation tax at the right time and in the right place.

Some of Britain's largest co-operatives have led the way, with Midcounties Co-op, Phone Co-op, Unity Trust Bank and the Co-operative Group the first to achieve the Mark. They've since been joined by transport operator Go Ahead Group, energy company SSE, and high street cosmetics chain Lush, with others scrambling to sign-up.

Yes, I know it's a long quote.

But I liked it.

Full disclosure: I created the [Fair Tax Mark](#) and am its technical director.