V. 2025.18 Oct 2025

The Compact
Us, Politics and The System

The core issue - How we relate in politics and trade and work together to produce the wealth. What's wrong with it and how to put it right, worldwide.

What's In This Compact Us, Politics and The System –

- from the main Us, Politics and The System -

The Essential Us, Politics and The System -

To page 12 is 'The Essential Us, Politics and The System'

People all over feel they're not getting what they need and are entitled to. They expect political parties and governments to provide it, which they promise they can do.

But governments don't simply 'run the country'. It's outside politics where people make their living, and some get wealthy. Where people work together, producing goods and services, in the business system, in free markets, that governments don't control.

So people need to see how political parties have a limited role in them getting what they need and to look beyond politics.

In free markets, the effectiveness of high-volume, industrialised production leads inevitably to large businesses displacing small ones. And that leads, inevitably, to a small class of business people dominating work and wealth and using their power for their own benefit and against everyone else's.

To justify how the high-volume, free-market business system enables business people to have such power and wealth, conservatives claim it embodies freedom. The key freedom being for any individual to run their own business. They then say 'they're entitled to what they get from their individual efforts, ability and risk-taking.'

This glorious vision of freedom might fit for the legendary little guy. But it gives political cover to most business people, who, with volume production and large workforces, in fact take wealth from the system collectively - as companies, with large, workforces. Through this industrial, collectivist production, they get wealthy more from the work everybody else does for them than their own. It's the big basic wrong in the system.

Business people are, and run, the economy. And, through conservative media and parties, they maintain the dominant political view that business people's freedoms are sacred, and can impose their rights over worker's rights.

They are a class and it is key to ordinary people and progressives getting anywhere to recognise them as one, as the business class.

Talking only of billionaires, 'oligarchs' or 'the'1%' obscures how it's the whole business class, with their strong belief in their rights, that achieves the wide acceptance of them, that is the main problem. It's the whole business class, and their political support for their rights, that enables them to run the world. As in the USA right now.

Everyone calls the system 'capitalism' but capitalism is just the investment stage of the main business system. The term obscures the central process, the work process, in business, where we produce goods, services, and wealth before capital. It obscures that central process and the whole business class. This work explains them.

So, political parties don't make, or much control, the economic system, except in state-run economies. It's the other way round – political parties come from people in the economic system organising politically to protect their role and interests in it. And ordinary people don't get what they need because business people put more into that, and into political activity as conservatives, than they do.

We need a clear view of these basic political and trading relationships as a foundation for politics and for people getting what they are entitled to. This work provides one.

But everybody, including commentators and politicians, takes how we relate in politics and how we trade with each other for granted. They ignore the basic facts of how we do it and flail about, arguing about the wrong issues, supporting the wrong people, and blaming innocent people and each other.

So we get some ordinary people making things worse for themselves by voting conservatives, hostile to their interests and those of their relatives, workmates, friends and neighbours, into government; deserting progressive parties that do try to look after them, for not doing enough; or turning to malicious 'strongmen' who divert them from tackling those who are responsible, the business class, into attacking each other, often over personal things; turning off from politics; getting angry about politics and with each other over politics; and, in making their living, the business class bossing and mis-treating them and cornering huge wealth from their work. All because we don't base politics on the facts of how we relate to each other in politics and how we trade together in producing wealth and allocating it.

To do that, we need to put aside talk of left, right, capitalism, socialism, conservatism and communism and of Thatcher, Reagan, Hayek and Marx. And to put aside politics based simply on political views and even just feelings.

*Before all that, we need to establish what **actually goes on** outside our heads. To establish the key facts of what we **do** every day. To get an observable, demonstrable, view of how we relate and trade with each other, a framework that people can agree on, and base political debate on it.*

In politics, we need to go deeper than every little thing each of us wants and think about what everybody else wants too, and how to co-ordinate it all. And to go beyond leaders and what they 'are like' or do. Like Starmer being cautious or Trump being what he is. We do need to try to influence political leaders when in office but if they are so wrong, we need to work on how they get there.

That comes from how our fellow-citizens vote, and that comes from how they see the world and politics. Like, if unhappy with Starmer's centrism, recognise that the evidence is, over many elections, that there's not enough fellow-citizens prepared to vote progressive parties like Labour into government with anything other than centrist programmes. Last time they offered a radical programme, people even voted in the conservative clown Johnson instead. And accept that the problem with Trump isn't him but the American business class and those who voted for him or didn't vote for the more civilised Democrats.

We need to get fellow-citizens to be more progressive but it isn't just the party leader's job. Conservatives don't just leave that to their leaders - they have independent activists owning and running most of the media, campaigning relentlessly. Progressives don't have media power but can counter that by communicating with fellow-voters directly themselves. This work provides material that will help. ***(See 'How To Talk Politics With Each Other', page 281.)***

How Politics Comes From What We Do – Especially How We Create Wealth

***But before politics**, we need to persuade people of the importance of understanding how we trade with each other. Because who gets what is the big thing, isn't it?* ***To understand that, we have to understand how we relate to each other in the work process, where most make a living and some get wealthy**.*

It means recognising the centrality of this hugely important fact - we exist by volume-production of goods and services. It started hundreds of years ago with the industrial revolution, is the biggest change in our history, and now dominates human life worldwide. But we've never worked out the power relationships of how we trade with each other in it, seen how they are unacceptable, and dealt with them. We need to. It's our most pressing task.

Producing The Wealth

Here's how it works. It's not an academic or difficult thing - you can easily observe and explain the relationships in it from how we take part in it in everyday life. Then see how the economy and politics are built on top of this core factual social process. Only then discuss political views about it all.

We create wealth by producing goods and providing services, but all that's talked about is how they are sold, in free markets, or provided, by public bodies. Nobody talks about how we work together in producing them. ***The work process*** *is the central activity in society but everyone takes how we do it for granted.*

Conservatives push a fantasy that we do it trading as individuals, as if we are all self-employed. Some are, but they talk absolute nonsense when they say it's the basic way we relate. How they get away with it shows how we haven't got to grips with the industrial revolution.

High-volume production dominates how we live but we need the language to put the facts of how it works at the centre of politics. Industrialism, the usual term, to some people means just the manufacture of goods in factories. But high-volume, large-scale operations dominate services too. We do talk of 'service industries' and 'the chains.' Maybe say 'mass production, of goods and services'? 'High-volume production of goods and services'? Or 'large-scale.' Or just 'volume.' ***But whatever we call it, we have to get to grips with the industrial revolution.***

Volume production and selling is more efficient than small-volume and relentlessly displaces most of it. And from high-volume production we get large workforces. So it is collective. Volume production includes small businesses, because small businesses are crucially different from individual trading in having many staff, which determines how the key job relationship works. Individual 'sole traders' are a small minority compared to how most people work, in 'jobs', for 'bosses.' It means the conservative stress on 'the individual' is nonsense.

Call It The Business System, Not Capitalism

We generate wages and wealth by our work in familiar everyday business. 'Capitalism' is just where business people re-invest the surplus money they accumulate from that. Important, but only a supplementary process to the main activity, not the core process. That's normal business, production and selling. So call the economy 'the business system', not 'capitalism'.

Conservative parties claim the system is about the individual and individual rights because they represent business people's interests in politics. Especially important is the right for anyone to start and run a business. That right should indeed exist. But their core imagery of the plucky self-reliant individual, and the 'self-made' wealthy, and of it being the essence of freedom, gives crucial political cover for business people.

Because most of them are not the worthy individuals of conservative mythology. Because high-volume production inevitably takes the market from most small-business. And those who run it – even including those smaller ones - don't operate as individuals. ***They operate as companies and corporations****. Very* ***collectively****.* ***They are business organisations*** *using* ***large workforces*** *for* ***collective production****.*

And the inevitable result of volume production is that a small number of businesses - as a proportion of the population - dominate the markets. So a minority of people will necessarily own and manage most work. ***That's the business class****. And most of the rest can only get work by working for them, or for public bodies. You can see it in how people always talk of themselves or others 'getting a job.' That's a vital fact that demolishes the conservative argument 'you can always start a business yourself.' You can, but the efficiency of volume production means most will inevitably be forced out.*

From all that you can easily explain to others how there is a class who run most production of wealth through control of the work process. And that with volume production such a class develops inevitably.

What It Means For Wealth Allocation

The business class allocate themselves huge wealth from it, justifying it with well-worn arguments about ability, risk and hard work. These are valid arguments but their wealth comes not so much from them but from the collectivism of companies with volume-production and large-workforces, and the key relationship in them, which comes next.

With volume production, of services as well as goods, collectively-organised employers, including public bodies and, compared to individual trading, small businesses – have large workforces. Where they trade with workers each trading with them really as an individual – as is usual - they have so many they can easily do without any one and use that advantage to bargain hard. This is why workers are weaker than employers. This is not 'Well that's your opinion' or 'point of view.' Even a Trumper said 'Right - it's just the arithmetic', accepting it as fact, not opinion. *(It's the biggest bad trade deal affecting American workers and Trump is on the business class's side in it.)*

Here is how the wealth extraction process works - with this power over staff, business people can pay them less than what they sell their work for, and keep the difference. That's how they get wealthy, not just from their own ability and effort.

That's how the business class dominate work. Here's how they dominate politics too. Simply because they run the economy, they can

and do severely limit what governments can do. And they organise politically. They get wealthy enough to not need public services, so oppose them and the taxes to pay for them. Conservative parties represent business people's interests. They claim the system is about individual freedom to justify government having a limited role, as that leaves the business class as the most powerful actors in society. And to justify opposing worker's own collectivism, unionisation.

But, as shown, the business class actually trade not as individuals but as collectives. As ***companies****. The rest, the majority, mostly workers - people who need jobs - do mostly trade as individuals, un-unionised. And trading with employers as individuals in large workforces, and small government, doesn't mean freedom for them - it leaves them as atomised individuals, weak in trading with the organised business class at work, needing public services to make up for that, and governments that will regulate business people.*

For actual freedom they need to match up to the business class's collectivism and organisation at work by organising too, by unionising. In politics, by organising too and voting into government parties that will provide basic rights and good public services and regulate the minority business class for the good of the majority.

We can debate the rights and wrongs of all that but it's not opinion, is it? It's fact? We should base all political debate on it. I do, and it works.

Do you think about how we relate and trade together in public life - politics, business, production, and work? About 'the system.' Do media commentators and leading political activists? And, most importantly, do ordinary citizens, as workers and voters? The answer is no, or not much. Isn't it?

We need to, because of people having a hard time making a living and getting basic needs; public services not being good enough; hostility between fellow-citizens and to people cast as outsiders; distrust in politics; giving up even on thinking about it and basing it just on feelings; turning to daft conspiracy theories, misleading nationalism and nasty populists. And even wrecking our own habitat.

So base political debate and opinion on these facts about the volume-production business system – most people can only find work with business people or state employers; are weak if not unionised; low unionisation enables the business class to take great wealth out of the production process; enough to also spend on commanding political debate. *Debate how to vote based on these facts of* ***how trading relationships in the work process determine wealth and income.*** *Refer often simply to the existence of the business class. On all political issues, ask 'What's the role of*

the business class in this?' And build what level of unionisation and political organisation you can.

To deal with it all, worldwide, we need, as a shareable knowledge base, a factual framework, like this one, of how we relate, how we trade and work together in producing wealth and wages in business, jobs, in politics. A common understanding of these basics of society to found political opinion and action on. This work helps to develop this, to show what it is about how we relate that causes our problems, and what we can do about it.

How The Business Class Dominate The Rest

And How To Stand Up To Them

Here, once the start of this work, an alternative run-through of these observations. Repetitious, yes, but it balances how little this crucial stuff is discussed.

It's through business, work and politics that we get what we most need - money, housing, clothes, food, wi-fi; public support, health services. In business and work we work collectively to make things and provide services, they are bought and sold or funded by public spending. We make our living, some get wealthy. Politics and government are supposed to run it all for us and insure us against its shortcomings.

So how we relate in this is central. Our problems start with not having a clear view of how we do, especially how we trade together, where some make their living and some get power and wealth; and how to make it work for everyone.

We call it all the economy, free markets or capitalism. But they sound like self-existing 'things', outside and above us. And they don't say anything about the core, everyday activities - business, work and trade.

Property is important but can be only about storage and transfer of wealth. ***More important than free markets or property are the relationships where wealth is created – relationships in production, the work process, the labour process.***

It's all not really a system laid down anywhere, just the established rules and customs of buying and selling, of contract law - including, importantly, employment contracts.

These trades we make every we make every day are the basis of society, not politics and the state. Governments, public services and law come from the system, they don't make it. People actually get diverted from this central process by expecting to be able to sort everything through politics.

How we trade with each other enables business people, the business class, to dominate everyone else at work, annex obscene wealth, and dominate politics too. People accept the business system as if it's our natural habitat, like fish accept water. This explains how conservatives get themselves elected into government despite being hostile to most people's interests.

They mistreat the majority as policy but because everyone accepts the trading relationships of the business system they claim to be working for everyone and pose as just managers of 'the economy', and, ridiculously, they get away with it.

They resist government regulation of the business system as that enables the power and wealth of their class. But progressive parties accept the business system too. So while claiming to 'run the country', all parties actually leave business people to do it and people are mis-treated whichever is in government. As policy by conservatives, reluctantly by progressives.

So people, not even recognising the business class's existence, blame 'politicians' as a group and even call them a class, which they aren't. And then they believe maverick conservatives who cast politicians as a ruling elite. But the business class is the elite. They run the economy and dominate government, the state and politics. They are the ruling class. All conservatives are of them, including Trump. They divert people from blaming the business class into blaming each other via shallow identities. And into blaming progressive parties, who, by failing to tackle the business system and the business class, enable the view 'They're all as bad as each other.' (They aren't.)

The observations made in this work can seem remote from normal political discussion because conservatives convince people that the business system is the only way, they take its relationships for granted, fail to base politics on it, and let conservatives divert them onto lesser issues. But it is a grounded explanation of the essentials that we should base all politics on.

It shows how we work together in the system, worldwide, how we co-operate, collectively, intensely, but also antagonistically; how a minority dominate the majority; who they both are; and how the majority can stand up to and regulate the business class minority, in the workplaces and in politics.

Uniquely, it identifies the basic problem - that business people are organised, at work as businesses, and in politics; that the rest, mostly workers, are mostly not; that employers overpower each worker because they have many others; that this entitles workers to organise too, to unionise; that they desperately need to do, and to organise in politics as well - ***to match up to the business class at work and in politics, do what they do, and organise.***

The argument to make to business people and conservatives about unionisation is this: you assert business people's right to organise, collectively, in their economic activity, as companies and corporations. The rest of the population, mostly workers, are entitled to organise likewise.

'Us, Politics and The System' helps you make more sense of politics and our everyday world by explaining the key public relationships, from the daily experience of ordinary working people, and shows how to make them fairer. It will help you talk about them and work and politics - which we need to do.

Again, 'How To Talk Politics With Each Other'
is at page 281 and free-standing on the website.

Why This Work Is Needed

(Again, maybe a bit repetitious but it's not heard elsewhere...) People think the everyday world is run by politics but it's the other way round - politics comes from the everyday world. Especially from how we relate in making goods, providing services, and selling them, to making our living or get wealthy - business, trade and work. With us only having flimsy relationships in politics it actually diverts us from the basics of society and wealth and power. It's 'the economy' then politics.

Most people think there's lot wrong with it, and that governments let us down. We're even wrecking our own habitat. But rather than tackle the system, many are diverted into phony loyalties and divisions and daft conspiracy theories. That's because we ignore the system. We need to build a clear understanding of it and relate all politics to it, including our own and other ordinary people's politics. And to relate discussion not just to someone's opinions or attitudes, like left or right, socialist or conservative, but to their role in the system.

People look to 'politicians' to put things right and see the political parties as just interchangeable management teams, all aiming to 'run the country', for everyone. As if from above the system. But politicians don't make the system, and not from above. They come from it, to represent the interests of different groups in it. That are often against the interests of other groups.

The key process where interests are different is in how we produce goods and services to create wealth and make our living. It involves working together so much, is so industrialised - including the service industries - so social, collective, it's really a public activity. That's why we call it 'the economy'. But it is run privately, by a self-confessed selfish minority. They run this key activity, us making our living together intensely inter-connected, and they control the allocation of income and wealth. This obstructs protection of people in their basic needs and democratic regulation of the economy.

The system is the business system. The minority, business people. The business class. But we don't see them as a class. And most

people are workers but don't see themselves as the worker class either.

Conservatives say the system is about 'the individual'. Nonsense. It is industrialised, including the service industries, requiring people to work highly collectively, co-operatively, with millions of others, under the control of organisations, mainly of business people. And, doing this as individual workers, they relate to collectively organised business people on very unequal terms.

In claiming the system is based on people looking out for themselves, conservatives also say that makes it work best for everyone. That's nonsense too, borne out by the outcome - great unfairness, misery, instability and inequality of power and wealth. It's dynamic, true. But negatively almost as much as positively and, on balance, dreadful.

Conservatives also claim that this system works best (for all!) when governments don't regulate it. Conservatives think the government shouldn't govern! This - leave the system alone, 'laissez-faire' - is the core of conservativism. It's more nonsense. They oppose regulation of the business system because it favours business people and they represent them, the business class, and are mostly members of it.

Exploiting the majority to get great wealth, running the economy, dominating politics and the state - the business class are the ruling class. Not all of them are bastards but their system pressures them to be. And it's them who create, support and sustain the conservative parties.

When people vote in 'progressive' parties who aim to govern for all, they can't do enough for people to vote them in regularly. One, because the business class organise the economy, they can't much challenge them. And two, because there's so many relationships in the system, established in so many long-standing laws and institutions, they can't promise much change without a lot more backing from we voters. So it's our fault too - we accept the system and don't give progressive parties the votes to regulate the business class and their system.

But people don't see how the system works and how it enables the business class to dominate. People don't even see that they exist, as a class. So people can't make sense of how they are treated and some say they find politics confusing. Some support politicians they just 'like'. Some take positions on actual policies, but others give up on politics and don't vote.

Some think political debate is exchanging broad views, in those brief social exchanges we have, on vague notions of 'capitalism' or 'socialism' or 'communism', as if in a micro constitutional convention. But we need to base politics not on abstract discussions of ideal social systems or 'isms but on what is, on how politics, public services, the economy; markets, business, workers, class, jobs; unions, income, wealth generation and distribution,

poverty, opportunity; media, identities, racism, nationality - all actually work. On where we are.

And people believe they can 'make it' on their own, especially in the USA. But the business system often means they can't. See the 2008 crash and since. So, not understanding how their suffering is caused by the business system and the business class, they turn for security to vague collective identities like colour and nationality where nothing is said about how those in the identity group might relate if there were no outsiders, just themselves. No actual policies, just following political leaders who promise salvation through hostility to harmless fellow-citizens, or outsiders, not the business class.

All this is because we've no accurate, widely-held, view of the system that exposes the absurdity of the conservative world view, on which to base political thinking, debate and actions. *We need to get it widely accepted that the main issue in society is business-class supremacy - that they have it because they organise, at work and in politics - that the worker majority - defined by how you make your living - must talk to each other about how they relate and organise and unionise widely and organise more in politics.*

With this clear understanding of what is, then we can talk about how society should be - about political change for fairness, dignity, security, support, equality and preserving our environment. To meet this need, Us, Politics and The System explains the system, from everyone's everyday experience, from how you are involved. It will help you think and talk about where we are and what to do. ***The key is to see that there is a business class and how it's their organisation that enables their supremacy, and that to stand up to them we need to organise too, as workers, at work and in politics.***

End of The Essential 'UsPol'. For more, see, at page 358, 'Why People Should Read 'Us, Politics and The System'

v.2024.6

The Ten Minute Read Of 'Us, Politics and The System'

Humanity is in a ridiculous, unnecessary state. On top of our usual problems with jobs, health services, recessions, war and the rest, we're allowing the least public-spirited of us, some of them malevolent crazies, to run our world, and we're wrecking our own habitat. With our amazing technical knowledge and ability to cooperate to produce all we need and more, it needn't be like this. To change it we need to get the basics of politics, the economy, work and business - 'The System' - clear in our heads.

'It's the system' - what workmates would say to this writer when he argued against employers' power over workers - everyone who needs a job - and how it enables them to annex wealth and the power to dominate society; and the need to organise to match up to them, at work and in politics.

'A lesson from the Obama years – failure to seize the opportunities offered by the great recession to reform an economic system that has worked against most Americans for four decades.' (The Observer 17-1-2021)

People, politicians and media commentators only talk about things that happen, not about how they come from how we interact in business, the economy and politics. They treat that as just how the world is. While obsessing about all sorts of things, we ignore how we relate in the vital tasks of making products and services, making a living, making money!

But conservatives, when arguing against wealth re-distribution, by government, do mention it, saying it's wealth creation that really matters. Yes, OK. Yes and let's take a good look at it. Let's bring the trading relationships and social processes where wealth is created out of the private arena of business and work and into the light of public, political discussion.

Central but neglected is the work process. And central to that is the employment relationship. Examine them and you see how the distribution of wealth at source is the issue, and how it is the foundation issue in the debates about taxes, public spending and the role of the state.

We ignore it because conservatives convince us that the business system is the only way. So people get on with their lives, meeting their needs, enjoying their pleasures, and just expect whoever is in government to 'run the country'. But Presidents, Prime Ministers, Members of Congress, Parliaments and Assemblies, don't simply 'run the country'. They don't initiate all that happens in society - that, and they, come from society and from how people relate in the system, the business system.

Conservatives use politics to divert workers from tackling the business class. It gives only weak opportunities for workers to exercise any power over them. Because conservative parties only intend to represent the business class and progressive parties haven't the ideological tools or the backing to tackle them. So then conservatives - representing the actual elite - spread confusion and disillusion with politics, telling people that politicians are an elite that fails them. And persuade some to back alternative conservative 'strongmen' who offer them the self-defeating answer of uniting with the business class in national identity and turning on outsider groups.

So put 'politics' aside while we examine the underlying system. People have different roles in it, especially in that most necessary activity - making a living or making money. We need to be much clearer about how we interact with each other to do this and how it means people's interests in the system are different.

A minority, business people, run businesses. So its them who organise the production and sale of goods and services and provide most work - the supremely important activities. Most other people get a job, working for business people, or for public bodies. So, in this central arena, business and jobs, people relate differently. They have different power, get different incomes, are different in their need for public services and support. They have different interests. We should group them by this. The different interest groups look out for their interests in everyday business or work. In politics they promote relationships and public policies that suit these interests and oppose those that don't. They are classes, better defined than what are commonly referred to as classes, based on less significant attributes. Political parties and politicians come from and represent these different classes, defined by functional relationships not income or culture.

Each party claims to represent everyone's interests but it's not true. Certainly not of conservatives. They represent the interests of business people, the business class and the wealthy. Labour or progressive, social-democrat parties mainly represent the rest, who are mostly workers.

Business People - The Business Class -Run The System

The key to understanding the system is to see that business people run it. They organise the production and distribution of most of the goods and services we need and the jobs we need. They dominate politics simply because of that. They are a class - the business class. They organise politically too, generally as conservatives. Business-class supremacy is the basis of the system. With this in mind, the rest, particularly politics, becomes clearer.

Most people make their living working for these business people or for public bodies. We should call this majority a class too, probably the working or worker class, but defined by their definite, vital, unarguable, role in the system, being a worker.

Not enough people support the state organising production so we do need business people to organise most of it. But we need to make them behave civilly, to regulate them. For that, we need to be far more organised, and these works explain how. But if we don't do that, let's at least get everyone to see how the system works and build it into political debate.

Conservatives claim the basis of the system is 'the individual', trading freely with others, as equals, in free markets. Ok, we do have or should have individual rights. But the conservative view is simplistic, highlighted to distract us from how society actually works.

The view that it's all about individual rights comes from centuries ago, when people worked out the case for freedom from the absolute dictatorship of monarchy - for freedom of religion, for political rights and free markets. Conservatives still speak of it like this. They say the key issue is 'the individual' versus 'the state' and promote a small state and low taxes. They trumpet this as the essence of freedom, of liberty. And many people see it like this, particularly in the US, and is why some call it 'The Land of The Free'.

But with a small state, you might be less controlled by the state but you still have to make your way in life in the unequal relationships of the business system, and they control you as much or even more than the state. With the state you should at least have some egalitarian democratic voice, which you don't in the business system. And that is a reason why business class conservatives are hostile to the state.

*In the business system you have to trade, to buy and sell, under its rules, often to people with far more power than you. Crucially, you have to trade with people who are **organised**, who **don't** trade as individuals, especially **business people** in their **businesses**, their **organisations**. Because most business-class conservatives don't themselves operate as individuals: Because in the business system, with trade in free markets, the efficiency of mass production leads inevitably to the collectivism of industrial production, owned by a few powerful and wealthy people.*

The business class are the people who organise all the collectivism! They set up and run all the collective companies and corporations, and organise the rest of us into industrial workforces. They run the collective global system of mass production and trade. In this highly industrialised, trading, mass-marketized, commercialised, corporate, financialised, micro-managed, nation-state, inter-connected, globalized society, we are hugely collective and inter-dependent.

Business-class conservatives feel, correctly judging by the huge wealth many of them acquire, that they are good at operating in this privately-run collectivism. So they resist the state regulating it in the interests of everyone else. And they get wealthy enough from it to not need collective public support and services. But everybody else needs them, to make up for the brutality, insecurity and instability of business people's system in making their living.

The issue isn't the simple 'the individual versus the state' but the distribution of power in all this collectivism. Conservatives represent business people and that is why they oppose the state. Their talk of individualism might make sense in an imaginary world of small traders and genuine self-employed. In the industrialised real world, it's nonsense. They do it to divert us from organising while these very collective business people do organise.

Simple individualism is just not how the world works. The very existence of things like money, inflation, interest rates, banks, and the many other powerful business organisations, in the business system, all show this.

In many, many trading interactions you are a long way from being equal. Particularly, crucially, in making your living, in getting work, in getting a job. More on that soon.

And it's nonsense to claim individualism is in general the basis of society. With all our collectivisms like family, community, religion, identity, clubs, football fandom and patriotism, we are highly social. Our talk, our mindset, what we do, are full of 'we' and 'us' and 'our'.

All the above is obvious if you just look at it. It results, first of all, in huge inequality of power, and, as a result, of wealth. Yet people ignore it. We need everyone to talk about it and develop a common understanding of it.

Everyone knows what's wrong with the outcomes of the system but not the processes that enable it. People call it capitalism but that evokes something remote where some invisible people accumulate money, invisibly. It doesn't explain capitalism's key relationships and how they are rooted in, and observable in, everyday life.

We give the system status above and beyond us, as apparently self-standing 'capitalism'. But it's just how we relate ordinarily to each other, dominated in the everyday world by business people. We can do it differently.

However, it has many well-established relationships, many embedded in law. To change all that through politics, our rights are limited. You get one vote, every four years, isolated from each other, on all of the issues bundled together, for political

representatives who can ignore you, with minority parties hostile to the interests of the majority often getting into government.

Most people oppose excess wealth and agree the wealthy should be taxed more. But they claim they earn their wealth from their abilities and effort. They get away with that claim because workers don't see that business people make most of their wealth from the work they themselves do. How capital and wealth is made, in the work process, by workers, is concealed by just referring to 'capitalism'. It means the central relationship in creating and distributing wealth - how employers buy labour and workers sell it, the trade in our labour, the trade in people - goes unexamined.

Here it is - with most workers not being organised in unions, not negotiating their conditions together, the deal on starting, or keeping, a job is made between an employer and an individual worker.

*In these industrial economies, most employers have many staff, even small businesses. With the other staff producing whatever the business or service does, they have enough staff to be able to do without any **one** of them. That is why employers can drive a hard bargain with each one individually.*

That is how workers are in an unequal bargaining position. With these 'free' labour market conditions, each worker has only 'marginal utility' (usefulness) to the employer. Any one worker needs the job more than the employer needs them. Call it the unequal 'ratio of need'. While it's a hugely important political point it's also just plain arithmetic and undeniable!

It is why business people, and public employers, can say 'take it or leave it'. It is how employers can be the 'boss' of people who are, according to the free market propagandists, equal trading partners. And when they say 'Go somewhere else if you don't like it', in any other job in these industrialised economies you are usually up against the same unequal trading relationship with the employer.

It's the most important feature of the system. The inequality of it is what enables the imbalance of power between business people and workers. Business owners use it to not pay staff the full price they sell their work for and keep the difference for themselves. That is how most wealth is gained. They don't earn their power and wealth from what they actually do in production but from taking the trouble to organise it and get us to do it, on these unfair terms of trade.

They inflict this unfairness on fellow-citizens, their fellow-country(w)men who they should treat with respect, the great majority, in making their living. It gives them the right to organise, in unions, to respond to and match up to business people's organisation. It's up to us to do the same as them - take the trouble to organise, act together, collectively, and negotiate with them as equals.

But because the system is so established, accepted and poorly-understood, people don't notice how the inequality in the production process is the real problem. So, confused and dismayed, some give up on politics. Others, angrily seeking answers, adopt crazy conspiracy theories; divide us by racial groupings and culture wars; blame flimsily-defined 'elites'; and support business-class mavericks like Trump who get them to blame anybody and anything but them and their system.

We'll do better when we share a clear, factual, understanding of the system as the framework for political debate. Us, Politics and The System provides one. It explains the roles and relationships, rewards, and penalties, obligations and protections, rights and wrongs, of public life, which includes economic activity. It shows how power and wealth, powerlessness and unfairness, come from social organisation and lack of organisation.

It shows how the majority organising in their economic role as workers would make the system much fairer. It shows how humanity can relate better, fairly, and run a sustainable global society. It does it without any academic talk of capitalism, liberalism, socialism, communism or economics, but simply by showing how we interact together ordinarily, daily.

Political thinking and debate not based on the system is futile. When you hear anyone talk about politics, relate what they say to the system. When you talk politics with people, don't just exchange views and attitudes - relate it to the system, to your role in it, theirs, their family, friends, neighbours and workmates roles.

Finally - 'capitalism' and 'free markets' as names for the system place it up above us, beyond our reach. Capitalism's core activity is business. Capital is created in business. We encounter business every day, take part in it as workers and consumers, speak naturally about it. We can locate it in our normal experience. So let's call it 'the business system', and be more comfortable talking about it and evaluating it.

What We Need To Do

To solve humanity's problems, we need to get it widely understood, accepted in everyday political talk, that -

...business people run the world more than politicians do...

...because they organise the production of goods and services, the buying and selling of them and of people's labour - work, jobs and trade...this makes them 'the economy' (most of it)...being the economy gives them inherent political power, under any government, even without them acting directly in politics ...

...to act directly, the most class-conscious of them organise and run the conservative parties...some run the conservative media...

...and that - politics comes from this system, that business people

dominate, and not the other way round…politicians can regulate its unfairness but conservatives won't…and progressives won't enough.
…Conservative parties exist to obstruct the system from being regulated…because they represent business people and it's their system… the business system is the main thing conservatives work to conserve.
…politics 'rides-on-top' of the system…you might get improvements in how you and your fellow-workers are treated through it but not many.

To see how little individual freedom people have in business and work, look again at how free markets operate. They develop inevitably to industrialism so that the majority have to work for the minority business class, and be dominated by them, unless regulated and made fair by workers unionizing and putting in progressive governments.

Conservatives claim, and liberals accept, that free markets provide everyone with 'opportunity'. But in industrial systems only a few can really succeed. Most people will inevitably be standard workers. There can only be fairness in who gets the better positions.

And, as said, business people don't themselves operate as individuals! ***Each and every day, all day, night-time too, they organise and act together collectively, as businesses, as companies, as corporations.*** *They are a class - the business class. Some are alright, and credit them for their organisation and enterprise etc. But as a group they exploit and mistreat the great majority, viciously so in their opposition to us organising too.*

The majority of citizens are workers. But compared to the business class we represent ourselves weakly in everyday society and politics. We let them dominate us at work, in political debate; in political action. We are so weak we don't even see them as a class, nor ourselves… haven't got names for their class or ours and … don't organise together and act together like they do.

Business people organise in their meaningful, active, everyday economic roles (in companies and corporations). We need the majority of citizens to organise in their everyday economic roles, as workers, in unions…
… with this collective strength, stand up at work to the business class… and to public sector managers… and also…represent themselves in public life, as mature citizens… speaking together through credible institutions, their unions… join business people as 'players' in the system.
…in politics, match up to the business class by doing as they do and act in politics organised in their own economic role…in mass progressive political forces and parties, with other progressive groups …
…and run their own media to counter the effect on political thinking of

the propagandist conservative media.

Progressives always have better policies for the majority than conservatives. What they lack is organisation and its use to communicate policy and get support for it.

Widespread organisation will enable communication of progressive attitudes and policies throughout society and politics, independent and counter to conservative media. (Social media is not good for this. It's not people acting together meaningfully, in meaningful social organisations, but mostly just mouthing off as atomised individuals).

It's because we aren't clear about these basics of the system that many find politics confusing and, not recognising and opposing the business class, the dominant people in society, group themselves and others by low-content 'identities' based on passive attributes like skin colour and country of birth, and allow these identities to define their politics…

…and allow the business class minority, who mostly care only for themselves, to govern, disastrously for all of us and even for themselves at times.

We need to persuade fellow-citizens to stop identifying themselves and others trivially by appearance, locality, mass culture or personal preferences… but by more meaningful things like how they behave, by what they do - especially by how they act and interact in the practical world of business, jobs, the economy and politics - by economic class …

… to persuade the worker majority, blue-collar, white-collar, whatever colour, whatever gender, to find their main identity in their most important, practical role, in being, with most other citizens, a worker, a member of the worker class.

When we share a clear understanding of the system such as put here and in the full book, it'll be easier to make sense of politics, discuss the issues widely, and organise to get society working fairly for all. Us, Politics and The System will help, explaining the system clearly using everyday language and locating it in our daily experience.

We need to spread widely this explanation of the system… the rights and wrongs of it… show it is true, because drawn from everyone's observable everyday life experience, and not just opinion… explaining especially how business people and public employers get power over workers from having many staff and being able to do without any one… and how to make it fairer by organising… spread this view widely, globally. and …how to make it fairer by organising…spread this view widely, globally.

(v.2024.4)

The Twenty Minute Read Of Us, Politics and The System

Ending With ***'What Will It Be Like If People Do As These Writings Urge?'***

Go By Facts or How You Feel?

'Us, Politics and The System' shows how the system - work, business, money, politics - works, by looking at it in everyday life. What it shows is observable fact, not just opinion or one narrative of many. Taking the key example - As even a Trumper said when I explained the unfairness and inequality of the labour trade to him – find it on page 20, The Job Deal – 'It's just the arithmetic, isn't it?' Meaning it's not a contentious political point. It's plain undisputable fact.

But many say they don't understand politics and vote by feelings. They won't vote for a party leader because they don't 'like' them. Or they'll vote for a party because they do like their leader. Or they'll vote for politicians who just promise 'change' or 'hope' instead of voting on real policies.

And many see political parties as just alternative management teams who offer to 'run things' better than the others and all we do is vote for one or another. As when people say - 'I thought we should give the other lot a chance'. Or they'll base their politics on the feelings of belonging offered by low-content 'identities'.

Basing your politics on how you feel instead of on the facts of business and job relationships and on policies is no way to use your democratic rights. 'Feelings' will be addressed again at the end of this paper. But first, a

A System Analysis to base politics on, a common framework for our political thinking...starting with –

Business people run the world.
Because they organise together.
And because the rest mostly don't.

This helps to explain most of politics.

Business people are a class and they run the world because they run 'the economy', because they organize (most of) the goods, services, and jobs. But people don't talk about this as the hugely significant political fact that it is. They just accept, unspoken, that business people organise production, trade and jobs as if it's the natural order. They don't even speak of business ***people*** *but of businesses, companies, corporations. Or more likely just of what 'they' are doing.*

So most political debate is not about how we all earn our living, income and wealth. For all the serious issues around public services and the role of the state, and the daft distractions of culture and identity wars, this, the basic, underlying issue, is not addressed.

If people do talk of the system, usually as 'capitalism', it's as if it's self-existing. They don't talk about how it works, think they haven't the power to change it, and think all we could so is change to another 'self-existing' system like socialism or communism, that most people think won't work. So they just expect 'politicians' to 'run the country', which means managing the system or letting it alone.

This is all a consequence of conservatives winning the argument on the key economic issues so everyone treats them as settled. Yet conservative ideas are facile and don't correspond with observable reality. Progressive politics makes far more sense but isn't argued for strongly enough. This paper aims to enable it to be.

Most of the system runs independently of politics. Politicians don't normally really control what goes on every day. And the basic business and job relationships that shape it all were established over the centuries, in practice and in piecemeal legal decisions, never publicly debated or democratically voted for. They persist from before we won limited democracy. Since then we've not developed an adequate awareness of how the system works, or the organised strength, to change it. In countries with little or no democracy, business people just seize political power through their conservative activists.

We can challenge business people through politics but, by being the economy, they have the power to seriously limit what politicians can do. We need to look at how we can regulate this most powerful group.

Some think the world is secretly run by 'the deep state' or some Jewish people or 'the Illuminati'. But it's business people, and not a secret. You can see it by just looking around you, at what you've got in your home, what's in the high street, what's on the road, in your job, in leisure activities. It's business people, who are represented in politics by conservatives. (Who come in all colours, races and nationalities.)

We depend on business people to organize production and jobs because we aren't mature and organized enough to do it ourselves. But it means we leave essential public needs – jobs, incomes, the

economy – to be provided privately, by them, not for us all, their fellow-countryfolk, but for their own gain. We allow them to run the world economy greedily and recklessly, with the unregulated free markets they demand, and to cause instability such as the crash of 2008. In Britain, the Conservatives used that as an excuse to attack public services and support. That attack caused many affected workers to support Brexit – 'we can't see what's wrong and who causes it, let's blame foreigners'. The US business class instigated the forty-year standstill in American workers' living standards and the job losses in the rust-belt that led many to turn, angry, insecure and confused, to Trump.

The big business class people get insanely wealthy from our work while causing billions to live in insecure jobs and poverty. Insisting on a right to 'make a return on capital', they generate the needless growth that is wrecking our planet.

Since we do depend on them we have to do deals with them, at work and in politics. But we need fairer deals. For that, we, the worker majority, first need to see how they dominate us.

We need a better term for the system than 'capitalism'. That just evokes remote financial operations. 'Free markets' only refers to trade. Neither refer to production, work and business - the central processes where capital is made and where we are all involved! Business is how we experience the system and how we refer to it every day. So let's call it 'the business system'.

*And call them **the business class**. When politicians and commentators even acknowledge that they are an identifiable group, they call them 'the business community'. Community? Community?? They are a class and we need to name them as one. Especially the corporate and financial operators. Not 'the 1%'. Too vague, doesn't refer to what they do. The business class are the ruling class, not vague 'elites' or 'the establishment.*

Conservative politicians and parties are of them and represent them. Their key policy is to let business people do what they want. That's what 'free markets' and 'laissez-faire' economics mean. The power the business system grants to business people is what conservatives aim to conserve.

They conceal this by:

- *presenting the system as a self-existing thing, above us, just 'there'. But it is only the customary everyday relationships in business, work, jobs and trade.*
- *talking about 'businesses', 'companies', 'corporations', 'multi-nationals' and 'the markets' as if they too are extra-human, self-existing entities. But they are just **people**,*

fellow-citizens and we can hold them to account in political debate and democratic government.

- *claiming to be just 'politicians' looking after everyone's interests. They just honestly think the business system is fair for everybody, and effective: just honestly believe giving business people great freedom, protection and low taxes, with the rest not having the right to organize, and little state support, is how to do it!*
- *justifying business people's power and wealth as fair outcomes of a fair system. They aren't, it isn't. It is loaded against the worker majority.*

Their case is absurd but they get away with it because we don't examine it. This system doesn't exist by itself - it's an ongoing set of relationships that conservatives actively maintain, protect and extend. Capitalism isn't the problem – it's capitalists. It's their system, not ours. Their business system has its points and the rest of us have no complete alternative system to hand. But however good they claim it to be everyone knows it's not good enough. We need to regulate it, and them.

Progressives and organised workers have better policies, that can make the system fair, civilized, stable and sustainable. But they don't see what it is that enables business people to dominate, and what's wrong with it, and concede to them their free-market business system. That limits progressives' ability to do what's needed so they often disappoint people.

But progressive parties can't do it all on their own. We, the voters, also don't understand the system and how it limits progressive parties, and workers don't vote with enough conviction, in enough numbers, for progressive party policies that will regulate business people and improve the majority's lives.

For this, and for civilized, planet-saving politics, we need to match business people's organised power as the business class by getting ourselves organised into a corresponding mass political force, operative every day, permanent. Just as business people are organised together as businesses, the central framework needs to be non-business people, mostly workers, blue collar and white, organised as workers.

We need to spread knowledge of more key features of the system:

- *in industrial society economies of scale mean production, trade and services inevitably come to be dominated by fewer, larger operations; run by a minority, the business class; and inevitably the majority have no option to make their living but to work for one or another of them.*
- *business people are organized. A business is people organized together, at work, with shareholders, suppliers, customers,*

managers and staff; endorsed by the state with privileges such as limited company status.

- *their collective organisation and activity at work makes them the economy (most of).*
- *so they can and do dictate to governments.*
- *when conservative parties win elections, it amount to business people themselves being the government. What conservatives really exist to conserve is business people's rights and privileges.*
- *independent conservative activists run mass media to set a pro-business political agenda and pro-business political thinking, and divert attention from what they do and direct it at minorities.*

Business people, the business class, do deserve more than the rest, because they take the trouble to organize and be active every day, in businesses. And we can credit them for the public utility of their enterprise and risk-taking. (But not, on risk-taking, as much as they credit themselves. The bigger the business, the more they spread the risk across projects and investment funds, successes cover losses. And losses are protected by limited company and bankruptcy laws).

Some can be decent, maybe more the smaller ones and small traders. But competition pressures even the decent ones to be bad so we need to regulate competition. It has benefits, but not as many as co-operation.

The Rest - The Worker Class?

*Aside from them, all who need a job to make a living are workers. Blue-collar, white-collar; shop floor, office; manual, technical, engineer; teacher, lecturer. Even managers. The working class, the great majority of the population. But people muddle definition of class with 'middle class', that 'classes' by spending power and lifestyle, and 'working class' that 'classes' people by culture and education. We need to class people by **how** they make their money, by **how** they take part in the vital activities of production, work, business and wealth creation. So maybe it's the worker class and the business class?*

The Job Deal – A Bad Deal

Every worker knows the power an employer has over them in the job transaction - when starting a job; in a job; in how easily they can sack you.

*Unique to the book 'Us, Politics and The System' is that it shows just **how** business people, and public bodies, overpower people in this transaction. Workers and progressive parties need to understand this clearly, and how it entitles those who are workers to organize in unions.*

This is how ...

in our industrialised world, economies of scale mean most jobs are in workplaces with many workers ...

… so the employer can get the work done without any one of them.

This *is why workers are weak and employers and the business class strong, and why there is the huge disparity in wealth.*

'The 'Market Ratio' In 'Free' Labour Markets

Here it is again - In the transaction each of us makes with an employer, a worker is ten, hundreds or thousands of times weaker. depending on how many other staff they have. That's how big a difference there is between how much they need one worker and how much one worker needs the job. It is great inequality in the ratio of need.

It means each worker is of only 'marginal use' to an employer. That's why people get a bad deal and bad treatment in jobs - because whilst making a deal with one worker, the employer has all the others to rely on for output. Go to another job - 'There's the door if you don't like it ' – and, in our industrial societies, you are at the same disadvantage. It operates against better-qualified, so-called middle class workers the same as the less-qualified.

This demolishes the conservative claim that free markets mean freedom and opportunity. That 'you can make it by your own efforts' and, in the US, achieve 'the American Dream'. This claim vaporizes before the plain fact that in modern industrial society most work isn't individual, it's collective, and having many staff gives employers power over workers that far outweighs whatever opportunity there may be. To make their living, people shouldn't have to sell themselves so unfairly.

And the huge inequality in ***wealth*** *is because this unfair job deal enables business people to pay workers less than the full value of the work they do. This is where profits and most wealth come from, from control of the work process, because that is where wealth is produced. The wealthy claim it is because of their superiority, their ability and effort. Yes, some is from that. But it's mostly from the unrecognised and unfair power they have in the labour process that produces wealth.*

This all entitles the worker majority of citizens to organize in unions. It is the mature, adult, legitimate response to the injustice of trading with employers

*alone, one at a time: to organize together so employers can only have **all** of us or none of us, and negotiate together, with strength, for union conditions.*

Centrists and Liberals - Not Woke Enough

There's a few inequalities but the biggest is in the job relationship because it's inequality in everyone's most important task – making their living. Inequality of power. We fail to identify it, expose it, and use it to establish and spread the case for the right to organize as workers. Most workers do recognise bosses' power but see it as part of the natural order and let the business class alone. While some then blame other people for their problems instead.

The failure to challenge the inequality of power in the job transaction enables some 'white working class' people to see action against other inequalities as favours done for minorities, that they don't get. They are badly-treated by their fellow-white conservative business class. But not knowing the case for their right to organise to stand up to them, they turn and are easily turned on minorities and liberals and progressive parties and, in the USA, vote for business-class boss-class Trump's minority-bashing.

The 'white working class' should see non-union job deals as an over-riding inequality shared with minorities and that they should organise with the minorities and liberals to tackle it. This will improve their condition more than attacking the minorities, who don't in fact do much or anything against their interests, and voting for outsider-bashing businessmen like Trump; or, in the UK, for outsider-blaming policies like Brexit.

Liberals are just fair-minded better-off people who tackle the obvious inequalities based on skin colour and gender. But they depend on business people to run the economy and some are business class themselves so don't see the biggest inequality clearly enough, that between employers and all workers. They need to challenge this inequality as much as the others and support all workers, white and of colour, whatever gender or personal tastes, in getting equal to employers by unionising.

The Case For Organising Summed Up

Look at all the institutions that organise and operate in society. Business people organise together and operate as companies, even protected from their responsibilities by limited company and bankruptcy laws. They have trade and employer associations. There's government itself, government departments, national, state and regional government, city and town councils, courts, schools, hospitals, fire authorities, the police and military, churches,

sports clubs, printed, televised and digital media and more. These are all people organised, collectively. For so many of us, the worker class majority, not to be organised likewise in making our living is ridiculous. And, by being so hostile to workers organizing, vicious, from the conservative, business class side.

Make the case for the right to organize to fellow-workers, and even conservatives, with the simple arithmetic - employers with many workers have an unfair advantage over them as individuals.

For equality for all, for equality for workers of all colours, genders and personal lives, the right to organize and the right to union recognition from employers should be a recognised civil right.

Individual But Also Very Collective

Conservatives, representing the business class, talk of the individual as the basis of society. Yes, we are individuals, but in a very social and collective world.

Keep in mind - these are industrialised societies. That means all large-scale collective working methods, not just smoky factories. We co-operate very collectively in all the companies, corporations and banks, the public authorities, in production, trade, and at work. It's the business class who do the collectivizing, by constantly industrializing work. It's collective even though it's not democratically controlled.

In this collective world, look at how collectively organized business people themselves are – the owners, the boards, the CEO's, multiple departments, middle managers, supervisors, and we staff, on many work sites and in many countries. Team-building exercises, 'There's no I in team' and so on. Compared to them, the rest of us are mostly poorly organised as workers, atomised. Many are organised but not with enough confidence and conviction, and nowhere near as many as need to be. As said, we need to take the trouble to organize at work and trade with employers on equal terms; and in politics to identify and organize distinctly as the worker class, to be strong enough to regulate the whole business class.

How Collective Do We Want To Be?

The conservative argument that making our living is about the individual and politics mainly about the liberty to do so imagines a non-industrial fairytale world that has never existed. Except maybe in 19th century America where land was easily available to whites. In this fantasy land we can all be small traders,

set up in business, and it's all in your own hands, you aren't affected by what everybody else does. But the success of industrialism means we can't all be small traders, most people have to work in large organisations and in most jobs, without union organisation, you are dominated by your boss, with little individual freedom.

The self-employed, one-person businesses, traders, tradespeople, do operate as individuals in making their living, and unintentionally act as a buffer class, obscuring the fundamental reality of mass, business class-organised industrialised collectivism. And even for them, the market system means they too are affected by what everybody else does, particularly big business people.

How much we want to operate as individuals is an issue but the fact is we are highly collective and the question is more 'How collective do we want to be and in what ways?' It's a big political question, at the heart of US politics and elections. We need to make it central to the debates about the state, freedom, public spending on public support and public services, taxes, socialism, patriotism, military spending and military service. So here goes…

Public Services and Taxes –
The Individual, Liberty, and the State

The business class do 'take care of business', make the big decisions on money, managing, and selling goods and services, in activities we all depend on to make our living. For that, they deserve a fair amount. But they take more than their fair share using the unfair power in the job transaction.

They take so much from this collective work they get enough wealth to not need public services and support. They claim they get the money by individual effort so their conservative parties say everyone is individually responsible for meeting their needs by doing the same. With that argument they block ***public services and income security*** *for the worst-off, and the taxes needed for them.*

Many people think the wealthy have too much money but also accept this claim that it's from their own effort and that in the business system everybody has the freedom to do the same. So conservatives, notably in the US, deter many from supporting public spending and public services by convincing them that taxes to pay for them are attacks on this liberty. But the claim that the money is from their own efforts is false, and taxes just a way for the majority who helped make it to reclaim some of it from them. And public services and welfare are just fellow-citizens backing each other up on basic needs, spreading the risks and costs with the common practice of insurance. Taxes are just for

collective spending, democratically decided, like people do in many types of clubs.

But the conservative claim to be for individual liberty, a small state, and being against public support is false. To protect themselves and their business interests, they are vigorous collectivists. They strongly promote patriotism, and even compel allegiance to 'the nation' and 'the country'. They support huge public spending on the police and the military. They even force citizens into compulsory, life-risking military service to protect their privileged trading relationships. They oppose socialized health care but support socialized warfare. We need to ask, are they simply rugged individuals, or also collectivists?

We need to say to workers who conservatives deter from supporting progressive parties by calling public services 'socialism' – 'To support conservative politics instead, while expecting 'the country' to look after you, as the MAGA people do, is a kind of socialist expectation itself. But it's one that must fail. Because conservatives' core policy is that everyone has to look out for themselves in the business system and the country – the state - shouldn't support those who can't make it on their own'. They say the unregulated business system will enable people to meet their needs and their ambitions themselves. And sometimes it does, for many. But the evidence keeps re-appearing – it often doesn't, disastrously, and you need the state to provide. The business class won't.

Taxes and Public Services isn't all one way – you need to support others too, which can mean collective spending via taxes that doesn't always benefit you directly. There's plusses and minuses. But you can't rely on conservative business people for support. You need to ally with fellow-citizens who actually believe in mutual support, and support and vote for progressive parties.

Just blaming conservatives and the business class for diverting people from voting for public support and services like this does us no good. They are just taking the trouble to look out for themselves in their brutal, uncaring system and if that involves diverting us that's what they'll do. It's our own fault for not taking the trouble to understand the system and not demolishing conservatism's feeble, self-contradicting politics.

The Individual and 'Identities'

Now, look at individualism and the 'Identities' that people readily adopt, and conservatives promote.

They too are in opposition to the supposedly basic notion of individualism. They are collective. And though they are low-content, everyone makes a lot of them. Far more than they do of class, properly defined by how people earn a living or make money.

Identities divert us from seeing the business class and blaming them and their system. So note again, we need to see how we relate to business people, public service managers and each other; to see that we are the worker class; to see it as our main identity; and to talk to each other about it, as fellow-workers and mature citizens. And to organize, at work and in politics, and not let them distract and disarm us with low-content 'identities', some that unite us falsely with them; others that divide us against each other.

The National Identity

Conservatives' trumpeting of individualism is nonsense. It's demolished by the reality of how collectively our societies function, with our intensely collective economic systems, with the job deal that enables employers to treat fellow-countrymen and women terribly, and with their unstable business system regularly hurting many innocent people, enterprising individuals and small business people too. But many believe in the individualist view, and to believe conservatives, so do they.

Yet they and most people adopt this opposite, collectivist view – the national 'we'. Conservatives use the 'we' to mask class identities, theirs and ours. We don't see their dominant role, workers drop their class identity in favour of it. Progressive parties lose their independence from the business class in it.

People go along with it because it gives them feelings of significance, belonging and security, from being (weakly) part of so strong an institution as a country and being one of so many other people – being 'British', 'Americans', Russians, French, and the rest. You don't have to do anything like organize, at work or in politics. Just by living in a country you get to be in a big national 'we'.

Conservatives use the prestige of the nation state to draw people into national identities which mean unity with them rather than with each other in opposition to them. Independently active conservatives overwhelm people with national identities in print, radio and digital media. But again, conservatives contradict themselves with their core belief that people should manage on their own (dressed up as individual freedom) - 'it's everybody for themselves' - the well-off earn it through ability and hard work - that the less well-off are less able or are idle - that those in trouble should

not get state support - that people should be left to sink or swim.

To conservatives 'the nation' only really means the laws and institutions that enable business people to use, misuse, discard and abandon fellow-country(w)men. Their opposition to public services and welfare means they don't believe 'the country' should support its citizens! Conservative parties talk big about 'the nation' but won't support the people who are the nation. In the US, not even with their health.

Workers who vote for them self-harm. We should ask - Is 'the nation' the institutions or is it the people? Is this one society? What will conservatives and business people do for their fellow-nationals? What will they give up for them? Will they be enterprising, not just for their own greed but for the good of fellow-nationals, for only fair rewards? Will they agree their fellow-citizens shouldn't have to trade with them for work in unfair deals? Shouldn't they have the right to organise in unions (and be recognized by employers)?

If we vote in governments to regulate the business class, make them act decently towards fellow-nationals (and the planet), will they accept it? Or will they, if regulated, disinvest, as conservatives always threaten?

With how little conservatives and business people care for their compatriots, nationality only really means people reside in the same system of politics and law. There are practical things to it, rights and obligations you are entitled to, or had better abide by, but anything more depends on what fellow-citizens actually do with and for each other.

To accommodate to how people do suffer from their brutality, conservatives do promise citizens their needs will be met, but by the business system. It doesn't do that of course and they have to promise the state will support. But they do no more to support fellow-countrymen and women than the minimum they can get away with.

People who are workers - the great majority - shouldn't share with the business class and conservatives the national identity they laughably claim to believe in and should downplay the whole notion of 'the country' and a 'we' with them.

'The Nation' Hides The Business Class

But most people, and progressive parties, ignore this clear conflict of interests between the business

class and the worker class and do go along with 'the nation' , incorporating the system, as the framework for politics. So when the business system fails, people can't even see the business class or take them on about its failings. The business system is accepted as the natural way of things, as part of the national framework. The business class blend into it and recede from view.

So conservative business class activists are able to divert us into blaming an abstraction, 'the economy'. Progressive parties and voters also accept the business system and go along with conservative's talk of problems being with 'the economy' and affecting all of 'us', and limit themselves to disputing which party has the greater competence to 'manage' the economy. Which they don't in fact do.

'The Nation' Blames Outsiders

So, having hidden themselves and their system from responsibility, conservative business class media and politicians use the national mindset to further divert 'Britons', 'Americans' etc. into thinking that their problems are caused not by them but by 'outsiders'. Falling in with the powerful voices of conservatives and their media and blaming outsiders is an easy option. This is people unable to tackle the people above them turning on those below them. It's punching down instead of up.

The key to tackling this is to grasp that being able to blame outsider groups depends on there being an insider group and to examine its credentials.

For outsiders to blame there's 'foreigners', people in other countries, who don't live under this system of politics and law, so are outside the national 'we'. 'Foreign competition' is blamed for job losses. But native business competitors do the same.

In the UK after the 2008 crash, many workers, instead of blaming conservative free market madness, and the Conservative government for making them pay for it with huge cuts in public services, blamed the foreigners of the European Union for their problems and thought leaving it would fix them. They supported 'taking back control' only to hand it to the Conservatives. Now, in 2024, that is being seen as the bad move it was.

And inside the country there's foreigners who people are encouraged to believe they have 'insider' entitlement over - migrant workers, refugees. Brexit voters were against Eastern European workers using EU free movement of labour to 'come here and take our jobs'. Yet they didn't blame British business people who used free movement for them and their

operations and investment to export their jobs,' often to EU countries. Anyway, migrant workers create jobs - they buy things here, so businesses don't have to go to the trouble of exporting them to them.

Also inside 'the country', conservative and populists divert people from blaming them by encouraging citizens to divide into 'insiders' and minority 'outsiders' by colour, gender or being different by personal things like sexuality. National and white - or, as in India, religious 'identities' - set people against each other instead of them.

When challenging the 'outsider' diversions don't over-debate the 'outsiders' themselves. The hostility to them depends on the insider 'we' and that's what you need to question. There's usually little content in it. We need to call out conservatives and the business class on nationalism and patriotism. Ask how much 'the country' really means to conservatives? How much do they really care about fellow-nationals? What will they pay towards the taxes needed for their fellow-citizen's health and public services, and support when they suffer from their unstable business system?

Nationalism can never work for workers simply because it leaves business people unchallenged. Conservatives will lead workers in being hostile to foreigners, and workers might vote in nationalist governments. But then what? The business class will still have power over workers, will still misuse and abandon them, obstruct them from organizing, and won't release their wealth for public services.

That's conservatives. But as well, how much does anyone white care for other white people? What do the 'we's' of colour (and nation) mean in real mutual support in getting the basics you need in life? What policies would an all-white society have to ensure fairness, security in getting life's needs, health services, and the rest?

Another Conservative Diversion –
'Them' and Conspiracy Theories

Another diversion used by populist conservatives is to point people at local and central government rather than the business class. As said, the business class dominate, and don't want to be regulated. In democracies, central and local government could be a way of the non-business class majority getting some control over them and providing some social support to make up for the mis-use of citizens at work and in wealth distribution that the business system embodies.

But they don't give citizens much power, and that is why conservative argue that everything should be done via the ballot box, because it's a remote way of getting at them. Business people claim the right to be able to do what they want and you have to understand the system to see how they should be called to account, and people don't. But local and central government to do make the promise of acting in people's interests. And much of what local and central government does can be found fault with, and the democratic connections with citizens are weak and remote. So a lot of people, not seeing the business class, are being wound up to see traffic control, necessary because we have all made millions of private decisions to run far too many cars on the road, as 'the council' or 'them' conspiring to control people. And environmental protection, clean air zones. And vaccinations. The answer? Show people the power of the business class, the ruling class, such as in cutting council funding through their conservative parties, and how that needs tackling before the council. As for the council, look into Sortition, people's assemblies, to make what they do more accountable and have more legitimacy.

Voters And The Economy, The Business System

The mainstream parties rely on business people to run the economy, the business system. Allowing them the freedoms to do that is the main policy of the conservative parties who represent them. And the centrist parties accept the business system. So, either because of wealthy business people's demands for incentives and personal riches, or because their system goes into crisis, both conservatives and centrist parties often don't deliver what they promise to voters.

Conservatives often get away with not delivering (for the majority) because of being effective at blaming other things and other people than their system, that they maintain works best left free of regulation. They are good at dividing voters and diverting them onto scapegoats. Often successfully enough to stay in government.

Centrist parties also leave the economy to be run by the business class, but don't say so, so take the blame when it goes wrong. Not being as nasty, as uncivilized, as conservatives, they don't blame minorities so they can't evade responsibility like they do. Because everybody thinks the government 'runs the country', voters blame them for the crises. E.g. after the 2008 crash caused by the finance section of the business class, Labour got blamed in the 2010 election in the UK; the Democrats in the US in 2016.

So then, when all mainstream parties fail, fringe conservatives – also supporters of the business system,

members of the ruling business class – call the main parties and the state 'the establishment' and 'the elite', charge them with letting down workers and 'the country', and pose as radical challengers to 'the establishment'. Workers, and people in general, don't see how the business system works and how the economic failures are the responsibility of the business class and the business system. Believing in the promise of 'the country' and national identity, they are pointed at the 'metropolitan elite' as people betraying their insider status. That includes those established parties who try to treat everyone fairly. And at outsider minority groups. So, many, taken in by the radical challengers, back nationalist, populist, business-class people like Trump. This is not the answer.

Class Organisation In Politics

The case has been made for people's right to organise at work. Organisation should be the base from where they represent themselves in politics too. It should be about having the sense and the right to participate in the economy and politics as mature, dignified adults with comparable power to the business class. About full citizenship.

This is a leap for many people. When conservatives even accept our right to organise unions, they say it should only be about conditions at work, that political rights are only individual, only to be exercised in place-based geographical constituencies.

And this is how most people do see political activity. That you are grouped by where you live, some of your fellow-constituents associate as political parties, the constituency parties form the national parties; and every few years you can vote for one of them.

But in place-based constituencies people have no organic connection. Being grouped just by address, without functional connections to each other, doesn't' amount to much. It is far more meaningful to base political activity on how we associate in making our living in business, the economy and work, the central, vital activities. And so are the relationships we have there, with fellow-citizens, as bosses or workers.

In the years between elections, voters, atomised, don't talk to each other much about politics or how they vote, in an organised way. Mouthing off to people you don't know on social media doesn't amount to that. And nor do they in election campaigns. And they vote secretively, individually.

But they do get, day in and day out, a huge amount of information and debate about the parties' leaders and policies from the mostly business class owned or business-system accepting media. Media businesses are run by business people, formally independent of conservative parties, who pose as independent commentators while campaigning frenziedly for conservative politics. The daily blast of conservative, business-class politics from them shapes much of political debate and influences most people's political opinions and how they vote when elections do take place. The parties themselves only contact you during the elections, and even during elections you still receive most of your information and debate from the conservative dominated media.

Conservatives and business people don't build their political strength from just being individual, atomised voters in the constituencies. They build it from being organised, collectively. Firstly in their economic roles, in businesses, at work, where they organize by class without even being in political parties. As said, this gives them great political power because governments, and the rest of us, rely upon them to organize most of the goods, services and jobs we need - they organise most of 'the economy'. Look at how national governments and local councils entice them with grants, tax breaks, planning permission, low regulation, 'flexible labour markets' (that's us being dominated by our bosses). Then, as companies and through trade associations, they fund think-tanks, contribute to conservative parties, and lobby politicians.

Then, being individually wealthy, they fund conservative parties, campaigns and candidates. But they mostly don't earn their money from their individual efforts. Their political donations are from what they make at work, from us, from our work! So they take money from us at work and use it against us in politics; then say politics is nothing to do with us in our unions, only about us as atomised individuals, once every few years, in place-based constituencies.

So, as well as their economic and financial strength, the business class get their political strength from work. The worker class majority need to do the same. But worker's organization in politics is pitiful compared to business people's. Politics is about running the country collectively but we don't do much together, aside from a few party activists at election times. We accept the limits of constituency-based politics, that atomises us, where we don't talk to each other about our shared class position, where we can't develop class politics. While all the time, between elections and during

them, we ingest business class political thinking from their media.

Like business people, workers are entitled to, and should, base their political thinking, their debate and their activity on their shared economic, work-based role, their work-based collective organisation. They should use the meaningful relationships they have with each other as union-organised fellow-workers to communicate with each other, daily, on political issues and voting choices. Political views developed there can go into the voting system expressed in constituencies.

Wherever workers organize, in unions, activists do act together politically. But it is marginalized, not getting through to inactive members and the millions who are not unionised. Just as the case for organizing together on pay and conditions at work needs to be more clearly made to workers, so does the case for using that as their main political base.

*Here are the central arguments of 'Us, Politics and The System': we need to establish, as a civil right, the right to organise as workers, and be recognized by employers; we need to **do** it, to actually organise, all across the world; and if we are not to forever flounder around weakly in the vague constituency-based relationships of the electoral system, being divided and overwhelmed by conservatives, the business class and their media, we need to use our workplace organisation as our main forum for developing our politics as the worker class.*

What To Do

Spread this or some similar understanding of the system. Urge people to use the relationships between the business class and the worker class as the framework for political thinking; and downplay the framework of 'the nation'; to base their politics on who they actually are in 'the system' - urge each other to adopt authentic identities that come from their real, active roles, especially in making a living, in working together; as blue-collar workers, white-collar workers, shop floor, office; manual, technical; teacher, lecturer; and even managers (as workers); of all nations, colours, genders, ages and personal tastes.

Business people inter-act intensely 24/7/365, in serious work-based relationships, between countries, worldwide. And they identify as business people. Convince each other of our right to do the same. Base it on the undeniable simple arithmetic of the job deal –

on how employers having many workers makes it an unacceptably unequal deal for every worker.

Urge workmates and other workers to see being a union member as normal, natural, everyday, expected. And for this relationship with each other at work to be as serious and meaningful as the one they have there with our employers. Say to each other 'Organized, you aren't alone against the boss. You get a feeling and a reality of support, security and fair treatment. You get real action to protect and improve your conditions. You get the adult dignity of being on an equal footing them.'

Urge each other to get organized, in nearly every job, section, department, workplace and trade; between almost every workplace and industry, trans-nationally, worldwide. Then do deals with business people and public service managers as near-equals.

And with politics based on class, convince each other as voters not to fall for conservative myths of individualism, opportunity, and seemingly low taxation; nor let them divert us into targeting fellow-worker 'outsiders' instead of them.

Conservatives should never get into government. With workers being such a large majority, we should always be able to vote into government strong progressive, pro-worker parties and back them to strike fair deals on worker's rights with the business class as a whole.

But basing your hopes on finding great leaders won't work. However able, they can't regulate the business class on their own. For that, we need an organised, everyday, permanent, social force that can match business people's everyday, permanent, recognized social force. That is us, organised as workers, in our unions and in our progressive parties.

Ambitious, all this? Yes. It would take many steps, taken by many millions, organizing and acting together. But it's what's needed if we are to get our world into a civilized state and to not wreck it.

We can start by getting each other to see that the system is the problem, and to talk about it. And to agree that we are entitled to and should be organizing so we can play mature, active, roles in the system.

So, Go By Facts Or By Feelings?

Returning to the issue of people not wanting to bother with all that and just go by feelings. Us, Politics and The System deals with that by giving people, for the first time, a clear explanation of the system, that anyone can understand, so they shouldn't find politics too much to think about.

But on feelings and facts –

The great majority of decent humanitarian people - progressives, liberals, trade unionists and socialists - have the strongest hand in making people feel they belong, are fairly treated, supported, secure and looked after. Conservative identities - nationalist, white, nativist - and anti-outsider politics don't offer real support. They say nothing about what they would do for people if the 'outsiders' weren't there to blame. Nothing about how relationships would be between fellow-nationals and 'whites'. Nothing about what to do about the business class's power, about jobs and incomes. Nothing about support at work, supporting each other in health, housing, education, social insurance.

And we can show

- *how the 'individual freedom' conservatives claim to offer is cover for business people's collective seizure of wealth in the work process.*
- *that real freedom is based on supporting each other, not abandonment.*
- *that shallow 'identities' can't deliver what proper organisation as workers and voters can.*

At work, strong union organisation replaces feelings of powerlessness with feelings of real support and dignity. Progressive and socialist politics and governments give genuine support and security in income, health, education, equal treatment and equal opportunity and in regulating business people.

Most people want fairness in society. Conservatism aims for unfairness, abandonment, and isolation. The fairness that progressive politics is all about is a powerful appeal to people's feelings that conservatism can't offer. And with wide, everyday organisation, we can get all this over to people, and deliver it. So though this work offers not an appeal to feelings but a thought-out factual analysis, we can do that too.

What Will It Be Like If People Do As These Writings Urge?

It will be common knowledge that business people have the central role in society and that it is because they are – by owning and organising the production of most goods, services and jobs – 'the economy'; that that makes them the most powerful group in society; that this is because they are organised (as businesses), and are granted the right to organise; that they are a class, the Business class; that they are 'the wealthy'.

It will be the common view that most of the rest, a large majority, are workers (however well-educated and paid they are); that most of the wealth the rich have is made by the work workers do for them; that workers are entitled to balance business people's power with their own.

It would be the norm, widely accepted, that they too need to be organised and are entitled to be; that almost all of them would be organised; and that as organised workers, this majority will stand up to business people and public sector employers at work, negotiating together for good conditions and pay, locally and across industrial sectors, and internationally.

It will be widely recognised that since being organised at work makes the business class most of the economy, that also gives them political power that can limit governments; that they also have conservative parties and conservative press and broadcast media promoting politics and laws that govern business and work relationships that favour them.

It will be recognised that like them, workers can use their organised relationships with each other in business, work and public services, to communicate and organise with each other on politics, independently of the business-class-owned media; that they develop their own politics and support and vote for progressive parties.

It will be recognised that most of rich people's wealth comes from paying workers less than the value of the work they do for them; that they get so well-off from that that they don't need public services and public support; that that is why they oppose taxes; that it is fair to reclaim the wealth they make from workers by taxing them to fund good public services and welfare.

Due to the majority being class-conscious as workers and aware of the difference of political interests between them and business people, and organised politically as well as at work, they will always elect progressive governments. These will regulate business people generally to make society fair and sustainable.

The Thirty Minute Read

of the two books

Us, Politics and The System and The Right To Unionise

v. 2018.6

The Essentials

Let's start with the huge gap in wealth and power between the few and the many.

Debate about the wealth gap should not centre on redistribution through taxation. It's too easy for the wealthy to claim 'their' money is being taken from them. What we need to look at and control is how they *get* excessive wealth (and power).
Most of it is gained through business activity.
Business is buying materials or services, adding value to them, and selling them.
People add that value, by working on the goods and services. The work is done by the owners or their managers, and by staff, the workforce. The bigger the business, the more the staff's work outweighs that of owners.
The value added is set by how much the owners sell the products and services for.

The owners pay the workforce less than that, less than the value they add. They keep the rest for themselves. This is Profit - the difference between what they get from selling the goods and services and what they pay the workforce for doing it.
Business people have difficulty with this view. They think the money they take in sales income is simply theirs. But if they didn't make money out of the work of the people they employ, why do they employ them? Out of philanthropy?
The owners deserve more of the value added than the workforce because of their initiative, enterprise and commitment. And they have to pay back whatever capital they invested. And they bear the risk of not being able to pay it back. But the amount they get for this is not determined by any known, agreed, fair evaluation. It could easily be but it's not. It's worked out like this ...
They use one trading relationship, with *customers,* to get the added value.
They use a different trading relationship, with *staff,* to pay them less than the value they add.

This is the employment or job relationship. A crucial relationship in society, it works like this: These are industrial societies we live in. That means large-scale work activity – call centres as well as factories. It means that in most jobs people work for an owner or a government body that has many staff. The more they have, the less they need each one. The more they have, the less they can pay any new or existing one *because they've got many others doing it already.* They don't need any *one* worker enough to put them under pressure to pay them their fair share of the added value. They don't lose much by rejecting someone applying for a job or by sacking an existing one. They can manage with the staff they've got and say "take it or leave it." The worker, on the other hand, is usually in great need of this job. It's usually their only way of making their living.

People, each subject at work to this unfair trading, need to band together, to unionise. Then say to the owner or employer "You can't now say to any one of us 'Take it or leave it because I've got many others'. If you don't bargain fairly with us, we'll all stop work and you won't have any. We will suffer, but so will you, until we come to a fair agreement."

Business people, when you discuss this view of added value and the unfairness of *They've Got Many Others* with them, can be quite intense in arguing against it and arguing for their right to hire and fire workers on their terms. (That's a conscious understatement.) They'll argue that workers who don't like what they offer them will just have to go and get a job somewhere else. This is business people blissfully ignoring the Industrial Revolution of the last 300 years, which means that most work is highly collective. So workers are at this same disadvantage in almost any other job they can go for.

One key argument they make is that these rights are justified because of them having risked capital, millions of pounds and dollars, if their business fails. In counter-argument, the bankruptcy laws allow them to evade similar amounts that they owe to suppliers.

Only ever arguing from their side, they think their enterprise and risk-taking gives them an absolute right to dominate the rest of us. Their enterprise and risk-taking is all well and good and, to a degree, fair enough. But wealth and power can't be worked out just on their side of it. It has to be also about the rights and wrongs of the relationship between themselves and workers.

They always argue their case as if the business system is made up entirely of small businesses started by involved, genuinely enterprising individuals. But much - maybe most - business activity and sequestration of value added by staff is done by large companies and corporations. Most of the sequestered added value goes to shareholders, many of whom do nothing to add value. And these people don't risk much of their capital. They spread it across funds where one business failing isn't much of a risk and the general success of others in their portfolio means they successfully get much of the value added by workers for doing nothing, at little or no risk.

And the capital risked is often from banks, not usually from someone's life savings or secured against their house. (Occasionally it is. This writer has as close friends people running at least three separate business. And one has, indeed, risked his house by borrowing against it to invest in his business. This writer is, as he writes, trying to work out how he can help him escape from this unusual and unwelcome trap.)

But they can't be allowed to base their case on the plucky small business model. Even from the smallest business upwards, and increasingly so as they get bigger, employers exploit the *They've Got Many Others* mechanism. And most of the real world is *big* business.

As for their claim to the extra wealth they get (which, in total, is stupendous) work is a generally a collective, co-operative activity. In actual cooperatives, pay is determined by democratic decisions about what each person contributes or how much their skills, maybe specialist skills, including management skills, is needed. But the wealth and power business owners get, and the power the government gets as an employer, is not set by any such fair assessment of the greater value of what they do. It is set by the crude, unequal power of having many staff and being able to do without any one of them at a time – having ***Many Others*** *- and paying them as little as they can get away with through this unacceptable mechanism.*

The *Many Others* mechanism governs a key society-wide relationship, in which fellow-citizens make their living, and that's not right. *Workers are the majority of the population. They are fellow-*

citizens in societies where there is a lot of talk about 'we' and ' us' and 'ours' and 'the country'. The work and wealth relationship has to be fairer, with more equality of power, by workers being organised enough to be equal to business owners, and the state as an employer.

People and The System

But at least business people are interested in these debates, and their enterprise does provide the jobs that the rest of us depend on to make our living.

People in general won't look at all this, about how we relate to each other and business people in politics, business, and work. They won't examine 'The System'. They complain about *what's done,* on each of the wide range of issues – the wealth gap, jobs, health, education, climate change and all the others. But they tamely accept the *relationships* that enable it.

Why is that? Are they too intimidated by the system to question it? Too self-centric to devote their attention to examining it? Too lazy to? Yet they have ravenous appetites for gathering – or googling - information all sorts of other things, and for eagerly exchanging it. They have fervid interests in consuming goods and services, in sport, music, celebrities, history, and various hobbies.

Seems like people will take an interest in anything *but* how we relate to each other in politics, business and work, the key relationships, the central issue in society. Before tackling what's *done* in politics, business and work, people need to examine, understand, and challenge these relationships, to examine and understand the arrangements we live by, *the system*.

The key problem is that business people have more power than we should allow them. They have power in politics because they are 'the economy'. What people think of as politics is subsidiary to this practical, everyday power. They get this by being *organised*, in their businesses, companies, corporations and banks. They also dominate political *debate,* because they are organised enough for some of them to own most of the media.

Everybody else can only respond to business people's everyday political power at elections held only every four or five years. And it's with just one simple vote, atomized, divided, unorganised; grouped together shallowly, by only geographical proximity, not by real everyday relationships.

Business people have more power over the rest than is right *at work* too. It's worth repeating that in industrial societies most businesses have many staff. As a worker, each individual is of only marginal use to them. They can turn down any one person for a job; or in work, not treat them right, not give them the right pay and conditions; or sack them, with little loss of output. *This* is the advantage employers have over the rest - ***They've Got Many Others***. It is an unfair, unacceptable advantage.

Public sector employers also have it over public sector workers. *The response to this unfair power is for people to organise together at work too,* to make employers deal with them fairly or risk losing all their staff when they treat people wrong, not just one.

*The unfairness of the **Many Others** mechanism to people as individuals makes the personalised case for people to organise in Trade Unions*. They need to do it universally, to make business people and public sector employers deal with them together, fairly.

This is also the proper response to business people's excess power in politics. With everybody else also organised, mostly as workers, they would not only match up to business people as everyday equals at work. They would also develop their political awareness, attitudes and organisation, to respond to business people's excessive political power.

So the solution in both politics and work is for people to organise together to match organised business people.

So What Is The System?

The common, official view of society sees the core of the system as everyone altogether as fellow-nationals and governments running the country, in everybody's best interests. Instead, we need to see everyday business and work relationships as the core of society.

These relationships grant business people a huge excess of power and wealth over the rest through unfair, unequal relationships in business and work, and also in politics. All political discussion must centre on a clear understanding of this. Currently, it doesn't.

What are these business and work relationships, the system? Everyone knows them but they are so accepted in everyday life and political debate they are almost invisible. Those who champion the system call it free markets, and free, or private, enterprise. Critics generally call it capitalism. Those terms are too remote for normal discussion. Let's talk of it with a familiar everyday term - ***the Business System*** or ***the Free-market Business System.***

Business people convince the rest that it is the only way to run society, as if it's the natural order. It's not. Throughout all of human history up to only a few hundred years ago the system was different. (Though not necessarily better).

The essentials are said to be that anyone - any *individual* - can set up in business to sell products or services; and any other *individual* is free to do the same, in competition with them. And any *individual* is free to buy products and services from any *individual* seller. Every *individual* is free to decide the price they will sell at and the price they will buy at.

Free markets favour business owners over everybody else, the

majority, most of whom are workers. Business people want, and get, a lot of freedom to do as they please. They use it to dominate and abuse fellow-citizen workers. They claim they deserve their position because of their enterprise. But they are over-entitled. They benefit far more than their enterprise merits. And the amount they take, and the way they treat people, challenges the notion of a national identity shared with them.

This is the basic system. Politics is built upon it, not the other way round. Politics is the arena for struggle between those who want to retain it – it's what *conservatives* seek to conserve – and those who want to make it meet the needs of the many rather than the few.

Business people established the business system before industrialisation and before the rest got the vote (in most countries). And since then this occasional, simple, atomised vote does not give the mass of people the power to challenge and regulate it – regulate *them* - in everybody's interests.

Many people do argue this, that business people are allowed too much freedom. These people want, at least, basic public services to be provided by society as a whole, not by business people for the wrong reasons. They also want business people's activity in general to be regulated in some ways by society as a whole, for the benefit of society as a whole. For example, consumer protection regulations restrict business people's unfair power over people as consumers. And environmental protection seeks to restrict their crazy activities.

Business people fiercely oppose such regulation. They argue it is state intrusion into individual freedom, which they claim free markets provide. But regulation can be seen simply as democratic decisions, made by and for all citizens.

They are under-regulated and allowed great freedom because they are 'the economy' and won't perform unless indulged. And they often get themselves into government, as their conservative parties, and de-regulate themselves.

Most of business people's arguments do not make sense and do not match reality. They speak of free markets as consisting of ' individuals being free to achieve on their own'. Yet they actually operate as organised groups - ***as companies* and *corporations***. In them they have intense *collective* relationships with many staff. They expect staff to be 'team players', don't they? That's modern industrial work and business.

And they relate to their many staff through 'the labour market'. ***The usual debates about markets don't matter much compared to the need for debate about this one***. It governs how *citizens* are bought and sold in making their living. And the work relationship between them and business people is key to production, profit, wealth and capital. Yet in politics and everyday political talk, this market in people – for most people, the market in *themselves* when making their living - is not

analysed, debated and disputed like the others are.

The labour market is the main everyday flaw in the system. It has the majority of the population, most citizens, near to helpless in earning their living. It also leaves them weak in politics. *They are weak in earning their living because the employer can either not employ, or mistreat, or sack, any one of them on their own, because they have the others.* ***This, again, is the 'They've Got Many Others' relationship. This flaw in the system needs challenging before any of the others can be.*** The response to *Many Others* is for those who are workers – most people - to organise together too.

When they are not, and people sell themselves as ***true*** *individuals, as is common*, they sell to business owners and state employers who not only have many of them but *who are not themselves individuals*. They are *organisations.* Yet for workers to also organise and act together is condemned, obstructed, and heavily regulated.

In our highly inter-active, collective, industrialised economies, justifying the free-market business system as individual freedom is plain absurd. And it is run against the interests of the majority. Yet, as voters, many are bewitched by this myth of individual freedom. So too are progressive commentators and politicians, who don't challenge it due to their own, and the electorate's, bewitchment. We need to expose it as a myth, an absurd view of modern mass society, and challenge it.

Business people are the main advocates of free enterprise, the business system. But they are a small minority. The majority are workers, deeply disadvantaged by the system. So business people, to get into government, build political alliances and parties by showcasing the apparent freedom it offers to others. Firstly, to small business people. Then, small traders. (They do often benefit from free markets. But they also often don't.) Then, workers also are persuaded that it's the only game in town and they should only aspire to advance as managers or as well-educated, skilled workers.

Across this range of making your living conservative politicians cast a holy mantle - 'the freedom to achieve through your own efforts'. It's 'The American Dream.' It is the key myth that sustains conservative politics.

(Although this business - or capitalist - system grants business people grossly unfair power over the majority of their fellow-citizens, allow that it has merits. It encourages enterprise, it encourages people to provide the goods, services and jobs we need. We do rely upon business people for this. Through competition, it encourages consumer choice and greater efficiency. It enables the accumulation of capital that can be invested in ever-greater efficiencies in production and better goods and services.)

But on top of the unfairness at work, it leaves the obviously collective world of work and business – the economy – to be run by people with fiercely individual aims, who believe in looking after just themselves, and everybody else can sink or swim. (Though they do organise themselves, politically, as conservatives, to protect the business system that enable this.)

And, under-managed, their business system is unstable and prone to crisis. And it allows them to so relentlessly pursue 'a return on capital' that they produce senseless growth that is destroying humanity's ability to live on this planet.

A classic argument made for the free-market business system is that, despite its inequality, anybody can 'make it'. They don't have to be subservient workers. Anybody can start a business and, if any good, become successful. This is true. But it's an irrelevant argument. We live in industrial societies. Many people working together, with costly equipment, is generally more efficient. Larger-scale production out-performs smaller-scale and takes most of the trade. In the UK, the supermarkets versus the corner shop is a recent example. And 'the chains'. We can't all be small traders. The majority of people *have* to work industrially, for employers who have many of them.

So It doesn't matter if anyone can 'make it'. That just means that we all have a chance to be the few people mistreating the majority. We need to challenge and regulate this mistreatment. Each of us having the chance be one of those doing it is no solution.

The argument that 'anyone can make it' can *seem* to be justified by there being many small businesses. By acting as a buffer zone between the worker majority and big businesses, they provide cover for, they legitimise, the big and corporate business class, that lets them portray their excess power as justified reward for self-made-man, little-person-made-good enterprise. It masks them, obstructs us from identifying them as a ruling class, challenging and regulating them. But they *are* the ruling class.

Us, Politics and The System argues for people to organise as workers, within the business system. There is a more ambitious approach. It is to transform the key relationships into Socialism. But when most people don't even see the case against the free-market business system's relationships as it is now, nor the case for being free to correct its unfairness, there's little prospect of them making that greater leap. Nor of us developing the mature approach to civilised living with each other that Socialism would require.

Instead, we need to start where we are and spread a sound understanding of what's wrong with relationships in the present system. And organise to be equal in it to business people, at work and in politics.

Germany is of interest. This writer hasn't especially studied how they do things there and it's not a perfect society. But the evidence is fairly

clear and undisputed that business owners and organised workers in Germany relate in a far more equal and productive way than most other countries.

That leads to the criticism the business system's advocates made of 'unions' in the UK in the 1970's, and still make. We were more organised and combative than we'd ever been (and so society was fairer, more equal than it is has ever been.) However there was a short-sightedness - we usually fought just for our conditions without taking the whole business into account. That's partly because owners had always treated us as outsiders to the business, and we did well enough just to organise to defend our conditions in it.

Having acknowledged that, trade unionists *did* attempt to participate positively, with alternative business plans. But employers were even less interested than us in working collaboratively. In 1980, the biggest UK car company, British Leyland, famously fired the senior union convenor for publishing a union business plan for the company.

Referring back to the start – we live in countries that assume we are all together as citizens, and that government's primary purpose is to secure the common good. Check the preamble to the US Constitution. But it's not done, because business people prefer this system in which they dominate and the rest sink or swim. The way to change that is not to hope, from atomised weakness, for progressive governments or Presidents. It is to organise, practically, daily, to be equal to employers at work; and from that base, to build political alliances that give progressive governments the support they need to regulate business owners on behalf of the majority. Then we can enjoy civilised, stable societies.

Next – The Right To Unionise - The Three-page Read

The next three pages have an independent, internally coherent (hopefully!) existence as a stand-alone, short version of 'The Right To Unionise' but covers some points also made elsewhere, in other contexts.

The Right To Unionise – The Three-page Read

Organising In Unions Can Mean Becoming Mature Citizens

Organising is firstly about bargaining at work. That's on the next page. But in politics, we do poorly at getting governments that will work for the majority. It's because the worker majority operate weakly in politics compared to business people and their conservative parties. But being organised as workers can be the base for matching up to them in politics as well as at work. It can mean becoming 'players' in the economy and politics, like they and the state are, becoming mature, involved citizens.

Business people's economic *and* political power from being organised overwhelms what's available to the rest simply through voting. As well as controlling people at work, business people, organised in running businesses, corporations and banks, are effective players in the economy *and* politics, every day, not just at election times. Their business activity *is* 'the economy'. From this everyday, practical organisation, and from their effective assertion of business rights through their conservative parties, they dominate political life. Through their media, they impress on workers self-defeating views of how the world works and mass acceptance of business class rights and politics.

To respond to this, we are encouraged to see the vote and parliament as the height of social and political organisation. But while the vote is important, it's not enough, unorganised against their organisation, to get governments that will run society for the majority.

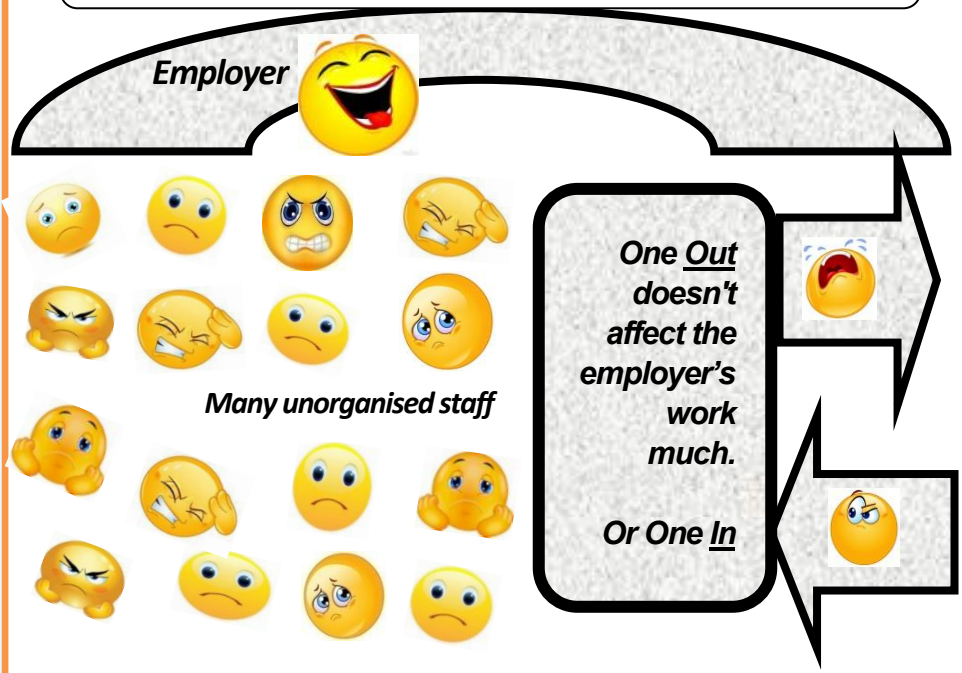
Seen as a form of collective organisation and action, the voting process is too flimsy to enable other people to challenge the business class. So many people are not organised in their meaningful economic role that they can't develop their own collective politics. To stand up for themselves against business people's workplace *and* political power, the great majority of the population - workers – need better organisation than just being atomised voters in occasional elections. Organisation at work is the obvious base, extending to political influence. Just as business people's political base is *their* organisation at work, *as* businesses.

They are organized. All workers should be.
And confidently so. Don't you think?

Note - *'The Right To Unionise'* shows how the entitlement to organise comes from the individual's needs and the consequent need to associate with each other. It isn't based on the rights of 'the unions'.

The Right To Unionise and *Us, Politics and The System* argue all this fully.

Weak as a worker because Employers have Many Others – The personal case for the Right To Unionise

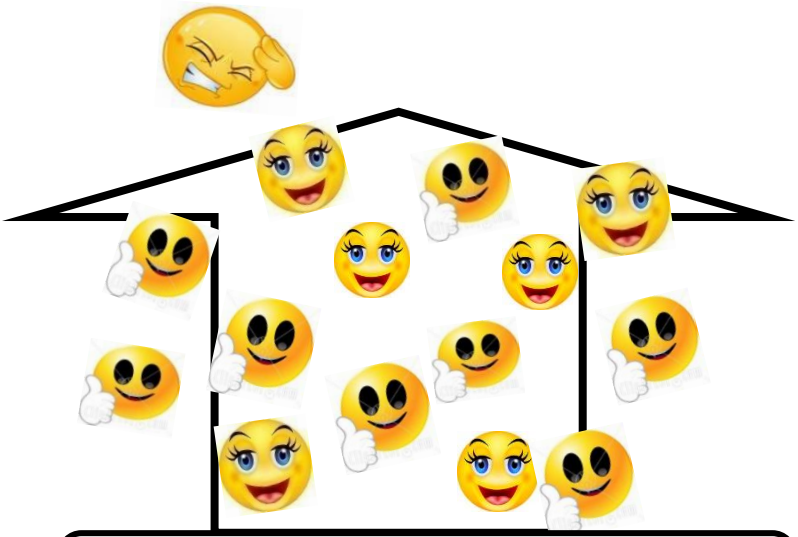


Work relationships as shown explain why people are not equal to employers. It's because 'They've Got Many Others'. 'Many Others' gives us the personal and the political Right To Organise.

Most employers have other staff as well as you. With many others working they can easily carry on their operation without any particular one. That's what gives them power over you and every other worker when starting, managing and sacking you.. (It's not because they can replace you from the unemployed.)

This unequal bargaining in earning your living is unfair; and has never been approved by anyone. It's just an unplanned feature of industrial society. That is, most work is collective and to earn a living most people *have* to work for an employer who has many other staff. You can't avoid it. Industrialism works better than small trading. Only a minority can be business owners. Most will be workers, inevitably. The chance to be an owner only changes *who* are the owners. There will always be *some.* And without staff being organised they will have unfair power over them. And for the same reason, so will the state as an employer.

It's not right for people - the majority – to have to make their living on such unequal, unfair terms. It is the biggest issue in politics. To relate fairly to business people and public sector employers fellow-citizens have to organise together at work – and be entitled to.



People Organised at Work – Negotiating and Acting Together

For society to be fair and civilised, the majority, workers, have the absolute right to correct the unfairness in work relationships by organising together, in unions. It should be expected, normal, recognised in everyday life, respectable, uncontroversial.

The heart of it is union recognition – getting employers to accept and agree that staff negotiate their terms and conditions with them as an organised body, with recognised workplace representatives.

It has to include denying fellow-workers the 'freedom' to work on less than union conditions. It is just obviously essential - it stops employers from forcing us into bargaining each other downwards. You see it happening. It's for every worker's good.

It has to include requiring fellow-workers to join the rest of the staff in a union. When taking a job you accept coming under the owner's and manager's authority. You should accept some from your fellow-workers. It's not against anyone's authentic freedom. It means everyone *gains* freedom from the employer. And gains the freedom to act – to have workmates who might drag your conditions downwards under yours and the others democratic authority.

It has to include helping and persuading workers in other companies to also work only on union conditions for the trade. Because in free markets for, as consumers we generally buy the lowest cost alternative. So the worst employers get the trade, or force yours to worsen your conditions in order to compete. You see it happening, most obviously with globalisation, but also within countries. For that reason workers need to win union organisation and union conditions internationally and domestically.

A Key Argument About Politics And The System - Who Gets How Much Power and Wealth?

Business people and their parties make a standard set of justifications for them having their power and wealth. The main ones are that they are enterprising and risk losing money they put into the business.

That at least recognises the centrality of business activity. Because often obscuring it is the belief that property and property rights are the central issue in wealth creation and retention. They aren't. The central issue is making money in running a business, employing people, and taking a portion of the value of the work they do. Property rights are significant, but not as much.

Property was the central issue when owning land was the main way of making money (often from rent rather than personal farming activity) and land was the key, fixed resource. But in industrialism, the productive property, like premises and machinery, can be and are repeatedly assembled, used and discarded. ***The key mechanism now is the use of people's labour to make money.*** (And the money for the premises, machinery and materials usually comes from earlier rounds of the use of labour.)

There is weight in the argument that business people are entitled to more power and wealth because of their enterprise and investment. They do deserve more than the rest of us for the effort they put into running businesses. But *how much* more power and wealth is the issue. What they make from using everybody else in their business activity is not determined by a fair measure of their enterprise and risk-taking. It probably could be. But it isn't. It's determined by the unfair ***Many Others* r**elationship that operates in the majority of jobs. ***And that is the key issue in the whole of politics and work.***

The justification because of risk-taking is over-stated. It does happen, and is most acceptable where small business people genuinely put their own personal money into the business. But – researched figures would be interesting – most invested money is borrowed from the banks or comes from profits made from a previous cycle of paying workers less than the value of what they've done. And so, if it is lost, it wasn't rightly theirs in the first place. And they limit their liability by use of the bankruptcy procedure. The people who really carry the risk are suppliers who don't get paid when the business goes bankrupt.

Some rich people get there from their own efforts. These include film actors, successful musicians, and top footballers. Good luck to them, they don't do it by exploiting others. Leaving them aside, most wealth *is* made by exploiting the many, using the *Many Others* mechanism. This explanation, and the way it justifies strong, universal union organisation, is at the heart of the challenge to the free-market business system.

Not far behind ***Many Others*** *in importance* is the question of whether it is sensible to leave the running of what is in fact a highly collective economy in their hands, when their declared main objective is to look after only themselves (presented, approvingly, as the individual freedom to achieve.)

They Show 'The Nation' To Be Nonsense

In response to our attempts, in the interest of balance and fairness in society, to regulate them and the wealth they take from everybody else's work, they refuse to perform. They argue that to invest and be enterprising they need the incentive of fabulous wealth.

To make their conservative parties electable, they mask all this with expressions of concern for everybody. And by presenting the policies that benefit mainly them – such as free markets - as being for everybody's good. They take care to say a lot about doing things for everybody; but what they actually do in government is look after themselves and their class.

Yet, through their conservative parties, they vigorously promote the notion of everybody feeling intense unity with them as fellow-nationals. 'The nation', 'the national interest'. With their great selfishness and their callous and sometimes brutal behaviour to fellow-nationals, this is absurd. Particularly at work, where they often treat adult fellow-citizens almost like children.

Although fervent belief in national identities shared with them is absurd, it is highly successful. That's because, against all the talk of individualism, people need to feel they belong to large, successful social organisations*. 'The Nation' is the most significant. Business people use it to obscure their oppressive role and to direct attention at outsiders for the cause of problems.

(* Like fervent support of football teams, whose fans have no real, participatory collective identity. And belief in flimsy local identities - 'where you're from' - as big self-defining things – when again there's no real collective identity. 'Where you're at' is what really matters.)

Organising sufficiently to really challenge them is not about to happen very soon. But in political debate we can challenge them on the absurdity of sharing national identity with them. And we can argue that to each other, as fellow-workers, and that class identity, organised, mature class identity, is the proper alternative.

And it has an immediate use in tackling divisive racism. Anti-racist argument normally focuses on the unfairness of discriminating against 'outsider' groups. Much more useful is to demolish the belief in the *insider* group that those discriminating feel they belong to, and are vigorously encouraged to by conservatives. That is, to show how seeing themselves as British, American, French, German, Russian, Brasilian and so on, fervently as one with self-centred and oppressive business people and conservatives, is self-demeaning and self-defeating.

But What About People?

All that is all very well but what about all those many millions, who have their own, different ideas? Many of them are dismayingly short-sighted and lacking in analysis.

In the UK the Labour party gets the blame for not getting themselves into government. That's not fair. It can't be just their responsibility. It's everyone's. The solution for Labour and other progressives isn't to give up on what you believe you should do in order to get elected. It is to campaign to influence and change the electorate's views and voting practices, like as follows.

Although it's argued here that the voting system is highly inadequate, people don't use it at all wisely. Flimsy as it is, people could in fact easily use it to stop conservative parties, the anti-majority parties, getting into government. But many people get taken in by self-defeating arguments and take self-defeating positions.

Many get taken in by the view that voting is a choice between parties or leaders simply on their competence to 'lead the country' or manage the economy. Being competent is of course a good idea. But most of the people who get to be party leaders are much the same competence wise. Before considering their competence there's something about them of greater importance – in government, what do they aim to do? Conservative parties aim to look after and represent the rich, business people. Social democratic parties aim to look after everybody. You'd be best advised to vote for parties that aim to look after you rather than those that aim to do you in, before considering competence.

And many people give up on, say, the Labour Party (in the UK) because of what they do or don't do on just one issue. There's no sense in that if it means letting in parties that do even more things

you don't like or are not in your interests. The point is, with just one vote, you have to put up with a lot of things a party does, vote for the least bad alternative party, and look to develop better control of them and influence over them issue by issue.

One of the biggest examples is diverted voting. That's people deciding their vote on an issue that, whatever the ins and outs of the issue, is a relatively minor issue. Anti-outsider voting is the biggest example. Compared to the role of business people in the economy, the health service and other issues, immigrants or asylum seekers are not issues worth swaying your vote over. They just aren't. But the business-owned media pound away at these issues every day and convince people that they are. People are swayed to vote anti-outsider because, either from lack of understanding of how central business people are to the system, or through being unable to see how to challenge them, they turn on the people presented as being less deserving than even themselves.

In broader, futile protest, people vote for parties other than the one they usually support or that best represents them for one with no chance of winning the seat or getting into government. So what these people are doing, for the sake of making a futile gesture, is letting the Tories in.

It might make sense if it's part of a long-term plan to establish this other party – say the Greens or one of the 'real labour ' groups who put up candidates. But in the short-term, in any one election, it's plain daft. And if it is long-term, then rather than just make the futile protest vote, they need to put some effort into building that party in between elections, particularly in constituencies where it might get a chance of winning the seat.

Then …. dohh!! there's not voting at all. Thirty or more per cent of voters in the UK don't. Since conservatives aren't daft enough to pass up this simple chance to help get governments that will work for them, it's reasonable to suppose that most non-voters are people who Labour tries to look after and who should vote for them. The usual reason given for not voting is 'They (the parties) are all the same.' That is simply refusing to think. Really, it's quite easy to see differences and also to see which party is best for them. While the parties do all present themselves as aiming to do the same thing - run the country well – there is that key fact that conservative parties actually exist to look after the rich and business people, and Labour genuinely wants to look after all (although hampered by their deference to business people.)

Some progressives even argue that not voting will somehow make politicians be more progressive. I'm sure conservatives love these people.

Another problem is that people don't talk openly enough to each other about voting. They allow all the debate to take place in the media. The social media may be changing that, and maybe that is its key new

role in politics. Underpinning the lack of proper discussion between people at election time, there's the old saying and practice 'Don't talk about politics or religion' in pubs and at social occasions. That is so self-defeating. We (*WE*) have got to be able to do that if we are going to achieve civilised society.

All in all, what people should do is vote, and vote for the least-bad party that can win their constituency or win a national majority. Doing anything else simply lets in the worst. (Currently, and usually, the Tories). There's more to after that, of course. But do that.

The business issue is one where it really is Labour to blame and not so much everybody else. Being clear about the relationship between business people and the rest is an absolute requirement in politics, and it's not, it's fudged. Basically, we and Labour should say about business people, and to them, 'Ok, you play a key role. But you need regulating, in the cause of fairness and the greater good. If you really believe in the national identity as you claim to, you'll accept regulation with good grace. If you don't, shut up about the 'we' of national identity. And we'll regulate you anyway, as far as we can manage to without you taking your ball home.'

The practices just analysed show up Labour's major traditional flaw - they have not been a campaigning party. They only, mainly, approach people through the media-dominated debates and mainly only at election time. They only have weak and indeed hostile connections to the mass of the electorate. So at elections they find them all over the place politically, with a range of anti-Labour attitudes. (This is changing in 2018, the party is campaigning regularly.)

So Labour has floundered around trying to present themselves as competent and pro-business. And anti-immigration and not soft on people on benefits. At the same time, they try to present themselves to those who want an actual Labour party, but who give up on them as they become alternative Tories.

In August 2015, during the Labour leadership election, there is a revealing debate about whether to choose a leader who is 'electable' or one who truly represents what Labour is supposed to be about – representing the majority of non-business people, workers. *The 'electable' arguments says* 'There's no point in being purist if the electorate won't vote you in'. That's true enough. But there's also, as we have seen, not such a great point being elected if you do it only as Tories-lite.

The answer – seek to change the political thinking of many of the electorate. Campaign, argue. It's no use just presenting progressive policies to 'the electorate' as they are.

The connections are weak but they can be built. As argued earlier, that is a key point about workers being organised - not just for decent working conditions but also to be 'players' in the economy and in politics. Organised workers have many opportunities to talk to each politically, and they have families, friends and neighbours and people in the bars pubs and clubs.

It might seem difficult to campaign to change people but if you don't even attempt it, you never will. Business people manage it, with their use their media to divert and disillusion people. So much so that, in 2015 in the UK, they managed to get themselves into government, and govern viciously, against the interests of most of the electorate, with the votes of only about 25% of them.

The start point and end point of campaigning to change people's politics is the argument that business people dominate; that they do it by being organised; and that to deal with them on an equal basis, at work and in politics, everybody else also needs to be organised.

This writer regularly argues this with people
and EVERYBODY goes 'Ah hah! Yes – that's right'.

A short piece, loose on the website, squeezed in here also

Work & Politics As Football

In your relationship with employers over wages and conditions, it's like you're playing football against the most assertive and possibly the most capable people around.

They are organised as a team, as companies and public bodies. They wear the same kit. They pass the ball to each other.

You and your workmates don't play as a team. You don't wear the same kit and don't pass the ball to each other.
You each play them as individuals, on your own.

So you usually lose to them.
You resent it but accept it as the way things are.

Most people like you think the same and don't notice or speak about the significance of them being organised and yourselves not being. Or that that to match up to their organisation you need to organise with each other too.

The people playing against you as a team have the rules of the game on their side from way back. One of the rules is that you can't play as a team without a struggle.

They know the rules and take an interest in them. Most people like you don't, thinking they are just the way the world is.

If you want to change the rules, they concede to you a remote regulatory political forum - parliament, congress.

Being organised and committed to their own best interests, they campaign for it better than you do.
You don't, much, so don't get much of what you want from it.

Their representatives in the forum argue that them beating you is actually in your interests - that they know best and wealth will trickle down to you from them, so you're better off voting for their people. Some of you are taken in by that.

They tell you your problems are from your representatives in the forum letting you down. Some of you are taken in by that.

Or they say your problem is that the remote forum itself is a self-serving elite. So, many give up on the forum. Or turn to alternative big-talking representatives put up by the other team.

To play them at this game, you and your workmates need to unionise at work; and, in politics, at least talk to each other as people on the same side. You have to play as a team, like they do.

The Micro-Summary + The Other Three Summaries

Formerly The Summary Charts

The Micro-Summary *- crammed in here in small text Oct 20-25 for record purposes.*

The Basics of Politics Chart *- Shows how the majority need to base their politics on their class role as a worker, just like business people base their politics, and their dominating political strength, on theirs as business people.*

The Right To Unionise Chart *- The key issue is that business people are organised and the majority, workers, are mostly not; or need to be more confident about their right to be organised and to take action, like business people are.*

It's Our Money Not Theirs *- Shows how the huge inequality in wealth comes from the business class using their power over workers to pay less than the value of the work they do and keep the difference, while presenting it as just reward for their own contribution.*

The Micro-Summary - Most of what people say about politics is unconnected to the basic operation of society. They think political parties and governments 'run the country'. They don't. Crucially, they don't run the business and work activity in free markets where we produce goods and services to make a living (and some get wealthy). That's the point of free markets.

In free markets, the business system develops to most production being in a few large operations - high-volume production (industrial methods), being more efficient, drives out small operations. And this leads to a small class of business people running most of the economy, not government. That way, they get power over everyone else, and great wealth.

Their conservative parties say that's fair because everybody can trade as individuals and start and run a business. That gives political cover to how business people take wealth from the system not as individuals but, with those large operations and workforces, as companies, collectively. It's through collectivism that they get wealthy, and it's more from what everyone else does than what they do.

The key mechanism in them getting the wealth is that large, industrialised operations have large workforces, with many staff. With large workforces they can keep production going without any particular worker. So they can bargain harshly with them (us) one at a time. And get wealthy by charging more for our work than they pay us.

They are a class – the business class. Because they run the economy, they have political power regardless of the parties. In politics they - as a class, including all sizes of business - protect their power to control everybody else in the work process. They make that the dominant political view through their conservative media and parties.

So, contrary to how people talk, political parties don't simply 'run the country'. The parties come from people in the system organising to protect their role and interests in it. And ordinary people don't get what they want because the business class put more into that and into conservative politics than they put into progressive politics.

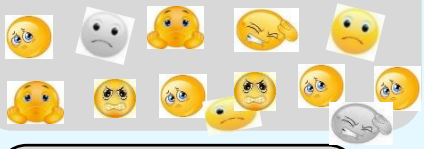
We need to put our relationships with the business class – at work, and in taxation and the need for public services – at the centre of political debate, and only then discuss the parties.

We need a clear view of the basic political and trading relationships as a foundation for politics and for people getting what they are entitled to. The works that make up 'Us, Politics and The System' provide it.

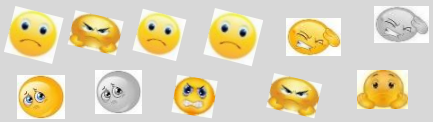
Politics - The Basics – In Chart Form

Workers – the majority of people - are mostly atomised, not organised.
Business people, their conservative media and parties - are organised.

Workers at work - under-organised



Workers as voters – under-organised



At work, business people and public employers – *organised as businesses and public bodies* - ***control unorganised workers.***

In Politics – *little inter-action between workers in their shared public role as voters. Low level of collective, progressive, political views and voting. Civilised politics and parties not strong enough. Overwhelmed, even in government.*

The Media – mostly Business-owned
Confuse people
Divert people
Divide people

Business people *are (most of)* ***the economy,*** *so they automatically dominate* ***governments.***
They have a clear view of ***business people's class rights.***
They dominate political debate.
Conservative parties *represent them.*

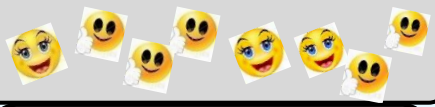
How To Fix Things

Workers Unionised At Work

Confidently Organised, Dealing with Employers as one

Equal at work to business owners & public service managers And also now 'players' with them in the economy

Voting As Workers in Politics



The worker majority, organised together as workers, in unions, developing their own independent, collective, civilised politics.

Resistant to the business class media

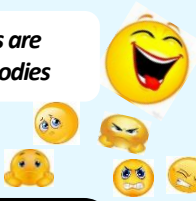
Civilised, easily electable progressive parties, able to govern confidently with mass voter support, and regulate the business class.

Business people – the business ***class*** *–*
their ***conservative parties***
and their conservative ***media***

The Right To Unionise

Business people and public employers are <u>organised</u> - <u>as</u> businesses and public bodies

Most people aren't organised as workers



One Starting

Un-unionised, each worker is weak <u>because the employer has many others</u> to do the work and doesn't much need any <u>one</u> more..... or <u>one</u> less

One Sacked

The Right – the <u>Entitlement</u> - To Unionise

*Most work is industrialised. Most employers have many staff. They can get by without any **<u>one</u>** leaving, any **<u>one</u>** new, or any **<u>one</u>** they sack, with **<u>the rest</u>** working. Each is weak in the job deal with their employer **<u>not because the employer can replace them from the unemployed but because even without them they still have all the others</u>**. And, with most workforces ununionized, there's the same unfair relationship in other jobs they might go to instead.*

People shouldn't have to make their living on such unfair terms. It operates against everybody - whatever gender, colour, or nationality. They have the right to bargain with business people and public sector managers as equals, by unionising.

Get Strength, Equality and Dignity
At Work By Being Organised,
Negotiate As One, As Equals,
With Business Owners
And Public Service Managers

Employers Are Organised - <u>Workers</u> Should Be

Such power for employers from 'having many others' is not on. It just grows out of industrialising, it was never decided. People are entitled to respond by unionising. It's about more than pay and conditions. By getting equal to managers you become adults at work, with dignity, not minions. Being in a trade union should be normal, accepted, expected and respectable in everyday life and politics.

*Business people dominate the majority in politics as well as work. Their **work-based, trade-based** organisation makes them 'the economy'. Because of that they dictate to progressive governments. And by owning most of the media they dominate political debate. And they often get to **be** the government, through their conservative parties. Yet they say we should not be involved in politics through our unions, just work and working conditions! No – we, the great majority, workers, are entitled to use **our** trade organisation too, to become 'players' in the economy, alongside business people and the state, and to build **our** political parties and power.*

People need to convince each other of their right to unionise – and do it.

The 'It's Our Wealth Not Theirs' Chart
Wealth comes from work adding value .....

Business people spend on premises, materials and equipment.
They spend some more on staff to work on the materials.

The work produces goods or services of greater value than what is spent.
That's the point of most business and work activity.

The greater value is set by what they are sold for.
What that is above the original spending is added value.

The equipment and materials can't increase their value themselves.
The work done on them does that.

The owners might do some hands-on work, but the bigger the business, the more it's the staff who do most of the work.

The business owners pay staff less than the value their work adds; they charge more for it than they pay them. After paying interest on loans etc, they pocket the rest and call it theirs.

That's how they make profits. That's what profits are.

They can do it because of the gross inequality in the job relationship –
see The Entitlement to Unionise, later.

The business economics view is different. *They say business people buy 'the factors of production' - premises, equipment, materials and labour – that's 'costs' - and add the higher, sale price on top as a separate thing. They say profit is from this, from what they add on top.*

This is absurd, fatuous, ridiculous. Although there is some trading where sharp operators play the market to make money by just buying and selling things, the non-human 'factors of production' are (mostly) bought in at the going market price and don't increase their own value. The work done on them by staff is what does that.

When they sell at the 'added-on' price*, or value, what are they selling? It's still the workforce's original work. Even the 'adding-on' is done by workers, in the Accounts or Sales departments! Likewise, if they buy equipment and materials for less than the usual market price, and claim that is where some of the profit comes from, that's the work of the workers in Buying.*

No - the money is made by the work done on materials, by adding value to them - turning metal and other materials into cars, maybe - and selling them. The staff do that.

They buy the staff's work at one price and sell it at another. If they don't make money out of the staff's work, why do they employ them? To create jobs, as they sometimes claim to be doing? If they sold their work at cost it might be believable.

Is their own work worth all of the added value?

Business people and the rich claim they are entitled to the added value, seen as profit, because of their enterprise, their taking of responsibility, their managerial talents, the risk of losing money, and their hard work.

They deserve more, but they overdo it. *Again, the bigger the business, in our high-volume-production economies, the more the staff do most of the work.*

What the business class take for their role – which is central, yes – isn't from some reasonable assessment. It's from the unfair trading relationship they have with the staff in the job deal – see the brief 'The Entitlement To Unionise' on the last page – to take an unjustifiable share of the added value for their own role.
On the 'risk-taking' factor – it can be high for small businesses but big businesses generally cover losses with successes. And they all use bankruptcy to evade their debts, meaning suppliers and banks carry much of the risk. And most of the capital they 'risk' was skimmed off workers' earlier work, as shown. And if they do go bust, they just join the rest of us as workers.

They claim to be 'self-made' but usually, we staff create most of the value - Jeff Bezos doesn't shift many parcels.

Higher ***taxes*** *on them is just workers reclaiming what's theirs originally.*
Note 1.- income tax is only part of general taxation. The rich pay less national insurance, the same VAT as everyone else, and capital gains at only standard rate. In the UK. Note 2 - some make money from buying and selling not-easily-manufactured resources like property and even currencies. This is just gaming the system. The work process is still the root source of wealth.
But their wealth can also be regulated at source, by staff being able to bargain effectively for their fair share. The next panel shows why and how.

Fair Trade – The Entitlement To Unionise

Most work is industrialised. *So most employers have many staff.* ***With the rest working****, they can get by without any* ***one*** *leaving, any* ***one*** *new, or any* ***one*** *they sack. Each is weak in the job deal they make with their employer* ***not because they can replace them from the unemployed but because without them they still have all the others.***

People shouldn't have to make their living on such unfair terms. *That's anybody, whatever colour, gender, or nationality. They all have the right to bargain with business people and public sector managers as equals,* ***by unionising.***

Note – 'Go somewhere else if you don't like it'? With most work industrialised and most workforces not unionized, there's the same unfair relationship in jobs wherever you go.

Note - the issue explained here is the allocation of money earned by the business between the owners and all of the staff. That's the big issue and is explained by the process 'they've got many of you', explained above and in the chart 'The Right To Unionise'.

Within a workforce, there's the secondary question of how much each worker contributes and should get. That's not for here but it is the very stuff of unionisation, where unions negotiate comprehensive Agreements with employers on Pay grades. They are referred to in the full work 'Us, Politics and The System',
https://9945a8ca-5ec8-4cc3-90a4-2e676d906269.filesusr.com/ugd/e8d212_0a9681c8625541de80011c7a2709b401.pdf
at pages 100, 136, and, in 'The Rich – Are They Worth The Expense?' at page 328.

This version is in landscape view and columns, laid out as if for printing as A5 booklets. Although it wouldn't print both sides back-to-back correctly like this.

Talking With Voters
for progressive parties

The following small-group activity aims to help progressive parties to support members in promoting the party's politics, independently of conservative mass media, through the natural relationships they have with voters,

Members' everyday relationships with family, friends, neighbours, workmates, acquaintances are the best route for communicating with voters. Several hundred thousand members talking politics with people they have 'organic' relationships with, in everyday conversation, is more natural and substantive than the usual forms of communication and campaigning.

It will overcome the alienation of the campaigning relationship of 'we Labour, you voter' and replace it with many scenarios where members and the many voters they know discuss politics *as* fellow-voters, equals, all members of that majority who need progressive governments. It will help develop us as a society to where it becomes the norm for citizens to discuss politics together.

The present situations in the UK, the USA and many other countries show that we *must* talk politics to each other as fellow-citizens and voters. The accompanying paper 'How To Talk Politics With Each Other' explains how to do it.

The small-group activity is drawn from the writer's experience as a trade union tutor (now retired), where group methods were the norm, were effective, and greatly enjoyed by union reps and members.

Activity: Talking With Voters

(Initially written offered to the Labour Party in the UK)

Aims: To exchange experience of talking about politics
To develop skills and confidence in talking with voters
To develop best practice

Setting Up Your Group:

A facilitator will organise you into small groups.
(*See Notes for Facilitators,* following)

<u>In your group</u> get someone to start and informally chair your discussion – like, keep it to one speaker at a time; indicate who that person is; allow everybody the chance to speak once before anybody speaks twice.

Choose someone else to take notes of key points, maybe on this sheet, on card provided by the facilitator, or on a smart device.

Group Task:

1. **Ask members in turn about discussions they've had, or have observed, about politics, voting and the party**.

(*see Notes for Facilitators1* * *overleaf*)

Ask:

Who was the discussion with? (no need for names)

Where? (tea break, party, across the garden wall etc?).

What was the political issue?

How did the discussion start?

What did they say? What did you say?

How did it develop?

Did it seem the other person's views
were influenced by the mass media?

What do they do for a living? (if you know)

How did it end?

2. **Finish the group work** by noting down **ideas on best practice** in talking with voters, or on the issues discussed, or just in general.

3. **Full-branch Report Back from each group**, and general discussion. Aim to take reports on one topic from each group in turn.

   We may not get to every group but all will have had the benefit of their own group's work and will get the benefit of the whole report back.

A Resource document or takeaway for this activity titled ***How To Talk Politics With Each Other'*** is provided here immediately after this activity (when printed for use in meetings) and is permanently available at *www.uspoliticsandthesystem.org*

See Notes for Facilitators2* overleaf *

Notes for Facilitators1*

... with neighbours, relatives, friends; workmates, fellow-union members; people met while campaigning or door-knocking; discussions seen or taken part in on social media, things read in 'the papers' or seen on TV, etc.

Some members might not be willing to talk with voters on their own, or not be in a position to. The activity is to support those who can, and all can contribute to that. Members (and senior officers of the party!) should be reassured that this is just about talking with voters as fellow-voters, not as official spokespersons of the party. And they need not feel they have to strenuously defend every party policy. The aim is simply to talk with people as fellow-voters but also as a Labour member; and for the party in this way to have grass-roots dialogue with voters, independently of the conservative-dominated media.

Notes for Facilitators2 *

Setting Up The Groups
The following points aim to help set up the small groups. They might seem complicated but are worth doing to avoid time-wasting confusion and to achieve good discussions.

1. **Have pieces of card** ready cut for numbering groups and for group note takers.

2. Ideally, set up groups mixed by experience of activism, age, life roles, gender, ethnicity etc. But for early sessions with a particular group, or for just one session at a Branch meeting, just **mixing people up randomly**, as suggested below, is probably all that is achievable.

3. **The preferred scenario is to have tables laid out**, enough for groups of four (divide expected numbers attending by four).

   Place a number on each table. Groups as big as five or six might have to do, though people then tend to sub-divide into twos or threes.

4. **The 'at-the-door' method** - As members come in, explain that we are having discussion groups and are mixing people up so they can meet and discuss with those they don't know. At the door, allocate them to tables like this: first person to table 1, next to table 2, and so on.

5. **The 'moving people around' method** –
If there are tables, but not numbered and people are sat at them already, go round and number the tables. Then explain, apologise and seek agreement for moving them and their coats and bags. (Good luck!) Then go to each table and allocate the members there to table 1, then 2, then 3 etc.

   This method is a bind, avoided by pre-numbering and allocation at the door as in method **4.** But still worth it.

6. **The 'chairs' method** –
If there are no tables, with members just on chairs, this might seem a bind too but again, is worth it: have numbered cards for the number of groups (of four) you will get from the numbers you are expecting.
So if you expect twenty, you'll need cards numbered 1 to 5.
If there's more, scraps of paper, numbered, will do.

   Go along the chairs giving number 1 to the first person, 2 to the second, and so on up to 5. Then carry on along telling the next five people they are in group 1, 2,3, 4 or 5, then 1,2,3,4 or 5 again and so on round the room. Then get people to assemble in their groups around the person with their numbered card. The card holder for Group 1 might stay where they are, the one for Group 2 will need to move along, the other card holders will find a suitable spot, maybe Group 5 will be near the end of the seating. The person with the number is just an assembly point, not necessarily group chair.

How To Talk Politics With Each Other

This is written about politics in the UK but it applies to most countries because the basics of economics and politics, and people, are the same worldwide. It is about ordinary citizens talking to each other about politics, and about progressive parties such as the Labour party in the UK, and elsewhere, talking with voters.

People think politics is about politicians and what they do, but it's far more than that, it's about us running society together. And we need to talk to each other more about how we do it, as fellow-citizens. That we don't do it enough was shown by, in Britain, the referendum on Europe and the Brexit saga that followed; and by voters (as a whole) electing into government conservative parties that are hostile to most people's interests. Likewise in America with the support for Trump.

In Britain, the Labour Party (I am a member) only really talk to voters just before elections, going round the streets knocking on doors asking people who they intend to vote for. That's like approaching strangers and asking about their sex lives! And when the media, mostly owned by conservative business people, have been on at people every day, year in, year out, distracting and mis-directing them, talking to them at election time is too little, too late.

By-Pass Their Media

To overcome the conservative media's demonisation of progressive policies, parties and leaders, we need to by-pass them, by building our own independent communications. Running newspapers and mass broadcast media like they can afford to run – and take the trouble to run - seem to be beyond our current confidence and level of organisation. But no matter. ***Talking about politics is best, most naturally done, by people talking to fellow-citizens they have relationships with, in normal everyday conversation. Talking to each other 'organically'***. That can be our mass media. So let's look at how to do it.

(Social media is not addressed here, yet. But talking with people you have real, definite, maybe organisational

relationships with, is far more useful than social media. There we just fling snappy opinions at each other, usually as strangers, and only in our role as voters who only act together, if you can call it that, at occasional elections. The thrust of all these writings is that we need to associate in definite social organisations in which we can act with real social and political power.)

How To Talk To Each Other About Politics

You can talk politics with people all the time. You don't have to push it. You probably shouldn't. No need for 'Let's talk politics.' Though maybe sometimes. 'Let's have a heated debate!' But things come up naturally in conversation, at work with fellow-workers; with friends, relatives, neighbours; in pubs and bars. Most people are actually keen to voice their political opinions.

You just have to develop the skill of noticing how people say things that have political meaning while often appearing to think they haven't, that open the possibility for political debate, and be prepared to broaden it into a proper political discussion. Like, 'Aren't these pavements bad' can lead into how Conservative governments slashed council funding; how they always want to do that anyway; but how from 2010 they used as cover for doing it what Labour had to spend to solve the financial crash of 2008; how that was caused by Labour having conceded too much to conservative free market ideas and allowed conservative bankers to cause the crisis; and how Labour took the blame - for being conservative!

You'll need to deal with '*Don't talk politics in the pub or club, or at family events'.* Get over that with 'Look, we're fellow-citizens. Look at the divisions in Britain over the EU referendum. Look at the election of Trump in the USA. Voting isn't just an individual act - politics and how we vote, or don't vote, affects us all together. How I vote affects you; how you vote affects me'. It's a collective decision. And as well as being fellow-citizens we are fellow-workers (mostly), maybe actual workmates, relatives, friends, neighbours. To be adult citizens, we

have to be able to talk to each other about how the society we all live in works and what we do about it.'

It's essential to lead discussions away from politics as being just about what each person *thinks*. What they think is, in the end, important, as it guides their actions. But what we think has to be based on the world outside our heads. Always base political discussion on the reality of *the system*, the economy, production, sales, work, jobs and wealth, and their place in it. It makes discussions much easier and more productive.

And the single most important, normally overlooked feature of politics and the system is that business people dominate it. We need to point out to each other how they are 'the economy', since they control production, sales, work and jobs; that they dominate politics for that reason; and they control of much of the media too. And to say that we need to see them as a class - the business class. And to see that Conservative parties represent them. In discussions you can move outwards from these central facts but keep referring back to them. Not all of the business class are hateful capitalists, some are alright (discuss) but, as a minimum to all agree on, we have to recognise the central role they play in society, talk about it, and include it any political discussions we have.

When talking about politics it would be best to agree some basics about how to conduct ourselves

- When getting onto political territory during an ordinary conversation, instead of spontaneously firing out a few random and contrary political opinions at each other then rapidly reverting to safer ground such as sport and consumer issues, agree to discuss politics properly for a few minutes.
- Agree that 'OK, it often does get heated. But let's agree to try to make an effort to keep calm!'
- Maybe agree early on, as a basic framework, that we all want society to be fair and we are discussing how to make it work fairly. That whatever different political opinions we have, we are talking as decent people, in favour of people treating each other decently. And possibly as humanitarians or liberals (people in favour of treating others properly).

- That, as well as being fellow-citizens, we are (mostly) each of us a worker, with common interests based on that.

Try for evenly balanced debate, allow each other to speak. (A tricky skill, this, judging when to interrupt in order to have your say, and when not to!) Don't let disagreements dominate - look for things you can agree on.

Finish with 'Well, have we agreed on anything?' And, since there will be some things you don't agree on - there always are - 'Can we go away agreeing to think about what we've each said?' People - me and you included - do change their mind later that way.

If you are regularly too keen to open up political discussion, you might need to deal with 'There s/he goes again, on about politics'. Deal with that, again, with the *need* for us to do it, and how, if we don't, we are not fully mature, adult citizens.

For any who say *'I'm not interested in politics'* say 'Well politics is interested in you. It affects your life hugely. Here's how…..'

There's an attitude that denies political debate and agreement where people say *'Well you think that, I think this. Everybody has their own opinion.*' This is true, we do all have our own opinions. But we also all live and operate in the same system, the same society. Leaving it at everybody having their own opinion might be Ok for survivalists living in the woods. But probably not, even for them.

The whole point of democracy is to come to agreed decisions on how to run the society we share. We can't do this with every last detail - we have to leave a lot to legislators, governments, public service managers, judges and more. But in principle that's what we aim to do.

And democratic politics requires us to combine our varying opinions into coherent public policy, on a wide range of issues. Human society is mostly run not by individuals but by those who organise together and

organisations can't function with everybody pleasing themselves. You won't do very well as a football team unless you agree on what is happening – agree the facts – and what to do together. At work, bosses don't say 'Yeah, just please yourselves what you do, whatever.' They more or less dictate facts and actions, from everything to do with the actual task to even how you dress. Do the military just let all their troops have their own view? Then there's the law - the whole point of the law is to determine who is 'right' in how we behave towards each other.

Denying political discussion with 'everybody has their own opinion' doesn't *elevate* individual opinions, it downgrades them. Because if they are all left at being different, the opinion-holders actually lose their right to have a say. Because for opinions and votes to have effect, some significant number of people have to discuss, agree, and pool their views into coherent ideas. It's what the conservative media does, raising some issues and downplaying others, setting the political agenda. It's what the political parties do. And single-issue campaign groups. They devise proposals and policies, that the remaining people can vote on. So the effect of 'everybody has their opinion', if universal, would make it impossible even to draw up anything for us to vote on. Those saying 'Everybody has their own opinion' and 'If I ruled the world' makes them ineffectual followers of those who organise collective platforms, who realise that to have any real say you have to do the hard work of agreeing things with each other.

There *are* things that are pretty much people's own business. But not work, politics and law. They are collaborative and collective. Most things in public life are done by some form of common purpose, by agreement on facts and actions, collectively. It may sometimes be imposed by autocrats, but preferably by various degrees of democracy.

It has been said here 'Don't let discussion be limited to what the person you are talking to thinks, or whatever political label they have attached to them'. Instead, raise the external actuality of their lives, their place in the system. Anchor the discussion on their actual role in it. Ask how they make their living. Most will be workers. This writer declines

to be labelled as 'left', which bases things on my opinions. I identify by my role in the system, as a worker, on my being working class, a fact that comes before my attitudes and political opinions and actions.

Conservatives stress 'the individual'. A lot of people go along with that and say '*I just look after No. 1'.* Some indeed can seem to get by OK like that. But they are inevitably affected by the overall state of the society they live in. And they usually have relatives, friends, neighbours and workmates. What about them?

And the majority can't get by simply by 'Looking after No. 1'. The main response to both points is 'We live very inter-dependently. Much of society is collective. Especially work, which, with high-volume production of goods and service (industrialism) in big organisations, is *intensely* collective'. So ask also about theirs and their relatives, friends, neighbours and workmate's place in the system. Ask how a particular political policy affects not just them but these other people close to them. And about how *they* vote or don't vote affects *you*. Acknowledge that of course they are entitled to their opinions but couch discussion of voting intentions to also include 'Well look, if you vote for or allow the conservatives in, you are doing harm to me, your relatives, friends, neighbours, workmates, and your fellow-citizens in general'.

Feelings Not Facts?

Another attitude to challenge is *people going by feelings* instead of facts, policies and debate. Going by feelings is actually declining to exercise your right to have your say. You can't have a credible opinion on most political issues without some consideration of facts and options. Going by feelings means handing that right over to some politician, many of whom deliberately only appeal to your feelings, with extravagant rhetoric assuring you they'll look after you but with little real content, just invoking fear, hate, belonging, security, hope or change.

What should we say to fellow-voters who say they just go by feelings? Maybe this - 'Well we do function with feelings, it can't be all about facts and reasoning. But don't you think the two should go together? Don't use feelings as an excuse for not weighing things up properly. It just doesn't make sense, if you really want to get what you want. But what are your feelings? Let's talk about them then.'

Values

Another approach might be to ask about their social values. *How caring should we be to others*? Do they agree we should aim for *fairness* in society? (That's not the same thing as *equality)*. What do they think we should expect from each other as citizens? How much should we be able to depend upon each other? What do they think of the term 'solidarity'? What do they think of *'It's everybody for themselves'?*

And of 'People should be able to keep what they've earned'. The key response to this big conservative argument is to say 'Well let's look at how they get it.' Most of the rich's wealth is made from other people's work. From ours, in fact.

Who We Vote For

And we need to be open with each other about who we vote for. In the UK, voting originally needed to be by secret ballot because landlords would evict you or employers sack you if you didn't vote for their candidate. And it still does need to be by secret ballot, as far as employers and the state not knowing how you vote. But between ourselves, equal citizens who aren't going to intimidate each other, we should be more open with each other in conversation about how we vote, and why.

In summary - we need to talk to each other, and organise together, as citizens and as workers, and work towards mass, mature, involved citizenship.

It's Not About Leaders - It's About Parties

The media, and many ordinary people, treat politics as if it's all about the party leaders. Almost all media coverage of politics is about how leaders do or don't hold sway over their party; their prospects for winning elections; their qualities and shortcomings as possible or actual Prime Ministers. This is ridiculous. For party members and voters who place all their

hopes in whoever is leader, it's 'Messiah' politics. It's immature. Messiah politics demeans those many who are active in their parties.

Leaders are important but their key qualities shouldn't be as one-person policy-makers and decision-makers. In a proper democracy, we all matter. On policy-making, parties have many members and activists, and policies are decided by thorough democratic processes. Major decisions that come up unexpectedly should be made by collective party leadership, not one person. The leader's key qualities are being able to bring together and hold together coalitions of views, in cabinets, in Parliaments and in the party membership as a whole.

Expecting so much from leaders is doomed to failure anyway. It's foolish to expect them to be all-wise. They can't be. So in talking to people about politics, argue against people just going on about the qualities and failings of potential prime ministers or presidents. Or just saying they 'like' one more than another. There's more to any party than the attributes of just one person. *Argue instead for supporting parties and policies rather than leaders.*

And the media and many people place on the leader all the responsibility for getting voters to vote for the party. But that's not only the leader's job - it's every member's job. And they can do it better than the leader. Whoever is leader doesn't know the relatives, friends, neighbours, workmates of several hundred thousand members. They do, and they are the best people to talk politics with them.

Taking Responsibility

One reason people pay so much attention to the leader is that they give up trying to make sense of politics themselves and take the easy option of 'Leave it to somebody else', i.e. one leader or another.

This is because we don't have a clear, commonly-held understanding of *the system*. Most importantly, of the fact that business people, the business class, dominate it, and how their overblown belief in their own

qualities and rights is the root cause of most of our problems. It's not really difficult to understand and talk about politics when you locate discussion in terms of this central political issue – that business people, the business class, have the most power in society; that most people are workers, the worker class; that business people get power through being organised; that in response the rest need to organise too, mainly as workers (and are entitled to).

Us, Politics and The System, a free download from the website ***www.uspoliticsandthesystem.org*** is a resource for this.

As said, we do need leaders. But the over-emphasis on them is a condemnation of our democracy. We should work towards a thorough, involved democracy, with widespread involvement of mature, rational citizens, acting together all through society. I've seen it done in the trade union movement. Political meetings needn't be boring if discussions are organised with small groups that allow everyone to speak. See the small group activity *Talking With Voters* that goes with this paper.

Persuading Fellow-citizens To Vote Effectively

People give reasons for how they vote or why they don't, that don't make sense. Here are the main ones, and some responses:

- *'I'm not voting for them because of (a single issue)'.*

Where people feel so strongly about one party on one issue that they don't want to vote for them, *prompt them to weigh up what the other parties are saying on that issue too.* Prime example – after Tony Blair's war on Iraq, many normally Labour voters stopped voting Labour. But that only, eventually, helped to allow the Conservatives into government. Yet they, and Parliament as a whole, had backed Blair on this war. And Blair and New Labour were, of course, infinitely better than the Conservatives on domestic issues.

You don't usually get a vote on one issue and you shouldn't vote according to only one issue. There are many issues and each party has differing policies on each of them. You normally have to vote for *packages* of policies*. You need to decide on the best or least bad package.*

Whatever you think of the parties, whatever their leaders or candidates have done or not done, *once you get to the vote, to the actual list of candidates, to the ballot paper, one must be the least bad* and you are surely better off with them in government than a worse one. So, in Britain, it means, even when Labour governments don't do as much as you'd like them too, Labour is always the best option for most people. Most citizens should never let the Conservatives in. The same applies in the US - the Democrats may not do enough but are the obvious better option for the majority than the Republicans.

- *Some will say they are voting for a minor party as a 'protest vote' against what progressive or social democratic parties have done or not done. Usually, it's because they've not been progressive enough.*

In the UK, protest voters see it as teaching Labour a lesson but they damage themselves as much as Labour. The minor party usually has no chance of winning so the protest vote just splits the progressive vote and allows the Conservatives – usually the worst option - to win the seat and get into government with, usually, less than 40% of the vote while the combined progressive vote is regularly in the 50% to 60% range.

Where people are committed to the small party and want to build it long term, it might make sense. But at any particular election, if their party has no chance of winning, all they often achieve is to allow the worst in. What the minority party should do is make tactical decisions about how supporters should vote in each election, to get the best or least-bad party or candidate in. But they are generally in too simplistically positive a mindset about their chances to do that. So then it's up to *voters themselves* to take a cool look at what is possible in any current election and vote for the party that is (a) actually able to win the seat and (b) is nearest to meeting their needs. If protest voters want to build the minor party in the long-term, throwing away their vote and letting the Conservatives in is not the way. They need to build that party in between elections, protest voting is an unlikely way to do it.

- *Many people say their vote makes no difference.* Well, yes, for everyone, it's rare for votes to be so tight that their vote appears to be a deciding vote. But they do add up, don't they?
- *Some don't vote at all, saying 'They're all the same' or 'They're all as bad as each other'.* In the UK, about 30% of those entitled to vote usually don't. And for all the fuss about elections for President in the USA, only about 50% vote. It's a serious problem for progressive parties. It's one of the reasons we usually have parties governing us who have the support of less than (a different) 30% of citizens.

Tell people who say this that the political parties are never all the same. They all disappoint in *some* way, that will be true, but they are never all the same. Saying that is just lazy.

It's a cop-out from doing any thinking. I've taken part in many union elections at all levels and it's easy to find enough difference between candidates to be able to decide on one rather than the other. It's easier still with the political parties. There's too many issues and too many policies for the parties to be the same on all of them. Too much in each parties' package for them to really match up closely over the whole range, if you just actually think about it for a few minutes. More on the nature of the main parties shortly, but argue to people who say this that they should at least *vote*, and to at least make sure the least bad and not the worst gets in.

The Parties Aren't All The Same

'They're all the same' leads to people just talking of 'them' and 'them in Parliament', and Trump calling them 'the swamp'. The media reinforce this, presenting elected representatives as a single, homogonous group - 'politicians'. It happened with Brexit in the UK, where people railed against 'Them in Parliament' or 'Politicians' for not *'sorting it out'*. This is lazy thinking. It's pretty obvious that elected politicians have varying objectives, so you can't talk of them as a homogenous body that you can expect to 'just get on with it'. In his work *'Us, Politics and The System*' this writer shows how you can get a clear view of the differences in politics by basing it on our relationships in the system, at work, in business, in

the economy. But even leaving that aside, just watching the nail-biting Brexit debates in Parliament, it was plain that the Conservatives are mostly an arrogant, entitled, unpleasant bunch, wealthy business people representing wealthy business people. There's a few with some human decency but not many. And it was plain that Labour MP's are mostly caring, well-intentioned people, even with internal disagreements about how to tackle the conservatives and the business class and the many voters under their influence.

Governing Is Not Just Managerial

In Britain the Labour Party loses votes and elections because the conservative 'newspapers' convince people that they are *not competent to manage the economy*. It's a myth – see *Labour Is Fit To Govern* at page 315 of *Us, Politics and The System*. *But we need to point out to people that there's more to governing than competence anyway (important though it is).*

One result of seeing choice of parties as being just about competence is people voting for a party simply because they are unhappy with the incumbent government. They do this because the present situation is unsatisfactory (it always will be, to some extent.) So they'll say '*Let's give the other lot a try*'. They'll vote just for *'change'*.

But few people *really* evaluate a government's competence, and certainly not those who just vote for change. They take the simplistic option to just try something different because they don't have a clear, holistic view of the system and the parties.

But There's Intentions Too

More importantly - the competence charge against Labour rests on the assumption that all the parties aim to govern for everyone. That there is a key task, managing the economy and that it is a neutral skill. So the choice is presented as just being about managerial ability. But although competence is obviously important, first ask people to look at *what are a party's intentions anyway?*

What do they try to do, what are they for, who are they for?

When people say 'they're all the same' what they really mean is 'they're all a disappointment'. But to think 'they are all the same' you must believe they all intend to do right by everybody. As said, that's not true, and we need to make it clear in discussions with fellow-voters.

Conservatives claim they intend to do what's best for everybody. That they get away with that claim is quite an achievement. They don't. They aim to manage the country for the people they represent – business people - the business *class* - and rich people. And to do just enough for some of the rest – managers, some high-earning workers – to get enough votes to win elections.

But it's our fault they get away with this ridiculous pose, for not talking enough ourselves to all those people who get political news and opinions from conservative media, that present conservative parties as well-intentioned, effective managers and also set the agenda for broadcast comment and the media generally. They talk to voters day in and day out and influence them deeply, such as diverting enough of them into blaming outsiders for problems to take election-swinging votes away from progressive parties (who don't blame outsiders.) And they undermine Labour's and progressive party's overall credibility with voters.

The Conservatives shouldn't ever be a *disappointment.* Why expect anything of them but policies largely hostile to the worker majority? They box clever with some policies that appeal to or benefit some workers. But their main aims are clear on the big issues – their fierce support for 'free markets' which essentially means 'freedom for the business class to get rich from everybody else's work', and their opposition to us matching up to their organised strength by ourselves organising together, in unions. And they oppose public services and support. Workers need public services because of how the business class mistreat and exploit them at work. But conservatives and their class – the business class - can afford to buy what they need themselves so don't want to pay taxes for public provision (except for the police and the military to defend their property and system, domestically

and around the world.) They make a show of supporting public services because most of us *do* need and want them and they know they won't get into government without concealing their true attitudes. But look at what they do on public services, not at what they say.

You can observe how they go about looking after their interests and admire the effort they put into achieving dominance in society, and realise it's our own fault, the rest, most voters, for not matching up to them, for not talking to each other properly about politics, for not educating and organising each other enough to show them up.

Updating this piece in May 2025, ***Reform*** are the alternative conservative party, with the same basic objective, to represent business class interests, just even nastier.

The Labour party genuinely aims to do the best they can for the majority. More on that below. But to get that through to people we first need to get them to see the key features of society – that business people dominate it; that it's because, as businesses, they are most of the economy; that this gives them power in politics even before they are active in political parties; to get them seen as *a class.* Having done that we can show people that most of 'the press', who position themselves as unaffiliated commentators, are actually independent conservatives, business people, working to influence politics and voters in the interests of business people. Only by spreading that basic understanding can we can pull people out of the influence of the conservative media and show how, in various ways, they consciously divert people from blaming the business class and their free-market business system for our problems. Then we can put *our* case clearly.

The Labour Party *can disappoint* because of a persistent problem it has never, so far, resolved - how much to regulate and tax the wealthy and business people for the benefit of the worker majority. The left in the party wants to offer policies that require that, and to

do it. But the centrists notice that not enough workers will vote for these policies. (That includes those who don't even vote.) So instead, they cobble together less ambitious policies that they hope enough centrist workers will vote for that Labour actually wins elections and gets into government. But then those policies eventually mean disappointing many workers, who don't vote Labour next time, maybe 'trying one of the others'.

The last time before this that we got a Labour government, it was after centrists led by Tony Blair took note of how, during 18 years of Conservative government, 1979 to 1997, many workers allowed or even assisted the Conservatives to win elections on pro-business, anti-worker, anti-union, anti-public services programmes. So to win votes from such workers and win elections the Blairites decided to become, as New Labour, another pro-business party. (That's what endorsing free markets really means). They hoped to still be able to improve public services and welfare, and did. The party as a whole went along with this, conceding to the business class and their media-propagated political arguments, in order to win the votes of better-off, conservative-minded workers and others who accepted their anti-union, and anti-public spending arguments.

It worked, to a degree, allowing New Labour to get elected and improve public services. But it failed in the end because the 'free market' policy left the economy to be steered by the most greedy, reckless, socially irresponsible members of the business class, the bankers, and they caused the crash of 2008. Labour let itself get blamed for that and lost the next election on grounds of incompetence and excessive public spending. As said earlier, all Labour had done was concede to a core conservative economic policy, that seemed to be necessary to get the votes of better-off workers, and the excess public spending was just what they had to spend to rescue the economy from the mis-behaviour of the financial leaders of the business class. It was absurd, and a good example of how awful we are at communicating with voters, and the consequences. A similar accommodation to conservative-influenced voters is happening now, in 2025, with damaging consequences.

But the concession to conservative policies is not only the party's fault. We voters obstruct Labour in what it can do for workers. Not enough of us vote for them on manifestos that would regulate business people and conservatives and govern for the majority. The party is limited in how radical a programme it can offer to workers when many are not as radical as even the centrists in the party.

Labour centrists feel, correctly, that they don't have the support to put forward policies that most members, left, centre and others, know are right, so they cast about for modest policies that might win elections. But when they do, these policies inevitably don't deliver enough for the mass of people.

But however disappointing some might find Labour governments, as a party they simply are better than the Conservatives. Unlike them, they aren't *intentionally* against 'ordinary working people' - workers – and public services. So the parties are *not* all the same.

To state this crucial point again – although there is a lack of conviction in the Labour party that causes bitter, ugly division between the left and the centrists and leads to policies and actions when in government that disappoint workers and voters generally, it is only a reflection of the politics of the whole electorate, including those who are workers. This, the politics of the electorate, needs tackling so that they can be offered, and will vote for, policies and government that won't disappoint them.

The left need to recognise that you can't just put up radical policies at election time: that you have to have thorough, constant dialogue with many millions of voters, through our own connections, to convince them of these policies.

The centrists need to recognise that devising a mish-mash of moderate policies hoping to get votes from voters who are doubtful about stronger policies means people saying they don't know what Labour stands for, not offering what you know is needed, and not doing enough in government to sustain support.

The whole party has to campaign continually with voters and change those voters' minds*. Then, left and centre can share a measured assessment of how radical the party's programme can be, to win an election, based on how much constant campaigning has brought how many voters to more progressive views and voting intentions.*

And this is not solely Labour's job*. It's up to us, the many millions of voters, to talk to each other more and persuade each other to vote Labour and commit to still doing so when they promise more determined policies and action – centrist voters. And even when they don't – left-wingers.*

And, again, we - ordinary people, voters, activists, and progressive parties – urgently need to by-pass the conservative mass media. It doesn't look likely we'll set up our own, progressive, mass media any time soon*. But we can talk to each other directly, consistently, thoroughly, every day, as fellow-citizens and (mostly) fellow-workers. The Labour Party particularly needs to talk to voters independently of the anti-Labour media. That's what the activity Talking With Voters is for, to provide encouragement and support for members doing that.*

The Lib Dems are a party of small business people, managers and professionals, with a rural base. They too are pro-business-class and don't intend to do anything for us as workers. They just claim to be able to run the country more effectively and campaign opportunistically on personal rights and single issues.

The Power Of The Business Class

All the main parties can seem the same because they all defer to the business class. As said, they own most of the economy. You could say, and they do, that through their enterprise they are 'the economy'. They are people with a strong sense of their own self-importance, confident and determined. They can and do make sure that governments, of whatever party supposedly 'in power', give them most of what they demand. Progressive parties conceding to them is seen as deferring to the business *system* (free markets) but it's the business *class's* system. It's them who benefit from it

far more than the majority. Its them who argue and fight for it, fiercely, determinedly. It is actually conceding to *them*.

One of their main promotional points is that 'free markets' allow individual freedom. That's a myth. The economy is actually, observably, hugely collective, particularly the businesses that they own and organise and we work for.

Conceding to the business class isn't a problem for the *Conservatives.* They *are* (the most politically-active members of) the business class, organised into a political party to represent them *as* a class. For *Labour* it is a problem. They have to either challenge the business class or work with them. How Labour governments handle them, try to get them to behave themselves, act more sociably, is the biggest policy issue they face.

So the parties are not, as some say, 'all the same' - the Conservatives are from the business class and represent their interests. Reform are an alternative, even nastier, business class party. Labour tries to do better for the masses but defers to the business class's power and are unwilling to challenge the business-class 'newspapers' influence on how people think and vote. The Lib Dems are small business and management class.

Again, we need to frame our evaluation of the parties, our attitudes to them, and our political discussions, in terms of the system. Whenever I talk to people about politics and the political parties and government, I declare early on that I am working class. (I'm moving to saying 'a worker' because people limit 'working class' to meaning just less qualified workers on lower incomes.) So why, despite Labour not achieving as much as workers might want, why would I or them vote instead for *anti*-worker parties? Any problems workers have with Labour letting them down or not doing enough aren't solved by turning to parties who are *enthusiastically* anti-worker. The thing to do with Labour is to vote them in as the best option - the least bad if you

want - the nearest to being a party for workers, and then to support and influence them to do more.

Again, the bigger need is for all of us, *as ordinary citizens, workers and voters, to talk to each other more about politics and persuade each other to vote for parties genuinely on our side (Labour in the UK, the Democrats in the USA, and similar elsewhere.) And to talk to each other and develop ourselves as an electorate that will not, as at present, hold back those parties from presenting more progressive policies, but support them in doing that and vote them in as more progressive governments.*

And to defend ourselves and improve our conditions with more than just progressive governments but with thorough union organisation at work and in politics.

There's another mis-conception about parties that we need to clear up with voters. After Labour lost the December 2019 election to the Conservatives the media, commentators and even Labour leaders themselves accused Labour of letting voters down and even demanded Labour apologise to voters. This is treating the parties as if they are public services or businesses that other people can make demands on. But, unless actually in government, they are not public services. And they are not businesses that people, as consumers, have given money to and can make demands on about quality of goods and services.

We are voters too. We are a voluntary association of those several hundred thousand voters who care enough about the conditions in their own lives and those of other voters to organise and put forward policies and candidates to improve them. They are Labour members like me, and active trade unionists, and others affiliated to the party. We join the party, pay money in, go to meetings, committees and conferences, discuss and vote on the policies we think best for ourselves and the many, and who from amongst us we should put forward as leaders, and as candidates for elections.

Most of our fellow-voters don't take the trouble to do all this. They leave us to do the graft of knocking our heads together to work out policy, with a lot of dissatisfaction

buried in compromise on the way, then expect us to meet their every little individual whim and concern. Now although we do need, for our own good and, we think, theirs, to convince them that the policies, candidates and leaders we choose are the best on offer, it is not a *duty* we owe them. It's more that *they,* as fellow-citizens, owe us a duty to get involved, maybe join the party and do what we do - compromise with each other on many issues to put together the best political offer we can, and the best available, and offer it to the electorate.

But sometimes members are so fervent about their own views that they ignore what other voters will make of it. In the 2019 election campaign, you (and I) might have thought a re-run of the Brexit Referendum was appropriate. But there were maybe four million other probable-Labour voters who'd voted for Brexit and for whom it was the biggest issue and a real vote-swinger. So unless you could go out and convince them you were just inviting defeat.

But these things are for members to discuss with each other. We owe no duty to non-members. Although we do need to communicate with them, and them with us, day in, day out. Not as a service supplier though, but as fellow-citizens and fellow-voters.

We let the media embarrass us when we lose elections by asking if we think voters are wrong and would we prefer to choose another electorate? First though, reject the media's simplistic question - there is no homogonous 'the electorate.' An awful lot of people vote Labour. The problem is with a minority, who are mostly workers, who are disillusioned and don't vote; another minority who would be better off with us but are taken in by conservative arguments, especially like the one that the EU was the main problem, when in fact it is the conservatives themselves who are. Add to those minorities the business class minority who really do benefit from conservative government and you get a conservative win.

So do we think those voters are wrong who vote for the conservatives or allow them to win? Of course we do. Because, do we think we are better for them than the conservatives? Of course we do. We need to convince the non-business class majority of this and that means communicating with them much much better to, indeed, change them. Although it would be a dialogue, a mutual process. This writer is urging the party to format branch meetings around exchanging experience and developing best practise on members getting across to voters they know, and has provided an activity for branches to use to do this.

Citizens' Assemblies?

This paper has been about the usual main political act, the vote. And occasionally there's referendums too. But they too suffer from the same problems as how we vote for representatives in Parliament, Congress and other democratic assemblies - there's not enough properly organised discussion between citizens, and no opportunity to have a say on individual policies. People's or Citizen's Assemblies may be a way forward. They are temporary gatherings of citizens selected randomly, maybe with proportions by age, gender, ethnicity and so on, who meet over a cycle of weekend conferences and suchlike, with presentations by political parties, councillors, council officials, MP's, lobbying groups, people with expert knowledge etc, and come up with recommendations for the rest of us on a particular policy issue. This writer's best knowledge of it is a book that calls it *'Sortition'*, the book being *Against Elections: The Case for Democracy by David Van Reybrouck.*

A final note to clarify what people should expect from politics - people talk about politics and the political system as if everything about society *starts* from there. As if we, whether politicians or all of us, started from a blank sheet and made society what it is. And as if politics decides everything that goes on.

That's not how it is. Lots of things go on in society, far more than government can reach. And most are governed by customs and rules developed over centuries, often without political action, just 'what is done' or has come to be done.

Some of it will have been set down in law and in political statute but much won't have been.

The crucial example, the central subject of this whole set of writings, is how high-volume, large-workforce production gives an organised minority – the business class - unfair power over the majority when they are just individual, atomised, unorganised workers, which we never decided in politics as the way to allocate what people need to make their living, and wealth.

It's best to see politics is as a way of potentially altering what already *happens* in society. To see *the system* and the basic activities and duties and rights and penalties as pre-existing, and politics as the main, officially-offered way of changing the broadest-ranging of them.

This may be a useful book on talking to each other
https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/feb/16/how-to-have-better-arguments-social-media-politics-conflict

More papers like this, covering all the basic organisational political issues, are at ***www.uspoliticsandthesystem.org***

List of Us, Politics and The System's Main Points for Discussion

How much do you agree with them?

Which are most worth discussing with other workers?

- *They've Got Many Others explains business and management power over you*
- *They can sack you easily in Contract Law because of Many Others*
- *The case for Our Right to Organise and Strike*
- *Striking and the bottle Issue - the comparison with War*
- *The definition of* ***the Working class***
- *The definition of* ***the Business class***
- *Exploitation means Paying Less than is Charged for your Work*
- *The view of the notion of National Identity*
- *The view of Local identity and Football identities*
- *The argument for Real Interest Groups*
- *The case for* ***Working Class identity and Organisation***
- *The explanation of UK society developed from the Land-Owner's Dictatorship to the Business Class dominating a weak Democracy*
- *The inadequacy of 'the Vote' – just One Little X*
- *The comparison between Union Democracy when Striking and Parliament's lack of any Democracy over War.*
- *Obligations, Rights and Deterrents to Associating with others*

  - Forced to Associate as 'the Country'

  - Business's right to associate as 'Companies'

  - Workers denied Rights to associate - 'Free markets in Labour'

  - Our Right to Organise and Act
- *Comparing Democracy in Choosing Leaders – Union v Parliament*
- *The argument for Having Your Say on Issues – Union v Parliament*
- *Interest-Group Constituencies*

Why People Should Read This Work
'Us, Politics and The System'

Q. Why are people treated so badly politically and in making their living, in their jobs? Most are workers: so why do anti-worker, pro-business-people, pro-the-wealthy parties ever get into government? Particularly conservative parties, like the Republicans in the USA and the others across Europe and all over the world?

A. Because that large majority of people who are workers don't understand their key relationship with business people. This book explains it, from everyone's daily experience of jobs and politics. It aims to convince workers of the case for organising together. For people ever to win decent treatment, the kind of views and understandings presented in it need to become widely held, argued for and acted on. If people read it and urge others to read it, it will help people, worldwide, achieve better lives and a better future. It is easily, cheaply and freely available globally.

We never examine 'the economy' and 'the system' as relationships. Even though we suffer many problems when it works - if that's ever really true - and still more when it's in crisis. Instead, we complain about what's done in politics and at work, and the effects on us - "I think it's terrible what they're doing about this or that" but mostly just ask, just plead, for better treatment, in the public arenas open to us, from the weak position the current relationships put us in. As if appealing for fairness and common humanity might work. We need to do more than complain and plead. We need to examine the job, workplace and political relationships that empower business people to treat us harshly, and change them, so we have the practical power to be far more assertive of our interests in 'the system'.

Once, the key relationships were between big landowners and tenants or peasants. In Europe first, the business system replaced that system, and has now spread across the globe. They call that 'globalisation'. The business system defines how people relate to everyone else - the basic relationships in the workplace and 'the economy.' Those who it favours call it free enterprise. Others call it capitalism. *The Free-market Business System* is a better term. We need to examine it. Especially how business people and workers relate to each other. We need a clear view of what's wrong with business relationships and the changes needed. We need it putting across to workers by fellow-workers. This book is provided to help that happen.

We use the business system without ever having taken a close look at how it operates and whether it is right or not. And without ever having chosen to use it. We could have done with doing so at any time in the past few centuries. It runs according to relationships that enable those

said to be the most able, energetic, most hard-working or ruthless to exploit, misuse, bully and discard the rest. It allows them to direct – or misdirect - the economy. It is claimed this is all reasonable because anyone can get to that position. Yet even if that were true it would be unacceptable for one very simple reason. That is that mass production of goods and services, involving most of us, is the dominant way of producing. Most people simply can't be owners, however enterprising they might try to be. Most will be workers. And it is not acceptable for them – us – to be treated as harshly as we are.

It allows business people to obstruct us organising together as workers. We have never written up the arguments against this, 'The Right To Unionise', nor put it out widely, to workers generally. It's urgently necessary that we do. This book enables it for the first time. For example, here is a statement of the unfairness in the job relationship, that should be commonly spoken of but isn't. Each 1 person - you, for example - who sells them self as a worker to those who employ 100 other workers is 100 times weaker than them, the 'employer'. Where the employer has 1000 workers, 1000 times weaker. That's not a fair, reasonable way to run everyone's most basic, important relationship - the one in which they make their living.

Those who champion the business system - business people, their 'news' papers, their conservative parties, in the UK the Tories, in the US the Republicans, their equivalents in other countries - have a well worked out set of arguments claiming that these relationships are fair and just. And even that they are the best for everybody. They manage the impressive feat of getting these views widely accepted. We workers, most people, don't have a clear, thoroughly-thought-out response. That's why we keep getting defeated in politics and at work. As happened in the UK in the 1979 election, when the political arguments against us organising and acting together to stick up for ourselves in the system won. And they continue to win, even amongst some workers, despite them being outrageous.

This has been going on for centuries. In the UK, workers were always treated very badly up to 1939 - not so badly after 1945 - badly again since 1979. And now, even worse. Without a clear, commonly-held understanding of the unfairness of the basic relationships, and of the rightness and necessity of organising together as workers, we will just carry on being treated like this. There's always some who resist but it's never enough. It never will be while most people accept the business system's unfair relationships as the only way to run society. We have no common criticism of these relationships. We don't even have an everyday term for the people whose system it is. The all-pervasive false 'we' of national identity blinds us even to their existence and masks their responsibility for how we are treated. That leads to some blaming our problems on people of different colour and foreigners. The problem is

the Free-market Business System and those who enforce its relationships - those whose system it is. The everyday term for them is 'the Business Class'.

Some argue for a radical change to a socialist system of relationships. That is too big a leap to make while we don't even have a solid criticism of the existing system, while most people accept the existing relationships. While we don't even have a widespread belief in our right to organise together to challenge their unfairness.

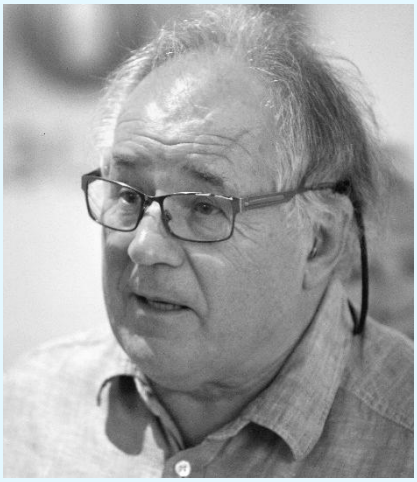
It's way beyond the time when people should have a sound criticism of the process, the relationships, that enable them to be treated wrongly. The book *Us,Politics And The System* is such a criticism. The writer believes it is essential that many workers read it and urge others to read it, to help develop a commonly-held worker's philosophy that will support much more organisation and assertive action.

A philosophy that we can use to challenge business people, the Tories, and those many Labour politicians who concede to them. They all grant business people great freedom while restricting us from trying to get equal to them by organising together. Anti-union and anti-strike laws, when properly examined, are an absolute scandal. Yet there they are. And this writer has found even some of the most combative and class-conscious workers accept their rules, like blaming the Unite union for the British Airways cabin crew's strikes being ruled illegal.

In promoting this book the writer finds people show real interest in this notion of examining the basic relationships. But few are actually getting hold of it, reading it and urging other workers to. Even revolutionary socialists don't 'get' the need to take a close look at how the existing society runs and at common, everyday attitudes to 'the system' and to each other. It's no wonder the business class, who do 'get it' and have their arguments sorted out and present them vigorously, dominate society and are able to treat us brutally. It's a history thing – they established these unfair ways of relating several hundred years ago, in practice and in our minds, and we've not yet challenged them on them. It's about time we did.

The book *Us, Politics and The System* aims to do this. People can download a free e-copy at *www.uspoliticsandthesystem.org* They can also buy it as a proper printed book from *http://www.lulu.com/* for cost price. Plus post and packing. You order it on Lulu's site and it is printed and posted for you locally. Check Lulu's 'print on demand' service at *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lulu*

About The Author



Ed McDonnell *is a retired lecturer in trade union education. He organised and tutored courses for workplace union representatives, for over twenty years, in the UK. Helping reps to examine how people relate at work was central to the job. That covers how they relate to each other as well as to the employer. It is a key political issue.*

Some courses were to help reps deal with laws made by conservatives to shackle workers union organisation, and the author had personal experience of them as an officer of the lecturers' union. In doing that, he learned a lot about the arguments for workers' rights to organise and act together, in response to employer's organisation, free from restrictions made in political systems subservient to business people.

His political and trade union education began when growing up in a community of dockers and shipbuilders on Merseyside, where people were fiercely working class; union; Labour; and politically argumentative. There and at grammar school studying history, he saw how badly workers were treated, as a class, in the industrial revolution, in the 19th century, in the two World Wars, and

in the depression of the 1930's. That stimulated a lifelong determination to work out the rights and wrongs of the relationships and political attitudes that enabled such awful treatment, and how to change them.

At university in the 1960's he was radicalised by the student political activism of the time. Then he worked in a range of jobs. In the engineering industry in Manchester he became active as a union rep in one of the biggest and best-organised factories ever.

He tried to convince fellow-workers of the case for socialist revolution. But in 1979 he saw how a lot of workers allowed the Thatcher-led conservatives to win elections and get into government. He concluded that workers, as a class, far from being likely to organise a revolution and build a socialist society, lacked conviction in their right to organise and defend themselves even under the present system; didn't recognise the existence of the business class, their own existence as a class, and how their relationships with them and with each other are the main problem. He concluded that the practical need was to understand and become players in the system as it is.

Throughout his working life, he found that everyone, including fellow-workers, has views on how we relate in politics, business, production and work, and what's right and wrong with it and will talk vigorously about it. But a work making coherent sense of it has never been written and widely read. So conservative arguments that business people are entitled to power and that workers are not, and their organisation not legitimate, remain unchallenged. And whatever advances are made in making society more civilised are repeatedly repulsed by conservatives, representing the business class. This book aims to help you to change that.

Reviews

The late Tony Benn

"It is a great book to explain the essentials and I hope is widely read."

John the Milkman *and daughter* ***Sarah***

"I agree with all that" and "I think it's great."

Eddie Little*, North West Labour History*

"Not so much a book as a toolbox for activists and thinking people, or all of us who should be thinking".

Mark Thompson, *North West Labour History*

"This pamphlet by retired union activist and trade union education lecturer Eddie McDonnell, extracted from his book *Us, Politics and The System* is as far from an academic handbook on your rights at work and how to win against the bosses as it's possible to imagine. *The Right To Unionise* has the feel of the shop floor, full of anecdotes about confrontations in the workplace... as well as discussions of class, democracy, nationalism, regionalism, religion, war and football. McDonnell looks at the basic relationship between bosses and workers and how it shapes class relations in wider society. His explanation of what happens when workers sell their labour power for wages is clear and unarguable.... he is also very clear about working class and middle class identities, cutting through the idea that your class is about where you live, how you talk, the car you drive or the school you went to rather than 'the most basic issue - how you make your money'. *The Right To Unionise* also includes a useful outline of how Britain developed from 'a dictatorship of a small class of brutal, undemocratic property-owners – the monarchy and the aristocracy ... who owned everything and had all the political power ... from 1640 this propertied class were forced to concede power to a semi-democratic Parliament of large farmers and merchants and manufacturers and not very long ago we workers forced these propertied business classes to concede us just one, occasional little vote".

What's In The Full Work 'Bolded' are 'The Right To Unionise' sections