

**The summary from the website.**

*'The Ten Minute Read' summary starts on the next page*

*You'll cope better with life and politics when you have the basic framework of society clear in your head. 'The System Explained' explains business, work and politics by showing how we trade and relate as workers, employers and fellow-citizens; and how we can do it differently to build a fair, secure, sustainable global society. In all the opinions we, the media, and politicians express about the state of the world, few raise the system, the basic relationships, as the problem. And even those who do never explain it, say what's wrong with it, or say what we can do about it. These writings do.*

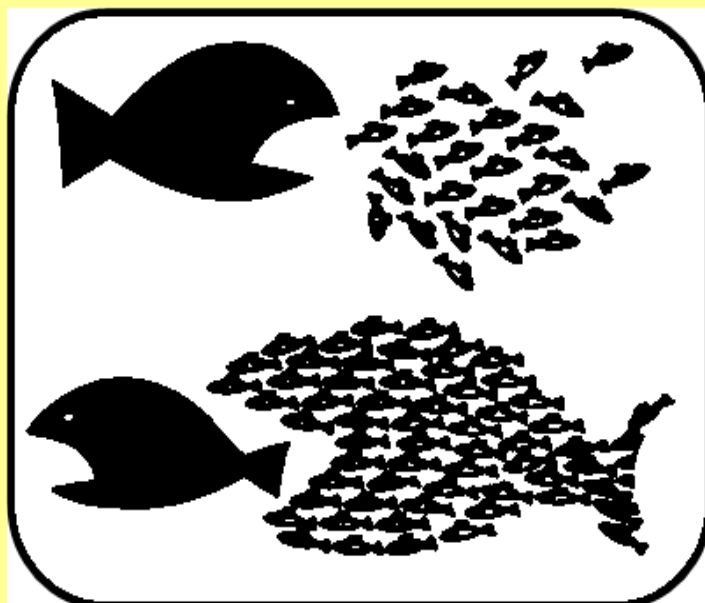
*People call the system 'capitalism'. But that just refers to some people accumulating money at the top and re-cycling it. It ignores capitalism's key process, the work process: The process where people produce capital in producing goods and services. It ignores how people relate in the workplace in the production processes, the social and economic relationships, the organisations that are the basis of the capitalist system. It ignores the key trading relationship. Not the markets in the trading of goods and services, but the labour market – the trade in people, in fellow-citizens – that is central to the manufacture of goods, the provision of services, and the generation of capital.*

*To solve humanity's problems, we need to:*

- › *Look beneath everyday politics and look at the system - at how we all interact in everyday life.*
- › *We need to explain the system and the rights and wrongs of it, especially the wrong of how business people and public sector managers get excess power over the rest and how to correct that imbalance of power ...*  
*... show the explanation is true by being drawn from people's own, observable, everyday life experiences ...*
- › *... spread this view widely.*
  
- › *But people take how we relate and organise in the system of business, work, trade and politics as just the way things are. They take how it operates for granted.*
- › *In political debate few mention or criticise the basic relationships.*
- › *They don't see that most things in the economy, work, income and jobs don't start with or come from politics and politicians, that most happen through the basic, long-established, everyday relationships of the business system. (A better term for capitalism).*
- › *... that politics is just how you might - or might not - get a say in this established everyday system.*
- › *We need to spread awareness that business people run the world more than politics and politicians do ...*  
*... because they organise most of the key public activities - business - production - work - jobs - trade, the everyday buying and selling of goods, services and people.*
- › *This everyday activity in their roles in business, work and trade makes them (most of) 'the economy'.*
- › *That gives them political power (even before they act directly in politics).*
- › *They earn this power because they organise and act socially as businesses.*
- › *To push their interests directly in politics, some of them run conservative media and conservative parties.*
- › *They are a class - the business class. They are a minority of citizens. They oppress the majority.*
- › *Conservative parties are the political arm of the business class.*
  
- › *The majority - most citizens - are workers. We too are a class - the worker class.*
- › *We represent ourselves weakly in the system.*
- › *We let business people dominate us every day, at work, in political debate in the media, and in politics itself.*
- › *We relate weakly to them because we don't recognise them as a class, nor ourselves and because we don't organise and act together like they do.*
  
- › *To stand up to them as employers (and to public sector employers) at work we need almost all citizens who are workers to organise together in unions.*
- › *Then in politics, the majority need to match up to business people's power by getting organised into a progressive social and political force. Unionized workers are central to it, making it soundly based on how the majority too relate and act together in their economic roles, and from being organised together in those meaningful, active, everyday, permanent relationships, represent themselves effectively in politics.*
- › *Progressives are not short of better policies than conservatives. They are short of organisation and its use in the effective communication and gathering of support for policy.*
- › *Because we don't look at the basics, many people find politics confusing and, disastrously for themselves and us all, allow the conservative, business class minority, who are out only for themselves, into government.*
- › *They group themselves and others by shallow, diversionary 'identities' when we should identify and group people, and base our politics on, how people genuinely relate in business, jobs, the economy and politics.*
- › *That means all who are workers should base their main 'identity' on being, with most other citizens, a worker.*
- › *When we share a clear understanding of these basics of 'the system' it'll be easier to make sense of political issues, discuss them, and organise to get society working fairly for all.*

# ***The System Explained - A Ten Minute Read***

*(v.2020.5b 05/11/20)*



***Politics - Politicians - The Economy -  
Business - Jobs - Workers - Class - Unions  
Fairness - Dignity - Security - Support  
Equality - Public Services - Climate Change  
Media - Identities - Racism - Nationalism  
Free Markets - Income - Wealth  
Opportunity - Poverty -  
and other such issues...***

***We faff around in politics because we don't look at the basics.  
The System Explained by Ed McDonnell explains them,  
from our - your - everyday experience. It will help you  
and others to think and talk about them.***

## **Facts or Feelings?**

*The book 'The System Explained' aims to help everybody understand 'the system' – business, work and politics. It shows how you can observe the system in the simple realities of everyday life. It is, therefore, demonstrable fact, not opinion or just one narrative of many possible ones. But many people say they don't understand politics and instead vote by feelings. They won't vote for a party leader just because they don't 'like' them. Or they'll vote for a party just because they do 'like' their leader. Or they'll vote for politicians who talk in simple slogans that promise 'hope' or 'change' 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 insubstantial 'identities'. Basing your politics on feelings instead of policies and real business and job relationships is a poor way to use your democratic rights. But it's what many people do.*

*'Feelings' will be addressed again at the end of this paper. But first, a framework for political thinking... **a System Analysis...** starting with –*

***Business people run the world.***

***Because they organise together.***

***And because the rest mostly don't.***

*This explains most of politics.*

*Business people run the world because they run 'the economy' - 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 what 'they' are doing; or of what 'they' do as 'just what happens'. They 'take the world as they find it'.*

*So most political debate is about issues which, though significant, are not the main issue – how we all earn our living, income and wealth. For all the issues around the role of the state, and the distractions of culture and identity wars, this, the underlying, basic issue, is rarely addressed.*

*If people do talk of the system, usually as 'capitalism', it's as if it's self-existing. They don't talk much about how it works, think they haven't*

*the power to change it, and think you could only change it for other 'self-existing' systems like socialism or communism, that most people think won't work. So they just expect 'politicians' to manage the system, to 'run the country'.*

*This is all a consequence of conservatives winning the argument on the key economic issues so everyone treats them as settled and debate other, lesser issues. Yet the core 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 argued more effectively.*

*Politicians don't really control what goes on every day, normally. Most of the system runs independently of*

*politics. The basic business and job relationships were established over centuries, in practice and in piecemeal legal decisions. We have never publicly debated or democratically voted for them. The system persists from before we won some limited democracy. Since then we've not developed our awareness of how the system works or the organised strength to change it. In countries with less democracy, business people just seize political power.*

*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 Jewish people or 'the Illuminati' or 'the deep state' secretly run the world. But it's no secret - it's*

*business people. You can see it by what you've got in your home, what's in the high street, what's on the road, in your jobs, in leisure activities. It's business people, represented in politics by conservatives. (Note: they come in all colours, races and nationalities.))*

*We, the rest, aren't mature and organized enough to organize production and jobs ourselves. We depend on business people for that but it causes our main problems. It means we leave essential public needs – the economy, jobs, incomes – to be organised and provided privately, by business people, for their own gain, not for their fellow-countryfolk. We allow them to run the world economy, with the unregulated free markets they demand, greedily and recklessly. They cause crashes like that in 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 challenge them, blame foreigners’. The US business class caused the forty-year standstill in American workers’ living standards and the job losses in the rust-belt that led many to turn, confusedly, to Trump.*

*They 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 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 why business people dominate us.*

*We need a better everyday term for 'the system'. 'Capitalism' evokes remote financial operations. 'Free markets' refers to trade. They omit production, business and work - the processes where capital is actually made.*

*Business is how we experience the system and how we refer to it every day. So let's call it 'the business and free market system'. Or just the business system.*

*We also need a collective name for business people. When politicians and commentators even allow that they are an identifiable group, they call them 'the business community'. Community?? They are a class - the business class - and we should speak of them as such. Especially the 1%, the*

corporate and financial operators. They 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 'laissez-faire' economics and 'free markets' mean. The power the business system grants to business people is what conservatives aim to conserve.

They conceal this by:

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

*people, fellow-citizens who we can hold to account in political debate and democratic decision-making.*

- *hiding behind the claim that they are just politicians who, looking after everyone's interests, just honestly think the business system is fair for everybody, and effective; who just honestly think 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 shockingly loaded against the worker majority.*

*Their case is absurd but they get away with it because we don't examine it. It doesn't exist by itself - it's a set of relationships that*

conservatives actively protect, maintain and extend. It's their system, not ours. Capitalism isn't the problem - capitalists are. The 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.

We organised workers and progressives have policies that can make the system fair, civilized, stable and sustainable. But our parties concede to conservative's the case for their free-market business system, and that limits progressives' ability to do what's needed. They don't see what it is that enables business people to dominate, and what's wrong with it.

But they can't do all that's needed on their own. We too, as, voters don't

*understand the system and that limits progressive parties, with workers not voting in enough numbers, with enough conviction, for progressive parties that will regulate business people.*

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

*But we need to spread knowledge of more key features of the system:*

- *in modern industrial society the economies of scale mean production,*

*trade and services inevitably become dominated by fewer, larger operations; run by a minority, the business class; and, inevitably, mean the majority have no option in making 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 dictate to governments, and do, on a fundamental level.*
- *when conservative parties win elections, business people are themselves the government. Behind*

*the debates they provoke about public services and behind the distraction of culture wars, what conservatives really want 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 to divert attention from what they do and direct it at minorities.*

*Business people 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 as much as they credit themselves - in big business, successes cover losses, risk is spread across projects and investment funds, and limited*



company and bankruptcy laws protect them). Some can be decent, maybe more the smaller ones and small traders. But competition pressures even the decent ones to be bad. We need to regulate competition. It has benefits, but not as many as co-operation.

### ***The Rest - The Worker Class***

All those of us 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 its meaning is muddled by 'middle class', that mistakenly 'classes' people by their spending power and lifestyle instead of how people make their money. So maybe the worker class?

## ***The Worst Bad Deal – The Job Deal***

*Trump claimed to challenge bad trade deals. But, being a representative of business people's interests, not the big one – the bad trade deal every worker makes with their boss. Every worker knows the power an employer has over them - in the deal you make when you start a job; in how they, and you, behave while in a job; in how easily they can sack you.*

*Unique to the book 'The System Explained' is that it shows just how business people, and public authorities, overpower people in jobs. People as workers, and progressive parties, need to understand this clearly, and how it entitles them to organize in unions.*

*This is how ....*

- since the economies of scale in our modern industrial economies mean most jobs are in workplaces with many workers ...*
- ..... employers can easily do without any one of them.*

### *'Free' Labour Markets and 'The 'Market Ratio'*

*In the deal each of us makes with an employer we will be ten, hundreds or thousands of times weaker than them. Because there is a big difference in how much they need one more worker and how much one worker needs the job. This is massive inequality in the market ratio – the ratio of need.*

*To employers each worker is of only marginal use. That's why people get a bad deal and bad treatment in jobs -*

*because 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 here' - and you are at the same disadvantage at most other employers. And it operates against better-qualified, so-called middle class workers just as it does the less-qualified.*

*These unfair deals in the labour market demolish the key conservative claim that free markets mean individual freedom and opportunity. That 'you can make it by your own efforts' and, in the USA, achieve 'the American Dream'. In the job market this claim vaporizes before the plain fact that in modern industrial society most work isn't individual, it's intensely collective and having many staff gives employers power over*

workers that far outweighs such opportunity as there may be.

To make their living, people shouldn't have to sell themselves in such bad deals. It is because they enable business people to pay workers less than the value of their work that we have huge inequality in wealth. This is where profits and most wealth come from. Owning property (historically important, and still significant) is now less important than control of the work process because that is where wealth is produced. The rich 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 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**, to negotiate together, with strength, for union conditions.*

### ***Equality and 'Liberals'***

*There are a few big inequalities, but the job relationship is the biggest of all, because it is inequality of power in everybody's key relationship – making their living. Most workers recognise and resent bosses' power but see it as part of the natural order and accept it. They let them alone and blame other people for problems. We have failed to identify it, expose it, and use it to establish and spread the case for the right to organize as workers.*

*Our failure to identify and challenge this biggest of all equality issues is*

*why some 'white working class' people see action against on race and gender equality as favours being done for minorities, that they don't get. Their fellow-white business class bosses treat them badly but they, along with progressive parties, don't fully know the case for their right to organise to stand up to them. So they turn on minorities and liberals and progressive parties and, in the USA, vote for business-class Trump's minority-bashing.*

*Liberals are just fair-minded, better-educated and probably better-off who tackle the obvious inequalities. But they still depend on business people to run the economy and so don't question enough the privileges and biased rights the business system allows them. They don't see clearly enough this biggest, global inequality,*

that between employers and all workers. They need to challenge this inequality too and support all workers, white and of colour, whatever gender or personal tastes, being able to get equal to employers by having the right to organize.

'The white working class' too should see the job deal where there is no union as an major, unacceptable inequality, one that hurts them and minorities alike. And that they should organise with the minorities and liberals to tackle this one as well as the more usual inequalities. This is more likely to better their condition than voting for outsider-bashing businessmen like Trump; or, in the UK, for outsider-blaming policies like Brexit.



## ***The Case For Organising Summed Up***

*Look at all the institutions allowed to operate in society. Business people are allowed to organise and operate together as companies, even protected from their responsibilities by limited company status and bankruptcy laws. They have trade and employer associations. There's government, there's 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 in making our living together 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, by using the simple arithmetic - employers with many workers have an unfair advantage over them as individuals. With that, make the argument for union organisation to fellow-workers, and even to conservatives.*

*Being organised is about full citizenship, about having the right and the sense to participate in the economy as mature, dignified adults with equal power to employers. 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.*

## ***Class In Politics***

*So the case for people's right to organise at work is made. And that organisation should be the base from where they represent themselves in politics too. This is a leap for many people. When Conservatives even accept our right to organise unions, they say it only be about pay and conditions at work, that political rights are only exercised individually in place-based constituencies.*

*And this is how most people see political activity. You are grouped by where you live, in place-based constituencies; some fellow-constituents associate as political parties; these constituency parties form the national parties; and every few years you vote for one of them.*

*But people have little organic connection with each other in place-*

*based constituencies. Being lumped together just by address, as individuals with little meaningful association with each other, does not amount to much, democratically. Far more meaningful is to base political activity on how we associate in the fundamental act of making our living. Business, the economy and work are the central, vital activities in society. And so are the everyday, meaningful relationships there, with fellow-citizens, as bosses or workers, more meaningful than just residing in the same locality.*

*In the years between elections, and in election campaigns, without associating as workers, atomised, voters themselves don't talk to each other much, in an organised way, about politics or how they vote. (Mouthing off to people you don't know on social media doesn't amount*

to that). And they vote secretly, individually. Day in and day out, they get most of their information and debate about the parties' leaders and policies from the mostly business class owned media. Media businesses are run by business people formally independent of conservative parties, who campaign frenziedly for conservative politics. (Whilst posing as independent commentators.)

The daily blast of class-biased politics from them shapes 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 receive most of your information and debate from the mostly business-run 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, candidates and campaigns.*

*But what they call individual, non-work-based political donations are from what they make at work, from us, from our work! They take money from us at work and use it against us in politics; then they tell us politics is nothing to do with us in our unions at work but is only about us acting as atomised individuals in the constituencies, once every few years!*

### ***Individual and Collective***

*Conservatives always talk of the individual. Yes, we are individuals but we are intensely social too. We work intensely collectively and cooperatively in all the businesses, companies, corporations and banks, in the public authorities, in production, trade, and at work. In fact, it's them*

who do the collectivizing, by constantly industrializing work.

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 together, a collective activity. Yet 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, work-based, economic 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 go into the constituency voting system, but from these independent, everyday, work-based discussions.*

*Wherever workers organize, activists do act together politically. But it is marginalized, not getting through to the minds of inactive members and those who are not organised. 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.*

*This is the central argument of 'The System Explained': we need to establish, as a civil right, the right to organise as workers, and be recognized by employers; we need 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 overwhelmed and divided 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.*

## ***‘How collective do we want to be? And In what ways?’***

*This is a big political question, at the heart of the 2020 US election. We need to raise it as the centre-piece of debate about freedom, taxes, public spending, public services, public support, the state, socialism, patriotism, military spending and military service.*

*Business people ‘take care of business’, making big decisions on money, managing, and selling goods and services, in activities we depend on for jobs, to make our living. For all that, they deserve a fair amount. But they take more than what’s fair by using unfair power in the job deal. From this collective work they take so much money they don’t themselves need public services and support. But their conservative parties claim they*

*get rich by individual effort, and so everyone is individually responsible for meeting their own 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.*

*But the conservative argument that making our living is all about the individual and about individual liberty imagines a fairytale pre-industrial world that has never existed (except maybe in 19<sup>th</sup> Century America where land was easily available (to whites)). In this fantasy land we can all be individual small traders or can 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 – that they organise – means we can't all be small traders. Most people have to find work in large*

organisations and in most jobs, without union organisation, you are dominated by your boss. You have no individual freedom. And the market system means we are all affected by what everybody else does.

Many workers accept that the rich have too much power and money, but also the conservative claim that it's from their own effort and that in the business system everybody has the freedom, the individual liberty, to do the same. Conservatives deter many from supporting public spending and public services by convincing them that taxes for public services are attacks on this liberty and call it socialism. This is nonsense. 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 collective spending, decided democratically, like you do in sports clubs and many suchlike organisations. (Socialism would be running the economy collectively, as we in fact do, but democratically instead of by the business class.)*

*But the conservative claim to be all for individual freedom, for a small state, and calling good public services and support socialism, is silly and contradictory. To protect themselves and their business interests, they are the biggest of collectivists! They strongly promote and even compel allegiance to 'the nation', 'the country' and patriotism. These are strongly collectivist notions. They support massive public spending on the police and the military, and even life-endangering, compulsory, military*

service, to protect their privileged trading relationships. They oppose socialized health care but support socialized warfare. We need to constantly ask them, are they really such rugged individuals, or are they also, like all of us, also collectivists? And to constantly ask all of us, how collectivist do we want to be?

We need to say to workers who let conservatives put them off progressive parties by calling public services socialism – “To support conservative, nationalist politics instead because you expect ‘the country’ to look after you is a socialist expectation itself; but a mistake, because conservatives’ core policy is that everyone has to look out for themselves in the uncaring business system and the country – the state - shouldn’t support those who can’t make it on their own. Instead of

*allying with conservative business people, the only way to get real support is to ally with fellow-citizens who actually believe in mutual support, and support and vote for progressive parties. It's not all one way, of course – you need to support others too, which can mean a bit of collective spending via taxes.”*

*But we can't just blame conservatives and their class for diverting many of us. They just take the trouble to look out for themselves, in their own brutal way. No, it's our fault for not taking the trouble to understand the system and not demolishing the facile world view of conservatism. 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.*

*Look at how densely organized business people are – they have owners, company boards, multiple departments, managers, supervisors, and we staff, on many work sites and in many countries. Compared to them, we are mostly atomised, poorly organised as workers. Many of us are, but even then, not with enough confidence and conviction, and nowhere near as many as need to be. At work we need to take the trouble to organize, 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.*

*But we let them distract and disarm us with shallow ‘identities’. Some*

*identities unite us falsely with them, others divide us against each other. Their conservative parties use the prestige of the nation state to draw people into national identities. Independently active conservatives overwhelm people with them in print, radio and digital media.*

*National identity gives people feelings of significance, belonging and security from being in so strong an institution and being one of so many 'British', 'Americans', Russians, French, and the rest. And you don't have to do anything. You don't have to organize at work or in politics. You get to be in a big national 'we' just by living in a country.*

*But conservatives completely contradict themselves with their core belief that 'it's everybody for themselves' - that people should*

*manage on their own (dressed up as individual freedom) - that the less well-off don't work hard, are less able or are idle - that people should be left to sink or swim - that those in trouble should not get state support - that the well-off earn it through ability and hard work.*

*In 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, this recourse to individualism is nonsense, visibly demolished by the everyday reality of how collectively our societies function.*

*But most people adopt the false national 'we' pushed on them by conservatives. They let them get away with using the 'we' to mask class*

*identities. It masks their identity. Workers drop their class identity in favour of it. Progressive parties lose their independence from the business class in it.*

*To conservatives 'the nation' only really means the laws and institutions that enable business people to use, misuse, discard and abandon fellow-countrymen and women. Their opposition to public services and welfare means they don't believe 'the country' should support its citizens!*

*To soften the brutality of their 'survival of the fittest' claimed individualism, conservative parties promise citizens their needs will be met, but by the business system. It doesn't do that of course - 'trickle down' is nonsense - 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.

With how brutally conservatives and business people treat the worker class, how little they care for compatriots, nationality only really means that 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.

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.

But most people, and progressive parties, look away from this clear

*conflict of interests between the business class and the worker class and go along with 'the nation' as the core framework for politics.*

*So when the business system fails, people can't even see the business class, never mind take them on about its failings. Their business system is accepted as part of the national framework, as the natural way of things. The business class blend into it and recede from view.*

*Conservatives glibly overlook that the key problem is the madness of letting business people run the economy and blame problems on it as an abstraction, 'the economy'.*

*Progressives accept the business system and voter don't back them enough to regulate it. So they too go along with conservative 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'.*

*Having hidden themselves from responsibility, conservative media and politicians ferociously use the national mindset to tell 'Britons', 'Americans' etc. that their problems are caused by 'outsiders', not them.*

*Most workers don't yet walk about with the understanding of the system and business people's responsibility for its failings presented here. So blaming outsiders is the easy option. Conservative media and politicians blast it at them, and they only have to fall in behind their power. This is people unable to tackle the people above them turning on those below them. It's punching down instead of up.*

*For outsiders to blame there's people not from this system of politics and law, outside the national 'we', i.e. 'foreigners'. 'Foreign competition' is blamed for job losses. But native business competitors do the same. With Brexit in the UK, many workers, instead of blaming conservative free market madness for the 2008 crash, and the Conservative government for making them pay for it, blame the European Union.*

*And there's the foreigners 'here' who people are told and believe they have 'insider' entitlement over - migrant workers, refugees. Brexit voters are against Eastern European workers using EU free movement of labour to 'come here and take our jobs'. Yet they don't blame British business people for using free movement for their operations and investment to*



*export their jobs. Anyway, migrant workers create jobs - they buy things here.*

*Conservatives and populists strengthen the 'we' that unites some workers with them by dividing citizens into majority '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 workers against each other instead of them.*

*But nationalism can never work for workers 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.*

*When we challenge 'outsider' diversions (often racist), don't debate the 'outsiders'. The hostility is always based on an 'insider' 'we' and that's what you need to question. Ask how much 'the country' really means to conservatives? How much do they really care about fellow-nationals? How much does anyone 'white' care for other white people? What do the 'we's' of nation and colour mean in real mutual support in getting the basics you need in life?*

### ***The Business System And The Voter***

*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.*

*Progressive parties rely on business*

people to run the economy. They demand such incentives, and their system is so unstable, progressive parties can't deliver all they promise, and voters blame them, thinking they have let them down. Voters see it as the progressive party's fault when business people mess up the economy. E.g. after the 2008 crash, Labour got blamed in the UK in the 2010 election; the Democrats in the US in 2016.

Because of rich business people's demands or failures, mainstream established parties in thrall to them often can't deliver. Then radical conservatives - the centre of the establishment - call them the establishment. Workers who don't believe enough in themselves resort even more to the 'insider' promise of national identity. They back populist, extreme outsider-blaming, nationalist,

*business people like Trump. It's ridiculous.*

*We need to call out conservatives and the business class on their nationalism and patriotism. Is 'the nation' the institutions or is it the people?*

*Ask them: Is this one society? What will they do for their fellow-nationals? What will they give up for them? Will they be enterprising not just for their own greed but for fellow-nationals, for only fair rewards? Will they agree their fellow-citizens shouldn't have to trade for their jobs in unfair deals? That they have the right to organise in unions and be recognized by employers?*

*If we vote in governments to regulate them, to make them act decently towards fellow-nationals and the planet, will they accept it? Or will*

*they disinvest, as conservatives threaten? 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?*

## ***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 our real, active roles, especially in making our 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 we 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.... The System Explained 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 business people'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.*

*More, much more, at  
[www.thesystemexplained.com](http://www.thesystemexplained.com)*

*and*

*[www.therighttoorganise.com](http://www.therighttoorganise.com)*

*This Ten Minute Read is constantly  
improved.*

*Changes are usually just sequencing  
and clarity.*

*For the latest version check the  
website.*