

Why This Work Is Needed

The bolded section is from the website

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People think the world is run by politics but it's the other way round - politics comes from the everyday world. Especially from how we, humanity, work co-operatively in doing the most essential things - making goods, providing services, selling them, making money, making a living. Trade, business, work. The economy as well as politics – ‘the system’.

There's a lot wrong with our world. We're even wrecking our own habitat. And governments let us down. But instead of tackling the real issues we get diverted into phony divisions and daft conspiracy theories. It's because we don't try to understand the system. See all politics – in the media, other people's, your own – as based on the system. And not just on people's political views but on their role in the system.

People look to ‘politicians’ to put things right, seeing the political parties as interchangeable management teams, all aiming to ‘run the country’ for all, from

above the system. But politicians don't make the system, and not from above it. They come from it and they represent the interests of different groups in it.

The production of goods and services that we call 'the economy' is so social, so industrialised, involves everybody working together so much, is so collective, it's really a public activity. But it is owned and run privately, by a self-confessed selfish minority. They run the key activity - making a living – and control the sharing-out of income and wealth. This prevents the democratic political regulation of the economy and political protection of people in their basic needs.

The system is the business system. The minority is business people – the business class. But people don't see them as a class. And though the majority are almost all workers, they don't see themselves as a class either.

Conservatives say the system is all about 'the individual'. This is nonsense. It requires individuals to work highly collectively, co-operatively, with millions of others, under

the control of organisations, mainly business people's. And, doing this themselves as individuals, they relate to organised business people on very unequal terms.

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

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

Exploiting the majority to acquire great wealth, running the economy, dominating politics and the state – the business class are the ruling class.

(Not all business people are complete bastards. But their system pressures them to be.)

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

We need to make it commonly known that the main issue in our societies is business-class supremacy over the rest (white, black, brown, whatever); 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 the system, unionise widely and organise more in politics.

But people don't see how the system works and how it enables the business class to dominate. They aren't even seen to exist. So people can't make sense of how they are treated. Many are confused by politics. So some give up on it and don't vote. Others support politicians they just 'like'. Others do have strong positions on actual policies. Some go a bit deeper and see politics as those brief casual social exchanges about unelaborated notions of 'capitalism', 'socialism' or 'communism', as if they're in a mini constitutional convention. But almost everybody thinks it's all on the leaders of the political parties and which one would serve everybody best. Such as, recently and currently, Corbyn or Johnson, Starmer or Sunak; Biden or Trump. That is wrong. It's about all of us.

And some people who are workers get so diverted from business class domination that they allow, or even help, their conservative parties to govern, repeatedly. And people believe they can make it on their own. (Especially Americans). But the working of the collective (but under-regulated) business system often mean they

can't (see 2008 and since). So, not understanding that, they turn for security to vague collective identities like colour and nationalism which have nothing to say about actual social relationships or ways of working together within their identity group. No actual policies. They follow political leaders who promise salvation in hostility to harmless fellow-citizens, or outsiders, not the business class.

It's all because we've no clear, widely-held, accurate view of the system, of how society actually operates, that shows up the absurdity of the conservative world view, on which to base political thinking, debate and actions. We need to base our politics on what is, on how politicians, public services the economy; markets, business, workers, class, jobs; unions, income, wealth, poverty, opportunity; media, identities, racism, nationality – all work. With this common 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, The System Explained does what it says, from our 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 it is the business class's organisation that enables their supremacy and that to stand up to them we need to organise together too, at work and in politics, as workers.

Next, The Ten Minute Read proper

The Ten Minute Read of 'The System Explained'

v.2022.9 (until June 2023, 'The Super Summary')

'It's the system' - what shopfloor workers always said to this writer when he worked in industry and argued against the wealth and power of employers, business people and the rich.

'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)

Humanity is in a ridiculous, unnecessary state. As well as our usual problems with jobs, health services, recessions, war and the rest, we're wrecking our environment while allowing our world to be governed by anti-people crazies. With our amazing technical knowledge and ability to cooperate to produce all we need and more, it needn't be like this. To change that, we need to get the basics of politics, the economy, work and business clear in all our heads.

People, politicians and commentators only talk about things that happen. They don't talk about how they happen, from how we interact in business, the economy and politics - the system. They just treat it as how the world is. We ignore how we relate in the vital tasks of making a living, making money and making products and services!

It's because conservatives convince us that the system is the only way. So people just get on with their daily lives, meeting their needs, enjoying their pleasures, and just expect 'the government' to 'run the country'. But Prime Ministers, Presidents, Members of Parliament, Congress(w)men and political institutions – Parliament, Congress, Assemblies - don't simply 'run the country'. They aren't the source of everything that happens in society – it comes from society and how people relate in the system. So put politics aside while we examine the whole system. To spell it out - people have different roles in the system, especially in the

most necessary activity – making a living or making money. To do that, we have to interact with each other. We need to be much clearer about how we do this and how it means people have different interests in how the system works.

A minority run businesses, which means they organise the supremely important activity of the production and sale of goods and services, and provide work. Most other people get a job, working for these business people or for public bodies. So, in this public arena of business and jobs, people relate differently and have different interests. They get very different incomes, so are different in their need for public services and support, and have different political interests. They are in different interest groups. 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.

Political parties and politicians come from and broadly represent these

different interest groups or classes – classes defined by functional roles and relationships, not income or culture. The parties claim to represent everybody's interests but it's not true. Certainly not of conservatives. They represent the interests of business people and the wealthy. Labour or progressive, social-democrat parties mainly represent the rest, mostly workers.

Business People - The Business Class - Run The System

The key to understanding the system is to realise 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. And they organise politically, generally as conservatives. They are a class – the business class. The basis of the system is business-class supremacy. With this in mind, the rest of the system becomes clearer.

The majority of people make their living by working for these business people or

for public bodies. We should call this majority a class too, the working or worker class, defined by that definite, vital, unarguable role in the system, being a worker, not by less important things.

Not enough people support the state organising production so we do need business people to organise most of it. But we need to regulate them, to make them behave civilly. 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, as follows, how it works, and build that 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 and this writer is a member of Amnesty International, which campaigns on human rights. But the conservative view is very simplistic, deliberately highlighted to distract the rest of us from how society actually works.

The view that it's all individualism comes from how, centuries ago, people made the case for freedom from the 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 low taxes and a small state. They trumpet this as liberty and freedom. And for many people it does feel like this, particularly in the USA, and is why some call it 'The Land of The Free'.

But with a small state, though you might be less controlled by the state, you are still governed by the workings of the business system. You still have to trade with many other people in it, do many deals, buy and sell, to people with widely varying power, often far more than you. And, especially, you have to deal with those who are in big organisations. Especially big business organisations. Conservatives represent business people, who think they are good at operating in all this and don't need

collective, public support. And there's some truth in that.

But simple individualism is just not how the world works, The very existence and centrality of money, of things like inflation, interest rates, of the powerful business organisations, including the banks, in the business system, all confirm this. And in many, many trading interactions with others, you are a long way from being equal. Particularly and, most importantly, in making your living, in getting work, in getting a job. More on that soon.

And its not how conservatives themselves operate. Most don't operate as individuals. Because in the vital activities of making money and making a living, the efficiency of mass production, and free markets lead inevitably to the collectivism of industrial production. Its them who organise it all, all the (collective) companies and corporations, and organise the rest of us into industrial workforces. They run the global system of mass production and trade. In this

highly industrialised, trading, mass-marketized, commercialised, corporate, financialised, micro-managed, nation-state, connected, globalized society, we are hugely collective and inter-dependent. The issue isn't the individual versus the state but the share of power in all this collectivism.

Conservative talk of individualism might make sense in an imagined world of small traders and genuine self-employed. In the industrialised real world, they do it to divert us from organising while these very collective business people do organise. In general, it's nonsense to claim individualism is the basis of society. We are highly social, with all our collectivisms like family, community, religion, identity, clubs, football fandom, patriotism. Our mindset, our talk, 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 only evokes a remote level where 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 to each other, ordinarily, enforced in the everyday world and in politics by business people. We can do it differently. However, it has many well-established relationships, often embedded in law. To change all that through politics, our rights are limited. You get one vote, every four years, isolated from one another, on all 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 rich should be taxed more. But the rich 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 labour, the trade in people – goes unexamined. Here it is – with most workers not being organised in unions and not negotiating collectively, the deal on starting or keeping a job is made, in 'free' labour markets, between an employer and an individual worker. In industrial economies – which are what we have - most employers, even small businesses, have many staff. With all the other staff

they have producing whatever the business or public service does, employers can drive a hard bargain with each one, individually, because they have enough staff to be able to do without any one of them. And, as everyone knows, they do.

This is how workers are in an unequal bargaining position. With these 'free' labour market conditions, each worker is of only 'marginal utility' (or usefulness) to the employer. Any one worker needs the job more than the employer needs them. Call this a different 'ratio of need'. While it's a supremely 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 view, equal trading partners. And with these being industrialised economies, when they say 'Go somewhere else if you don't like it', in another job you are usually up against

the same unequal trading relationship with the employer.

It is the most important feature of the system. Business people make money and workers make their living in this trade. The inequality of it is what enables the huge imbalance of wealth and power between business people (and public employers) and workers. It's how most wealth is acquired. Business owners use it to not pay staff the full price of what they sell their work for, and take the difference for themselves. 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 unrecognised unfairness is inflicted on their fellow-citizens, fellow-country(w)men who you 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 business people's organisation. It's up to us to do the same

as them - take the trouble to organise, act collectively, and aim to negotiate with them as equals.

But because the system is so established, accepted and poorly-understood, people don't notice it 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 'metropolitan elites'; and support maverick conservatives who get them to blame-anybody-and-anything-but-us-and-our-system.

We'll do better when we share a clear, factual, understanding of the system as a reference point for political debate. The System Explained provides one. It explains the roles and relationships, rewards, and penalties, obligations and protections, rights and wrongs, of public life. 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 by showing how we interact together ordinarily every day, without academic talk of economics, capitalism, liberalism, socialism or communism.

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 puts it above our heads, above us. 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, it is located in our normal experience. So

let's call it 'the business system', to 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 and 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, decisive political power, under any government, even without them acting directly in politics ...

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

...some of them organise and run the conservative media...

...and that –

...politics comes from this system, that business people dominate, not the other way round...

...politicians can regulate its unfairness but won't (conservatives) or don't enough (progressives).

... Conservative parties exist to obstruct the system from being regulated.

...They represent business people and it's their system.

... The system is what conservatives are set on conserving.

... politics is a process that 'rides-on-top' of the system, through which you might get improvements in how you and your fellow-workers are treated in it.

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

Conservatives claim, and liberals accept, that free markets provide everyone with 'opportunity'. But in our 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 - business people don't themselves operate as individuals!

Each and every day, all day, and 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 as people, 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 great 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 equivalent everyday roles, as workers, in unions...

... with this collective strength, stand up at work to the business class...

and to public sector managers... and...

...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 progressive media to counter the effect of the propagandist conservative media on political thinking. 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 independent communication of progressive attitudes and policies throughout society and politics, that will counter conservative media. (Social media is not ideal for this. It is not people acting together in substantive social organisations but mostly just people 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 dominant people in society, the business class, group themselves and others by often shallow 'identities' based on low-relevance attributes like skin colour, and

allow these identities to define their politics...

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

We need to persuade fellow-citizens to stop identifying themselves and others like this - by appearance, locality or personal preferences - but by more meaningful things like how they behave and by what they do – by how they act and interact in the practical world, of business, jobs, the economy and politics - by economic class (not, sillily, by mass culture)...

... 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. The System Explained will help, explaining the system clearly using everyday language and locating it in our daily experience.

We need to spread this explanation of the system... the rights and wrongs of it... show it is true, not just opinion, because it is drawn from observable everyday, life experience... 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.

This well-known cartoon sums it up

