

Before The Ten Minute Read proper, pages one to four of the full work - the title pages and 'Why This Work Is Needed' (more than four pages in this big text for smartphones)

The Title Pages

***How The Business Class Run Society
And How To Match Up To Them
At Work And In Politics***

by Ed McDonnell

It's through business and work that we get the most important things we need - money, housing, clothes, food, wi-fi; public support, health services. In business and work we work together - making things, providing services, that are bought and sold, or funded by public spending. We make our living, and some get wealthy. Politics is supposed to run it all

for us and government supposed to insure us against its shortcomings.

So how we relate in these activities is central to life.

And problems in fulfilling our needs start with us not having a clear view of how we do it, how we work together in the public arena, where some make their living and some get power and wealth; and how to make it work for everyone's benefit. This work provides one.

We call it 'the system', the economy, free markets and capitalism. But they sound like 'things', self-existing, outside and above us. And they don't refer to the actual core activities - business, work, trade. People often think property rights are the

basis of the system. Property is important but much of it is about storage and transfer of wealth. More important is the creation of wealth and control of the work process where wealth is made - control of labour. This work focusses on that.

It's not really a system, laid down somewhere. It's just the established rules of buying and selling, of contract law, including employment contracts. So better to call it 'How We Relate'. If we need shorthand for 'the system' - still a 'thing' that seems outside and above us? - call it 'the (everyday) business system.'

The business system, these trades we make every day, is the basis of society. Not politics and the state. Contract law brings order to it,

political assemblies make law and form governments to oversee it and provide public services. But governments and law come from the system - they don't make it.

How we relate enables business people, the business class, the wealthy - to dominate everyone else, to annex wealth, and to dominate politics too. To match up to them, at work and in politics, the rest need to do as they do, and organise.

People accept the business system like fish accept water, as if its our natural habitat. This explains how conservative parties get themselves elected into government despite being hostile to most people's interests. They mistreat the majority as policy but with everyone accepting the

business system, they can claim to be working for all, posing as just managers of 'the economy'.

They represent business people's interests and resist government of the system as, less regulated, it enables the power and wealth of their class, the business class. Progressive parties accept the system too. So, while claiming to run the country, all parties leave it to business people to run it.

So people are mis-treated whichever is in government.

As policy by conservatives, reluctantly by progressives.

Not seeing the system, or the business class, people blame 'politicians' so then believe extreme conservatives who say politicians and the state are a ruling elite - 'them'. But the elite

is the business class - running the economy, dominating government, the state and politics. They are the ruling class. All conservatives are of them and support them, including those like Trump. They divert people from blaming the business class into blaming each other via low-content identities. And into blaming progressive parties, who, failing to tackle the business system and the business class, enable the view 'They're all as bad as each other'. (They aren't.)

Conservatives have convinced people that the business system is the only way, so they take its relationships for granted, fail to base politics on it, and let conservatives divert them onto other issues. So this work might

seem distant from normal political discussion. Yet it is a grounded explanation of the essentials. All political thought, debate and action should be based on them. This work provides a mental foundation.

(More in 'Why People Should Read This Book' at page 351.)

It shows how we work together in the system, globally, how we cooperate 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.

'How We Relate' will help you make more sense of politics and the everyday world. It explains the key public relationships, from the

lived daily experience of ordinary working people, and shows how to make them fairer. It will help you talk about politics and work (which we need to do). A paper 'How To Talk To Each Other About Politics' is at page 465 of the full book.

Uniquely, 'How We Relate' identifies and explains the basic problem with the system - business people are organised, at work and in politics; the rest, mostly workers, are mostly not; that employers overpower each worker because they have many others; that this is what entitles workers to organise at work too, to unionise; that they desperately need to do, and to organise in politics as well. Here is the political argument to make

to business people and conservatives on the right to unionise: you assert business people's right to organise, collectively, in economic activity, as companies and corporations. The rest, mostly workers, are entitled to organise too.

Why This Work Is Needed

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 all relate to each other in making a living or getting wealthy - making goods, providing services, and selling them. Business, trade and work .

It's 'the economy' then politics.

Most people think there's a lot wrong with it. And that governments let us down. And we're even wrecking our own habitat. But rather than tackle the unfairness of the system we get 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 arena where interests are different is in how we produce goods and services to create wealth and make our living.

It involves us working together so much, so socially, it is so industrialised, so 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 of us making our living,

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 they are a class. 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, 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 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 that the government shouldn't govern!

This - leave the system alone, 'laissez-faire' - is the core of conservatism. 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.

When people vote in 'progressive' parties who genuinely aim to govern for all, they can't do enough for people to vote them in regularly. One, they can't much challenge the business class because they organise the economy. And two, because there's so many serious, long-standing relationships in the system, established in many laws and

institutions, they can't promise much change without a lot more backing from we voters.

So it's our fault as well - we accept the system too 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. They aren't even seen to exist.

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 do take positions on actual policies but others give up on politics and don't vote.

Some think political debate is exchanging broad views, in brief social exchanges, on vague

notions of 'capitalism', '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 actually are.

And almost everybody thinks it's all about the leaders of the political parties. Such as, Corbyn or Johnson, Starmer or Sunak; Biden or Trump. But it's about much more than them - it's about all of us and how we are organised and take part. But some workers are so

unaware of the business class's domination that they allow or even help their conservative parties to govern, repeatedly, against their own interests.

And people believe they can 'make it' on their own, especially in the US. But the operation of 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 just themselves. No actual policies, just following political leaders who promise salvation through hostility to

harmless fellow-citizens, or outsiders, not the business class.

It's all because we've not got an accurate, widely-held, view of the system, of how society works, 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 the system 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, How We Relate 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 it is the business class's organisation that enables their supremacy and that to stand up to them we need to organise too, as workers, at work and in politics.

Next, The Ten Minute Read proper

The Ten Minute Read of 'How We Relate In Business, Work & Politics

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'It's the system' - what his workmates would say to this writer when he argued against employers' power over workers – those who need a job - and how it enables them to annex wealth and get the influence 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 the great recession of 2008 to reform an economic system that has worked against most Americans for four decades.'

(The Observer 17-1-2021)

Humanity is in an unnecessary, ridiculous, 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 humanity's 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.

People, politicians and media commentators only talk about things that happen, not about how they come from how we all

interact in business, trade, 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 job trade, 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 the government to 'run the country'. But Presidents, Prime Ministers, Members of Congress, Members of Assemblies and Parliaments don't simply 'run the country'. They don't initiate

everything that happens in society - it, and they, come from society and from how people relate in the system, the business system.

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, far more better defined than what are commonly referred to as classes, based on far less significant attributes. Political parties and politicians come from

and represent these different classes, defined by functional relationships not by income or culture.

Each party claims to represent everyone's interests but it's not true. It's certainly not true 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 business people or for public bodies. We should call this big majority a class too, probably the working or worker class, but defined by their definite, vital, unarguable, role in the system, being a worker, and not by superficial attributes.

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 (personal) 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, to people with varying power and wealth, often far more 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.

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, private and public, in all this collectivism. Conservatives represent business people and that is the reason 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 only 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, often 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 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 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.

And in these industrialised economies, most employers have many staff, even small businesses. With the other staff producing whatever the business or public 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 get organised, 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 basic 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. How We Relate 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 system is what conservatives most want to conserve.

... the political process '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 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 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 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 progressive
media to counter the effect
on political thinking of
the 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. About 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.

This cartoon sums it up

