

Worker To Worker on Brexit, Trump and Populism

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This is written by a worker to fellow-workers. Not by a liberal, a commentator or member of any political elite. With the decision to leave the EU and the election of Trump, some of you responded to being badly treated by going for the wrong targets. And you allowed the real offenders off.

The people who oppress you are business people and the business system. It's that simple to identify and name them and their system. But we generally don't, yet, and while we don't, we can't get to grips with it. Progressives call it neoliberalism, a useless term; or it's called capitalism, free markets, maybe 'laissez-faire economics'. Its best called the free-market *business system*. Because that

includes, that the other terms don't, the central process in the system - business and work. *Our* work. Without it, how we are treated and our interests are barely visible behind all the fuss about markets and the abstraction of 'the economy.'

The problem people are big business people and not so much small business people. But small and big, they all demand and support and get the system that allows them to mistreat the great mass of people – the working class. Some of 'the white working class' feel hostile to people of other colours and adopt white-ism but don't seem to notice that the business class, the people who really mistreat them, are mostly white.

In all the talk about Brexit and Trump, and nationalist populism in

Europe, and the poor life conditions that prompted many working class voters in Britain and the USA to vote as they did, the provable fact that business people caused the real problems never gets a mention. The nearest, vague references are to 'the rich' or 'the corporations' or neo-liberalism.

And they aren't the reasons disgruntled Brexit, Trump and other supporters of populist politicians give. They blame foreigners, either 'them' in the European Union', or workers who move to get work, migrant workers. The nearest they get to recognising the real reasons are when they blame government and 'the establishment'; and when they vote just for 'change'. But that's not near enough. It's looking only as far as the politicians in the

political system, and that isn't the real system.

There's a reason why government and the establishment and the so-called political 'elites' let you down. It's because they, and we, rely on rich business people to organise our economy. We depend on them to organise jobs, goods and services. And they demand freedom to do things their way – unregulated, unfettered – and to get fabulous rewards for doing so.

Truth is, well known, there's enough wealth in our societies to sort this out if we could just get them under control and prepared to work for their fellow-countrymen and women. We could regulate them and re-distribute what there is. Share The

Wealth – and power – make union entitlement a basic right.

But not enough of us see it this way. So there's not enough of us pressurising politicians to take on business people. So we get parties like the US Democrats and the British Labour Party – this writer is a member - with reasonable intentions to the working class of all colours. But these parties are forced to recognise that we need business people, the business *class*, and have to work with them on their terms. We don't run the economy as socialists or producer co-ops, do we? So we rely on them.

And business people constantly reduce employment for us by investing in ever greater efficiency, automation, outsourcing, closing down in our areas and relocating.

That's the cause of the Rust Belt - business people having no social loyalty to their fellow-whites, their fellow-countrymen and women. And their financial elements operate like crazies and are incapable of running the system responsibly.

Progressive parties are not set up and backed enough by us to challenge them. So, if progressive parties can't take from them, because they threaten to not invest and generate jobs for us, how do progressive parties improve our lives? By chasing growth. Growth enables them to let rich business people keep plenty of wealth, while allowing us a bit more too. It enables public services and support to be increased by tax raised off the growth, not off the rich. It enables more jobs to replace the ones that

business people cut with automation and outsourcing.

Trouble is, none of it is under our control. They were allowed free rein up to 2008, produced a mad collapse, but helped and allowed to carry on, bailed out by us.

Instead of the biggest business people, the corporate 1%, many people voting for the UK to leave Europe, and people voting for Trump, targeted 'liberals' and 'metropolitan elites'. Why? Liberals are just business people or the better-off who care about poorer people. Do they prefer business people who *don't* care about them?

The hostility to them from disgruntled workers is because liberals have gone for the most obvious discriminations – skin, gender – and

some of you feel neglected by these issues, being treated badly not because of these but because of class. Yes, class is the invisible issue. You are badly treated by class. So are women and people of colour. What's happened is that the reasons for treating people badly by class are not recognised or tackled. Outside my written work, business people's rights to oppress workers are still widely accepted. They are challenged in the rest of my writings – see www.lookatthesystem.com See the charts *Its Your Money Not Theirs* about how to tackle their wealth.

What liberals have done, is recognised the obviously unfair discrimination suffered by working class women and people of colour, and done a bit to correct it, but not

recognised class oppression. You, oppressed white workers, have seen what liberals have done as favouritism and rebelled. But you've rebelled against the wrong thing because you are barely aware of the right thing to tackle – business people's power over *all* of us. That stands to be tackled by us recognising and trumpeting our right to respond to business people's power by organising – see *The Right To Organise In Unions*.

Business people, their power and their free-market business system are given a free pass. Their system is seen as just like a law of nature, a law of physics. Its oppressive relationships are seen as untouchable. So, that being the case, many Leave voters and Trump voters identified their interests by national identity, by nativism, by

colour, white-ism or sexism. This is all nonsense, either way. Skin colours, whether white, Hispanic, Asian, or black, and gender, are not relationships. You can't ask anything of anyone by these shallow identifiers, they have no obligation to you. There's little real loyalty by colour, most of all not from the white business class to the white working class. There's no promise to stand by you in getting jobs, nor standing by you *in* jobs, nor in getting good health services, education, and justice. There's none of that available for you from the rich, from white business people, for sure. They are against you having job guarantees, against you having wage rises, against collective health services – they don't want to be paying tax for your benefit. You'd think identifying by

nation – USA! – USA! – USA! And ‘Take back control’ – should guarantee you such things. But they don't, not with these people

There are real relationships to identify by. What we have and need to recognise are these real relationships, mainly the one we have as workmates, organised. As workers, unionised. One good thing out of Leave and Trump's support – the great unmentionable is back - the term working class has come back into use.

There's more to do on it though. Working class, in terms of jobs, the economy and politics, surely means anyone who works for someone else for a living. That includes the half of the working class who are masked and mis-defined defined as being middle

class. This defines, people, uselessly, by income not job status.

The vote on the EU in Britain, and the votes for Trump, and votes for populist politicians in Europe, Italy, Hungary, Poland, are people taking opportunities given to them to strike out against being mistreated. But identifying by nationality, by being white, by white-ism is easy but useless. Many have taken that opportunity but it's going for the wrong targets.

It's easy because to identify instead by real, functional relationships, you have to do something. You have to join a real organisation – like a union - and make real commitments to each other. National identity and white-ism is easy because you don't have to do anything. No input, no commitments.

Just express hostility to others, vote that way. But what results do you expect? Business people and Farage and Trump might do things against minorities. But they won't do anything real for you. No job protection, no decent wages, no housing policy, no health service.

Trump did attack Free Trade in the USA election for President, with some hostility directed at American big business people for exporting jobs. But far more towards foreigners, like China. Trouble is, free trade is better than protectionism, better for total trade. The thing is not to oppose it but to look at who gets the benefits. The big business people, the corporate owners, stock holders? If they want it, ok. But make them pay some of it down.

For those who are grouped as outsiders by national identity and by white-ism - the victims of discrimination and scapegoating - there's a strong trend to seeing politics as being about identity too. But *positive* identity by colour and gender is also low in meaning. Yes, there is a shared issue of oppression, placed upon you by white-ists and some men. And it has to be opposed. But there are far more meaningful relationships. For example – working class women are more oppressed by their class than by their gender. Same with people of colour. There's no real relationship in colour and gender. No organisation relating to jobs, housing, education, health services and the rest. The discrimination is to be opposed, of course. But identifying by

it is accepting it. There's more to you than your gender or colour so don't self-define by it. Those who do don't see the centrality of free-market business and job relationships, of the main identities - business class identity and working class identity.

Identity needs to come from real relationships. Maybe family. Maybe sports teams. Best – from being able to rely on each other at work, against bosses' bossiness. Not enough of us do. And talking politics to each other as organised workmates. Not just locally, but across your employers operation. Which is often worldwide.