

Politics is all about fighting corporate power

Published: January 13, 2026, 8:24 pm

[This morning's Guardian's editorial](#) on the independence debate includes an interesting comment of universal concern:

The reality for modern nation states is that they all face a global economic order in which corporate power is in the ascendant, threatening the livelihoods of the poor and averagely well-off with no respect for borders, and against which most elected politicians can only deploy limited authority. This is what modern politics is fundamentally about.

I do agree that a great deal of what modern politics is about is the relationship between corporate power, the state and the people it represents.

I also agree with the subtle wording of the first sentence. It is true that '**most** elected politicians can only deploy limited authority'. I add the emphasis with care because it is all too easy to overlook it in the original.

It is not true that all politicians need, by definition, suffer this complaint. Most do because they choose to shackle themselves to the interests of the corporation and so voluntarily curtail their capacity to act. That, of course, is the act of the cowardly politician as described in my book, *The Courageous State*.

What is clear in that case is that if this is the issue that modern politics is fundamentally all about then we need politicians willing to be open about it, to debate it, and to stand up against that interest when it is appropriate to do so rather than capitulate to it.

[France capitulated to corporate interests yesterday.](#)

[Deloitte has issued a demand that any future UK government capitulate](#) in advance of next year's election.

Some elements of UK politics are dedicated to granting Deloitte their wish whenever they ask.

What's need are politicians who will represent the people of this country to ensure they get what they really need.

Alex Salmond was playing that card last night for all it was worth. It will boost him. But who have we in the Rest of the UK saying the same thing? Caroline Lucas, undoubtedly. But who else? Some in Labour, definitely. And once we had some Lib Dems, but that seems to have been a long time ago now.

In that case what modern politics is all about is not just the challenge of the corporation but why there is no adequate response to it, because that's at least as worrying