## Role of the Ballot

#### Dominant epistemologies prevent cost benefit analysis of policies

Jackson 15 - Richard Jackson, professor of peace studies at The National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, in Critical Studies on Terrorism, Published online: 09 Apr 2015 “The epistemological crisis of counterterrorism” [http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2015.1009762, Vol. 8, No. 1, 33–54] Accessed 11/12/21 SAO

The significance of the epistemological crisis lies primarily in its consequences for counterterrorism thought and practice – which are inextricably bound together and inseparable, in any case. That is, the epistemological crisis can be understood as generative of certain kinds of thinking, actions and practices. As Daase and Kessler (2007, 412) describe the process by which contemporary understandings of terrorism construct the basis for action: “It is the relationship between what we know, what we do not know, what we cannot know and what we do not like to know that determines the cognitive frame for political practice.” Or, as Zulaika (2012, 58) quoting Merton notes: “If men (sic) define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (1968, 475). Once the premises of the epistemological crisis have been accepted as true, and especially once they have been institutionalised and internalised, they then form the logic or cognitive frame for action. From another perspective, it can be argued that, once accepted and institutionalised, the epistemological crisis acts as a kind of policy paradigm, forming a central part of the “elite assumptions that constrain the cognitive range of useful solutions available to policy makers” (Campbell 1998b, 385). Crucially, the epistemological crisis is not about individual or collective negligence or the personal failures of counterterrorist officials; those in charge of preventing terrorism are likely to be genuinely concerned, responsible individuals acting in what they perceive to be the best interests of society (Zulaika 2012, 52). Rather, counterterrorist failings and abuses are the result of the broader epistemic structures and conditions – the policy paradigm – **under which officials are forced to think and act**. Apart from the trillions of dollars and millions of people in the “security-industrial complex” who are currently invested in preventing the coming terror (see Zulaika 2012, 51; Baker-Beall and Robinson 2014), the first and most obvious consequences of the epistemological crisis of counterterrorism are all the **fantasy-infused security practices and** postures discussed earlier, as well as the extensive programmes of **security theatre** enacted at airports and elsewhere, the **institutionalisation of the state of exception, and socially disciplinary practices** such as mass surveillance, control orders, counter-radicalisation programmes, resilience initiatives and the like. Zulaika (2009, 18) argues that contemporary counterterrorism represents a form of thinking that resembles “the mental world of medieval witchcraft and inquisitorial nonsense”. Considering some of the magical realist thinking inherent in contemporary counter-radicalisation programmes (see also HeathKelly 2012a), including the official expression of notions of pre-crime, the concept of “risky citizens”, efforts to control words and images considered to be capable of infection, and more, such an assessment is entirely apposite. Another obvious and related consequence of the epistemological crisis of counterterrorism is the institutionalisation and sedimentation of a politics of fear (see Jackson 2013, 2007). In an atmosphere of permanently “waiting for terror” and moral panic, threat levels are raised and lowered by officials, often on the basis of fantastical projection rather than hard evidence, and public fear is manipulated for electoral gain and the promotion of non-terrorism-related political projects. In the process, the interplay of knowledge and ignorance transforms a public fear of terrorism into a general and **permanent epistemic fear** (Zulaika and Douglass 1996), one **which can be easily manipulated for political gain**. From this perspective, the epistemological crisis of counterterrorism is functional to political elites who can manipulate uncertainty and the underlying logic of the crisis for direct political and material gain. A third predictable consequence of the epistemological crisis in terms of risk management and preemption are the well-documented and highly destructive counterterrorist practices of preemptive war, the use of drones to kill terrorist suspects, torture and rendition, control orders and mass surveillance. For example, given that we cannot know for certain who the terrorist is, only that they certainly exist and are plotting mass destruction, and that we cannot take the risk that inaction will allow them to complete their mission, it makes perfect sense to include as many people as possible on any terrorist watch list. It is now known that in the United States, “More than one million names are included on secret lists of suspected terrorists maintained by the Obama administration”. While “people on the list are likely to be subject to enhanced surveillance”, not surprisingly in the context of the epistemological crisis, “almost half of the people on a key government list don’t have known ties to any specific terrorist organisation” (Lee 2014; emphasis added). Given the way that uncertainty and the unknown nevertheless create an imperative to act preemptively, it is perhaps surprising that many more people are not on the secret list. Of course, the reason for this is likely to be that virtually everyone is under surveillance anyway, as the Edward Snowden revelations demonstrate. A fourth consequence of the epistemological crisis is the many “false positives” (Heath-Kelly 2012a) produced by the moral imperative to act, even if “it turns out to be wrong”. Here we can note the hundreds of thousands of people killed in the invasion of Iraq aimed at preempting the “world’s most dangerous regimes… [from] threaten[ing] us with the world’s most destructive weapons”, as George Bush famously argued. Similarly, thousands of others have been rendered, detained, imprisoned, tortured, assassinated in drone strikes, or like Jean Charles de Menezes, shot to death in domestic counterterrorist operations. In each case, the moral imperative to act preemptively overwhelmed any caution which might have been engendered by uncertainty or lack of knowledge. Official calculations under the conditions of the epistemological crisis state that it is better to act than not act, even if it turns out to be wrong and leaves innocent people dead or injured. Similar logic applies to the greatly enhanced security measures across society, mass surveillance, de-radicalisation programmes, control orders, and the like, as well as efforts to curtail opposition and dissent in all forms, in case it proves to be the work of terrorists. Knowing that there are terrorists in our midst, but not knowing who they are or what they are planning, we are bound to watch everyone, detain anyone, secure everything, preempt attacks and prevent terrorist intentions from emerging in the first place. Another consequence of the epistemological crisis is that the symptoms – or the “signs of future threat”, as Martin (2014) puts it – rather than the deeper roots or causes of terrorism become the primary focus of action.6 That is, preventing the inevitable coming attacks becomes the main objective of counterterrorism, rather than the prevention of the circumstances and conditions that lead to terrorism in the first instance (Frank 2014, 333). This is both a consequence and cause of the taboo which prevents direct knowledge of terrorist subjectivity. It is also the result of rendering previous knowledge about terrorist behaviour obsolete, the fatalism of accepting that terrorism will occur whatever actions are taken, and the processes of knowledge subjugation about the kind of policies and circumstances which give rise to terrorism in the first place. In any case, counterterrorism efforts have become fixated on the anticipation of imagined future plots, rather than focused on the current actual threat and its causes (Mueller 2006). Finally, **the epistemological crisis precludes the possibility of the rational evaluation or cost-benefit analysis and assessment**, of counterterrorist policies (Mueller and Stewart 2011), and acts to pacify dissent and opposition to state security programmes. Instead, in a context bound by anti-knowledge and the unknown, speculation, imagination and counter-factual, unprovable knowledge becomes a substitute form of assessment, and the (non)victims of terrorist attacks that never occurred (but could have) are counted as evidence of success: Fighting terror is like fighting car accidents: one can count the casualties but not those whose lives were spared by prevention. Hundreds, if not thousands, of Israelis go about their lives without knowing that they are unhurt because their murderers met their fate before they got the chance to carry out their diabolical missions. This silent multitude is the testament to the policy’s success. (Luft 2003, 3)

#### Thus, The Role of the ballot is to vote for the debater who best adopts an attitude of epistemic disobedience to dominant security paradigms.

Jackson 15 - Richard Jackson, professor of peace studies at The National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, in Critical Studies on Terrorism, 2015 “The epistemological crisis of counterterrorism” [http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2015.1009762, Vol. 8, No. 1, 33–54] SAO

Given the vast suffering engendered by the global war on terrorism since 2001, the spread of unethical, illegal and counterproductive practices such as torture, rendition, extrajudicial killings, mass surveillance and control orders (among others), and the economic and social costs of contemporary counterterrorism, there is a clear normative responsibility to try and resist and deconstruct the current epistemological crisis and all its harmful effects. Notwithstanding the iron logic of the epistemological crisis, its widespread acceptance and its inherently expansionary and self-replicating nature, there are a number of potential avenues for resistance. However, to initiate resistance, it is crucial that we first adopt an attitude of what Walter Mignolo (2009) calls “epistemic disobedience” to the dominant paradigm. Although this term is employed by Mignolo in the context of de-colonial thought, it can readily be applied to the hegemonic counterterrorist paradigm and the urgent need for the “epistemic de-linking” of the unknown and the imperative to act; “the unveiling of epistemic silences” or knowledge de-subjugation (Jackson 2012b) about risk, actors and political violence; the challenging of the “epistemic privilege” held by security experts and officials; and the need to “change the terms of the conversation” regarding how we as a society deal with potential threats of political violence, particularly in terms of the material and legal sacrifices we are prepared to take. More specific suggestions for resisting the epistemological crisis include Zulaika and Douglass’s (1996) suggestion of employing strategies of exorcism to try and rid society of its ontological terror. In this regard, Charlotte Heath-Kelly (2012b) argues for the important role of laughter and humour as a way of creating space within which terrorism fears and obsessions can be exorcised and deconstructed. In a similar vein, Zulaika (2012) suggests a strategy aimed at heightening the contradictions within the epistemological crisis through encouraging more fantasy and cooperating with official activities, particularly those that are obviously bizarre. In this respect, proliferating fantasy scenarios and engaging in constant reporting of “suspicious” activities could overload and overwhelm counterterrorist structures, thereby making the paradigm practically unworkable

#### Prefer my ROB

#### [1] Judge Intervention: Dominant paradigms shape subconscious thought

Bargh 17 - John Bargh, professor of social psychology at Yale University, The Washington Post, November 22, 2017 “At Yale, we conducted an experiment to turn conservatives into liberals. The results say a lot about our political divisions.” [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2017/11/22/at-yale-we-conducted-an-experiment-to-turn-conservatives-into-liberals-the-results-say-a-lot-about-our-political-divisions/?utm\_term=.163c4d1d7be6] Accessed 4/24/18 SAO

Conservatives, it turns out, react more strongly to physical threat than liberals do. In fact, their greater concern with physical safety seems to be determined early in life: In one University of California study, the more fear a 4-year-old showed in a laboratory situation, the more conservative his or her political attitudes were found to be 20 years later. Brain imaging studies have even shown that the fear center of the brain, the amygdala, is actually larger in conservatives than in liberals. And many other laboratory studies have found that when adult liberals experienced physical threat, their political and social attitudes became more conservative (temporarily, of course). But no one had ever turned conservatives into liberals. Until we did. In a new study to appear in a forthcoming issue of the European Journal of Social Psychology, my colleagues Jaime Napier, Julie Huang and Andy Vonasch and I asked 300 U.S. residents in an online survey their opinions on several contemporary issues such as gay rights, abortion, feminism and immigration, as well as social change in general. The group was two-thirds female, about three-quarters white, with an average age of 35. Thirty-percent of the participants self-identified as Republican, and the rest as Democrat. But before they answered the survey questions, we had them engage in an intense imagination exercise. They were asked to close their eyes and richly imagine being visited by a genie who granted them a superpower. For half of our participants, this superpower was to be able to fly, under one’s own power. For the other half, it was to be completely physically safe, invulnerable to any harm. If they had just imagined being able to fly, their responses to the social attitude survey showed the usual clear difference between Republicans and Democrats — the former endorsed more conservative positions on social issues and were also more resistant to social change in general. But if they had instead just imagined being completely physically safe, the Republicans became significantly more liberal — their positions on social attitudes were much more like the Democratic respondents. And on the issue of social change in general, the Republicans’ attitudes were now indistinguishable from the Democrats. Imagining being completely safe from physical harm had done what no experiment had done before — it had turned conservatives into liberals. In both instances, we had manipulated a deeper underlying reason for political attitudes, the strength of the basic motivation of safety and survival. The boiling water of our social and political attitudes, it seems, can be turned up or down by changing how physically safe we feel. This is why it makes sense that liberal politicians intuitively portray danger as manageable — recall FDR’s famous Great Depression era reassurance of “nothing to fear but fear itself,” echoed decades later in Barack Obama’s final State of the Union address — and why President Trump and other Republican politicians are instead likely to emphasize the dangers of terrorism and immigration, relying on fear as a motivator to gain votes. In fact, anti-immigration attitudes are also linked directly to the underlying basic drive for physical safety. For centuries, arch-conservative leaders have often referred to scapegoated minority groups as “germs” or “bacteria” that seek to invade and destroy their country from within. President Trump is an acknowledged germaphobe, and he has a penchant for describing people — not only immigrants but political opponents and former Miss Universe contestants — as “disgusting.” “Immigrants are like viruses” is a powerful metaphor, because in comparing immigrants entering a country to germs entering a human body, it speaks directly to our powerful innate motivation to avoid contamination and disease. Until very recently in human history, not only did we not have antibiotics, we did not even know how infections occurred or diseases transmitted, and cuts and open wounds were quite dangerous. (In the American Civil War, for example, 60 out of every 1,000 soldiers died not by bullets or bayonets, but by infections.) Therefore, we reasoned, making people feel safer about a dangerous flu virus should serve to calm their fears about immigrants — and making them feel more threatened by the flu virus should cause them to be more against immigration than they were before. In a 2011 study, my colleagues and I showed just that. First, we reminded our nationwide sample of liberals and conservatives about the threat of the flu virus (during the H1N1 epidemic), and then measured their attitudes toward immigration. Afterward we simply asked them if they’d already gotten their flu shot or not. It turned out that those who had not gotten a flu shot (feeling threatened) expressed more negative attitudes toward immigration, while those who had received the vaccination (feeling safe) had more positive attitudes about immigration. In another study, using hand sanitizer after being warned about the flu virus had the same effect on immigration attitudes as had being vaccinated. A simple squirt of Purell after we had raised the threat of the flu had changed their minds. It made them feel safe from the dangerous virus, and this made them feel socially safe from immigrants as well. Our study findings may have a silver lining. Here’s how: All of us believe that our social and political attitudes are based on good reasons and reflect our important values. But we also need to recognize how much they can be influenced subconsciously by our most basic, powerful motivations for safety and survival. Politicians on both sides of the aisle know this already and attempt to manipulate our votes and party allegiances by appealing to these potent feelings of fear and of safety. Instead of allowing our strings to be pulled so easily by others, we can become more conscious of what drives us and work harder to base our opinions on factual knowledge about the issues, including information from outside our media echo chambers. Yes, our views can harden given the right environment, but our work shows that they are actually easier to change than we might think.

#### [2] Ethics: A focus on the contemporary effects of policymaking is a prerequisite to normative analysis

Holleman 15 - Hannah Holleman, assistant professor of sociology at Amherst College, The Monthly Review, October 2015 “Method in Ecological Marxism” [http://monthlyreview.org/2015/10/01/method-in-ecological-marxism/, accessed 10/12/16] SAO

A final feature of Marx’s methodology uniting the approaches of many third stage ecological Marxists is the commitment to living the eleventh thesis, or keeping at the forefront that the goal is not merely to interpret the world, but to change it. This means our work, including our theoretical development, must link philosophy, ethics, and critical social analysis. In Biology Under the Influence, Lewontin and Levins wrote that “any theory of society has to undergo a test, What does it do to Children?”33 This was in the context of a discussion of methodology, specifically “Strategies for Abstraction”—the title of the chapter in which the topic appears. Raising the question of the implications for children of our work in developing social theory illustrated the impossibility of separating questions of reality from questions of ethics. The impossibility arises because “theories support practices that serve some and harm others.” While “philosophers go through great contortions to separate questions of reality from questions of ethics, the historic process unites them…. Ethicists may debate, [for example], over dinner, the rational reasons for feeding the hungry, but for people in poverty food is not a philosophical problem.”34 For ecological Marxists, “**even the most committed investigation of ethics cannot be a substitute for a radical critique of politics** in its frustrating and alienating contemporary reality.”35 “For Marx,” as Cornel West wrote, “an adequate theoretic account of ethical notions, e.g., ‘just’ or ‘right,’ must understand them as human conventional attempts to regulate social practices in accordance with the requirements of a specific system of production.”36 In the end, István Mészáros suggests, the measure of the **success of our ethics in practice “can only be” their “ability to constantly maintain awareness of and reanimate practical criticism towards the real target of socialist transformation:** to go beyond capital in all its actually existing and feasible forms through the redefinition and practically viable rearticulation of the labor process.”37

#### Reject Theory Arguments

#### [1] Agonism: Notions of fairness in agonistic games are hopelessly vague and ideologically reinforce imperialism

Lee 17 - Jonathan Rey Lee, Analog Game Studies, March 20th, 2017 “CAPITALISM AND UNFAIRNESS IN CATAN: OIL SPRINGS” [http://analoggamestudies.org/2017/03/capitalism-and-unfairness-in-catan-oil-springs/] Accessed 9/14/20 SAO

Before the first turn was over, I knew I had won—a circumstance typically only achievable through overwhelming skill, prognostication, or cheating. In this case, however, the game itself gave me an insurmountable advantage via my starting position. It’s tempting to label this as poor game design1 since it certainly violates the principle of fairness almost universally assumed in competitive gaming. Yet in a world where the myth of a ‘level playing field’ obscures and authorizes ongoing social inequalities, problematizing the notion of ‘fairness’ in gameplay may provide unique insight into the ‘fairness’ of capitalist culture. This insight is possible because contemporary games are cultural phenomena that have also become media phenomena. Games, that is, need not merely reflect culture, but have critical potential for reflecting on culture. The following reflections work toward developing such a critical paradigm by showing how the Oil Springs scenario for The Settlers of Catan plays out ethical dilemmas raised by the emergent and systemic inequalities generated by capitalist systems. In order to analyze these inequalities, this paper first explores game balance as the interplay between emergent inequality (how games determine winners and losers through the inputs of skill and chance) and systemic inequality (how an asymmetrical game state may privilege certain players).2 This paper then analyzes how the Oil Springs scenario for Catan links resource generation to land ownership, the runaway leader problem to the tendency of capital to accrue capital, and industrialization to market destabilization and ecological catastrophe. Finally, I reflect on the experience of enacting inequality within an unbalanced game system. Throughout, I suggest that while competitive games are typically designed to produce emergent inequality from within a level playing field (systemic equality), the rules that govern such emergent inequality are systemic in ways that allow for critically engaging systemic inequality. Fair and Balanced While not all games are competitive,3 the history of games is thoroughly intertwined with agon (or ‘**contestation’) as an organizing principle of Western culture**. According to French sociologist Roger Caillois, agonistic games play out agonistic culture “like a combat in which equality of chances is artificially created, in order that adversaries should confront each other under ideal conditions, susceptible of giving precise and incontestable value to the winner’s triumph.”4 With mathematical precision, agonistic games create balanced contests that reflect the ideal of agonistic culture: a perfectly level playing field that produces a genuine meritocracy. Yet, even while reflecting this agonistic ideal, the complicated balancing act performed by actual games demonstrates the limits of this ideal. Recognizing that fairness is problematic even within the carefully-controlled medium of games should also call into question the very possibility of a level playing field in arenas as complex as global capitalism. Fairness, like beauty, is left to the eye of the beholder. What standards determine which is most fair: that everyone gets the same amount of pie (equality), that everyone gets pie according to their need for pie (equity),5 or that everyone gets pie in proportion to how much money or labor they invested in the pie (meritocracy)? There are similarly divergent ways of considering fairness in games. Caillois is adamant about the fundamentality of fairness, arguing that games of both skill and chance (agon and alea) “require absolute equity, an equality of mathematical chances of most absolute precision. Admirably precise rules, meticulous measures, and scientific calculations are evident.”6 Taken together, however, skill and chance presuppose contradictory paradigms of equality, making it difficult to determine what counts as fair for games that incorporate both (as most contemporary tabletop games do). Similarly, although Caillois argues that “The search for equality is so obviously essential to the rivalry that it is re-established by a handicap for players of different classes,”7 notion of fairness behind the handicap does not reinforce but rather undermines the agonistic ideal. Such contradictory messages suggest that fairness is a highly subjective notion. That is: standards of fairness vary not only according to individual preferences, but also by context (casual gaming vs. tournaments), game genre (wargames vs. party games), and even circumstance (games are generally only ‘unfair’ when one is losing). Unsurprisingly, this variability amongst subjective standards yields a spectrum of paradigms for promoting balance, a somewhat vague negative term that presents fairness as ‘not unbalanced.’ Most commonly, games that tend towards symmetry tolerate emergent inequality but very little systemic inequality: symmetrical games allow skill and chance to separate players as the game progresses, but provide roughly parallel pathways to victory. In such games, the inevitable asymmetries are typically either minimized (playing first often confers an advantage, but usually a minimal one) or counterbalanced by other asymmetries of relatively equal value (the komi in Go compensates black’s advantage in going first with a point bonus given to the white player). Asymmetrical games extend this latter technique by counterbalancing different ways of playing (via differing pieces, abilities, rules, goals, etc.) to create a more or less equal game balance. Thus, asymmetrical game design provides two possibilities for exploring systemic inequalities. Balanced asymmetrical games can explore themes of inequity while maintaining an environment of fair play that adopts a perspective of critical distance—the player observes the interplay of differences that contribute to inequity without being immersed in the experience of inequity itself. By contrast, deliberately unbalanced asymmetrical games can explore inequity both thematically and procedurally, immersing players in a fundamentally inequitable world. To advocate critical play with and against capitalist systems, there are good reasons to challenge any standard of competitive balance that supports the myth of capitalism as a level playing field. **Insisting on perfectly balanced games is not just an impossible ideal; it** is a problematic one. Balanced games imagine idealized worlds that **may reinforce the deep cultural assumption that contestation is a** practical and **ethical way of organizing society**. Yet, there is a substantial disconnect between the fair and balanced worlds of gameplay and the many systemic inequalities that emerge in everyday societies. In practice, major genres of competitive game design—such as wargames, race games, betting games, and economic strategy games—often uncritically invoke and thereby reinforce broader forms of cultural contestation. Strategic wargames, for example, may intellectualize war tactics while glossing over the cost of violence. Similarly, economic strategy games may glamorize profiteering while failing to represent exploitation. For instance, Monopoly depicts rents as an arena for capitalist competition but ignores the consequences for tenants, worker placement games often reinforce the dehumanizing representation of laborers as human resources,8 and Catan fails to represent the violence of settler colonialism.9 And even as these games ignore disenfranchised populations, they ask players to become complicit in the systems that produce such disenfranchisement: the participatory medium of games often entangles player agency with the logic of capitalism by promoting a particularly capitalist model of agency—a self-interested agonistic impulse that plays out within a quantifiable, rule-governed system of exchange. Monopoly board There is perhaps no clearer example of the intersection of games and capitalism than Monopoly, of which Caillois writes, “The game of Monopoly does not follow but rather reproduces the function of Capitalism.”[ref]Caillois, p. 61.[/ref] Ironically, the game industry appropriated Monopoly from a game explicitly designed to demonstrate social inequality—The Landlord’s Game (patented 1904; this image from 1906) by Elizabeth Magie. Originally designed to demonstrate Henry George’s notion that the infrastructure of renting properties consolidated wealth in the hands of landowners at the expense of their tenants, The Landlord’s Game has resonances with the issue of land ownership discussed in the next section. (CC Wikimedia Commons) Although the way that games are more generally implicated in capitalism10 (and vice versa)11 deserves more critique, this parallelism may also provide games like Catan with a special critical potential to expose systemic inequality. For instance, in The First Nations of Catan, game designer and scholar Greg Loring-Albright describes how he developed “a balanced, asymmetrical strategy game” that “creates a narrative for Catan wherein indigenous peoples exist, interact with settlers, and have a fair chance of surviving the encounter by winning the game.”12 As discussed above, this type of game represents a critical intervention into historical inequalities while minimizing systemic gameplay inequalities, such as ones that might give the indigenous peoples a less than “fair chance.” By contrast, Catan and its Oil Springs scenario are mostly symmetrical and, if not actually unbalanced, certainly balanced unstably. With respect to Catan, Oil Springs makes more explicit the thematic connection to capitalism and, in a related move, makes the game balance even less stable “to draw attention to important challenges humanity faces, in relation to the resources that modern society depends on.”13 It accomplishes this by adding to the five original pastoral resources in Catan the modern resource of Oil, which is simultaneously more powerful (it counts as two standard resources), more flexible (it can be used as two of any resource), and more dangerous (its use triggers ecological catastrophes). By raising the stakes in these ways, Oil Springs further unbalances Catan to make a point about emergent social inequality tied to the unequal distribution of resources. Playing Capitalism Capitalism is far too multifaceted for any game—even one with as many variants and expansions as Catan—to model fully. Yet, games can indeed critically play with capitalism by condensing capitalist principles into their game systems through the systemic constraints and affordances that structure game interactions. Rather than describing capitalism, many agonistic games are themselves simple capitalist systems in which self-interested players engage in more or less free market competition with each other. Certain game designs, therefore, are not only tied to the agonistic logic behind capitalism, but are unique microcosmic economies that can represent specific facets of capitalism. The abstraction of Catan, for instance, obscures the history of settler colonialism and the exploitation of labor to focus instead on portraying land ownership as a lynchpin of modern capitalism, both in relation to resource generation and the tendency of capital to accrue capital. Similarly, the mechanics in Oil Springs focus on the role of the natural resource of oil as fuel for industrial capitalism by showing how industrialization accelerates resource production and exploits the environment. For Karl Marx, ownership of private property14 precludes fair compensation of workers by granting the capitalist (the holder of capital[refMarx defines capital thusly: “Capital consists of raw materials, instruments of labor and means of subsistence of all kinds, which are utilized in order to produce new raw materials, new instruments of labor and new means of subsistence. All these component parts of capital are creation of labor, products of labor, accumulated labor. Accumulated labor which serves as a means of new production is capital.” See Robert C. Tucker, ed. The Marx-Engels Reader. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978, p. 207.[/ref]]) legal ‘rights’ the value generated by production without requiring that they contribute any labor towards generating that value. Land in Catan reflects this model by automatically generating resources which are given directly to the player/landowner, completely bypassing the question of labor. Instead, the emergent inequality is between rival capitalists played by the game participants. Although class differences are not represented, these emergent inequalities are structurally linked with class differentiation. Indeed, private property is problematic for Marx primarily because it forms the conditions for emergent inequalities to become systemic inequalities through wealth consolidation. Thus, private property parallels an emergent asymmetry known in game design as the runaway leader problem, in which it becomes increasingly difficult to catch the lead player as the game progresses. This occurs in any game design—such as Catan—that links point accumulation and resource generation, creating a feedback loop such that the further one is towards achieving victory the more resources one gains to reinvest in that progress. In contrast to a game like Dominion, in which accumulating victory points can actually reduce the effectiveness of one’s resource-generating engine, in Catan the closer one is to victory the faster one should move toward victory.15 The idiom it takes money to make money captures this fact about capitalism, which Marx describes as “the necessary result of competition” being “the accumulation of capital in a few hands, and thus the restoration of monopoly in a more terrible form” (70). In fact, emergent and systemic inequalities often do synergize in this way as the material consequences of emergent inequalities become concretized as systemic as they are passed down from generation to generation, maintaining fairly resilient wealth disparities between different social and ethnic groups. Catan For Marx, these problems with land ownership are only intensified in industrial capitalism, in which ownership over the machinery of production further disenfranchises the industrial worker. This is precisely the shift in emphasis behind Oil Springs, which introduces Oil not just as one more roughly equivalent commodity, but one which radically unbalances Catan’s market economy. Representing the increasing pace of production from pre-industrial to industrial societies, one unit of Oil is worth two resources. In fact, it is worth two of any resource, which means that the strategic value of a single Oil resource ranges from two to eight resources (since it can take up to 4 resources to trade for a resource of one’s choice), making Oil so much more valuable than other resources that it seriously unbalances the game. In addition, Oil is required for building a Metropolis, the most powerful building in the game. Depicting how new industrial processes destabilize existing economic relationships, Oil Springs shows how the problems of capitalist land ownership are compounded when such land contains scarce resource reserves that are essential to industry. Such resources encourage relationships of dependence not only over renters and laborers (who are nowhere represented in Catan), but also over other industrialists who require these resources. Thus, the game makes the inequality between different starting positions more dramatic to depict a shift in modern geopolitics away from territory being valued primarily for it land, population, and location to being valued primarily for its strategic resources. While Oil Springs does have mechanisms that restore some balance, such as keeping Oil off the highest-probability hexes and capping the amount of Oil a player may hold at one time,16 its primary mechanisms for balancing Oil ironically further unbalance the game. By making Oil use precipitate ecological disasters, Oil Springs highlights the costs of industrial capitalism and makes an implicit ecocritical statement about how environmental consequences affect us all. They affect us, that is, randomly but not equally. Demonstrating that even negative consequences can be exploited by the industrial capitalist, the game’s two forms of environmental disaster turned out to be less damaging to me than to other players. The first environmental disaster, in which rising water levels destroy coastal settlements, played in my favor because I planned to exploit Oil and therefore avoided building coastal settlements.17 The second disaster, representing ‘industrial pollution,’ randomly strikes individual hexes, causing them to permanently cease to produce resources. More precisely, it does this to the ‘natural’ resources—affecting all hexes except for Oil Springs, which continue to produce after a reduction in the shared Oil reserves. Thus, because I was disproportionally less accountable for the consequences of my actions, I was able to safely initiate risky behavior that the risk-averse players suffered from. As risk and accountability can become unhinged in a free-market society that pushes for deregulation, Oil Springs speaks to the fact that those most responsible for climate change—be they individuals, corporations, or nations—do not generally bear the brunt of the consequences.18 Oil Springs The Disaster Track from the Oil Springs Scenario. Every time an Oil resources is used, it moves a marker along this track, triggering an ecological disaster if it reaches the final space (this takes 5 Oil in the 3-4 player game and 8 Oil in the 5-6 player game). If this occurs 5 times in total, the game immediately ends and no one wins. Image used for purposes of critique. In all the aforementioned ways, the game systems of Catan and Oil Springs use emergent inequalities to reflect on various systemic inequalities. This conflation, however, raises another question of fairness, namely how systemic inequalities emerge. In the case of Catan, this question becomes how to distribute land that has such intrinsically unequal value that it is sometimes possible to accurately predict the winner based on the starting positions (as in my case). The game attempts to solve this by using a snake draft to organize how players select their starting positions. Fairness is achieved not by creating equal spaces, but by assigning fundamentally unequal spaces using the mechanisms of emergent inequality: skill and chance (agon and alea). There is a fundamental difference, however, in the role these two forms of emergent inequality play in the deep interpenetration of games and culture. For Caillois, whereas agonistic games reflect the meritocratic ideal of cultural contestation, aleatory games play with the fundamental uncertainty of life—they are ludic, even carnivalesque experiments in fatalism. Unlike the triumphalism of agon, therefore, the aleatory elements of games explore consequentiality beyond the limits of human agency. This explains, for Caillois, how aleatory social institutions such as gambling and lotteries counterbalance the fundamentally agonistic structure of society by providing a faint hope that any individual may leap out of a condition of systemic inequality through an emergent (but rare) inequality. This demonstrates how capitalism balances itself by using the possibility of upward mobility to obscure its systemic conditions for economic immobility. This also reveals a way in which game design struggles to represent systemic social inequality: games often achieve balance by using aleatory elements to subsume systemic inequality within emergent inequality, sacrificing the critical experience of systemic inequality in order to maintain the ideal of balance. Thus, the emergent inequalities in Catan fail to represent how historical inequalities are invariably systemic as race, gender, class, and nationality play prominent roles—how in America, for example, the original occupants were dispossessed by force of arms and land was redistributed according to explicitly discriminatory laws.19 It also fails to represent how even after more recent legislation has eroded many of these practices, their legacy20 necessarily lingers within a capitalist system where ownership is passed down from generation to generation. There are limitations, therefore, to representing social inequality exclusively through emergent mechanisms—when games create a genuinely level playing field, they become incompatible with capitalism, which perpetuates the myth of a level playing field while in fact perpetuating systemic inequalities. Playing with Privilege It was only upon further reflection that I began to tie my play experiences to the preceding forms of social inequality. In the moment, however, my focus was more narrowly focused on executing my strategy—or, to put it bluntly, on winning. At the same time, this was tinged with a growing sense of discomfort that can only be described by an even more uncomfortable word: privilege. Certainly, my ability to win the way I did was due to a privileged starting position, which tilted the balance of power in my favor. Yet, privilege is an attitude as well as a condition: **being able to focus exclusively on strategy and winning is itself** a form of **privilege**. Games (even so-called serious games) are not theories of social inequality—as embodied, performative spaces, games express a procedural rhetoric21 in which players develop perspectives by exploring the consequences of their decisions and actions as they play out within the game system. To play certain games in certain ways, therefore, is to play as capitalists and play out capitalism. Games like Acquire encourage us to play as capitalists. As mentioned above, the procedural rhetoric of Oil Springs is paradoxically predicated on privileging the very strategies of industrial capitalism that this ecocritical game otherwise censures. This presents players with a dilemma, in which **playing to win may require performing actions that are** thematically represented as **ethically problematic**. Thus, the primary reason I received such advantageous placement in my case study is that I ruthlessly pursued Oil from the start, whereas several of my opponents hesitated to do so (possibly due to their ecological consciousness). Sometimes gamers attempt to justify a win-at-all-costs mentality by claiming they are merely following the dictates of the game (indirectly valorizing the cultural ideology of agon), or that they are merely solving an abstract puzzle without regard to thematic considerations. While these are valid ways to play a game, **they** nonetheless **represent an active choice** on the part of the player **rather than some** ‘objective’ or **‘default’ position.** Indeed, the phrase “win at all costs” itself admits that such play necessitates a cost. While I can understand why some players would choose to play in this way, **this position is not viable for game scholarship**. To properly study a game, one must account for the interplay of its many facets. Theme, which can evoke representational content and complex psychological and affective22 responses, is an essential facet of a game as text. When players respond to a game’s theme, they are performing a genuine textual engagement worthy of analysis. Thus, this section draws on my own play experience to reflect on possible consequences of systemically privileging certain positions. If I had to sum up my experience, I would say that playing and subsequently winning this particular game was no fun at all. And, although I cannot speak for the other players, I imagine it was not much fun them either. Working from an advantaged position altered the game experience in ways that counteracted much of the enjoyment I typically derive from gameplay. I say ‘working from’ rather than ‘playing from’ because rather than playfully exploring new strategies, I found myself merely implementing the most obviously advantageous strategy. My narrow focus on winning imposed an inappropriately results-driven framework on play, something I typically value more for the experience than the results. This focus was driven, moreover, less by the rewards of victory than by the fear of failure23—even while my privileged position robbed winning of much of its merit, losing would have been still worse. Although the game was unbalanced in my favor, an increased probability of winning did not, in my case, lead to an enriched game experience. This is because **the value of a game experience cannot be reduced to winning,** which is why games—even agonistic ones—are distinct from non-playful tests or contests. This is surprisingly analogous to Marx’s argument that capitalism not only inequitably distributes resources, but also reduces human experience to something instrumental and transactional. Indeed, Marx suggests that even while the capitalist is materially advantaged over the laborer, both are equally alienated by being reduced to their respective roles within the capitalist system. Systemic inequality, that is, is dehumanizing for all its participants—whether privileged or marginalized. Systemic inequality in games is, of course, less consequential and more voluntary than social inequalities,24 but it can alienate players in similar ways. In fact, most games eschew systemic inequality because it tends to be unpleasant for everyone involved. Players in privileged positions may find their roles overdetermined by the game structure, resulting in a narrowing of strategic, exploratory, or playful possibilities (for example, I had no reason to trade with other players when I could acquire all the resources I needed on my own). Similarly, players in less privileged positions may find their choices narrowed by their limited resources as the runaway leader problem renders their choices increasingly inconsequential. Systemically unequal game design, that is, looks like a lose-lose situation. Yet, it is not that inequality deprives play of choice, but rather that it overdetermines the consequences or relative viability of various choices. In the right conditions, therefore, such unbalanced play may add a unique dimension to the play experience. Rather than playing as an industrial capitalist, for instance, I could have chosen to play as an environmentalist. Instead of using Oil, I could have chosen to ‘Sequester’ Oil by permanently removing one of my Oil resources from the game each turn, gaining 1 Victory Point (VP) for every three Sequestered Oil, and an additional VP for sequestering the most Oil. Simple mathematics suggests that this is a terrible strategy: 1 VP is a paltry reward for the relative value of three Oil.25 This discrepancy underlies a model in which industrial capitalism is systematically more viable than environmentalism. Yet, what counts ‘viable’ can be called into question. Precisely because sequestering is ‘bad’ strategy, it offers an interesting thematic possibility: role-playing as an environmentalist knowing that one is not likely to win. From a thematic perspective, this strategy could be quite rewarding. Whereas my privileged play would lead either to failure or a victory deprived of merit, pursuing sequestering could offer either an impressive victory or a loss offset by the satisfaction of maintaining a moral position. These benefits, however, are psychological rather than ethical. While environmentalism is certainly much needed, playing environmentalism in a game is no more intrinsically beneficial than playing industrial capitalism. Critical gameplay requires more than importing real-world values into games; it requires interrogating the assumptions players bring to the game and the positions they adopt within the game. To sequester Oil solely for the sake of feeling morally superior is not a critical position (although it could certainly be an attractive one). Precisely because environmentalism matters, it deserves critical attention and critical gameplay. After all, activism can be problematic in, for example, replicating colonial attitudes towards the developing world or performing a kind of ‘conscience laundering.’26 Critical play,27 that is, is not an outcome but a method. Or, as Marx puts it, “I am therefore not in favor of setting up any dogmatic flag. On the contrary, we must try to help the dogmatics to clarify themselves the meaning of their own positions” (13). The potential consequences of such reflection are not just two, but many. Beyond simply stating that one way of playing (environmentalism) is superior to another (industrial capitalism), critical play provides an opportunity for players to self-reflectively engage the decisions and feelings of occupying different subject positions within inequitable systems. Critical play encourages reflection. Coda Games have not historically been on the forefront of discussions on social inequality.28 This is partially because the fundamentality of agon in games reinforces certain cultural logics, partially because the carnivalesque nature of play tends not to revolutionize prevailing systems,29 and partially because social inequality presents a special challenge for game design. To reverse this trend will require a critical perspective that pushes the limits of the game medium, such as the imperative toward balance at the heart of competitive game design—especially in a world where ‘fairness’ alternatively means ‘light-skinned,’ and the myth of a level playing field is used to justify a clearly uneven one. As Oil Springs demonstrates, experimenting with the interplay between emergent and systemic inequality is one way games can explore capitalism as similarly rule-governed, self-interested systems. In deconstructing the myth of the level playing field, it becomes clear that emergent inequalities in capitalism are develop systemic qualities. As a rule-governed agonistic system, capitalism legally positions the capitalist to leverage the rights of ownership to exploit the worker’s labor. Similarly, capitalism promotes the runaway leader problem by passing down capital via inheritance rather than need or merit. Furthermore, despite all claims to neutrality, economic hierarchies in capitalism are historically intertwined with other social hierarchies, such as race and gender. The problems of social inequality, therefore, are necessarily multiple and intersectional. Games have historically also lacked nuance with respect to intersectional analysis.30 If they represent categories like race and gender at all, most games do so either via problematic stereotypes or via visual and narrative means that bypass the procedural rhetoric that makes games so distinctive. I suspect that most game design avoids systemic unfairness at the level of identity politics to avoid alienating players who identify in diverse ways. At least on the surface, class—an extrinsic marker of social identity—seems easier to dissociate from sensitive identity politics and, thereby, more implementable in games like Catan.31 However, critical play must resist the ways that games by their nature simplify and abstract what they represent. Instead, critical play draws upon but moves beyond such simplification and abstraction to respond to complex social realities. And the reality of capitalism, as discussed above, is that class is intertwined with race and gender. Indeed, an intersectional perspective on critical play may provide a way of exploring the paradoxical unity and disunity of player and role that complicates the gameplay experience. After all, despite the common association between criticism and distance, critical play is still an experience—an embodied calling into question of certain social systems. –

#### [2] The aff is the interpretation. Solves ideological dogmatism and content exploration and turns every standard

Koh 13 - Ben Koh, NSD Update, October 1st, 2013 “Breaking Down Borders: Rethinking the Interaction Between Theory and Ethics” [http://nsdupdate.com/2013/breaking-down-borders-rethinking-the-interaction-between-theory-and-ethics/] Accessed 8/14/20 SAO

First: **Fairness is** at its basis is **an ethical concept**. For instance at its basis, fairness as Rawls explains is, “a number of persons engage in a mutually advantageous cooperative venture according to certain rules and thus voluntarily restrict their liberty, those who have submitted to these restrictions have a right to a similar acquiescence on the part of those who have benefited from their submission.” That is to say, the basis of fairness rises from benefiting from cooperation. In the debate context, the “benefit” as Rawls refers to could be the actual ability to debate, or speaking without interference etc. In the same way that it’s considered immoral under most ethical systems to take without recompense, fairness is relevant due to it being the “recompense.” Additionally, equality’s importance is as a moral concept. The utterance that we ought to both start with the same amount of speaking time is morally relevant for it guides or at least constrains our actions, or the rightness and wrongness thereof (i.e. if I go a minute longer in the NR, I would usually be dropped or at least penalized due to its wrongness). Second, Fairness is normative: A) The idea that there is a consequence to a certain unfair act implies its relevance to our action. Debaters generally don’t read theory just because they wanted to point out something interesting or amusing, they do so to win or to rid the round of the problematic argument. B) The voluntary concession of the basic rules for the round renders fairness as being “obligatory.” Loland explains, “the obligation of fairness does not arise unconditionally. One basic premise is that the parties are voluntarily engaged. They have chosen participation in favor of nonparticipation and have thus more or less tacitly agreed to follow the commonly accepted rules and norms of the practice play the game. Loland further explains that “in sporting games, the predominant distributive norm is meritocratic. The norm on equal tratemnt, then, becomes a necessary condition for a game to take place. To be able to evaluate the relevant inequalities satisfactorily, participants have to compete on the same terms. All competitors ought to be given equal opportunity to perform.” The implication is that an argument that questions ethical assumptions (or even more basically assumptions at all) needs to be open to criticism. In the same way debaters now take into account the theoretical implications of their frameworks (i.e. the line of arguments centered around whether or not “ought is defined as maximizing well-being” is a fair interpretation), **debaters should take into account the ethical implications of their theory arguments**. Analyzing the way we debate theory further exposes these assumptions. Theory is debated typically in a very **utilitarian** **fashion**. Debaters tend to weigh between theory standards under assumed criterions of “what would a policy maker do,” how easy the calculation is, etc. They answer the question of drop the debater vs. drop the argument commonly in terms of solvency, whether or not there is a deterrent effect, etc. It’s no surprise in my mind that most “LARPers” are generally as proficient on the LARP as they are on the theory debate due to the reproduction of skill. To keep theory argumentation at a standstill in its variation is to deny the basic value in LD in the first place. There’s no reason why we should not question the assumption of how we debate or think about theory in the same way we question the assumptions of right and wrong in LD. A question that follows then is what occurs if we debate theory in a more Kantian sense? Or a more Nietzschean one? Etc. I’m not persuaded by the idea that ethical arguments cannot apply to the context of theory debate. Examples: 1) If the argument against consequentalism is true that there are infinite consequences, is norm setting ever possible? 2) If an intention based framework is true, and the violation was not made intentionally, should the one violating still be held culpable for the violation 3) A polls framework would outline why community consensus is most ethically relevant. If a certain practice is common, would that implicate its moral permission? Beyond the voter, concepts like competing interpretations, which in some variations claims that only one interpretation is objectively/ absolutely true, could easily be criticized with postmodern arguments. Massumi (a Deleuzian contemporary) would probably argue that the attempt to instill a certain worldview of the round is indicative of state philosophy, where “The end product would be ‘a fully legitimated subject of knowledge and society’ – each mind an analogously organized mini-State morally unified in the supermind of the State. Prussian mind-meld.” Security K type arguments that criticize the idea of deterrence claiming that mindset is the root cause of the threats it attempts to be prevented can easily apply to drop the debater justifications about norm setting. Apprehension to introduce this type of argumentation into the debate sphere can be tracked most likely to the tendency of judges to either a) paradigmatically assume fairness is important to avoid annoying and assumptive debates about whether or not fairness is a voter or b) judges not voting on these arguments frequently in the past. However, this line of thought I present does not attempt to claim that fairness is absolutely not a voter. This type of argument generally does not contest if theory itself is unfair or resolvable in a theoretical way, i.e. in the fashion most “fairness not a voter” arguments are made. The goal rather is to reframe the lens of which we analyze theory debates, or analyze “fairness not a voter arguments.” The application fosters discussion about what fairness ethically should imply, not in attempt to create more “frivolous theory debates” or figure out ways to make theory irresolvable. In fact, this mindset would produce **better philosophical discussion**. By examining the full implication of an ethical argument, debaters could more fully understand what it means to argue X or Y is the correct moral framework beyond just the resolution at hand. Whereas debate about animal rights or compulsory voting does allow for that form of philosophical analysis, this viewpoint allows for full education of ethics to even more frequent, real world concerns of fairness and education. Additionally, most of the historical unwillingness is probably rooted in tendency for debaters to use this avenue of argumentation in a **blippy fashion**. However in the same way that arguments that are more fleshed out or have definitive warrants are given priority over others, debaters ought to argue this similarly. Rather than treating ethical arguments against theory as a “back up strategy,” this should become a more full, centralized approach. The purpose of this article is that fairness as an ethical idea, with the same ethical discussion, etc., should not be absent from questioning. The implementation, function, correctness of a conception of fairness, etc., should all be open for debate in the same way that we try to figure out if death is really morally bad after all. The even broader implication is that LD debate should continue to foster questioning**. To take a firm stance on basic assumptions is to deny the role of philosophical questioning in the first place**. To quote Rebar Niemi, “the notion that any one of us could set some determinate standard for what debate should be is preposterous, uneducational, sanctimonious, and arrogant. I think that the notion that we should teach the already privileged population of debate to be inflexible, dogmatic, and exclusive in their belief sets **creates** worse citizens, **worse people,** and ultimately a worse world.”

## Solvency

#### The Plan: The US ought to recognize that prison workers in the US have the unconditional right to strike. The criminal justice system is inherently marginalizing

Loubriel 16 - Jennifer Loubriel, Everyday Feminism, May 17, 2016 “Why Our Punitive Justice System Doesn’t Work – And 3 Alternatives to Prisons” [https://everydayfeminism.com/2016/05/punitive-justice-alternatives/] Accessed 2/11/18 SAO

Like most people, I grew up believing that prisons equaled safety. According to the majority of cop shows all over television when I was a kid, only “bad guys” went to prison. The good detectives always put away the violent criminals. Sometimes it was for a few years, and sometimes it was for a lifetime. The message was always clear: criminals did this to themselves. They deserved to be locked up. Prison walls protected the rest of us – the good, the upstanding, the lawful – from them. But as I got older, I realized how wrong these shows were. Because everything that I was witnessing in my neighborhood, everything I was hearing from loved ones, and everything I read from activists just didn’t match up to what I had always been taught about punitive justice. Instead of the simple narrative of good cop vs. really bad, violent criminal, the story got way more complicated. What Is Punitive Justice And Why Is It Oppressive? Prisons are part of a larger system called punitive (or retributive) justice. Under this system, if someone breaks the law, they’re punished for that wrongdoing. The punishment is supposed to be proportionate to the crime and should accomplish two things: rehabilitate the original law-breaker and stop others from committing the same crime. On paper, that looks pretty simple, and it looks fair. In reality though, punitive justice in the United States is far from being simple or being fair. Our punitive justice system is inherently antiblack, racist, and classist. Historically, the prison system and the police force in the United States were both used as tools of white supremacy. Michelle Alexander’s The New Jim Crow is one of many resources that go into details about how our so-called justice system disproportionately attacks Black people. Nothing much has changed since these things were created. Today, the justice system relies heavily on prejudices we’ve been socialized to see as truths for generations. These prejudices, when internalized, are called “implicit biases.” Implicit biases work against marginalized folks because we are seen as inherently dangerous — whether or not we have committed a crime, we are assumed to be guilty simply by existing. This means that Black, Native, Latinx, LGBTQIA+, and low-income people – many of whom have more than one of these identities – are all overrepresented in the punitive justice system. Because we’re automatically seen as criminal, law enforcement can basically do anything to us without consequence. This is why rates of police brutality, rape, and abuse are extremely high against People of Color. This is especially true for folks who are further marginalized in our communities. For example, 58% of fatal police shootings involve a person with a mental illness. This means that the death of Tanisha Anderson – a Black woman with schizophrenia who was murdered by police – is not an isolated event. Unfortunately, it’s all too common. But more than that, when a crime has been committed, the punishments we receive are disproportionately harsh, particularly for non-violent crimes like drug related offenses. Wealthy white people, however, are often protected or get lesser sentencing for crimes they commit. For example, both Jaime Arellano and Ethan Couch were Texas teenagers who killed people while driving drunk. They were charged with the same crimes. Yet while Jamie Arellano was charged as an adult and spent 20 years in prison, Ethan Couch stayed in the juvenile justice system and was only sentenced to 10 years probation and 2 years of jail time. The punitive justice system definitely doesn’t treat everyone equitably. And a lot of times this happens because the punitive justice system just seeks to punish someone for breaking a law, rather than looking at the reason why it was done. This kind of system doesn’t look at how oppression and systemic violence can cause someone to break the law — nor does it look at how some laws were created to target certain people. Many women – especially queer and trans Black women – are punished simply for protecting themselves. Often, these are women who are protecting themselves from abusive partners. In New York’s prison system alone, 67% of women incarcerated for killing a significant other had been abused by that person. It’s not only that our punitive justice system is racist, classist, and homophobic. It’s that this system doesn’t even do what folks claim it’s supposed to do. Going to jail just doesn’t rehabilitate people. There’s no proof that incarceration prevents crime. And once they go to jail, so many marginalized folks continue to experience trauma. The American Civil Liberties Union has many pages explaining how the prison system often violates human rights. Abuses such as lack of medical resources, solitary confinement, debriefing policies, and rape happen too often within the system. The Attica Prison Revolt of 1971 is one of the most famous examples of incarcerated folks protesting these abuses. In short: the United States punitive criminal justice system is inherently violent and it just doesn’t work. INCITE!’s Critical Resistance Statement speaks to all of this.

#### Contradicting official justifications for the erosion of rights affirms under my role of the ballot.

Jackson 15 - Richard Jackson, professor of peace studies at The National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, in Critical Studies on Terrorism, 2015 “The epistemological crisis of counterterrorism” [http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2015.1009762, Vol. 8, No. 1, 33–54] SAO

Other more traditional modes of resistance include the employment of academic research and counter-evidence to contradict official statements and justifications, fill purported knowledge gaps and demonstrate alternative policy options (see Mueller and Stewart 2011, 2012). While providing an evidentiary base cannot break down the epistemological crisis on its own (due to the built-in rejection of evidence and knowledge), it is nonetheless crucial in the broader struggle to win legitimacy for change in the dominant policy paradigm. Related to this, there is an important role for activist groups and individuals, as well as investigative journalists such as Glenn Greenwald, WikiLeaks, Edward Snowden and others, to publicise the nature and extent of counterterrorist activities, particularly when they involve secret wrong-doing and social harm such as mass surveillance, torture, rendition, shoot-to-kill policies and the like. Other groups like Cageprisoners can then use this information to provide legal support for victims and challenge government programmes

#### Prison strikes align prisoners with radical Black movements to test revolutionary political strategies against the state’s necropolitics.

Fox ‘20 [Taylor Fox; a fourth-year in the College studying Political Science and Human Rights; 05-01-2020; “Freedom, Caged: A Foucauldian Inquiry into the National Prison Strike”; Bachelor’s Thesis, University of Chicago; Advisor: Professor Reuben Miller; Preceptor: Alex Haskins; http://pozen.s3.amazonaws.com/system/ckeditor/attachments/435/Fox\_\_Taylor\_BA\_Thesis\_copy.pdf; Accessed 10-09-2021] AK Recut SAO

The National Prison Strike follows a long tradition of prison strikes in the U.S., beginning with insurrections in late 18th-century prisons. Incarceration was a popular form of criminal punishment, compared to the death penalty in England and elsewhere, and often required hard labor. In Philadelphia’s Walnut Prison, America’s first prison, incarcerated people regularly mounted work stoppages to protest brutal labor conditions. In turn, common features of today’s prison struggles can be traced to the founding of the U.S. prison system itself.67 Following the Civil War, Black convict laborers struggled in response to brutal labor practices demanded by the growing Southern plantation economy. In order to enforce social control over recently freed Black men and disincentivize poor whites from unionizing, these punitive labor regimes escalated in cruelty and violence.68 As this problem of incarceration grew in size and brutality, prisoners responded with over a dozen major riots and strikes between 1879 and 1892.69 Though quickly suppressed, these **strikes “symbolically empowered inmates**, who could no longer be considered ‘powerless, broken men who could do nothing but toil obediently for their masters.’”70 This “symbolic” register re-emerges throughout prison strike history, apparent in uprisings that failed to secure material gains but garnered significant outside attention. Yet scholars also consider the public outrage and media attention that ensued from these late-19th century strikes to be significant in their own right, contributing to the demise of contract prison labor and chain gangs.71 Moving to the 20th century, the period between 1968 and 1972 saw a significant uptick in **prison struggles, providing a testing ground for political** questions of unionism and revolutionary action that continue to beset prison strikes today. During this era, a broad coalition of prisoners’ rights groups, academics, lawyers, journalists, and incarcerated activists emerged in support of the growing prison movement. In particular, the 1970 Folsom Prison Strike was a major inflection point for the U.S. prison movement.72 While no demands were met, prisoners claimed the right to unionize for the first time in U.S. history, along with economic, labor, and general human rights. The early 70s saw other major prison uprisings, with San Quentin and Attica among the most notorious. Folsom was made possible by the rise of Black Power and its ideological import on political prisoners across the U.S. and beyond. Black Power organizers positioned themselves as a revolutionary alternative to NAACP-style legal change and proffered a distinct form of Black political consciousness that was embraced by prison radicals. Incarcerated Black Power organizers saw their task as a revolutionary challenge against the state and its necropolitics, which incarceration embodied. They claimed that white racism necessarily relied on Black captivity, which manifested in the prison being used “as,” and not “for,” punishment.73 For Black Power revolutionaries, criminalization was a racialized project designed to punish Blackness itself. In turn, Black prisoners were de facto political prisoners. Black Power’s redefinition of crime as something beyond moral failure – as a political act, and as a form of survival – exposed the indefensible logics of incarceration to a new generation of prison radicals.74 Beyond appealing to Black prisoners, Black radicalism attracted whites through its message that all incarcerated people belonged to a distinctly exploited underclass.75 The possibilities for **multiracial solidarity** presented by Black radicals **threatened the prison’s hegemony** over the socio- political order. During prison uprisings in Walla Walla and Walpole, for instance, Black Power organizers and prisoner unions fought and temporarily won self-governance.76 Though this demand for self-governance is largely absent from today’s prison struggles, the instinct toward self- determination remains visible in hunger strike campaigns that assert prisoners’ subjectivity.

#### Pragmatic utopianism bolsters the criminal justice abolition movement

Robinson 17 - Nathan Robinson, Author, Current Affairs, August 3rd 2017[“CAN PRISON ABOLITION EVER BE PRAGMATIC?” https://www.currentaffairs.org/2017/08/can-prison-abolition-ever-be-pragmatic] BHAJr Recut SAO 11/12/21

The truth is that we don’t know the degree to which crime can be controlled by addressing social causes. We don’t know it, because we’ve never seriously tried it. But we do know that there are cities (https://www.safewise.com/safest-cities-america) in the United States that have incredibly low crime rates, where violent crime hardly ever occurs and property crime is incredibly infrequent. We are far from understanding why that’s the case. Since we know that it 􀥾 the case, though, we know that it’s possible to create places in which crime is almost nonexistent. Violent crime has consistently been dropping in the United States despite the public perception otherwise (http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/16/voters-perceptions-of-crime-continue-to-conflict-withreality/) (not helped by Donald Trump’s demagogic attempts to terrify people). It is impossible to know how much further it could be made to drop. (Nor is that because we’ve been locking up all of the criminals. States with low crime rates can also have very low incarceration rates, whereas states like, for example, Louisiana have both incredibly high crime rates (https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2016/07/29/americas-most-violent-and-peacefulstates/87658252/) and incredibly high incarceration rates (http://www.sentencingproject.org/the-facts/#map).) Since very low-crime societies are possible already, even when they consist entirely of perfectly ordinary human beings, it does not actually seem especially naïve to believe that both crime and prisons can essentially be eliminated from the world. I refuse to see Anders Breiviks as an inevitability; I believe he is the product of a perverse racist ideology, one that can be countered and eradicated. Prison **abolition and** prison **reform can actually be reconciled fairly easily.** The ultimate goal is prison abolition, because in a world without hatred and violence there would be no need for prisons, and the goal is a world without hatred and violence. In **the interim,** prisons **must be made better and more humane**. It’s not that you should, in the world we live in now, open the prison gates and give murderers probation. It’s that you should always remember that even if you think prison is a necessary evil, that still makes it evil, and evil things should ultimately be gotten rid of, whatever their short-term necessity. You can be both pragmatic and utopian at the same time. One should always adopt the “utopian” position, because it helps affirm what our ideal is and serves as a guiding star. But you can simultaneously operate with the real-world political constraints you have. As Angela Davis says, “the call for prison abolition urges us to imagine and strive for a very different social landscape.” It’s useful because it gets us thinking about big questions, picturing what very different worlds might be like and then beginning to plot how we might get from here to there. To me, one of the most moving pieces of writing on prison is Oscar Wilde’s “Ballad of Reading Gaol (http://www.dskpdrustvo. si/uploadane\_datoteke/Wilde.pdf).” I find it a far more persuasive indictment of the concept of prison than any number of abolitionist tracts or policy papers about restorative justice. Wilde, destroyed by an unjust and bigoted Victorian criminal court system, wrote that no matter how we felt about the justice of particular laws, the very existence of prisons was a stain on humanity: I know not whether Laws be right, Or whether Laws be wrong; All that we know who lie in jail Is that the wall 􀥾 strong; And that each day 􀥾 like a year, A year whose days are long. But th􀥾 I know, that every Law That men have made for Man, Since first Man took h􀥾 brother’s life, And the sad world began, But straws the wheat and sav􀥽 the chaff With a most evil fan. Th􀥾 too I know—and wise it were If each could know the same— That every prison that men build Is built with bricks of shame, And bound with bars lest Christ should see How men their brothers maim. Eugene Debs’s principle is an essential one, then. You can’t rest until the prisons are gone, because only then will injustice have been banished from the world: While there is a soul in prison, I am not free.

## Cap ADV

#### US carceral practices fuel global capitalism. Methodological pluralism is key to combat it.

Sudbury 4 - Julia Sudbury, Canada Research Council Chair in Social Justice, Equity and Diversity in social work at the University of Toronto, in the Journal Social Justice, 2004 “A World Without Prisons: Resisting Militarism, Globalized Punishment, and Empire” [http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/29768237.pdf] Accessed 1/10/18 SAO

In addition, global capitalism is deeply implicated in U.S. and allied military interventions worldwide, which frequently target strategic economic interests and natural resources. These interventions are not limited to wars using U.S. troops. From Israel to Bolivia, U.S. funds are used to pay for military equipment, training, and troops. Women are particularly at risk in the environment of violence and displacement caused when regimes with poor human rights records deploy armed forces against civilian or insurgent populations. One outcome of this vulnerability is the displacement of poor women from traditional forms of survival and their subsequent engagement in the illicit economies of sex work or the drug trade. Women in militarized situations are also at risk of criminalization and incarceration when they take up insurgent positions against repressive regimes. Militarism and globalization thus generate a web of criminalization that in turn fuels the prison building boom and generates profits for the economic interests served by the transnational prison-industrial complex. **Penal warehouses** for people of African descent, immigrants, indigenous people, and the global poor, as I have outlined, **are central to the new world order**. For that reason, even as "small government" is promoted as a prerequisite for competitiveness in the global market, "corrections" budgets continue to skyrocket. That is also why **prison abolition remains of vital importance in this time of endless war**. What does this mean for our research and praxis as scholars and activists? First, much more work needs to be done to unravel the complex interconnections between mass incarceration, militarism, and the global economy. **As activists in the heart of empire, our priority should be to make connections** between radical social movements. **Bridge-building between the anti-globalization, antiwar, and prison abolitionist movements provides critical opportunities for sharing strategies**. For example, global anti-sweatshop activism against Wal-Mart and Nike can serve as a model of cross-border activism that could be deployed to challenge private prison corporations such as Wackenhutand Sodexho. Such transnational activism might successfully prevent the spread of U.S.-style private superjails from South Africa through the rest of the continent and from Mexico and Chile throughout the rest of Latin America. In addition, cross-fertilization between movements will encourage activists to address wider issues that are not always made visible in issue-based campaigns. For example, intensified analysis of globalization might encourage prison abolitionists to consider the need for anti-capitalist economic models as a prerequisite for a world without prisons. Similarly, an engagement between antiwar activists and analyses of mass incarceration would generate a deeper understanding of the need to simultaneously challenge militarism abroad and racialized surveillance and punishment at home. An effective challenge to the interlocking systems of militarism, incarceration, and globalization demands the establishment of broad-based, cross-movement coalitions, in the U.S. and internationally. The World Social Forum (WSF) is an important venue where critiques of, and alternatives to, free trade, imperialism, and neoliberalism are developed. Prison abolitionists need to infuse the politics of the WSF with an analysis of the role of the prison-industrial complex in bolstering global capitalism. At the same time, the movement to abolish prisons can learn from the successes of popular movements in the global South such as the Movimento Sim Terra in Brazil and the Ruta Pacifica in Colombia. These broad based movements involve organized labor, women, the homeless, the unemployed, students, rural campesinos, and indigenous communities. They have developed a sophisticated intersectional analysis of globalization, imperialism, and militarism, as well as race, gender, class, and nation. Most important, they have been successful in generating mass mobilizations by developing a viable alternative to the Washington Consensus model, prioritizing people and the environment over corporations and profits. These broad-based popular movements pay attention to issues of identity while maintaining a radical analysis of, and opposition to, global capitalism. Activists in the global North have the advantage of witness? ing firsthand the emergence of the transnational prison-industrial complex as important weapon in the armory of global corporate and political elites. Radical prison abolitionists, especially grass-roots activists of color, have a great deal to add to the global movement against imperialism and neoliberal capitalism. Our combined analyses demonstrate that to build un outro mundo (a different world), we must first envision a world without prisons.

**Prison Workers specifically subsidize weapon production**

Noah **Shachtman**, March 8th **2021**, “Prisoners Help Build Patriot Missiles, [https://www.wired.com/2011/03/prisoners-help-build-patriot-missiles/] // swickle

This spring, the United Arab Emirates is expected to close a deal for $7 billion dollars' worth of American arms. Nearly half of the cash will be spent on Patriot missiles, which cost as much as $5.9 million apiece. But what makes those eye-popping sums even more shocking is that some of the workers manufacturing parts for those Patriot missiles are prisoners, earning as little as 23 cents an hour. (Credit Justin Rohrlich with the catch.) The work is done by Unicor, previously known as Federal Prison Industries. It's a government-owned corporation, established during the Depression, that employs about 20,000 inmates in 70 prisons to make everything from clothing to office furniture to solar panels to military electronics. One of the company's high-tech specialties: Patriot missile parts. "UNICOR/FPI supplies numerous electronic components and services for guided missiles, including the Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC-3) missile," Unicor's website explains. "We assemble and distribute the Intermediate Frequency Processor (IFP) for the PAC-3s seeker. The IFP receives and filters radio-frequency signals that guide the missile toward its target." The missiles are then marketed worldwide -- sometimes by Washington's top officials. Last year, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates pitched the Patriots to the Turkish government last year, a diplomatic cable released by WikiLeaks reveals: "SecDef stressed that 'nothing can compete with the PAC-3 when it comes to capabilities.'" Patriot assemblers Raytheon and Lockheed Martin aren't the only defense contractors relying on prison help. As Rohrlich notes, Unicor "inmates also make cable assemblies for the McDonnell Douglas/Boeing F-15, the General Dynamics/Lockheed Martin F-16, Bell/Textron’s Cobra helicopter, as well as electro-optical equipment for the BAE Systems Bradley Fighting Vehicle’s laser rangefinder." Unicor used to make helmets for the military, as well. But that work was suspended when 44,000 helmets were recalled for shoddy quality. Government agencies -- with the exception of the Defense Department and the CIA -- are required to buy goods from Unicor, according to a Congressional Research Service report (.pdf). And no wonder: the labor costs are bordering on zero. "Inmates earn from $0.23 per hour up to a maximum of $1.15 per hour, depending on their proficiency and educational level, among other things," the report notes. Last year, Unicor grossed $772 million, according to its most recent financial report (.pdf). Traditionally, inmate salaries make up about five percent of that total. Unicor insists that the deal is a good one for inmates -- and for the government. The manufacturing work offers a chance for job training, which "improves the likelihood that inmates will remain crime-free upon their release," the company says in its report. (Some reports suggest that Unicor prisoners are as much as 24% less likely to return to crime.) The work also keeps the inmates in check, Unicor insists. "In the face of an escalating inmate population and an increasing percentage of inmates with histories of violence, FPI’s programs have helped ease tension and avert volatile situations, thereby protecting lives and federal property," the company says. "Prisons without meaningful activities for inmates are dangerous prisons, and dangerous prisons are expensive prisons."

#### Prison labor strike action unsettles the carceral state spilling up to larger movements and demystifying the prison.

Fox ‘20 [Taylor Fox; a fourth-year in the College studying Political Science and Human Rights; 05-01-2020; “Freedom, Caged: A Foucauldian Inquiry into the National Prison Strike”; Bachelor’s Thesis, University of Chicago; Advisor: Professor Reuben Miller; Preceptor: Alex Haskins; http://pozen.s3.amazonaws.com/system/ckeditor/attachments/435/Fox\_\_Taylor\_BA\_Thesis\_copy.pdf; Accessed 10-09-2021] AK – Recut SAO

By shutting down activity and rejecting the material rhythms of prison life, strikes unsettle the reproduction of the prison apparatus. According to Michigan Abolition and Prisoner Solidarity organizer Alejo Stark, these disruptions “intensify the state’s inability to continue to hold prisoners captive,” helping to dismantle the carceral state piece-by-piece.117 One example of disruption can be found in the Crossroads prison uprising, which resulted in the closure of the prison itself through stripping its financial resources. Stark provides another instance of disruption in Michigan’s Kinross prison during the 2016 Strike, during which an uprising forced the state to spend exorbitant financial resources to keep the prison up and running. Because incarcerated kitchen workers were on strike, no one was left to staff the kitchen and “the warden was spotted making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches [for prisoners] with his staff.”118 The point is not that these disruptions will necessarily force the state’s hand in conceding to strikers’ demands, like higher wages, but that the state must devote extra resources to keep prisons alive.119 A longstanding prison strike tactic, disruption is central to the abolitionist project today. Like abolition, disruption is processual. In an interview with Shadowproof, a JLS member incarcerated in South Carolina remarked that he thinks about prison organizing as a “a dismantling process. And that gives the opportunity for other people to get in with their reform ideas.”120 Disruption involves mobilizing collective power to chip away at the carceral state, through actions big and small.121 Experiences of freedom emerge through participation in disruption, as protestors refuse to accept the carceral present as a blueprint for the future. Building on the lessons of the 2016 National Prison Strike, 2018 organizers broadened their internal tactics and forms of participation to include sit-ins and commissary boycotts while also re- introducing hunger strikes.122 While work strikes were a central feature of the 2016 Strike, most prisoners don’t actually work, limiting their tactical value. Importantly, disruption does not need to rely on withholding physical labor in order to be successful; work strikes are only one form of doing so. Strikers were influenced by “Redistribute the Pain,” a set of essays by Bennu Hannibal Ra-Sun of the Free Alabama Movement, who called on his fellow prisoners to mobilize their economic power to “boycott, defund, and bankrupt.”123 Ra-Sun urged a commitment to “defund[ing] prison operations budgets” by eliminating spending on commissary, collect phone calls, and incentive packages would shrink a prison’s finances.124 Accordingly, Strike organizers employed a multiplicity of tactics tailored to participants’ levels of access in the prison. For instance, while people on lockdown couldn’t participate in a work stoppage, they could join a boycott or hunger strike. In the year leading up to the Strike, sit-ins notably resurged in popularity across the prison movement. During a sit-in, participants refuse to return to their cells when corrections officers tell them to line up at lunch or yard. Collectively refusing to comply stops the motion of the prison, halting thedailybusinessofcorrectionalstaff.125 Like a boycott, which strips the prison of important financial reserves, sit-ins disrupt the labor power used to fuel the prison’s operations. Florida offers an instructive example of how coordinated tactics on the inside and outside speak to the intersubjective character of freedom, which is constantly in-the-making through struggle. According to the Miami New-Times, work strikes have ballooned over the last few years in response to increasingly poor conditions in Florida’s prisons, such as when prisoners were forced to work for free in clean-up crews after Hurricane Irma in 100-plus-degree conditions.126 Throughout the Strike, hundreds of prisoners in at least five facilities organized work strikes and commissary boycotts.127 Internal participation during these uprisings showed how collective struggles can provide glimpses into alternative ways of organizing power. Returning to Oksala’s reinterpretation of Foucault, these struggles visibilize the “indeterminacy of the present” in their refusal to accept its suffocating terms. Following the prison movement’s long tradition of inside-outside organizing, Strike disruptors understood what happened on the outside to shape the conditions of possibility on the inside.128 For instance, Gainesville’s IWOC chapter coordinated a string of solidarity actions, including an eight-day encampment outside a work release camp.129 In response to a call to escalate strike solidarity over Labor Day weekend, Gainesville IWOC, Fight Toxic Prisons, and Occupy ICE Tampa organized a 24/7 occupation across from the Florida Department of Corrections’ Gainesville Prison Work Camp. The protestors called for an end to “slave labor contractors” between FDOC, the City, County, and University of Florida, in addition to the Strike’s demands.130 Over a hundred people participated in the demonstrations, which included blocking and delaying City vehicles from leaving for work assignments and staging protests at work sites. In an interview with Shadowproof, a JLS prison organizer remarked that “the more people that tend to stand up, demonstrate from the outside, particularly demo[nstration]s at the prisons, what it does is it incites. It incites inside and this is why prisons have a problem against it.”131 In response to the protestors, FDOC officials would frequently usher work crews back into their vans and leave the site in order to eliminate contact with the protestors. On day four, protestors reported that police and prison officials threatened to use prisoner labor to shut down the encampment. In the absence of direct testimony from incarcerated organizers, we can heed Foucault’s dictum of analyzing power (and, by proxy, freedom) through the strategies of its antagonists.132 Returning to FAM’s “Let the Crops Rot in the Fields,” Gainesville protestors collectively “confronted the system at the site of its oppression: the prisons,” centralizing resources and forcing the state’s response.133 By forcefully demanding sets of political alternatives, incarcerated strikers and comrades offered glimpse into what life beyond carcerality could look like. IWOC organizer Nick conceded that “withholding labor” for extended periods of time “as a way of crippling the system is a way’s off,” but also that cases like Gainesville set the pace for larger-scale protests in the future. Gainesville illustrates how the walls of the prison are more porous than any Department of Corrections would have us believe. In other words, the joint protest helped demystify an image of the prison as a self-contained institution impenetrable to outside influence. Most visibly, we can see this through how the occupation disrupted daily life in the work camp, forcing FDOC to rearrange and even suspend production. By refusing to leave for nearly a week, the protestors offered an alternative imaginary of what the work camp could be: a space for music, art, free movement, and collective struggle. But we can also find literal glimpses in reports that, though inside-outside communication was heavily restricted, incarcerated people were seen giving affirmative “nods, smiles and throwing up power fists, even in the face of overseers and guards” to outside protestors.”134 These brief moments gesture toward the kinds of intersubjectivities that uniquely emerge through struggle.

#### Eliminating the prison industrial complex is critical to challenging global predatory capitalism

Martinot 15 - Steve Martinot, Journal of the Research Group on Socialism and Democracy, November 14th 2015 “Toward the Abolition of the Prison System” [http://sdonline.org/66/toward-the-abolition-of-the-prison-system/] Accessed 1/10/18 SAO

The existentiality of prisons involves not only what prison does directly, but how it affects the society that accepts it as normal, and that can have what prisons do as a purpose. This existential aspect is applicable to all societies that use imprisonment as a way of implementing political decisions. It reflects the understanding that crime itself is politically defined. **Imprisonment as punishment of crime exists only within a matrix of political uses (such as class control**, racialization, social militarization, etc.).1 I will deal with the prison system in the US as the world’s extreme case, that for which all other prison systems are lesser forms. And I will argue that in order to get beyond capitalism, the social/cultural framework that sees prisons as normal will have to be transformed. Every society has its own traditions with respect to imprisonment, but the existentiality of prison will have to be addressed in general. Prison is used to punish. Punishment is used to establish the cultural norms of a society. And law is thus deployed for the creation of cultural norms.2 We can see this not only in US history, but also in the history of the birth of capitalism in Europe. As Silvia Federici has shown, a culture that could accept capitalism arose through the criminalization of women, and through the colonial imposition – via the church – of certain laws, in particular, pertaining to witchcraft.3 In England, the previous norms of cooperative production were squelched and replaced through the state’s systematic torture and murder of anyone who took goods without paying for them. The colonialist context for this discussion is threefold, understanding colonialism as the arrival or invasion of an alien power that dominates for its own benefit an indigenous people, which it then reduces to subhuman status by force and through destruction of the indigenous culture. The US dominates most areas of the world financially or militarily. There is also an internal colonialism in the US governed by the corporate structure, white supremacy, and the structures of racialization; the institution of prisons sits at the core of this. And finally, there is the domination of humans globally by the corporate structure, which colonizes by its indifference to human concerns.4 Here I will focus on the second of these three forms of colonialism. The existential dimension of prisons in general An existential examination of prison is necessary in order to go beneath the political rhetoric by which it legitimizes itself, to its underlying structure. Prison is a form of violence. It has the same structure as a number of different criminal acts. A person is forcibly removed from social space and social relationships, immobilized spatially, and made to suffer thereby. The removal from social space is an act of violence; the immobilization is an act of control over a person’s consciousness through control of the body; and the resultant suffering serves an intended ideological or political or psychological purpose. That is the basic structure of imprisonment.5 The crime most similar or isomorphic to this is kidnapping. Its purpose is personal gain of some kind for the kidnapper, and its major instrument is spatial constraint. When a man sequesters his wife as a form of patriarchal control, keeping her locked in the house, it amounts to the same thing. Imprisonment also resembles torture. The precondition for physical torture is immobilization, but its major element is inducing suffering, so as to control consciousness, i.e., force the subject to behave in accordance with the torturer’s wishes. The most prevalent form of torture in civil society is rape. A person, most often a woman, is immobilized for the purpose of using her body for some form of personal gratification. In the sense that no ransom is demanded, incarceration is most isomorphic to rape, as it supposedly gives the entirety of society some form of satisfaction. All of these crimes are acts of extreme violence. Prison, despite its acceptability, fits this category. It serves as a role model for all these other acts. In this sense, the violent act of imprisonment does more than punish violation of the law; it situates prison at the source of social violence. Judicial process claims to punish criminals as a means of making them “pay” for what they have done. That is, they pay for their transgression by undergoing a transgression against themselves. The act of punishment is indistinguishable from revenge. The core of incarceration is a revenge ethic. That revenge ethic is the essence of any and all judicial process that pursues imprisonment. But a revenge ethic cannot be used to respond to or diminish the violence in a society because it is itself an act of violence. It thus doubles the violence of society, and doubles its criminality. Insofar as any concept of justice is motivated by a desire to diminish social violence, to heal the wounds to community caused by violence, the revenge ethic accomplishes the opposite. For a society that operates on the basis of a revenge ethic, justice is impossible. And the possibility of equality between persons is canceled by the existence of institutions that can impose this revenge. Therefore, democracy, which depends on justice as well as equality, becomes impossible in such a society. In the US, this existential absence manifests itself as the ease with which political voice and political participation are reduced to merely a periodic vote (with growing deployment of police repression, which we shall examine shortly). Rather than a “justice system,” a society that operates on a revenge ethic can at most have a “judicial machine.” Role models are ethical as well as structural. When the state executes a convicted person, it is saying that murder is not impermissible. When it imprisons a person, it is saying that kidnapping and torture are not impermissible. It signifies that violence itself may be illegal, but is not impermissible. War is a role model, not in the sense of exemplifying courage, but rather in making it acceptable to use hyper-technological means of killing others who are defined as a threat. Thus, when a cop kills an unarmed man, and says he felt threatened, he is claiming a war situation between himself and his victim, and using his socially given technology to carry it out. When Reagan sent 14 fighter-bombers over Libya to try to assassinate Qaddafi, he was ordering a drive-by shooting (and killed 100 people in the process). Someone who does a drive-by shooting in LA is simply trying to keep up with the president. Gun control will not put a dent in the effects of social role models. When parents punish their child by locking him in a closet, they are acting in keeping with the political structure. Imprisonment, however, is considered paying a “debt” to society. The form in which this debt is paid is control over the convicted person’s body, followed – upon release – by social ostracism, aggravated impoverishment, and harassment, signifying that the debt never gets paid.6 But to whom is the debt to be paid in the first place? Not the person wronged, and not society. It is paid to the judicial machine. The judicial machine collects the debt in the name of the victim. This makes the victim an accessory to the criminal violence committed against the convicted person. Thus, the victim becomes complicit in the crime of imprisonment, while the convicted person is commodified by becoming a form of payment. This commodification of persons is performed for its own sake, with no socially redeeming value. It only expresses the political character of criminalization. Though the state performs acts of violence against people, it defines its own violence as something else (“justice”). In the same way that the state has the power to politically redefine what it itself does, those acts it considers criminal become so as well only through political definition. We see this when definitions of criminal acts are modified. Marital rape, for instance, used to be non-criminal. It has been redefined. Marijuana use is currently in the process of being redefined as non-criminal. Thus, a crime exists as such only because an act has been politically defined as a crime, and not otherwise. Debt servitude, sweatshop labor conditions, racial segregation, and rent gouging all make people suffer, and do so by trapping them in social situations from which extrication most often requires an act of violence, for which the perpetrator will be punished. But those conditions that make people suffer are not defined as criminal. In short, there is nothing that distinguishes the existentiality of imprisonment from the fundamental aspects of capitalist society – the violence against persons, the social immobilization of persons, their commodification, the reduction of certain persons to lesser human status for the benefit or satisfaction of those in certain positions of power, as well as finally the revenge imposed on those who have slighted the self-proclaimed virtue of a self-decriminalizing judicial machine. The essence of prison is the validation of political power, and the bestowal of sanctity on private property.7 It is impossible to get beyond capitalism as long as society insists on the most fundamental form of commodification, the commodification of human beings. **We will not have gone beyond capitalism until we have eliminated the ethos of imprisonment from society.** We have to understand that, because imprisonment is an act of violence and violation, and because the prison – whatever its social framework (traditional or revolutionary) – is thus a criminal institution, those who gravitate toward the carceral system for employment do so existentially in order to be able to commit acts of violence against others.

#### Capitalism is the root of all impacts. It’s try or die to avoid global extinction

Foster 19 - John Bellamy Foster, Monthly Review, February 1st, 2019 “Capitalism Has Failed—What Next?” [https://monthlyreview.org/2019/02/01/capitalism-has-failed-what-next/] Accessed 11/19/19 SAO

Less than two decades into the twenty-first century, it is evident that capitalism has failed as a social system. The world is mired in economic stagnation, financialization, and the **most extreme inequality in human history**, accompanied by mass unemployment and underemployment, precariousness, poverty, hunger, wasted output and lives, and what at this point can only be called a **planetary ecological “death spiral**.”1 The digital revolution, the greatest technological advance of our time, has rapidly mutated from a promise of free communication and liberated production into new means of surveillance, control, and displacement of the working population. The institutions of liberal democracy are at the point of collapse, while fascism, the rear guard of the capitalist system, is again on the march, along with **patriarchy, racism, imperialism, and war**. To say that capitalism is a failed system is not, of course, to suggest that its breakdown and disintegration is imminent.2 It does, however, mean that it has passed from being a historically necessary and creative system at its inception to being a historically unnecessary and destructive one in the present century. Today, more than ever, the world is faced with the epochal choice between “the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large and the common ruin of the contending classes.”3 Indications of this failure of capitalism are everywhere. Stagnation of investment punctuated by bubbles of financial expansion, which then inevitably burst, now characterizes the so-called free market.4 Soaring inequality in income and wealth has its counterpart in the declining material circumstances of a majority of the population. Real wages for most workers in the United States have barely budged in forty years despite steadily rising productivity.5 Work intensity has increased, while work and safety protections on the job have been systematically jettisoned. Unemployment data has become more and more meaningless due to a new institutionalized underemployment in the form of contract labor in the gig economy.6 Unions have been reduced to mere shadows of their former glory as capitalism has asserted totalitarian control over workplaces. With the demise of Soviet-type societies, social democracy in Europe has perished in the new atmosphere of “liberated capitalism.”7 The capture of the surplus value produced by overexploited populations in the poorest regions of the world, via the global labor arbitrage instituted by multinational corporations, is leading to an unprecedented amassing of financial wealth at the center of the world economy and relative poverty in the periphery.8 Around $21 trillion of offshore funds are currently lodged in tax havens on islands mostly in the Caribbean, constituting “the fortified refuge of Big Finance.”9 Technologically driven monopolies resulting from the global-communications revolution, together with the rise to dominance of Wall Street-based financial capital geared to speculative asset creation, have further contributed to the riches of today’s “1 percent.” Forty-two billionaires now enjoy as much wealth as half the world’s population, while the three richest men in the United States—Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffett—have more wealth than half the U.S. population.10 In every region of the world, inequality has increased sharply in recent decades.11 The gap in per capita income and wealth between the richest and poorest nations, which has been the dominant trend for centuries, is rapidly widening once again.12 More than 60 percent of the world’s employed population, some two billion people, now work in the impoverished informal sector, forming a massive global proletariat. The global reserve army of labor is some 70 percent larger than the active labor army of formally employed workers.13 Adequate health care, housing, education, and clean water and air are increasingly out of reach for large sections of the population, even in wealthy countries in North America and Europe, while transportation is becoming more difficult in the United States and many other countries due to irrationally high levels of dependency on the automobile and disinvestment in public transportation. Urban structures are more and more characterized by gentrification and segregation, with cities becoming the playthings of the well-to-do while marginalized populations are shunted aside. About half a million people, most of them children, are homeless on any given night in the United States.14 New York City is experiencing a major rat infestation, attributed to warming temperatures, mirroring trends around the world.15 In the United States and other high-income countries, life expectancy is in decline, with a remarkable resurgence of Victorian illnesses related to poverty and exploitation. In Britain, gout, scarlet fever, whooping cough, and even scurvy are now resurgent, along with tuberculosis. With inadequate enforcement of work health and safety regulations, black lung disease has returned with a vengeance in U.S. coal country.16 Overuse of antibiotics, particularly by capitalist agribusiness, is leading to an antibiotic-resistance crisis, with the dangerous growth of superbugs generating increasing numbers of deaths, which by mid–century could surpass annual cancer deaths, prompting the World Health Organization to declare a “global health emergency.”17 These dire conditions, arising from the workings of the system, are consistent with what Frederick Engels, in the Condition of the Working Class in England, called “social murder.”18 At the instigation of giant corporations, philanthrocapitalist foundations, and neoliberal governments, public education has been restructured around corporate-designed testing based on the implementation of robotic common-core standards. This is generating massive databases on the student population, much of which are now being surreptitiously marketed and sold.19 The corporatization and privatization of education is feeding the progressive subordination of children’s needs to the cash nexus of the commodity market. We are thus seeing a dramatic return of Thomas Gradgrind’s and Mr. M’Choakumchild’s crass utilitarian philosophy dramatized in Charles Dickens’s Hard Times: “Facts are alone wanted in life” and “You are never to fancy.”20 Having been reduced to intellectual dungeons, many of the poorest, most racially segregated schools in the United States are mere pipelines for prisons or the military.21 More than two million people in the United States are behind bars, a higher rate of incarceration than any other country in the world, constituting a new Jim Crow. The total population in prison is nearly equal to the number of people in Houston, Texas, the fourth largest U.S. city. African Americans and Latinos make up 56 percent of those incarcerated, while constituting only about 32 percent of the U.S. population. Nearly 50 percent of American adults, and a much higher percentage among African Americans and Native Americans, have an immediate family member who has spent or is currently spending time behind bars. Both black men and Native American men in the United States are nearly three times, Hispanic men nearly two times, more likely to die of police shootings than white men.22 **Racial divides are now widening across the entire planet**. Violence against women and the expropriation of their unpaid labor, as well as the higher level of exploitation of their paid labor, are integral to the way in which power is organized in capitalist society—and how it seeks to divide rather than unify the population. More than a third of women worldwide have experienced physical/sexual violence. Women’s bodies, in particular, are objectified, reified, and commodified as part of the normal workings of monopoly-capitalist marketing.23 The mass media-propaganda system, part of the larger corporate matrix, is now merging into a social media-based propaganda system that is more porous and seemingly anarchic, but more universal and more than ever favoring money and power. Utilizing modern marketing and surveillance techniques, which now dominate all digital interactions, vested interests are able to tailor their messages, largely unchecked, to individuals and their social networks, creating concerns about “fake news” on all sides.24 Numerous business entities promising technological manipulation of voters in countries across the world have now surfaced, auctioning off their services to the highest bidders.25 The elimination of net neutrality in the United States means further concentration, centralization, and control over the entire Internet by monopolistic service providers. Elections are increasingly prey to unregulated “dark money” emanating from the coffers of corporations and the billionaire class. Although presenting itself as the world’s leading democracy, the United States, as Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy stated in Monopoly Capital in 1966, “is democratic in form and plutocratic in content.”26 In the Trump administration, following a long-established tradition, 72 percent of those appointed to the cabinet have come from the higher corporate echelons, while others have been drawn from the military.27 War, engineered by the United States and other major powers at the apex of the system, has become perpetual in strategic oil regions such as the Middle East, and threatens to escalate into a global thermonuclear exchange. During the Obama administration, the United States was engaged in wars/bombings in seven different countries—Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan.28 Torture and assassinations have been reinstituted by Washington as acceptable instruments of war against those now innumerable individuals, group networks, and whole societies that are branded as terrorist. A new Cold War and nuclear arms race is in the making between the United States and Russia, while Washington is seeking to place road blocks to the continued rise of China. The Trump administration has created a new space force as a separate branch of the military in an attempt to ensure U.S. dominance in the militarization of space. Sounding the alarm on the increasing dangers of a nuclear war and of climate destabilization, the distinguished Bulletin of Atomic Scientists moved its doomsday clock in 2018 to two minutes to midnight, the closest since 1953, when it marked the advent of thermonuclear weapons.29 Increasingly severe economic sanctions are being imposed by the United States on countries like Venezuela and Nicaragua, despite their democratic elections—or because of them. Trade and currency wars are being actively promoted by core states, while racist barriers against immigration continue to be erected in Europe and the United States as some 60 million refugees and internally displaced peoples flee devastated environments. Migrant populations worldwide have risen to 250 million, with those residing in high-income countries constituting more than 14 percent of the populations of those countries, up from less than 10 percent in 2000. Meanwhile, ruling circles and wealthy countries seek to wall off islands of power and privilege from the mass of humanity, who are to be left to their fate.30 More than three-quarters of a billion people, over 10 percent of the world population, are chronically malnourished.31 Food stress in the United States keeps climbing, leading to the rapid growth of cheap dollar stores selling poor quality and toxic food. Around forty million Americans, representing one out of eight households, including nearly thirteen million children, are food insecure.32 Subsistence farmers are being pushed off their lands by agribusiness, private capital, and sovereign wealth funds in a global depeasantization process that constitutes the greatest movement of people in history.33 Urban overcrowding and poverty across much of the globe is so severe that one can now reasonably refer to a “planet of slums.”34 Meanwhile, the world housing market is estimated to be worth up to $163 trillion (as compared to the value of gold mined over all recorded history, estimated at $7.5 trillion).35 The Anthropocene epoch, first ushered in by the Great Acceleration of the world economy immediately after the Second World War, has generated enormous rifts in planetary boundaries, extending from climate change to ocean acidification, to the sixth extinction, to disruption of the global nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, to the loss of freshwater, to the disappearance of forests, to widespread toxic-chemical and radioactive pollution.36 It is now estimated that **60 percent of the world’s wildlife** vertebrate population (including mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and fish) have been wiped out since 1970, while the worldwide abundance of invertebrates has declined by 45 percent in recent decades.37 What climatologist James Hansen calls the “species exterminations” resulting from accelerating climate change and rapidly shifting climate zones are only compounding this general process of biodiversity loss. Biologists expect that half of all species will be facing extinction by the end of the century.38 If present climate-change trends continue, the “global carbon budget” associated with a 2°C increase in average global temperature will be broken in sixteen years (while a 1.5°C increase in global average temperature—staying beneath which is the key to long-term stabilization of the climate—will be reached in a decade). Earth System scientists warn that the world is now perilously close to a Hothouse Earth, in which catastrophic climate change will be locked in and irreversible.39 The ecological, social, and economic costs to humanity of continuing to increase carbon emissions by 2.0 percent a year as in recent decades (rising in 2018 by 2.7 percent—3.4 percent in the United States), and failing to meet the minimal 3.0 percent annual reductions in emissions currently needed to avoid a catastrophic destabilization of the earth’s energy balance, are simply incalculable.40 Nevertheless, major energy corporations continue to lie about climate change, promoting and bankrolling climate denialism—while admitting the truth in their internal documents. These corporations are working to accelerate the extraction and production of fossil fuels, including the dirtiest, most greenhouse gas-generating varieties, reaping enormous profits in the process. The melting of the Arctic ice from global warming is seen by capital as a new El Dorado, opening up massive additional oil and gas reserves to be exploited without regard to the consequences for the earth’s climate. In response to scientific reports on climate change, Exxon Mobil declared that it intends to extract and sell all of the fossil-fuel reserves at its disposal.41 Energy corporations continue to intervene in climate negotiations to ensure that any agreements to limit carbon emissions are defanged. Capitalist countries across the board are putting the accumulation of wealth for a few above combatting climate destabilization, **threatening the very future of humanity**. Capitalism is best understood as a competitive class-based mode of production and exchange geared to the accumulation of capital through the exploitation of workers’ labor power and the private appropriation of surplus value (value generated beyond the costs of the workers’ own reproduction). The mode of economic accounting intrinsic to capitalism designates as a value-generating good or service anything that passes through the market and therefore produces income. It follows that the greater part of the social and environmental costs of production outside the market are excluded in this form of valuation and are treated as mere negative “externalities,” unrelated to the capitalist economy itself—whether in terms of the shortening and degradation of human life or the destruction of the natural environment. As environmental economist K. William Kapp stated, “capitalism must be regarded as an economy of unpaid costs.”42 We have now reached a point in the twenty-first century in which the externalities of this irrational system, such as the costs of war, the depletion of natural resources, the waste of human lives, and the disruption of the planetary environment, now far exceed any future economic benefits that capitalism offers to society as a whole. The accumulation of capital and the amassing of wealth are increasingly occurring at the expense of an irrevocable rift in the social and environmental conditions governing human life on earth.43

#### Reject Turns - Capitalist literature production is strongly incentivized, and politically agenda based

Morley 15 - Louise Morley, Center for Higher Education and Equity Research @ University of Sussex, in Journal of Education Policy (2016), Published online: 13 Jul 2015 ["Troubling intra-actions: gender, neo-liberalism and research in the global academy", http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02680939.2015.1062919, 10-4-2017] AR Recut SAO 9/29/21

I have argued that research and researcher identities are being constructed and reinforced via the optics and apparatus of neo-liberalism. Research capital is a key performance indicator and co-constitutes reputation, power, status, rewards, and continued employment. Individual academic identities materialise through intraactions between research policy discourses, performance and productivity within the confines of key performance indicators. Insecurity, inequality and individualisation are fostered as part of ensuring the conditions for power to exercise a hold over conduct (Lazzarato 2009). In the neo-liberalised research economy, risk is redistributed, as academics are made to feel indebted to their organisations and responsibilised for generating income in financial systems over which they have little or no control. What is valued in research and scholarship is increasingly being shaped by market demands. Income generation, enterprise, impact, innovation for the market and the exchange value in the global prestige economy are dominant indicators of the value of research. Productivity and quality are connected and classified according to financial returns and the predictability of research utility. Knowledge production, custody and dissemination processes purport to be neutral and objective, but overlap with social and policy hierarchies. The knowledge economy is invested, situated, exclusionary and embodied, and as such, infused with power and control. The empty signifier of excellence is frequently invoked, yet value indicators can be unstable, transitory, contingent, contextualised and highly gendered. The knowledge economy is driven by the materialities of financialisation, but also by a powerful psychic and affective economy of shame, pride, humiliation, anger, disappointment, despair and anxiety. This represents a type of emotional geography (Kenway and Youdell 2011), with academic identities formed and evaluated in relation to mutable and constructed differences and boundaries. Affect, as Barad might say, is a phenomenon. It is not a stand-alone thing in the world as such things do not exist. It is a term called forth through a relationship with an apparatus (Rutherford 2013). The evaluative gaze of the neo-liberal research economy is the apparatus that can provoke such a powerful affective range. Research makes the world intelligible in specific ways and contributes to the foreclosure of other patterns of intelligibility (Rouse 2004). Additionally, the logic of relationality suggests that for every winner there are many losers. From the evidence presented in my study and from larger studies (European Commission 2008, 2011; European Science Foundation 2009; UNESCO 2010), it seems that, globally, women are the losers and are participating unequally in the research economy through which social meanings and knowledge are generated. This raises questions about whose research is having impact on policy, society and the economy. It is also highly precarious as to if and when women receive sponsorship from the neo-liberal winners. However, many women in my study maintain a rational and humanistic attachment to notions of mentoring and altruistic re-distributions of research knowledge in a competitive economy that rewards differentiation. A question is how to materialise women’s academic identities in a global research economy that urgently needs to renew itself. Research has been too readily ceded to neo-liberal forces and practices. There are questions about what the future holds for critical scholarship and whether there is an alternative to the neo-liberal corporate logic that fosters competition, convergence and compliance (Leathwood and Read 2013). A role of the social scientist is to render the world problematic by formulating and elaborating questions. To offer simplistic and reductive solutions of ‘what works’ formulae is not enough (Thrift 2007). Academic creativity should incorporate transgression and re-signification, and not just compliance and mechanistic productivity. This necessitates a troubling of the neo-liberal realisms and a re-invigoration of knowledge production as a site of transformation and change. Colley (2013) entreats counter-hegemonic scholars to act as Socratic ‘gadflies’. This includes defending the autonomy of the field of the production of research against heteronomy and control practices that masquerade as democratisation. One task for social research could be to resist co-option by narrow research policy agendas. This involves the prerequisite to identify new optics for viewing the social world, and to re-work tired, stale categories and vocabularies that produce tedious social reproductions. Enterprise cannot be used alone to solve social problems (Ball and Olmedo 2012). Most importantly, there is a need to imagine and research desired futures. Barad (2010, 257) suggests that ‘We inherit the future, not just the past’. What foundations are current practices, exclusions and disqualifications laying for future knowledge?

#### Corporate capitalists filter what we learn through search engines

Hedges 18 - Chris Hedges, Truth Dig, “Thought Police for the 21st Century” January 21st, 2018 [https://www.truthdig.com/articles/thought-police-21st-century/] Accessed 4/24/18 SAO

DETROIT—The abolition of net neutrality and the use of algorithms by Facebook, Google, YouTube and Twitter to divert readers and viewers from progressive, left-wing and anti-war sites, along with demonizing as foreign agents the journalists who expose the crimes of corporate capitalism and imperialism, have given the corporate state the power to destroy freedom of speech. Any state that accrues this kind of power will use it. And for that reason I traveled last week to Detroit to join David North, the chairperson of the international editorial board of the World Socialist Web Site, in a live-stream event calling for the formation of a broad front to block an escalating censorship while we still have a voice. “The future of humanity is the struggle between humans that control machines and machines that control humans,” Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, said in a statement issued in support of the event. “Between the democratization of communication and usurpation of communication by artificial intelligence. While the Internet has brought about a revolution in people’s ability to educate themselves and others, the resulting democratic phenomena has shaken existing establishments to their core. Google, Facebook and their Chinese equivalents, who are socially, logistically and financially integrated with existing elites, have moved to re-establish discourse control. This is not simply a corrective action. Undetectable mass social influence powered by artificial intelligence is an existential threat to humanity. While still in its infancy, the trends are clear and of a geometric nature. The phenomena differs in traditional attempts to shape cultural and political phenomena by operating at scale, speed and increasingly at a subtlety that eclipses human capacities.” In late April and early May the World Socialist Web Site, which identifies itself as a Trotskyite group that focuses on the crimes of capitalism, the plight of the working class and imperialism, began to see a steep decline in readership. The decline persisted into June. Search traffic to the World Socialist Web Site has been reduced by 75 percent overall. And the site is not alone. AlterNet’s search traffic is down 71 percent, Consortium News is down 72 percent, Global Research and Truthdig have seen declines. And the situation appears to be growing worse. The reductions coincided with the introduction of algorithms imposed by Google to fight “fake news.” Google said the algorithms are designed to elevate “more authoritative content” and marginalize “blatantly misleading, low quality, offensive or downright false information.” It soon became apparent, however, that in the name of combating “fake news,” Google, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are censoring left-wing, progressive and anti-war sites. The 150 most popular search terms that brought readers to the World Socialist Web Site, including “socialism,” “Russian Revolution” and “inequality,” today elicit little or no traffic. Monika Bickert, head of global policy management at Facebook, told the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation in a hearing Wednesday that Facebook employs a security team of 10,000—7,500 of whom “assess potentially violating content”—and that “by the end of 2018 we will more than double” it to over 20,000. Social media companies are intertwined with and often work for U.S. intelligence agencies. This army of censors is our Thought Police. The group, Bickert said, includes “a dedicated counterterrorism team” of “former intelligence and law-enforcement officials and prosecutors who worked in the area of counterterrorism.” She testified that artificial intelligence automatically flags questionable content. Facebook, she said, does not “wait for these … bad actors to upload content to Facebook before placing it into our detection systems.” The “propaganda” that Facebook blocks, she said, “is content that we identify ourselves before anybody” else can see it. Facebook, she said, along with over a dozen other social media companies has created a blacklist of 50,000 “unique digital fingerprints” that can prevent content from being posted. “We believe that a key part of combating extremism is preventing recruitment by disrupting the underlying ideologies that drive people to commit acts of violence,” she told the committee. “That’s why we support a variety of counterspeech efforts.” “Counterspeech” is a word that could have been lifted from the pages of George Orwell’s dystopian novel “1984.” Eric Schmidt, who is stepping down this month as the executive chairman of Google’s parent company, Alphabet, has acknowledged that Google is creating algorithms to “de-rank” Russian-based news websites RT and Sputnik from its Google News services, effectively blocking them. The U.S. Department of Justice forced RT America, on which I host a show, “On Contact,” that gives a voice to anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist voices, to register as a “foreign agent.” Google removed RT from its “preferred” channels on YouTube. Twitter has blocked the Russian news service agencies RT and Sputnik from advertising. This censorship is global. The German government’s Network Enforcement Act fines social media companies for allegedly objectionable content. French President Emmanuel Macron has vowed to remove “fake news” from the internet. Facebook and Instagram erased the accounts of Ramzan Kadyrov, the dictator of the Chechen Republic, because he is on a U.S. sanctions list. Kadyrov is certainly repugnant, but this ban, as the American Civil Liberties Union points out, empowers the U.S. government to effectively censor content. Facebook, working with the Israeli government, has removed over 100 accounts of Palestinian activists. This is an ominous march to an Orwellian world of Thought Police, “Newspeak” and “thought-crime” or, as Facebook likes to call it, “de-ranking” and “counterspeech.” The censorship, justified in the name of combating terrorism by blocking the content of extremist groups, is also designed to prevent a distressed public from accessing the language and ideas needed to understand corporate oppression, imperialism and socialism. “Don’t you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought?” Orwell wrote in “1984.” “In the end we shall make thought-crime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten. … Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller. …” Corporate capitalism, and the ideology that justifies it—neoliberalism, the free market, globalization—no longer has any credibility. All of the utopian promises of globalization have been exposed as lies. Allowing banks and corporations to determine how we should order human society and govern ourselves did not spread global wealth, raise the living standards of workers or implant democracy across the globe. The ideology, preached in business schools and by pliant politicians, was a thin cover for the rapacious greed of the elites, elites who now control most of the world’s wealth. The ruling elites know they are in trouble. The Republican and Democratic parties’ abject subservience to corporate power is transparent. The insurgencies in the two parties that saw Bernie Sanders nearly defeat the seemingly preordained Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton, and the election of Donald Trump terrify the elites. The elites, by attacking critics and dissidents as foreign agents for Russia, are seeking to deflect attention from the cause of these insurgencies—massive social inequality. Critics of the corporate state and imperialism, already pushed to the margins, are now dangerous because the elites no longer have a viable counterargument. And so these dissidents must be silenced. “What’s so specifically important about this is that in a period of growing political radicalization among young people, among workers, they start to look for oppositional information, they become interested in socialism, revolution, terms like ‘equality,’ those terms which previously would bring thousands of readers to the World Socialist Web Site, now were bringing no readers to the World Socialist Web Site,” North said. “In other words, they were setting up a quarantine between those who may be interested in our site and the WSWS. From being a bridge, Google was becoming a barrier, a guard preventing access to our site.” The internet, with its ability to reach across international boundaries, is a potent tool for connecting workers across the earth who are fighting the same enemy—corporate capitalism. And control of the internet, the elites know, is vital to suppress information and consciousness. “There is no national solution to the problems of American capitalism,” North said. “The effort of the United States is to overcome this through a policy of war. Because what, ultimately, is imperialism? The inability to solve the problems of the nation-state within national borders drives the policy of war and conquest. That is what is emerging. Under conditions of war, the threat of war, conditions of growing and immeasurable inequality, democracy cannot survive. The tendency now is the suppression of democracy. And just as there is no national solution for capitalism, there is no national solution for the working class.”