# 1AC Stuff

**Resolutional Overview**

#### “Right to Strike” Defined as Right to Resist Oppression – Prioritize Over All Other Rights

Gourevitch 17

Alex Gourevitch, “The Political Ethics of the Strike”, Radcliffe Institute,

May 19, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5hfeOD7Mzs

The second advantage that I think this view has

is that it means that the right to strike

is shaped in a way that allows it to actually protect

the interest that justifies it.

I know that sort of an obscure way of saying it.

So by shape, I just mean that the shape of a right

is what kinds of permissions and restrictions

there are on it's exercise.

Now we saw in the other two cases

the shape of their version of the right to strike

was limited by the need to respect

the basic economic and civil liberties

because that way of thinking derived the right

to strike from those basic economic and civil liberties.

But this way of thinking--

**the right to strike as a right to resist**

**oppression**-- just begins from the basic interest

that workers have in exercising their freedom,

exercising their collective capacity

to reduce the oppression to which they're subject.

Which means that the right must include permission

to use some kinds of means that gives them

a reasonable chance of actually resisting that oppression.

It won't just import these restrictions that normally

apply to basic civil liberties.

So I think that's a further advantage

is it's more suitably tailored to the aim is supposed

to promote, which is to give workers the actual capacity

to use their own agency to resist the oppression they

face.

The third and I think final superiority

of this particular way of thinking

is that it also explains why the right to strike

enjoys priority over these basic economic and civil liberties

in the case of labor disputes, which is the following.

If the right to strike is a right to resist oppression

and the oppression that workers are resisting

is a product of the way in which the law protects

these basic economic and civil liberties,

then those basic economic and civil liberties-- at least

when it comes to the economy-- are not

worthy of very much respect.

Because it's the protection of those particular liberties

that creates the oppression in the first place.

And in fact, whatever claim to respect

those liberties have is actually a claim

for the right to strike.

Because it's actually in the exercise of the right

to strike that workers come closer to demanding

the kind of equal freedom that is the basis

for any reasonable account of just economic

and social relationships.

So this way of thinking about the right to strike

answers the question in a way that's both coherent

and establishes it's own limitations.

It's just an argument about why the right to strike

would have priority over basic economic and civil liberties

like property rights, freedom of contract,

freedom of association in the economy,

and even general counts of law and order.

Because when the law protects those rights,

it actually creates the very oppression

that the right to strike is a response to.

Since the normal justification of those basic economic and

civil liberties is that they create

a kind of fair or just system of social cooperation,

but they in fact just create this highly unequal system

of forcing coercion and domination,

it's actually the right to strike that has a better

claim to having priority.

#### “Just Government” definitionally requires non-oppression; workers’ rights key; avoids violent revolution

Eliot **Cohen**, PhD, 11-27-20**14**, "Two Concepts of Oppression," Psychology Today, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-would-aristotle-do/201411/two-concepts-oppressionThe Oxford English Dictionary defines “oppression” as “the state of being subject to unjust treatment or control.” However, this does not mean that those subjected to unjust treatment or control are aware of it.

This is an aspect of oppression that is largely missed in popular culture when we consider whether we or others are being oppressed. Indeed, when living day to day in concert with the constraints of a given cultural milieu, we seldom consider whether we are actually being oppressed. Instead, we tend to think that one who wants to live according to the constraints of her culture is making a free choice.

In contrast, the usual scenario we think of when we think of oppression is that of someone who is captured, confined, tortured, or otherwise unjustly treated or controlled against his or her protests and pleas for freedom. Those who organize rebellions, or who would do so if they could, are thought to be oppressed. The internal resistance against apartheid in South Africa was viewed as a mark of oppression; while those who acquiesce in their cultural restrictions and taboos, and think none the worst of it, are typically considered free agents.

In United States history, one prominent example of the latter sort of “forced” oppression is that described by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, in 1848, in their influential book, The Communist Manifesto. Therein, Marx and Engels advanced their polemic against the power of capitalism to enslave the working class using the technology of mass production:

"Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of laborers, crowded into the factory, are organized like soldiers … Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machines, by the overlooker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is."

In this image of wage slavery, the popular conception of exploitation is clearly illustrated wherein the masses of laborers are bound to an assembly line for an excessive amount of hours per day, under abominable working conditions, and given meager compensation. Indeed, Marx and Engel predicted that such egregious treatment of workers by rich capitalists would inevitably “produce its own gravediggers,” that is, explode into a bloody revolution.

#### Judge has binary choice between right to strike and violent state suppression

Gourevitch 18 (Alex Gourevitch, associate professor of political science at Brown University, Jacobin, “A radical Defense of the Right to Strike, 7/12/2018, <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/07/right-to-strike-freedom-civil-liberties-oppression>; Associate Professor of Political Science, Brown University)

The stakes of all of this are high. If one does not agree that workers are generally justified in engaging in mass, disruptive, and unlawful activity as part of exercising the right to strike, then one is committed to arguing that the state is justified in violently suppressing strikes — a violence with a [long](http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/?GCOI=80140100529240) and [bloody](https://www.amazon.com/Labor-Wars-Maguires-Workers-Memorial/dp/1931859701) [history](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/perspectives-on-politics/article/div-classtitlepolice-work-the-centrality-of-labor-repression-in-american-political-historydiv/7DF60C0EBD68C32C500D28EF215D765B). Some might very well draw that latter conclusion. But they should be clear about which side they’re choosing.

Either workers are justified in resisting the use of legal violence to suppress their strikes, or the state is justified in violently suppressing coercive strike tactics. No amount of dressed-up rhetoric about liberty and justice for all can shroud that inescapable fact.

#### “strike” means refusing to work due to working conditions

Cambridge Dictionary No Date

https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/strike

strike

*verb*

US

 /straɪk/ UK

 /straɪk/

struck | struck

strike verb (STOP WORK)

B2 [[ I ]](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/help/codes.html)

to [refuse](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/refuse) to [continue](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/continue) [working](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/working) because of an [argument](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/argument) with an [employer](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/employer) about [working](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/working) [conditions](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/conditions), [pay](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/pay) [levels](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/level), or [job](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/job) [cuts](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/cut):

*Democratization has*[*brought*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/brought)[*workers*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/worker)*the*[*right*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/right)*to strike and*[*join*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/join)*a*[*labor*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/labor)[*union*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/union)*.*

*We're striking for*[*better*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/better)[*pay*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/pay)*and*[*improved*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/improved)[*safety*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/safety)[*standards*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/standard)*.*

#### The aff advocates that a just government, in order to meet its role of avoiding oppression, must recognize an unconditional right to strike

### Contention 1 is Oppression

#### Class Based Oppression Inherent in Capitalism –Right to Strike is Only Check Against Injustice

**Gourevitch 18** (Alex Gourevitch, associate professor of political science at Brown University, Jacobin, “A radical Defense of the Right to Strike, 7/12/2018, <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/07/right-to-strike-freedom-civil-liberties-oppression>; Associate Professor of Political Science, Brown University)

[Class-based oppression](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/03/working-class-capitalism-socialists-strike-power/) is inextricable from liberal capitalism. While meaningful variation exists across capitalist societies, one of the fundamental unifying facts is this: the majority of able-bodied people are forced to work for members of a relatively small group, who dominate control over productive assets and who, thereby, enjoy control over the activities and products of those workers. There are [workers](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/07/turning-to-the-working-class), and then there are owners and their managers.

Workers are pushed into the labor market because they have no reasonable alternative to looking for a job. They cannot produce the goods they need for themselves, nor can they rely on the charity of others, nor can they count on adequate state benefits. Depending on how we measure income and wealth, **about 60 to 80 percent** of Americans [fall into this category](https://thenewpress.com/books/after-new-economy) for most of their adult lives.

This structural compulsion is not symmetric. A significant minority of the population has enough wealth — whether inherited or accumulated or both — that they can avoid entering the labor market. They might happen to work, but they are not forced to do so.

The oppression, then, stems not from the fact that some are forced to work. After all, if socially necessary work were shared equally, then it might be fair to force each to do their share. The oppression stems from the fact that the forcing is unequal —that only some are made to work for others, producing whatever employers pay them to produce.

This structural inequality feeds into a second, interpersonal dimension of oppression. Workers are forced to join workplaces typically characterized by large swathes of uncontrolled managerial power and authority. This oppression is interpersonal because it is power that specific individuals (employers and their managers) have to get other specific individuals (employees) to do what they want. We can distinguish between three overlapping forms that this interpersonal, workplace oppression takes: subordination, delegation, and dependence.

Subordination: Employers have what are sometimes called “[managerial prerogatives](https://books.google.com/books/about/Managerial_Prerogative_and_the_Question.html?id=NQLEBAAAQBAJ)” — legislative and judicial grants of authority to owners and their managers to make decisions about investment, hiring and firing, plant location, work process, and the like. Managers may change working speeds and assigned tasks, the hours of work, or, as Amazon currently does, force employees to spend up to an hour going through security lines after work [without paying them](https://www.oyez.org/cases/2014/13-433). They can fire workers for [Facebook comments](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/17/facebook-firings_n_1003789.html), [their sexual orientation](https://www.sgvtribune.com/2011/10/08/fired-gay-water-polo-coach-and-supporters-protest-at-charter-oak-board-meeting/), [for being too sexually appealing](http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2013/07/29/borgata_babes_lawsuit_new_legal_cases_assess_discrimination_based_on_sex.html), or for not being appealing enough. They can [give](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/71431/the-big-squeeze-by-steven-greenhouse/9781400096527/) workers more tasks than can be performed in the allotted time, lock employees in the workplace overnight, [require employees to labor](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/money_co/2011/09/amazon-warehouse-employees-overheated-ahead-of-holiday-season.html) in extreme heat and [other physically hazardous conditions](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/31/us/osha-emphasizes-safety-health-risks-fester.html), or [punitively isolate](https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/caring-on-stolen-time-a-nursing-home-diary) workers from other coworkers. They can [pressure](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/03/labor-law-corporations-workers-political-influence) employees to take unwanted political action, or, in the case of nurses, force employees to [work for twenty-two different doctors](https://socialistworker.org/2018/07/03/nurses-are-set-to-strike-uvm).

What unifies these seemingly disparate examples is that, in all cases, managers [are exercising](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/06/private-government-interview-elizabeth-anderson) legally permitted prerogatives. The law does not require that workers have any formal say in how those powers are exercised. In fact, in nearly every liberal capitalist country (including social democracies like Sweden), employees are defined, in law, as “subordinates.” This is subordination in the strict sense: workers are subject to the will of the employer.

Delegation: There are additional discretionary legal powers that managers enjoy not by legal statute or precedent but because workers have delegated these powers in the contract. For instance, workers might sign a contract [that allows managers to require employees](https://www.aclu.org/issues/criminal-law-reform/drug-testing?redirect=workplace-drug-testing) to submit to random drug testing or unannounced searches. In the United States, 18 percent of current employees and 37 percent of workers in their lifetime [work under noncompete agreements](http://equitablegrowth.org/why-its-time-to-rethink-non-compete-agreements/). These clauses give managers the legal power to forbid employees from working for competitors, in some cases reducing these workers to near indentured service. The [contract](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/04/verizon-wireless-strike-bernie-sanders-cwa/) that the Communications Workers of America had with Verizon until 2015 included a right for managers to force employers to perform from ten to fifteen hours of overtime per week and to take some other day instead of Saturday as an off-day.

While workers have granted these prerogatives to employers voluntarily, in many cases it’s only technically voluntary because of the compulsion to work. This is especially true if workers can only find jobs in sectors where these kinds of contracts proliferate.

Which leads to the third face of oppression: the distributive effects of class inequality. The normal workings of liberal capitalism elevate a relatively small group of owners and highly paid managers to the pinnacle of society, where they accumulate most of the wealth and income. Meanwhile, most workers do not earn enough to both meet their needs and to save such that they can employ themselves or start their own businesses. The few that do rise displace others or take the structurally limited number of opportunities available. The rest remain workers.

Dependence: Finally, managers might have the material power to force employees to submit to commands or even to accept violations of their rights because of the worker’s dependence on the employer. A [headline example](https://jacobinmag.com/2018/06/heres-how-much-money-americas-biggest-corporations-have-stolen-from-their-own-workers) is [wage theft](https://www.epi.org/blog/wage-theft-by-employers-is-costing-u-s-workers-billions-of-dollars-a-year/), which affects [American workers](https://www.nelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/WinningWageJusticeSummaryofResearchonWageTheft.pdf) to the tune of $8 to $14 billion per year. Employers [regularly break](http://www.jwj.org/free-and-fair-how-labor-law-fails-u-s-democratic-election-standards) labor law, by disciplining, threatening, or firing workers who wish to organize, strike, or otherwise exercise supposedly protected labor rights. In other cases, workers have been [refused bathroom breaks](https://www.oxfamamerica.org/livesontheline/) and resorted to wearing diapers, [denied legally required lunch breaks](https://www.sfgate.com/business/article/Employers-must-pay-if-they-deny-lunch-breaks-2474407.php) or [pressured to work through them](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/14/indiana-att-technicians-class-action-lawsuit-lunch-breaks_n_1777166.html), [forced to keep working](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/08/business/media/ads-for-mcdonalds-and-las-vegas-aimed-at-harried-workers.html) after their shift, or denied the right to read or turn on air conditioning during break. In [particularly egregious examples](https://www.buzzfeed.com/jessicagarrison/the-new-american-slavery-invited-to-the-us-foreign-workers-f#.nmJN7Yg27), employers have forced their workers to stay home rather than go out on weekends or to switch churches and alter religious practices on pain of being fired and deported. There are also the many cases of systematic [sexual harassment](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/03/metoo-workplace-discrimination-sexual-harassment-feminism), in those wide regions of the economy where something more than a public shaming is needed to control bosses.

In all these instances, employers are not exercising legal powers to command. Instead they are taking advantage of the material power that comes with threatening to fire or otherwise discipline workers. This material power to get workers to do things that employers want is in part a function of the class structure of society, both in the broad sense of workers being unequally dependent on owners, and in the narrower sense of workers being legally subordinate to employers. The oppression lies not just in the existence of these powers, nor in some capitalist bad apples, but in how these powers are typically used. Managers tend to use these powers “rationally,” to exploit workers and extract profits.

Each of these different faces of oppression — structural, interpersonal, and distributive — is a distinct injustice. Together they form the interrelated and mutually reinforcing elements of class domination that are typical of capitalist societies.

Defenders of liberal capitalism insist that it provides the fairest way of distributing work and the rewards of social production. They often speak in the idiom of freedom. Yet liberal capitalism fundamentally constrains workers’ liberty, generating the exploitation of one class by another. It is this oppression that explains why workers have a right to strike and why that right is best understood as a right to resist oppression.

#### Right to Strike is Fundamental, Outweighing Opposing Interests

Lim 19

https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2019/12/11/lim-right-to-strike/

Strikes are not only a means of demanding and achieving an adequate provision of basic liberties but also are themselves intrinsic, self-determined expressions of freedom and human rights. The exercise of the power to strike affirms a quintessential corpus of values akin to liberal democracies, notably those of dignity, liberty, and autonomy. In acts of collective defiance, strikers assert their freedoms of speech, association, and assembly. Acts of striking, marching, and picketing command the attention of the media and prompt public forums of discussion and dialogue.

The question of civic obligations, however, remains at stake. Perhaps those disgruntled with the strike might claim on a whiff that the strike impedes upon their own freedom of movement, educational rights, privacy, and so forth. Do strikers, in virtue of expressing their own freedoms, shirk valid civic norms of reciprocity they owe to members of the community, for instance, to students? No. The right to strike stems from the premise of an unjust flaw in the social order, that is, the recognition that the benefits from shouldering the burdens of social cooperation are not fairly distributed. Strikes and protests publicize this recognition and demand reform.

No doubt, work stoppages from teaching fellows, course assistants, and graduate research assistants — no sections, no office hours, no labs, no grades — may pose [inconvenience](https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2019/11/26/barham-quesada-protest/) and perhaps hardship in our present lives. Strikes may also impose a serious financial [cost](https://harvardmagazine.com/2019/11/a-harvard-graduate-student-union-strike) on both the employer and the employees. These costs and inconveniences, however, should not be ridiculed as outrageous, for they rightfully [invite](https://jacobinmag.com/2018/07/right-to-strike-freedom-civil-liberties-oppression) disruption.

The possible hazards that arise from a strike must be weighed against the workers’ welfare and just rewards and to the community. For instance, current graduate students who struggle in [financials](https://www.apa.org/monitor/2015/04/money-stress) and [mental health](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/258702) may be troubled with juggling teaching obligations. If graduate students are provided with pay security and adequate dental, mental health, and specialist coverage, their quality of teaching and research may [improve](https://cpr.bu.edu/resources/reasonable-accommodations/how-does-mental-illness-interfere-with-school-performance/) in the [long run](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6350815/). There are dangers to bystanders and neutrals when a strike occurs, but such considerations also arise when one lays down the right to strike.

#### Right to strike is fundamental human right, protects against tyranny and involuntary servitude

**Pope 18**

{James Gray Pope, 9-21-2018, "Labor’s right to strike is essential," PSC CUNY, https://www.psc-cuny.org/clarion/september-2018/labor%E2%80%99s-right-strike-essential//ZR}

The right to strike should be a no-brainer for any self-respecting candidate who claims to care about working people. It isn’t some transitory policy fix; it’s a fundamental human right, recognized in international law. Without the right to strike, workers have no effective recourse against unhealthy conditions, inadequate wages, or employer tyranny. Before the American labor movement began its long decline, unions made the right to strike a litmus test for supporting candidates. Labor leaders held that anti-strike laws imposed “involuntary servitude” in violation of the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Corporate interests ridiculed this claim, arguing that the Amendment guaranteed only the individual right to quit and go elsewhere. But workers and unions held their ground. “The simple fact is that the right of individual workers to quit their jobs has meaning only when they may quit in concert, so that in their quitting or in their threat to quit they have a real bargaining strength,” Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) General Counsel Lee Pressman explained. “It is thus hypocritical to suggest that a prohibition on the right to strike is not in practical effect a prohibition on the right to quit individually.”

#### Key to Workers’ Freedom

**Gourevitch 18** (Alex Gourevitch, associate professor of political science at Brown University, Jacobin, “A radical Defense of the Right to Strike, 7/12/2018, <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/07/right-to-strike-freedom-civil-liberties-oppression>; Associate Professor of Political Science, Brown University)

Workers have an interest in resisting the oppression of class society by using their collective power to reduce, or even overcome, that oppression. Their interest is a liberty interest in a double sense.

First, resistance to that class-based oppression carries with it, at least implicitly, a demand for freedoms not yet enjoyed. A higher wage expands workers’ freedom of choice. Expanded labor rights increase workers’ collective freedom to influence the terms of employment. Whatever the concrete set of issues, workers’ strike demands are always also a demand for control over portions of one’s life that they do not yet enjoy.

Second, strikes don’t just aim at winning more freedom — they are themselves expressions of freedom. When workers walk out, they’re using their own individual and collective agency to win the liberties they deserve. The same capacity for self-determination that workers invoke to demand more freedom is the capacity they exercise when winning their demands. Freedom, not industrial stability or simply higher living standards, is the name of their desire.

Put differently, the right to strike has both an intrinsic and instrumental relation to freedom. It has intrinsic value as an (at least implicit) demand for self-emancipation. And it has instrumental value insofar as the strike is an effective means for resisting the oppressiveness of a class society and achieving new freedoms.

#### Prior moral obligation – only addressing worker oppression uproot capitalism

**Gourevitch 18** (Alex Gourevitch, associate professor of political science at Brown University, Jacobin, “A radical Defense of the Right to Strike, 7/12/2018, <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/07/right-to-strike-freedom-civil-liberties-oppression>; Associate Professor of Political Science, Brown University)

Still, the question remains: why should the right to strike be given moral priority over other basic liberties? The reason is not just that liberal capitalism produces economic oppression but that the economic oppression that workers face is in part created and sustained by the very economic and civil liberties that liberal capitalism cherishes. Workers find themselves oppressed because of the way property rights, freedom of contract, corporate authority, and tax and labor law operate. Deeming these liberties inviolable doesn’t foster less oppressive, exploitative outcomes, as its defenders insist — quite the opposite. The right to strike has a stronger claim to be protecting a zone of activity that serves the aims of justice itself — coercing people into relations of less oppressive social cooperation. Simply put, to argue for the right to strike is to prioritize democratic freedoms over property rights.

### Contention 2 Is Unchecked Capitalism

#### Right to Strike Key to Prevent Capitalism-Induced Planetary Extinction

**Treen 16** (Mike Treen, “What can be done to fight inequality?” <https://unite.org.nz/news/what_can_be_done_to_fight_inequality/>, National Director, Unite Union)

But so long as we have a competitive, dog-eat-dog capitalist system then the tendency to centralise and concentrate wealth will continue with irresistible force that ultimately will overcome all barriers that governments try and establish.

Capitalism is also a system of commodity production for sale at a profit. There are simply too many linkages in that process that can go wrong for the system to escape its tendency towards crisis. And the longer the system survives the greater those threats become. Today the global economy remains at risk of a renewed global recession/depression without really recovering from the worst crisis to hit the system since the 1930s. The system of production for profit also threatens the ultimate source of life itself – mother earth.

Because the system is based on the production of commodities for sale, the capitalists do not actually care who buys their product. The worker can buy food to eat, the professional can buy a house, the capitalist can buy a private jet. The capitalist can also buy buildings and raw materials for expanded production. That is why I don’t buy into the “Left Keynesian” arguments that it is simply not enough demand from workers that creates problems for capitalism. Expanding workers wages to purchase the products of capitalists is not a “solution” if it reduces middle-class purchases or capitalist investments. Higher wages also ultimately impact on the rate of profit which is a key barometer of capitalist health.

There is also a conservative argument in favour of the Universal Basic Income that is essentially along these lines. The pro-capitalist supporters like Reich see it as necessary to maintain incomes of the working class poor who have lost higher-paying industrial jobs that and have been thrust into a more precarious existence juggling several minimum wage, part time service jobs to survive. They essentially accept that there is nothing much that can be done to prevent that. But we can minimise its impact by having the State pay a UBI that can maintain a consumer market for capitalism among the poor. In this world view, the capitalists are free to eliminate as many jobs as they like with the new technologies that are becoming available so long as we have a UBI to prevent complete destitution. Some like New Zealand’s own Gareth Morgan [argue that you don’t need a minimum wage](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=10766024) with a UBI.

I support a UBI for different reasons. I agree that it is important to protect people from the ravages of capitalism as much as possible. This includes socialised health care and education as a right. Welfare is needed for people who are sick or invalided in some way. Living allowances are needed while in tertiary study. Pensions are needed for the elderly. A UBI is a simple and effective way to do all of that with the least cost and without punitive barriers or stigma associated with access.

In addition, I believe a UBI will strengthen workers bargaining power with their bosses – both at an individual level and collectively. An individual is better able tell an abusive boss to just stick it if they have access to means of support till they find another job. Collectively workers can more readily afford to strike for improvements as well if they have this available as of right.

This will also strengthen workers position to challenge the precarious existence being imposed on us rather than accepting it as somehow an inevitable consequence of technological development.

Capitalism will continue to produce a world of instability for working people so long as it exists. It can only be replaced by the collective action of the big majority of the population acting together to create a new society.

That new society will take democratic ownership control of the finance system and the major monopolies and use that control to lead investments according to a democratic plan.

Before that day arrives there will be a contest of power within capitalism.

Working people need to fight for demands that can expand their power and make it easier to resist what capitalism wants to impose.

Demands to reduce inequality that are simply abstract appeals to the rich and powerful to wake up and do the right thing are simply a waste of time. The ruling elite does not care that they are destroying humanity and the planet.

The left needs to popularise a programme for political, economic and social changes that empower people as much as possible. That begins with strengthening unions and their bargaining power.

#### Also, climate strikes independently help solve

**Subasinghe & Vogt 19** (Ruwan Subasinghe & Jeff Vogt, 9/5/2019, “Unions must join the Global Climate Strike to avert a climate catastrophe”, <https://www.equaltimes.org/unions-must-join-the-global#.YY1TaGDML-g>; Ruwan Subasinghe is a Legal Advisor to the International Transport Workers’ Federation, and Jeff Vogt is Director for the Solidarity Center’s Rule of Law Center and previously was legal director of the International Trade Union Confederation)

Now young people around the world are calling on workers to join them on 20 and 27 September for the third wave of [global climate strikes](https://globalclimatestrike.net/). While some trade unions have been responding to the call with plans for [lunch break actions](http://unionsforenergydemocracy.org/tued-bulletin-88/) and [workplace climate assemblies](http://www.cgil.it/la-cgil-aderisce-al-terzo-global-climate-strike/), most are constrained by legal restrictions on the right to strike at the national level.

A strike is generally framed in national law as either a positive right or a freedom from liability which an employer would otherwise be able to assert in, for example, tort or contract. However, in many jurisdictions the right can only be exercised in the context of collective bargaining and/or a trade dispute. Unions operating in such jurisdictions will find it difficult to formally join the Global Climate Strike as the purpose of the action ostensibly falls outside the strict scope of collective bargaining or a trade dispute. While unions are increasingly bringing environmental issues to the bargaining table with demands for [greening or just transition clauses](https://adaptingcanadianwork.ca/green-collective-agreements-database/), these efforts are still limited to workplace mitigation and adaptation strategies and do not cover wider commitments on climate change.

In countries where strikes in furtherance of socio-economic aims are permitted, unions will nevertheless need to win the argument that climate change is a socio-economic issue and not just an environmental or a political one.

Here we can, and should, rely on international law.

Committee on Freedom of Association

The International Labour Organization’s (ILO) tripartite Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA) has for nearly 70 years defined the scope of the right to freedom of association, including the right to strike. The CFA has consistently held that workers may engage in collective action, including protests and strikes, outside of the [collective bargaining process](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:70002:0::NO::P70002_HIER_ELEMENT_ID,P70002_HIER_LEVEL:3945422,2) and over matters beyond the traditional ambit of wages and conditions of work. So long as the strike is not [‘purely political’](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:70002:0::NO:70002:P70002_HIER_ELEMENT_ID,P70002_HIER_LEVEL:3945422,2) in nature, such as an insurrection, the CFA has stated that, “organizations responsible for defending workers’ socio-economic and occupational interests should be able to use strike action to support their position in the search for solutions to problems posed by major social and economic policy trends which have [a direct impact on their members and all workers in general](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:70006:0::NO::P70006_COMPLAINT_TEXT_ID,P70006_PARAGRAPH_NO:2909393,901), in particular as regards employment, social protection and standards of living.”

In the past, the CFA has given its imprimatur to protests and strikes concerning a range of issues including trade agreements, labour law reform, pensions, tax policy, social protection and similar demands. While it has not yet had occasion to consider a climate strike, it should find such a strike to be protected. Indeed, there is no issue today that has a more direct, immediate and serious impact on the world of work than the climate emergency.

Already, the ILO has explained that climate change, if not addressed, will have a serious impact on employment in all sectors and in all regions. These impacts include significant [climate-driven migration](https://www.equaltimes.org/unions-and-ngos-gather-in-london#.XW5y_W5Fw2x) for work, dangerous working conditions from [extreme heat](https://www.equaltimes.org/as-global-temperatures-rise#.XW5zyW5Fw2x), job loss in rural areas due to crop failure and job loss in urban areas due to extreme weather events. Also, the actions we will need to take to mitigate climate change may be deeply disruptive, as the [ILO Commission on the Future of Work](https://www.equaltimes.org/ilo-s-work-for-a-brighter-future-a#.XW5z3m5Fw2x) has underscored. Conflict over how this is carried out and who benefits is certain to happen. Indeed, this is why [Sustainable Development Goal 16](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/) calls for broad social engagement in order to attain economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The concept of a just transition of the workforce is firmly embedded in the legally binding Paris Agreement. Furthermore, in 2015 the ILO’s tripartite constituents unanimously endorsed [guidelines](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/publications/WCMS_432859/lang--en/index.htm) for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies. The promotion and realisation of fundamental principles and rights at work, which includes the principle of freedom of association, lies at the heart of the guidelines. It is evident that without the right to strike workers will not be able to effectively demand investment in new green jobs, training, income protection and other necessary measures for a fair and just transition

#### Climate change will destroy planet; tipping point in years; workers rights checking capitalism key to solve

Scott 18

https://www.counterfire.org/articles/opinion/20054-climate-chaos-is-the-most-political-issue-of-our-time-to-stop-it-we-need-systemic-change

Absolutely every single aspect of our lives’ is ‘political’, but the most pressing political issue humanity has ever faced is climate change and the impending climate breakdown that will destroy the world around us if we fail to tackle it. In order to halt climate change, we need to get real and deal with the politics behind it head-on.

David Attenborough gave a very powerful speech to the COP24 conference recently, highlighting climate breakdown and the mass extinctions that we face on a global scale if the ‘decision makers’ do not act immediately to reverse global emissions. For once, the BBC ran this topic as a headline story and ran it for an entire day. Yet, with their backdrop of the Polish coal mining industry, the media coverage was complicit to say the least with the fossil fuel industry by the very way in which they framed the story.

I don’t doubt Attenborough’s commitment to this issue for one minute but when the BBC tried to torpedo his arguments by challenging him on his solutions for the Polish coal miners, their families and the effect that losing the Polish coal industry would have on their livelihoods, his answer was along the lines of “things change” and “workers will have to adapt”. Yet if he was politically aware, he would have known the arguments and could have reeled off all the positive alternatives to coal. He could have talked about green jobs, disruptive technologies, disinvestment, and the huge opportunities the green economy will offer coal miners, in terms of high skilled, well paid and secure jobs.

This is the problem with trying to leave politics out of analysing climate change. Climate breakdown is the most pressing political issue of our time, it is simply ludicrous to not recognise that and not to campaign directly on those terms.

I’ve also heard recently of some Extinction Rebellion activists saying that the campaign should be “non-political”. This may be a minority view within the campaign, I’m not sure. It certainly is fair to say that they have hit the ground running and their direct action including blocking bridges has brought significant media attention. They have sent a strong message to the polluters and the political class that they mean business. There is doubtless more to come from XR. However, as with any campaign, we need to identify the root cause of the problem in order to tackle it.

The problem is capitalism

It is no coincidence that the fossil fuel industry has been allowed to lead us into the situation we now face. Oil barons of a hundred years ago were firmly rooted inside governments and were allowed to dictate the way in which our energy sector has developed. Extraction of fossil fuels was favoured over the development of renewable technologies for as long as those in power could get away with it - why? Because renewable energy doesn’t make as much profit. Just think what a hundred years of technological advances in renewables would have bought us had they not steered us down their dirty route for profits.

While it is encouraging that the ‘climate agenda’ has finally hit the mainstream, the Paris Accord and the recent COP24 meeting don’t go anywhere near far enough to scratch the surface of the monumental task we have in front of us, let alone address it. Evidence shows that we will reach the tipping point of catastrophic, runaway climate breakdown in a matter of years - this is very serious. [This video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnyLIRCPajM) from Leo Murray of the 10:10 Climate campaign shows exactly what we are facing if we hit that tipping point.

One rather glaring issue in relation to sea level rises is also often overlooked. Fukushima remains in a very fragile state and still holds the potential to cause a global extinction event. The authorities simply don't know how to deal with the crippled reactor. There are 454 nuclear power stations around the world, usually located in coastal locations. If sea levels rise by just a few meters this could cause many reactors to go into uncontrollable meltdown. Any climate change event which prevented staff from being able to get to work to operate these power stations for more than a week could have exactly the same effect. Nuclear power stations (54 are currently being constructed despite the huge threat they would pose to life if any of these scenarios ever play out). Their construction is in no small part due to the fact that they also produce plutonium for the nuclear arms industry.

All this is because we are now fully entrenched into a global culture of exploitation of the world’s resources. The last forty years of neoliberalism has utterly compounded this. Capitalism relies on the exploitation of the workers, ownership of land and control of the means of production. Simply put, this means exploitation of people and exploitation of our land in the name of profit.

It is politics and the politicians in the back pockets of the super-wealthy who have allowed this all to happen.

If we are apathetic and take no part in the political agendas which influence every aspect of our surroundings, then we ignore for instance, that the metals and minerals found in our smartphones have largely been torn from the ground in Africa. Where corporations with scant regard for environmental protections or employee safety, exploit the workers and force them into terrible working conditions. We ignore that they fund and arm militias and armies to murder and brutally quash legitimate protest.