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Value: Justice

Criterion: Minimizing Suffer

Contention One: Workers suffer inequalities

Contention Two: Strikes give workers a way out of suffering

Contention Three: Strikes have historically corrected injustices

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“Non-cooperation is directed not against men but against measures. It is not directed against the Governors, but against the system they administer. The roots of non-cooperation lies not in hatred but in justice.”- Mahatma Gandhi. The fight against injustice ought not have barriers, and that’s why I strongly affirm the **Resolved: A Just Government Ought to Recognize an Unconditional Right of Workers to Strike**

**My Value is** Justice as warranted by the resolution. The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics defined Justice in 2018, stating

As the ethicist John Rawls has pointed out, the stability of a society—or any group, for that matter—depends upon the extent to which the members of that society feel that they are being treated justly. When some of society's members come to feel that they are subject to unequal treatment, the foundations have been laid for social unrest, disturbances, and strife. The members of a community, Rawls holds, depend on each other, and they will retain their social unity only to the extent that their institutions are just.

End quote. Justice means equal treatment which is why

**My Criterion is** Minimizing Suffering as defined by Karl Popper in 1952, “I believe that there is, from the ethical point of view, no symmetry between suffering and happiness, or between pain and pleasure. Both the greatest happiness principle of the Utilitarians and Kant's principle, "Promote other people's happiness...", seem to me (at least in their formulations) fundamentally wrong in this point, which is, however, not one for rational argument....In my opinion...human suffering makes a direct moral appeal for help, while there is no similar call to increase the happiness of a man who is doing well anyway.”

End Quote. When citizens are suffering, it is an injustice as they are not being treated equally. Minimizing suffering upholds justice

**Worker is defined** by Macmillan Dictionary as

 Macmillan Dictionary, June 21, 2021. Retrieved Oct. 12, 2021 from https://www.mac millandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/worker

“someone below the level of a manager who works in a particular company or industry.” End Quote

**Strike is defined** by Cornell Law as

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/strike>

“Strike means an organized and intentional stoppage or slowdown of work by employees, intending to make the employer comply with the demands of the employees.” End Quote

**Contention One: Workers Suffer Inequalities**

Poor working conditions are spreading across the world. Governments must recognize these inequalities and distribute rights to minimize suffering and achieve justice

UNICEF In 2021 Reports,

UNICEF ILO REPORT JUNE 9 2021 <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/child-labour-rises-160-million-first-increase-two-decades>

The report points to a significant rise in the number of children aged 5 to 11 years in child labour, who now account for just over half of the total global figure. The number of children aged 5 to 17 years in hazardous work – defined as work that is likely to harm their health, safety or morals – has risen by 6.5 million to 79 million since 2016.

End quote. Innocent children are victims of poor labor conditions. A just government would not allow this suffering to stand. The governments must take action against this injustice.

WHO/ILO 2021 Finds that

9/17/21 <https://www.who.int/news/item/16-09-2021-who-ilo-almost-2-million-people-die-from-work-related-causes-each-year>

Work-related diseases and injuries were responsible for the deaths of 1.9 million people in 2016, according to the first joint estimates from the World Health Organization (WHO) and International Labour Organization (ILO). According to the WHO/ILO Joint Estimates of the Work-related Burden of Disease and Injury, 2000-2016: Global Monitoring Report, the majority of work-related deaths were due to respiratory and cardiovascular disease. Non-communicable diseases accounted for 81 per cent of the deaths. The greatest causes of deaths were chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (450,000 deaths); stroke (400,000 deaths) and ischaemic heart disease (350,000 deaths). Occupational injuries caused 19 per cent of deaths (360,000 deaths). The study considers 19 occupational risk factors, including exposure to long working hours and workplace exposure to air pollution, asthmagens, carcinogens, ergonomic risk factors, and noise. The key risk was exposure to long working hours – linked to approximately 750,000 deaths. Workplace exposure to air pollution (particulate matter, gases and fumes) was responsible for 450,000 deaths. “It’s shocking to see so many people literally being killed by their jobs,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "Our report is a wake-up call to countries and businesses to improve and protect the health and safety of workers

End quote. People are legitimately dying at their jobs. Countries must protect the safety of their workers to minimize suffering. A just government would recognize this right because

**Contention Two: Strikes give workers a way out of suffering**

Life without a job in the 21st century is either luck or suffering. Most human beings cannot survive if they do not work, so they are being forced into suffering. Governments cannot allow this.

Barrett and Oliphant 2013-2014 Illustrate,

Steven Barrett & Benjamin Oliphant, (Labor Law Attorneys), OTTAWA LAW REVIEW, 2013-2014, 213. <https://www.canlii.org/en/commentary/journals/11/65/>

We do not think it can. It is well recognized that the *right to strike* is a "necessary corollary" to collective bargaining. It is an "indispensable condition to the existence of collective bargaining, as the process of collective bargaining is only feasible for workers if they have the means to persuade their employer to engage in meaningful negotiations. Providing a right to collective bargaining without the opportunity for strike action would, in the colourful words of the late Professor England, be "illogical and a sham." As such, the indispensability of strike action to a meaningful process of collective bargaining has been long recognized in the literature and jurisprudence, and is undeniably central to the North American model of labour law.

End quote. Collective bargaining improves lives, but workers need a mechanism to engage in collective bargaining and minimize suffering. However, we can’t just not prevent them from striking.

A 2017 UN Report by Kiai demonstrates why we need to recognize strikes as an unalienable right,

Maina Kiai, (United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association), FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO STRIKE MUST BE PRESERVED, Mar. 9, 2017. Retrieved Oct. 12, 2021 from [https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx? NewsID=21328&LangID=E](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21328&LangID=E)

The right to strike is also an intrinsic corollary of the fundamental right of freedom of association. It is crucial for millions of women and men around the world to assert collectively their rights in the workplace, including the right to just and favourable conditions of work, and to work in dignity and without fear of intimidation and persecution. Moreover, protest action in relation to government social and economic policy, and against negative corporate practices, forms part of the basic civil liberties whose respect is essential for the meaningful exercise of trade union rights. This right enables them to engage with companies and governments on a more equal footing, and Member States have a positive obligation to protect this right, and a negative obligation not to interfere with its exercise.

End quote. Governments need to recognize this as a basic right so that workers are not deterred from striking. Not recognizing this instills vulnerability in workers and forces them to keep suffering.

**Contention Three: Strikes Historically correct injustices**

We look to the past to inspire us, and see that strikes have helped workers fight so mand have effectively minimized suffering.

Coleman 2020 Tells us,

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On February 12, 1968, 1,300 Black sanitation workers in Memphis began a strike to demand better working conditions and higher pay. Their stand marked an early fight for financial justice for workers of color as part of the civil rights movement. The strike also drew Martin Luther King, Jr. and fatefully became the setting for his “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech and his assassination.

End quote. This strike was instrumental for black labor rights, and it succeeded. MLK believed in standing for rights. When these 1300 workers fought for their rights, were they not justified in their actions?

In conclusion, we must recognize the right to strike. Workers are suffering and must have a means to minimize it, as they have in the past. A just government recognizes that the fight against injustice ought not have barriers, and that is why I strongly encourage you to affirm.