## 1

#### The Right to Strike legitimates neoliberal domination – it marks strikes as a restriction of one’s own personal labor power, which equivocates the right to strike with the right of contract – the plan is subtended by an assumption that workers are economic subjects who turn their labor into human capital, leaving the terms and conditions of neoliberal capitalism intact. Tomassetti, 21

[Julia, Assistant Prof. Law @ City University of Hong Kong, JD @ Harvard, PhD Sociology @ UCLA: “Neoliberal Conceptions of the Individual in Labour Law,” Chapter 7 in The Collective Dimensions of Employment Relations: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Workers’ Voices and Changing (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75532-4]//AD](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75532-4%5d//AD)

\*legerdemain = slight-of-hand

Neoliberal theory telescopes the corporation to the individual subject through the concept of ‘human capital’. What is human capital? Simulating the emic perspective of the neoliberal subject, Feher (2009, p. 26) provides: ‘my human capital is me, as a set of skills and capabilities that is modified by all that affects me and all that I effect’. Whereas liberal agency is grounded in possessive individualism (Gershon 2011), neoliberal agency is based on human capital (Feher 2009; Brown 2015). Neoliberalism transmutes the firm from a coordinator of labour to the manager of an asset portfolio, and the worker from an owner of labour to the manager of a human capital portfolio.

The shift from labour to human capital reflects ‘neoliberal rationality’, which views neoliberalism as an ‘order of normative reason’ (Brown 2015; Foucault 2008). From an analysis of policies, economic arrangements, and other contemporary institutions, Brown (2015) distils neoliberal rationality as a complex of categories, practices, logics, and principles that differ from their liberal counterparts. Scholars have been addressing how platform companies, as part of the ‘gig economy’, enact, benefit from, and propel neoliberal policies and work arrangements (Zwick 2018). We see less work examining neoliberalism as a form of rationality. Yet, scholars are beginning to explore how neoliberal rationality and its construction of the individual manifest in and shape different social relations, including work. Moisander, Groß, and Eräranta (2018), for example, explore how a digital platform company, in order to manage precarious labour, sought to shape its workers’ subjectivity so that workers thought of themselves as little enterprises, or neoliberal agents.

This chapter argues that we can also see neoliberal rationality at work in legal reasoning, when companies, and sometimes legal decisionmakers, construe workers as neoliberal agents.

Using the SuperShuttle DFW dispute as my primary example, I show how a company can index the worker and ‘entrepreneur’ in neoliberal terms through practical and discursive techniques. The worker becomes an ‘entrepreneur’, but with a meaning far removed from a liberal understanding of the term. For example, on the practical side, the company designs the labour process to permit/require workers to determine their own working times by logging in and out of the platform. The platform then argues that, since workers can earn more money the more hours they log in, they are deploying a managerial strategy in deciding when and how long to work. For the liberal subject, choosing to work longer hours under the command of another for mostly fixed returns is not entrepreneurial. However, for the neoliberal subject, a decision to work longer hours reflects her discretionary commitment of human capital— her time.1 Human capital is like any other capital. It is ‘invested’ like other capital and earns ‘profit’ like any other capital. Therefore, working longer hours is the equivalent of risking any other capital for the sake of gain, like investing additional money in a business to expand production or enter a new market.

This is how the practice of permitting—requiring—workers to determine their own schedules facilitates a neoliberal legerdemain: the company provides the individual, as holder of human capital, the opportunity to make decisions about the use of this capital. In fact, it requires the worker to make these decisions. As a consequence, no matter how unskilled the work, and even where the costs and returns vary little or not at all with the duration of the work, time management becomes an entrepreneurial venture.

The analysis of SuperShuttle DFW shows how neoliberal rationality can transform discretion in carrying out work tasks into economic autonomy. Conceptualizing the worker as a manager of human capital makes it possible to interpret almost all worker discretion as entrepreneurial opportunity. As illustrated by the working hours example, within neoliberal rationality, the discretion need not be exercised in the context of product market competition to be entrepreneurial or involve activities characteristic of product market competition, like investing in advertising or making production more efficient. Nor does the desired end need to be monetary, because neoliberal rationality does not distinguish between the domains of production and reproduction (Feher 2009). Thus, taking time off from work can be an entrepreneurial opportunity. Further, the discretion need not be exercised in as methodological a fashion as expected under a liberal notion of entrepreneurialism. It can be more speculative and sporadic.

By showing how neoliberal rationality can shape legal evaluations of platform work, including what it means to be an entrepreneur, my analysis carries some implications for our understanding of digitally coordinated work. Advancements in information and communications technology have facilitated changes in how companies organize production and exchange. Yet, these changes do not always involve major shifts in the organization of authority relations, sites of entrepreneurial ferment, or loci of power. The analysis of SuperShuttle DFW suggests that some of these apparent transformations in the organization of work are artefacts of changes in our conception of individuals as economic agents.

#### The aff’s strike-focused politics privatizes and atomizes worker struggle – it channels it towards specific employers rather than class domination as a whole while ensuring the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by privileging alternative modes of settlement outside and in spite of the specifics of the law itself. Feldman, 94

[George, Assistant Prof. @ Wayne State Law: “Unions, Solidarity, and Class: The Limits of Liberal Labor Law,” Berkeley Journal of Employment and Labor Law, Volume 15, No. 2, 1994. https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/berkjemp15&div=14&g\_sent=1&casa\_token=&collection=journals#]//AD

In other ways, however, the liberal vision of labor law that Justice Brennan exemplified has been severely limited. 19 One obvious limitation, for instance, has been the Court's preference for arbitration.20

\*\*\*FOOTNOTE 20 STARTS HERE\*\*\*

20. The Court's tendency to privilege arbitration has led it to impose legal limitations on the right to strike that are unsupported by the language, policy, or history of the labor laws. See Boys Mkts., Inc. v. Retail Clerks Union, Local 770, 398 U.S. 235 (1970); Gateway Coal Co. v. United Mine Workers of Am., 414 U.S. 368 (1974), discussed infra at part III.C. For criticism of the Court's weakening of the right to strike, see Matthew W. Finkin, Labor Policy and the Enervation of the Economic Strike, 1990 U. ILL. L. REV. 547, 548-49; JAMES B. ATLESON, VALUES & AssuMiPTIONS IN AMERICAN LABOR LAW

\*\*\*FOOTNOTE 20 ENDS HERE\*\*\*

(1983). Yet a different kind of limit also has been present in the labor jurisprudence of the Court's liberal wing-a limit that is less obvious, usually has less immediate impact, but that is perhaps more deeply seated. The Court's privileging of arbitration restricts the means by which unions legally may act in response to concerns that are concededly legitimate. The limits discussed here, by contrast, define the legitimate boundaries of collective actions and collective concerns. The cases discussed here reflect the liberal doctrine that labor law protects unions only insofar as they limit their role to that of representative of the employees of an individual employer, and that the law will resist any union attempt to move beyond this limitation. That doctrine rejects protection when the underlying issue implicates the proper role of unions in American society.

That question emerges in a variety of contexts. In some, a broad definition of unions' societal function may require, or may seem to require, limiting individual rights;21 in others, the Court's conclusion, or something very similar to it, is so clearly required by statute that the conclusion cannot be ascribed to the conscious or unconscious ideological views of the Justices.22

\*\*\*FOOTNOTE 21 STARTS HERE\*\*\*

21. When such a conflict is actually present, the proper place to draw the line is fairly subject to debate; a judge determined to protect both strong unions and individual employee rights might resolve apparent conflicts between the two in different ways without forfeiting a claim of taking each seriously. See infra notes 237-41; cf Emporium Capwell Co. v. Western Addition Community Org., 420 U.S. 50 (1975).

\*\*\*FOOTNOTE 21 ENDS HERE\*\*\*

At other times, however, liberal members of the Court have narrowed the range of permissible union concerns and therefore of unions' social role in contexts in which the law would have allowed a broader understanding, and in which the danger of conflict with individual rights was either absent or too attenuated to serve as a reasonable justification. In some cases this desire to narrow the sphere of union activity is central to the Court's reasoning; in others, it is a subsidiary theme, or is present only as an underlying assumption, unstated and perhaps unconscious, whose presence helps account for the result reached.

This article examines what the members of the Supreme Court who have been identified with its liberal wing have said explicitly or by necessary implication about what is the legitimate sphere of union activity in American life. This vision of the role that unions should play in society has both practical and ideological consequences. Modern labor law, faithful to the Wagner Act's premises, aims to particularize rather than generalize workers' struggles; it directs them towards their specific relationship to their employer, rather than to the larger relationship of their class to employers and to work; it privatizes and depoliticizes those struggles.23

\*\*\*FOOTNOTE 23 STARTS HERE\*\*\*

23. It is in this sense that I think the frequently voiced point of authors associated with the Critical Legal Studies movement is correct. It is not that workers' struggles are channeled to arbitration rather than to a public body like the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), see Katherine Van Wezel Stone, The Post-War Paradigm in American Labor Law, 90 YALE L.J. 1509 (1981). but rather that whatever method workers employ-even including a strike or other collective job actions-the locus of the struggle remains the particular workplace or employer. It is in this sense that workers' struggles are channeled away from "political" dimensions.

\*\*\*FOOTNOTE 23 ENDS HERE\*\*\*

Given the contextual limitations mentioned, this analysis necessarily must be cautious. It must take account of the constraints of statutory language and congressional intent and, where applicable, of judicial deference to the decisions of the NLRB. 24 This analysis also must recognize the presence of other policy or ideological considerations that are unrelated to the theme of limiting the breadth of union concerns. Nonetheless, this theme is demonstrably present in a wide variety of legal settings, transecting the doctrinal categorizations that abound in labor law.

#### Neoliberalism turns democracy and creates an environment of misinformation that promotes fascism in the political sphere

Giroux, 18 [Distinguished Scholar in Critical Pedagogy, The Politics of Neoliberal Fascism, <https://www.tikkun.org/the-politics-of-neoliberal-fascism>, 8/21/18] -TB

Democracy is the scourge of neoliberalism and its ultimate humiliation. As the ideas, values, and institutions crucial to a democracy have withered under a savage neoliberalism, which has been fifty years in the making, fascistic notions of racial superiority, social cleansing, apocalyptic populism, hyper-militarism, and ultra-nationalism have gained in intensity moving from the repressed recesses of US history to the centers of state and corporate power. [7] Decades of mass inequality, wage slavery, the collapse of the manufacturing sector, tax giveaways to the financial elite, and savage austerity policies that drove a frontal attack on the welfare state have further strengthened fascistic discourses and redirected populist anger against vulnerable populations and undocumented immigrants, Muslims, the racially oppressed, women, LGBTQ people, public servants, critical intellectuals, and workers. Not only has neoliberalism undermined the basic elements of democracy by escalating the mutually reinforcing dynamics of economic inequality and political inequality– accentuating the downhill spiral of social and economic mobility–it has also created conditions that make fascist ideas and principles more attractive. Under these accelerated circumstances, neoliberalism and fascism conjoin and advance in a comfortable and mutually compatible movement that connects the worst excesses of capitalism with authoritarian “strong man” ideals—the veneration of war, a hatred of reason and truth; a celebration of ultra-nationalism and racial purity; the suppression of freedom and dissent; a culture which promotes lies, spectacles, scapegoating the other, a discourse of deterioration, brutal violence, and ultimately erupting in state violence in heterogeneous forms. In the Trump administration, neoliberal fascism is on steroids and represents a fusion of the worse dimensions and excesses of gangster capitalism with the fascist ideals of white nationalism and racial supremacy associated with the horrors of the past.[8] Neoliberal structural transformation has both undermined and refigured “the principles, practices, cultures, subjects and institution of democracy understood as rule by the people.”[9] Since the earlier seventies, the neoliberal project has mutated into a revolt against human rights, democracy, and created a powerful narrative that refigures freedom and authority so as to legitimate and produce massive inequities in wealth and power.[10] Its practices of offshoring, restructuring everything according to the dictates of profit margins, slashing progressive taxation, eliminating corporate regulations, unchecked privatization, and the ongoing commercializing of all social interactions “inflicts alienating misery” on a polity newly vulnerable to fascist ideals, rhetoric, and politically extremist movements.[11] Furthermore, the merging of neoliberalism and fascism has accelerated as civic culture is eroded, notions of shared citizenship and responsibility disappear, and reason and informed judgment are replaced by the forces of civic illiteracy. State sanctioned attacks on the truth, facts, and scientific reason in Trump’s America are camouflaged as one expect of the first Reality TV president– by a corporate controlled culture of vulgarity that merges celebrity culture with a non-stop spectacle of violence. Neoliberalism strips democracy of any substance by promoting an irrational belief in the ability of the market to solve all social problems and shape all aspects of society. This shift from a market economy to a market-driven society has been accompanied by a savage attack on equality, the social contract, and social provisions as wages have been gutted, pensions destroyed, health care put out of reach for millions, job security undermined, and access to crucial public goods such as public and higher education considerably weakened for the lower and middle classes. In the current historical moment, neoliberalism represents more than a form of hyper capitalism, it also denotes the death of democracy if not politics itself. Anis Shivani’s articulation of the threat neoliberalism poses to democracy is worth quoting at length: Neoliberalism believes that markets are self-sufficient unto themselves, that they do not need regulation, and that they are the best guarantors of human welfare. Everything that promotes the market, i.e., privatization, deregulation, mobility of finance and capital, abandonment of government-provided social welfare, and the reconception of human beings as human capital, needs to be encouraged, while everything that supposedly diminishes the market, i.e., government services, regulation, restrictions on finance and capital, and conceptualization of human beings in transcendent terms, is to be discouraged….One way to sum up neoliberalism is to say that everything—everything—is to be made over in the image of the market, including the state, civil society, and of course human beings. Democracy becomes reinterpreted as the market, and politics succumbs to neoliberal economic theory, so we are speaking of the end of democratic politics as we have known it for two and a half centuries.[12] What is particularly distinctive about the conjuncture of neoliberalism and fascism is how the full-fledged liberation of capital now merges with an out-and-out attack on the racially oppressed and vulnerable populations considered disposable. Not only do the oppressive political, economic and financial structures of casino capitalism bear down on people’s lives, but there is also a frontal attack on the shared understandings and beliefs that hold a people together. One crucial and distinctive place where neoliberalism and fascism converge is in the undermining of social bonds and moral boundaries. Displacement, disintegration, atomization, social isolation, and deracination have a long history in the United States, which has been aggressively exploited by Trump, taking on a distinctive right-wing twenty-first century register. There is more at work here than the heavy neoliberal toll of social abandonment. There is also, under the incessant pedagogical propaganda of right-wing and corporate controlled media, a culture that has become cruel and cultivates an appetite for maliciousness that undermines the capacity for empathy, making people indifferent to the suffering of others or, even worse, willing participants in their violent exclusion. Irish journalist, Fintan O’Toole, warns that fascism unravels the ethical imagination through a process in which individuals eventually “learn to think the unthinkable…followed, he writes, “by a crucial next step, usually the trickiest of all.”: You have to undermine moral boundaries, inure people to the acceptance of acts of extreme cruelty. Like hounds, people have to be blooded. They have to be given the taste for savagery. Fascism does this by building up the sense of threat from a despised out-group. This allows the members of that group to be dehumanised. Once that has been achieved, you can gradually up the ante, working through the stages from breaking windows to extermination.[13] What is often labeled as an economic crisis in American society is also a crisis of morality, of sociality, and of community. Since the 1970s, increasing unregulated capitalism has hardened into a form of market fundamentalism that has accelerated the hollowing out of democracy through its capacity to reshape the commanding political, social, and economic institutions of American society, making it vulnerable to the fascist solutions proposed by Trump. As an integrated system of structures, ideologies, and values, neoliberalism economizes every aspect of life, separates economic activity from social costs, and depoliticizes the public through corporate controlled disimagination machines that trade in post-truth narratives, enshrine the spectacle of violence, debase language, and distort history. Neoliberalism now wages a battle against any viable notion of the social, solidarity, the collective imagination, the public good, and the institutions that support them. As the realm of the political is defined in strictly economic terms, the institutions, public goods, formative cultures, and modes of identity essential to a democracy disappear along with the informed citizens necessary to sustain them.

#### Our critique independently outweighs the case - neoliberalism causes extinction and massive social inequalities – the affs single issue legalistic solution is the exact kind of politics neolib wants us to engage in so the root cause goes unquestioned – and treat this as a no long-term solvency argument – the inequalities of labor relations are fundamental to capitalism. Farbod 15

( Faramarz Farbod , PhD Candidate @ Rutgers, Prof @ Moravian College, Monthly Review, http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2015/farbod020615.html, 6-2)

Global capitalism is the 800-pound gorilla. The twin ecological and economic crises, militarism, the rise of the surveillance state, and a dysfunctional political system can all be traced to its normal operations. We need a transformative politics from below that can challenge the fundamentals of capitalism instead of today's politics that is content to treat its symptoms. The problems we face are linked to each other and to the way a capitalist society operates. We must make an effort to understand its real character. The fundamental question of our time is whether we can go beyond a system that is ravaging the Earth and secure a future with dignity for life and respect for the planet. What has capitalism done to us lately? The best science tells us that this is a do-or-die moment. We are now in the midst of the 6th mass extinction in the planetary history with 150 to 200 species going extinct every day, a pace 1,000 times greater than the 'natural' extinction rate.1 The Earth has been warming rapidly since the 1970s with the 10 warmest years on record all occurring since 1998.2 The planet has already warmed by 0.85 degree Celsius since the industrial revolution 150 years ago. An increase of 2° Celsius is the limit of what the planet can take before major catastrophic consequences. Limiting global warming to 2°C requires reducing global emissions by 6% per year. However, global carbon emissions from fossil fuels increased by about 1.5 times between 1990 and 2008.3 Capitalism has also led to explosive social inequalities. The global economic landscape is littered with rising concentration of wealth, debt, distress, and immiseration caused by the austerity-pushing elites. Take the US. The richest 20 persons have as much wealth as the bottom 150 million.4 Since 1973, the hourly wages of workers have lagged behind worker productivity rates by more than 800%.5 It now takes the average family 47 years to make what a hedge fund manager makes in one hour.6 Just about a quarter of children under the age of 5 live in poverty.7 A majority of public school students are low-income.8 85% of workers feel stress on the job.9 Soon the only thing left of the American Dream will be a culture of hustling to survive. Take the global society. The world's billionaires control $7 trillion, a sum 77 times the debt owed by Greece to the European banks.10 The richest 80 possess more than the combined wealth of the bottom 50% of the global population (3.5 billion people).11 By 2016 the richest 1% will own a greater share of the global wealth than the rest of us combined.12 The top 200 global corporations wield twice the economic power of the bottom 80% of the global population.13 Instead of a global society capitalism is creating a global apartheid. What's the nature of the beast? Firstly, the "egotistical calculation" of commerce wins the day every time. Capital seeks maximum profitability as a matter of first priority. Evermore "accumulation of capital" is the system's bill of health; it is slowdowns or reversals that usher in crises and set off panic. Cancer-like hunger for endless growth is in the system's DNA and is what has set it on a tragic collision course with Nature, a finite category. Secondly, capitalism treats human labor as a cost. It therefore opposes labor capturing a fair share of the total economic value that it creates. Since labor stands for the majority and capital for a tiny minority, it follows that classism and class warfare are built into its DNA, which explains why the "middle class" is shrinking and its gains are never secure. Thirdly, private interests determine massive investments and make key decisions at the point of production guided by maximization of profits. That's why in the US the truck freight replaced the railroad freight, chemicals were used extensively in agriculture, public transport was gutted in favor of private cars, and big cars replaced small ones. What should political action aim for today? The political class has no good ideas about how to address the crises. One may even wonder whether it has a serious understanding of the system, or at least of ways to ameliorate its consequences. The range of solutions offered tends to be of a technical, legislative, or regulatory nature, promising at best temporary management of the deepening crises. The trajectory of the system, at any rate, precludes a return to its post-WWII regulatory phase. It's left to us as a society to think about what the real character of the system is, where we are going, and how we are going to deal with the trajectory of the system -- and act accordingly. The critical task ahead is to build a transformative politics capable of steering the system away from its destructive path. Given the system's DNA, such a politics from below must include efforts to challenge the system's fundamentals, namely, its private mode of decision-making about investments and about what and how to produce. Furthermore, it behooves us to heed the late environmentalist Barry Commoner's insistence on the efficacy of a strategy of prevention over a failed one of control or capture of pollutants. At a lecture in 1991, Commoner remarked: "Environmental pollution is an incurable disease; it can only be prevented"; and he proceeded to refer to "a law," namely: "if you don't put a pollutant in the environment it won't be there." What is nearly certain now is that without democratic control of wealth and social governance of the means of production, we will all be condemned to the labor of Sisyphus. Only we won't have to suffer for all eternity, as the degradation of life-enhancing natural and social systems will soon reach a point of no return**.**

#### Cap makes global pandemics inevitable---causes extinction

**Krepinevich 9** (Andrew, President of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments and Distinguished Visiting Professor @ George Mason's School of Public Policy, Congressional Consultant on Military Affairs, PhD Harvard, "7 Deadly Scenarios," February)

Over the past several decades the world has experience a wave of globalization, far surpassing the great surge that swept over the globe in the years leading up to World War I. The growth of the world economy---facilitated by lower trade barriers, global supply chains, international financial networks, and global communication---has yielded many benefits, including increased wealth and great economic efficiencies. It has also yielded an unprecedented level of mobility---in the movement of capital, goods, and services, in people (including migration) , and last but not least, in disease. For nearly a century the world has been spared the specter of mass deaths induced by a killer disease. The last great global pandemic occurred at the end of World War I, when the misnamed Spanish influenza killed an estimated 20 million people---including nearly 700,000 Americans---before it ran its course. To a significant degree, the spread of influenza was aided and abetted by the world war, which saw the armed forces of many nations on the move from their home countries to other parts of the world. Even then, however, human mobility and trade were far more constrained than they are today, when every year millions of passengers pass through U.S. airports alone. There have been several canaries in humanity's mine shaft, warning of impending disaster. According to the scientific community, the world has been overdue for some form of pandemic. On occasions too numerous to count, members of the medical profession have stated that "it is not a matter of if such an event will occur, but when." As the World Health Organization met in Geneva in the summer of 2009, health officials were citing the "near-misses" the world had recently experienced with the AIDS virus, tuberculosis, and avian flu (commonly referred to as bird flu), and warned that, absent a major effort to improve the globe's public health system, humanity's good fortune could not---and would not---last. But the issue has to struggle to get on the global agenda. Here in America the 2008 presidential campaign (which began in early 2007) was dominated by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the broader problem of militant Islam, rising energy prices, a falling economy, and growing concerns about global warming. Neither public health concerns over a pandemic nor the country's illegal alien problem appeared prominently on the political radar screen. Call them the "stealth" issues---the ones that we failed to detect.

#### New radical party politics are key—we need a new political ecology of class. That solves 100% of labor problems, the environment, and imperialism.

#### The alternative is to affirm the model of the Communist Party – only party organizing can provide effective accountability mechanisms to correct chauvinist tendencies, educate and mobilize marginalized communities, and connect local struggles to a movement for global liberation.

Escalante, Philosophy @ UOregon, 18

[Alyson, M.A., is a Marxist-Leninist, Materialist Feminist and Anti-Imperialist activist. “PARTY ORGANIZING IN THE 21ST CENTURY” September 21st, 2018 <https://theforgenews.org/2018/09/21/party-organizing-in-the-21st-century/>] rVs

I would argue that within the base building movement, there is a move towards party organizing, but this trend has not always been explicitly theorized or forwarded within the movement. My goal in this essay is to argue that base building and dual power strategy can be best forwarded through party organizing, and that party organizing can allow this emerging movement to solidify into a powerful revolutionary socialist tendency in the United States. One of the crucial insights of the base building movement is that the current state of the left in the United States is one in which revolution is not currently possible. There exists very little popular support for socialist politics. A century of anticommunist propaganda has been extremely effective in convincing even the most oppressed and marginalized that communism has nothing to offer them. The base building emphasis on dual power responds directly to this insight. By building institutions which can meet people’s needs, we are able to concretely demonstrate that communists can offer the oppressed relief from the horrific conditions of capitalism. Base building strategy recognizes that actually doing the work to serve the people does infinitely more to create a socialist base of popular support than electing democratic socialist candidates or holding endless political education classes can ever hope to do. Dual power is about proving that we have something to offer the oppressed. The question, of course, remains: once we have built a base of popular support, what do we do next? If it turns out that establishing socialist institutions to meet people’s needs does in fact create sympathy towards the cause of communism, how can we mobilize that base? Put simply: in order to mobilize the base which base builders hope to create, we need to have already done the work of building a communist party. It is not enough to simply meet peoples needs. Rather, we must build the institutions of dual power in the name of communism. We must refuse covert front organizing and instead have a public face as a communist party. When we build tenants unions, serve the people programs, and other dual power projects, we must make it clear that we are organizing as communists, unified around a party, and are not content simply with establishing endless dual power organizations. We must be clear that our strategy is revolutionary and in order to make this clear we must adopt party organizing. By “party organizing” I mean an organizational strategy which adopts the party model. Such organizing focuses on building a party whose membership is formally unified around a party line determined by democratic centralist decision making. The party model creates internal methods for holding party members accountable, unifying party member action around democratically determined goals, and for educating party members in communist theory and praxis. A communist organization utilizing the party model works to build dual power institutions while simultaneously educating the communities they hope to serve. Organizations which adopt the party model focus on propagandizing around the need for revolutionary socialism. They function as the forefront of political organizing, empowering local communities to theorize their liberation through communist theory while organizing communities to literally fight for their liberation. A party is not simply a group of individuals doing work together, but is a formal organization unified in its fight against capitalism. Party organizing has much to offer the base building movement. By working in a unified party, base builders can ensure that local struggles are tied to and informed by a unified national and international strategy. While the most horrific manifestations of capitalism take on particular and unique form at the local level, we need to remember that our struggle is against a material base which functions not only at the national but at the international level. The formal structures provided by a democratic centralist party model allow individual locals to have a voice in open debate, but also allow for a unified strategy to emerge from democratic consensus. Furthermore, party organizing allows for local organizations and individual organizers to be held accountable for their actions. It allows criticism to function not as one independent group criticizing another independent group, but rather as comrades with a formal organizational unity working together to sharpen each others strategies and to help correct chauvinist ideas and actions. In the context of the socialist movement within the United States, such accountability is crucial. As a movement which operates within a settler colonial society, imperialist and colonial ideal frequently infect leftist organizing. Creating formal unity and party procedure for dealing with and correcting these ideas allows us to address these consistent problems within American socialist organizing. Having a formal party which unifies the various dual power projects being undertaken at the local level also allows for base builders to not simply meet peoples needs, but to pull them into the membership of the party as organizers themselves. The party model creates a means for sustained growth to occur by unifying organizers in a manner that allows for skills, strategies, and ideas to be shared with newer organizers. It also allows community members who have been served by dual power projects to take an active role in organizing by becoming party members and participating in the continued growth of base building strategy. It ensures that there are formal processes for educating communities in communist theory and praxis, and also enables them to act and organize in accordance with their own local conditions. We also must recognize that the current state of the base building movement precludes the possibility of such a national unified party in the present moment. Since base building strategy is being undertaken in a number of already established organizations, it is not likely that base builders would abandon these organizations in favor of founding a unified party. Additionally, it would not be strategic to immediately undertake such complete unification because it would mean abandoning the organizational contexts in which concrete gains are already being made and in which growth is currently occurring. What is important for base builders to focus on in the current moment is building dual power on a local level alongside building a national movement. This means aspiring towards the possibility of a unified party, while pursuing continued local growth. The movement within the Marxist Center network towards some form of unification is positive step in the right direction. The independent party emphasis within the Refoundation caucus should also be recognized as a positive approach. It is important for base builders to continue to explore the possibility of unification, and to maintain unification through a party model as a long term goal. In the meantime, individual base building organizations ought to adopt party models for their local organizing. Local organizations ought to be building dual power alongside recruitment into their organizations, education of community members in communist theory and praxis, and the establishment of armed and militant party cadres capable of defending dual power institutions from state terror. Dual power institutions must be unified openly and transparently around these organizations in order for them to operate as more than “red charities.” Serving the people means meeting their material needs while also educating and propagandizing. It means radicalizing, recruiting, and organizing. The party model remains the most useful method for achieving these ends. The use of the party model by local organizations allows base builders to gain popular support, and most importantly, to mobilize their base of popular support towards revolutionary ends, not simply towards the construction of a parallel economy which exists as an end in and of itself. It is my hope that we will see future unification of the various local base building organizations into a national party, but in the meantime we must push for party organizing at the local level. If local organizations adopt party organizing, it ought to become clear that a unified national party will have to be the long term goal of the base building movement. Many of the already existing organizations within the base building movement already operate according to these principles. I do not mean to suggest otherwise. Rather, my hope is to suggest that we ought to be explicit about the need for party organizing and emphasize the relationship between dual power and the party model. Doing so will make it clear that the base building movement is not pursuing a cooperative economy alongside capitalism, but is pursuing a revolutionary socialist strategy capable of fighting capitalism. The long term details of base building and dual power organizing will arise organically in response to the conditions the movement finds itself operating within. I hope that I have put forward a useful contribution to the discussion about base building organizing, and have demonstrated the need for party organizing in order to ensure that the base building tendency maintains a revolutionary orientation. The finer details of revolutionary strategy will be worked out over time and are not a good subject for public discussion. I strongly believe party organizing offers the best path for ensuring that such strategy will succeed. My goal here is not to dictate the only possible path forward but to open a conversation about how the base building movement will organize as it transitions from a loose network of individual organizations into a unified socialist tendency. These discussions and debates will be crucial to ensuring that this rapidly growing movement can succeed.

#### K First - There is no material world that we can separate from the lens through which we view it. Deconstructing the AFF scholarship is a prior question that has material effects.

#### Therefore the ROB is one of deconstruction – vote for the side which best challenges neoliberal scholarship Springer ‘12

Simon Springer - Department of Geography, University of Otago. “Neoliberalism as discourse: between Foucauldian political economy and Marxian poststructuralism.” Routledge. May 2012. JJN from file \*bracketing in original

Conclusion In arguing for an understanding of neoliberalism as discourse, I do not presume that comprehending neoliberalism separately as a hegemonic ideology, a policy and program, a state form, or as a form of governmentality is wrong or not useful. Rather I have simply attempted to provoke some consideration for the potential reconcilability of the different approaches. My argument should accordingly be read as an effort to destabilize the ostensible incompatibility that some scholars undertaking their separate usage seem keen to assume. Without at least attempting to reconcile the four approaches we risk being deprived of a coherent concept with which to work, and thus concede some measure of credibility to Barnett’s (2005) claim that ‘there is no such thing as neoliberalism’. Such a position renders the entire body of scholarship on neoliberalism questionable, as scholars cannot be sure that they are even discussing the same thing. More perilously, to accept such a claim throws the project of constructing solidarities across space into an uneasy quandary, where the resonant violent geographies of our current moment may go unnoticed, a condition that plays perfectly into the ideological denial maintained by the current capitalist order (Zizek, 2011). In ignoring such relational possibilities for resistance to the contemporary zeitgeist, Barnett (2005) seems keen to engage in disarticulation ad nauseam. Yet deconstruction is meant to be interruptive not debilitating. As Spivak (1996, p. 27) contends, ‘Deconstruction does not say there is no subject, there is no truth, there is no history. ... It is constantly and persistently looking into how truths are formed’. It is about noticing what we inevitably leave out of even the most searching and inclusive accounts of phenomena like neoliberalism, which opens up and allows for discursive understandings. Rather than making nice symmetrical accounts of the ‘real’ at the meeting point of representational performance and structural forces, neoliberalism understood as a discourse is attuned to processual interpretation and ongoing debate. While there are inevitable tensions between the four views of neoliberalism that are not entirely commensurable, their content is not diametrically opposed, and indeed a considered understanding of how power similarly operates in both a Gramscian sense of hegemony and a Foucauldian sense of governmentality points toward a dialectical relationship. Understanding neoliberalism as discourse allows for a much more integral approach to social relations than speech performances alone. This is a discourse that encompasses material forms in state formation through policy and program, and via the subjectivation of individuals on the ground, even if this articulation still takes place through discursive performatives. By formulating discourse in this fashion, we need not revert to a presupposed ‘real-world’ referent to recognize a materiality that is both constituted by and constitutive of discourse. Instead, materiality and discourse become integral, where one cannot exist without the other. It is precisely this understanding of discourse that points to a similitude between poststructuralism and Marxian political economy approaches and their shared concern for power relations. I do not want to conclude that I have worked out all these tensions, my ambition has been much more humble. I have simply sought to open an avenue for dialogue between scholars on either side of the political economy/ poststructuralist divide. The importance of bridging this gap is commensurate with ‘the role of the intellectual ... [in] shaking up habits, ways of acting and thinking, of dispelling commonplace beliefs, of taking a new measure of rules and institutions ... and participating in the formation of a political will’ (Foucault, quoted in Goldstein, 1991, pp. 11– 12). Such reflexivity necessarily involves opening ourselves to the possibility of finding common ground between the epistemic and ontological understandings of political economy and poststructuralism so that together they may assist in disestablishing neoliberalism’s rationalities, deconstructing its strategies, disassembling its technologies, and ultimately destroying its techniques. In changing our minds then, so too might we change the world.

## Case

**Strikes hurt unions and their members**

**Gardapee 12**

Pamela Gardapee (studied accounting, computers and writing before offering her tax, computer and writing services to others, 2012-08-16 (date found in source code), "How Do Strikes Affect Labor Union Members?," Your Business, [https://yourbusiness.azcentral.com/strikes-affect-labor-union-members-2432.html //](https://yourbusiness.azcentral.com/strikes-affect-labor-union-members-2432.html%20//) AW

Whether you are a small business or a big business, strikes can hurt both the business and the members. Although companies have options during a strike, the labor union members have very few options after the strike vote is cast and the members walk out. **The affect of a strike on union members is just as hard as it is for the business.** Earnings The earnings that a labor union member is used to making will stop. Although there is a strike fund that provides some money to strikers every week, the amount doesn’t make up for lost wages. Every union is different, but members could only make a fraction of their normal wages, depending on the union to which they belong and the funds available. However, the only way to get paid from the union strike fund is to walk the picket line. If an employee belongs to the union, that person cannot choose to work without resigning from the union or he could face fines because he is not abiding by the bylaws set forth by the union. If a union member doesn’t resign from the union before working for the employer, the union will fine that person and can sue him for the money. Benefits ref Labor union members who strike for long periods of time can lose benefits such as sick pay, vacation and medical insurance. The company can only stop benefits if the actual expired contract stipulates it, however. Some unions also have funds to pay for some or all employee benefits during a strike. Morale Moral is likely to deteriorate if the strike drags on. Companies will be watching for this problem with labor union members. Members start feeling the strain from loss of wages, benefits and available work. Relationships feel the strain when a wage earner is no longer bringing home enough money to feed the family or pay the bills. When the strike lasts longer than a few weeks, morale continues to decline. Communication Communication with the company may stop. This can affect all the striking members. Companies can opt to hire workers to replace the striking members. When and if the strikers return to work, there will be a strain between the members and the management team caused by a strike. The workers hired during the strike can keep their jobs even after the strike is over if the company chooses, which means labor union members will lose their jobs. The company does not have to rehire the union members.

**Unions make strikes less effective and less common**

**Maynard 12**

Melissa (Melissa Maynard is a senior officer with The Pew Charitable Trusts' Fiscal 50), 9-25-2012, "Public Strikes Explained: Why There Aren't More of Them," Pew Trusts, [https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2012/09/25/public-strikes-explained-why-there-arent-more-of-them //](https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2012/09/25/public-strikes-explained-why-there-arent-more-of-them%20//) AW

Strikes often end without an agreement but come with significant costs for both sides. They can damage public opinion toward both elected leaders and the public employees involved, and bring real financial **consequences for the strikers**. Strikes have been especially rare in the budget-cutting environment that has been the reality in most states for the past few years. This isn't because labor relations are generally rosy — far from it. But striking public workers tend not to fare well in the court of public opinion because the public expects them to share in the widespread economic pain. “Strikes tend to be won or lost on public support more than anything else," says Joseph Slater, professor at the University of Toledo College of Law. “[Workers] may rightly feel put upon, but they have to be very leery of alienating the public.” Few politicians have been thrown out of office for supporting cuts to public employee pay and benefits in recent years, despite the toll those cuts have taken on labor relations. **Many public sector union contracts include “no strike clauses” as a condition of employment, even in states where strikes are legal.** In some cases, the terms of the prior agreement remain in force even after a contract expires until a new agreement is reached, giving workers little incentive to negotiate but also little motivation to strike.

**Unionizing hurts employment + wages**

**Greeman and Kleiner PhDs Econ 90**

Freeman, Richard Barry (so many awards he has a wikipedia page – a PhD in econ from harvard and teaches in London and gives lectures around the world), and Morris M. Kleiner. (M.A. in Labor and Industrial Relations, and Ph.D. in economics from the [University of Illinois](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Illinois) and his undergraduate degree in economics)1990. The impact of new unionization on wages and working conditions. Journal of Labor Economics 8(1) Part 2: S8-S25. // AW

This article has presented the results of a survey of 364 establishments covering over 146,000 workers, some which faced union organizing drives during the 1980s and some which did not face such drives. Our data show that firms that lost elections to unions and signed collective contracts increased wages and benefits more rapidly than control firms but fell far short of the gains needed to reach the 15%-25% union wage premium found in cross-section studies. Our data also show that the newly organized workers obtained substantial "voice" benefits such as grievance procedures and seniority provisions, while **experiencing declines in employment compared to control firms**. We hypothesize that the smal l wage effects that we found are likely to reflect "period" effects due to the economic environment of the 1980s and "first-contract" effects due to the tendency of new union organizations to use their bargaining power to enhance industrial democracy and decision making by rules rather than to raise wages. They may also reflect differences in the estimated size of union wage premium between establishment and individual-worker data sets.

#### The racism that labor unions are built on must be acknowledged before true progress can be made

**Dogan ‘17**

(Shamed Dogan, November 13, 2017, Dogan is a Missouri State Representative abd he was served for 7 years, his agenda focusing on education reform, ethics reform, and criminal justice reform, “Unions ignore long history of excluding minorities from jobs”, [https://www.stltoday.com/opinion/columnists/unions-ignore-long-history-of-excluding-minorities-from-jobs/article\_ef58bccd-f04a-5172-8dbd-18b8ee5eb9e2.html //](https://www.stltoday.com/opinion/columnists/unions-ignore-long-history-of-excluding-minorities-from-jobs/article_ef58bccd-f04a-5172-8dbd-18b8ee5eb9e2.html%20//) HM)

Missouri has taken great strides forward in **restoring free-market** approaches to our economy. Thanks to the efforts of a Republican Legislature and governor, Missouri is open for business. We have passed right-to-work legislation and have begun to challenge the stranglehold that union bosses hold over the labor market. However, this development has not come without a fight; union organizers and bosses are angry because these changes upset the established order. While these union bosses argue that they best represent Missouri workers, they ignore their long history of excluding minority Americans from jobs and opportunities. Although labor unions have made some positive contributions, we must not forget their **legacy of discrimination, prejudice and racism**. For decades, unions worked to exclude black Americans from jobs. White workers felt endangered by black Americans who were willing to work longer and harder, so labor unions used legislation to force **blacks** out of unions, and out of the labor market. Herbert Hill, the labor director of the NAACP, wrote about this fact in 1959. In his seminal article “Labor Unions and the Negro: The Record of Discrimination,” he noted, “the Negro worker’s historical experience with organized labor has not been a happy one. ... Trade unions practice either **total exclusion** of the **Negro**, segregation (in the form of ‘Jim Crow’ locals or ‘auxiliaries’), or enforce separate, **racial seniority lines** which limit Negro employment to menial and unskilled classifications.”

#### The American labor system is built upon discriminating against Black people and excluding them. From collective unity (unions), which is still a prevalent issue today - strikes are ingrained in this system and thus inherently racist.

**Dogan ‘17**

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One such tool wielded against minorities was prevailing wage laws. In the 1930s, New York Congressman Robert Bacon, angry that black Americans were competing with white workers for jobs, introduced the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires contractors on federally funded construction projects to pay the “local prevailing wage.” This policy has been implemented in many states as well, including Missouri, to force governments to only negotiate with white-dominated unions. This policy remains as a vestige of a racist past, and it **harms American workers** and **taxpayers to this day.** In addition, minimum wage laws were instituted a century ago in large part to prevent white workers from having to compete with cheaper labor from immigrants and African-Americans. Even though today’s “Fight for $15” effort to raise the minimum wage to $15/hour is supported by many minority groups with good intentions, it would likely have the unintended consequence of replacing young low-wage workers with older workers, disproportionately hurting minority youth. Unfortunately, the days of union bosses fighting to protect their own interests over the interests of minority workers are not just in the past. According to a 2016 report prepared for the AFL-CIO, “Whole sectors of workers have been ignored or neglected by the labor movement for shortsighted or xenophobic reasons. ... Those workers also tend to be largely **p**eople **o**f **c**olor and women, further enlarging the racial and gender divide that makes up the labor movement.” And in Virginia’s recent election, unions made headlines for successfully demanding that the African-American candidate for lieutenant governor be deleted from the Democratic Party’s campaign mailers and then excluding him from the union’s sample ballot on Election Day. (The candidate, Justin Fairfax, won despite the union’s opposition.) Here in Missouri, union leaders have long clashed with African-American leaders because of a lack of inclusion on big union projects and a disparity in contributions to African-American political candidates, even when those candidates have pro-union voting records. Before her comments hoping for President Donald Trump to be assassinated thrust her into the national spotlight, state Sen. Maria Chappelle-Nadal, D-University City, made headlines last year with a speech on the Senate floor that highlighted “the racism and inequality that exists in the labor movement” and in which she read numerous racist and sexist comments from union members directed to her on social media. Though the unions have formed various diversity councils and hired staffers to work on making their ranks more diverse, they still have a long way to go to produce the hoped-for results. Systems designed to be discriminatory and anti-competitive should not be the basis for our economy: Prevailing wage, arbitrary minimum wages and forced union membership are examples of policies that unfairly exclude Americans from the workplace. For Missouri to move forward, we should not allow such misguided policies to determine employer/employee relations. Bold reform is needed, and the Republican Legislature is paving the way for just that.

#### Racism is institutionalized in the creation of Unions and in turn striking – It creates a Catch 22 and stonewalls Black workers, so they feel the lack of accessibility to unions is their own fault rather than the racist institution.

**Watson 6-14**

(Travis Watson, June 14, 2021, Watson is the chair of the Boston Employment Commission (BEC), he is also a member of the board for YouthBuild Boston and NEI General Contracting’s Workforce Opportunity Resource Center, and he created ADOSconstruction.org which helps to create more inclusive construction unions, ““Union Construction’s Racial Equity and Inclusion Charade (SSIR)”, [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/union\_constructions\_racial\_equity\_and\_inclusion\_charade //](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/union_constructions_racial_equity_and_inclusion_charade%20//) HM)

**Six Practices That Institutionalized Racism in Union Construction** The Catch 22 | White union construction workers often stymie prospective Black workers’ attempts to join a union by trapping them in a Catch-22: requiring the worker to have a job prior to being admitted into a union, but also requiring union membership before getting a construction job. Former United Community Construction Workers activist Omar Cannon recalls **Black workers being told by white union officers** that they “had to be in the union to get a job.” However, the problem, [Cannon explains](https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv941wxz.23?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents), is that “you had to get a job to get in the union.” Former Army veteran and construction worker Gilbert Banks has told a [similar story](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Black_Power_at_Work/16RmDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0) about treatment by foremen and unions: “They’d say, ‘Have you got a (union membership) book?’ I’d say, ‘No.’ ‘Well,’ they said, ‘Go get a book and we’ll give you a job.’ And I’d go to the union and ask them for a book. They’d say, ‘Listen, if you get the job, we’ll give you a book.’ There was no way of fighting it.” This no-win situation is not a coincidence. This Catch-22 is a form of structural racism intended to **exclude people not already on the inside**. Stonewalling | Another strategy white union members use to frustrate Black workers into giving up their effort to join a union is intentionally **refusing communication, ignoring, and silencing them**. Stonewalling effectively blocks Black workers from jobs and from unions, even when those workers have superlative skills, training, and experience. For example, former member of the Congress of Racial Equity (CORE) and construction activist [Oliver Leeds recalls](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt7v804) how his work as an Army engineer wasn’t enough to even get considered for work and union acceptance: “I was in the Corps of Engineers. And you know what we do? We worked to win the war. We built anything that could be built: bridges, tunnels, houses, officers’ quarters, Myers quarter, roads, and airstrips. We loaded and unloaded ships. We did anything in the way that involved work, construction work. You know, when I got back to the United States, after the war, I couldn’t get a job in construction, that **there was no union that would let me in**? And there was damn little that I couldn’t do in the way of construction work. They’ll take you and turn you into construction workers in the army, in a segregated army, and then when you get back into civilian life, you can’t get a construction job.” These first two strategies—the Catch 22 and stonewalling—cloak the structural racism operating within unions by displacing the consequence onto the Black person: that they gave up, or that they got frustrated, rather than seeing the mechanisms at work that produced this outcome.

#### Unions are built around keeping Black workers out and/or beneath white workers by stealing opportunities for greater societal advancement via: gatekeeping, racist testing, voter suppression, etc.

**Watson 6-14**

(Travis Watson, June 14, 2021, Watson is the chair of the Boston Employment Commission (BEC), he is also a member of the board for YouthBuild Boston and NEI General Contracting’s Workforce Opportunity Resource Center, and he created ADOSconstruction.org which helps to create more inclusive construction unions, ““Union Construction’s Racial Equity and Inclusion Charade (SSIR)”, [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/union\_constructions\_racial\_equity\_and\_inclusion\_charade //](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/union_constructions_racial_equity_and_inclusion_charade%20//) HM)

Biased Gatekeepers | Many construction unions place unemployed members “on the bench” while they wait to be sent to work by dispatchers, the union members who distribute the jobs. Dispatchers play a central role in access to jobs and, therefore, to union entry. However, by intentionally refusing to send Black workers to jobs, racially biased dispatchers play a pivotal role in keeping unions white. In Boston, former construction worker Earl Quick [recalls](https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/437214073/) receiving his union book but never being assigned work. “White guys would come in and go right into the business agent’s office and they’d get work and me and the rest of the Black guys would just sit there,” he explains. “I never did work in Boston.” [According to](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt7v804) the former Northwest American Friends Service Committee Director Arthur Dye, “Some [Black] workers appeared at the hiring hall day after day for several months and were never dispatched. If they began to ask questions why they were not dispatched they would be sent out to jobs … a hundred miles or so away, only to find out that when they arrived at their destination there wasn’t a job. Or they would be dispatched to a job where there was considerable possibility for physical intimidation.” Because this is a well-known practice, Black workers have often [applied directly to employers](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt7v804), going around the union hiring halls. But in most cases, employers are required **by union policy** to hire only workers referred by union hiring hall dispatchers. And even when employers [intentionally](https://www.reviewjournal.com/local/local-las-vegas/vegas-discrimination-lawsuit-could-be-headed-to-arbitration/) seek to diversify their employees and union contractors, dispatchers can thwart this effort. For example, when Robert Lucas, the president of the refrigeration contractor Lewis Refrigeration, who is a white man, [called Local Union 32](https://hcommons.org/deposits/objects/hc:16486/datastreams/CONTENT/content) and **specifically asked for a Black plumber** to be dispatched to his job, the dispatcher reportedly laughed and dismissed his request. Discriminatory Testing | Some construction unions require that applicants pass a test for admittance. To keep their membership as white as possible, some local unions went so far as to pass white applicants regardless of how they scored, while failing nearly every Black applicant. Journalist Gary McMillan reported in the [Boston Globe](https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/437214073/), that “in 1980, a federal court in Boston found that the oral section of the exam given by the Ironworkers was so subjective and so open to abuse that it had almost no bearing on ability to do the job. For some reason, the court also found, whites almost always passed the test but Blacks almost always failed.” This blatant discriminatory testing enables the construction industry to remain an “old-boys club,” and barring entry to people of color keeps their ranks as white as possible going forward. Without equal access to unions, Black workers have been deprived of apprenticeship, mentorship, and other networking opportunities that are crucial to their professional advancement and success. Explicit Racism | Some white construction workers take a more overtly racist and aggressive approach to keeping Black membership as low as possible. This strategy has been tactically employed through the use of racist language and putting Black workers in dangerous situations. In Seattle, Donald Kelly, a white apprentice in Local 86 [recalls hearing](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt7v804), “We have no Negro apprentices, and we will never have no Negro apprentices … No Black [expletives] will ever work out of this union as long as I am business agent.” In Boston, Earl Quick had union men [drop bolts on him and call him the N-word.](https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/437214073/) As McMillan enumerated, “almost every Black construction worker interviewed by the [Boston Globe in 1983](https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/437214073/) … has had ‘accidents’ on the job: boards or bolts dropped from above, a steel beam swing very close to his head, live wires left at his feet as he walked by.” But these **incidents of overt racism and aggression aren’t just relics of the past**. Last year, places like Toronto, Las Vegas, and Portland, Oregon, have had incidents of [nooses](https://www.archpaper.com/2020/06/nooses-found-at-construction-sites-in-las-vegas-toronto-and-elsewhere/) being left at construction sites. And this year, in Boston, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers International Vice President Mike Monahan referred to Black people as “[colored.](https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2021/03/18/boston-planning-agency-vice-chair-criticized-for-racist-language)” And, in response to my critique about the lack of diversity in union construction, he emailed me with the following threatening message, which included a pointed reference to “sun down towns”: “Goodnight — what time does the sun set and rise in Falmouth? Make sure you lock the doors.” Voter Suppression | And lastly, some unions go to great lengths to exclude Black people from participating in their elections. In Boston, for example, union construction limits the number of Black members through voter suppression. Voter suppression is as American as the second amendment, a tool used to maintain white power and silence Black voices for decades. For most of us, voter suppression manifests itself through draconian policies—things like making it more difficult to vote by mail, voter ID laws, and restricting access to early voting. But while many of the elected officials behind such policies are Republican lawmakers, the Greater Boston building trades unions have been taking a page from their book; one of Boston’s most extensive and ingrained systems of voter suppression resides within their halls. First, let’s take a closer look at the Greater Boston building trades unions as a system: The Greater Boston building trades union is a group of 20 construction unions operating in the Greater Boston area. Each of the 20 construction unions is governed by their own elected officials/officers. Of these elected officials/officers, 100 percent of the senior leadership is white men. The overwhelming majority of members that are responsible for recruiting new members, administering entrance exams, and conducting interviews are white men. Not a single union will disclose the number of Black members they have or the number of union-signatory companies owned by Black people. What does this have to do with voter suppression? By keeping Black membership low through exclusionary practices, the Greater Boston building trades unions control the total number of Black voters participating in union elections. This ensures that Black representation in union votes will never be sufficient to correct exclusionary or racist union policies. This also suffocates any possibility for progressive Black leadership to be elected to senior leadership positions. White union members have gone to extreme lengths to maintain their power and dominance in the construction industry. They have designed the entire system to benefit themselves and other white men, often in direct opposition to Black membership. While many of these examples occurred in the past, their roots took hold and are still manifest in today’s union construction industry, which helps white men keep unions—and especially their leadership—white.