# 1AC

## Case

#### Contention 1: Inequality

#### 1. Capitalism has produced shocking global inequality-the public is ready for action

Abdelmahmoud 10-1-21

(Elamin, https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/elaminabdelmahmoud/squid-game-netflix-review-lupin-international)

The dizzying success of Squid Game and the triumph of other non-English shows may finally kill the unfounded idea that North American viewers — the largest share of Netflix’s audience — are not interested in watching foreign shows. That is significant by itself. But these shows also share a common throughline: They all deal with inequality, capture the despair of poverty, and dissect class anxiety. Regardless of the country or language, capitalism is the shared villain in Netflix’s global successes. It’s a villain viewers everywhere can identify. In case you’re among the eight people who have yet to watch Squid Game, the premise is simple: Hundreds of people living with oppressive debt are approached to take part in a series of games — all variations of childhood favorites like Red Light, Green Light, but with, uh, deadly modifications — with the promise of a cash prize that might change their lives. It’s like if the playground games you played as a kid suddenly turned into the Hunger Games. Squid Game is effective at pulling you in. By the middle of the first episode, viewers are plunged into a world that’s as repulsive as it is gripping, complete with masked villains and hapless antiheroes who do not know what’s in store for them. The “game” sequences are breathtaking — in creator Hwang Dong-hyuk’s hands, a game as familiar as tug of war is transformed into an exhilarating, high-stakes contest. At the center of it all is Seong Gi-hun, a chauffeur addicted to gambling and self-sabotage, played brilliantly by Lee Jung-jae. In Lee’s performance, we see all the big and small humiliations of capitalism: the feeling of your worth being tethered to your productivity; the magical thinking that once you’re rich, you’ll be a different person; the embarrassments we are willing to endure to afford what we think we deserve. As we become invested in Gi-hun, we watch him as he lets us down over and over again. He steals from his mother and forgets his daughter’s birthday. When he is handed a financial lifeline, he gambles it away. The first episode sets up the tension by slowly luring you into its shocking climax, when players discover the true cost of playing. No matter how much you read about it, you will not be ready for the rules of the game. But Squid Game is at its most effective in the second episode, where the contestants briefly find themselves back in their regular lives. Here, the show cycles through the horrors they all exist in: the pickpocket desperate to secure enough money to rescue her little brother; the business graduate who can’t confront the ways he has let down his mother; the young migrant worker who cannot provide for his wife and his newborn. And in the case of Gi-hun, the reality that his debt has not only driven his daughter away, but also put him in a position where he is unable to help his sick mother. Through the course of the episode — aptly entitled “Hell” — we learn of the various chokeholds these characters are in, which are cruel enough that they might even prefer to go back to wagering with their lives. Their debts — and circumstances — are treated with tenderness and compassion. These are desperate people, willing to do anything to get out of their own personal hells. Their desperation may be familiar to viewers in Korea, where household debts are snowballing, but it is universal, too: in the US, Americans have more debt than ever before. In Canada, household debts are at worrying levels. Beyond the indignities of working only to keep your head above water, debt has devastating health consequences like depression and anxiety. Forty percent of Americans would struggle to handle an unexpected $400 expense because of debt. Meanwhile, even though inequality was already high, the pandemic made it even worse. Hell, that cuts both ways, and inequality made the pandemic worse, too. That growing wealth gap is not an accidental outcome of capitalism — it is rather predictable. The games are made up, the pot of money is fictional, and Squid Game is a drama, but its honest exploration of the weight of debt and inequality could not be more timely. Squid Game fully understands the crushing consequences of being in debt, and it’s easy for viewers to see themselves in it. “We are simply here to give you a chance,” the masked villains say, and you understand their meaning to be more sinister than that. Squid Game deals with these themes explicitly, but it is hardly the only Netflix property to dive into the horrors of capitalism. In Lupin, Assane Diop, the noble thief, is struggling to pay the bills and is forced to rely on loan sharks in order to pull off an elaborate heist. We see Tokyo, the protagonist of Money Heist, begin from a place of desperation too as she is left shattered after a botched robbery before she’s taken in by the mysterious Professor. Even the Spanish-language hit Elite takes on class anxiety, as three lower-income students begin life at a wealthy school and struggle to fit in with their new classmates. In all of these shows, the poverty and precariousness of the protagonists are the entry points for viewers, the vectors of relatability. We cheer for them because we understand that they are up against the same forces as the rest of us. All of these shows are thrilling and well paced, with impeccable writing. But more to the point, the fact that it is these shows that Netflix viewers have gravitated to suggests a universal center of gravity. No matter the language or location, capitalism makes us all desperate. ●

#### 2. Income inequality undermines democracy making action on existential problems like climate change impossible- it’s the biggest global risk and the US is the worst example

Lingis, PhD, 9-29-21

(Alphonso Lingis, a professor emeritus of philosophy at Pennsylvania State University, https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/465571/Inequality-of-wealth-is-greater-in-the-U-S-than-in-any-other)

“Inequality of wealth is greater by far in the United States than in any other developed country and increasing,” Lingis tells the Tehran Times. “One percent of the population in the United States holds 42.5 percent of the national wealth. Just three men—Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Microsoft founder Bill Gates, and investor Warren Buffett—hold combined fortunes worth more than the total wealth of the poorest half of Americans.” Since wealth means political power in the United States, the gap between tycoons and ordinary people reflects a defect in the political system. Critics say capitalism in the U.S. is going to marginalize democracy. Mass media plays a key role in this regard. “As wealth becomes increasingly concentrated in an ever smaller number of individuals and corporations, so does the potential political power of the wealthiest,” Lingis notes. Meanwhile “the median White family has 10 times more wealth than the median Black family and 7.5 times more wealth than the median Latino family. This increasing economic inequality is damaging to the health, education, job opportunities, and home ownerless possibilities of a growing number of people in the nation,” the professor of philosophy adds. Following is the text of the interview: Q: How do you see the political fallout of Trump's presidency in America and its impact on U.S. democracy? A: Lawyers for President Trump identified 62 incidences of alleged voter fraud in the 2020 election, which the courts individually examined and rejected. Nonetheless, Trump continues to claim that massive voter fraud invalidated the election, a claim shared by more than half of Republican voters. This does undermine public trust in the essential institutions of democracy in the country. Q: U.S. officials claim to defend democratic values, but apparently giant corporations, lobbies, and money have a big influence on U.S. democracy. Is American democracy in favor of the majority or just a tool in the hands of the elites? A: As wealth becomes increasingly concentrated in an ever-smaller number of individuals and corporations, so does the potential political power of the wealthiest. In 2020 candidates for the U.S. Congress spent $8,703,050,547 on their campaigns. Individual candidates spent up to $270 million on a campaign. The greater part of the money spent was donated by a small number of very rich individuals and corporations. One-fifth of the money spent on campaigns was donated by just 2635 individuals. Their influence makes President Trump’s numerous actions against climate change control, environmental protection, and his massive tax reduction for the rich difficult to reverse. Q: What is your comment on Republicans' efforts to restrict voting rights in some states? Do you think the American establishment can protect democracy? A: Since the 2020 election, nine Republican-dominated states have passed new laws that restrict access to voting for poorer people and minorities. Seventeen states have passed laws to expand access to voting for their citizens. A national voting rights law is presently being blocked by Republicans in Congress. Q: Is there any correlation between defending democracy at home and supporting democracy abroad? Apparently, the U.S. has failed to realize this goal in foreign policy. For example, America is a great sponsor of tyrannical regimes in the Persian Gulf. A: President Trump openly admired authoritarian regimes, and leaders such as Bolsonaro in Brazil, Duterte in the Philippines, and Orban in Hungary copied Trump’s rhetoric and domestic policies. President Biden, addressing the United Nations General Assembly, affirmed that his government will exercise “relentless diplomacy” in favor of democratic regimes. He called for international cooperation to address the coronavirus pandemic, global climate change, and cyber threats. He said the United States will double its financial commitment to climate aid and spend $10 billion to fight hunger. He also announced a donation of 1.1 billion doses of the Covid vaccine to poor countries, “for everyone shot we’ve administered to date in America we have now committed to doing three shots to the rest of the world.” Q: Some critics like Bernie Sanders believe that capitalism may push the U.S. and its democracy towards an abyss. What is your comment? A: Inequality of wealth is greater by far in the United States than in any other developed country and increasing. One percent of the population in the United States holds 42.5 percent of the national wealth. Just three men—Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Microsoft founder Bill Gates, and investor Warren Buffett—hold combined fortunes worth more than the total wealth of the poorest half of Americans. The median White family has 10 times more wealth than the median Black family and 7.5 times more wealth than the median Latino family. This increasing economic inequality is damaging to the health, education, job opportunities, and home ownerless possibilities of a growing number of people in the nation. In 2014, The World Economic Forum based in Davos, Switzerland released its “Global Risks 2014” report, listing income disparity first of the most likely five global risks, followed by extreme weather events, unemployment and underemployment, climate change, and cyber-attacks. Noted economist Thomas Piketty and others have argued that the growing economic inequality is also economically unsustainable.

#### 3. *Striketober* has seen a massive increase in labor activity but it’s not sustainable

Greenhouse 10-23-21

(Steven, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/oct/23/striketober-unions-strikes-workers-lasting-change)

US labor unions have been on the defensive for decades but this October there has been a surprising burst of worker militancy and strikes as workers have gone on the offensive to demand more. Experts are predicting more actions to come but whether “Striketober” can lead to permanent change remains an open question. The scale of industrial action is truly remarkable. Ten thousand John Deere workers have gone on strike, 1,400 Kellogg workers have walked out, as well as a walkout threatened by more than 30,000 Kaiser Permanente workers, all inflamed by a profound disconnect between labor and management. Many frontline workers – after working so hard and risking their lives during the pandemic – say they deserve substantial raises along with lots of gratitude. With this in mind and with myriad employers complaining of a labor shortage, many workers believe it’s an opportune time to demand more and go on strike. It doesn’t hurt that there’s a strongly pro-union president in the White House and there’s more public support for unions than in decades. But some corporations are acting as if nothing has changed and they can continue corporate America’s decades-long practice of squeezing workers and demanding concessions, even after corporate profits have soared. This attitude doesn’t sit well with Chris Laursen, who earns $20.82 an hour after 19 years at Deere’s farm equipment factory in Ottumwa, Iowa. Laursen is upset that Deere is offering just a one-dollar-an-hour raise and wants to eliminate pensions for future hires even when Deere anticipates a record $5.7bn in profits this year, more than double last year’s earnings. “We were deemed essential workers right out of the gate,” Laursen said, noting that many workers racked up lots of overtime during the pandemic. “But then they came with an offer that was appallingly low. It was a slap in the face of the workers who created all the wealth for them.” Many Deere workers complain that the company offered only a 12% raise over six years, which they say won’t keep pace with inflation, even as the CEO’s pay rose 160% last year to $16m and dividends were raised 17%. Deere’s workers voted down the company’s offer by 90% before they went on strike at 14 factories on 14 October, their first walkout in 35 years. “We really showed up during the pandemic and kept building equipment for them,” Laursen said. “Now we want something back. The stars are finally lined up for us, and we had to bring the fight.” Thomas Kochan, an MIT professor of industrial relations, agreed that it was a favorable time for workers – many corporations have substantially increased pay in response to the labor shortage. “It’s clear that workers are much more empowered,” he said. “They’re empowered because of the labor shortage.” Kochan added: “These strikes could easily trigger more strike activity if several are successful or perceived to be successful.” Robert Bruno, a labor relations professor at the University of Illinois, said workers have built up a lot of grievances and anger during the pandemic, after years of seeing scant improvement in pay and benefits. Bruno pointed to a big reason for the growing worker frustration: “You can definitely see that American capitalism has reigned supreme over workers, and as a result, the incentive for companies is to continue to do what’s been working for them. It’s likely that an arrogance sets in where companies think that’s going to last for ever, and maybe they don’t read the times properly.” Kevin Bradshaw, a striker at Kellogg’s factory in Memphis, said the cereal maker was being arrogant and unappreciative. During the pandemic, he said, Kellogg employees often worked 30 days in a row, often in 12-hour or 16-hour shifts. In light of this hard work, he derided Kellogg’s contract offer, which calls for a far lower scale for new hires. “Kellogg is offering a $13 cut in top pay for new workers,” Bradshaw said. “They want a permanent two-tier. New employees will no longer receive the same amount of money and benefits we do.” That, he said, is bad for the next generation of workers. Bradshaw, vice-president of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union local, noted that it made painful concessions to Kellogg in 2015. “We gave so many concessions, and now they’re saying they need more,” he said. “This is a real smack in the face during the pandemic. Everyone knows that they’re greedy and not needy.” Kellogg said its compensation is among the industry’s best and its offer will help the company meet competitive challenges. Deere said it was determined to reach an agreement and continue to make its workers “the highest paid employees in the agriculture industry”. There are many strikes beyond Deere and Kellogg. More than 400 workers at the Heaven Hill bourbon distillery in Kentucky have been on strike for six weeks, while roughly 1,000 Warrior Met coalminers in Alabama have been on strike since April. Hundreds of nurses at Mercy hospital in Buffalo went on strike on 1 October, and 450 steelworkers at Special Metals in Huntington, West Virginia, also walked out that day. More than 30,000 nurses and other healthcare professionals at Kaiser Permanente on the west coast have voted to authorize a strike. Sixty thousand Hollywood production employees threatened to go on strike last Monday, unhappy that film and TV companies were not taking their concerns about overwork and exhaustion seriously. But seeing that the union was serious about staging its first-ever strike, Hollywood producers flinched, agreed to compromises, and the two sides reached a settlement. Noting that Kaiser Permanente, a non-profit, had amassed $45bn in reserves, Belinda Redding, a Kaiser nurse in Woodland Hills, California, said, “We’ve been going all out during the pandemic. We’ve been working extra shifts. Our lives have been turned upside down. The signs were up all over saying, ‘Heroes Work Here’. And the pandemic isn’t even over for us, and then for them to offer us a 1% raise, it’s almost a slap in the face.” Redding is also fuming that management has proposed hiring new nurses at 26% less pay than current ones earn – which she said would ensure a shortage of nurses. “It’s hard to imagine a nurse giving her all when she’s paid far less than other nurses,” Redding said. Kaiser said that its employees earn 26% more than average market wages and that its services would become unaffordable unless it restrains labor costs. On a smaller scale but in an industry in increasing demand, striking workers at one of the world’s largest bourbon producers were scheduled to vote on a new contract on Saturday, a day after announcing a tentative agreement with Heaven Hill, the producer of Evan Williams bourbon. About 420 members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 23D went on strike about six weeks ago, forming picket lines at the company’s operations in Bardstown, Kentucky, with the dispute revolving around healthcare and scheduling. Meanwhile, many non-union workers – frequently dismayed with low pay, volatile schedules and poor treatment – have quit their jobs or refused to return to their old ones after being laid off during the pandemic. In August, 4.2 million workers quit their jobs, part of what has been called the Great Resignation. Some economists have suggested this is a quiet general strike with workers demanding better pay and conditions. “People are using exit from their jobs as a source of power,” Kochan said. As for unionized workers, some labor experts see parallels between today’s burst of strikes and the much larger wave of strikes after the first and second world wars. As with the pandemic, those catastrophic wars caused many Americans to reassess their lives and jobs and ask: after what we’ve been through, don’t we deserve better pay and conditions? Professor Bruno said that in light of today’s increased worker militancy, unionized employers would have to rethink their approach to bargaining “and take the rank and file pretty seriously”. They can no longer expect workers to roll over or to strong-arm them into swallowing concessions, often by threatening to move operations overseas. Bruno questioned whether the surge in strikes will be long-lasting. He predicts that the improvements in pay and job quality will be long-lasting, adding that that was more likely than unions substantially increasing their membership. He said that if workers see others winning better wages and conditions through strikes, that will raise unions’ visibility and lead to more workers voting to join unions. Despite the recent turbulence, Ruth Milkman, a sociologist of labor at City University of New York, foresees a return to the status quo. “I think things will go back to where they were once things settle down,” she said. “The labor shortage is not necessarily going to last.” She sees the number of strikes declining once the labor shortage ends. In her view, union membership isn’t likely to increase markedly because “they’re not doing that much organizing. “There’s a little” – like the unionization efforts at Starbucks in Buffalo and at Amazon – “but it’s not as if there’s some big push.” A big question, Milkman said, was how can today’s labor momentum be sustained? She said it would help if Congress passed the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, which would make it easier to unionize workers. That law would spur unions to do more organizing and increase their chances of winning union drives. “That would be a real shot in the arm,” Milkman said.

#### 4. The right to strike is crucial to stop decline of labor unions, the vital internal link to economic inequality

Pope et al. 17

(James Gray Pope Professor of Law and Sidney Reitman Scholar at Rutgers University.Ed Bruno is the former director of the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers of America, Peter Kellman is past president of the Southern Maine Labor Council and is currently working with the Movement Building/Education Committee of the Maine AFL-CIO https://bostonreview.net/forum/james-gray-pope-ed-bruno-peter-kellman-right-strike , 5-22)

In December 2005 more than 30,000 New York City transit workers walked out over economic issues despite the state of New York’s Taylor Law, which prohibits all public sector strikes. Not only did the workers face the loss of two days’ pay for each day on strike, but a court ordered that the union be fined $1 million per day. Union president Roger Toussaint held firm, likening the strikers to Rosa Parks. “There is a higher calling than the law,” he declared. “That is justice and equality.” The transit strike exemplified labor civil disobedience at its most effective. The workers were not staging a symbolic event; they brought the city’s transit system to a halt. They claimed their fundamental right to collective action despite a statute that outlawed it. For a precious moment, public attention was riveted on the drama of workers defying a draconian strike ban. How did national labor leaders react? AFL-CIO president John Sweeney issued a routine statement of support, while most others did nothing at all. To anybody watching the drama unfold, the message was clear: there is no right to strike, even in the House of Labor. About a decade earlier in 1996, Stephen Lerner, fresh from a successful campaign to organize Los Angeles janitors, had warned in Boston Review that private sector unions faced an existential crisis: density could soon drop from 10.3 percent to 5 percent if unions did not expand their activity beyond the limits imposed by American law. He called for unions to develop broad organizing strategies—industry-wide and regional—and to engage in civil disobedience. Few embraced these radical strategies. Today private sector union density is about 6.5 percent, not quite as low as Lerner predicted, but down from a high of over 30 percent in the mid-1950s. Union decline matters. For half a century, it has moved in lock step with the increase in income inequality. According to an International Monetary Fund study of twenty advanced economies, . In the heyday of American unionism, CEOs made about 25 times the annual compensation of the average worker; today, the multiple is more than 350. Meanwhile, as Thomas Edsell and others have warned for decades, the decline of unions has deprived the Democratic Party of its strongest link to white workers. The overwhelming majority of unions continue to endorse Democratic candidates (including Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election), but with ever-diminishing effect. Until two decades ago it was possible to blame union decline on backward labor leaders, such as George Meany, who were so steeped in business unionism that they could not see the need to organize broadly, much less to ally with other social movements across lines of race, gender, and immigration status. Since then, however, we have seen continued shrinkage under leaders who are, for the most part, well intentioned and savvy. The problem is structural. National union officials are not well positioned to lead a challenge to corporate power. Institutions with big treasuries and tit-for-tat relations with establishment politicians cannot be expected to undertake risky and polarizing actions. Although leaders might see the need to build working-class power, the immediate incentives all point toward the narrow needs of their particular union’s members. This constraint is rooted in the American system of exclusive representation, which divides workers into thousands of bargaining unit boxes, gives unions property interests in particular boxes, and penalizes unions for doing anything other than defending existing boxes and acquiring new ones. The prospects for union revival may seem bleaker than ever during the Trump administration, even as the triumph of right-wing populism makes more urgent what was already apparent: the need to build a labor movement that can fight for the interests of the working class in the face of corporate power. But prospects are not as grim as they appear. Over the past decade, there has been an undeniable shift toward class politics, most visibly evidenced by Occupy Wall Street, the Bernie Sanders campaign, the Fight for Fifteen, and the rise of a Black Lives Matter movement that supports economic justice demands, including the right to organize. Building the labor movement in this period of danger and opportunity will require not only heeding Lerner’s call for a strategic shift and extralegal action; labor must also reclaim the right to strike and confront the deep structural disabilities that impede unions from challenging corporate power.

#### 5. Statistically economic inequality outweighs war

Richter, PhD/EMT, 15

(Roxane, *Disaster Types and their Consequences for Women* in Medical Outcasts: Gendered and Institutionalized Xenophobia in Undocumented Forced Migrant’s Emergency Health Care)

As we see above in Galtung’s “Typology of Violence" from 1969 (Table 2.1), the “need groups” may be disadvantaged to such an extent that they starve, become terminally ill from the result of illness or disease, or die. The second category. Exploitation B, leaves the underprivileged in a constant involuntary state of poverty, usually comprising malnutrition and illness. These effects all occur within and at the culmination of multifaceted social and economic structures, and obscured legislative cycles. A noted successor of Galtung’s benchmark work in structural violence, James Gilligan began a quest to look closely at the ties between structural violence and its effects on individuals' health, violent behavior, and society. As a prison psychiatrist and director of the Center for the Study of Violence at Harvard Medical School. Gilligan observed that structural violence differs from behavioral violence in three major respects: In addition to its virtual invisibility, structural violence functions more or less independently of individual behaviors: further, its problematic effects operate continuously, not just sporadically (1996). In his book Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic. James Gilligan defines structural violence as “the increased rates of death and disability suffered by those who occupy the bottom rungs of society, as contrasted with the relatively lower death rates experienced by those who are above them” (1996, 192). Gilligan largely describes these “excess deaths” as “non-natural" and attributes them to the stress, shame, discrimination, and denigration that results from lower status. Gilligan paralleled the worldwide summations of structural violence to direct (armed conflict, military or political wars) violence thusly: Every fifteen years, on the average, as many people die because of relative poverty as would he killed in a nuclear war that caused 232 million deaths: and every single year, two to three times as many people die from poverty throughout the world as were killed by the Nazi genocide of the Jews over a six-year period. This is. in effect, the equivalent of an ongoing, unending, in fact accelerating, thermonuclear war. or genocide on the weak and poor every year of every decade, throughout the world. .. . The question as to which of the two forms of violence—structural or behavioral—is more important, dangerous, or lethal is moot, for they are inextricably related to each other, as cause to effect. (Gilligan 1996. 195-96) When we fix and focus our view on structural violence through the lens of healthcare, we see that every country is marked by suffering, illnesses, and death, to one extent of another. But it is the distribution of the preventable and manageable illnesses and diseases in underprivileged countries that tip the scales of parity in suffering. It is these “social conditions"—these imbalances of influence—if you will, that affect and influence social justice in healthcare, and creates a poverty of lifesaving access to medication, supplies, treatment, training, and equipment to stave off human suffering from avoidable and unnecessary illness and disease. Didier Fassin in his book Humanitarian Reason quotes Margaret Lock concerning social sentiment on human suffering: “Efforts to reduce suffering have habitually focused on control and repair of individual bodies. The social origins of suffering and distress, including poverty and discrimination, even if fleetingly recognized, are set aside” (2012, 21). (24-5)

#### 6. Economic inequality causes US civil war-this card answers every 1NC response

Aldhous 10-24-20

(Peter, https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/peteraldhous/political-violence-inequality-us-election)4r

Many Americans are clinging to the idea that if Joe Biden wins the presidential election, calm can return to a nation riven by protests and rattled by President Donald Trump’s authoritarian rhetoric. Not so fast, caution two academics who claim they have devised a measure of political instability that shows that the nation will still be a powder keg that is waiting to blow, even if a Biden landslide means that Trump has little choice but to step aside. “The tendency is to blame Trump, but I don’t really agree with that,” Peter Turchin, an evolutionary anthropologist at the University of Connecticut who studies the forces that drive political instability, told BuzzFeed News. “Trump is really not the deep structural cause.” The most dangerous element in the mix, argue Turchin and George Mason University sociologist Jack Goldstone, is the corrosive effect of inequality on society. They believe they have a model that explains how inequality escalates and leads to political instability: Worsened by elites who monopolize economic gains, narrow the path to social mobility, and resist taxation, inequality ends up undermining state institutions while fomenting distrust and resentment. Building on Goldstone’s work showing that revolutions tend to follow periods of population growth and urbanization, Turchin has developed a statistic called the political stress indicator, or PSI. It incorporates measures of wage stagnation, national debt, competition between elites, distrust in government, urbanization, and the age structure of the population. Turchin raised warning signs of a coming storm a decade ago, predicting that instability would peak in the years around 2020. “In the United States, we have stagnating or declining real wages, a growing gap between rich and poor, overproduction of young graduates with advanced degrees, and exploding public debt,” he wrote, in a letter to the journal Nature. “Historically, such developments have served as leading indicators of looming political instability.” Today, with the nation in turmoil, Turchin’s prediction seems remarkably prescient. We live in a pandemic hellscape that has disproportionately harmed Black and brown Americans and those living in poverty. We have widespread civil unrest over racial injustice. And we are hurtling toward an election in which Trump is stoking unfounded fears of voter fraud and refusing to commit to a peaceful transition of power. In August, Turchin gave himself a pat on the back for his predictive ability with an analysis showing a significant rise in political demonstrations and violent riots over the last 10 years. But he and Goldstone fear that much worse is to come. The political stress indicator for the US is rising rapidly, much like it did before the Civil War. Charts show a similar rise in the political stress indicator in the buildup to the Civil War and today When Goldstone talks about America’s darkest days in the 1860s, he provocatively calls it the “First Civil War.” He fears that we may be on the way to a second one, with the 2020 election serving as a potential “fire-starter” event. Goldstone has some credentials in predicting conflict. In 1994, shortly after the US military’s ill-fated efforts to support UN intervention in Somalia’s civil war, which led to the downing of two Black Hawk helicopters and the gruesome spectacle of a dead US soldier being dragged through the streets, Goldstone was tapped by the CIA to help lead the State Failure Task Force. This group of academic social scientists was asked to identify factors that predict when a nation is likely to spiral into chaos. The task force’s initial report, published in 1995, identified three risk factors that seemed to predict whether a state would fail within the next two years in about two-thirds of cases: high infant mortality, low openness to international trade, and level of democracy. On the last measure, partial democracies were more vulnerable to collapse than fully democratic states or autocratic regimes. Goldstone continued to work on the project, later renamed the Political Instability Task Force, until 2012, tweaking its statistical model to predict both civil wars and democratic collapses with about 80% accuracy over the same two-year lead time. He didn’t think of applying a similar approach to assess the risk of political conflict in the US until Turchin got in touch in 2015. “I didn’t expect political violence because I believed the US was a strong and flexible democracy,” Goldstone said. But he is now convinced that Turchin’s PSI heralds a disturbing future for the US that won’t be solved by politics as usual after the 2020 election, even if Trump is defeated and goes quietly. “If those trends continue after Trump departs, then the risks and the occurrence of violence will likely continue,” Goldstone told BuzzFeed News. “I’m worried about that no matter who wins,” he added. “The social problems are the gasoline. Trump is throwing matches.” The PSI doesn’t explicitly address America’s deep divisions over racial justice. “Race has been an enduring faultline, ever since the founding of the Republic,” Turchin said. But he argued that it’s the additional dynamics captured by the PSI that explain why tensions are boiling over right now. One key concern, according to Goldstone, is that people across the political spectrum have lost faith in government and political institutions. “In short, given the accumulated grievances, anger and distrust fanned for the last two decades, almost any election scenario this fall is likely to lead to popular protests on a scale we have not seen this century,” he and Turchin wrote in a recent article published by the Berggruen Institute, a think tank based in Los Angeles. This would hurtle the US into a period of political instability the researchers dubbed “the turbulent twenties.” “Given the Black Lives Matter protests and cascading clashes between competing armed factions in cities across the United States, from Portland, Oregon, to Kenosha, Wisconsin, we are already well on our way there,” the article said. “But worse likely lies ahead.” “The social problems are the gasoline. Trump is throwing matches.” Turchin said people who rule out the possibility of serious political violence in the US based on “the strength of American institutions” are being “unduly optimistic.” “The social system that we live in is extremely fragile, Turchin said. Other social scientists consulted by BuzzFeed News were skeptical that the US is on the brink of a civil war. But they were concerned about the trends highlighted by Goldstone and Turchin, and worried about the potential for violence around the coming election — especially from right-wing militia groups if Trump loses and contests the result. “No matter what the outcome is, it is going to be disputed by some components of the other side,” Craig Jenkins, a sociologist at Ohio State University who studies political violence, told BuzzFeed News. “The difference is that the Trump forces have militia that have some capacity for violence and mayhem.” One reason that most experts in conflict studies don’t predict an outright civil war as a consequence of the US’s gap between rich and poor is that inequality hasn’t emerged as a major driving factor in studies of such conflicts in the modern era. “Civil war has been predominantly a phenomenon in low-income countries,” James Fearon, a political scientist at Stanford University and coauthor of a 2003 paper that identified national poverty as an important condition that can lead to violent insurgency, told BuzzFeed News. Another influential study, published in 2000 by the economists Paul Collier of the University of Oxford and Anke Hoeffler, now at the University of Konstanz in Germany, suggested that an armed group’s ability to seize control over significant economic resources — such as diamonds in several conflict-prone African nations and drug crops in Colombia — was a key driver of modern civil wars. As a rich nation with a diverse and robust economy, the US should have a fairly low chance of falling into civil war according to these theories. And if push comes to shove and order needs to be restored by force, few experts in political conflict expect even a well-armed militia to be a match for federal law enforcement or the National Guard. The circumstances in the 19th century that led the US into the bloodiest conflict in its history were also unusual. The young nation was growing, adding states that either opposed or supported slavery, creating a fundamental economic and moral divide that couldn’t easily be resolved. “That was an irreconcilable dynamic,” Jenkins said. “I think you need the accumulation of irresolvable conflicts to get a true civil war.” But recent events, notably the plot by a group of right-wing militants to kidnap and potentially kill the Democratic governor of Michigan, Gretchen Whitmer, over her policies to limit the spread of the coronavirus, have shocked even skeptics of the idea that the US is teetering on the brink of civil conflict. “This is really concerning,” Fearon said. The PSI isn’t the only indicator that has set alarm bells ringing about the stability of the US. The Fund for Peace, a nonprofit based in Washington, DC, has developed a measure called the Fragile States Index (FSI) that, like the work of the State Failure Task Force, seeks to identify nations that are at risk of violence and instability from a range of underlying pressures including economic distress, refugee flows, and their record on human rights. Overall, the US looks reasonably healthy on the FSI, ranked 149th out of 178 countries for its potential for instability. But there are worrying signs for the US on a component of the FSI labeled “cohesion,” according to Fund for Peace programs manager Natalie Fiertz. “Over the past decade-plus, we’ve seen very rapid worsening of the score for those dimensions,” she told BuzzFeed News. The Fragile States Index shows that the US is becoming a less cohesive society. Chart showing how the cohesion component of the Fragile States Index for the US rose from the second best in the G7 in 2005 to the worst in 2019 Peter Aldhous / BuzzFeed News / Via fragilestatesindex.org ADVERTISEMENT This chart shows change in the average score across the three cohesion components of the FSI for the members of the G7 group of rich democracies. These measure security threats including terrorism and organized crime, factionalization of a nation’s elites, and schisms between different groups in society. Not surprisingly, given the intense and growing political polarization in the US, it is the last two measures that explain why the nation’s cohesion score has gone from the second best among the G7 to the worst in just 15 years. (In recent years, the UK has closely followed the US on this measure, driven by its own political divisions over Brexit.) But political polarization may be just another consequence of the economic inequality that Goldstone and Turchin argue lies at the heart of the US’s current vulnerability to political violence. Political scientists have put a great deal of energy into identifying why polarization in the US is escalating. But factors including the influence of partisan cable TV news and congressional redistricting don’t seem to provide the answer — the latter, for instance, can’t explain why the Senate has become increasingly divided. What is clear is that polarization in Congress has historically tracked closely with income inequality. And recent studies have shown that states with greater income inequality tend to have more polarized state legislatures — supporting the idea that inequality is a fundamental cause of America’s deep political divisions. “The social system that we live in is extremely fragile.” Even the International Monetary Fund has weighed in, warning nations of the corrosive effects of inequality in a 2017 publication: “While some inequality is inevitable in a market-based economic system, excessive inequality can erode social cohesion, lead to political polarization, and ultimately lower economic growth.” Inequality can also damage public health. In their 2009 book The Spirit Level, the British epidemiologists Kate Pickett of the University of York and Richard Wilkinson of the University of Nottingham looked at differences across rich nations for an index of health and social outcomes including infant mortality, life expectancy, mental illness, incarceration, and literacy. They could find no correlation with gross national income per person, but found a strong relationship between poor outcomes and inequality, measured by the gap in incomes between the top and bottom 20% of a country’s earners. “Inequality is a social stressor,” Wilkinson told BuzzFeed News. “One of the big changes in our understanding of social determinants of health is the role of chronic stress.” The pandemic has made inequality much worse — but it may also be a catalyst for change. Given all of the evidence linking inequality to a raft of bad outcomes, it should come as no surprise that unrest has surged during the coronavirus pandemic. Americans living in poverty and people of color have not only been disproportionately sickened and killed by the virus, but they have also been hit harder by the recession it has caused — which has further widened the gulf between rich and poor. “What we need is a new social contract that will enable us to get past extreme polarization to find consensus, tip the shares of economic growth back toward workers and improve government funding for public health, education and infrastructure,” Goldstone and Turchin wrote in their Berggruen Institute article. Can that really happen in today’s combat zone of weaponized social media, in which even modest proposals to ratchet back inequality are framed as “communism”? One hopeful sign is that the US has pulled back from the brink of chaos before through similar reforms, within the lifetime of its oldest citizens. In the 1930s, as parts of Europe slid into fascism, the US went in a different direction, electing Franklin D. Roosevelt to drag the nation out of the Great Depression by ushering in the New Deal. At least some social scientists think the US could pull off a similar feat again. “You can reform your way out of dramatically polarized societies,” said George Lawson of the Australian National University in Canberra, who has studied societal transformations including the peaceful transition to majority rule in South Africa. Even given Trump’s flouting of democratic norms and the current upsurge in civil unrest, Lawson believes the US, by and large, has withstood a political “stress test.” “I would err on the side that the system has shown to be more robust than fragile,” Lawson said. “One thing to come out of the past few years is an energization of political engagement that is healthy.”

#### 7. Civil war causes extinction – other powers get drawn in and cause WWIII.

Michael Laitman, PhD, 8-25-17 [Professor of Ontology and Theory of Knowledge, PhD in Philosophy, MSc in Medical Bio-Cybernetics] "There Will Be No Winners in the Second Civil War," Newsmax, https://www.newsmax.com/MichaelLaitman/america-civil-war-newt-gingrich-don-lemon/2017/08/25/id/809867/

Earlier this week, CNN news anchor Don Lemon stated that the president “is clearly trying to ignite a civil war in this country.” In response to Lemon’s words, historian and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich said in an interview on "Tucker Carlson Tonight": “I think we should take the threat of civil war very seriously.” Referencing Dennis Prager’s piece, “America's Second Civil War,” Gingrich added, “What you’re seeing with Antifa, what you’re seeing on college campuses, what you’re seeing, to some extent, in the bureaucracy, is a real division of the country. …I wish we could all sing Kumbaya and come together but I don’t think that’s what’s gonna happen. …As a historian, my view is pretty straightforward: one side or the other wins.” America is already so rife with extremists on both sides of the political aisle that many people see war not only as imminent, but as virtually inevitable. If that’s the case, we’d better get busy digging ourselves bunkers… and graves. And not just in the U.S. A civil war in America will not end in America. If the country plunges into battle, many will be vying for the loot. China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and others will destroy whatever the war doesn’t, the American empire will become history, and a third world war, with multiple nuclear powers, will follow. There will be no winners because, to quote Machiavelli, “Wars begin when you will, but they do not end when you please.” Is there really no alternative? I think there is, or I wouldn’t be writing here. In my previous column, I noted that President Trump needs to take a more appeasing tone in order to start building national cohesion. It’s great to state, “No matter our color, creed, religion or political party, we are ALL AMERICANS FIRST,” but doing so right after the Charlottesville murderous car ramming is the epitome of poor timing. Such statements should be part of the president’s routine, not rare occasions. Trump excels in using social media. If he uses it to broadcast a constant stream of unifying messages, notwithstanding the cynicism of the press, he will win over the American people’s hearts regardless of their political affiliation. I wholly agree that America requires massive infrastructure projects. But the real infrastructure of the country is its people, not its asphalt roads or railroads. The administration needs to implement ASAP solidarity programs that will create a uniform American identity. People need to learn that an ideology that undermines freedom of speech, freedom of religious practice, and freedom of the press, cannot use the First Amendment to legitimize itself. Even more importantly, people need to learn that plurality of views is not a recipe for war; it is precisely what has made America great in the first place. When people of different approaches and views strive for the same goal, they are far more likely to achieve it. If the goal is the well-being of all Americans, the entire country will benefit from it, and this goal should top the priority list of every American. It might not seem possible to patch up the divided United States, but 1) no one has ever sincerely tried, and 2) the other option is war. With my students, I have developed simple and easily applicable techniques that create a sense of unity and connection even among the most unlikely populations, such as Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs, ultra-Orthodox and devout agnostics, and affluent and needy. These techniques work wonders wherever we have tried them: North America, Western and Eastern Europe, and in Israel. Today’s world is pushing toward connection. The interconnectedness of reality requires that we learn how to work in a world where everyone is dependent on everyone else. When we think in terms of “one side or the other wins,” we cannot succeed because we are perpetuating a mindset of separation. This will inevitably create unions of extremists that will feed on hatred of the other side, which in turn will lead to war. The only way to avoid this route is to make unity mainstream. If this seems unrealistic, think of your own body. Without the unity of radically different organs all working in unison for the common cause of sustaining you and keeping you healthy, you would not exist. Therefore, unity is not unrealistic; it is the only realistic option for society. The sooner we make American solidarity the prime value of America, the better it is for the entire country. Any decision that Trump’s administration and Congress make from here on should first and foremost promote unity and solidarity because this is truly the only realistic option.

#### Plan: The United States ought to recognize an unconditional right to strike

#### Contention 2: Shutdowns

#### SQ polarization makes government shutdowns structurally inevitable

Politico 11-2-21 https://www.politico.com/news/2021/11/02/congress-standstill-shutdown-debt-518567

Government funding expires in one month, and bickering top lawmakers are already forecasting another autopilot spending bill to prevent a December shutdown. Democrats and Republicans can't even agree on how to begin negotiations. “We’re at a standstill,” Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) said as he exited a meeting Tuesday between the two Senate appropriations leaders and their two House counterparts. It was the first "four corners" meeting of the fiscal year. “Then make an offer!” Senate Appropriations Chair Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) retorted about his Republican counterpart’s grievances with the funding plans Democrats have offered. The next shutdown threat hits at midnight on Dec. 3, when federal cash stops flowing from the temporary spending patch Congress enacted to keep the government funded after the new fiscal year started on Oct. 1. Another debt cliff is also expected as soon as next month, since the Treasury Department already exhausted the $480 billion in extra borrowing power Congress granted three weeks ago. While the pressure is on to clinch deals on funding the government and addressing the debt limit before early December, the energy in Congress is sapped by bigger spending fights as Democrats labor to pass President Joe Biden’s social policy package and the bipartisan infrastructure bill. Shelby predicted Congress is headed for another stopgap spending patch come Dec. 3 and probably another once that one expires. Leahy said that fate would be the minority party’s doing. “Right now, the offer is a continuing resolution, which is a major cut in defense,” said Leahy, noting that another patch would deprive the Pentagon of the funding increase Republicans are seeking. “And if they’re in favor of a major cut in defense, that’s their decision.” House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer said Tuesday that Democrats must finish work on Biden’s $1.75 trillion social spending package and the Senate-passed infrastructure bill before the party can devote its attention to annual government funding or act on the debt limit, to ensure the Treasury Department can continue to pay the government’s bills. Democrats still say they aren't planning to lift the debt ceiling by using the reconciliation process — the only way they could remedy the issue without GOP votes in the Senate. “I don’t think it’s on the table,” Hoyer said. “Whether it’s completely off the table, my view is, we need to deal with the debt limit. ... And we should be dealing with the debt limit in a bipartisan way.”

#### Shutdown threats have become the standard republican tactic during democratic administrations- they will never stop and threaten the economy

Leonhardt and Philbrick 9-23-21

(David Leonhardt and Ian Prasad Philbrick https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/23/briefing/government-shutdown-debt-ceiling-brinkmanship.html)

It has become the norm during a Democratic presidency: Republicans in Congress threaten to shut down the federal government or even allow the U.S. to default on its debts. These threats used to be much rarer. For most of the 20th century, the raising of the debt ceiling and the funding of the federal government’s operations tended to be sleepy, technical subjects. Members of Congress would fight over how to spend money rather than the basic mechanics of enacting that spending. The new era began in the 1990s, when Newt Gingrich, then the House speaker, tried to force Bill Clinton to cut Social Security and other programs. Although Gingrich failed, congressional Republicans adopted his tactics during Barack Obama’s presidency and did win significant cuts to domestic programs. Now the pattern is repeating itself. Republicans say they will not provide enough votes to lift the debt ceiling before the federal government hits its legal cap on borrowing next month. And because Democrats have packaged a debt-ceiling increase together with a bill to extend funding for the federal government beyond Sept. 30 (the end of the fiscal year), a possible government shutdown also looms. The standoff could have ripple effects. Economists are worried the uncertainty could hurt financial markets, while Democrats — already facing a packed congressional agenda — now have yet another legislative problem to solve. This time, Republicans have a different goal than they did during the Clinton and Obama administrations. With Democrats controlling both the House and the Senate, Republicans recognize they cannot force spending cuts. Mitch McConnell, the Senate minority leader, is instead trying to force Democrats to lift the debt ceiling with no Republican help.

#### Shutdown collapses outbreak response.

Charles Bethea 18. Staff writer at The New Yorker. 1-22-2018. “What’s Scary About Shutting Down the C.D.C.” https://www.newyorker.com/news/as-told-to/whats-scary-about-shutting-down-the-cdc. DOA: 9-10-2020. kyujin

This past Thursday, Dr. Tom Frieden, the recently departed director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, tweeted about the last shutdown of the United States government, which took place during Barack Obama’s second term. “The 2013 government shutdown was like a scene from a science fiction movie—empty labs and offices at CDC,” he wrote. “Shutdowns are not safe.” The C.D.C. serves as the country’s national reference laboratory, defining the extent and nature of disease outbreaks. During that shutdown, C.D.C. employees who tracked food-borne illness had to be brought back from furlough to belatedly contain a nationwide salmonella outbreak, which left seventy-six people hospitalized in eighteen states. Since 2010, seasonal flu outbreaks alone have killed between twelve thousand and fifty-six thousand Americans annually, and the current flu outbreak is widely acknowledged as one of the worst in years. Reportedly, some two-thirds of the national public-health institute’s employees—approximately eight thousand people—will stay home until the government reopens. Last night, as the third day of the current government shutdown loomed, I spoke to a furloughed employee at the C.D.C, in Atlanta, who is familiar with the public-health institute’s influenza-related activities. This employee, who requested anonymity, explained what the C.D.C. can and can’t do during a shutdown, and what’s frightening about even a brief stoppage in its work. This account has been edited and condensed. “During a bad influenza season, tens of thousands of Americans die from influenza, hundreds of thousands are hospitalized, and millions become ill. We’re having one of the worst flu seasons in recent years. And we’re right in the middle of it. It’s an H3N2 virus year, which tends to hit older people and younger children really hard. We tend to have a higher number of deaths and hospitalizations in H3N2 years. And we can’t communicate to clinicians, health departments, and the public in the way that we would like because of the shutdown. We can’t provide accurate information and the tools they need to prevent deaths from flu. When most of our workforce is sent home, we can’t do our jobs effectively. That’s scary. “The day-to-day operations, in large part, ground to a halt during a shutdown. Particularly in the flu division. We have multiple surveillance systems that are gathering information from different sources. We have outpatient clinics reporting the proportion of influenza-like illness. We have state public-health labs reporting the kinds of flu that they’re tracking. Clinicians around the country use that information to know if flu is circulating locally. Some of those surveillance people were kept on during the last shutdown. But I think they stopped reporting weekly information. “The last shutdown, it was in October, which wasn’t the height of flu season. But they were gearing up for people to get their flu vaccines. We’re farther in this time. The flu division, if the government were open, would be doing a lot of communications activities—talking to people who are at high risk for getting seriously ill from flu about going to their doctor promptly, outreach to clinicians to make sure they’re following guidelines about prescribing influenza antiviral drugs, and other public-health-outreach campaigns. These grind to a halt during a shutdown. “The surveillance systems kind of keep going in a limited way, but there certainly isn’t the same amount of staff that usually work on them. And the information probably won’t be reported publicly this Friday, as it usually is. “After the last shutdown, at a C.D.C. event, some employees did skits about what C.D.C. people did during the shutdown: bowling in the cubicles, things like that. It was pretty depressing. “The big influenza labs at the C.D.C. aren’t just looking at the giant epidemic of seasonal flu. They’re also looking for novel influenza viruses, because there’s always a pandemic threat from an influenza virus out there that hasn’t yet been studied. Often these are zoonotic viruses, like avian flu or a swine flu, that can be transferred from animals to humans, who have no population immunity to it. Also, they look for unusual mutations or activity in certain states. Having less lab capacity may impact those critical activities. Pandemic preparedness and monitoring will still happen during a shutdown, but our capacity is very limited. That’s scary. “The everyday work the C.D.C. does saves lives, and when those activities are limited, we aren’t able to do that work. And I think having the government shut down—particularly during a bad flu season, in a setting of outbreaks—could very well cost American lives. “If there’s any really unusual activity, the C.D.C. can mobilize people to come back. There’s a fair number of people—like everyone who’s in the U.S. Public Health Service—that are exempt from government shutdowns. So a fair number of people will be there this week. But, if anything major happened, they wouldn’t have the administrative support that they need to get people out in the field quickly, to do the general monitoring of things. Most of the lab people are furloughed, so the labs are being shut down and the normal testing we do for many different diseases—like, if the states get an unusual result or need further testing—we are the reference lab and that activity won’t happen. So things will be delayed or missed that are potentially really important. “People are frustrated and nervous at the C.D.C. About the shutdown, of course. But also by the possibility of budget cuts and not even having a budget yet. There’s a clear feeling about blame, but I don’t want to say specifically. You can probably guess. “It went on for a long time last time. The fact is, none of us know how long it will last this time. The uncertainty with the budget has been challenging, in general. But not knowing how long this will last is hard, too. It makes it very hard to plan. If the furlough goes on for a while, basic scientific evidence about what’s actually going on from a public-health point of view may not get out to Americans in a timely manner.”

#### Extinction.

Walsh 20 – Bryan Walsh covers emerging technology and geopolitics for Axios, internally citing a 2018 pandemic simulation put on by the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, Richard Pilch of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, and Kevin Esvelt, a biologist at the MIT Media Lab and a member of the CDC's Biological Agent Containment Working Group. [The coronavirus pandemic reawakens bioweapon fears, 5-14-2020, https://www.axios.com/coronavirus-pandemic-pathogen-bioweapon-45417c86-52aa-41b1-8a99-44a6e597d3a8.html]//BPS

The immense human and economic toll of the COVID-19 pandemic only underscores the threat posed by pathogens that could be deliberately engineered and released. Why it matters: New technology like gene editing and DNA synthesis has made the creation of more virulent pathogens easier. Yet security and regulation efforts haven't kept pace with the science. What's happening: Despite some claims by the White House, overwhelming scientific evidence indicates that the novel coronavirus was not accidentally released from a lab or deliberately engineered, but naturally spilled over from an animal source. That doesn't mean the threat from bioweapons isn't dire. Along with AI, engineered pandemics are widely considered the biggest existential risk facing humanity. That's in part because a pathogen could be engineered in a lab for maximum contagiousness and virulence, well beyond what would arise through natural selection. Case in point: a 2018 pandemic simulation put on by the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security featured a fictional engineered virus called Clade X that combined the contagiousness of the common cold with the virulence of the real-life Nipah virus, which has a mortality rate of 40-75%. The resulting simulated global outbreak killed 150 million people. COVID-19 isn't anywhere near that fatal, but the pandemic has shown the vulnerability of the U.S. and the world to biological threats both natural and manmade. "Potential adversaries are of course seeing the same things we’re seeing," says Richard Pilch of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies. "Anyone looking for a radical leveling approach — whether a state actor like North Korea or a motivated terrorist organization — may be influenced by COVID-19 to consider pursuing a biological weapons capability." Background: Bioweapons were officially banned by the Biological Weapons Convention in 1975, though North Korea is suspected of maintaining an offensive bioweapons program. A particular concern about biowarfare and bioterror, though, is that many of the tools and methods that could be used to create a weaponized virus are largely indistinguishable from those used in the course of legitimate scientific research. This makes biotechnology "dual-use" — and that much more difficult to safely regulate without cutting off research that could be vitally important. While earlier bioweapons fears focused on the possibility that a state or terror group could try to weaponize a known dangerous agent like smallpox — which would require somehow obtaining restricted pathogens — new technology means that someone could obtain the genetic sequence of a germ online and synthesize it in the lab. "If you've been trained in a relevant technical discipline, that means you can make almost any potentially harmful agent that you're aware of," says Kevin Esvelt, a biologist at the MIT Media Lab and a member of the CDC's Biological Agent Containment Working Group. That would include the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19, which was recently synthesized from its genetic sequence in a study published in Nature. How it works: Currently, synthetic DNA is ordered through commercial suppliers. But while most suppliers screen DNA orders for the sequences of dangerous pathogens, they're not required to — and not all do, which means safety efforts are "incomplete, inaccurate, and insecure," says Esvelt. Screening efforts that look for the genetic sequences of known pathogens also wouldn't necessarily be able to detect when synthetic DNA was being used to make something entirely novel and dangerous. In the near future, desktop DNA synthesizers may be able to generate synthetic DNA in the lab, cutting out the need for commercial suppliers — and potential security screenings. The democratization of biotechnology could unleash a wave of creativity and innovation, just as the democratization of personal computing did. But it also increases the number of people who could potentially make a dangerous engineered virus, whether deliberately or by accident.

#### 5. Public right to strike is essential to avoiding government shutdowns

Nolan 20

(Hamilton, a labor reporter for In These Times, <https://inthesetimes.com/article/bernie-biden-task-force-labor-public-sector-right-strike-nelson-saunders>, 7-9)

Perhaps the most notable part of the platform, however, is an omission. It asks to ​“ensure that all private-sector workers’ right to strike… is vigorously protected.” But for public sector workers, it asks only to ​“Provide a federal guarantee for public sector employees to bargain for better pay and benefits and the working conditions they deserve.” In other words, despite the fact that the public sector is much more heavily unionized than the private sector, and has been under legal attack from the right for decades, there is no demand that public sector workers be granted the right to strike — the single most potent weapon in any union’s toolbox. More remarkable is the fact that Lee Saunders, one of America’s most powerful public sector union leaders and an Obama confidante, represents the faction that was not seeking to give his own members the right to strike. ​“In the public sector, AFSCME has taken the position that… in order to come to a conclusion if there are difficult negotiations, we should have binding arbitration in place of the right to strike,” Saunders told In These Times. ​“Public sector unions believe binding arbitration is better because we provide valuable public services.” Saunders acknowledged that the issue of the public sector’s right to strike was discussed in the task force’s negotiations, but his view, unsurprisingly, carried the day. Sara Nelson, a leftist in the labor movement who is often mentioned as a future candidate to lead the AFL-CIO, pushed unsuccessfully for public workers to have the same right to strike as their counterparts in the private sector. ​“My mind wasn’t changed during this process on any issue we brought forward. I fundamentally believe in the right to strike. The strike is a necessary component of collective bargaining,” she told In These Times. ​“If federal workers had the right to strike, there would never be a government shutdown ever again.”

#### Government shutdowns violate 13th amendment prohibition on forced labor- right to strike is crucial

Garcia, JD, 19

(Ruben, Professor of Law and Co-Director of the Workplace Law Program, University of Nevada Las Vegas William S. Boyd School of Law, https://www.acslaw.org/expertforum/the-federal-government-shutdown-is-a-thirteenth-amendment-problem/)

Today, the shutdown of the federal government is in its 33rd day. The claims of federal workers deemed “essential” and forced to work without pay have been brought under the expected statute for unpaid wages— the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. On January 14, a federal judge refused to require the government to pay the workers, saying that the decisions of the court will not “be leverage in the internal struggle between the branches.” Besides a host of reasons why federal courts are loathe to be involved in interbranch disputes, the courts are hesitant to enjoin bad actors if the damages can later be repaired through back pay and penalties at a later date. But another claim brought by some of the plaintiff federal workers merits greater attention as a way to stop an ongoing constitutional violation — the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. And that provision seems to provide a strong case for the intervention of the federal courts now. Section One of the Amendment provides that “[n]either slavery nor involuntary servitude . . . shall exist in the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction.” An exception, not applicable here, allows forced labor “as a punishment for a crime whereof the party has been duly convicted . . . .” Most people know that the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 ended the system of racial slavery that precipitated the Civil War. What is less known are the ways that the Amendment has been and can be used to invalidate oppressive economic arrangements even when they are entered into voluntarily. Economic systems like sharecropping and debt bondage that existed before the Civil War and after emancipation which replicated slavery were held unconstitutional under the Thirteenth Amendment regardless of whether they were imposed voluntarily or involuntarily. Thus, the “voluntary” nature of the work does not end the discussion about whether the work violates the Amendment. Under federal labor law, private sector workers have the right to strike, but federal workers are legally prevented from doing so. The unsuccessful strike of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) in 1981 reminds workers of the employment consequences of such an action, even though the leverage a strike provides would effectively hasten the end of the shutdown. That is exactly the kind of unequal floor for free labor that the Thirteenth Amendment was intended to abolish. As Professor James Pope has written, the Amendment set a floor for free labor which is ineffective without the right to strike. As I argue in a new article, the Thirteenth Amendment and its context provides the legal and historical infrastructure for our modern minimum wage laws. Courts have been able to avoid interpreting the Thirteenth Amendment because of 20th Century statutes that prohibited race discrimination and unpaid work. Because Congress grounded the power to regulate the economy in the authority to regulate commerce, the Supreme Court has not had to address the scope of Congress’s authority under the Thirteenth Amendment. Even so, Congress has shown renewed interest in the Amendment by basing legislation prohibiting human trafficking and hate crimes under its power under Section Two to enforce the Thirteenth Amendment “by appropriate legislation.” The federal workers’ FLSA claims are likely to prevail, as similar litigation during the 2013 government shutdown resulted in legal victories for the workers. Now, six years later, they have yet to recover all of the compensation owed to them. The current impact on the shut-out workers has been immediate and severe, and cannot be fully remedied with back wages and interest received years from now. The ongoing constitutional violation can be stated plainly. While the federal workers are “voluntarily” working, the coercive nature of working without pay and being prevented from going on strike cannot be understated. While it is true that some workers are so essential that they may be required to work, the definition of what is essential is highly political and should be applied sparingly. Look no further than the Internal Revenue Service workers forced to process refunds so the political impact on the Trump Administration will be lessened. At a minimum, a judge should scrutinize closely the Administration’s claims that such workers are essential to “protecting life and property.”

#### A right to strike is crucial to enabling government workers to resist austerity

The Guardian 19

(An anonymous article by a government worker, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jan/24/federal-workers-shutdown-organized-labor-movement>, 1-24)

The longtime anti-tax activist and prominent Trump supporter Grover Norquist once said: “I don’t want to abolish government. I simply want to reduce it to the size where I can drag it into the bathroom and drown it in the bathtub.” You don’t have to listen hard to hear the water running. As the government shutdown enters its second month, we are witnessing an unprecedented effort by the administration to starve out federal employees, decimate the agencies we compose, and undermine the very foundation of the civil service. Unprecedented – but not unexpected. From Trump’s campaign pledge to abolish the Environmental Protection Agency, to his budget blueprint in 2017 proposing the elimination of 19 federal agencies ranging from the Chemical Safety Board to the National Endowment for the Arts, the president has been gunning for the federal sector for years. He implemented a federal hiring freeze in the first days of his term. Following that with a $1.5tn tax cut, Trump and congressional Republicans set the stage for budget shortfalls – and their attendant cuts to services – for years to come. The president was less effective in his second year. Last summer, he aimed to gut what’s left of federal labor protections with three executive orders that were later largely struck down by the courts. These orders were paired with a proposal to eliminate or hollow out several agencies, consistent with the vision of the small-government fundamentalists that surround Trump. But, like the executive orders, Trump’s proposal remains only a proposal, without legislative support. Trump appears to see the shutdown as his opportunity to press on, outside of pesky legal constraints, to win the political fight against “big government”. Last week, the Daily Caller ran a piece from an anonymous “senior official in the Trump administration” that called on the president to continue the shutdown for “a very long time” in order to slash the federal workforce by “smoking out the resistance”. A long shutdown, the official argued, could demonstrate “that government is better when smaller”. Many federal workers are still in denial. Sure, we’re angry – especially those of us not getting paid. But there’s little sense that there’s anything we can do. In today’s political context, calling our congressional representatives is understood to be even less effective than it’s ever been. The painful and demoralizing truth for us federal workers is that we’ve never had great friends in Congress, no matter how many times we’ve called. Since the 1970s, the erosion of the public sector has been overseen by both parties (one, undeniably, more enthusiastic than the other). And even during the prior decades, when the federal sector was expanding, political leaders of both parties were careful to carve out and preserve exceptions to the rights of public employees. To this day, it is not only illegal for federal workers to strike, but, according to the same statute, it is illegal for us to even assert the right to strike. The dubious constitutionality of such a clause aside, it has had its intended effect. Our mere discussion of a federal strike – to say nothing of others’ explicit endorsement of such an action – compels us to author opinions anonymously. Leaving aside the strike question, one must understand that federal workers are bullied even when it comes to the most elementary political activity. Consider the Hatch Act, which prohibits lobbying or partisan electoral activity on the clock. The act’s reasonable restrictions are designed to guard against graft, but are being weaponized by agency bosses against any political speech. Consider last week’s internal email to FAA employees, which conflates at-work partisan activity with “remarks made in any forum”. Under such a vindictive administration as this one, we expect such memos of intimidation to become commonplace anytime our collective indignation starts to outweigh our fears. This tactic by management of overstating the restrictions of the Hatch Act works in a particularly insidious way. A shocking number of federal employees believe that basic constitutional protections do not apply to themselves. So those calling for a TSA strike or French-style mass pickets will forgive us for treading lightly while some of our colleagues believe their jobs to be at risk for far less. But the authors’ points are well-taken. The truth is that without a pushback from organized labor, more and more of the civil service continues to face ever deeper cuts. The question we should be asking is not whether federal workers will, can or should strike. There’s a different question, more immediately relevant to all of organized labor. How can federal workers and the jobs that we do – from protecting health and the environment to collecting taxes to maintaining public infrastructure and security – become central commitments of our society again? How can the broader labor movement start to see the modest first steps of rank and file federal workers as the necessary next steps toward defending the public sector from the privatizers and the deregulators? Tuesday night, at a church kitchen in Montclair, New Jersey, federal workers and their families gathered for a free dinner and groceries donated by local businesses and supporters. This Friday, in lower Manhattan, a small union local that represents federal workers who are not furloughed will be hosting a similar event for the benefit of those who are. Small, morale-boosting events like these may not rise to the level necessary to force an end to the shutdown. Nevertheless, they demonstrate a craving for the kind of solidarity that might begin to tip the balance in our favor. So organized labor could support such efforts where they emerge, or help get them going in locations with concentrations of federal staff. Such solidarity, of course, must be a two-way street and federal workers can do our part by, for example, refusing to scab on striking teachers such as Denver public schools have asked local feds to do. In truth, we have a lot to learn from such teachers and, like the rest of the country, we are taking notes. But more than anything else, federal workers need solidarity from the broader labor movement: actual material support while we are locked out or forced to work without pay can help bring us to our feet. We need all unions to defend the role of the public sector and the integrity of civil service against small government fanatics. And we need political repression and intimidation in federal agencies to be understood as a threat to all of labor. If you want to see federal workers run, you can offer a hand, help get us on to our feet and walk with us.

#### Empirics prove strikes can end government shutdowns-the right is key

Featherstone 19

(Liza, <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/02/flight-attendants-union-sara-nelson-shutdown>, 2-8)

On Sunday, January 20, speaking at an AFL-CIO dinner honoring Martin Luther King, Jr, Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA-CWA), called for a general strike to end Trump’s government shutdown. The following Friday, Nelson, a United Airlines flight attendant since 1996, told the media that flight attendants were “mobilizing immediately” for a strike of their own. A couple hours later, President Trump agreed to provisionally reopen the government for three weeks. Nelson’s power moves have a backstory — and a future. She was raised to serve the public, in Corvallis, Oregon, in the 1970s and 1980s, an era when the earning power of public servants had already begun to wane. Her mother was a teacher, but her father, though trained as a physical education teacher, never found a job in that field due to budget cuts in the public school system. He worked first in a lumber mill, then selling lumber. In college, Nelson majored in English and education. She did her student teaching in inner-city St Louis. “I really would have loved to be a teacher,” she said. But she struggled to make ends meet after graduation, facing student loans. One of her best friends became a flight attendant. “We sort of thought it was funny, and that she would do it for a year or two,” Nelson recalls. Not long after, her friend called from a beach in Miami, toes in the ocean, announcing firmly that it was time to stop laughing at her new career: among other benefits and perks, the money was better than Nelson’s first-year teacher salary. Nelson drove to Chicago the next day to interview with United Airlines, and was hired. After weeks of unpaid training, her first paycheck was delayed by several more weeks. She ate nothing but plane food and Ramen, her bank balance at zero. She went to United’s Boston office to beg for help and was met with indifference. Standing in the office weeping, she felt a tap on the shoulder. “And there was someone standing there who looked just like me. I’d never seen her before. She was in the same uniform, holding her checkbook and asking me how to spell my name. She hands me a check for $800 and she says, ‘Number one, you take care of yourself, and number two, you call our union.’” “And I always tell people, I called my union, and I had my paycheck the next day,” Nelson continues. “But, I learned everything I needed to know in that moment when she was standing in front of me with that check. And that is, that flight attendants are union members. There is almost nobody better at taking care of each other. And in our unions we are never alone.” Not long afterward, her local called her up. ‘We’d like you to get involved,’ they said. I was so honored,” she laughs, “I didn’t realize people said no.” Nelson’s union, the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA-CWA), which today represents nearly fifty thousand workers at twenty airlines, had an impressive history even before she joined. In the 1980s and 1990s, airline deregulation brought vicious assaults on labor. After Carl Icahn fired all the TWA strikers in 1986, he showed that flight attendants could be replaced within a few days. “We had to be able to fight back,” Nelson emphasizes. In response, AFA created a strike tactic called Create Havoc Around Our System (CHAOS), whose guiding principle is that “the strike is going to take any form and we are not going to give you any warning,” Nelson explains. CHAOS is deeply destabilizing to corporate management. “It could be a single flight, where there is no replacement. It could be shutting down an entire airport, or it could be everyone walking off the job for an hour,” says Nelson. “You don’t know where or when. And the effective result is that we control the schedule.” Alaskan Airlines’ executives were once driven to such confused desperation by CHAOS that they inadvertently gave many employees a 60 percent raise overnight. “There are no labor rights without the right to strike,” says Nelson. “You can’t have a collective bargaining process without the right to strike.” The reason is that without that threat, management has no incentive to reach an agreement with workers. When Ronald Reagan famously fired the striking air traffic controllers in 1981, he knew this, and his move had just the consequences that he and his right-wing backers desired. Making it harder for workers to go on strike has immeasurably complicated their efforts to build and exercise power, and union membership has steadily declined. But worker power is not just about having the legal right to strike. Power also lies in being organized and willing to strike. During negotiations, Nelson says, “You have to be able to show the company that your workforce is ready to act. You cannot lead on policy. You can’t lead by slamming your hand on the table. I’ve never seen management, when you walk in and make this impassioned argument at the table, that they sort of slap their head and go, ‘Oh you’re right! We should pay the flight attendants more!’ No, it’s when they know that you have a mobilized workforce who can go out.” Nelson’s call for a general strike last month was moved by solidarity with government workers who were going without pay. But the flight attendants’ strike preparations had an equally urgent motive: fear for their own safety. Air traffic controllers — unpaid but facing felony charges if they were to strike — were working but, Nelson says, “driving Ubers and Lyfts outside their shifts to try to provide for their families when they should have been getting rest. We said, ‘There’s going to be a breaking point here.’” Nelson insists, “We just could not continue to fly and ask the members to be put in harm’s way. It was increasingly clear that we were open to accident or attack.” Nelson’s strike mobilization was real, and industry and government alike knew it. “The airline industry knows me,” she says. “I think they know they had to take that threat seriously. It was very clear to the airline industry, to everyone on the Hill, that we were prepared to take action.” Also in the workers’ favor: the timing of a certain cultural ritual. “I think people were starting to recognize that the Super Bowl wouldn’t have happened,” says Nelson. “Private jets wouldn’t have been able to take off.” Indeed, almost all Georgia’s legislators voted to end the shutdown, and Republican Senator Johnny Isakson participated in bipartisan talks to do so. “He was very concerned about Atlanta and the shutdown,” Nelson observes. “Look, you have to understand where your leverage is and how to get people’s attention.” I ask Nelson what she and her members plan to do with all this power. “We cannot take day thirty-six of a lockout,” she insists quickly, explaining that the AFA-CWA is now wholly focused on preventing lawmakers from shutting down the government again when this temporary truce expires. “We are getting ready to take very fulsome action on February 16 to define what’s at stake if they don’t get to the table and resolve this,” she emphasizes. These antics by Trump represent, to Nelson, “an attempt to fundamentally unravel our government.” When people can’t get the goods and services they need, she explains, “there will be a tremendous outcry to just stop the bleeding, and if we allow it to get to that point, the White House and anyone else who has wanted to privatize all of our government functions will try to use [the crisis] to do exactly that. And that will lower standards.” This should terrify everyone. Nelson gives the example of air traffic controllers, who now train for three to five years to do their jobs. Private industry would have every incentive to ease such requirements. “It opens us up to tremendous risk,” Nelson warns. “Air traffic controllers have to get it right 100 percent of the time when they’re on the job. In any other workplace, if you have an efficiency of 99.5 percent, that is stellar. It’s unheard of. It’s unbelievable. If air traffic controllers got it 99.5 percent right, you’d have fifty aircraft accidents a day. This is what’s at stake.” Capitalists, in short, would be happy to privatize air traffic control, and let many of us die. “Unions are the last check against that kind of greed,” Nelson says. “And we are also there for the public good, because we are the public.” “We need to understand our power and never allow this to happen again,” she continues. “We need to encourage women to understand that they have power in their workplace, by joining unions and running unions. We will end the wage gap that way because everyone is equal in a union contract.” Nelson also sees such organizing as the best way to change our political system. “When labor has that power and density, politics will reflect working people. It changes everything.” Start in the workplace, she says, and “the politics will follow.”

#### Contention 3: The Strike is Right

#### 1. The right to strike is a political statement that rejects the commodification of human labor- this is the vital internal link

Burns , JD, 11

(Joe, veteran union negotiator and labor lawyer Reviving the Strike: How Working People Can Regain Power and Transform America)

For the traditional labor movement, the notion that human beings were like objects, to be used up during the production process, was highly offensive. As Samuel Gompers melodramatically stated, “You cannot weigh the human soul in the same scales with a piece of pork. You cannot weigh the heart and soul of a child with the same scales upon with you weigh any commodity.”10 Traditional trade unionists believed that workers had rights unrelated to the price they could command on the open market for their labor. This view was supported by the Clayton Act, passed in 1914 after years of agitation by the labor movement, which contained the simple declaration that, “The labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce.”11 When signing the Act into law, then President Woodrow Wilson declared that “a man’s labor is not a commodity but a part of his life, and that, therefore, the courts must treat it as if it were a part of his life. I am sorry that there were any judges in the United States who had to be told that.”12 As James Pope explains, the idea that labor is not a commodity is vital one for the labor movement, as it provides the intellectual justification for successful strike tactics: The treatment of labor as a commodity subject to the rules of the marketplace is a defining feature of capitalism. The claim of a constitutional right to strike—a right to interdict the free competition of individuals in the buying and selling of labor power— obviously imperiled the ideology and practice of commodity labor. The right to strike could not be justified without addressing the question of labor liberty per se.13 Well into the 1950s, labor leaders defended union activity based on the assertion that labor was not a commodity. For example, with employers complaining of national pattern or multi-employer agreements, and conservative members of Congress investigating whether labor unions were a monopoly, Arthur Goldberg, the legal counsel for the CIO and later a Supreme Court Justice, testified in 1955 that The charge that national or regional or pattern bargaining is “monopolistic” and “a restraint of trade” reverts, of course, to the basic fallacy that human labor is to be treated as a commodity, and that organizations of those who have nothing to sell but the use of their minds and bodies constitute restraints of trade.14 Likewise, Walter Reuther, the leader of the United Autoworkers, testifying at a congressional hearing in 1953, bristled at the notion that labor could be considered a commodity: Well, you see, labor is not a commodity which you go and shop for in the free market place. Labor is something different than a commodity, and if you want to give American labor the status of another commodity you can go out and shop for on the free market place, you have missed the whole point.”15 The fiery words of Goldberg and Reuther reveal the belief, held by generations of trade unionists, that treating labor as a commodity would undermine the very foundation of the labor movement, and lead to a number of conclusions favoring management. First, if labor is just like any other commodity, then it logically follows that the “free market” should determine the price of a worker’s labor, just as it does with any other input into the production process. However, one of the main tenets of traditional trade unionism was that workers could not allow the market to determine wages and working conditions, as the market, unrestrained, will continually drive workers toward poverty, injury, and even death. Part of the reason for this attitude was that traditional trade unionists had witnessed firsthand how the courts applied laws intended to regulate commerce to trade union activity. For example, while Congress passed the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890 to regulate the power of massive corporations, the Courts soon subverted the intent of the Act, using it instead to justify sweeping injunctions against trade unionists, including an injunction in 1894 against Eugene Debs during the great Pullman railroad strike.16 As Samuel Gompers said, “Labor power is a human attribute. … Both the injunction and the anti-trust law were intended to apply only to property. When courts put human labor power and commodities in the same category, they laid the foundation for serious injustice.”17 If a worker’s labor is treated like commerce, than it can be “sold” as with any other commodity, with management becoming the “owner” of that labor. Then, just as management owns a pile of lumber for example, once the purchase of human labor is complete, the employer would theoretically control the mind and body of the worker for the period of time they were on the job. Legal scholar Karl Klare expands on this idea, explaining how a labor contract is “more than a legal relationship” because it …establishes an entire system of social relations in the workplace whereby the employer is entitled to control the worker’s actions and choices during the major portions of his waking hours. Thus, labor contractualism functions as the institutional basis of domination in the workplace.18 To the extent that the labor movement accepts this “wagebargain” as the natural order, the more difficult it becomes to justify the fight for power on the shop floor, as once the commodity (whether oil or pork or human labor) has been used in the production process, management becomes the owner of the final product. Once workers sell their labor, they have no further interest in the enterprise, as the employer now owns the final product and all profits derived from its sale. Ultimately, the notion that human labor is not a commodity brings to the forefront the proposition that the rights of workers must trump market considerations. Whether one is arguing that courts cannot enjoin workers from striking, that bankruptcy law should not apply to labor contracts, or that unions should be able to monopolize labor markets, the phrase “labor is not a commodity” cuts through a host of employer arguments. On a deeper level, if the commodity status of labor is indispensable to a capitalist economy, then to say that human labor is not a commodity is quite radical in its implications. According to Karl Marx, wages were “a commodity which its possessor, the wage worker, sells to the capitalist. Why does he sell it? It is in order to live.”19 Thus, the rejection of the commodity status of human labor is also a rejection of the idea that the market should govern every sphere of human activity.

#### 2. Alternatives short of the right to strike fail- only withholding labor can grind capitalism to a halt

Nolan 21

(Hamilton, Labor Journalist for In These Times, <https://inthesetimes.com/article/no-strike-clause-labor-peace-union-contracts>, 5-4)

In post WWII America, union contracts work more or less like this: The company guarantees workers certain wages and benefits, and the workers agree to give up their right to strike for the term of the contract. This fundamental agreement — material gains in exchange for labor peace — defines modern labor relations. And where has this arrangement gotten the labor movement? Near death. For decades, union membership has declined, wages have stagnated, and capital has gained more and more power over working people. This devastating collapse in the power of organized labor has coincided with the post ​“Treaty of Detroit” period in which a very dangerous idea was cemented and enshrined as conventional wisdom. That is the idea that employers agree to union contracts in order to purchase labor peace—that the incentive for a company to bargain and sign a contract with its workers is to receive, in turn, a guarantee that those workers will be quiescent. Today, the belief in the necessity of this arrangement prevails among management-side attorneys, labor-side attorneys, and union leaders alike. Indeed, it is embodied very well in this quote that the Sacramento Bee got from labor attorney Tim Yeung when asking about the proposal to get rid of no-strike clauses: ​“It’s all about labor peace,” Yeung said. ​“When we agree to a contract, we’re agreeing that for the next three years or whatever, we’re not going to have a strike. If you can walk out at any time, that defeats much of the purpose of what we’re trying to do.” Let me suggest a different, more reasonable framework for labor relations between an employer and its employees. The employer signs a union contract in order to buy the work the employees do. Labor peace is something that the employer purchases separately, by being a good employer, and not fucking the employees over. The basic act of enshrining a mundane agreement on wages and working conditions in a contract should rightly be seen as a normal part of doing business, not as something that working people have to fight to gain at the expense of their own rights. What a business gets in return for a union contract is a work force. What the workers get is freedom from having the terms of their employment radically upended at any moment. To our jobs, we should be obligated to give our time and our effort, but not our souls. The right to strike is, at the end of the day, the only thing that gives working people power. The only thing! Withholding our labor is the one and only weapon we have that can match the power that capital has — the economic power to render people destitute, a fearsome power that is every bit as threatening as guns and bombs. Any working person individually can be destroyed by that power. Collectively, however, working people can match that power by striking and forcing capital to grind to a halt. No set of laws, regulations, or contractual provisions will ever change the fact that this is the only balance of power that exists in a capitalist workplace. We are fed the illusion that giving up the right to strike in exchange for material gains is an even trade. But that’s not true. For a little bit of money, businesses gain freedom from the one thing that can make them negotiate evenly with their workers. They maintain their own economic weapons over their workers, while we willingly lay down ours and tell ourselves that we have won something.

#### 3. Now is the perfect time for strikes

Mordock 10-14-21

(Jeff, https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/oct/14/strikes-increase-poses-political-test-biden/)

But more recent events, including Mr. Biden‘s pro-union stance and the worker shortage caused by COVID-19 shutdowns, have given labor a shot in the arm. “Right now, the stars are aligned in favor of unions,” Mr. Clark said. “They have both low unemployment, and you have a very friendly administration in Washington supportive of unions. Everything is in order for unions to take advantage of the situation right now.”