## 1NC – K

#### Claims of metaphysical ontology are inherently depoliticizing, locking in politics rather than opening up the possibility of a pragmatics of becoming acting directly upon the contingencies of power relations that make up the status quo.

Buck-Morss 13. Susan Buck-Morss, Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the CUNY Graduate Center, NYC, “A Commonist Ethics,” in The Idea of Communism, 2013, http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/

The First Point: Politics is not an ontology. The claim that the political is always ontological needs to be challenged.[1](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:1) It is not merely that the negative the case — that the political is never ontological[2](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:2) (as Badiou points out, a simple negation leaves everything in place[3](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:3)). Instead, what is called for is a reversal of the negation: The ontological is never political. It follows that the move from la politique (everyday politics) to le politique (the very meaning of the political) is a one-way street. With all due respect to Marcel Gauchet, Chantal Mouffe, Giorgio Agamben, and a whole slew of others, the attempt to discover within empirical political life (la politique) the ontological essence of the political (le politique) leads theory into a dead end from which there is no return to actual,v political practice. There is nothing gained by this move from the feminine to the masculine form. The post-metaphysical project of discovering ontological truth within lived existence fails politically. It fails in the socially disengaged Husserlian-Heidegerian mode of bracketing the existenziell to discover the essential nature of what “the political” is. And it fails in the socially critical, post-Foucauldian mode of historicized ontology, disclosing the multiple ways of political being-in-the-world within particular, cultural and temporal configurations. This is not news. From the mid-1930s on, it was Adorno’s obsessive concern, in the context of the rise of fascism, to demonstrate the failure of the ontological attempt to ground a philosophy of Being by starting from the given world, or, in Heideggerian language, to move from the ontic, that is, being [seiend] in the sense of that which is empirically given, to the ontological, that which is essentially true of existence (Dasein as the “a priori structure” of “existentially”[4](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:4)). Adorno argued that any ontology derived (or reduced5) from the ontic, turns the philosophical project into one big tautology.[6](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:6) He has a point, and the political implications are serious. Ontology identifies. Identity was anathema to Adorno, and nowhere more so than in its political implications, the identity between ruler and ruled that fascism affirmed. Indeed, even parliamentary rule can be seen to presuppose a striving for identity, whereby consensus becomes an end in itself, regardless of the truth content of that consensus.[7](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:7) It is not that Heidegger’s philosophy (or any existential ontology) is in-itself fascist (that would be an ontological claim). Rather, by resolving the question of Being before subsequent political analyses, the latter have no philosophical traction. They are subsumed under the ontological a prioris that themselves must remain indifferent to their content.[8](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:8) Existential ontology is mistaken in assuming that, once “the character of being” (Heidegger) is conceptually grasped, it will return us to the material, empirical world and allow us to gather its diversities and multiplicities under philosophy’s own pre-understandings in ways adequate to the exigencies of collective action, the demands of actual political life. In fact, the ontological is never political. A commonist (or communist) ontology is a contradiction in terms. But, you may ask, did not Marx himself outline in his early writings a full ontology based on the classical, Aristotelian claim that man is by nature a social animal? Are not the 1844 manuscripts an elaboration of that claim, mediated by a historically specific critique, hence an extended, socialontology of man’s alienation from nature (including his own) and from his fellow man? Yes, but in actual, political life, this ontological “man” does not exist. Instead, we existing creatures are men and women, black and brown, capitalists and workers, gay and straight, and the meaning of these categories of being is in no way stable. Moreover, these differences matter less that whether we are unemployed, have prison records, or are in danger of being exported. And no matter what we are in these ontic ways, our beings do not fit neatly into our politics as conservatives, anarchists, evangelicals, Teaparty-supporters, Zionists, Islamists, and (a few) Communists. We are social animals, yes, but we are also anti-social, and 0 are thoroughly mediated by society’s contingent forms. Yes, the early Marx developed a philosophical ontology. Nothing follows from this politically. Philosopher-king-styled party leaders are not thereby legitimated, and the whole thorny issue of false consciousness (empirical vs. imputed/ascribed [zugerechnectes] consciousness) cannot force a political resolution. At the same time, philosophical thought has every right – and obligation — to intervene actively into political life. Here is Marx on the subject of intellectual practice, including philosophizing: But again when I am active scientifically, etc, — when I am engaged in activity which I can seldom perform in direct community with others –- then I am social, because I am active as a man [human being[9](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:9)]. Not only is the material of my activity given to me as a social product (as is even the language in which the thinker is active): my own existence is social activity, and therefore that which I make of myself, I make of myself for society and with the consciousness ofmyself as a social being. [10](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:10) Again, no matter how deeply one thinks one’s way into this ontological generalization, no specific political orientation follows as a consequence. It describes the intellectual work of Heidegger and Schmitt every bit as much as it does that of Marx or of us ourselves.

#### Pessimism derives from the understanding that nothing other than capitalism is possible

Panitch and Gindon 09 [(Leo Victor Panitch FRSC is a Distinguished Research Professor of Political Science and Canada Research Chair in Comparative Political Economy at York University) (Sam Gindin was research director of the Canadian Auto Workers from 1974–2000. He is co-author (with Leo Panitch) of The Making of Global Capitalism (Verso), and co-author with Leo Panitch and Steve Maher of The Socialist Challenge Today, the expanded and updated American edition of which is forthcoming from Haymarket in 2020.)“Transcending Pessimism: Rekindling Socialist Imagination” Socialist Register, 3/18/2009] BC

CONCRETE UTOPIAS

As socialists search for what direction to take under these conditions, it helps to know that others before have faced the same problem. How to make ‘the defeated man ... try the outside world again’ was precisely the question that impelled Ernst Bloch in the 1930s to write his magnum opus, The Principle ofHope.2Pessimism – ‘paralysis per se’ – was the first obstacle to be confronted:

...people who do not believe at all in a happy end impede changing the world almost as much as the sweet swindlers, the marriage-swindlers, the charlatans of apotheosis. Unconditional pessimism therefore promotes the business of reaction not much less than artificially conditioned optimism; the latter is nevertheless not so stupid that it does not believe in anything at all. It does not immortalize the trudging of the little life, does not give humanity the face of a chloroformed gravestone. It does not give the world the deathly sad background in front of which it is not worth doing anything at all. In contrast to a pessimism which itself belongs to rotten-ness and may serve it, a tested optimism, when the scales fall from the eyes, does not deny the goal-belief in general; on the contrary, what matters now is to find the right one and to prove it.... That is why the most dogged enemy of socialism is not only... great capital, but equally the load of indifference, hopelessness; otherwise great capital would standalone.3

Bloch’s response was to try to revive the idea of utopia. He insisted that even in a world where socialist politics are marginalized, we can still discover, if only in daydreams, the indestructible human desire for happiness and harmony, a yearning which consistently runs up against economic competition, private property and the bureaucratic state. The ‘utopian intention’, which is, for Bloch, the real ‘motor force of history’, may be found in architecture, painting, literature, music, ethics and religion: ‘every work of art, every central philos-ophy had and has a utopian window in which there lies a landscape which is still developing.’ Bending the stick against orthodox Marxism’s traditional dismissal of ‘utopian socialism’, Bloch’s project was in good part to rehabilitate what Marx himself once called ‘the dream of the matter’ which the world had long possessed. ‘The power of the great old utopian books’, Bloch demon-strated, was that ‘they almost always named the same thing: Omnia sintcommunia, let everything be in common. It is a credit to pre-Marxist political literature to possess these isolated and rebellious enthusiasms among its many ideological insights. Even if they did not seem to contain a shred of possibility...the society projected within them managed without self-interest at the expense of others and was to keep going without the spur of the bourgeois drive for acquisition.’ It was this literature which first established that one of the main prerequisites to realize ‘the leap of humanity out of the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom... is the abolition of private property and the classes this has produced. Another prerequisite is the consistent will towards the negation of the state in so far as it rules individuals and is an instrument of oppression in the hands of the privileged.’4What made More’s Utopia ‘with all its dross, the first modern portrait of democratic communist wishful dreams’ was that

For the first time democracy was linked here in a humane sense, the sense of public freedom and tolerance, with a collective economy (always easily threatened by bureaucracy, and indeed clericalism) ... [T]he end of the first part of the ‘Utopia’ states openly: ‘Where private ownership still exists, where all people measure all values by the yardstick of money, it will hardly ever be possible to pursue a just and happy policy... Thus possessions certainly cannot be distributed in any just and fair way...unless property is done away with beforehand. As long as it continues to exist, poverty, toil and care will hang instead an inescapable burden on by far the biggest and by far the best part of humanity. The burden maybe lightened a little but to remove it entirely (without abolishing prop-erty) is impossible.’5

It was the abstractness of such utopian thinking, of course, that led Marx to insist on the crucial importance of analysing ‘objective conditions’. Bloch had no doubt about how necessary this was for ‘cooling down... totally extravagant abstractly utopian fanaticism’ and for the development of the kind of practical consciousness that would allow the carrying through of the dream to reality through the transformation of social relations. But the unmasking of ideologies and illusions by what he called the ‘cold stream’ of Marxism’s ‘historical and current practical conditional analysis’ had always to be mixed with the kind of appreciation of ‘subjective conditions’ present in the ‘warm stream’ of the Marxist tradition. ‘[F]ermenting in the process of the real itself’, Bloch insisted,‘[is] the concrete forward dream: anticipating elements are a component of reality itself. Thus the will towards utopia is entirely compatible with object-based tendency, in fact is confirmed and at home within it.’ The best kind of Marxism demonstrates that ‘enthusiasm and sobriety, awareness of the goal and analysis of the given facts go hand in hand. When the young Marx called on people to think at last, to act “like a disillusioned man who has come to his senses”, it was not to dampen the enthusiasm of the goal, but to sharpen it.’6

In recent years we have seen all too many disillusioned people on the left ‘coming to their senses’ by abandoning the goal of socialism. Some have succumbed to a post-modernist pessimism, which has indeed proved to be ‘paralysis per se’. Even more seem to have jumped from what Bloch called the ‘evils of putschist activism’ all the way to social democracy’s ‘third way’, whose presumption that neo-liberal prescriptions of efficiency are compatible with social justice is the contemporary expression of what Bloch designated as one of the key hallmarks of ideology – ‘the premature harmonization of social contradictions’ within the confines of existing social relations. Frustrated by their inability to change the world overnight through sheer activism, they have not so much abandoned the idea of change but, like the Greek God Procrustes who adjusted the size of his guests to fit the size of his bed, they have shrunk the meaning of change to fit what capital and the state will accommodate.

Yet it is increasingly apparent from the extreme limitations of the ‘third way’ in practice that reviving the goal of socialism is necessary even to make small improvements in the current state of the world. As Bloch put it: ‘If the will-content of the goal is missing, then even the good probable is left undone; if the goal remains, however, then even the improbable can be done, or at least made more probable for later.’ Moreover, as against the kind of ‘third way’ thinking that embraces the novelty, inevitability and progressive character of globaliza-tion, ‘even a dash of pessimism’ does not go amiss, for, as Bloch suggested, ‘at least pessimism with a realistic perspective is not so helplessly surprised by mistakes and catastrophes, by the horrifying possibilities which have been concealed and will continue to be concealed precisely in capitalist progress.’7

But if such a healthy pessimism about capitalist progress is indeed growing as we end the century, what persists alongside it, even through repeated and deepening capitalist crises, is a profound pessimism about the possibility of real-izing any better world. This debilitating pessimism derives not only from the feeling that nothing can be done, or even that nothing other than capitalism is possible, but also from a fear, well-honed by twentieth century experience as well as ruling class propaganda, of the perverse consequences of the attempt to put utopian visions into practice. This is not surprising in light of the experi-ence with Communist regimes in this century, where there occurred, as The Principle of Hope already suggested, ‘an undernourishment of revolutionary imagination’ and ‘a schematic pragmatic reduction of totality’ through an over-emphasis on science and technology ‘such that the pillar of fire in utopias, the thing which was powerfully leading the way, could be liquidated.’8‘All the worse’, as Bloch later wrote after his self-exile from East Germany, was that once it became clear that the ‘revolutionary capacity is not there to execute ideals which have been represented abstractly’, the Communist regimes acted so as ‘to discredit or even destroy with catastrophic means ideals which have not appeared in the concrete.’ This stifled ‘transitional tendencies’ within them which would have been able to move towards ‘active freedom only if the utopian goal is clearly visible, unadulterated and unrenounced.’9

It must be said, of course, that Bloch’s remarks only implicitly identify the weakest aspect of the classical Marxian legacy in this respect: the the orization of the role of the political in the transition to socialism. Marx’s central concepts of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’, ‘smashing the bourgeois state’ and ‘the withering away of the state’ all obscured rather than clarified the fundamental issues; and Marxists in the twentieth century did not go nearly far enough in overcoming the limits of this legacy.10Yet it is at the level of the political that transitions from one socio-economic order to another are effected – or come to grief in the attempt.

But whether the socialist utopian goal can be revived must obviously depend on much more than a clarification and enrichment of socialist political theory. It will above all depend on agency, that is, on what human beings can still discover about their potential. For all the valuable insights, promising signposts and rich hints even the ‘warm stream’ of Marxism bequeaths, it must be said that the historical optimism in Marx that inspired generations of socialists came with an underestimation of the chasm between the scale and scope of the utopian dream and the capitalism-created agency honoured – or saddled – with carrying it out: the working class. Between Marx’s broad historically-inspired vision of revolution/transformation and his detailed critique of political economy, there was an analytical and strategic gap – unbridgeable without addressing the problematic of working class capacities – which later Marxists sometimes addressed, but never overcame.11Nor has the problem been over-come by recent social movement theory. For the rethinking that is required must be more profound than just imagining that the problem can be resolved by substituting a plurality of new social movements for the old workers’ move-ments. The compensatory stifling of ideals we saw in the institutions of the labour movement has also appeared in the new social movements. Every progressive social movement must, sooner or later, confront the inescapable fact that capitalism cripples our capacities, stunts our dreams, and incorporates our politics.

Where then can socialism, as a movement linking the present with the possible, once again find the air to breathe and space to grow? To answer this we need both to clarify the socialist ‘utopian goal’ today and to develop a clearer sense of where our potential capacities to create that better world welcome from. The rest of this essay concerns itself with these questions, but a few preliminary guidelines will be useful before moving on.

The socialist ‘utopian goal’ is built around realizing our potential to be full human beings. What separates this ideal from its liberal roots is not only socialism’s commitment to extending this principle to all members of society, but also its insistence that the flowering of human capacities isn’t a liberation of the individual from the social, but is only achievable through the social. Ideals are always linked to some notion of justice and freedom. Notions of justice revolve around the egalitarianism of certain outcomes (like distribution of income or wealth) or the legitimacy of a process for reaching goals even if the ultimate results are unequal (equal access to opportunities). Notions of freedom generally divide into freedom from an external arbitrary authority (the state) or the freedom to participate in setting the broad parameters that frame the context of our lives (as in current liberal democracies). The socialist ideal does not exclude these other moral spaces, but locates them on the specific terrain of capacities: capitalism is unjust and undemocratic not because of this or that imperfection in relation to equality or freedom, but because at its core it involves the control by some of the use and development of the potential of others, and because the competition it fosters frustrates humanity’s capacity for liberation through the social.

And what is especially important is that conceiving freedom and justice on the terrain of capacities leads beyond mere dreaming: it links the ideal to the possibility of change and so to what is politically achievable. This is what Bloch meant by ‘concrete utopias’ which, always operating on the level of ‘possibility as capacity’, incorporate the objective contradictions that create an opening for socialist goals (‘capability-of-being-done’), the subjective element of agency(‘capability-of-doing-other’), and therefore the possibility of changing ourselves and the world (‘capability-of-becoming-other’).12These concrete utopias are not blueprints for a new order entirely external to this one. Socialism, as Marx noted, is not ‘a state of affairs which is to be estab-lished, an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself... [but] the real movement which abolishes the present state of things.’13That ‘real movement ‘will live or die based on whether the necessary capacities and possibilities can first show themselves, in some substantive way, inside everyday capitalism. Terry Eagleton argues in another essay in this volume that ‘the only authentic image of the future is, in the end, the failure of the present.’ This is indeed true. And the best measure of the failure of the present is its inability to redeem the glimpses of our potential afforded by our own experiences. In Barbara Kingsolver’s novel Animal Dreams, a woman asks her lover: ‘Didn’t you ever dream you could fly?’ He answers: ‘Not when I was sorting pecans all day. ’When she persists and demands: ‘Really though, didn’t you ever fly in your dreams?’, he replies: ‘Only when I was close to flying in real life... You rdreams, what you hope for and all that, its not separate from your life. It grows right out of it.’14

#### The aff’s anti-institutional politics re-entrenches the power of capital by leaving intact broader structures of global political economy—it creates catharsis that prevents action against ecological catastrophe and crises of neoliberalism

Parenti and Emanuele 15 (Christian Parenti, former visiting fellow at CUNY's Center for Place, Culture and Politics, as well as a Soros Senior Justice Fellow, teaches in the Liberal Studies program at New York University, interview with Vincent Emanuele, writer, activist and radio journalist who lives and works in the Rust Belt, “Climate Change, Militarism, Neoliberalism and the State,” May 17, 2015, http://ouleft.sp-mesolite.tilted.net/?p=1980)

You mention mutual aid and how it was overhyped by the left in the aftermath of Katrina. I’m thinking of the same thing in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. You’ve been critical of the left in the US for not approaching and using the state apparatus when dealing with climate change and other ecological issues. Can you talk about your critique of the US left and why you think the state can, and should, be used in a positive manner? Just to be clear, I think it is absolutely heroic and noble what activists have done. My critique is not of peoples’ actions, or of people; it’s of a lack of sophistication, and I hold myself partly accountable, as part of the US left, for our deficiencies. With Hurricane Sandy, the Occupy folks did some amazing stuff. Yet, at a certain level, their actions became charity. People were talking about how many meals they distributed. That’s charity. That is, in many ways, a neoliberal solution. That’s exactly what the capitalist system in the US would like: US citizens not demanding their government redistribute wealth from the 1% to the 99%. The capitalists love to see people turn to each other for money and aid. Unwittingly, that’s what the anarcho-liberal left fell into. This is partly due a very American style of anti-state rhetoric that transcends left and right. The state is not just prisons or the military. It’s also Head Start, quality public education, the library, clean water, the EPA, the City University of New York system – a superb, affordable set of schools that turns out top-notch, working-class students with the lowest debt burdens in the country. There’s a reason the right is attacking these institutions. Why does the right hate the EPA and public education? Because they don’t want to pay to educate the working class, and they don’t want the working class educated. They don’t want to pay to clean up industry, and that’s what the EPA forces them to do. When the left embraces anarcho-liberal notions of self-help and fantasies of being outside of both government and the market, it cuts itself off from important democratic resources. The state should be seen as an arena of class struggle. When the left turns its back on the social democratic features of government, stops making demands of the state, and fails to reshape government by using the government for progressive ends, it risks playing into the hands of the right. The central message of the American right is that government is bad and must be limited. This message is used to justify austerity. However, in most cases, neoliberal austerity does not actually involve a reduction of government. Typically, restructuring in the name of austerity is really just a transformation of government, not a reduction of it. Over the last 35 years, the state has been profoundly transformed, but it has not been reduced. The size of the government in the economy has not gone down. The state has become less redistributive, more punitive. Instead of a robust program of government-subsidized and public housing, we have the prison system. Instead of well-funded public hospitals, we have profiteering private hospitals funded by enormous amounts of public money. Instead of large numbers of well-paid public workers, we have large budgets for private firms that now subcontract tasks formerly conducted by the government. We need to defend the progressive work of government, which, for me, means immediately defending public education. To be clear, I do not mean merely vote or ask nicely, I mean movements should attack government and government officials, target them with protests, make their lives impossible until they comply. This was done very well with the FCC. And my hat goes off to the activists who saved the internet for us. The left should be thinking about the ways in which it can leverage government. The utility of government was very apparent in Vermont during the aftermath of Hurricane Irene. The rains from that storm destroyed or damaged over a hundred bridges, many miles of road and rail, and swept away houses. Thirteen towns were totally stranded. There was a lot of incredible mutual aid; people just started clearing debris and helping each other out. But within all this, town government was a crucial connective tissue. Due to the tradition of New England town meeting, people are quite involved with their local government. Anarchists should love town meetings. It is no coincidence that Murray Bookchin spent much of his life in Vermont. Town meetings are a form of participatory budgeting without the lefty rigmarole. More importantly, the state government managed to get a huge amount of support from the federal government. The state in turn pushed this down to the town level. Without that federal aid, Vermont would still be in ruins. Vermont is not a big enough political entity to shake down General Electric, a huge employer in Vermont. The Vermont government can’t pressure GE to pay for the rebuilding of local infrastructure, but the federal government can. Vermont would still be a disaster if it didn’t get a transfer of funds and materials from the federal government. Similarly in New York City, the public sector does not get enough praise for the many things it did well after super storm Sandy. Huge parts of the subway system were flooded, yet it was all up and running within the month. As an aside, one of the dirty little secrets about the Vermont economy is that it’s heavily tied-up with the military industrial complex. People think Vermont is all about farming and boutique food processing. Vermont has a pretty diverse economy, but agriculture plays a much smaller role than you might think, about 2 percent of employment. Meanwhile, the state’s industrial sector, along with the government, is one of the top employers, at about 13 percent of all employment. Most of this work is in what’s called precision manufacturing, making stuff like: high performance nozzles, switches, calibrators, and stuff like the lenses used in satellites, or handcrafting the blades that go in GE jet engines. But I digress … As we enter the crisis of climate change, it’s important to be aware of the actually existing legal and institutional mechanisms with which we can contain and control capital. I often joke with my anarchist and libertarian friends and ask if their mutual-aid collectives can run Chicago’s sanitation system or operate satellites. Of course, on one level, I’m joking, but on another level, I’m being quite serious. I don’t think activists on the left properly understand the complexity of modern society. A simple example would be how much sewage is produced in a single day in a country with 330 million people. How do people expect to manage these day-to-day issues? In your opinion, is there a lack of sophistication on the left in terms of what, exactly, the state does and how it functions in our day-to-day lives? It’s sobering to reflect on just how complex the physical systems of modern society are. And though it is very unpopular to say among most American activists, it is important to think about the hierarchies and bureaucracies that are necessarily part of technologically complex systems. A friend of mine is a water engineer in Detroit, and he was talking to me about exactly what you’re mentioning. The sewer system in Detroit is mind-bogglingly enormous and also very dilapidated and very expensive. To not have infrastructure publicly maintained, even though the capitalist class might not admit this, would ultimately undermine capital accumulation. You asked if there is a lack of sophistication. Look, I’m trying to make helpful criticisms to my comrades on the left, particularly to activists who work so hard and valiantly. I’ve criticized divestment as a strategy, yet I support it. I criticized the false claims that divesting fossil fuels stocks would hurt fossil fuel companies. The fossil fuel divestment movement started out making that claim. To its credit, the movement has stopped making such claims. Now, they say that it will remove the industries "social license," which is a problematic concept that comes from the odious world of "corporate social responsibility." However, now, students are becoming politicized, and that’s always great news. For several years, some of us have been trying to get climate activists, the climate left, to take the EPA and the Clean Air Act seriously. The EPA has the power to actually de-carbonize the economy. The divestment logic is: Schools will divest, then fossil fuel companies will be held in greater contempt than they are now? Honestly, they’re already hated by everybody. That does what? That creates the political pressure to stop polluting? We already have those regulations: the Clean Air Act. There was a Supreme Court Case, Massachusetts v. EPA, that was ruled on in 2007. It said the EPA must regulate greenhouse gas emissions. Lots of professional activists in the climate movement, at least up until very recently, have been totally unaware of this. Consequently, they are not making demands of the EPA. They are not making demands of their various local, state and federal environmental agencies. These entities should be enforcing the laws. They have the power. It’s not because the people in the climate movement are bad people or unintelligent. They’re dedicated and extremely smart. It’s because there’s an anti-state ethos within the environmental movement and a romanticization of the local. On a side note, I don’t think all of this stuff about local economies is helpful. Sometimes I think this sort of thinking doesn’t recognize how the global political economy works. The comrades at Jacobin magazine have called this anarcho-liberalism. I think that is a great way to describe the dominant ideology of US left, which is both anarchist and liberal in its sensibilities. This ideology is fundamentally about ignoring government, and instead, being obsessed with scale, size, and, by extension, authenticity. Big things are bad. Small things are good. Planning is bad. Spontaneity is good. It is as insidious as it is ridiculous. But it is the dominant worldview among the US left. Do you really think that this is the best way to approach the industry, through mobilizing state resources? Look, the fossil fuel industry is the most powerful force the world has ever seen. Be honest, what institution could possibly ~~stand up to~~ [rebuff] them? The state. That doesn’t mean it will. Right now, government is captured by these corporate entities. But, it has, at least in theory, an obligation to the people. And it also has the laws that we need to wipe out the fossil fuel industrial complex. This sounds fantastical and nuts, but I don’t think it is. I’ve been harping on this in articles and a little bit at the end of Tropic of Chaos. According to the Center for Biological Diversity, Nixon-era laws can be used to sue developers, polluters, etc. You might not be able to stop them, but you can slow them down. The Clean Air Act basically says that if science can show that smoke-stack pollution is harmful to human health, it has to be regulated. If there was a movement really pushing the government, and making the argument that the only safe level of CO2 emissions is essentially zero … We have the laws in place. We have the enabling legislation to shut down the fossil fuel industry. We should use the government to levy astronomical fines on the fossil fuel companies for pollution. And we should impose them at such a level that it would undermine their ability to remain competitive and profitable. Part Two: Vincent Emanuele: Much of the green washing, or capitalism’s attempt to brand itself as green, focuses on localism and anti-government, market-driven programs. Do you think this phobia of the state among the US left is a result of previous failed political experiments? How much of this ideology is imposed from outside forces? Christian Parenti: Some state phobia comes from the American political mythology of rugged individualism; some comes from the fundamentally Southern, Jeffersonian tradition of states’ rights. Fear of the federal government by Southern elites goes back to the founding of the country. The Hamiltonian versus Jeffersonian positions on government are fundamental to understanding American politics. I wrote about this for Jacobin magazine in a piece called "Reading Hamilton from the Left." Lurking just beneath the surface of states’ rights is, of course, plantation rights. Those plantations, places like Monticello, were America’s equivalent of feudal manors where, in a de facto sense, economic, legal and military power were all bound up together and located in the private household of the planter. Those Virginian planters were the original localistas. Nor did that project end with the fall of slavery, or the end of de jure segregation in the 1960s. Southern elites didn’t want Yankees telling them what to do; how to treat their slaves, how to organize their towns, how to run their elections, how to treat the environment – none of that! The South is a resource colony and its regional elites, some of them now running multinational corporations and holding important posts in the US government, believe they have a right to do what they wish with the people and landscape. Historically, that’s a large part of what localism and local democracy meant in the South. It meant that White local elites were "free" – free to push Black people around, free to feed racist fantasies to the White working class. They didn’t want interference from the outside. So, some of that anti-statist ideology comes from that plantation tradition. Another part of it comes from the real failures and crimes of state socialism, though state socialism also had, and in Cuba still has, many successes. The social welfare record of what we used to call "actually existing socialism" was pretty impressive. But there were also the problems of repression, surveillance and bureaucratization, which were partly the result of capitalist encirclement, partly the result of the ideological hubris rooted in ideological overconfidence in the allegedly scientific power of Marxism, partly the result of simple corruption among socialism’s political class. These real problems were central themes in the Cold War West’s educational and ideological apparatus of (generally right-wing) messaging from the press and the political class. In this discourse, communism was the state, while freedom was the private sector. Thus, the United States and freedom became embodied in popular notions of the private sector and individualism. Of course, the great, unmentioned contradiction in this self-fantasy is the fact that American capitalism has always been heavily, heavily dependent on the state. Modern society, despite its fantasies about itself, is intensely cooperative and collective. Look at how complex its physical systems are; that cannot be achieved without massive levels of coordination and collective cooperation, much of it provided by the rules and regulations of government. The knee-jerk anti-statism, what the folks at Jacobin call "anarcho-liberalism," is also rooted in experience. The less social power you have, the more the state is experienced as an invasive, demeaning, oppressive and potentially, very violent bureaucracy. Neoliberalism would not have gotten this far if there wasn’t an element of truth to this critique of its bureaucracy and regulation. It has also used ideas that have old cultural tractions, like freedom. Such are the contradictions of the modern democratic state in capitalist society. Government is rational, supportive, humane, [and offers] redistribution in the form of Social Security, high-quality public schools, environmental regulation, the Voting Rights Act and other federal civil rights laws that have helped break hegemonic power of local and regional bigots. But government is also militarized policing, the bloated prison system, spying on a vast scale; it is child protective services taking children from loving mothers on the basis of bureaucratic traps, corrupt corporate welfare at every level from town government to federal military contracting. The racist, sexist, plutocratic and techno-bureaucratic features of the state create fertile ground for people to turn their backs on the whole idea of government. What has been the impact of the right’s ability to effectively propagandize the White working class in the US? Rightist intellectuals, academics, journalists, media tycoons, university presidents and loudmouth politicians work diligently to capture and form the raw experience of everyday oppression into an ideological common sense. To be clear, I use that term in the Gramscian sense, in which common sense refers to ruling class ideology that is so hegemonic as to be absorbed and naturalized by the people. The constant libertarian assault on the radio, in newspapers, on the television, this drumbeat of anti-government discourse is an old story – but still very important for understanding the anarcho-liberal sensibility. Just tune in to AM radio late on a weekday evening and listen to the anti-government vitriol. It’s sort of wild. Someone could do an interesting study, Ph.D., in unpacking the cultural history of all this. It is tempting to speculate that deindustrialization, having disempowered and made anxious many huge sections of the working class, opens the way for fantasies of empowerment. The anti-statist, rugged individualist common sense is also always simultaneously a fantasy of empowerment. White men are particularly vulnerable to these fantasies. The classic guy who calls into the batshit crazy, late night, right-wing talk radio show is a middle-aged White man. Listen closely to the rage and you hear fantasies of independence. In this rhetoric, guns and gun rights become an obviously phallic symbol of individual empowerment, agency, self worth, responsibility etc. But most importantly, we have to think about how all of this anti-state ideology is being stirred up with investments from elites. The neoliberal project is to transform the state through anti-statist rhetoric and narratives. They sell the idea that people need to be liberated from the state. But then push policies that imprison people while liberating and pampering capital. It is hard for the left to see itself in this sketch – the angry, beaten-down, middle-aged White guy calling in from his basement or garage. But I think these much-documented corporate efforts to build neoliberal consent permeate the entire culture and infect us all, if even just a little bit. This is the intellectually toxic environment in which young activists are approaching the question of the climate emergency. Young activists should be approaching the climate crisis the way the left approached the economic crisis during the Great Depression. We need to drastically restructure the state. We need it mobilized and able to transform the economy. The New Deal was imperfect, of course. It left domestic workers and farm workers out of the Fair Labor Standards Act. It was inherently racist. It dammed rivers and was environmentally destructive. However, the New Deal was radical in its general empowerment of labor; its distributional outcomes were progressive and it achieved a modernizing transformation of American capitalism. Not to overstate the case, but the New Deal could be a reference point for thinking about the beginning of a green transformation that seeks to euthanize the fossil fuel industry. We have to precipitously reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build a new power sector. That much is very clear. However, let me be clear: Shutting down the fossil fuel industry – mitigating the climate crisis – is not a solution for the environmental crisis. Climate change is only one part of the multifaceted environmental crisis. Shutting down the fossil fuel industry would not automatically end overfishing, deforestation, soil erosion, habitat loss, toxification of the environment etc. But carbon mitigation is the most immediately pressing issue we face. The science is very clear on this. Climate change is the portion of the overall crisis that must be solved immediately so as to buy time to deal with all the other aspects of the crisis. Because I take the political implications of climate science very seriously, I am something of a carbon fundamentalist.

#### Neoliberal exploitation causes extinction.

Clark 18 (Brett, associate professor of sociology and sustainability studies at the University of Utah; Stefano B. Longo, Assistant Professor specializing in Environmental Sociology at NC State; “Land–Sea Ecological Rifts”, Land–Sea Ecological Rifts, https://monthlyreview.org/2018/07/01/land-sea-ecological-rifts/)

Covering approximately 70 percent of the Earth’s surface, the World Ocean is “the largest ecosystem.”1 Today all areas of the ocean are affected by multiple anthropogenic effects—such as overfishing, pollution, and emission of greenhouse gases, causing warming seas as well as ocean acidification—and over 40 percent of the ocean is strongly affected by human actions. Furthermore, the magnitude of these impacts and the speed of the changes are far greater than previously understood.2 Biologist Judith S. Weis explains that “the most widespread and serious type of [marine] pollution worldwide is eutrophication due to excess nutrients.”3 The production and use of fertilizers, sewage/waste from humans and farm animals, combustion of fossil fuels, and storm water have all contributed to dramatic increases in the quantity of nutrients in waterways and oceans. Research in 2008 indicated that there were over 400 “dead zones,” areas of low oxygen, mostly near the mouths of rivers.4 Nutrient overloading thus presents a major challenge to maintaining healthy aquatic ecosystems.

Nutrients are a basic source of nourishment that all organisms need to survive. Plants require at least eighteen elements to grow normally; of these, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium are called macronutrients, because they are needed in larger quantities. While all essential nutrients exist in the biosphere, these three are the ones most commonly known to be deficient in commercial agricultural production systems. Beginning in the early twentieth century with the Haber-Bosch process, atmospheric nitrogen was converted into ammonia to create synthetic nitrogen fertilizer. The fixation of nitrogen, an energy-intensive process, made the nutrient far more widely available for use in agriculture. This in turn dramatically changed production systems, which no longer depended on legumes and manures to biologically supply nitrogen for other crops such as wheat, corn, and most vegetables.

In the modern era, particularly since the Second World War, the increased production and use of fertilizers served to greatly expand food production and availability. Major macronutrients are routinely applied to soils in order to maintain and increase the growth of plant life on farms, as well as private and public landscapes such as golf courses, nurseries, parks, and residences. They are used to produce fruits, vegetables, and fibers for human and non-human consumption, expand areas of recreation, and beautify communities. However, like many aspects of modern production, given the larger social dynamics and determinants that shape socioecological relationships, these technological and economic developments have generated serious negative—often unforeseen—consequences. The wide expansion and increasing rates of nitrogen and phosphorus application have caused severe damage to aquatic systems in particular. Rivers, streams, lakes, bays (estuaries), and ocean systems have been inundated with nutrient runoff, which has had far-reaching effects.

Here we examine the socioecological relationships and processes associated with the transfer of nutrients from terrestrial to marine systems. We employ a metabolic analysis to highlight the interchange of matter and energy within and between socioecological systems. In particular, we show how capitalist agrifood production contributes to distinct environmental problems, creating a metabolic rift in the soil nutrient cycle. We emphasize how the failure to mend nutrient cycles in agrifood systems has led to approaches that produce additional ruptures, such as those associated with nutrient overloading in marine systems. This analysis reveals the ways that the social relations of capitalist agriculture tend to produce interconnected ecological problems, such as those in terrestrial and aquatic systems. Further, we contend that these processes undermine the basic conditions of life on a wide-ranging scale. It is important to recognize that nutrient pollution of groundwater as well as surface waters has been a major concern since the rise of modern capitalist agriculture and the development of the global food regime.5 The failure to address the metabolic rupture in the soil nutrient cycle and the contradictions of capital are central to contemporary land-sea ecological rifts.

#### Capitalism is responsible for the birth of racism –

WASP 15 [(Workers and Socialist Party in South Africa affiliated to International Socialist Alternative. WASP fights to replace capitalism with a democratic socialist system that will use the wealth of society to meet the needs of its people instead of the needs of shareholders and big-business.) “Class and Race: Marxism, Racism & the Class Struggle” Workers and Socialist Party, 10/5/2015] BC

Racism is not the result of an “inevitable” racial friction between white and black. It is maintained by the class structure of capitalist society. Indeed, capitalism itself was responsible for the birth of racism. Before capitalism, discrimination against an entire people based on permanent prejudices of supposedly inferior ancestry, skin color or other physical and mental characteristics did not exist. Historically, racism emerged to justify the Atlantic slave trade, an enormous source of profits for the fledgling capitalist class. Once arisen, racism was molded and adapted to justify the shifting economic interests of the capitalist class in their colonial conquests and as part of capitalism’s ideological armory against the revolutionary working class. Charting the development of racism against the ebbs, flows, twists and turns of the class struggle is the only way to understand why racism exists. This requires a Marxist analysis.

The Marxist Approach

For Marxists, all ideas, including racism, are ultimately a reflection of social conditions. This materialist approach means ideas must be examined as products of historical development. Trying to understand any idea without a materialist approach is like examining the shadow independently of the object that casts it. To truly understand racism it is necessary to examine the specific historical circumstances that created it and which have maintained and modified it up to the present day.

The most fundamental social conditions that must be examined are the relationship between classes which themselves arise depending on how society organizes production. Different ways of organizing production give rise to different classes. History has known a number of different forms of class society. But the common feature is a minority ruling class who exploits the working majority by expropriating (i.e. stealing) the surplus wealth created by their labors. This is the fundamental division in society.

Different systems of belief (or ideologies) emerge to justify the position of the ruling class and to persuade the masses to accept their exploitation. Different forms of class society require different ideologies to justify them. However, the history of slave uprisings, peasant revolts, and the mass revolutionary struggles of the working class in our own time shows that the ruling class only ever partially succeeds in fooling the classes they exploit.

But it is not only the class struggle between the ruling class and the exploited majority that has significance. The struggles between competing factions of the same ruling class, or two different exploiting classes, also play an important role in determining the development of society and the ideologies that emerge. For example the competition between the different imperialist capitalist classes in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, or the struggle between the rising capitalist class and the declining feudal ruling class in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It is the conflicting interests of different classes that are the real social basis upon which racial prejudices, discrimination and oppression form. In the struggles between classes, differences of race but also gender, age, sexuality and religion are frequently given an antagonistic form leading to corresponding ideologies of racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia and religious prejudice. The great Marxist Friedrich Engels dealt extensively with the roots in class society of oppression against women and the sexist prejudices this gives rise to; later writers have shown how homophobic prejudices emerged in the nineteenth century based on the form of the family in capitalist society.

However, Marxism’s power as a method of analysis does not lie in a simplistic materialism that says economic interests are always reflected as ideas and ideologies in a crude and obvious way. Rather it lies in Marxism’s dialectical materialism.

Dialectics means to examine the development of social conditions as processes and interactions. This means that Marxism recognizes that ideas and ideologies can themselves interact with the economic forces that originally created them adding layers of complexity to social conditions. Engels explained the nuances that dialectics brings to Marxism as a method of analysis when he wrote:

According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. Other than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure — political forms of the class struggle and its results … constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas — also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless host of accidents (that is, of things and events whose inner interconnection is so remote or so impossible of proof that we can regard it as non-existent, as negligible), the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary. Otherwise the application of the theory to any period of history would be easier than the solution of a simple equation of the first degree.

– Letter to J. Bloch, 1890

Engels’ comment is the key to understanding what can otherwise appear as contradictions in the historical development of racism. For once arisen an idea or ideology, even a prejudice, can take on a certain life of its own within limits. Under the weight of historical inertia ideas can persist long past their use-by date. So for example, whilst it is not possible to be born racist, it is possible to be born into a racist society and raised to accept prejudices that were created by the social conditions of a past period. Also, ideas and ideologies can be given a new content by changing social conditions even as the language they express themselves in remains unchanged. Ideas that were progressive in one period in history can become reactionary in another as they are adapted to serve different class interests. Different ideologies can intertwine. This has been the case with racism and nationalism, particularly in the social conditions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is only Marxism that can cope with such contradictions by basing itself on the real thread of continuity in changing social conditions and not the ideological shadows they cast.

Marxism can accommodate and explain why sections of classes, under certain conditions, can support ideologies that do not correspond with their fundamental interests. Marx observed that, “the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas.” This means that the ruling class’s control of society gives them the means to partially impose ideologies that reflect their interests on to society in general. Under the right historical conditions, ruling class ideologies of racism and nationalism can succeed in creating divisions amongst the working class and poor and prevent them from uniting against their common exploiter, the capitalist class.

Lenin described how the imperialist phase of capitalism and its colonial expansion created the social conditions for the European capitalist classes to “bribe” sections of the European working class by encouraging the formation of a privileged “labor aristocracy” that would opportunistically support racist colonial policies as the basis of its privilege. Today this idea is regularly distorted to write-off the entire working class of Europe. But even in the nineteenth century that Lenin was describing, at the height of colonial rule, he stressed that it was only ever a section of the working class that succumbed to this bribery.

He further explained that the contradiction between supporting an ideology that did not in reality correspond to the working class’s fundamental interests was “bound to increase the irreconcilability between opportunism and the general and vital interests of the working class movement.”

#### The alternative is a rejection of identity politics and an affirmation of structural socialist reforms - only through participation within the state allows the proletariat fight against the capitalist class.

Day 18 [(Meagan, a staff writer at Jacobin magazine. Her articles have also appeared in The New York Times, The Guardian, Vox, n+1, The Baffler, In These Times, Mother Jones, and elsewhere. She is the co-author with Micah Uetricht of Bigger than Bernie: How We Go From the Sanders Campaign to Democratic Socialism and the author of Maximum Sunlight) “Why Socialists Should Fight for Structural Reforms” Democratic Socialists of America, fall 2018] BC

There is a common misconception on the radical left about reforms. If you’re serious about revolution, so the thinking goes, you shouldn’t waste your time with pushing reforms, because those reforms will only defer the revolution that we should actually be fighting for.

It’s true that “reformism” and “revolutionism” are distinct political orientations on the socialist left. But it’s important to be clear about what reformism actually consists of. It does not, as many mistakenly believe, simply mean the pursuit of reforms — which, by definition, do not replace the capitalist system with a socialist system in one fell swoop.

Instead, reformism refers to, as Rosa Luxemburg wrote in Reform or Revolution, the “gradual realization of socialism through social reforms.” It’s the idea that socialism is a certain number of discrete steps away, and each reform inherently brings us a step closer to our ideal society.

It’s a way of thinking that leads to a fixation on reforms for their own sake.

To be a revolutionary who is against reformism is to oppose this gradual or incremental approach to supplanting capitalism with socialism piecemeal, like a high-stakes game of Jenga.

But revolutionarism is not opposed to the pursuit of reform itself. In fact, revolutionary socialists have historically been very focused on the proper integration of reform campaigns into revolutionary strategy. “Between social reforms and revolution there exists for [socialism] an indissoluble tie,” Luxemburg wrote. “The struggle for reforms is its means; the social revolution, its aim.”

Stemming from their conflation of reforms with reformism, some on the radical left today conclude that a substantive but non-comprehensive change to the current order like single-payer healthcare  —  which will provide for and empower millions of working-class people, but won’t actually end capitalism  —  is fundamentally at odds with the idea of a revolution, which is what we really need. In order to signal their revolutionary commitments, they therefore regard reforms like single-payer with skepticism, if not disdain. They confront us with an ultimatum: pursue socialized health insurance and forsake the possibility of a radical rupture, or reject it and proceed instead to revolution.

This counterposition overlooks the possibility that some struggles for reform might actually bring us closer to revolution — and that indeed, they may be a necessary component of that project.

“The daily struggle for reforms,” Luxemburg wrote, “for the amelioration of the condition of the workers within the framework of the existing social order, and for democratic institutions, offers to [socialists] the only means of engaging in the proletarian class war and working in the direction of the final goal — the conquest of political power and the suppression of wage labor.”

The idea that we should pursue revolution instead of reforms is predicated on the mistaken belief that revolutions are instantaneous affairs. As the late socialist organizer Peter Camejo put it:

“First of all, you have to have clear in your mind the meaning of the word ‘revolution’. Many people have a stereotyped picture of what a revolution is like. They say a revolution is when people come with guns, when they surround a fortress or take over a city. What they do is they confuse revolution with insurrection. Insurrection is just one stage of revolution. Revolution is a lot more. It’s a long process.”

Have we reached the insurrectionary stage of revolution? Definitely not. In the U.S. we have never come close to a point where workers were ready to wrest control of the state from capitalists and establish socialism. We have no independent working-class party, our socialist organizations and press organs are relatively small, our unions are on the back foot, and millions of people have effectively given up on the possibility of changing the world through collective action.

It’s important to acknowledge this, because if we delude ourselves into thinking that we’re not vastly outmatched by the capitalist class and its political functionaries, we can end up making deeply misguided decisions about how to act. Those decisions can result in the destruction of our movement’s infrastructure, while also alienating ourselves from a potential mass audience.

If we’re serious about transforming the social order as soon as possible, we have a responsibility to avoid making rash errors that can lead us down long detours. That means understanding that right now, despite our recent growth and rising profile, our resources are relatively limited and our popular influence is low. Even so, there also signs of regeneration that we can’t afford to ignore. The mass popularity of Bernie Sanders’ vision for economic redistribution and the growing favorability toward the word “socialism” is one indication. The idea of class has re-entered the national political conversation in an actually meaningful way. Educators are continuing to engage in deeply politicized forms of strike activity around the country. The membership of socialist organizations, which stagnated at a low level for decades, is suddenly mushrooming. And candidates calling themselves democratic socialists are winning elections in states and cities all over the country.

For the first time in a good half-century, the U.S. socialist left has an opportunity to engage in mass politics and make a real impact in mainstream political life. If we didn’t, the White House wouldn’t feel the need to publish 72-page memos propagandizing against us. We have to think logically and systematically about how to make the most of that opportunity.

What do we need to make a socialist revolution? Many things, obviously, but we can’t dispense with these two. First, we need the working-class majority to understand what’s wrong with capitalism and see the need for its replacement. Second, we need the working-class majority to be strong enough to really go toe-to-toe with the capitalist class and win.

When the socialist left thinks about how to choose the demands we should elevate and the campaigns we should focus our energy on, we should always be asking whether a particular fight serves these two purposes: building working-class consciousness and confidence (or ideological empowerment), and strengthening working-class institutions and giving working people more leverage over the bosses (material empowerment).

There are some reforms that — if fought for strategically and won on the right terms — position us better to square off with capitalism down the line and not get obliterated in the process. The Austrian socialist Andre Gorz called this kind of reform a “structural reform.” To be a structural reform, a reform cannot simply be an improvement in the immediate state of affairs; it has to involve a transfer of significant power from capital to labor, constitute “a victory of democracy over the dictatorship of profit,” and point to a world beyond capitalism.

Fighting for structural reforms raises the possibility of broadening the popular political imagination, raising working-class expectations, and strengthening working-class institutions and political formations. Fortunately, we have the possibility of participating in precisely this kind of reform struggle today: the fight for Medicare for All.

A key concept at play here is “decommodification.” The word means to take something out of the capitalist market, to shield it from the profit motive, to ban the involvement of private corporations and turn it over to the people. It’s what socialists want to do with everything, from housing and education to transportation and beyond.

And we’re in luck, because millions of people are demanding that that we do that right now with health insurance. In record numbers, we see that ordinary working-class people want health insurance to be provided by the state via taxes, and administered via a universal democratically-run program, to the detriment of insurance CEOs and benefit of everyone else.

Bernie Sanders has led the charge on Medicare for All and has done a remarkably effective job in linking the demand to the need for class struggle on a massive scale. He has popularized the argument that not only does health insurance need to be taken out of the market to ensure decent health care for all, but that the reason it hasn’t happened yet is that our domestic ruling class is standing in the way.

Seventy percent of Americans now support single-payer healthcare — up from only 21 percent in 2014 — and most accept the need to eliminate profit-hungry insurance companies in order to have a rational and equitable healthcare system that works for everyone. This reform struggle is already doing a lot to raise working-class people’s expectations for how society ought to be governed, as well as consciousness about the obstacles that must be overcome to govern it in their interests.

Medicare for All will help millions of people survive and thrive. But all progressive reforms do that, from a raise in the minimum wage to increasing food-stamp funding. Medicare for All isn’t smart for socialists just because it’s a “step in the right direction.” It’s smart because it attacks the core logic of capitalism in a serious way, with high material stakes for millions of people. It affirms the principle that we must have zones of life that are off-limits to capitalism, an idea which, when articulated on a mass scale, can change the terms of political debate and the terrain of struggle. Because if it makes sense to protect health insurance from the free market, doesn’t it also make sense to remove a host of other things we need from the market’s clutches, too?

If socialists sit out the struggle for Medicare for All, it will still proceed anyway. But if we jump in, becoming fighters and, where possible, leaders, we stand a better chance of winning and of further articulating and popularizing the socialist logic that undergirds this fight, and connecting it to other anti-austerity, anti-privatization and pro-democracy efforts. Heavy participation in this reform struggle allows us to agitate, propagandize, clarify battle lines, strengthen our organizations, build coalitions, and develop cadre whose skills are forged in the fight against the capitalist class.

As for implementation, Medicare for All doesn’t just offer much-needed and greatly-deserved relief to working people. It also increases our ability to intentionally push back against the ruling class. If unions didn’t have to make major sacrifices to protect health benefits, what else could they fight for? If a worker didn’t have to worry about losing health insurance when they lose their job, how much bolder could they be in standing up to their boss? If healthcare coverage is made independent from employment, how much less power would the bosses have over workers in the economy and in politics?

The liberatory potential of structural reforms is exponential, not additive. Some reforms are an extra chunk of change here, an extra subsidy there. But a reform like this upsets the balance of forces between the working class and the ruling class. Far from forestalling or distracting from revolution, it can add new dynamism to class conflict and builds the power workers in relation to capital.

No matter how ambitious, a single reform like Medicare for All won’t end capitalism, not even in the realm of health care. But it emboldens ordinary people to imagine new political possibilities, make new claims on the future, and trains them for bigger battles to come. At this critical moment, the socialist left must fight to win, and that means learning to spot a potentially transformative campaign when we see one.

This is not to say that Medicare for All is the only fight socialists should be involved in right now. Other fights might include demands for abundant and beautiful social housing, for tuition-free public education from pre-K through college or trade school, and for a federal jobs guarantee paired with a pro-environment green jobs program.

Socialists can have reasonable disagreements over what exactly constitutes a structural reform struggle. That’s okay, and that’s the exactly the kind of debate the socialist left should be having with itself. We should, however, dispense with conceptions that counterpose reform struggles to the ultimate goal of socialism as a different kind of society. The logical conclusion of hostility to reform fights is abstention from working people’s ongoing efforts to improve their quality of life. That kind of perpetual bench-warming leads to a kind of sectarian isolation made sterile by a lack of meaningful contact with the millions of people who currently stand outside the fold.

Class conflict is always happening under capitalism. Our task is to locate the most promising currents of mass working-class resistance, support them, and to win leadership roles in them on the basis of our good work. This would imbue them with a socialist perspective and character and draw in as many people into the struggle as possible. If we abdicate that responsibility, we’ve blocked off our best avenue for making a revolution in our lifetimes.

## 1NC – T

#### Our interpretation is that the resolution should define the division of affirmative and negative ground and offense. It was *negotiated* and *announced in advance*, providing both sides with a reasonable opportunity to prepare to engage one another’s arguments.

**Resolved denotes a proposal to be enacted by law**   
**Words and Phrases 1964** Permanent Edition   
Definition of the word “resolve,” given by Webster is “**to express an opinion or determination by resolution or vote; as ‘it was resolved by the legislature;**” It is of **similar** force **to the word “enact,”** which is **defined** by Bouvier **as** meaning “**to establish by law**”.

#### Ought means should

Merriam Webster, No Date – Merriam Webster’s Learner’s Dictionary, “ought”, <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/definition/ought>  
ought /ˈɑːt/ verb  
Learner's definition of OUGHT [modal verb] 1 ◊ Ought is almost always followed by to and the infinitive form of a verb. The phrase ought to has the same meaning as should and is used in the same ways, but it is less common and somewhat more formal. The negative forms ought not and oughtn't are often used without a following to. — used to indicate what is expected They ought to be here by now. You ought to be able to read this book. There ought to be a gas station on the way. 2 — used to say or suggest what should be done You ought to get some rest. That leak ought to be fixed. You ought to do your homework.

#### Should requires legal effect

Summers 94 (Justice – Oklahoma Supreme Court, “Kelsey v. Dollarsaver Food Warehouse of Durant”, 1994 OK 123, 11-8, http://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/DeliverDocument.asp?CiteID=20287#marker3fn13)

¶4 The legal question to be resolved by the court is whether the word "should"[13](http://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/DeliverDocument.asp?CiteID=20287#marker3fn13) in the May 18 order connotes futurity or may be deemed a ruling *in praesenti*.[14](http://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/DeliverDocument.asp?CiteID=20287#marker3fn14) The answer to this query is not to be divined from rules of grammar;[15](http://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/DeliverDocument.asp?CiteID=20287#marker3fn15) it must be governed by the age-old practice culture of legal professionals and its immemorial language usage. To determine if the omission (from the critical May 18 entry) of the turgid phrase, "and the same hereby is", (1) makes it an in futuro ruling - i.e., an expression of what the judge will or would do at a later stage - or (2) constitutes an in in praesenti resolution of a disputed law issue, the trial judge's intent must be garnered from the four corners of the entire record. [CONTINUES – TO FOOTNOTE] [13](http://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/DeliverDocument.asp?CiteID=20287#marker2fn13) "*Should*" not only is used as a "present indicative" synonymous with *ought* but also is the past tense of "shall" with various shades of meaning not always easy to analyze. See 57 C.J. Shall § 9, Judgments § 121 (1932). O. JESPERSEN, GROWTH AND STRUCTURE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (1984); St. Louis & S.F.R. Co. v. Brown, 45 Okl. 143, 144 P. 1075, 1080-81 (1914). For a more detailed explanation, see the Partridge quotation infra note 15. Certain contexts mandate a construction of the term "should" as more than merely indicating preference or desirability. Brown, supra at 1080-81 (jury instructions stating that jurors "should" reduce the amount of damages in proportion to the amount of contributory negligence of the plaintiff was held to imply an *obligation* *and to be more than advisory*); Carrigan v. California Horse Racing Board, 60 Wash. App. 79, [802 P.2d 813](http://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/deliverdocument.asp?box1=802&box2=P.2D&box3=813) (1990) (one of the Rules of Appellate Procedure requiring that a party "should devote a section of the brief to the request for the fee or expenses" was interpreted to mean that a party is under an *obligation* to include the requested segment); State v. Rack, 318 S.W.2d 211, 215 (Mo. 1958) ("should" would mean the same as "shall" or "must" when used in an instruction to the jury which tells the triers they "should disregard false testimony"). [14](http://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/DeliverDocument.asp?CiteID=20287#marker2fn14) *In praesenti* means literally "at the present time." BLACK'S LAW DICTIONARY 792 (6th Ed. 1990). In legal parlance the phrase denotes that which in law is *presently* or *immediately effective*, as opposed to something that *will* or *would* become effective *in the future [in futurol*]. See Van Wyck v. Knevals, [106 U.S. 360](http://www.oscn.net/applications/oscn/deliverdocument.asp?box1=106&box2=U.S.&box3=360), 365, 1 S.Ct. 336, 337, 27 L.Ed. 201 (1882).

#### Member nations of the World Trade Organization are

Cal Chamber [“World Trade Organization,” California Chamber of Commerce] JL

The WTO and its 164 member nations is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. At its heart are the WTO agreements, negotiated and signed by the bulk of the world’s trading nations and ratified or approved in their parliaments or legislatures. The goal is to help producers of goods and services, exporters and importers conduct their business.

#### WTO is

MBN N.D. [(Market Business News, an online newspaper specializing in financial, economic and business news worldwide) “World Trade Organization (WTO) – definition and meaning” MBN, No date. <https://marketbusinessnews.com/financial-glossary/world-trade-organization-wto-definition-meaning/>] RR

The World Trade Organization, often referred to by its initials WTO, is a global international organization that deals with the rules of trade between countries, and helps trading nations resolve disputes. The WTO says it is the only global organization that does this. The World Trade Organization says it aims to help producers of goods and services, importers, and exporters conduct their business.

#### Intellectual property protections are

USFG 14 [(US Mission to International Organizations in Geneva) “Key Forms of Intellectual Property Protection,” 4/24/2014] JL

The key forms of intellectual property protection are patents, copyrights, trademarks and trade secrets. Because intellectual property shares many of the characteristics of real and personal property, associated rights permit intellectual property to be treated as an asset that can be bought, sold, licensed or given away. Intellectual property laws enable owners, inventors and creators to protect their property from unauthorized use.

#### Medicine is

Lexico ND [(Lexico dictionary) https://www.lexico.com/definition/medicine] BC

The science or practice of the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease (in technical use often taken to exclude surgery)

#### Vote negative to preserve limits and equitable division of ground – the resolution is the most predictable stasis point for debates, anything outside of that ruins prep and clash by allowing the affirmative to pick any grounds for debate. That greenlights a race away from the core topic controversies that allow for robust contestation, which favors the aff by making neg ground inapplicable, susceptible to the perm, and concessionary. Two additional impacts:

#### Accessibility – Cutting negs to every possible aff wrecks small schools, which has a disparate impact on under-resourced and minority debaters. Counter-interpretations are arbitrary, unpredictable, and don’t solve the world of neg prep because there’s no grounding in the resolution

#### Link turns their education offense – getting to the third and fourth level of tactical engagement is only possible with refined and well-researched positions connected to the resolutional mechanism. Repeated debates over core issues incentivize innovative argument production and improved advocacy based on feedback and nuanced responses from opponents.

#### Prefer our impact: they’ve skewed the game which necessarily comes first because it makes evaluating the aff impossible. The role of individual debate rounds on broader subject formation is white noise – *can you remember what happened in doubles of the Loyola tournament your junior year?* – individual rounds don’t affect our subjectivity, so fairness is the only impact your ballot can resolve. You should presume all their truth claims false because they have not been properly tested

#### They can’t get offense: we don’t exclude them, only persuade you that our methodology is best. Every debate requires a winner and loser, so voting negative doesn’t reject them from debate, it just says they should make a better argument next time.

## 1NC – Case