## 1AC

### Framing

#### The standard is minimizing material violence. Prefer:

#### **Traditional risk calculus deprioritizes marginalized voices in favor of catastrophic fears. Policymaking must center discussion on harm to disadvantaged populations**

Verchick 96 [Robert, Assistant Professor, University of Missouri -- Kansas City School of Law. J.D., Harvard Law School, 1989, “IN A GREENER VOICE: FEMINIST THEORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE” 19 Harv. Women's L.J. 23] //AHS

The scientific process used to assess risk purports to focus single-mindedly on only one feature of a potential injury: the objective probability of its occurrence. n276 Risk assessors, who consider most value judgments irrelevant in determining statistical risk, seek to banish them at every stage. n277 As a result, **the language of risk assessment** -- and of related environmental safety standards -- often carry an air of irrebuttable precision and certainty. The EPA, for example, defines the standard acceptable level of risk under Superfund as "10<-6>" -- that is, the probability that one person in a million would develop cancer due to exposure to site contamination. n278 [\*76] Feminism challenges this model of scientific risk assessment on at least three levels. First, feminism questions the assumption that scientific inquiry is value-neutral, that is, free of societal bias or prejudice. n279 Indeed, as many have pointed out, one's perspective unavoidably influences the practice of science. n280 Western science may be infused with its own ideology, perpetuating, in the view of the ecofeminists, cycles of discrimination, domination, and exploitation. n281 Second, even if scientific inquiry by itself were value-neutral, environmental regulation based on such inquiry would still contain subjective elements. Environmental regulation, like any other product of democracy, inevitably reflects elements of subjectivity, compromise, and self-interest. The technocratic language of regulation **serves only to "mask, not eliminate, political and social considerations." n282 We have already seen how the subjective decision to prefer white men** as subjects for epidemiological study can skew risk assessments against the interests of women and people of color. The focus of many assessments on the risk of cancer deaths, but not, say, the risks of birth defects or miscarriages, is yet another example of how a policymaker's subjective decision of what to look for can influence what is ultimately seen. n283 Once risk data are collected and placed in a statistical form, the ultimate translation of that information into rules and standards of conduct once again reflects value judgments. A safety threshold of one in a million or a preference for "best conventional technology" does not spring from the periodic table, but rather evolves from the application [\*77] of human experience and judgment to scientific information. Whose experience? Whose judgment? Which information? These are the questions that feminism prompts, and they will be discussed shortly. Finally, feminists would argue that **questions involving the risk of death and disease should not even aspire to value neutrality**. Such decisions -- which affect not only today's generations, but those of the future -- should be made with all related political and moral considerations plainly on the table. n284 In addition, **policymakers should look to all** **perspectives,** especially those **of society's most vulnerable** members, to develop as complete a picture of the moral issues as possible. Debates about scientific risk assessment and public values often appear as a tug of war between the "technicians," who would apply only value-neutral criteria to set regulatory standards, and the "public," who demand that psychological perceptions and contextual factors also be considered. n285 Environmental justice advocates, strongly concerned with the practical experiences of threatened communities, argue convincingly for the latter position. n286 A feminist critique of the issue, however, suggests that the debate is much richer and more complicated than a bipolar view allows. For feminists, the notion of value neutrality simply does not exist. The debate between technicians and the public, according to feminists, is not merely a contest between science and feelings, but a broader discussion about the sets of methods, values, and attitudes to which each group subscribes. Furthermore, feminists might argue, the parties to this discussion divide into more than two categories. Because one's world view is premised on many things, including personal experience, one might expect that subgroups within either category might differ in significant ways from other subgroups. Therefore, feminists would anticipate a broad spectrum of views concerning scientific risk assessment and public values. Intuitively, this makes sense. Certainly scientists disagree among themselves about the hazards of nuclear waste, ozone depletion, and global warming. n287 Many critics have argued that scientists, despite their allegiance [\*78] to rational method, are nonetheless influenced by personal and political views. n288 Similarly, members of the public are a widely divergent group. One would not be surprised to see politicians, land developers, and blue-collar workers disagreeing about environmental standards for essentially non-scientific reasons. Politicians and bureaucrats are two sets of the non-scientific community that affect environmental standards in fundamental ways. Their adherence to vocal, though not always broadly representative, constituencies may lead them to disfavor less advantaged socioeconomic groups when addressing environmental concerns. n289 In order to understand a diversity of risk perception and to see how attitudes and social status affect the risk assessment process, we must return to the feminist inquiry that explores the relationship between attitudes and identity. 1. The Diversity of Risk Perception A recent national survey, conducted by James Flynn, Paul Slovic, and C.K. Mertz, measured the risk perceptions of a group of 1512 people that included numbers of men, women, whites, and non-whites proportional to their ratios in society. n290 Respondents answered questions about the health risks of twenty-five environmental, technological, and "life-style" hazards, including such hazards as ozone depletion, chemical waste, and cigarette smoking. n291 The researchers asked them to rate each hazard as posing "almost no health risk," a "slight health risk," a "moderate health risk," or a "high health risk." The researchers then analyzed [\*79] the responses to determine whether the randomly selected groups of white men, white women, non-white men, and non-white women differed in any way. The researchers found that perceptions of risk generally differed on the lines of gender and race. Women, for instance, perceived greater risk from most hazards than did men. n292 Furthermore, non-whites as a group perceived greater risk from most hazards than did whites. n293 Yet the most striking results appeared when the researchers considered differences in gender and race together. They found that "white males tended to differ from everyone else in their attitudes and perceptions -- on average, they perceived risks as much smaller and much more acceptable than did other people." n294 Indeed, without exception, the pool of white men perceived each of the twenty-five hazards as less risky than did non-white men, white women, or non-white women. n295 Wary that other factors associated with gender or race could be influencing their findings, the researchers later conducted several multiple regression analyses to correct for differences in income, education, political orientation, the presence of children in the home, and age, among others. Yet even after all corrections, "gender, race, and 'white male' [status] remained highly significant predictors" of perceptions of risk. n296 2. Explaining the Diversity From a feminist perspective, these findings are important because they suggest that **risk assessors**, politicians, and bureaucrats **-- the large majority of whom are white men** n297 -- may be acting on attitudes about security and risk that women and people of color do not widely share. If this is so, white men, as the "measurers of all things," have crafted a system of environmental protection that is biased toward their subjective understandings of the world. n298 [\*80] Flynn, Slovic, and Mertz speculate that white men's **perceptions of risk** may **differ** from those of others **because** in many ways **women and people of color are "more vulnerable, because** they benefit less from many of [society's] technologies and institutions, and **because they have less power and control**." n299 Although Flynn, Slovic, and Mertz are careful to acknowledge that they have not yet tested this hypothesis empirically, their explanation appears consistent with the life experiences of less empowered groups and comports with previous understandings about the roles of control and risk perception. n300 Women and people of color, for instance, are more vulnerable to environmental threat in several ways. Such groups are sometimes more biologically vulnerable than are white men. n301 People of color are more likely to live near hazardous waste sites, to breathe dirty air in urban communities, and to be otherwise exposed to environmental harm. n302 Women, because of their traditional role as primary caretakers, are more likely to be aware of the vulnerabilities of their children. n303 It makes sense that such vulnerabilities would give rise to increased fear about risk. It is also very likely that women and people of color believe they benefit less from the technical institutions that create toxic byproducts. n304 Further, people may be more likely to discount risk if they feel somehow compensated for the activity. n305 For this reason, Americans worry relatively little about driving automobiles, an activity with enormous advantages in our large country but one that claims tens of thousands of lives per year. The researchers' final hypothesis -- that differences in perception can be explained by the lack of "power and control" exercised by women and people of color -- suggests the importance that such factors as voluntariness and control over risk play in shaping perceptions. [\*81] Risk perception research frequently emphasizes the significance of voluntariness in evaluating risk. Thus, a person may view water-skiing as less risky than breathing polluted air because the former is accepted voluntarily. n306 Voluntary risks are viewed as more acceptable in part because they are products of autonomous choice. n307 A risk accepted voluntarily is also one from which a person is more likely to derive an individual benefit and one over which a person is more likely to retain some kind of control. n308 Some studies have found that people prefer voluntary risks to involuntary risks by a factor of 1000 to 1. n309 Although environmental risks are generally viewed as involuntary risks to a certain degree, choice plays a role in assuming risks. White men are still more likely to exercise some degree of choice in assuming environmental risks than other groups. Communities of color face greater difficulty in avoiding the placement of hazardous facilities in their neighborhoods and are more likely to live in areas with polluted air and lead contamination. n310 Families of color wishing to buy their way out of such polluted neighborhoods often find their mobility limited by housing discrimination, redlining by banks, and residential segregation. n311 The workplace similarly presents workers exposed to toxic hazards (a disproportionate number of whom are minorities) n312 with impossible choices between health and work, or between sterilization and demotion. n313 Just as marginalized groups have less choice in determining the degree of risk they will assume, they may feel less control over the risks they face. "Whether or not the risk is assumed voluntarily, people have greater [\*82] fear of activities with risks that appear to be outside their individual control." n314 For this reason, people often fear flying in an airplane more than driving a car, even though flying is statistically safer. n315 If white men are more complacent about public risks, it is perhaps because they are more likely to have their hands on the steering wheel when such risks are imposed. White men still control the major political and business institutions in this country. n316 They also dominate the sciences n317 and make up the vast majority of management staff at environmental agencies. n318 Women and people of color see this disparity and often lament their back-seat role in shaping environmental policy. n319 Thus, many people of color in the environmental justice movement believe that environmental laws work to their disadvantage by design. n320 [\*83] The toxic rivers of Mississippi's "Cancer Alley," n321 the extensive poisoning of rural Indian land, n322 and the mismanaged cleanup of the weapons manufacturing site in Hanford, Washington n323 only promote the feeling that environmental policy in the United States sacrifices the weak for the benefit of the strong. In addition, the catastrophic potential that groups other than white men associate with a risk may explain the perception gap between those groups and white males. Studies of risk perception show that, in general, individuals harbor particularly great fears of catastrophe. n324 For this reason, earthquakes, terrorist bombings, and other disasters in which high concentrations of people are killed or injured prove particularly disturbing to the lay public. Local environmental threats involving toxic dumps, aging smelters, or poisoned wells also produce high concentrations of localized harm that can appear catastrophic to those involved. n325 Some commentators contend that the catastrophic potential of a risk should influence risk assessment in only minimal ways. n326 Considering **public fear of catastrophes**, they argue, **will irrationally lead policymakers to battle** **more dramatic but statistically** **less threatening hazards, while accepting more harmful but more mundane** **hazards.** n327 [\*84] At least two reasons explain why the catastrophic potential of environmental hazards must be given weight in risk assessment. First, concentrated and **localized** environmental **hazards** do6 for instance, will **create community-wide stress** that will debilitate the neighborhood **in emotional, sociological, and economic ways**. n328 **To ignore this** communal harm is **to underestimate** severely the true **risk involved.** n329 Second, **because** concentrated and **localized** environmental **hazards tend to be unevenly distributed on the basis of race and income** level, any resulting **mass injury to a threatened population takes on profound moral character**. For this reason, Native Americans often characterize the military's poisoning of Indian land as genocide. n330 [\*85] 3. Understanding Through Diversity Flynn, Slovic, and Mertz challenge the traditional, static view of statistical risk with a richer, more vibrant image involving relationships of power, status, and trust. n331 "In short, **'risk**iness' **means more** to people **than 'expected number of fatalities.'**" n332 These findings affirm the feminist claim that public **policy must consider both logic and local experience in addressing a problem.** n333 Current attempts to "re-educate" fearful communities with only risk assessments and scientific seminars are, therefore, destined to fail. n334 By the same token, even dual approaches that combine science and experience will fall short if the appeal to experience does not track local priorities and values. Cynthia Hamilton illustrates these points in her inspiring account of how a South Central Los Angeles community group, consisting mainly of working-class women, battled a proposed solid waste incinerator. n335 At one point, the state sent out consultants and environmental experts to put the community's fears into perspective. The consultants first appealed to the community's practical, experience-based side, by explaining how the new incinerator would bring needed employment to the area and by offering $ 2 million in community development. n336 But the community group found the promise of "real development" unrealistic and the cash gift insulting. n337 When experts then turned to quantifying the risks "scientifically" their attempts backfired again. Hamilton reports that "expert assurance that health risks associated with dioxin exposure were less than those associated with 'eating peanut butter' unleashed a flurry of dissent. All of the women, young and old, working-class and professional, had made peanut butter sandwiches for years." n338 The sandwich analogy, even assuming its statistical validity, could not convince the women because it did not consider other valid risk factors (voluntariness, dread, and so on) and because it did not appear plausible in the group members' experience. In the end, Hamilton explains that the superficial explanations and sarcastic responses of the male "experts" left the women even more united and convinced that "working-class women's [\*86] concerns cannot be dismissed." n339 Thus even **the "science" of risk assessment,** if it is to serve effectively, **must include the voices of those** typically **excluded from its practice.**

#### And policy discussions that address material harms are essential – abstract critique is counterproductive to revolutionary aims. Concrete solutions matter

Bryant 12 [(EDITED FOR GENDERED LANGUAGE – the author said “she” and it was replaced with the word “to” – Levi Bryant is currently a Professor of Philosophy at Collin College. In addition to working as a professor, Bryant has also served as a Lacanian psychoanalyst. He received his Ph.D. from Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois, where he originally studied 'disclosedness' with the Heidegger scholar Thomas Sheehan. Bryant later changed his dissertation topic to the transcendental empiricism of Gilles Deleuze, “Critique of the Academic Left”, http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2012/11/11/underpants-gnomes-a-critique-of-the-academic-left/)]

Within a Marxo-Hegelian context, a thought is **abstract** when it ignores all of the mediations in which a thing is embedded. For example, I understand a robust tree abstractly when I attribute its robustness, say, to its genetics alone, ignoring the complex relations to its soil, the air, sunshine, rainfall, etc., that also allowed it to grow robustly in this way. This is the sort of **critique** we’re always leveling against the neoliberals. They are abstract thinkers. In their doxa that individuals are entirely responsible for themselves and that they completely make themselves by pulling themselves up by their bootstraps, neoliberals **ignore** all the mediations belonging to the **social and material context** in which human beings develop that play a role in determining the vectors of their life. They ignore, for example, that George W. Bush grew up in a family that was highly connected to the world of business and government and that this gave him opportunities that someone living in a remote region of Alaska in a very different material infrastructure and set of family relations does not have. **To think concretely is to engage** in a cartography of these mediations, a mapping of these networks, **from circumstance to circumstance** (what I call an “onto-cartography”). It is to map assemblages, networks, or ecologies in the constitution of entities. Unfortunately, the academic left falls prey to its own form of abstraction. It’s good at carrying out **critiques** that **denounce** various **social formations, yet** very **poor at proposing** any sort of **realistic** constructions of **alternatives**. This because it thinks abstractly in its own way, ignoring how networks, assemblages, structures, or regimes of attraction would have to be remade to create a workable alternative. Here I’m reminded by the “underpants gnomes” depicted in South Park: The underpants gnomes have a plan for achieving profit that goes like this: Phase 1: Collect Underpants Phase 2: ? Phase 3: Profit! They even have a catchy song to go with their work: Well this is sadly how it often is with the academic left. Our plan seems to be as follows: Phase 1: Ultra-Radical Critique Phase 2: ? Phase 3: Revolution and complete social transformation! Our problem is that we seem perpetually stuck at phase 1 without ever explaining what is to be done at phase 2. Often the critiques articulated at phase 1 are right, but there are nonetheless all sorts of problems with those critiques nonetheless. In order to reach phase 3, we have to produce new collectives. In order for new collectives to be produced, people need to be able to hear and understand the critiques developed at phase 1. Yet this is where everything begins to fall apart. Even though these critiques are often right, **we express them in ways that only an** academic with **a PhD** in critical theory and post-structural theory **can understand.** How exactly is Adorno to produce an effect in the world if only PhD’s in the humanities can understand him? Who are these things for? We seem to always ignore these things and then look down our noses with disdain at the Naomi Kleins and David Graebers of the world. To make matters worse, we publish our work in expensive academic journals that only universities can afford, with presses that don’t have a wide distribution, and give our talks at expensive hotels at academic conferences attended only by other academics. Again, who are these things for? Is it an accident that so many activists look away from these things with contempt, thinking their more about an academic industry and tenure, than producing change in the world? If a tree falls in a forest and no one is there to hear it, it doesn’t make a sound! Seriously dudes and dudettes, what are you doing? But finally, and worst of all, us Marxists and anarchists all too often act like assholes. We denounce others, we condemn them, we berate them for not engaging with the questions we want to engage with, and we vilify them when they don’t embrace every bit of the doxa that we endorse. We are every bit as off-putting and unpleasant as the fundamentalist minister or the priest of the inquisition (have people yet understood that Deleuze and Guattari’s Anti-Oedipus was a critique of the French communist party system and the Stalinist party system, and the horrific passions that arise out of parties and identifications in general**?). This type of “revolutionary”** is the greatest friend of the reactionary and capitalist because they do more to **drive people into the** embrace of **reigning ideology** than to undermine reigning ideology. These are the people that keep Rush Limbaugh in business. Well done! But this isn’t where our most serious shortcomings lie. Our most serious shortcomings are to be found at phase 2. **We** almost **never make concrete proposals** for how things ought to be restructured, for what new **material infrastructures** and semiotic fields **need to be produced**, and when we do, our **critique-intoxicated** cynics and **skeptics** immediately jump in with an analysis of all the ways in which these things contain dirty secrets, ugly motives, and **are doomed to fail**.

### Advantage 1 is Labor Rights

#### Striketober and Republican obstruction prove now is the key time to institutionalize support for striking workers Sims 10/25 Joe Sims, People’s World. Worker power sweeps the country during #Striketober. <https://www.peoplesworld.org/article/worker-power-sweeps-the-country-during-striketober/> //AHS

**Workers** all across the country **are striking** and engaging in other job actions, large and small. Fed up with company attempts to impose two-tier wages, long hours, and inadequate pay—**despite rising productivity and** skyrocketing corporate **profits**—unions in several industries have had it. Now they’re marching on the picket lines. As of last weekend, **over 100,000** workers had **voted to authorize strikes**, and over 169 have occurred so far this year, the largest uptick since the wave of job actions in 2018-19. The AFL-CIO has **aptly labeled this month #striketober**. **The class struggle is sharpening.** There is deep **anger, unrest, and** growing **militancy among the working class**. Why? **Companies want more** **while labor is** repeatedly **asked to do with less**. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that “manufacturing sector labor productivity increased 8% in the second quarter of 2021, as output increased 5.5% and hours worked decreased 2.3%.” Overall, productivity “grew an average of 3% in the first half of 2021. Unit labor costs fell 0.8% during the same period.” But at what cost to the worker? **Wages are too low to pay for** the rising cost of **housing, hours are too long** to allow adequate time for caregiving, **and lack of health care** benefits **force many to go to work sick**. Workers are tired of supplying profits to billionaires like Jeff Bezos to fuel their rocket rides and egos. As the nation emerges from the pandemic, **literally millions are so dissatisfied that they’re simply quitting in** what some have described as **a silent general strike**. The business press calls it “The Great Resignation.” The left-wing Monthly Review writes: “The seriousness of the situation was confirmed by the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics report showing that **a record 2.9% of the workforce quit their jobs** in August, which is equivalent to 4.3 million resignations.” According to one poll, “employees were so dissatisfied with their situation that more than one-quarter (28%) of all respondents left their jobs without another job lined up.” One of the main reasons workers are leaving is burnout, cited by 40% of the poll respondents. Big business is alarmed at the political significance of so many workers quitting. “The Great Resignation,” Forbes writes, “is a sort of workers’ revolution and uprising against bad bosses and tone-deaf companies that refuse to pay well and take advantage of their staff.” Contributing to the spike in labor activism is growing confidence in collective action and knowledge that you can strike and win. A glut in job openings, despite still significant unemployment, has improved unions’ bargaining position and power. **Pro-union sentiment among the** broad **public is** at its **highest** level **in several decades**. A Gallup poll released at the beginning of July showed that 68% of Americans approve of labor unions, up significantly from the 48% approval in 2009 during the throes of the Great Recession. In this regard, the Biden-Harris administration’s pro-union stance should not be underestimated, not the least of which is reflected by new appointments to the National Labor Relations Board. The new general counsel, Jennifer Abruzzo, for example, has “signaled that she is willing to reconsider all kinds of twisted and outdated precedents that have vastly favored bosses during a nearly four-decades-long union-busting drive…she’s indicated a willingness to issue bargaining orders—not elections—for new unions when employers commit Unfair Labor Practices, to certify minority members-only bargaining units to help unions establish a foothold and to be more creative about ‘make whole’ financial remedies for terminated union activists.” 10,000 workers at John Deere are among the latest to go out: “The strike wave that has hit John Deere has been building nationwide for more than a month. Last week Kellogg workers went on strike, and over the summer Mondelez, the maker of Nabisco Oreos walked out. Coal miners in Alabama have been on strike for months.” While uneven, **the working class** and people’s forces in local communities and workplaces **are gathering** in strength **for** the class and democratic **battles** that lie ahead. Today they’re focused on bread-and-butter issues of survival. But **with the Republican Party blocking everything** from strengthening voting rights to spending on climate change and human infrastructure, these economic **struggles are becoming political**. When that material force takes off—especially with the midterm elections looming—watch out. Big days are coming. But **it would be a mistake for the friends of labor to sit around** awaiting their arrival. Visit the picket lines and be sure to bring your walking shoes. A box of donuts and coffee would be appreciated but more important are the smiles and solidarity of friends. Talk, learn, listen, and afterwards share the experience. In so doing, you’ll add to the growing class consciousness and militancy that’s sweeping the nation. It will do everyone concerned a whole lot of good. **Building** community **support for striking workers is vital, calling on** local **politicians**, clergy, and neighborhood leaders **to lend solidarity**. Letters to the editor along with social media campaigns can help build **pro-strike sentiment.** Community pickets at retail outlets and dealerships might also be helpful. Solidarity should also include boycotts **and other forms of public pressure** against companies that refuse to provide good wages, health care, working conditions, and rights in the workplace. Yes, there’s a rising tide of struggle occurring deep within our class. Let’s give it our every support.

#### And there is work to be done---current law prohibits secondary striking and undermines union leverage Rhinehart 21

https://www.epi.org/blog/six-ways-the-protecting-the-right-to-organize-pro-act-restores-workers-bargaining-power/

The PRO Act eliminates the ban on so-called “secondary” activity. In order to win a wage increase, a voice on new technology, safety improvements, or other bargaining priorities, workers need leverage to put economic pressure on their employer to accept their demands. But **current law robs workers of their leverage** in many ways, **including a prohibition on so-called “secondary” activity** that was enacted by Congress in 1947. In fact, current law instructs the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to give top priority to shutting down so-called “secondary” activity. These cases are given even higher priority than cases alleging that employers have illegally fired union activists, and statistics show this has in fact been the case. For example, in the first 12 years after the restriction on secondary activity was first implemented, the number of injunction proceedings against unions for engaging in illegal secondary activity skyrocketed by 1,188%, while virtually no injunction proceedings were brought against employers for violating workers’ rights. **This** restriction on secondary activity **forbids workers from picketing or otherwise putting pressure on so-called “neutral” companies other than their employer**, even if those companies could influence their employer’s practices by, for example, withholding purchases until workers and their employer reach a collective bargaining agreement. The restriction has been interpreted so broadly as to prohibit janitors from picketing a building management company over sexual harassment by its janitorial subcontractor. The Trump NLRB General Counsel unsuccessfully tried to argue that floating an inflatable Scabby the Rat balloon at a labor protest was illegal secondary activity, even though courts have consistently said such protests are protected by the First Amendment. Given the prevalence of subcontracting and the interrelated nature of business relationships, **the ban** on secondary activity does not reflect the realities of today’s business structures. It **deprives workers of an important tool in** **the bargaining process** **and** unfairly **tips the power balance to employers**. To correct this imbalance, the PRO Act repeals the ban on secondary activity.

#### The impact is worldwide oppression and violence against millions of workers in the squo---labor solidarity through striking is key to solve ITF 21 International Transport Workers Federation (ITF Seafarers), April 30, 2021. “It’s time to end oppression and respect workers’ civil liberties.” <https://www.itfseafarers.org/en/news/its-time-end-oppression-and-respect-workers-civil-liberties> //AHS

May Day is when workers of the world stop and reflect. We’re seeing so many human rights abuses — workers being denied their right to free association, free speech being suppressed. **It is the responsibility of us all to defend** our fundamental human rights. **The right to strike**. The right protest. The right to freedom of association. These **civil liberties**, that run through the veins of trade unionist globally **are under attack**. And collectively we need to stand shoulder to shoulder and say, “no more oppression”. Today, on May Day, the ITF and its 20 million transport workers call on governments, employers and civil society to respect our rights, end the persecution of trade unionists, and protect our freedoms. Solidarity is our most powerful weapon in the fight to uphold human rights – and defend the persecution of our sisters, brothers and friends around the globe. This is also very real for 13 activists at **the** **Thai state railway**. The “SRUT 13” were handed three-year jail sentences last October, after legal action brought by the railway company. Their crime? **Campaigning for better safety.** They **were scapegoated** **for an accident in 2009** that both the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand and an internal investigation concluded was primarily caused by poor maintenance. The Thai **authorities used false charges** to deflect attention from their own incompetence. Leonardo Escala no longer has any human rights. In February, he was **shot over and over and killed** outside his home in Tondo, Manila. Escala, **president of the dockers’ union at an ICTSI port in Manila**, continued to **exercising his right to freedom of association**, despite receiving threats on his life. Clearly, the authorities are not doing enough to protect people’s human right to life. In **Myanmar, the military coup is seeing workers imprisoned and protesters shot dead** on the streets. **Brazil has a new president who endorses political killings**. **In Belarus, worker rights are routinely trampled. The list of human rights abuses and oppression** that ITF sees **goes on and on**. Some can be dealt with at a local level. But increasingly we need a global response. **Workers** who escape oppression **must stand** steadfast with those who cannot. It is the responsibility of each and every trade unionists to act – **solidarity is our most powerful weapon** **in the fight for justice, equality, freedom and dignity.** Demands must be put on shareholders to stop doing business with oppressive regimes. CEOs of global businesses must be held to account for human rights violations in their global supply chains. And our politicians must stiffen their resolve on human rights. It should be absolutely clear to them and the rest of the world that we will not stand for oppression. **If we all stand firm** on human rights, **there will be no more oppression**. By defending the human rights of others, we are defending our own way of life. The madness can stop, if we human beings decide to collectively stop it.

### Advantage 2 is Income Inequality

#### Union membership is down despite strikes---failure to protect workers including RTS means the squo can’t solve Rosenberg 20 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/01/22/workers-are-fired-up-union-participation-is-still-decline-new-statistics-show/> //AHS

In a year when teachers and autoworkers mounted lengthy strikes, **participation in labor unions** in 2019 **continued their** decades-long **decline**. Union membership in the American workforce was down to 10.3 percent from 10.5 percent in 2018, according to statistics released Wednesday by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The continued slide shows how **energy and momentum around the labor movement** **is not translating into equivalent growth for unions, whose memberships have fallen sharply** as a percentage of the U.S. workforce over the past roughly 40 years. In 1983, unions represented about 1 out of 5 workers; now it’s 1 in 10 workers. “They’re disappointing numbers for workers and unions,” said Professor Joseph McCartin, the executive director of the Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor at Georgetown University. “The expansion of the labor market in 2019 didn’t produce a proportional expansion in union members. Unions would have hoped to make gains in the course of the past year and they didn’t.” The number of total union members — 14.6 million — is relatively unchanged from 2018. But in a robust jobs market, the number of union workers added has not been enough to replace those who retired or left the workforce. The drop in union representation in the workforce is sobering news for the labor movement, which otherwise saw an eventful year. Major strikes including grocery workers in the Northeast, teachers in cities such as Chicago and Little Rock, Ark., and autoworkers around the country attracted public attention and became a crucial stop for 2020 candidates on the campaign trail. The 47,000 General Motors workers who brought the company’s car production to a halt during a six-week strike that culminated with a contract — and concessions — from the company in the fall marked one of the largest private-sector strikes in the last 20 years. And even nonunion workers have taken advantage of the tight labor market to advocate for more workers’ rights. Employees have circulated petitions around Silicon Valley companies, calling for tech companies to cut ties with immigration enforcement, and gig-economy drivers at Lyft and Uber have rallied for better pay and more rights. The numbers of **workers who participated in** large-scale **strikes ballooned to 500,000** in 2018, up from 25,000 in 2017, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Strike participation numbers for 2019 have yet to be finalized. **But** the broader factors that have contributed to union declines over the last few decades appear to still be in play. “The lack of an increase in union membership points to the fact that **there are still so many barriers to organizing**,” said Heidi Shierholz, the director of policy at the Economic Policy Institute. “When people try to organize at their workplace there is just **a relentless, fierce opposition on the part of employers**.” One reason why union membership may have declined is that 2019 was the first full year since the Supreme Court’s decision in the Janus case. The court ruled that it was unconstitutional to allow unions to require collective bargaining fees from public employees — a decision that was seen as a major blow for unions and their budgets. Local public employees saw a small dip in membership to 39.4 percent in 2019, down from 40.3 the previous year, Shierholz noted. But union membership among state government workers has grown. Public support for unions appears to be growing. Some 64 percent of people said they approved of unions last year, among the highest numbers the company has collected in the last 50 years, according to Gallup. And nearly half of nonunion workers say they would join a union if given the opportunity to do so — a 40-year high. “People look at decline of unionization and think that people don’t want unions anymore,” Shierholz said. “But its just demonstrably false.” The momentum in the labor movement has fostered a political discussion on the left about workers’ rights and strengthening the labor movement. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) wants **to give federal workers the right to strike** and ban “at will” employment, which allows companies to fire workers without cause. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) has called for banning the permanent replacement of striking workers and strengthening the National Labor Relations Board, which **enforces laws meant to protect unions and organizing** in workplaces. Both of them, along with Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg, say they want to undo “right to work” laws that Republicans have championed in states throughout the country that allow workers to opt out of paying union dues. Some labor advocates said that **union participation could** eventually **rise if** worker **strikes fortify** the **political will to make changes** like these. “The way that huge upsurges in union membership have happened in this country is when workers have taken control, gone on massive strikes and forced corporate elite to enter grand bargains,” said Jane McAlevey, a former labor organizer and the author of “A Collective Bargain: Unions, Organizing and the Fight for Democracy." McAlevey noted that **previous waves of unionization** — in the 1930s after the National Labor Relations Act passed, and a few decades later as the public sector began to unionize — **were preceded by large scale strikes**. “Strikes are a precursor,” she said. "I believe we’re at the beginning of that cycle.” The International Association of Fire Fighters is one of the larger unions that has seen growth over the years. The union was at 321,000 last year up, from 220,000 20 years ago. Harold Schaitberger, the union’s general president, said their **success is due to** showing their members the **benefits the union helped secure** for them, including better government codes on firefighting and success **in collective bargaining.** “**There’s a direct** connection to what the union does to having **tangible effect on their lives**,” he said.

#### Union decline leads to increased income inequality---strengthening labor laws i.e. codifying RTS can solve Da Costa 19 [Pedro Nicolaci da Costa, senior Markets contributor for Forbes, August 29, 2019. https://www.forbes.com/sites/pedrodacosta/2019/08/29/u-s-inequality-wage-stagnation-tied-to-falling-union-membership-in-the-private-sector/?sh=324a34917ff7](Pedro%20Nicolaci%20da%20Costa,%20senior%20Markets%20contributor%20for%20Forbes,%20August%2029,%202019.%20https://www.forbes.com/sites/pedrodacosta/2019/08/29/u-s-inequality-wage-stagnation-tied-to-falling-union-membership-in-the-private-sector/?sh=324a34917ff7)

Need further proof that **stagnant wages and rising inequality** can be **directly traced to a sharp drop in union membership in corporate America**? Look no further than a comprehensive new report from the Hamilton Project at Brookings, entitled "The Shift in Private Sector Union Membership: Explanations and Effects." The research chronicles the role of **the long-term decline of worker power, and unions** specifically, in **creating an economy that is highly unequal** and where the benefits of economic growth are not widespread. "We present evidence on the labor market effects of private sector unions, showing that unions reallocate income from employers to workers, with particularly large effects on the lower part of the wage distribution," write economists Ryan Nunn, Jimmy O’Donnell and Jay Shambaugh. "Consequently, the decline of union participation was **an important driver of the increase in wage inequality** and wage stagnation for some workers." This incredible chart traces the growth and retreat in union membership back to the 19th century. As the figure shows, the number of unionized workers has shrunk back to early 20th century levels with only 10.5% of all workers belonging to a union. Among private sector workers that number is even tinier—just 6.4% of the workforce. "The decline in union membership (also referred to as union density) over the past 45 years has occurred almost entirely within the private sector," the report said. The Hamilton study says employers have inherent advantages over workers in terms of information and power in the labor market, findings corroborated by a long history of research at the Economic Policy Institute, where I work. "**The classic solution to this asymmetry in bargaining power is the labor union**," the Hamilton report says. "By representing individual workers at the bargaining table, a union can ameliorate many of the disadvantages listed above and improve workers’ compensation and conditions of work." The Trump administration has turned what was an uphill battle for organized labor into an outright fight for survival, nominating pro-corporate judges that favor harmful arrangements like forced arbitration, stacking the National Labor Relations Board with anti-worker appointees and, most recently nominating former Walmart lawyer and Wall Street darling Eugene Scalia to the role Secretary of Labor. What can be done? According to Nunn, O’Donnell and Shambaugh, it’s the politics, stupid. "If unions are to regain a larger role in representing worker interests, **changes would** likely **need to be made to** current **labor** relations **law** and institutions," they write. "Options for doing so include making more use of sectoral bargaining, wage boards, works councils, and co-determination in addition to making it easier for workers to form unions." Fortunately, there’s legislation out there currently that would do much of that. **All Congress needs to do is act.**

#### Income inequality causes perpetual cycle of poverty for millions---historical trends confirm Gould 14 https://www.epi.org/blog/inequality-main-persistent-poverty/

I couldn’t agree more with Paul Krugman’s blog post this morning when he says, “**the main cause of persistent poverty** now **is** high **inequality of** market **income**.” We looked at precisely this question in the latest edition of State of Working America. (And the White House Council of Economic Advisors cited our work on this in their War on Poverty 50 Years Later Report, released today.) **In** the roughly **three decades** leading up to the most recent recession, **looking at the** **officially measured poverty rate**, educational upgrading and overall income growth were the two biggest poverty-reducing factors, while **income inequality was the largest poverty-increasing factor**. Relative to these factors, the racial composition of the U.S. population over this period (the growth of nonwhite populations with higher likelihoods of poverty) and changes in family structure (the growth of single mother households) have contributed much less to poverty, particularly in recent years. The figure below plots the impact of these economic and demographic factors on the official poverty rate from 1979 to 2007. *The impact of income inequality and income growth were quantitatively large, but in the opposite directions.* **Had income growth been equally distributed**, which in this analysis means that all families’ incomes would have grown at the pace of the average, **the poverty rate would have been** 5.5 points lower, essentially, **44 percent lower than what it was**. This rise in inequality, in turn, has been dominated by inequality of pre-tax, pre-transfer, market incomes. This means that **making real progress on pushing the poverty rate down** going forward **would be** helped enormously **by checking or** even **reversing** this growth in market **income inequality**. In concrete terms, this means we need wages to go up for those at the bottom and middle of the income distribution.

#### Poverty is the worst form of violence and controls the root cause to numerous forms of oppression based on race, class, ability, and gender Taniguchi 15

“[Why Poverty Is the Worst Form of Oppression . . . and Why We Should Start Giving a $hit](https://www.pacificcitizen.org/why-poverty-is-the-worst-form-of-oppression-and-why-we-should-start-giving-a-hit/)” By Rhianna Taniguchi AUGUST 6, 2015 [<https://www.pacificcitizen.org/why-poverty-is-the-worst-form-of-oppression-and-why-we-should-start-giving-a-hit/>]

Money is power — at least that’s what they say. In America, it is clear that race, money and power have a strong connection. So, why don’t we talk about it more? Asian Americans are commonly viewed as well-assimilated, educated and highly competent. However, 12.7 percent of Asian Americans are estimated to live in poverty according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2013 report. Unfortunately, this is one of the least-addressed issues within the model minority myth. Mahatma Gandhi said that “Poverty is the worst form of violence,” and quite frankly, I agree. Poverty is society’s way of perpetually dehumanizing people and subjecting them to unlivable conditions while calling it “just.” Those within society believe (or pretend to believe) that the system creating poverty is equitable and therefore fair. It is hard to deny the strong correlation between wealth and race, but ironically, that’s exactly what we do. The effects of poverty include mental and physical illness, inadequate nutrition, food insecurity, adverse effects on academic outcomes . . . the list goes on. The effects of poverty are most felt by women. This topic is never discussed with the urgency it deserves, and how can it? Where in the world do we start? Let’s first define poverty in the United States. The 2014 poverty thresholds by size of family and number of related children would define a two-adult household with one child in poverty if their total income was less than $16,317. That means living off of less than $15 per day per person. It doesn’t sound too bad, until you factor in rent, utilities, transportation to and from work, education, medicine, health care and food. So, why is race tied to poverty? Well, there are many speculations. The American Psychological Assn. has found that “while non-Hispanic whites still constitute the largest single group of Americans living in poverty, ethnic minority groups are overrepresented. These disparities are associated with the historical marginalization of ethnic minority groups and entrenched barriers to good education and jobs.” According to the APA, there are a few barriers. First and foremost is marginalization, which is assigning and confining a group to inferior conditions. As a result of marginalization, access to good education and jobs are limited. What are we doing as individuals, as a society, and as a country to battle the inequities? Whatever efforts we’re making, they’re not working — at least not fast enough. Financial education and social reconfiguration are the missing components of the equation to equity. On an individual level, we need to get smart about money in order to increase our income, increase our savings and increase our investments. I highly recommend LearnVest for affordable financial planning. We also need to change the way our society thinks — no person is inferior based on race, gender, sexual orientation or ability. Lastly, we need to provide access, education and tools to those who are most vulnerable in our community. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau actively listens to our community’s needs and concerns, but we must be vigilant and continuously seek progress. The JACL Credit Union is another resource that provides a higher interest rate than most banks with high standards of privacy, security and service. In a nutshell, you should care about poverty because it is one more way that society is using racial prejudice to violate your right to the pursuit of happiness. It is one more way that people of color are being targeted, and it is working. Here are eight ways you can make some change

### Thus, the advocacy:

#### A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.

#### RTS is a fundamental part of international law that solves oppression and preserves democracy worldwide---states have a moral obligation to enforce UN 17 UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, partially quoting Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, March 9, 2017. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21328&LangID=E> //AHS

GENEVA (9 March 2017) – Further to the Human Rights Council side event on freedoms of association and of peaceful assembly in the workplace which took place on Monday 6 March, and on the occasion of a key meeting of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai, is recalling that **the right to strike is a fundamental one** enshrined in international human rights and labour law, **and** that its protection is **necessary in ensuring just, stable and democratic societies**: “As the 329th session of the Governing Body of the ILO starts today, I wish to reiterate the utmost importance of the right to strike in democratic societies. As stated in my 2016 thematic report to the General Assembly (A/71/385), the right to strike has been **established in international law for decades**, in global and regional instruments, such as in the ILO Convention No. 87 (articles 3, 8 and 10), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (article 8), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (article 22), the European Convention on Human Rights (article 11), and the American Convention on Human Rights (article 16). **The right is also enshrined in the constitutions of at least 90 countries**. The right to strike has in effect become customary international law. **The right to strike is** also an intrinsic corollary of the fundamental right of freedom of association. It is **crucial for millions** of women and men around the world to assert collectively their rights in the workplace, including the right to just and favourable conditions of work, and **to work** in dignity **and without fear of** intimidation and **persecution.** Moreover, protest action in relation to government social and economic policy, and against negative corporate practices, forms part of the basic civil liberties whose respect is essential for the meaningful exercise of trade union rights. This right enables them to engage with companies and governments on a more equal footing, and **Member States have a positive obligation to protect this right, and a negative obligation not to interfere with its exercise.** Moreover, protecting the right to strike is not simply about States fulfilling their legal obligations. **It is also about** them creating **democratic and equitable societies that are sustainable** in the long run. The **concentration of power** in one sector – whether in the hands of government or business – inevitably **leads to the erosion of democracy**, and an **increase in inequalities and marginalization** with all their attendant consequences. **The right to strike is a check on this** concentration of power. I deplore the various attempts made to erode the right to strike at national and multilateral levels. In this regard, I welcome the positive role played by the ILO’s Government Group in upholding workers’ right to strike by recognizing that ‘without protecting a right to strike, freedom of association, in particular the right to organize activities for the purpose of promoting and protecting workers’ interests, cannot be fully realized.’ I urge all stakeholders to ensure that the right to strike be fully preserved and respected across the globe and in all arenas”, the expert concluded.

#### And the plan solves oppression and inequality---change spills over to broad public dialogue Lim 19 <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2019/12/11/lim-right-to-strike/> //AHS

The **right to strike is a right to resist oppression**. The strike (and the credible threat of a strike) is an indispensable part of the collective bargaining procedure. Collective bargaining (or “agreement-making”) provides workers and employees with the opportunity to influence the establishment of workplace rules that govern a large portion of their lives. The concerted withdrawal of labor allows workers to promote and defend their unprotected economic and social interests from employers’ unilateral decisions, and provide employers with pressure and incentives to make reasonable concessions. Functionally, **strikes provide workers with the bargaining power** to drive fair and meaningful negotiations, **offsetting the inherent inequalities of bargaining power in the employer-employee relationship**. **The right to strike is essential in preserving and winning rights**. Any curtailment of this right involves the risk of weakening the very basis of collective bargaining. **Strikes are** not only a means of demanding and achieving an adequate provision of basic liberties but also are themselves **intrinsic, self-determined expressions of freedom and human rights**. The exercise of the power to strike affirms a quintessential corpus of **values akin to liberal democracies, notably those of dignity, liberty, and autonomy.** In acts of collective defiance, strikers assert their freedoms of speech, association, and assembly. **Acts of striking**, marching, and picketing **command the attention of the media and prompt public forums of discussion and dialogue**. The question of civic obligations, however, remains at stake. Perhaps those disgruntled with the strike might claim on a whiff that the strike impedes upon their own freedom of movement, educational rights, privacy, and so forth. **Do strikers**, in virtue of expressing their own freedoms, **shirk valid civic norms of reciprocity** they owe to members of the community, for instance, to students? **No. The right to strike stems from the premise of an unjust flaw in the social order, that is, the recognition that the benefits from shouldering the burdens of social cooperation are not fairly distributed**. **Strikes and protests** **publicize this recognition and demand reform.**

#### And we are \*indisputably\* better off because of strikes---Remembering the successes and failures of organized labor is a call to action in the present to create a fairer, more democratic future Lisa 2 Andrew Lisa, August 31, 2021, Stacker. 30 victories for workers’ rights won by organized labor over the years. <https://stacker.com/stories/2505/30-victories-workers-rights-won-organized-labor-over-years> //AHS

Today, American workers have a host of rights and recourses should their workplace be hostile or harmful. While **the modern labor movement** works to continue to improve the working conditions for all, with big efforts around a fair minimum wage and end of employer wage theft, the movement has a history rich with fights and wins. It **put an end to child labor**, 10-to-**16 hour workdays, and unsafe** **working conditions**. Stacker compiled a list of 30 of the most consequential victories that unions fought for in the name of **workers**' rights. The list includes information about the milestones unions achieved and the circumstances that made those victories worth fighting for. Today, every wage-earning American **owes a debt of gratitude to organized labor for** the 40-hour workweek, minimum wage (such as it is), anti-discrimination laws, and other **basic protections**. Far from basic, those protections **were**, until fairly recently, **pipe dreams to the millions** of American men, women, and children **who labored endlessly in dreadful conditions for poverty wages**. The gratitude is owed mostly to the unions those nameless and disposable **workers organized**, which they did **under the threat of being fired, harassed, evicted** from company homes, **beaten, jailed, and**, in many cases, **killed**. In 1886, for example, over 200,000 railroad workers went on strike to protest an unjust firing. In 1894, over 250,000 workers walked out of the Pullman Palace Car Company factories to protest 12-hour workdays and wage cuts. The 2018 Supreme Court case Janus v. AFSCME established that public-sector workers who are protected by unions—of which there are five times as many as private workers—but don't wish to join, no longer have to pay fees on behalf of the union's collective bargaining. This dealt a blow to public-sector unions, though it didn't result in the mass exodus union detractors had hoped for. Overall union membership in the U.S. in 2020 was at 10.8%, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. While that's a historical low rate, some industries—like digital media, museums, and non-profits—are making inroads with new unions. Over the decades, **there have been far more losses than victories**, **but the** victories the labor **movement** did achieve **made earning a living** in the United States a much **more equitable, fair, safe, and profitable** proposition. **These wins show what is possible** for the modern labor movement. Keep reading to explore 30 hard-fought victories that America's working class won in our names.