# **1NC**

#### **Structural violence occurs when people are systematically excluded and harmed for arbitrary factors. Opotow 01 further explains:** **[Susan Opotow, Opotow is a social psychologist and researcher at the City University of New York (CUNY). Additionally, Opotow has written/edited for Peace & Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology and Past President of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology for the 21st Centuryl Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 2001, https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/u.osu.edu/dist/b/7538/files/2014/10/Chapter-8-Social-Injustice-Opotow-1jaya7m.pdf**

#### **Both structural and direct violence result from moral justifications and rationalizations.** Morals are the norms, rights, entitlements, obligations, responsibilities, and duties that shape our sense of justice and guide our behavior with others (Deutsch, 1985). **Morals operationalize our sense of justice by identifying what we owe to whom, whose needs, views, and well-being count, and whose do not.** Our morals apply to people we value, which define who is inside our scope of justice (or “moral community”), such as family members, friends, compatriots, and coreligionists (Deutsch, 1974, 1985; Opotow, 1990; Staub, 1989). **We extend considerations of fairness to them, share community resources with them, and make sacrifices for them that foster their well- being** (Opotow, 1987, 1993). We see other kinds of people such as enemies or strangers outside our scope of justice; they are morally excluded. Gender, ethnicity, religious identity, age, mental capacity, sexual orientation, and political affiliation are some criteria used to define moral exclusion. Excluded people can be hated and viewed as “vermin” or “plague” or they can be seen as expendable non-entities. In either case, disadvantage, hardship, and exploitation inflicted on them seems normal, acceptable, and just—as “the way things are” or the way they “ought to be.” Fairness and deserving seem irrelevant when applied to them and harm befalling them elicits neither remorse, outrage, nor demands for restitution; instead, harm inflicted on them can inspire celebration. Many social issues and controversies, such as aid to school drop-outs, illegal immigrants, “welfare moms,” people who are homeless, substance abusers, and those infected with HIV are essentially moral debates about who deserves public resources, and thus, ultimately, about moral inclusion. When we see other people’s circumstances to be a result of their moral failings, moral exclusion seems warranted. But when we see others’ circumstances as a result of structural violence, moral exclusion seems unwarranted and unjust. While it is psychologically more comfortable to perceive harm-doers to be evil or demented, we each have boundaries for justice. Our moral obligations are stronger toward those close to us and weaker toward those who are distant. When the media reports suffering and death in Cambodia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, the former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda, we often fail—as a nation, as com- munities, and as individuals—to protest or to provide aid. Rationalizations include insufficient knowledge of the political dynamics, the futility of doing much of use, and not knowing where to begin. Our tendency to exclude people is fostered by a number of normal perceptual tendencies: 1. Social categorization. Our tendency to group and classify objects, including social categories, is ordinarily innocuous, facilitating acquisition of information and memory (Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963). Social categorizations can become invidious, however, when they serve as a basis for rationalizing structural inequality and social injustice. For example, race is a neutral physical characteristic, but it often becomes a value-loaded label, which generates unequal treatment and outcomes (Archer, 1985; Tajfel, 1978). 2. Evaluative judgments. Our tendency to make simple, evaluative, dichotomous judgments (e.g., good and bad, like and dislike) is a fundamental feature of human perception. **Evaluative judgments have cognitive, affective, and moral components. From a behavioral, evolutionary, and social learning perspective, evaluative judgments have positive adaptive value because they provide feedback that protects our well-being** (Edwards & von Hippel, 1995; Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). Evaluative judgments can support structural violence and exclusionary thinking, however, when they lend a negative slant to perceived difference. In-group-out-group and we-them thinking can result from social comparisons made on dimensions that maximize a positive social identity for oneself or one’s group at the expense of others (Tajfel, 1982).

#### **Thus, the value today is mitigating structural violence. Moral inclusion is a necessary precondition to all other ethical theories as we can’t form those moral theories until all those who are affected are included in it.**

**NEXT**

#### **Capitalism guarantees social crisis – the judge has an intellectual obligation to evaluate the social relations that underpin the 1AC prior to evaluating the benefits– vote negative because the system the aff partakes in is fundamentally unethical Molisa, Philosophy PhD, 14(Pala Basil Mera, “Accounting For Apocalypse Re-Thinking Social Accounting Theory And Practice For Our Time Of Social Crises And Ecological Collapse,”** [**http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10063/3686/thesis.pdf?sequence=2**](http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10063/3686/thesis.pdf?sequence=2)**) \*\*\*\*NCC’19 Novice Packet\*\*\*\*** Ecologically too, the situation is dire. Of the many measures of ecological well-being – topsoil loss, groundwater depletion, chemical contamination, increased toxicity levels in human beings, the number and size of “dead zones” in the Earth’s oceans, and the accelerating rate of species extinction and loss of biodiversity – the increasing evidence suggests that the developmental trajectory of the dominant economic culture necessarily causes the mass extermination of non-human communities, the systemic destruction and disruption of natural habitats, and could ultimately cause catastrophic destruction of the biosphere. The latest Global Environmental Outlook Report published by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the GEO-5 report, makes for sobering reading. As in earlier reports, the global trends portrayed are of continuing human population growth, expanding economic growth,6 and as a consequence severe forms of ecological degradation (UNEP, 2012; see also, UNEP, 1997, 1999, 2002, 2007). **The ecological reality described is of ecological drawdown (deforestation, over-fishing, water extraction, etc.) (UNEP, 2012, pp. 72, 68, 84, 102-106, ); increasing toxicity of the environment through chemical and waste pollution, with severe harm caused to human and non-human communities alike (pp. 173- 179); systematic habitat destruction (pp. 8, 68-84) and climate change (33-60), which have decimated the number of species on Earth, threatening many with outright extinction** (pp. 139-158). The most serious ecological threat on a global scale is climate disruption, caused by the emission of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels, other industrial activities, and land destruction (UNEP, 2012, p. 32). The GEO-5 report states that “[d]espite attempts to develop low-carbon economies in a number of countries, atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases continue to increase to levels likely to push global temperatures beyond the internationally agreed limit of 2° C above the pre-industrial average temperature” (UNEP, 2012, p. 32). Concentrations of atmospheric methane have more than doubled from preindustrial levels, reaching approximately 1826 ppb in 2012; the scientific consensus is that this increase is very likely due predominantly to agriculture and fossil fuel use (IPCC, 2007). **Scientists warn that the Earth’s ecosystems are nearing catastrophic “tipping points” that will be marked by mass extinctions** and unpredictable changes on a scale unseen since the glaciers retreated twelve thousand years ago (Pappas, 2012). Twenty-two eminent scientists warned recently in the journal, Nature, that humans are likely to have triggered a planetary-scale critical transition “with the potential to transform Earth rapidly and irreversibly into a state unknown in human experience”, which means that “the biological resources we take for granted at present may be subject to rapid and unpredictable transformations within a few human generations” (Barnofsky et al., 2012). This means that human beings are in serious trouble, not only in the future, but right now. The pre-industrial level of carbon dioxide concentration was about 280 parts per million (ppm). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates concentrations could reach between 541 and 970 ppm by the year 2100. However, many climate scientists consider that levels should be kept below 350 ppm in order to avoid “irreversible catastrophic effects” (Hansen et al., 2008). “Catastrophic warming of the earth” would mean a planet that is too hot for life – that is, any life, and all life (Mrasek, 2008). We need to analyze the above information and ask the simple questions: **what does it signify and where will it lead?** In terms of the social crises of inequalities, the pattern of human development suggests clearly that a**lthough capitalism is capable of raising the economic productivity of many countries as well as international trade, it also produces social injustices on a global scale. The trajectory of capitalist economic development that people appear locked into is of perpetual growth that also produces significant human and social suffering.** In terms of the ecological situation, the mounting evidence from reports, such as those published by UNEP, suggest that a full-scale ecocide will eventuate and that a global holocaust is in progress which is socially pathological and biocidal in its scope (UNEP, 2012; see also, UNEP, 1997, 1999, 2002, 2007). **Assuming the trends do not change, the endpoint of this trajectory of perpetual economic growth, ecological degradation, systemic pollution, mass species extinction and runaway climate change, which human beings appear locked into, will be climate apocalypse and complete biotic collapse.** Given the serious and life-threatening implications of these social and ecological crises outlined above, it would be reasonable to expect they should be central to academic concerns, particularly given the responsibilities of academics as intellectuals. As the people whom society subsidizes to carry out intellectual work,7 the primary task of academics is to carry out research that might enable people to deepen their understanding of how the world operates, ideally towards the goal of shaping a world that is more consistent with moral and political principles, and the collective self-interest (Jensen, 2013, p. 43). **Given that most people’s stated philosophical and theological systems are rooted in concepts of justice, equality and the inherent dignity of all people (Jensen, 2007, p. 30), intellectuals have a particular responsibility to call attention to those social patterns of inequality which appear to be violations of such principles, and to call attention to the destructive ecological patterns that threaten individual and collective well-being. As a “critic and conscience of society,” 8 one task of intellectuals is to identify issues that people should all pay attention to, even when – indeed, especially when – people would rather ignore the issues (**Jensen, 2013, p. 5). In view of this, intellectuals today should be focusing attention on the hard-to-face realities of an unjust and unsustainable world. Moreover, intellectuals in a democratic society, as its “critic and conscience”, should serve as sources of independent and critical information, analyses and varied opinions, in an endeavour to provide a meaningful role in the formation of public policy (Jensen, 2013c). In order to fulfil this obligation as “critic and conscience,” **intellectuals need to be willing to critique not only particular people, organizations, and policies, but also the systems from which they emerge. In other words, intellectuals have to be willing to engage in radical critique.** Generally, the term “radical” tends to suggest images of extremes, danger, violence, and people eager to tear things down (Jensen, 2007, p. 29). Radical, however, has a more classical meaning. It comes from the Latin –radix, meaning “root.” **Radical critique in this light means critique or analysis that gets to the root of the problem.** Given that the patterns of social inequality and ecocidal destruction outlined above are not the product of a vacuum, but instead are the product of social systems, radical critique simply means forms of social analysis, which are not only concerned about these social and ecological injustices but also trace them to the social systems from which they emerged, which would subject these very systems to searching critiques. Such searching critique is challenging because, generally, the dominant groups which tend to subsidize intellectuals (universities, think tanks, government, corporations) are the key agents of the social systems that produce inequalities and destroy ecosystems (Jensen, 2013, p. 12). The more intellectuals choose not only to identify patterns but also highlight the pathological systems from which they emerge, the greater the tension with whoever “pay[s] the bills” (ibid.). However, this may arguably be unavoidable today, given that the realities of social inequality and ecological catastrophe show clearly that our social systems are already in crisis, are pathological, and in need of radical change.9 To adopt a radical position, in this light, is not to suggest that we simply need to abolish capitalism, or to imply that if we did so all our problems would be solved. For one thing, such an abstract argument has little operational purchase in terms of specifying how to go about struggling for change. For another thing, as this thesis will discuss, capitalism is not the only social system that we ought to be interrogating as an important systemic driver of social and ecological crises. Moreover, to adopt a radical position does not mean that we have any viable “answers” or “solutions” in terms of the alternative institutions, organizations and social systems that we could replace the existing ones with. There is currently no alternative to capitalism that appears to be viable, particularly given the historical loss of credibility that Marxism and socialism has suffered. As history has shown, some of the self-proclaimed socialist and communist regimes have had their own fair share of human rights abuses and environmental disasters, and the global left has thus far not been able to articulate alternatives that have managed to capture the allegiances of the mainstream population. Furthermore, given the depth, complexity, and scale of contemporary social and ecological crises, I am not sure if there are any viable alternatives or, for that matter, any guarantees that we can actually prevent and change the disastrous course of contemporary society. I certainly do not have any solutions. What I would argue, however, is that i**f we are to have any chance of not only ameliorating but also substantively addressing these social and ecological problems, before we can talk about alternatives or potential “solutions”, we first need to develop a clear understanding of the problems. And, as argued above, this involves, amongst other things, exploring why and how the existing social systems under which we live are producing the patterns of social inequality and ecological unsustainability that make up our realities today.10 To adopt a radical stance, in this light, is simply to insist that we have an obligation to honestly confront our social and ecological predicament and to ask difficult questions about the role that existing social systems might be playing in producing and exacerbating them.**

#### **Therefore our value criterion is the reduction of capitalism. The judge should vote for the debater that has the best potential for addressing structural violence.**

**NEXT**

### **Contention one is Capitalism.**

#### **The state and capitalism are one and the same - you can't get rid of one while preserving the other.**

Cockburn, Cynthia. “In And Against The State: Chapter 3 - Understanding The Capitalist State.”

1979. Web. October 11, 2021. <https://libcom.org/library/chapter-3-understanding-

capitalist-state>.

It is common to think of the state as being a capitalist state simply because of what it does:

defending property against attack, keeping pickets under control, paying subsidies to the monopolies, providing cheap labour power for industry etc. However, the conversations we described in Chapter I, suggest that, at least as important is how the state does things, that is,

the social relations embodied in the organisation of the state and its activity. **What makes the** **state a capitalist state is the way in which it is built into the whole structure of capitalist social relations.** **Capitalism is a particular system of social relations, of class relations, which appear on** **the surface as relations between free and equal individuals. The capitalist nature of the state expresses itself in the way that it consolidates those social relations.** The categories of the state (that is the categories through which the state deals with people) are built upon the categories of exchange and constitute an extra layer of protective seal over the class relations of capitalist society. Starting out from the ‘free’ exchange of commodities (including the labour power of the worker) the whole structure of the political system is built upon equality and citizenship, or upon distinctions which do not relate directly to the fundamental antagonism of capitalist production. **It treats us as citizens, voters, taxpayers, patients, social security claimants,** **employers, employees, smokers, non-smokers — on a host of different bases, but never on the basis of class, never on a basis which would raise explicitly the question of exploitation and class domination.** And so these questions simply get squeezed out of political discussion. **Exploitation is presupposed before bourgeois politics even begin. Conflicts within the confines of bourgeois politics concern only the structure of social relations to be built on top of exploitation: the conflicts may be important but they never raise the fundamental question of class exploitation itself.** This is the significance of the distinction between politics and

economics: to make that distinction a rigid one (as does the whole structure of the bourgeois

political system) means that, from the start, you cut yourself off from an understanding of politics as one aspect of the system of relations of production ‘and exploitation. **The state, then,** **is not just an institution. It is a form of social relations, a class practice. More precisely, it is a process which projects certain forms of organisation upon our everyday activity, forms of organisation which do not pose any threat to the reproduction of capitalist social relations.** When, as at the moment, the development of British capitalism is particularly oppressive (rising unemployment, rising prices, declining social services and so on), the state invites us, not as a class, but as individuals, workers and capitalists alike, into the ballot box to mark a cross in the hope that it might influence which party will next try to govern the capitalist system. When capitalism makes us destitute, the state requires us, not to demonstrate as the victims of Class domination, but to fill in forms and apply, as individuals in need of assistance, for supplementary benefit. When capitalism ruins our health, we are taken as patients into hospitals to be treated as unfortunate individuals; the state never assists us to fight back against the causes of ill-health. At every step our relation to the state breaks us up, pushes us into certain moulds, removes from sight all mention ‘of class, or exploitation, or anything which might raise the question of the interrelation between our fragmented ills. Furthermore, the processes by which the state fragments (or ‘confirms the fragmentation of) society at large find

their counterpart within the internal organisation of the state apparatus itself. Just as the state deals with people in a fragmented manner as patients, social security claimants, or old age pensioners, so this is reflected in the internal division of labour within the state apparatus between officials who deal with patients, those who deal with social security claimants, those who deal with old age pensioners, and so on. And just as the receipt of benefits and the definition of the claimant is bound up with a whole network of supervision and control, so within the state a massive system of hierarchical control ensures that the proper division of labour makes it virtually impossible to raise the question of class or exploitation. For a state worker to try to get to the roots of a problem would be to stray beyond the definition of her or his job. So what is at issue here is not just a question of ideology in a simple sense. It is not just that our minds are constantly bombarded (as indeed they are) with the idea that we are living in a free, democratic society, that illness and poverty are individual problems. It is more than that. Even if we see through all this, even if we see or sense that illness or poverty are problems of society, we are still faced by the problem that any positive action by us seems to require us

to jump through certain administrative hoops, to go through certain procedures which, whatever our beliefs, constrain us to act as individuals or fragmented groups. T**he struggle** **against the state, therefore, is not just a matter of enlightening people, of showing them that the state is capitalist. It is a problem of trying to develop alternative forms of organisation which will counteract the fragmentation imposed by the state and give material expression to class solidarity. The state is constantly trying to reduce us to abstract individual citizens. We**

**must struggle against that.** We must find ways of expressing our struggles materially as class struggles.

**NEXT**

#### **We need to do more than cross our arms and say no! We ought to actively move away from every instance of capitalism. Vote negative to use your ballot as an active move against Capitalism. Holloway 10 (John, Professor in the Instituto de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades of the Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla in Mexico, Crack Capitalism, 17-20)**

**Imagine a sheet of ice covering a dark lake of possibility. We scream 'NO' so loud that the ice begins to crack. What is it that is uncovered? What is that dark liquid that** (sometimes, not always) slowly or quickly bubbles up through the crack? We shall call it dignity. The crack in the ice moves, unpredictable, sometimes racing, sometimes slowing, sometimes widening, sometimes narrowing, sometimes freezing over again and disappearing, sometimes reappearing. **All around the lake there are people doing the same thing as we are, screaming 'NO' as loud as they can, creating cracks that move just as cracks in ice do, unpredictably, spreading, racing to join up with other cracks, some being frozen over again. The stronger the flow of dignity within them, the greater the force of the cracks. Serve no more, La Boetie tells us, and we shall at once be free. The break begins with refusal, with No**. No, we shall not tend your sheep, plough your fields, make your car, do your examinations. The truth of the relation of power is revealed: the powerful depend on the powerless. The lord depends on his serfs, the capitalist depends on the workers who create his capital. But the real force of the serve no more comes when we do something else instead. Serve no more, and then what? I**f we just fold our arms and do nothing at all, we soon face the problem of starvation.** **The serve no more, if it does not lead to an other-doing, an alternative activity, can easily become converted into a negotiation of the terms of servitude. The workers who say 'no' and cross their arms, or go on strike, are implicitly saying 'no, we shall not carry out this command', or 'we shall not carry on working under these conditions.' This does not exclude the continuation of servitude** (of the relationship of employment) **under other conditions. The 'serve no more' becomes a step in the negotiation of new conditions of servitude. It is a different matter when the negation becomes a negation-and- creation.** This is a more serious challenge. **The workers say 'no' and they take over the factory. They declare that they do not need a boss and begin to call for a world without bosses**.2 Think of the sad story of Mr Peel, who, Marx tells us ... took with him to Swan River, West Australia, means of subsistence and of production to the amount of 50,000 pounds. Mr. Peel had the foresight to bring with him, besides, 3,000 persons of the working-class, men, women and children. Once arrived at his destination, 'Mr. Peel was left without a servant to make his bed or fetch him water from the river.' Unhappy Mr. Peel who provided for everything except the export of English modes of production to Swan River. (1867/1965: 766; 1867/1990: 933) What happened was that land was still freely available in Swan River, so that the 3,000 persons of the working class went off and cultivated their own land. One can imagine the scene as the unhappy Mr. Peel's initial anger, when the workers refused to carry out his orders, turned to despair when he saw them going off to develop an alternative life free of masters. The availability of land made it possible for them to convert their refusal into a decisive rupture and to develop an activity quite different from that planned for them by Mr. Peel. Think of the exciting story of the teachers in Puebla.3 **When the government announced in 2008 the creation of a new scheme to improve the quality of education by imposing greater individualism, stronger competition between students, stricter measurement of the output of teachers, and so on the teachers said 'No, we will not accept it.' When the government refused to listen, the dissident teachers moved beyond mere refusal and in consultation with thousands of students and parents, elaborated their own proposal for improving the quality of education by promoting greater. cooperation between students, more emphasis on critical thinking, preparation for cooperative work not directly subordinate to capital, and began to explore ways of implementing their scheme in opposition to the state guidelines, by taking control of the schools.4** **Here too the initial refusal begins to open towards something else, towards an educational activity that not only resists but breaks with the logic of capital.** In both of these cases, the No is backed by an other-doing. This is the dignity that can fill the cracks created by the refusal. The original No is then not a closure, but an opening to a different activity, the threshold of a counter-world with a different logic and a different language. The No opens to a time-space in which we try to live as subjects rather than objects. These are times or spaces in which we assert our capacity to decide for ourselves what we should do - whether it be chatting with our friends, playing with our children, cultivating the land in a different way, developing and implementing projects for a critical education. These are times or spaces in which we take control of our own lives, assume the responsibility of our own humanity. **Dignity is the unfolding of the power of No.** Our refusal confronts us with the opportunity, necessity and responsibility of developing our own capacities. The women and men who left Mr. Peel in the lurch were confronted with the opportunity and necessity of developing abilities suppressed by their previous condition of servitude. The teachers who reject the state textbooks are forced to develop another education. The assumption of responsibility for our own lives is in itself a break with the logic of domination. This does not mean that everything will turn out to be perfect. The dignity is a breaking, a negating, a moving, an exploring. We must be careful not to convert it into a positive concept that might give it a deadening fixity. The women and men who deserted Mr. Peel may well have turned into small landholders who defended their property against all newcomers. The teachers who take their schools to create a critical education may possibly reproduce authoritarian practices as bad as those which they are rejecting. It is the moving that is important, the moving against-and-beyond: the negating and creating of those who abandoned Mr. Peel, more than the new spaces that they created; the taking of the schools by the teachers, more than the schools that they have taken. **It is the assuming of our own responsibility that is important**, though the results may well be contradictory.6 Dignity, the movement of negating-and-creating, of taking control of our own lives, is not a simple matter: it is, we said, a dark liquid bubbling up from a lake of possibility. To give a positive solidity to what can only be a moving of refusing and creating and exploring can easily lead to disillusion. A pro-Zapatista collective, or a social centre, or a group of piqueteros ends in conflict and disarray and we conclude that it was all an illusion, instead of seeing that such dignities are inevitably contradictory and experimental. The cracks are always questions, not answers. **It is important not to romanticise the cracks, or give them a positive force that they do not possess**. And yet, this is where we start: from the cracks, the fissures, the rents, the spaces of rebellious negation-and-creation. We start from the particular, not from the totality. We start from the world of misfitting, from the multiplicity of particular rebellions, dignities, cracks, not from the great unified Struggle that simply does not exist, nor from the system of domination. We start from being angry and lost and trying to create something else, because that is where we live, that is where we are. Perhaps it is a strange place to start, but we are looking for a strange thing. We are looking for hope in a dark night. 7 We are trying to theorise hope-against-hope. This is surely the only subject matter of theory that is left.

#### **NEXT**

### **CASE**

#### **TURN: State recognition of a right to strike encourages ‘Capital Strikes’ in retaliation that off-shore labor, cease hiring, and lay-off workers. Even if a just government recognizes the unconditional right to strike it doesn’t stop the state from undercutting services for workers. Re-Entrenches workers into systems of oppression to settle capital’s temper tantrums.** [**Young et al**. (Kevin Young, Associate professor of history at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.), Jacobin,**2017**,https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/02/capital-strike-regulations-lending-productivity-economy-banks-bailout]

**A manufacturer refuses to invest in the United States until the government cuts taxes and loosens “environmental regulations and hiring rules.” The CEO of a top technology firm flatly states that the $181 billion stored in an overseas tax haven won’t come “back until there’s a fair rate.” Despite several trillion dollars in reserves, banks and corporations collectively refuse to make loans or hire new employees.** In response, politicians from both parties seek to encourage investment by enacting pro-business reforms. The president begs business to add jobs while aggressively pushing pro-corporate trade deals, cutting corporate taxes, and scrapping regulations. Meanwhile, his administration floods financial institutions with low-cost public cash in the form of bailouts, careful not to infringe on banks’ power. **To lure capital back from offshore tax shelters, presidential candidates from both parties propose cutting corporate taxes and reject punitive or coercive measures.**

**Capitalists** routinely **exert leverage over governments by withholding** the **resources** — **jobs**, **credit**, **goods**, and **services** — upon which society depends. **The “capital strike” might take the form of layoffs, offshoring jobs and money, denying loans, or just a credible threat to do those things, along with a promise to relent once government delivers the desired policy changes.** Government officials know this power well, and invest great energy and public resources in staving off fits by malcontent capitalists. The profoundly rotten campaign finance system is just one manifestation of business’s domination over government policy. The real power resides in the corporate world’s monopoly over the flow of capital.

Recent investigations into Donald Trump’s past unearthed a telling example. In the late 1970s, the real-estate magnate used a hotel project in Manhattan to extract millions in tax breaks from the city. The bankrupt government granted Trump an unprecedented forty-year waiver on all real-estate taxes for his 42nd Street Grand Hyatt hotel in return for his investment in its construction.

The backdrop was the 1970s New York City financial crisis, during which virtually all investment had come to a halt. City and state leaders rationalized the subsidy by arguing that Trump and Hyatt would break the capital strike. The hoped-for flood of new development, however, did not materialize until the Municipal Assistance Corporation — a committee dominated by Wall Street bankers empowered to do whatever it took to bring investment back — imposed a buffet of business-friendly “spending decisions.”

Some might argue that Donald Trump represents a particularly noxious breed of capitalist, making this example atypical. But Obama’s presidency shows just how routine these practices are. While **capital** **strikes are common to all capitalist countries**, they were especially important in the Obama era. **Despite strong voter support for progressive changes**, his administration did little to challenge corporate power, inequality, militarism, and the growing climate catastrophe. **Even the most timid efforts at reform were either defeated or watered down to appease entrenched interests.**