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#### Using organized labor strikes fails – that naturalizes capital’s control and is parasitic on political organizing.

Eidlin 20 Barry Eidlin (assistant professor of sociology at McGill University and the author of Labor and the Class Idea in the United States and Canada), 1-6-2020, “Why Unions Are Good – But Not Good Enough,” Jacobin, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2020/01/marxism-trade-unions-socialism-revolutionary-organizing

Labor unions have long occupied a paradoxical position within Marxist theory. They are an essential expression of the working class taking shape as a collective actor and an essential vehicle for working-class action. When we speak of “the working class” or “working-class activity,” we are often analyzing the actions of workers either organized into unions or trying to organize themselves into unions. At the same time, unions are an imperfect and incomplete vehicle for the working class to achieve one of Marxist theory’s central goals: overthrowing capitalism. Unions by their very existence affirm and reinforce capitalist class society. As organizations which primarily negotiate wages, benefits, and working conditions with employers, unions only exist in relation to capitalists. This makes them almost by definition reformist institutions, designed to mitigate and manage the employment relationship, not transform it. Many unions have adapted to this conservative, managerial role. Others have played key roles in challenging capital’s power. Some have even played insurgent roles at one moment and managerial roles at others. When unions have organized workplace insurgencies, this has sometimes translated into political pressure that expanded democracy and led to large-scale policy reforms. In the few revolutionary historical moments that we can identify, worker organization, whether called unions or something else, has been essential. Thus, labor unions and movements have long been a central focus of Marxist debate. At its core, the debate centers around the role of unions in class formation, the creation of the revolutionary working-class agent. The debate focuses on four key questions. First, to what degree do unions simply reflect existing relations of production and class struggle, or actively shape those relations? Second, if unions actively shape class struggle, why and under what conditions do they enhance or inhibit it? Third, how do unions shape class identities, and how does this affect unions’ scope of action? Fourth, what is the relation between unions and politics? This question is comprised of two sub-questions: to what degree do unions help or hinder struggles in the workplace becoming broader political struggles? And how should unions relate to political parties, the more conventional vehicle for advancing political demands? The following is a chapter from [The Oxford Handbook of Karl Marx](https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190695545.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780190695545) (Oxford University Press, 2019). It assesses Marxist debates surrounding trade unions, oriented by the four questions mentioned previously. It proceeds historically, first examining how Marx and Engels conceived of the roles and limitations of trade unions, then tracing how others within Marxism have pursued these debates as class relations and politics have changed over time. While the chapter includes some history of labor unions and movements themselves, the central focus is on how Marxist theorists thought of and related to those movements. Marx and Engels wrote extensively about the unions of their time, although never systematically. The majority of their writings on unions responded to concrete labor struggles of their time. From their earliest works, they grasped unions’ necessity and limitations in creating a working-class agent capable of advancing class struggle against the bourgeoisie. This [departed](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/wusa.12021) from previous variants of socialism, often based in idealized views of rebuilding a rapidly eroding community of artisanal producers, which did not emphasize class organization or class struggle. Writing in The Condition of the Working Class in England about emerging forms of unionism, Engels observed that even though workers’ primary struggles were over material issues such as wages, they pointed to a deeper social and political conflict: What gives these Unions and the strikes arising from them their real importance is this, that they are the first attempt of the workers to abolish competition. They im­ ply the recognition of the fact that the supremacy of the bourgeoisie is based wholly upon the competition of the workers among themselves; i.e., upon their want of cohesion. And precisely because the Unions direct themselves against the vital nerve of the present social order, however one-sidedly, in however narrow a way, are they so dangerous to this social order. At the same time, Engels saw that, even as union struggles “[kept alive] the opposition of the workers to the … omnipotence of the bourgeoisie,” so too did they “[compel] the admission that something more is needed than Trades Unions and strikes to break the power of the ruling class.” Here Engels articulates the crux of the problem. First, unions are essential for working-class formation, creating a collective actor both opposed to the bourgeoisie and capable of challenging it for power. Second, they are an insufficient vehicle for creating and mobilizing that collective actor. Marx and Engels understood that unions are essential to working-class formation because, under capitalism, the system of “free labor,” where individual workers sell their labor power to an employer for a wage, fragments relations between workers and makes them compete with each other. As described in the Communist Manifesto, the bourgeoisie “has left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous ‘cash payment,’” leaving workers “exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.” While workers organized based on other collective identities, such as race, ethnicity, or religion, only unions could unite them as workers against the source of their exploitation — the bourgeoisie. Unions serve “as organized agencies for superseding the very system of wage labor and capital rule.” But just as unions could allow the proletariat to take shape and challenge the bourgeoisie for power, Marx and Engels also saw that they were a partial, imperfect vehicle for doing so for two reasons. First, unions’ fundamentally defensive role, protecting workers against employers’ efforts to drive a competitive race to the bottom, meant that they [limited themselves](https://www.amazon.com/Wage-Labour-Capital-Value-Price-Profit/dp/0717804704) “to a guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it.” Thus, even militant trade unions found themselves struggling for “a fair day’s work for a fair day’s wage” without challenging the bourgeoisie’s fundamental power, particularly the wage labor system. And some layers of the trade union officialdom were content to fight for privileges for their small segment of the working class, leaving most workers behind. Second, unions’ focus on wages and workplace issues tended to reinforce a division between economic and political struggles. This division was explicit with the more conservative “old” unions in Britain, which “bar[red] all political action on principle and in their charters.” But even with more progressive formations, such as the early nineteenth century’s Chartists, or the late nineteenth century’s “new” unions, Marx and Engels saw that the transition from workplace struggles to politics was not automatic. For one, it varied across national contexts. Engels observed that French workers were much more likely to mobilize politically, while English workers “fight, not against the Government, but directly against the bourgeoisie.” But beyond national variation, they saw a recurring pattern of division, separating economic and political struggles by organization. Reflecting on the early to mid-nineteenth century English working-class movement, Engels noted a threefold divide between “socially-based” Chartists, “politically-based” Socialists, and conservative, craft-based trade unions. While the Chartists were “purely a working-men’s [sic] cause freed from all bourgeois elements,” they remained “theoretically the more backward, the less developed.” Socialists may have been more theoretically sophisticated, but their bourgeois origins made it difficult to “amalgamate completely with the working class.” Although young Engels thought an alliance of Chartism and socialism was underway, the alliance proved elusive. By the 1870s, Marx opined that politically, the English working class was “nothing more than the tail of the great Liberal Party, i.e., henchmen of the capitalists.” Likewise, Engels had soured on the English working class. Both saw promise in the militant worker protest in the United States at the time, seeing the seeds of a nascent labor party. But that too fell short. Thus, unions failed in Marx and Engels’s central task: the formation of “a political organization of the working class as a whole.”

#### Recognizing a right to strike reduces revolutionary potential and fractures class organizing – turns the perm.

Crépon 19 Mark Crépon (French philosopher), translated by Micol Bez “The Right to Strike and Legal War in Walter Benjamin’s ‘Toward the Critique of Violence,’” Critical Times, 2:2, August 2019, DOI 10.1215/26410478-7708331

If we wish to understand how the question of the right to strike arises for Walter Benjamin in the seventh paragraph of his essay “Zur Kritik der Gewalt,” it is impor­ tant to first analyze the previous paragraph, which concerns the state’s monopoly on violence. It is here that Benjamin questions the argument that such a monopoly derives from the impossibility of a system of legal ends to preserve itself as long as the pursuit of natural ends through violent means remains. Benjamin responds to this dogmatic thesis with the following hypothesis, arguably one of his most impor­ tant reflections: “To counter it, one would perhaps have to consider the surprising possibility that law’s interest in monopolizing violence vis­à­vis the individual is explained by the intention not of preserving legal ends, but rather of preserving law itself. [This is the possibility] that violence, when it does not lie in the hands of law, poses a danger to law, not by virtue of the ends that it may pursue but by virtue of its mere existence outside of law.”1 In other words, nothing would endanger the law more than the possibility of its authority being contested by a violence over which it has no control. The function of the law would therefore be, first and foremost, to contain violence within its own boundaries. It is in this context that, to demonstrate this surprising hypothesis, Benjamin invokes two examples: the right to strike guaranteed by the state and the law of war. Let us return to the place that the right to strike occupies within class struggle. To begin with, the very idea of such a struggle implies certain forms of violence. The strike could then be understood as one of the recognizable forms that this violence can take. However, this analytical framework is undermined as soon as this form of violence becomes regulated by a “right to strike,” such as the one recognized by law in France in 1864. What this recognition engages is, in fact, the will of the state to control the possible “violence” of the strike. Thus, the “right” of the right to strike appears as the best, if not the only, way for the state to circumscribe within (and via) the law the relative violence of class struggles. We might consider this to be the per­ fect illustration of the aforementioned hypothesis. Yet, there are two lines of ques­ tioning that destabilize this hypothesis that we would do well to consider. First, is it legitimate to present the strike as a form of violence? Who has a vested interest in such a representation? In other words, how can we trace a clear and unequivocal demarcation between violence and nonviolence? Are we not always bound to find residues of violence, even in those actions that we would be tempted to consider nonviolent? The second line of questioning is just as important and is rooted in the distinction established by Georges Sorel, in his Reflections on Violence, between the “political strike” and the “proletarian general strike,” to which Benja­ min dedicates a set of complementary analyses in §13 of his essay. Here, again, we are faced with a question of limits. What is at stake is the possibility for a certain type of strike (the proletarian general strike) to exceed the limits of the right to strike— turning, in other words, the right to strike against the law itself. The phenomenon is that of an autoimmune process, in which the right to strike that is meant to protect the law against the possible violence of class strugles is transformed into a means for the destruction of the law. The diference between the two types of strikes is nevertheless introduced with a condition: “The validity of this statement, however, is not unrestricted because it is not unconditional,” notes Benjamin in §7. We would be mistaken in believing that the right to strike is granted and guaranteed uncondi­ tionally. Rather, it is structurally subjected to a conflict of interpretations, those of the workers, on the one hand, and of the state on the other. From the point of view of the state, the partial strike cannot under any circumstance be understood as a right to exercise violence, but rather as the right to extract oneself from a preexisting (and verifiable) violence: that of the employer. In this sense, the partial strike should be considered a nonviolent action, what Benjamin named a “pure means.” The interpretations diverge on two main points. The first clearly depends on the alleged “violence of the employer,” a predicate that begs the question: Who might have the authority to recognize such violence? Evidently it is not the employer. The danger is that the state would similarly lack the incentive to make such a judgment call. It is nearly impossible, in fact, to find a single instance of a strike in which this recognition of violence was not subject to considerable controversy. The political game is thus the following: the state legislated the right to strike in order to con­ tain class strugles, with the condition that workers must have “good reason” to strike. However, it is unlikely that a state systematically allied with (and accomplice to) employers will ever recognize reasons as good, and, as a consequence, it will deem any invocation of the right to strike as illegitimate. Workers will therefore be seen as abusing a right granted by the state, and in so doing transforming it into a violent means. On this point, Benjamin’s analyses remain extremely pertinent and profoundly contemporary. They unveil the enduring strategy of governments confronted with a strike (in education, transportation, or healthcare, for example) who, afer claiming to understand the reasons for the protest and the grievances of the workers, deny that the arguments constitute sufcient reason for a strike that will likely paralyze this or that sector of the economy. They deny, in other words, that the conditions denounced by the workers display an intrinsic violence that jus­ tifies the strike. Let us note here a point that Benjamin does not mention, but that is part of Sorel’s reflections: this denial inevitably contaminates the (socialist) lef once it gains power. What might previously have seemed a good reason to strike when it was the opposition is deemed an insufcient one once it is the ruling party. In the face of popular protest, it always invokes a lack of sufcient rationale, allow­ ing it to avoid recognizing the intrinsic violence of a given social or economic situ­ ation, or of a new policy. And it is because it refuses to see this violence and to take responsibility for it that the left regularly loses workers’ support.

#### The affs attempt to make the wage system better rather than destroy it represents capitalism's attempt to naturalize itself. The aff is a neoliberal attempt to soften the negative impacts of capitalism. This masks capitalism and attempts to soothe the common populace away from challenging the roots of capitalism. A just government and the wage system are mutually exclusive

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Naturalizing the wage concept works to naturalize[s] capitalist relations of production, the employer/employee relation, not as one among alternative production systems but as somehow intrinsic to production itself. Workers, trade unions, and intellectuals often cannot imagine production without wages and hence wage payers juxtaposed to wage earners. This helps to make[s] capitalism itself appear as necessary and eternal much as the parallel theories celebrating feudalism and slavery performed the same function for those systems of production. The naturalization of the wage system helps support the notion that the fundamental goal of workers’ organization must be to raise wages. Thus, no surprise attaches to the fact, these days, that one widespread kind of social criticism concentrates on softening capitalism’s negative impacts on workers and the larger society. It seeks to raise workers’ wages and benefits and to make governments limit capitalists’ rapaciousness and the social costs of their competition. In the US, this is what “liberals” do: from the minimalist oppositions within the Democratic Party to the demands of social democrats and many “radicals” for major wage increases, major government interventions, and so on. What always frustrates liberals and radicals is the difficulty of achieving these improved workers’ conditions and the insecurity and temporariness of whatever improvements they do achieve. Today they bemoan yet another roll-back of improvements, namely those won under FDR’s New Deal, Kennedy’s New Frontier, and so on.Marxism is that other kind of opposition that demands the abolition of capitalism as a system. Since Marxists find capitalist exploitation to be as immoral and inhumane as slavery, they might logically seek a further amendment to the US Constitution that abolishes it as well. A Marxist program would seek to replace capitalist production by a non-wage system, one where the workers will not only produce surpluses but also be their own boards of directors. The “associated workers” would, as Marx suggested, appropriate their own surpluses and distribute them. The wage-payer versus wage-recipient division of people inside production would vanish. Every worker’s job description would entail not only his/her technical responsibilities to produce a specific output but also her/his responsibilities as part of the collective that appropriates and distributes the surplus. Monday to Thursday, each worker in each enterprise makes commodities, and every Friday, each worker functions as a member of that enterprise’s board of directors. The stakes here are less obtaining higher wages than abolishing the wage system. The point of such a Marxist program is to overcome the conflicts, wastes, and inequalities (economic, political, and cultural) that flow from the existence of capitalist exploitation whether or not wages are raised. The point is likewise to stress the incompatibility of any genuine democracy with the wage system and its usual social effects (and again whether wages are higher or lower). Of course, in the struggle between such a Marxist perspective and its various critics, the latter will depict the programmatic advocacy of an end to the wage system as impracticable, utopian, or deluded. Those persuaded by neoclassical economics will simply dismiss or ignore not only the Marxist criticism of the wage system but Marxism altogether. For them, the wage system is not only eternal and necessary, but also fair and “efficient.” For them, since there “is” no surplus, they need not read or learn Marxist theory and criticism, let alone debate it. So Marxist theory and its proponents can and are largely excluded from public discourse in the media, the schools, and politics.For liberals suspicious of neoclassical economics – or “neoliberalism” as it is now more often called - the Marxian program sketched above would be seen as utopian fantasy at best. Yet, not the least irony of Bush’s America today is how his regime’s relentless removal or reduction of the past reforms (high wages, pensions, medical insurance, social security, state social programs, etc.) makes a liberal politics today seem painfully deluded to so many. The liberals seem hopelessly weak, unable to stop let alone reverse the Bush juggernaut. Worse still, what they advocate are precisely the reforms now being dismantled and thus revealed as having been fundamentally insecure all along. The audience for capitalism’s critics and opponents is thus being primed to listen rather attentively to Marxist claims that an abolition of the wage system offers not only a better society but also a far better basis for securing those improvements in wages and working conditions that mass action can achieve. What is needed now are Marxists able and willing to articulate those claims to that audience, to persuade ever more of capitalism’s critics and opponents that abolition of exploitation and the wage system must be a component of their program for social change.

#### Capitalism is a system engendering massive violence and inevitable extinction – the foundational task is to find a way out – the Role of the Ballot is to endorse the best organizational tactics.

Badiou ‘18

[Alain, former chair of philosophy at the Ecole Normale Superiure, professor of philosophy at The European Graduate School. Translated by David Broder. 07/30/2018. “The Neolithic, Capitalism, and Communism,” <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3948-the-neolithic-capitalism-and-communism>] pat

Today, it has become commonplace to predict the end of the human race such as we know it. There are various reasons for such forecasts. According to a messianic kind of environmentalism, the excessive predations of a beastly humanity will soon bring about the end of life on Earth. Meanwhile, those who instead point to runaway technological advances prophesy, indiscriminately, the automation of all work by robots, grand developments in computing, automatically-generated art, plastic-coated killers, and the dangers of a super-human intelligence.

Suddenly, we see the emergence of threatening categories like transhumanism and the post-human — or, their mirror image, a return to our animal state — depending on whether one prophesies on the basis of technological innovation or laments all the attacks on Mother Nature.

For me, all such prophesies are just so much ideological noise, intended to obscure the real peril that humanity is today exposed to: that is to say, the impasse that globalised capitalism is leading us into. In fact, it is this form of society — and it alone — which permits the destructive exploitation of natural resources, precisely because it connects this exploitation to the boundless quest for private profit. The fact that so many species are endangered, that climate change cannot be controlled, that water is becoming like some rare treasure, is all a by-product of the merciless competition among billionaire predators. There is no other reason for the fact that scientific innovation is subject to the question of what technologies can sell, in an anarchic selection mechanism.

Environmentalist preaching does sometimes use persuasive descriptions of what is going on — despite the exaggerations typical of the prophet. But most of the time this becomes mere propaganda, useful for those states who want to show their friendly face. Just as it is for the multinationals who would have us believe — to the greater benefit of their balance sheets — in the noble, fraternal, natural purity of the commodities they are trafficking.

The fetishism of technology, and the unbroken series of "revolutions" in this domain — of which the "digital revolution" is the most in vogue — has constantly spread the beliefs both that this will take us to the paradise of a world without work — with robots to serve us, and us left to idle — and then, on the other hand, that digital "thought" will crush the human intellect. Today there is not one magazine that does not inform its astonished readers of the imminent "victory" of artificial over natural intelligence. But in most cases neither "nature" nor the "artificial" are properly or clearly defined.

Since the origins of philosophy, the question of the real scope of the word "nature" has been constantly posed. "Nature" could mean the romantic reverie of evening sunsets, the atomic materialism of Lucretius (De natura rerum), the inner being of things, Spinoza’s Totality (Deus sive Natura), the objective underside of all culture, rural and peasant surroundings as counterposed to the suspicious artificiality of the towns ("the earth does not lie," as Marshal Pétain put it), biology as distinct from physics, cosmology as compared to the tiny location that is our planet, the invariance of centuries as compared to the frenzy of innovation, natural sexuality as compared to perversion… I am afraid that today "nature" most of all refers to the calm of the villa and the garden, the charm wild animals have for tourists, and the beach or the mountains where we can spend a nice summer. Who, then, can imagine man responsible for nature, when thus far he has just been a thinking flea on a secondary planet in an average solar system at the edge of one banal galaxy?

Since its origins philosophy has also devoted a great deal of thought to Technology, or the Arts. The Greeks meditated on the dialectic of Techne and Physis — a dialectic within which they situated the human animal. They laid the ground for this animal to be seen as "a reed, the weakest of nature, but … a thinking reed." For Pascal, this meant that humanity was stronger than Nature and closer to God. A long time ago, they saw that the animal capable of mathematics would do great things to the order of materiality.

Are these "robots" which they keep banging on about anything more than calculation in the form of a machine? Digits in motion? We know that they can count quicker than us, but it was we who invented them, precisely in order to fulfil this task. It would be stupid to look at a crane raising a concrete pillar up to some great height, use this to argue that man is incapable of the same feat, and then conclude by saying that some muscular, superhuman giant has emerged… Lightning-quick counting is not the sign of an insuperable "intelligence" either. Technological transhumanism plays the same old tune — an inexhaustible theme of horror and sci-fi movies — of the creator overwhelmed by his own creation. It does so either thrilled about the advent of the superman — something we have been expecting ever since Nietzsche — or fearing him and taking refuge under the skirt of Gaia, Mother Nature.

Let’s put things in a bit more perspective.

For four or five millennia, humanity has been organised by the triad of private property — which concentrates enormous wealth in the hands of very narrow oligarchies; the family, in which fortunes are transmitted via inheritance; and the state, which protects both property and the family by armed force. This triad defined our species’ Neolithic age, and we are still at this point — we could even say, now more than ever. Capitalism is the contemporary form of the Neolithic. Its enslavement of technology in the interests of competition, profit and concentrating capital only raises to their fullest extension the monstrous inequalities, the social absurdities, the murderous wars, and the damaging ideologies that have always accompanied the deployment of new technology under the reign of class hierarchy throughout history.

We should be clear that technological inventions were the preliminary conditions of the arrival of the Neolithic age, and by no means its result. If we consider our species’ fate, we see that sedentary agriculture, the domestication of cattle and horses, pottery, bronze, metallic weapons, writing, nationalities, monumental architecture, and the monotheist religions are inventions at least as important as the airplane or the smartphone. Throughout history, whatever has been human has always, by definition, been artificial. If that had not existed, there would not have been Neolithic humanity — the humanity we know — but a permanent close proximity with animal life; something which did indeed exist, in the form of small nomadic groups, for around 200,000 years.

A fearful and obscurantist primitivism has its roots in the fallacious concept of "primitive communism." Today we can see this cult of the ancient societies in which babies, men, women and the elderly supposedly lived in fraternity, without anything artificial, and indeed lived in common with the mice, the frogs, and the bears. Ultimately, all this is nothing but ridiculous reactionary propaganda. For everything suggests that the societies in question were extremely violent. After all, even their most basic survival needs were constantly under threat.

To speak fearfully of the victory of the artificial over the nature, of robot over man, is today an untenable regression, something truly absurd. It is easy enough to answer such fears, such prophesies. For judged by this standard, even a simple axe, or a domesticated horse, not to mention a papyrus covered in symbols, is an exemplary case of the post- or trans-human. Even an abacus allows quicker calculation than the fingers of the human hand.

Today we need neither a return to primitivism, or fear of the "ravages" the advent of technology might bring. Nor is there any use in morbid fascination for the science-fiction of all-conquering robots. The urgent task we face is the methodical search for a way out of the Neolithic order. This latter has lasted for millennia, valuing only competition and hierarchy and tolerating the poverty of billions of human beings. It must be surpassed at all cost. Except, that is, the cost of the high-tech wars so well known to the Neolithic age, in the lineage of the wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945, with their tens of millions of dead. And this time it could be a lot more.

The problem is not technology, or nature. The problem is how to organise societies at a global scale. We need to posit that a non-Neolithic way of organising society is possible. This means no private ownership of that which ought to be held in common, namely the production of all the necessities of human life. It means no inherited power or concentration of wealth. No separate state to protect oligarchies. No hierarchical division of labour. No nations, and no closed and hostile identities. A collective organisation of everything that is in the collective interest.

All this has a name, indeed a fine one: communism. Capitalism is but the final phase of the restrictions that the Neolithic form of society has imposed on human life. It is the final stage of the Neolithic. Humanity, that fine animal, must make one last push to break out of a condition in which 5,000 years of inventions served a handful of people. For almost two centuries — since Marx, anyway — we have known that we have to begin the new age. An age of technologies incredible for all of us, of tasks distributed equally among all of us, of the sharing of everything, and education that affirms the genius of all. May this new communism everywhere and on every question stand up against the morbid survival of capitalism. This capitalism, this seeming "modernity," represents a Neolithic world that has in fact been going on for five millennia. And that means that it is old — far too old.

#### This is a question of non-permutable starting points; The alternative is critical interrogation of economic relations that lays the groundwork for radical politics.

McLaren ‘06 (Peter, University of California, “Slavoj Žižek's Naked Politics: Opting for the Impossible, A Secondary Elaboration”, JAC, <http://www.jacweb.org/Archived_volumes/Text_articles/V21_I3_McLaren.htm>, jj)

Žižek challenges the relativism of the gender-race-class grid of reflexive positionality when he claims that class antagonism or struggle is not simply one in a series of social antagonisms—race, class, gender, and so on—but rather constitutes the part of this series that sustains the horizon of the series itself. In other words, class struggle is the specific antagonism that assigns rank to and modifies the particularities of the other antagonisms in the series. He notes that "the economy is at one and the same time the genus and one of its own species" (*Totalitarianism* 193). In what I consider to be his most important work to date, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (coauthored with Judith Butler and Ernesto Laclau), Žižek militantly refuses to evacuate reference to historical structures of totality and universality and argues that class struggle itself enables the proliferation of new political subjectivities (albeit subjectivities that ironically relegate class struggle to a secondary role). As Marx argued, class struggle structures "in advance" the very terrain of political antagonisms. Thus, according to Žižek, class struggle is not "the last horizon of meaning, the last signified of all social phenomena, but the formal generative matrix of the different ideological horizons of understanding" ("Repeating" 16-17). In his terms, class struggle sets the ground for the empty place of universality, enabling it to be filled variously with contents of different sorts (ecology, feminism, anti-racism). He further argues that the split between the classes is even more radical today than during the times of industrial class divisions. He takes the position that post-Marxists have done an excellent job in uncovering the fantasy of capital (vis-à-vis the endless deferral of pleasure) but have done little to uncover its reality. Those post-Marxists who are advocates of new social movements (such as Laclau and Mouffe) want revolution without revolution; in contrast, Žižek calls for movements that relate to the larger totality of capitalist social relations and that challenge the very matter and antimatter of capital's social universe. His strategic focus on capitalist exploitation (while often confusing and inconsistent) rather than on racial, ethnic, gender, or sexual identity is a salutary one: "The problem is not how our precious particular identity should be kept safe from global capitalism. The problem is how to oppose global capitalism at an even more radical level; the problem is to oppose it universally, not on a particular level. This whole problematic is a false one" (Olson and Worsham 281). What Žižek sets himself against is the particular experience or political argument. An experience or argument that cannot be universalized is "always and by definition a conservative political gesture: ultimately everyone can evoke his unique experience in order to justify his reprehensible acts" ("Repeating" 4-5). Here he echoes Wood, who argues that capitalism is "not just another specific oppression alongside many others but an all-embracing compulsion that imposes itself on all our social relations" ("Identity" 29). He also echoes critical educators such as Paulo Freire, who argues against the position that experiences of the oppressed speak for themselves. All experiences need to be interrogated for their ideological assumptions and effects, regardless of who articulates them or from where they are lived or spoken. They are to be read with, against, and upon the scientific concepts produced by the revolutionary Marxist tradition. The critical pedagogical act of interro-gating experiences is not to pander to the autonomous subject or to individualistic practices but to see those experiences in relationship to the structure of social antagonisms and class struggle. History has not discharged the educator from the mission of grasping the "truth of the present" by interrogating all the existing structures of exploitation present within the capitalist system where, at the point of production, material relations characterize relations between people and social relations characterize relations between things. The critical educator asks: How are individuals historically located in systematic structures of economic relations? How can these structures—these lawless laws of capital—be overcome and transformed through revolutionary praxis into acts of freely associated labor where the free development of each is the condi-tion for the free development of all?

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#### Interpretation – The affirmative may not defend strikes of a political nature

#### Exclusively political actions are not protected as strikes by the International Labor Organization (ILO) Bernard Gernigon et al. 2000, ILO PRINCIPLES CONCERNING THE RIGHT TO STRIKE.” INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE GENEVA. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\_norm/---normes/documents/publication/wcms\_087987.pdf

On the basis of the definition of “workers’ organization” contained in Article 10 of Convention No. 87, **the Committee on Freedom of Association considers that “strikes of a purely political nature … do not fall within the scope of the principles of freedom of association**” (ILO, 1996d, para. 481). However, although the Committee has expressly stated that “ it is only **in so far as trade union organizations do not allow their occupational demands to assume a purely political aspect that they can legitimately claim that there should be no interference in their activities**”, it has also specified that it is difficult to draw a clear distinction between what is political and what is, properly speaking, trade union in character, and that these two notions overlap (ibid., para. 457). Hence, in a subsequent decision, the Committee concluded that the occupational and economic interests which workers defend through the exercise of the right to strike do not only concern better working conditions or collective claims of an occupational nature, but also the seeking of solutions to economic and social policy questions (ibid., para. 479). Along the same lines, the Committee has stated that workers and their organizations should be able to express their dissatisfaction regarding economic and social matters affecting workers’ interests in circumstances that extend beyond the industrial disputes that are likely to be resolved through the signing of a collective agreement (ibid., para. 484). Nevertheless, worker action should consist merely in the expression of a protest and not be intended as a breach of the peace (ILO, 1979, para. 450). In this connection, the Committee on Freedom of Association has stated that “a declaration of the illegality of a national strike protesting against the social and labour consequences of the government’s economic policy and the banning of the strike constitute a serious violation of freedom of association” (ILO, 1996d, para. 493). That said, it should be added that the principles laid down cover both strikes at the local level, and general strikes, which by their nature have a markedly political connotation. As regards the geographical scope of the strike: The Committee [on Freedom of Association] has stated on many occasions that **strikes at the national level are legitimate in so far as they have economic and social objectives and not purely political ones;** the prohibition of strikes could only be acceptable in the case of public servants exercising authority in the name of the State or of workers in essential services in the strict sense of the term, i.e. services whose interruption could 14 endanger the life, personal safety or health of the whole or part of the population (ILO, 1996d, para. 492). As regards the general strike, in its examination of one particular case, the Committee considered that “ [a] 24-hour general strike seeking an increase in the minimum wage, respect of collective agreements in force and a change in economic policy (to decrease prices and unemployment) is legitimate and within the normal field of activity of trade union organizations “ (ibid., para. 494). Similarly, in connection with another case, the Committee concluded that “[a] general protest strike demanding that an end be put to the hundreds of murders of trade union leaders and unionists during the past few years is a legitimate trade union activity and its prohibition therefore constitutes a serious violation of freedom of association” (ibid., para. 495). The Committee on Freedom of Association’s attitude in cases where the demands pursued through strike action include some of an occupational or trade union nature and others of a political nature has been to recognize the legitimacy of the strike when the occupational or trade union demands expressed did not seem merely a pretext disguising purely political objectives unconnected with the promotion and defence of workers’ interests. **The Committee of Experts also has stated that strikes that are purely political in character do not fall within the scope of freedom of association**.

#### Violation – They advocate for \_\_\_

[SAMPLE - They advocate political strikes that are not connected to an organized union associated with a specific shop or work place. They advocate \_\_\_ [Explain what they do]

#### Standards –

#### Jurisdiction - Judges are constrained by the ballot to vote on the topic

#### Ground - Common understanding of Topic wording is the basis of all prep, so redefining words creates a lack of stable ground – kills engagement and forces the debate to fringe parts of the topic. The literature specifically denies the interconnection as, Labor movements must remain non-partisan to preserve their legitimacy

David **Robertson**, University of Missouri, 19**99**, Voluntarism Against the Open Shop: Labor and Business Strategies in the Battle for American Labor Markets, Studies in American Political Development, 13 (Spring 1999), 146–185.

**The AFL sought to maximize workers’ political impact independent of existing political parties, and to pursue its policy priorities with an opportunistic non-partisanship. The creation of a labor or socialist political party, leaders argued, had in the past diverted scarce resources into efforts with less certain payoffs**. Non-partisanship was especially appropriate in the fragmented U.S. policy making system. In the United States, the parties primarily aimed to secure office rather than programmatic change. Institutional fragmentation permitted officials of both parties to compete for worker votes.21 In 1900, with solid Republican majorities in Congress and William McKinley in the White House, AFL leaders recognized that legislative progress required access to key Republican leaders and committee chairs. Prior to the mobilization of open shop employers in 1902–1903, Republic legislators seemed willing to entertain AFL appeals. In states dominated by Democrats, however, labor needed to be on good terms with Democratic governors and legislators. Any election could shift the balance of power to the rival party (as frequently had happened during the period of close partisan balance that constituted most of Gompers’s adult experience by 1900).22 **Non-partisanship also was essential in a system in which a worker with established political identity might balk at joining in a union that insisted on a rival partisan affiliation. Labor leaders themselves were divided in party affiliation. Different labor unions had different stands on the tariff and other issues that divided the parties. Workers in the steel industry tended to support the argument that tariffs increased wealth and wages, for example, whi**le workers in other industries were more open to the argument that the tariff was the “mother of trusts.” The AFL’s declared non-partisanship allowed individual unions to adapt political strategy to maximum advantage under varying industrial or local circumstances. Specific partisan affiliations or third party politics (as in San Francisco) were tolerable if they facilitated labor objectives. Consistent with its view of non-partisan working class electoral power, the AFL endorsed the direct election of the president and the U.S. Senate, as well as initiative and referendum.23

#### Voters & Paradigm Issues –

**Fairness — debate is a game that requires objective evaluation.**

**Education – it’s why schools fund debate.**

**Drop the debater—the abuse has already occurred and my time allocation has shifted. Key to deter future abuse**

**Competing interps—race to the top since we figure out the best possible norm and avoids judge intervention since there’s a clear brightline.**

**No RVIs—**

**a. Baiting—they’ll just bait theory and prep it out—justifies maximal abuse and results in a chilling effect**

**b. its not logical—you don’t reward them for meeting the burden of being fair. Logic is a meta constraint on all args because it definitionally determines whether an argument is valid.**