## FW – Structural Violence

#### The standard is mitigating structural violence.

#### 1] The ROB is to vote for the debater who best endorses actions that criticize and expose social structures of domination and oppression. The purpose of debate education should be to train youth to challenge oppressive structures, not perpetuate them.

**Bohmer [[1]](#footnote-1)991** “Teaching Privileged Students about Gender, Race, and Class Oppression.” Teaching Sociology, Vol. 19, No. 2 (April, 1991) pp. 154-163 Susanne Bohmer

Our strong emphasis on institutional oppression is not only due to our sociological approach to social psychology; it is also an outcome of our interactions with students. Let us repeat that most of our students are white and middle class [students], with limited exposure to group diversity. Much of the material we present is new to them and often difficult to absorb. One of their major problems lies in moving from individualistic explanations to a sociological analysis. Teaching in this setting, we have found that a focus on micro-level processes is fruitful only after we have addressed the concept of institutional oppression. Without an understanding of institutional aspects students decontextualize social interactions; they equate prejudice with oppression and argue that members of privileged groups are also oppressed. This position, of course, is untenable if we want the concept to remain useful for an analysis of class, race, and gender relations in our society. Even while we emphasize institutional barriers for members of oppressed groups, we do not deny human agency by portraying oppressed individuals as trapped entirely by the confines of society. Balancing the two perspectives, however, is difficult, and the outcome depends strongly on our audience. With primarily white, middle-class students, who tend to advance individualistic explanations and who seem largely unaware of the institutional nature of oppression, we believe it is appropriate to stress barriers and limitations. If we taught a more diverse population we are certain that our discussion of oppression would focus more sharply on human agency as a potential for change. It can be both trying and challenging to integrate considerations of race, gender, and class into an introductory course on social psychology. We have experienced resistance, guilt, anger, and denial from many of our privileged students. Our greatest frustration is that students are reinforced in their resistance and denial because they experience little follow-up in other classes and have little ongoing exposure to the concepts we have introduced. We believe, however, that exposure to the concept of oppression in our classes helps at least some studentsto gain a greater understanding and appreciation for those who are different from themselves. Such exposure also leads s**ome** students to raise questions in other courses that **do not take race, gender, and class into account. These students, who we hope will** apply their knowledge to their everyday interactions with members of other groups, [**and] encourage us to find new ways of introducing race, gender, and class into the sociology curriculum.**

#### 2] Morality must start from the non-ideal circumstances we have inherited. We can never achieve the ideal consequences that ethical theories aspire for without a focus on social reality

Mills 05 Charles W. Mills, “Ideal Theory” as Ideology, 2005

I suggest that this spontaneous reaction, far from being philosophically naïve or jejune, is in fact the correct one. If we start from what is presumably the uncontroversial premise that the ultimate point of ethics is to guide our actions and make ourselves better people and the world a better place, then the framework above will not only be unhelpful, but will in certain respects be deeply antithetical to the proper goal of theoretical ethics as an enterprise. In modeling humans, human capacities, human interaction, human institutions, and human society on ideal-as-idealized-models, in never exploring how deeply different this is from ideal-as-descriptive-models, we are abstracting away from realities crucial to our comprehension of the actual workings of injustice in human interactions and social institutions, and thereby guaranteeing that the ideal-as-idealized-model will never be achieved.

#### 3] This approach to ethics justifies focus on resolving material conditions of violence. Morality isn’t just something that we strive for in a vacuum, rather, we resolve it based on the empirical world.

**Pappas 16** Gregory Fernando Pappas [Texas A&M University] “The Pragmatists’ Approach to Injustice”, The Pluralist Volume 11, Number 1, Spring 2016,

In Experience and Nature, Dewey names the empirical way of doing philosophy the “denotative method” (LW 1:371).18 What Dewey means by “denotation” is simply the phase of an empirical inquiry where we are con- cerned with designating, as free from theoretical presuppositions as possible, the concrete problem (subject matter) for which we can provide different and even competing descriptions and theories. Thus an empirical inquiry about an injustice must begin with a rough and tentative designation of where the injustices from within the broader context of our everyday life and activities are. Once we designate the subject matter, we then engage in the inquiry itself, including diagnosis, possibly even constructing theories and developing concepts. Of course, that is not the end of the inquiry. We must then take the results of that inquiry “as a path pointing and leading back to something in primary experience” (LW 1:17). This looping back is essential, and it neverends as long as there are new experiences of injustice that may require a revi- sion of our theories.¶ Injustices are events suffered by concrete people at a particular time and in a situation. We need to start by pointing out and describing these proble-matic experiences instead of starting with a theoretical account or diagnosis of them. Dewey is concerned with the consequences of not following the methodological advice to distinguish designation from diagnosis. Definitions, theoretical criteria, and diagnosis can be useful; they have their proper place and function once inquiry is on its way, but if stressed too much at the start of inquiry, they can blind us to aspects of concrete problems that escape our theoretical lenses. We must attempt to pretheoretically designate the subject matter, that is, to “point” in a certain direction, even with a vague or crude description of the problem. But, for philosophers, this task is not easy because, for instance, we are often too prone to interpret the particular problem in a way that verifies our most cherished theories of injustice.One must be careful to designate the subject matter in such a way as not to slant the question in favor of one’s theory or theoretical preconceptions. A philosopher must make an honest effort to designate the injustices based on what is experienced as such because a concrete social problem (e.g., injustice) is independent and neutral with respect to the different possible competing diagnoses or theories about its causes. Otherwise, there is no way to test or adjudicate between competing accounts.¶ That designation precedes diagnosis is true of any inquiry that claims to be empirical. To start with the diagnosis is to not start with the problem. The problem is pretheoretical or preinquiry, not in any mysterious sense but in that it is first suffered by someone in a particular context. Otherwise, the diagnosis about the causes of the problem has nothing to be about, and the inquiry cannot even be initiated. In his Logic, Dewey lays out the pattern of all empirical inquiries (LW 12). All inquiries start with what he calls an “indeterminate situation,” prior even to a “problematic situation.” Here is a sketch of the process:¶ Indeterminate situation → problematic situation → diagnosis: What is the problem? What is the solution? (operations of analysis, ideas, observations, clarification, formulating and testing hypothesis, reasoning, etc.) → final judgment (resolution: determinate situation)¶ To make more clear or vivid the difference of the starting point between Anderson and Dewey, we can use the example (or analogy) of medical prac- tice, one that they both use to make their points.19 The doctor’s startingpoint is the experience of a particular illness of a particular patient, that is, the concrete and unique embodied patient experiencing a disruption or prob- lematic change in his life. “The patient having something the matter with him is antecedent; but being ill (having the experience of illness) is not the same as being an object of knowledge.”20 The problem becomes an object of knowledge once the doctor engages in a certain interaction with the patient, analysis, and testing that leads to a diagnosis. For Dewey, “diagnosis” occurs when the doctor is already engaged in operations of experimental observation in which he is already narrowing the field of relevant evidence, concerned with the correlation between the nature of the problem and possible solu- tions. Dewey explains the process: “A physician . . . is called by a patient. His original material of experience is thereby provided. This experienced object sets the problem of inquiry. . . . He calls upon his store of knowledge to sug- gest ideas that may aid him in reaching a judgment as to the nature of the trouble and its proper treatment.”21¶ Just as with the doctor, empirical inquirers about injustice must return to the concrete problem for testing, and should never forget that their con- ceptual abstractions and general knowledge are just means to ameliorate what is particular, context-bound, and unique. In reaching a diagnosis, the doc- tor, of course, relies on all of his background knowledge about diseases and evidence, but a good doctor never forgets the individuality of the particular problem (patient and illness).¶ The physician in diagnosing a case of disease deals with something in- dividualized. He draws upon a store of general principles of physiology, etc., already at his command. Without this store of conceptual material he is helpless. But he does not attempt to reduce the case to an exact specimen of certain laws of physiology and pathology, or do away with its unique individuality. Rather he uses general statements as aids to direct his observation of the particular case, so as to discover what it is like. They function as intellectual tools or instrumentalities. (LW 4:166)¶ Dewey uses the example of the doctor to emphasize the radical contex- tualism and particularism of his view. The good doctor never forgets that this patient and “this ill is just the specific ill that it is. It never is an exact duplicate of anything else.”22 Similarly, the empirical philosopher in her in- quiry about an injustice brings forth general knowledge or expertise to an inquiry into the causes of an injustice. She relies on sociology and history as well as knowledge of different forms of injustice, but it is all in the service of inquiry about the singularity of each injustice suffered in a situation.¶ The correction or refinement that I am making to Anderson’s character- ization of the pragmatists’ approach is not a minor terminological or scholarly point; it has methodological and practical consequences in how we approach an injustice. The distinction between the diagnosis and the problem (the ill- ness, the injustice) is an important functional distinction that must be kept in inquiry because it keeps us alert to the provisional and hypothetical aspect of any diagnosis**.** To rectify or improve any diagnosis, we must return to the concrete problem; as with the patient, this may require attending as much as possible to the uniqueness of the problem. This is in the same spirit as Aon’s preference for an empirical inquiry that tries to “capture all of the expressive harms” in situations of injustice. But this requires that we begin with and return to concrete experiences of injustice and not by starting with a diagnosis of the causes of injustice provided by studies in the social sciences, as in (5) above. For instance, a diagnosis of causes that are due to systematic, structural features of society or the world disregards aspects of the concrete experiences of injustice that are not systematic and structural.¶ Making problematic situations of injustice our explicit methodological commitment as a starting point rather than a diagnosis of the problem is an important and useful imperative for nonideal theories. It functions as a directive to inquirers toward the problem, to locate it, and designate it before venturing into descriptions, diagnosis, analysis, clarifications, hypotheses, and reasoning about the problem. These operations are instrumental to its ame- lioration and must ultimately return (be tested) by the problem that sparked the inquiry. The directive can make inquirers more attentive to the complex ways in which such differences as race, culture, class, or gender intersect in a problem of injustice. Sensitivity to complexity and difference in matters of injustice is not easy; it is a very demanding methodological prescription because it means that no matter how confident we may feel about applying solutions designed to ameliorate systematic evil, **our** cures should try to address as much as possible the unique circumstances of each injustice. The analogy with medical inquiry and practice is useful in making this point, since the hope is that someday we will improve our tools of inquiry to prac- tice a much more personalized medicine than we do today, that is, provide a diagnosis and a solution specific to each patient.

## Advantage – Oppression

#### Lower skill, easily replaceable workers who face worse conditions and abuse must use coercive striking tactics in order to solve these oppressions.

**Gourevitch 18’** (Alex Gourevitch is an associate professor of political science at Brown University and the author of From Slavery To the Cooperative Commonwealth: Labor and Republican Liberty in the Nineteenth Century. “A Radical Defense of the Right to Strike” 7-12-2018 https://jacobinmag.com/2018/07/right-to-strike-freedom-civil-liberties-oppression”)

**Lower skill**, high-labor-supply **workers in** sectors like service, transportation, agriculture, and **basic industry** are in a different situation. These kinds of workers, in part because they are in such great supply, tend to **have less bargaining power and** therefore usually **face lower wages**, longer hours, **and worse working conditions**. **They are** also **more vulnerable to** forms of **illegal pressure**, [wage theft](https://jacobinmag.com/2018/06/heres-how-much-money-americas-biggest-corporations-have-stolen-from-their-own-workers), **and other abuses**. These are the workers we intuitively think should have the strongest case for a right to strike. Yet even if all of those workers walk off and respect the picket, **production will continue** rolling **because replacements are** much **easier to find**, train, and put to work. **The** collective **refusal to work** **doesn’t pack the same punch**. This is one reason why McDonald’s and Walmart workers have stuck to single-day strikes — they’d be replaced otherwise. **To** have a better shot of **succeed**ing, the majority of easily replaced **workers** often **have to use** some type of **coercive tactics.** **They must prevent managers from hiring replacements**, prevent replacements from taking struck jobs, **or prevent work from getting done** in some other way. To be clear, by coercive, I don’t mean violent. Historically, it has not been workers but **the state and** **employers’ private thugs** who have **committed most** of the **strike-related violence.** **Workers have suffered violence when exercising perfectly legitimate forms of coercion.** The classic coercive tactics are [sit-down strikes](http://scholarship.shu.edu/shlr/vol40/iss1/4/) (occupying the workplace to prevent work from being done) and [mass pickets](http://scholar.law.colorado.edu/articles/80/) (surrounding a workplace so no people or supplies can get in or out).

#### Right to strike is unique in leveling the playing field for public workers – tons of benefits

**Myall ’19** (<https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/>, “Right to strike would level the playing field for public workers, with benefits for all of us”, James Myall, 4/17/2019, ”James is MECEP’s lead on the inclusive economy, including research on labor issues, gender and racial equity, and health care policy. James conducts research and impact analyses, writes educational materials, and collaborates with partners. He is skilled in data collection, research, and statistical and policy analysis. He studied public policy and management at the University of Southern Maine and holds a master’s degree in ancient history and archaeology from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.”)

**The right** of workers **to organize and bargain** with their employer **benefits all** Mainers. **Collective bargaining leads to better wages, safer workplaces, and a fairer and more robust economy** for everyone — not just union members. The right to strike is critical to collective organizing and bargaining. **Without it**, Maine’s public **employees are unable to negotiate on a level playing field.** Maine’s Legislature is considering a bill that would give public-sector workers the right to strike. MECEP supports the legislation, and is urging legislators to enact it. The right to strike would enable fairer negotiations between public workers and the government. All of us have reason to support that outcome. **Research shows** that union **negotiations set the bar for working conditions** with other employers. And as the largest employer in Maine, **the state’s treatment of its workers has a big impact on working conditions** in the private sector. Unions support a fairer economy. Periods of high union membership are associated with lower levels of income inequality, both nationally and in Maine. Strong unions, including public-sector unions, have a critical role to play in rebuilding a strong middle class **Unions help combat inequities** within work places. **Women and people of color in unions face less wage discrimination** than those in nonunion workplaces. On average, wages for nonunionized white women in Maine are 18 percent less than of those of white men. Among unionized workers, that inequality shrinks to just 9 percent. Similarly, women of color earn 26 percent less than men in nonunionized jobs; for unionized women of color, the wage gap shrinks to 17 percent.[[i]](https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/" \l "_edn1) All of us have a stake in the success of collective bargaining. But **a union without the right to strike loses much of its negotiating power. The right to withdraw your labor is the foundation of** collective **worker action**. When state employees or teachers are sitting across the negotiating table from their employers, how much leverage do they really have when they can be made to work without a contract? It’s like negotiating the price of a car when the salesman knows you’re going to have to buy it — whatever the final price is. **Research confirms that public-sector unions are less effective without the right to strike. Public employees with a right to strike earn between 2 percent and 5 percent more than those without it**.[[ii]](https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/" \l "_edn2)While that’s a meaningful increase for those workers, it also **should assuage any fears that a right to strike would lead to excessive pay increases or employees abusing their new right.**

#### Strikes don’t perpetuate disturbance – they are good in the long run and solve for oppression stemming the root of actual disturbance – unjust policies and social flaws.

Lim ’19 (<https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2019/12/11/lim-right-to-strike/>, Woojin Lim, 12/11/2019, “The Right to Strike”, Woojin Lim is a Crimson Editorial editor, is a Philosophy concentrator in Winthrop House)

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 **a**n unjust **flaw in the social order, that is, the** **recognition that the benefits from shouldering the burdens of social cooperation are not fair**ly distributed. **Strikes and protests publicize this recognition and demand reform**. No doubt, **work stoppages** from teaching fellows, course assistants, and graduate research assistants — no sections, no office hours, no labs, no grades — **may pose**[**inconvenience**](https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2019/11/26/barham-quesada-protest/) and perhaps hardship **in our present lives**. Strikes may also impose a serious financial [cost](https://harvardmagazine.com/2019/11/a-harvard-graduate-student-union-strike) on both the employer and the employees. **These costs and inconveniences, however, should not be ridiculed as outrageous, for they rightfully**[**invite**](https://jacobinmag.com/2018/07/right-to-strike-freedom-civil-liberties-oppression)**disruption. The possible hazards that arise from a strike must be weighed against the workers’ welfare and just rewards and to the community. For instance**, current graduate students who struggle in [financials](https://www.apa.org/monitor/2015/04/money-stress) and [mental health](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/258702) may be troubled with juggling teaching obligations. **If graduate students are provided with pay security and adequate dental, mental health**, and specialist coverage, their **quality of teaching and research may**[**improve**](https://cpr.bu.edu/resources/reasonable-accommodations/how-does-mental-illness-interfere-with-school-performance/)**in the**[**long run**](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6350815/). There are dangers to bystanders and neutrals when a strike occurs, but **such considerations also arise when one lays down the right to strike.**

#### Oppressions will not stop insofar as strikes are not available as strikes are uniquely effective.

**Chibber 16’** (“Why the Working Class?”, Vivek Chibber, 3/13/2016, Vivek Chibber is a professor of sociology at New York University. He is the editor of *Catalyst: A Journey of Theory and Strategy*., https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/03/working-class-capitalism-socialists-strike-power/)

There are many things that people need to lead decent lives. But two items are absolutely essential. The first is some guarantee of material security — things like having an [income](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/08/universal-basic-income-socialist-libertarian/), [housing](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/11/public-housing-social-welfare-crisis-affordable-gentrification/), and [basic health care](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/02/gaffney-single-payer-sanders-healthcare-obamacare-aca-clinton/). The second is being free of social domination — if you are under someone else’s control, if they make many of the key decisions for you, then you are constantly vulnerable to abuse. So, **in a society in which most** people don’t have job security, or have jobs but [can’t pay their bills](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/07/tsipras-syriza-referendum-debt-euro/), in which they have to **submit to other people’s control, in which they don’t have a voice in how laws and regulations** are made **— it’s impossible to achieve social justice. Capitalism** is an economic system that **depends on depriving** the vast majority of people of these essential **preconditions for a decent life. Workers** show up for work every day knowing that they **have little job security;** they are paid what **employers** feel is consistent with their **main priority,** which is making **profits, not the well-being** of employees; they work at a pace and duration that is set by their bosses; and **they submit** to these conditions, not because they want to, but **because** for most of them, **the alternative** to accepting these conditions **is not having a** **job** at all. This is not some incidental or marginal aspect of capitalism. It is the defining feature of the system [capitalism]. Economic and political **power is in the hands of capitalists, whose only goal is to maximize profits**, which means that **the condition of workers is**, at best, **a secondary** concern to them. And that means that the system is, at its very core, unjust. It follows that the first step to making our society more humane and fair is to reduce the insecurity and material deprivation in so many people’s lives, and to increase their scope for self-determination. But we immediately run into a problem — the political resistance of elites. Power is not distributed equally in capitalism. Capitalists decide who is hired and fired, and who works for how long, not workers. **Capitalists also have the most** political **power,** because **they can do things like lobby**, fund political **campaigns, and bankroll** political **parties.** And since they are the ones who benefit from the system, why should they encourage changes in it, changes that inevitably mean a diminution in their power and their bottom line? The answer is, **they don’t take** very kindly **to challenges, and they do their best to maintain the status quo.** Movements for progressive reform have found time and again that whenever they try to push for changes in the direction of justice, they come up against the power of capital.Any reforms that require a redistribution of income, or come from the government as a social measure — whether it’s health care, [environmental regulations](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/12/naomi-klein-climate-change-this-changes-everything-cop21/), [minimum wages](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2013/10/beyond-fast-food-strikes/), or [job programs](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/01/supreme-court-scalia-fisher-texas-bakke-affirmative-action-civil-rights/) — are routinely opposed by the wealthy, because any such measures inevitably mean a reduction in their income (as taxes) or their profits. What this means is that progressive **reform efforts have to find** a source of **leverage,** a source of **power that will enable them to overcome the** resistance of the **capitalist class** and its political functionaries. **The working class has this** power, for a simple reason — **capitalists can only make their profits if workers show up to work every day, and if they refuse** to play along, the **profits dry up** overnight. And if there is one thing that catches employers’ attention, it’s when the money stops flowing. Actions like **strikes** don’t just **have the potential to bring particular capitalists to their knees, they can have an impact** far beyond, on **layer after layer of other institutions that** directly or indirectly **depend on them — including the government**. This ability to crash the entire system, just by refusing to work, gives workers a kind of leverage that no other group in society has, except capitalists themselves. This is why, if progressive social **change requires overcoming** capitalist **opposition** — and we have learned over three centuries that it does — then **it is of** central **importance to organize workers so that they can use that power.** Workers are therefore not only a social group that is systematically oppressed and exploited in modern society, they are also the group best positioned to enact real change and extract concessions from the major center of power — the bankers and industrialists who run the system.They are the group that comes into contact with capitalists every day and are tied in a perennial conflict with them as a part of their very existence. They are the only group that has to take on capital if they want to improve their lives. There is no more logical force to organize a political movement around. And this isn’t just a theory. If we look back at the conditions in which far-reaching reforms have been passed over the past hundred years, reforms which improved the material conditions of the poor, or which gave them more rights against the market ­— they were invariably based on working-class mobilization. This is true not only with the “color-blind” measures of the welfare state, but even with such phenomena as [civil rights](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/08/alabama-hammer-and-hoe-robin-kelley-communist-party/) and the [struggle for the vote](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/02/chartism-feargus-oconnor-democracy-suffrage-thomas-paine/). Any movement that extended benefits to the poor, whether they were black or white, male or female, had to base itself on a mobilization of working people. This was true in Europe and the Global South as much as it was in the United States.It is this power to extract real concessions from capital that makes the working class so important for political strategy. Of course, the fact that workers also form the majority in every capitalist society and that they are systematically exploited only makes their plight all the more pressing. This combination of moral urgency and strategic force is what places the working class at the center of socialist politics.

## Advantage – Climate Strikes

#### Climate change is evident right now – we are on the brink of catastrophe and the point of no return

**Harvey 21’** (“We’re on the brink of catastrophe, warns Tory climate chief”, 8/7/2021, Fiona Harvey, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/aug/07/were-on-the-brink-of-catastrophe-warns-tory-climate-chief)

**The world will soon face “catastrophe” from climate breakdown if urgent action is not taken**, the British president of vital UN climate talks has warned. Alok Sharma, the UK minister in charge of the [Cop26 talks](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/cop26-glasgow-climate-change-conference-2021) to be held in Glasgow this November, told the Observer that **the consequences of failure would be “catastrophic**”: “I don’t think there’s any other word for it. **You’re seeing** on a daily basis **what is happening** across the world. **Last year was the hottest** on record, **the last decade the hottest** decade **on record.”** But Sharma also insisted the UK could carry on with fossil-fuel projects, in the face of mounting criticism of plans to license [new oil and gas fields](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/24/uk-government-to-allow-new-north-sea-oil-and-gas-exploration). He defended the government’s record on plans to reach net zero emissions by 2050, which have been heavily criticised by the UK’s independent [Committee on Climate Change](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/25/road-to-net-zero-what-the-committee-on-climate-change-recommends), and dismissed controversies over his [travel schedule](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/aug/06/one-rule-for-them-alok-sharma-criticised-over-flights-to-30-countries). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the world’s leading authority on climate science, will publish a [comprehensive report](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/aug/06/reduce-methane-or-face-climate-catastrophe-scientists-warn?fbclid=IwAR061pAQp1wAJM-wqHo_RsW0lwhkC_utM8iwv9h1Rppce-jooQuu3tkoJi8) on Monday showing how close humanity is to the brink of potentially irreversible disaster caused by extreme weather. “This is going to be the starkest warning yet that human behaviour is alarmingly accelerating global warming and this is why [Cop26](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/cop26-glasgow-climate-change-conference-2021) has to be the moment we get this right. **We can’t afford to wait** two years, five years, 10 years – this is the moment,” Sharma warned, in his first major interview since taking charge of the climate talks. “I don’t think we’re out of time but I think **we’re getting dangerously close to when we might** **be out of time**. We will see [from the IPCC] a very, very clear warning that unless we act now, we will unfortunately be out of time.” **The consequences of global heating were already evident**, he said. “**We’re seeing the impacts across the world** – **in the UK** **or the terrible flooding we’ve seen across Europe and China, or forest fires**,the record temperatures that we’ve seen in North America. **Every day you will see a new high** being recorded in one way or another across the world.” This was not about abstract science but people’s lives, he added. “Ultimately this comes down to the very real human impact this is having across the world. I’ve visited communities that as a result of climate change have literally had to flee their homes and move because of a combination of drought and flooding.” Sharma spoke exclusively to the Observer on the eve of the IPCC report to urge governments, businesses and individuals around the world to take heed, and press for stronger action on greenhouse gas emissions at the Cop26 conference, which he said would be almost the last chance. “This [IPCC report] is going to be a wake-up call for anyone who hasn’t yet understood why this next decade has to be absolutely decisive in terms of climate action. We will also get a pretty clear understanding that **human activity is driving climate change at alarming rates**,” he said. Disaster was not yet inevitable, and actions now could save lives in the future, he added: “**Every fraction of a degree rise** [in temperature] **makes a difference** and that’s why countries have to act now.”

#### Current labor laws pose a huge barrier for climate strikes – it’s too restrictive

**Ghazarian 19’** (“The Climate Strikers Walked Out of School. Next, Let’s Walk Off the Job”, Sydney Ghazarian, 11/5/2019, <https://inthesetimes.com/article/climate-change-strike-labor-union-school-strike-protest>, Sydney Ghazarian started the National Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) Ecosocialist Working Group and is a member of its current Steering Committee. She is also a climate organizer and an advisory board member for The Trouble.”

One possible route forward comes from Francisco Cendejas, a long-time labor organizer who helped start National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW). He suggests that unions could resolve to strike for a Green New Deal if a number of other national unions agreed to do so as well. The simple explanation for this ​“strike pact” approach is that there is safety in numbers, but the reasoning goes deeper. **The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and** U.S. **labor laws overtly favor employers over workers — and place strict parameters around striking. This imbalance has created a mountain of legal barriers preventing an entire union from going on strike — especially for a Green New Deal or other demands for the common good.**

#### Climate strikes are successful in spreading awareness – we need more to truly force action.

**Thunberg et al 19’** (“Why We Strike Again”, Greta Thunberg, Luisa Neubauer, Angela Valenzuela, 11/29/2019, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/climate-strikes-un-conference-madrid-by-greta-thunberg-et-al-2019-11>)

For more than a year, children and young **people** from **around the world have been striking for the climate**. We launched a movement that defied all expectations, with [millions](https://globalclimatestrike.net/7-million-people-demand-action-after-week-of-climate-strikes/) of people lending their voices – and their bodies – to the cause. We did this not because it was our dream, but because we didn’t see anyone else taking action to secure our future. And despite the vocal support we have received from many adults – including some of the world’s most powerful leaders – we still don’t. Striking is not a choice we relish; **we do it because we see no other options.** We have watched a string of United Nations climate conferences unfold. Countless negotiations have produced much-hyped but ultimately empty commitments from the world’s governments – the same **governments** that **allow** fossil-fuel **companies to** drill for ever-more oil and gas, and **burn away our futures** for their profit. Politicians and fossil-fuel companies have known about climate change for decades. And yet the politicians let the profiteers continue to exploit our planet’s resources and destroy its ecosystems in a quest for quick cash that threatens our very existence. Don’t take our word for it: scientists are [sounding the alarm](https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/advance-article/doi/10.1093/biosci/biz088/5610806). They [warn](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/26/climate/greenhouse-gas-emissions-carbon.html) that **we have never been less likely to limit the rise in global temperatures** to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels – the threshold beyond which the most destructive effects of climate change would be triggered. Worse, recent [research](https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/production-gap-report-2019) shows that we are on track to produce 120% more fossil fuels in 2030 than would be consistent with the 1.5°C limit. The concentration of climate-heating greenhouse gases in our atmosphere has reached a [record high](https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/greenhouse-gas-concentrations-atmosphere-reach-yet-another-high), with no sign of a slowdown. Even if countries fulfill their current emissions-reduction pledges, we are headed for a [3.2°C increase](https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2019). Young people like us bear the brunt of our leaders’ failures. Research [shows](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29295510) that pollution from burning fossil fuels is the world’s most significant threat to children’s health. Just this month, five million masks were [handed out](https://edition.cnn.com/2019/11/01/asia/delhi-pollution-schools-intl-hnk/index.html) at schools in New Delhi, India’s capital, owing to toxic smog. Fossil fuels are literally choking the life from us. The science is crying out for urgent action, and still our leaders dare to ignore it. So we continue to fight. After a year of strikes, **our voices are being heard. We are being invited to speak in the corridors of power.** At the UN, we [addressed](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAJsdgTPJpU) a room filled with world leaders. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, we met with prime ministers, presidents, and even the pope. We have spent hundreds of hours participating in panels and [speaking](https://www.ted.com/talks/greta_thunberg_school_strike_for_climate_save_the_world_by_changing_the_rules/transcript?language=en) with journalists and filmmakers. We have been [offered](https://time.com/5713794/greta-thunberg-turns-down-environment-prize/) awards for our activism. **Our efforts have helped to shift the wider conversation on climate change.** **People now increasingly discuss the crisis** we face, not in whispers or as an afterthought, but **publicly and with a sense of urgency**. **Polls confirm changing perceptions**. **One**[recent survey](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/sep/18/climate-crisis-seen-as-most-important-issue-by-public-poll-shows) **showed that, in seven of the eight countries included, climate breakdown is considered to be the most important issue facing the world**. Another confirmed that schoolchildren have led the way in raising awareness. **With public opinion shifting, world leaders, too, say that they have heard us.** They say that they agree with our demand for urgent action to tackle the climate crisis. But they do nothing. As they head to Madrid for the 25th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP25) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, we call out this hypocrisy. On the next two Fridays, **we will again take to the streets**: worldwide on November 29, and in Madrid, Santiago, and many other places on December 6 during the UN climate conference. Schoolchildren, young people, and adults all over the world will stand together, demanding that our leaders take action – not because we want them to, but because the science demands it. That action must be powerful and wide-ranging. After all, the climate crisis is not just about the environment. It is a crisis of human rights, of justice, and of political will. Colonial, racist, and patriarchal systems of oppression have created and fueled it. We need to dismantle them all. Our political leaders can no longer shirk their responsibilities. Some say that the Madrid conference is not very important; the big decisions will be made at COP26 in Glasgow next year. We disagree. As the science makes clear, we don’t have a single day to lose. We have learned that, **if we do not step up, nobody will**. So we will keep up a steady drumbeat of strikes, protests, and other actions. We will become louder and louder. We will do whatever it takes to persuade our leaders to unite behind science so clear that even children understand it. **Collective action works; we have proved that.** But to change everything, we need everyone. Each and every one of us must participate in the climate resistance movement. We cannot just say we care; we must show it. Join us. Participate in our upcoming climate strikes in Madrid or in your hometown. Show your community, the fossil-fuel industry, and your political leaders that you will not tolerate inaction on climate change anymore. With numbers on our side, we have a chance. And to the leaders who are headed to Madrid, our message is simple: the eyes of all future generations are upon you. Act accordingly.

#### The US is uniquely key in leading the fight against climate change

**Butcher 20’** (“The US must lead in the fight against climate change”, Danielle Butcher, 9/11/20, <https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/515980-the-us-must-lead-in-the-fight-against-climate-change>)

The premise is simple: **climate change is a global challenge** and thus requires global solutions. **The United States has a major leadership role to play in this fight**, but the truth is that if we are fighting alone, we’ve already lost. A global approach to reducing emissions around the world is required. While international cooperation has always been used as a buzzword in climate discussions, previous attempts have fallen flat. We live in a chaotic world with a multitude of challenges, but we cannot allow the future of our planet to be lost in the noise. Carbon emissions don’t stay confined within a nation’s borders, so emissions anywhere affect people everywhere. Any serious climate plan must include measures for global engagement because we cannot solve climate change, and its many effects, by ourselves. **The U**nited **S**tates **produces** approximately [**15 percent**](https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data)**of global carbon emissions,** which by all means is **a significant amount**. However, this figure leaves 85 percent of emissions out of our hands, 30 percent of which come from China. While reaching net zero emissions in our own nation is a worthy goal, we can’t make global progress if we keep mitigation efforts within our borders. In fact, only [16 out of 197](https://www.euractiv.com/section/climate-environment/news/only-16-countries-meet-their-commitment-to-paris-agreement-new-study-finds/) countries signed on to the Paris climate accord are actually on track to meet their climate goals. Effects of climate change are felt in every corner of the world, so to help ourselves, we must help others too. [The American Climate Contract](http://www.climatesolution.eco/), a platform introduced by our organization, recognizes this reality and presents a new way forward. While climate change and emissions are the chief concern, energy poverty is also a serious problem globally. The American Climate Contract aims to help those at the frontlines of climate change and other environmental challenges because citizens of every country in the world need and deserve energy. By pursuing an innovation-based approach here at home, **we** can not only lower our own emissions, but also **export new technologies abroad to industrializing countries with high levels of emissions.** **Industrializing countries do not produce energy as cleanly as we do here in the United States**, so by innovating and creating new, clean technologies, **we’re helping everyone, including the environment**. The benefits of global engagement don’t start and stop with technology, though. Exporting **American energy, too, is beneficial** — not only for our nation, but for nations who are dependent on authoritarian regimes such as Iran and Russia for their energy. Not only are those countries growing geopolitical threats, but **American natural gas exports are significantly cleaner than Russian natural gas exports** and have anywhere from [41 to 47 percent](https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2019/09/f66/2019%20NETL%20LCA-GHG%20Report.pdf) lower lifecycle emissions. Exporting natural gas, renewable technologies and energy infrastructure technology will benefit **the U.S.** economy and **assist developing countries in lowering emissions and raising standards of living.** In addition to the national security component, it’s far easier to export technologies than it is to impose a domestic policy in another country. Instead of attempting to implement policy in an entirely different country with different politics, we can empower foreign governments with new technologies and cleaner energy sources. Not only is this more feasible, it’s more effective. That’s real American leadership. Trying to address climate change without international cooperation would be a grave mistake. Past international agreements may have failed to live up to their promises, but that doesn’t mean collaboration doesn’t have merit. **The United States has an opportunity to set a positive example for the rest of the world by promoting the increased development of innovative technologies and by producing cleaner energy for the world to use.** This approach makes economic and environmental sense and improves countless lives while mitigating the effects of a changing climate. There’s little time to wait and every reason to work together. We can make a difference domestically, without a doubt, but to truly adapt to climate change, we are all in this together.

**Warming causes extinction and turns every impact – no adaptation and each degree is worse**

**Krosofsky ’21** [Andrew, Green Matters Journalist, “How Global Warming May Eventually Lead to Global Extinction”, Green Matters, 03-11-2021, https://www.greenmatters.com/p/will-global-warming-cause-extinction]

Eventually, yes. **Global warming will invariably result in the mass extinction of millions of different species,** humankind included. In fact, **the Center for Biological Diversity says that global warming is currently the greatest threat to life on this planet**. **Global warming causes a number of detrimental effects on the environment that many species won’t be able to handle long-term**. Extreme weather patterns are shifting climates across the globe, eliminating habitats and altering the landscape. **As a result, food and fresh water sources are being drastically reduced**. Then, of course, **there are the rising global temperatures themselves, which many species are physically unable to contend with**. Formerly frozen arctic and antarctic regions are melting, increasing sea levels and temperatures. Eventually, **these effects will create a perfect storm of extinction conditions**. The melting glaciers of the arctic and the searing, **unmanageable heat indexes being seen along the Equator are just the tip of the iceberg, so to speak.** **The species that live in these climate zones have already been affected by the changes caused by global warming.** Take polar bears for example, whose habitats and food sources have been so greatly diminished that they have been forced to range further and further south. **Increased carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere and oceans have already led to ocean acidification**. **This has caused many species of crustaceans to either adapt or perish and has led to the mass bleaching of more than 50 percent of Australia’s Great Barrier Reef**, according to National Geographic. According to the Center for Biological Diversity, the current trajectory of global warming predicts that more than 30 percent of Earth’s plant and animal species will face extinction by 2050. By the end of the century, that number could be as high as 70 percent. We won’t try and sugarcoat things, humanity’s own prospects aren’t looking that great either. According to The Conversation, **our species has just under a decade left to get our CO₂ emissions under control. If we don’t cut those emissions by half before 2030, temperatures will rise to potentially catastrophic levels. It may only seem like a degree or so, but the worldwide ramifications are immense.** The human species is resilient. We will survive for a while longer, even if these grim global warming predictions come to pass, **but it will mean less food, less water, and increased hardship across the world — especially in low-income areas and developing countries. This increase will also mean more pandemics, devastating storms, and uncontrollable wildfires**.

#### Climate change perpetrates slow violence that hurts the most vulnerable

Nelson 16 – Sara Nelson is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Geography, Environment, and Society at the University of Minnesota. Her research explores the political economy of conservation and environmental management (Sara Nelson, 2/17/16, “The Slow Violence of Climate Change”, JacobIn, [https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/02/cop-21-united-nations-paris-climate-change/)](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/02/cop-21-united-nations-paris-climate-change/)//A-Sharma)

The Paris Agreement, achieved December 12 at the twenty-first Conference of the Parties to the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP21), has been heralded as a “[turning point for humanity](http://content.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2015/12/sierra-club-paris-climate-agreement-turning-point-humanity)” and “[a new type of international cooperation](http://www.wri.org/blog/2015/12/paris-agreement-turning-point-climate-solution).” In his remarks to the General Assembly following the close of COP21, UN Secretary General [Ban Ki-moon](http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sgsm17417.doc.htm) called it “a triumph for people, the planet, and multilateralism.” More critical voices have pointed to the “[wrinkles](http://fpif.org/seven-wrinkles-paris-climate-deal/)” that mar the agreement, while influential climate scientist James Hanson has dismissed it as “[just worthless words](http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/climate-scientists-paris-1.3366751).” Most commentary falls in a middle ground, viewing the agreement as an important, if faltering,[step in the right direction](http://www.economist.com/news/international/21683990-paris-agreement-climate-change-talks): even if we’re not entirely happy with what has been achieved, that something was achieved at all signals a “[political will](http://earthinnovation.org/2015/12/paris-unifying-global-political-will/)” for change. But the drama and significance of the COP as an event isn’t primarily about the emergence of an agreement. The history of international climate negotiations — with the exception of the spectacular failure at Copenhagen — boasts a long line of Outcomes, Accords, and even Protocols. Throughout, emissions have continued not only unabated, but [at an accelerated pace](https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/ar5/pr_wg3/20140413_pr_pc_wg3_en.pdf). Bolivian president Evo Morales remarked on this uncomfortable truth at last year’s COP20 in Lima, when he admonished delegates for having little to show for over two decades of climate change negotiations other than “a heavy load of hypocrisy and neocolonialism.” The COP as an event, then, does not simply represent the failure to contend with the ongoing catastrophe of climate change. Its very process perpetrates what Rob Nixon calls the “slow violence” of climate change. Nixon uses this term to describe how contemporary imperialism transfers its toxic byproducts to peoples and ecosystems at the peripheries of the global economy, challenging us to recognize imperial violence in the cumulative, attritional, and mundane forms of death and disease that do not resolve into moments of spectacular destruction**. Climate change**, for Nixon, is the ultimate expression of slow violence, a “[temporal and geographical outsourcing](http://harvardpress.typepad.com/hup_publicity/2013/11/when-slow-violence-sprints-rob-nixon.html)” of environmental devastation to the most vulnerable populations and to future generations, a “discounting” of lives and livelihoods that cannot prove their worth in economic terms. But if climate change is “slow violence” in terms of its cumulative effects, it is equally slow in its execution — and nothing illustrates this quite so effectively as the trudging pace of international negotiations. Geopolitical power operates here in decidedly non-spectacular ways, through the procedural minutiae of negotiations over subtleties of wording. The drama of urgency around the production of an outcome distracts from the reality of negotiations as a long process of strategic refusal, whereby wealthy countries deny their historical responsibility for global emissions and thereby lock in catastrophic climate trajectories. Rather than heralding the success of an agreement or rejecting it outright as a failure, we should attend to the COP as an instance of slow violence in action.

1. “Teaching Privileged Students about Gender, Race, and Class Oppression.” Teaching Sociology, Vol. 19, No. 2 (April, 1991) pp. 154-163. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)