I stand in negation of the resolution “A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.”

# Framing: Mutualism (Darby 16)

There are lots of ideas for changing the world – from voting to demonstrations, petitions, lifestyle change, incremental change, revolutionary change, or more of the same, only harder. The problem with many of them is that they are either ineffective or not implementable. Mutualism is, I believe, an idea that is both implementable and potentially beneficial.Now, are you sitting down? Mutualism is a flavour of anarchism – mutualist anarchism. Try to banish from your mind any visions of men with beards, masks and bombs with fizzing fuses. Anarchism just means without ‘rulers’ – society is instead organised on a voluntary, co-operative basis. We find ways to network and make decisions democratically and collectively without the need for force. The kinds of decisions that get made amongst groups of friends, in co-operative businesses or in (functional) families.Trying to differentiate types of anarchism can be a bit like trying to visually follow individual strands of spaghetti on a plate – very tricky. After tugging at lots of spaghetti strands, I suggest that these are the three main threads, from which a multitude of schools of thought emerge:mutualist anarchism; follows the philosophy of Proudhon; gradualist rather than revolutionary; involves a free market, with money as a means of exchange, with competition and wages. But – no bosses, no landlords and no shareholders. No making money from anybody else’s work, and no making money from lending money. Private property is fine as long as you live in it or use it for your work (including land).collectivist anarchism: follows the philosophy of Bakunin; requires a revolution; involves collectivisation of the means of production (land, industry, buildings, machinery); wages; money but with the same conditionsabove.communist anarchism: follows the philosophy of Kropotkin; revolution required; no wages; no money; people take from communal stores what they need; from each according to ability, to each according to need.I’m sure that many anarchists will disagree with this simplistic classification, and indeed, there are many other ways to do it – this is just my interpretation.I’d describe myself as a (PREFER:) mutualist for(These) 3 main reasons: it’s implementable. ‘Solutions’ are no good if they only work in theory – they have to work in the real, messy, unforgiving world.I know that mutual systems can work – co-ops, building societies, peer-to-peer, partnerships, open source (even at the scale of Mondragon, the Scott-Bader commonwealth, the John Lewis partnership, the Nationwide or the Co-op), and that they can be successful in the 21st century. I can’t say that about collectivist or communist anarchism – yet.it can attract both left and right, which could free us from the pointless left vs right battle that saps our energy and allows the corporate sector to retain power. I can only see hysteria and absolute opposition emerging from the right from any attempt to implement collectivist or communist anarchism in one step from where we are now. I’d go so far as to say that if a strategy is opposed by either left or right, it’s going to fail.However, I accept that mutualism could be a stepping stone to a moneyless society if that’s what we decide we want – all of us, not just the few who are in control now.Wikipedia states that anarchism is generally considered a left-wing phenomenon. I don’t disagree that that’s what most people perceive it as, but I don’t agree that it actually is left-wing – not using the criteria for left- and right-wing thought that are used by most people these days. For me, ‘left’ means more state control and ‘right’ means less. As anarchism promotes no state or minimal state, I don’t see how it can possibly be considered ‘left’. And as for mutualist anarchism, the inclusion of competition and a free market in its philosophy seems to put it more towards the right end of the spectrum.But I don’t think it is a spectrum, I think it’s a circle, and anarchism is the place where the libertarian right and the communist left meet. What’s the point of removing the authority of the state without challenging the power of money (libertarianism), or on the other hand, of removing the power of money without challenging the power of the state (communism)? A step further for each would see them firmly in the realm of anarchism – and all the better for it.Here’s an infographic on the differences between the main strands of anarchism (leaves out collectivist anarchism, possibly a bit harsh on anarcho-primitivism but spot on about anarcho-capitalism. It’s not anarchism at all – you can corroborate that here, if you have a few thousand hours to spare).But there are core principles shared by all types of anarchism – co-operation, no hierarchy, no making money from anyone else’s work, no landlordism etc. Here’s more on mutualism from Kevin Carson. I can’t find much there I disagree with – and if your thing is a moneyless society, then we might transition to that later. I can’t honestly see any one-step transition to collectivist or communist anarchism from here – even if we could be sure that they would work. I know that mutualism can work; and we don’t have the luxury of time (see here for why) for an idea that doesn’t have an immediate implementation plan.Reading Parecon, by Michael Albert (an outline of a communist anarchist society), I was struck by a) how clever Albert is, and b) how extraordinarily difficult it would be to transfer to his ideal, moneyless societypareconAlternatively, a mutualist society could involve:a steady-state economy.a market that’s free in ways that a capitalist market isn’t. Corporations outcompete small companies unfairly because they fund politicians and parties, they run a multi-billion dollar lobby industry, they have multi-billion dollar advertising budgets, they avoid tax, they offer jobs to politicians and they operate sweatshops. That is in no way a free market. Competition within a really free market is seen as a good thing because it engenders pride in work – people generally want to be good at what they do, and useful to their community. OK, maybe competition isn’t the best way for humans to relate to each other, ultimately, and if pushed on this, I agree. I’d just fall back on the previous argument, that mutualism is implementable, and doesn’t have to be the end of history.self-employment – and if you want to work with other people, then form or join a partnership, co-op or trust. You can only be a boss to an apprentice, as long as you’re teaching him or her a trade.home-ownership – owning your own home is fine, but owning someone else’s isn’t. All forms of co-ownership are, of course, fine. You can own land too – but only as much as you can work. If you can’t work it, co-operatively or alone (but not as anyone’s boss), it’s not yours – it’s wild land or it’s someone else’s to work.money – making money from your work is fine, but making money from your money isn’t. There should be a money economy, at least for now, but with no interest. What interest should anyone have in someone else’s work?I used to think that this kind of society was ‘distributist‘, but it’s not, because (apart from the anti-semitism of some of its main proponents) distributism was about building an economy based on small businesses and family farbut with no way to stop those small businesses growing into or being bought out by monopoly corporations. Back to the left vs right issue – I had a conversation with our Conservative parliamentary candidate who considered himself to be a distributist, but wondered how to limit the size of small businesses to stop them becoming corporate (yes, really).To those who don’t believe that mutualism is human nature, I’d refer you to Murray Bookchin’s Ecology of Freedom. Working with palaeoarchaeologists and palaeoanthropologists, he shows that pre-agricultural societies were non-hierarchicalpeople assumed leadership in tasks that they excelled in, such as hunting, cooking, climbing trees for honey etc. – but no-one was in overall control, no-one had a bigger hut than anyone else, and no-one had more possessions than anyone else (crucial really, in largely nomadic societies).

Some people may not want the responsibility of running their own business or being part of a co-operative – they may long for a structured job with a set wage, a boss telling them what to do and no responsibility. But that’s not an argument against mutualism – that’s like saying that some slaves didn’t want the responsibility of being free people. If owning people is wrong, it’s wrong – you can’t ‘volunteer’ to be a slave. When the feudal system had gone, I’m sure that some of the older generation looked back with nostalgia to a time when they were tied to the land of the lord of the manor, rather than having to work for a wage. But when that system had gone, it was gone. That was it, no going back. Now, of course, we see slavery and feudalism as barbaric, oppressive and exploitative. I believe that it’s wrong to make money from other people’s work, and that in time, people will look back on private employment in the same way that we look back on serfdom or slavery. It’s more than just making money from someone else’s work, bad though that is – it’s having the power to make decisions that will hugely affect someone else’s life – whether or not they have a job, for instance. Furthermore, being able to go to a polling station and vote every four or five years (especially if you’re not in a marginal constituency) doesn’t make up for the fact that you have a boss or line manager with authority over you for forty hours per week, virtually every week of your life. That in no way constitutes democracy.Self-employed people obviously rely on their own hard work and skills, but also, in my experience of co-operatives, peer pressure is usually enough for people to pull their finger out. No-one wants to be seen as a slacker by their peers. And of course you can still be fired by a co-operative if you don’t pull your weight – but the decision will be made by a vote of your peers, rather than people above you in a hierarchy.If the right are serious about free markets and fair competition then let’s have them. They can’t seriously argue that we have them at the moment. Achieving a mutualist society still seems like a distant dream, but I can envisage it, and we can start to build it straight away – by adopting, using, joining or starting:housing co-opsworker co-opscommunity energycredit unionscryptocurrenciespen sourcecommunity-supported agricultureintentional communitiescommunity land trustsbuilding societiesgift economypeer-to-peerLETS, timebanking and collaborative credit‘commons‘All the above systems are non-hierarchical, and benefits remain in the local community. But mutualism is definitely NOT the new ‘sharing’ economy, featuring Űber, Airbnb etc. This is nothing to do with real sharing, and huge amounts of money are sucked out of communities all over the world to pay already wealthy shareholders. See here for more on this.An important point may be to not dwell on the name too much. I’ve had debates with people who lean more towards collectivist or communist anarchism, and some have agreed that trying to convert the mainstream to an idecalled communist anarchism wouldn’t be easy, and that to have a successful revolution, having mainstream support is essential. I think that mainstream support is achievable with mutualism. If we step back from any kind of academic discussion, and look at the world from the position of someone in the street, I think the mutualist approach is much more explicable. Allowing competition in a free market chimes with people – it means that people work hard and try to do a good job. People understand the benefits of having a choice of two local bakers (for example) – the one who makes the best bread at the best price will get more customers. People get that. Try to explain collectivist or communist anarchism and I think you’re going to hit the wall pretty quickly. However, I think mutualism could be a stepping stone to a collectivist or communist (moneyless) economy, if that’s what we want, but I don’t see any way of getting there in one step from here. It has to work in the real world, surely, or we’re just talking academically, not practically. And there are already people building a mutualist society. We may as well support them and see what happens. A mutualist society doesn’t have to be the end of history, but it is a step in the right direction.

# Inherency (Thier 20)

Modern capitalism is characterized by an immense expansion of wealth. Its entire history is marked by growth. The US economy, when healthy, grows by about 4 percent per year. The Chinese economy, until recently, was growing by as much as 10 percent per year. And the world economy as a whole has expanded by roughly 3 percent annually since 1980, according to data from the World Bank. In fact, if any country’s output stops expanding, it goes into recession. If economies throughout the world contract all at once — as we’re seeing today — the result may well be a global depression.

How do capitalists generate this expanding surplus? Karl Marx, though he was writing 150 years ago, made an indispensable contribution to uncovering the internal laws of capitalism beneath the façade of equity. A useful starting point is to look at what Marx calls the “the general formula of capital,” which he summarized with a simple formula: M-C-M’. Capitalists start with money (M), which they use to invest in the production of commodities (C), and then they sell those commodities on the market to get back more money than they started with, (M’).In a pre-capitalist bartered exchange, commodities of roughly equal value could change hands, using money as an intermediary to facilitate the process. But the circuit of capital instead turns money into the driver of the process. Capitalists don’t exchange goods for the sake of qualitative enrichment. Steve Jobs didn’t one day decide he had more iPhones and MacBooks than he reasonably needed and therefore might as well trade them for something he didn’t have. (What didn’t Steve Jobs have?) A capitalist invests for the sole purpose of accruing further wealth. To exchange like-for-like items and wind up with the same amount of money that they started with would be, to use Marx’s words, “absurd and empty.” The sole purpose of exchange among capitalists is the accumulation of extra value, or surplus value, which forms the basis of capitalist profit. As Marx explained: The simple circulation of commodities [basic bartered exchange] — selling in order to buy — is a means to a final goal which lies outside circulation, namely the appropriation of use-values [goods for use], the satisfaction of needs. As against this, the circulation of money as capital is an end in itself, for the valorization of value takes place only within this constantly renewed movement. The movement of capital is therefore limitless.In pre-capitalist societies, the satisfaction of even the most extravagant of needs could only go so far in compelling an expansion of the production of goods. But under capitalism, the goal of acquiring more money through its circulation is an inexhaustible endeavor, which has the potential to provoke continual growth. Unlike systems of mercantilism which preceded it, modern capitalism doesn’t depend on a process of “buying cheap and selling dear,” and the thievery that this entailed. Surplus value is produced when capitalists are buying goods for their true value and selling them for their true value. Capitalists may certainly defraud other players along the way — pay less for inputs or charge more for the final product. But surplus is produced without that duplicity occurring, even when the system is at its most “honest” and “lawful.”Rather than being cunning in the market, the key to surplus value is a production process that creates more wealth than it begins with. Contrary to mainstream explanations, capitalist surplus is not generated within the realm of exchange at all. It is created, argued Marx, within “the hidden abode of production on whose threshold there hangs the notice ‘No admittance except on business.’ Here we shall see, not only how capital produces, but how capital is itself produced. The secret of profit-making must at last be laid bare.”Wherein lies the secret? Let’s look more closely at the circuit of capital. The merchant bought commodities that had already been produced and then sold them for a higher price. However, the capitalist invests not in finished products, but rather purchases two different types of commodities: 1) means of production (MP), and 2) labor-power (L). The “means of production” are the tools and materials that are necessary to make goods (e.g. factories, office buildings, land, machinery, software, IT infrastructure, etc.). And “labor-power” is our ability to labor.The capitalist employs both “inputs” in a production process (P) that creates a new set of commodities, worth more than the combined value of the original inputs. The circuit of capital can thus be expanded to a more precise formula: M-C (MP+L) . . . P . . . C’-M’.The “secret” hidden within this production process lies in a special commodity of “labor-power” — the ability to work. The ability to work has become a commodity under capitalism, which the capitalist buys in exchange for a wage. At first look, this seems self-evident. We wake up, go to work, come home with a wage (or at least the promise of one to be paid at the end of the pay period). We are selling our ability to work — our labor-power. And since selling our old Beanie Baby collection will only get us so far, by and large, for most of us, if we are “lucky” enough to be considered employable, our labor-power is the only commodity we really have to sell. But what makes this commodity special, and to whom? Labor-power is bought by the capitalists for a wage. But the value of this wage and the value that labor, once employed, then produces for the bosses, are two very different things. The worker is paid one thing, but then will normally create much more value during her shift than she is paid. The key to this arrangement for the boss is an agreement in which your labor is put under his control for a set amount of time, and you are paid for this time, not for the fruits of your labor. Just as a baker parts with the bread she has made once she sells it, so too does the worker part with her labor-power once she has sold it. As soon as she punches the clock, the conditions of her labor and the products of her labor are no longer hers, but the boss’s. Marx thus continued:L]abor, belongs just as little to its seller [the worker], as the use-value of oil after it has been sold belongs to the dealer who has sold it. The owner of the money has paid the value of a day’s labor-power; he therefore has the use of it for a day, a day’s labor belongs to him. On the one hand the daily sustenance of labor-power [paid out in a wage] costs only half a day’s labor, while on the other hand the very same labor-power can remain effective, can work, during a whole day, and consequently the value which its use during one day creates is double what he pays for that use; this circumstance is a piece of good luck for the buyer, but by no means an injustice towards the seller.In other words, the boss can get away with paying you for just half (or some other fraction) of the day for the “daily sustenance of labor-power” while reaping the full day of your labor. On top of it, he can proclaim it a fair day’s wage.The secret to this claim is in the determination of value of labor-power. Labor-PowerMarx explained: “The value of labor-power is determined by the value of cheaper the means of subsistence habitually required by the average worker.” That is to say, labor-power’s “value,” in the form of a wage, is determined by the amount of labor-time required to keep the worker alive, to daily reproduce her capacity and readiness to go to work every day, and to keep her children alive, so that they may one day replace her in the workforce. The value of food, rent, clothing, training, and education, along with other necessities deemed essential by society, therefore make up the value of labor-power. If, for example, social norms attach an average of $120 to the cost of minimal daily needs, that would loosely translate into the value of labor-power, or its daily wage.Of course, $120 per day is a simplified and arbitrary cost of labor-power, for the purpose of distilling the basic mechanism of this special commodity. In reality, the cost of the subsistence and reproduction of workers is both socially and historically determined. It reflects the changing cost of producing food or acquiring skills; as well as differences — based, for instance, on the balance of class forces — in what is deemed a socially acceptable requirement for subsistence.For both of these reasons, the cost of labor differs, too, between countries or regions with disparate levels of productivity and histories of class struggle. This is why US-based companies chase wages to other countries like China or Mexico, or to the closer distance of the “right-to-work” states within the US.The cost of labor also reflects the injustice of oppression. As of 2019, women in the United States were still paid 79 cents to a man’s dollar. (Or in the case of the country’s most talented and famous soccer team, the United States women’s national soccer team earns 38 cents to their male counter- parts, despite generating greater revenue.) Black men are paid 70 cents and black women 61 cents in comparison to their white counterparts. Latina women earn 53 cents to a white man’s dollar. Increased education does little to change this ratio for women or people of color. Blacks, Latinos, and women at all education levels earn less than white men. Women of color occupy the bottom of the totem pole. American capitalism relies upon women and people of color to populate permanent, low-wage sectors of the labor force. The disparities in racial and gender wage gaps point to the fact that “socially determined” is not only dependent on public perception of what is acceptable, but is also based on historic and systemic institutions of oppression. People of color, on average, have less inherited familial wealth to draw from, and therefore disproportionately suffer from the accumulation of considerable amounts of debt in order to go to college or earn an advanced degree. Combined with the reality of severely underfunded, under-resourced, segregated public schools, this ensures that they never enter a level playing field. Then come long-documented discriminatory practices, which ensure that they are the last to get hired and the first to be fired, contributing to higher rates of unemployment and a more desperate workforce, forced to accept lower wages for equal work.Inequality has long been built into the core fabric of the American business model. Pitting black workers against white workers against immigrant workers has been a particularly potent, tried-and-true tactic of employers to drive down all wages. But the cursory sketch laid out here does not even begin to discuss the very many oppressions — of immigrants, of people with disabilities, of gay people, of transgender people, of Native peoples, of elders, and more — that play an integral role in upholding the profitability of US capitalism. In fact, any place where bosses can hold down the wages of one section of the workforce not only ensures a cheaper labor pool among the oppressed demographic, but also, in the words of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, divides both in order to conquer each, so that everyone’s wages are pushed down.The value of labor will also vary among industries and skills. One reason is the cost of education and training required for different jobs, and another is the expectation of how stable of a workforce bosses are looking to buy. Fast food workers, home health aides, farm workers, and other low-wage workers are consistently paid wages far short of the cost of living (and there- fore their true value).The capitalists bank on getting away with it because they expect, in fact depend on, a high turnover rate and unemployment rate, which will ensure that those positions will fill easily. Bosses see low-wage workers as quickly replaceable commodities, bought and employed as easily as one would buy other cheap “inputs.” The bosses also get a big discount when they purchase labor-power. A good deal of unpaid work contributes heavily toward its reproduction: for instance, childbirth, childcare, food preparation, laundry, and household cleaning, to name a few.As Marxist feminist Tithi Bhattacharya explained, “The working class doesn’t only work in its workplace. A woman worker also sleeps in her home, her children play in the public park and go to the local school, and sometimes she asks her retired mother to help out with the cooking. In other words, the major functions of reproducing the working class take place outside the workplace.” The free labor, performed largely by women within the home, is not accounted for within labor-power’s exchange-value. Within the realm of social reproduction, workers’ ability to live and work are reproduced and regenerated at very little cost to the system.Surplus Labor

Yet even if we limit ourselves more narrowly to the paid labor that goes into producing your subsistence, if all things were fair and just, you would give over to your boss only the amount of time that it takes to reproduce the value of your labor-power. Say it takes four hours to produce $120 worth of goods, the equivalent of your daily wage, you could go home after four hours. But if your boss allowed that, his inputs and outputs would be equal. It would just be M-C-M. What would be the point? Why not just keep the money he started with But all things are not fair and just. The capitalist pays you for the cost of your labor-power, not for the value of the goods you produce. Thus your paycheck is worth the value of your labor-power. But your labor-power is set to woTHIrk to produce commodities of greater value.Let’s say you work for Starbucks and they pay you $120 for an eight-hour shift. But you can probably make $120 worth of fancy coffee in an hour, or probably in a half hour at a busy storeEven once you subtract the cost of materials and use of the equipment, Starbucks doesn’t pay you anywhere near the value you’ve created (hundreds of dollars a day). They buy your labor-power from you, not the actual fruits of your labor. And you make that value back for them in an hour. The rest of your shift, you’re basically working for free!This extra labor they extract from us is called “surplus labor.”While necessary labor is that part of the day required to reproduce the cost of labor-power, the surplus labor is the free labor that the capitalist benefits from during the rest of your workday. Thus, if after you finish making $120 worth of coffee, instead of throwing down your apron and going home, you finish out your eight-hour shift, one hour will be necessary labor, and seven hours are surplus labor! (This seven to one ratio is overly simplified because it doesn’t yet factor in the machinery and equipment we mentioned above, something I take up elsewhere in my book.)Marx wrote:I call the portion of the working day during which this reproduction takes place necessary labor-time, and the labor expended during that time necessary labor; necessary for the worker, because independent of the particular social form of his labor; necessary for capital and the capitalist world, because the continued existence of the worker is the basis of that world. During the second period of the labor process, that in which his labor is no longer necessary labor, the worker does indeed expend labor-power, he does work, but his labor is no longer necessary labor, and he creates no value for himself. He creates surplus value which, for the capitalist, has all the charms of something created out of nothing. In this way, through the “charm of something created out of nothing,” capitalism disguises a process of exploitation, of appropriating surplus labor from the working class, as a “fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work.” Appropriating surpluses was a visible and obvious norm of previous class societies. In examining capitalist society however, we have to go beneath the surface appearance of a “fair day’s work” to uncover the inner essence of exploitation.

There is no fair pay for any work

# Link

Use of strike (Back to Darby 16) There are lots of ideas for changing the world – from voting to demonstrations, petitions, lifestyle change, incremental change, revolutionary change, or more of the same, only harder. The problem with many of them is that they are either ineffective or not implementable.

Directly relates to the fact that strikes have been inherent in in fighting capitalist ideals, but they are ineffective

From teachers in North Carolina to hospital workers in California, and from autoworkers in Michigan to grocery store cashiers in Boston, workers across the United States have participated in a resurgence in major work stoppages in the last two years. By far the most common form of work stoppage is a strike, which is when workers withhold their labor from their employer for a period of time during a labor dispute. By withholding their labor—labor that employers depend on to produce goods and provide services—workers are able to counteract the inherent power imbalance between themselves and their employer. In this way, strikes provide critical leverage to workers when bargaining with their employer over fair pay and working conditions or when their employer violates labor law.In this brief, we cover the basics of strikes—who has the legal right to strike and when—and what policies to strengthen the right to strike are under consideration. We also analyze new data on major work stoppages from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) showing that after decades of a downward trend, there has been an upsurge in strike activity in the last two years.[1](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note1)At first blush, it may seem odd that the United States is seeing a resurgence in strike activity when the unemployment rate is below 4%. The increased activity likely stems from two factors. First, workers know that if they are fired or otherwise pushed out of their jobs for participating in a strike (which is illegal but common behavior among employers), they are more likely to be able to find another job. Second—and perhaps even more important—working people are not seeing the robust wage growth that one might expect with such a low unemployment rate, and inequality continues to grow. The increase in strike activity suggests that working people are concluding that if even a sub-4% unemployment rate 10 years into an economic recovery is not providing enough leverage to generate truly robust wage growth, workers must join together to demand a fair share of the recovery.

Who has the legal right to strike?Most private-sector workers in the United States are guaranteed the right to strike under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Section 7 of the Act grants workers the right “to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.” This allows private-sector workers to engage in “concerted activities” such as strikes, regardless of whether the worker is in a union or covered by a collective bargaining contract. There is no federal law that gives public-sector workers the right to strike, but a dozen states grant public-sector workers the right to strike.[2](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note2)n general, there are two types of strikes: economic strikes and unfair labor practice strikes. In an economic strike, workers withhold their labor as leverage when bargaining for better pay and working conditions. While workers in economics strikes retain their status as employees and cannot be discharged, their employer has the right to permanently replace them.[3](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note3) At the conclusion of an economic strike, replaced workers are not automatically reinstated in their old jobs, but they have priority to apply for any future job openings. In other words, while workers have the legal right to participate in an economic strike—and remain employees while on strike—current law makes participation risky because workers might be out of a job when the strike concludes.In an unfair labor practice strike, workers withhold their labor to protest their employer engaging in activities that they regard as a violation of labor law. Workers in an unfair labor practice strike cannot legally be discharged or permanently replaced. When an unfair labor practice strike concludes, workers who were on strike are entitled to be reinstated even if replacement workers have to be discharged. Workers in both economic and unfair labor practice strikes are entitled to back pay if the National Labor Relations Board finds that the employer unlawfully denied the workers request for reinstatement.While Section 7 of the NLRA provides workers the right to strike, not all strikes are lawful. Under Section 8(b)(4) of the Act, it is currently unlawful for workers to be involved in “secondary” strikes, which are strikes aimed at an employer other than the primary employer (for example, when workers from one company strike in solidary with another company’s workers). If a strike is deemed an “intermittent strike”—when workers strike on-and-off over a period of time—it is not protected as a lawful strike by the NLRA. In general, a strike is also unlawful if the collective bargaining agreement between a union and the employer is in effect and has a “no-strike, no-lockout” clause.Upsurge in very large work stoppages in the last two yearsBLS data on major work stoppages–work stoppages involving 1,000 or more workers lasting one shift or longer—show that 425,500 workers were involved in major work stoppages that began in 2019.[4](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note4) The 2019 level was slightlylower than the 2018 level, but as **Figure A** shows, there has recently been a meaningful “break” in the series. Through 2017, the general trend was downward, but there was a substantial upsurge in workers involved in major work stoppages in 2018. On average, in 2018 and 2019, 455,400 workers annually were involved in major work stoppages—the largest two-year pooled annual average in 35 years, since 1983 and 1984.One thing that is important to note when comparing the number of workers involved in major work stoppages over time is that other things in the economy have evolved as well. For example, the number of union members has declined, from 21 million in 1979 to 14.6 million in 2019.[5](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note5) This means the share of union members involved in a major work stoppage has declined somewhat less rapidly than the raw levels over this period (the surge in 2018 and 2019 notwithstanding).[6](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note6) In the 2018 and 2019 period, 3.1% of union members were involved in a work stoppage each year on average—a level of sustained resistance not seen since 1983.[7](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note7) Furthermore, in the last two years, major work stoppages have involved more workers than ever before. In 2018/2019, an average of 20,000 workers were involved in each major work stoppage—the highest two-year average on record, back to 1947. By contrast, in earlier years when there were many more major work stoppages, they tended to be smaller. For example, 1952 had 470 major work stoppages—the most on record and many times the 25 major work stoppages that occurred in 2019—but each major work stoppage in 1952 involved “just” 6,000 workers on average.[8](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note8)**Figure B** breaks down the data from Figure A into two sizes of major work stoppages—stoppages involving 20,000 workers or more, and stoppages involving at least 1,000 but less than 20,000 workers. The data to compute this breakdown are available only for 1993 and later years.[9](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note9) The figure shows that the 2018 and 2019 upsurge in workers involved in major work stoppages has largely been the result of an increase in very large work stoppages—work stoppages involving at least 20,000 workers. In fact, in 2019, there were 10 work stoppages involving at least 20,000 workers, the largest number of work stoppages of this size since before 1993, when the data on work stoppages by size became available. **Table 1**lists the 2019 work stoppages that involved more than 20,000 workers by organization name and number of workers involved.Limitations of the BLS data on work stoppagesThe BLS data on work stoppages, while useful, have a major limitation—the data include only information on work stoppages involving 1,000 or more workers that last at least one full shift. There is an enormous amount oinformation that is missed by restricting the data to work stoppages involving at least 1,000 workers, as evident in BLS data on firm size: according to the BLS, nearly three-fifths (59.4%) of private-sector workers are employed by firms with fewer than 1,000 employees.[10](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note10) Restricting the tracking to actions that last at least one full shift also misses important work stoppages. For example, the data do not include the 2018 Google walkouts in protest of the company’s handling of sexual harassment, because even though the walkouts involved thousands of workers, they did not last for one full shift.[11](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note11) Unfortunately, comprehensive data on work stoppages that involve fewer than 1,000 workers, or that last less than one full shift, are not readily available from BLS or other sources. Thus, there is a large gap in knowledge about the true extent of, and trends in, strike and lockout activity.Examples of major work stoppages in 2018 and 2019

This card outlines how strikes are mostly due to wage growth and the efforts of their work not being met by wages. Simply recognizing a right to strike is not enough, as states in the resolution, to affirm the government would be considered just by simply recognizing their right to strike

First amendment: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or **prohibiting the free exercise thereof**; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. This includes right to strike considering a strike isa refusal to work organized by a body of employees as a form of protest, typically in an attempt to gain a concession or concessions from their employer. The us government specifically protects protest under the first amendment. In order to affirm you’d have to also agree to the fact that any government that only recognizes this right would be just. This applies to any country, but using the US as an example, it is not enough, There is still mistreatment in the workforce Darby 16 specifically explains how strikes often aren’t implementable and lead to no substantial change. We can see this in the fact that strikes have been going on since the early 1900s and workers are still receiving unfair wages and poor treatment. Not to mention racism and discrimination being a problem (Their 20)

### Teacher strikesIn February 2018, teachers went on a statewide strike in West Virginia to demand just wages and better teaching and learning conditions. For nine days, schools across the state were closed as teachers, students, and community supporters protested at the state capital against the state government’s chronic underfunding of public education and the impact on the teachers and students. After a week and a half on strike, the West Virginia teachers received a pay increase. They also sparked a movement that prompted public school teachers in other states to strike in support for better pay and working conditions.[12](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note12)Consequently, the largest work stoppages by number of workers during 2018 and 2019 were in elementary and secondary schools in states such as Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, North Carolina, and West Virginia.[13](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note13) Community support, such as students and parents protesting in solidarity at schools and state capitals, made it possible for hundreds of thousands of teachers to strike in an effort to improve their pay and working conditions.The General Motors strikeIn the early hours of September 16, 2019, nearly 50,000 workers walked out of General Motors (GM) factories across the nation and went on strike. The action followed GM’s decision to close multiple U.S.-based factories and move jobs abroad, even after the company received millions in corporate tax cuts.[14](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note14) GM workers went on strike to preserve job security, improve wages, and retain health care benefits. The GM strike was the longest major work stoppage in 2019, with over 1.3 million days idle.[15](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note15) The strike was also the first GM strike in over a decade.The six week strike concluded with the United Auto Workers and GM agreeing to a four-year contract that improved wages, sustained health care costs for workers at existing levels, created a transition process for temporary workers to become permanent employees, and committed to making investments in American factories.[16](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note16) In addition to improving the pay and working conditions of GM workers, the final contract will serve as a template for UAW’s contracts with Ford and Chrysler, creating a set of standards in the automotive industry.[17](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note17)The Stop & Shop strikeAnother notable major work stoppages of 2019 was the Stop & Shop strike. More than 30,000 workers at the New England-based grocery chain went on strike after negotiations over new contracts stalled for three months. During those negotiations, Stop & Shop had offered workers across-the-board pay increases but also proposed increasing the cost of health care, ultimately negating the pay raises. The workers argued that Stop & Shop could offer better compensation than it did because the company reported profits of more than $2 billion in 2018.[18](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note18) As a result of the impasse, workers in over 240 locations went on strike for better pay and benefits during the week of Easter.The Stop & Shop strike was the second largest private industry work stoppage in 2019, with over 215,000 days idle. The 11 day strike concluded with the United Food and Commercial Workers and Stop & Shop agreeing to a three-year contract that preserved health care benefits, increased wages, and maintained time-and-a-half pay on Sunday for current employees.[19](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note19)Policies to strengthen the right to strikeThe resurgence is in strike activity is occurring despite current policy that makes it difficult for many workers to effectively engage in their fundamental right to strike.The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act includes critical reforms that would strengthen workers’ right to strike. The PRO Act would expand the scope for strikes by eliminating the prohibition on secondary strikes and by allowing the use of intermittent strikes. It would also strengtheworkers’ ability to strike by prohibiting employers from permanently replacing striking workers. Further, the PRO Act would strengthen undocumented workers’ right to strike by overturning the Supreme Court’s decision in Hoffman Plastic Compounds v. NLRB, which held that undocumented workers are not entitled to reinstatement or back pay if their employer violated their workplace rights. The PRO Act passed the House of Representatives February 6, 2020, but is unlikely to advance in the Senate in the near future.In addition to the crucial reforms found in the PRO Act, there are additional solutions under discussion that would strengthen the right to strike, including extending unemployment benefits to striking workers, creating tax-deductible strike funds to make it easier for unions to sustain long-term strikes, and forming digital picket lines to inform consumers of real-life collective actions during online interactions with the workers’ employer.[20](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note20) All of these policies, and those of the PRO Act, are part of an important effort to bring U.S. labor law into the 21st century.ConclusionThe unemployment rate averaged 3.8% in 2018 and 2019, its lowest level in 50 years. At first blush, it may seem odd that the U.S. is seeing a resurgence in strike activity at a time like this. The increased activity likely stems from two factors. First, workers know that if they are fired or otherwise pushed out of their job for participating in a strike (which is illegal but common), they are more likely to be able to find another job. Second and perhaps even more important, working people are not seeing the robust wage growth that one might expect with such a low unemployment rate, and wage levels for working people remain low, with many families struggling to make ends meet. The wage of the median worker is about $19 per hour, which translates to about $40,000 per year for a full-time, full-year worker, a level that suggests that the U.S. economy is not delivering for many working people.[21](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note21) Further, inequality continues to rise, as the people who already have the most see strong gains.[22](https://www.epi.org/publication/continued-surge-in-strike-activity/#_note22) The increase in strike activity suggests that more and more, working people are concluding that if even a sub-4% unemployment rate 10 years into an economic recovery is not providing enough leverage to meaningfully boost their wages, they must join together to demand a fair share of this recovery.

# Alt: Mutualist society (AQA, Edexcel, IB 21)

Recognizing a right to strike to fight wage inequality is not effective, me must go all the way with a mutualist society

Mutualism (sometimes known as ‘contractualism’ or ‘guaranteeism’) is a more moderate sub-strand of collectivist anarchism, based on the ideas of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon.Mutualism provides a link between collectivist and individualist anarchism since it endorses forms of collective ownership and private property. Under mutualism, self-governing producers (either groups or individuals) reject profiteering and exploitation, and exchange goods and services equitably and fairly through mutually beneficial economic contracts. Mutualism opposes capitalism and large-scale property ownership (because both lead to exploitation and inequality) but allows small-scale private property based on use or possession. Other mutualists include Gustave Courbet (1819-77) and Charles Longuet (1839-1903).The main features of mutualism can be summarised as follows:**Mutualism and Human Nature**Like other forms of collectivist anarchism, mutualism offers a positive view of human nature, claiming people are characterised by their productive abilities and creativity as producers. Humans are also seen as cooperative with a firm belief in social solidarity. Under mutualism, people would be able to take responsibility for their own lives and interact through contracts regulating the exchange of goodseople would be bound together in small communities or associations by mutually beneficial contracts regulating economic and social relations. Only the family (which would remain patriarchal and hierarchical) would not be covered by such contracts. These communities would show moral respect for individuality and would be based on possession to ensure producers (1) are entitled to the fruits of their labour (2) have the necessary means (e.g. land or tools) for work. In this way, people could possess private property so long as they were not exploiting or mistreating others. Society would be regarded as a free association between autonomous producers. It would also be just because it upheld the principles of equality and freedom of contract.

**Mutualism and the Stat**Since the state is seen as oppressive, it has no place in mutualist thinking and must be abolished. The state would be removed peacefully through a democratic process as mutualist ideas became more popular. Contracts would replace government and oppose all forms of authority. Mutualist communities would form a federation and send delegates to coordinating councils. This political system would be 'bottom up' in structure, based on voluntary agreements and free from central authority**Mutualism and the Economy**

A cooperative economic system to satisfy genuine need, with small productive independent associations of workers and a system of mutually beneficial exchange based on contracts freely entered into by individuals and associations. Contracts could not be made under duress or conditions of unequal freedom. Workers would receive the 'true value' of what they produced based on the labour time nvolved. A non-profit National Bank would make credit available to the associations and individuals to start businesses. Products could also be exchanged for credit notes guaranteed by the bank. Mutualist economic reorganisation would make the state redundant.

# Impacts:

1. Less oppression due to the opposition of capitalism and reduction of the state (seen above) and inequality reduction that creates poor/homeless death
2. People being allowed to freely use their creativity and human nature
3. Everyone can participate