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#### Capitalism creates the conditions for exploitation in the workforce—it is the direct cause for the lack of workers’ rights

**Gourevitch, 18** [Alex Gourevitch, “The Right to Strike: A Radical View,” American Political Science Review, 2018; https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/8B521F67E28D4FAE1967B17959620424/S0003055418000321a.pdf/the-right-to-strike-a-radical-view.pdf]

To explain why the right to strike is a right to resist oppression, I first must give an account of the relevant oppression. Oppression is the unjustifiable deprivation of freedom. Some deprivations or restrictions of freedom are justified and therefore do not count as oppression. The oppression that matters for this article is the class-based oppression of a typical liberal capitalist society. By the class-based oppression, I mean the fact that the majority of able-bodied people find themselves forced to work for members of a relatively small group who dominate control over productive assets and who, thereby, enjoy unjustifiable control over the activities and products of those workers. There are workers and then there are owners and their managers. The facts I refer to here are mostly drawn from the United States to keep a consistent description of a specific society. While there is meaningful variation across liberal capitalist nations, the basic facts of class-based oppression do not change in a way that vitiates my argument’s applicability to those countries too. Empirical analysis of each country to which the argument applies, and how it would apply, is a separate project. The first element of oppression in a class society resides in the fact that (a) there are some who are forced into the labor market while others are not and (b) those who are forced to work—workers—have to work for those who own productive resources. Workers are forced into the labor market because they have no reasonable alternative but to find a job.8 They cannot produce necessary goods for themselves, nor can they rely on the charity of others, nor can they count on adequate state benefits. The only way most people can gain reliable access to necessary goods is by buying them. The most reliable, often only, way most people have of acquiring enough money to buy those goods is through employment. That is the sense in which they have no reasonable alternative but to find a job working for an employer. Depending on how we measure income and wealth, about 60–80% of Americans are in this situation for most of their adult lives.9 This forcing is not symmetrical. A significant minority is not similarly forced to work for someone else, though they might do so freely. That minority has enough wealth, either inherited or accumulated or both, that they have a reasonable alternative to entering the labor market. So, this first dimension of oppression comes not from the fact that some are forced to work, but from the fact that the forcing is unequal and that asymmetry means some are forced to work for others.10 That is to say, what makes it oppressive is the wrong of unequally forcing the majority to work, for whatever purpose, while others face no such forcing at all.11 That way of organizing and distributing coercive work obligations, and of imposing certain kinds of forcing on workers, is an unjustifiable way of limiting their freedom and therefore oppressive. To fix ideas, I call this the structural element of oppression in class societies. This structural element leads to a second, interpersonal dimension of oppression in the workplace itself. Workers are forced to join workplaces typically characterized by large swathes of uncontrolled managerial power and authority. This oppression is interpersonal in the sense that it is power that specific individuals— employers and their managers—have to get other specific individuals—employees—to do what they want. We can distinguish between three overlapping forms that this interpersonal, workplace oppression takes: subordination, delegation, and dependence. Subordination: Employers have what are sometimes called “managerial prerogatives,”12 which are legislative and judicial grants of authority to owners and their managers to make decisions about investment, hiring and firing, plant location, work process, and the like.13 These powers come from judicial precedent and from the constellation of corporate, labor, contract, and property law. Managers may change working speeds and assigned tasks, the hours of work, or even force workers to spend up to an hour going through security lines after work without paying them (Integrity Staffing Solutions, Inc. v. Busk 2014). Managers may fire workers for Facebook comments, their sexual orientation, for being too sexually appealing, or for not being appealing enough (Emerson 2011; Hess 2013; Strauss 2013; Velasco 2011). Workers may be given more tasks than can be performed in the allotted time, locked in the workplace overnight, required to work in extreme heat and other physically hazardous conditions, or punitively isolated from other coworkers (Greenhouse 2009, 26–27, 49–55, 89, 111–112; Hsu 2011; JOMO 2013; Urbina 2013). Managers may pressure employees into unwanted political behavior (HertelFernandez 2015). In all of these cases, managers are exercising legally permitted prerogatives.14 The law does not require that workers have any formal say in how those powers are exercised. In fact, in nearly every liberal capitalist country, employees are defined, in law, as “subordinates.”15 This is subordination in the strict sense: workers are subject to the will of the employer. Delegation: There are also other discretionary legal powers that managers have not by legal statute or precedent but because workers have voluntarily delegated these powers in the contract. For instance, workers might sign a contract that allows managers to require employees to submit to random drug testing or unannounced searches (American Civil Liberties Union 2017). In the United States, 18% of current employees and 37% of workers in their lifetime work under noncompete agreements (Bunker 2016). These clauses give managers legal power to forbid workers from working for competitors. The contract that the Communications Workers of America had with Verizon until 2015 included a right for managers to force employers to perform from 10 to 15 hours of overtime per week and to take some other day instead of Saturday as an off-day (Gourevitch 2016a). These legal powers are not parts of the managerial prerogatives that all employers have. Rather, they are voluntarily delegated to employers by workers. In many cases, though the delegation is in one sense voluntary, in another sense it is forced. This will especially be the case if workers, who are forced to find jobs, can only find jobs in sectors where the only contracts available are ones that require these kinds of delegations. Dependence: Finally, managers might have the material power to force employees to submit to commands or even to accept violations of their rights because of the worker’s dependence on the employer. A headline example is wage-theft, which affects American workers to the tune of $8– $14 billion per year (Eisenbray 2015; Judson and Francisco-McGuire 2012; NELP 2013; Axt 2013). In other cases, workers have been forced to wear diapers rather than go to the bathroom, refused legally required lunch breaks, or pressured to work through them, forced to keep working after their shift is up, or denied the right to read or turn on air conditioning during break (Oxfam 2015; BennettSmith 2012; Egelko 2011; Greenhouse 2009, 3– 12; Little 2013; Vega 2012). Other employers have forced their workers to stay home rather than go out on weekends or to switch churches and alter religious practices on pain of being fired and deported (Garrison, Bensinger, and Singer-Vine 2015). In these cases, employers are not exercising legal prerogatives, they are instead taking advantage of the material power that comes with threatening to fire or otherwise discipline workers. This material power to get workers to do things that employers want is in part a function of the class structure of society, both in the wide sense of workers being asymmetrically dependent on owners, and in the narrower sense of workers being legally subordinate to employers. Subordination, delegation, and dependence add up to a form of interpersonal oppression that employers and their managers have over their employees. The weight and scope of this oppression will vary, but those are variations on a theme. Employers and managers enjoy wide swaths of uncontrolled or insufficiently controlled power over their employees. This is the second face of oppression in a class society and it is a live issue. For instance, during the Verizon strike of 2016, one major complaint was that, when out on the job, hanging cable, or repairing lines, some technicians had to ask their manager for permission to go to the bathroom or to get a drink of water. As one striker said in an interview, “Do I have to tell my boss every single minute of what I am doing? This is basic human dignity” (Gourevitch 2016b). If they did not ask or wait to get clear approval from their manager, then they were guilty of a time code violation and were suspended for up to six weeks. The strike made workplace control a direct issue and one measure of its success was a change in disciplinary proceedings (ibid.). To take another example, the Fight for $15 strikes have made control over scheduling a central demand, even managing in certain states and municipalities to pass laws mandating minimal regularity and predictability in weekly schedules (Andrias 2016, 47–70).

#### Capitalism is in decline and created conditions where the people it exploits have been made the most vulnerable due to the pandemic, which sets the stage for revolution

Ben **Tarnoff**, a founding editor of Logic. April 7, **2020** “THESE ARE CONDITIONS IN WHICH REVOLUTION BECOMES THINKABLE” Commune Magazine

If the swiftness of the economic contraction inflicted by the pandemic is one feature that distinguishes our present crisis from previous ones, another is the particular segment of the economy that will suffer the most from that contraction: services. Services usually don’t take the worst hit during recessions. That’s because they can’t be stored, so they have to be consumed right away. The coronavirus crisis may break this pattern, however. “This will probably be the world’s first recession that starts in the service sector,” the economist Gabriel Mathy told the New York Times. In a pandemic, services are uniquely vulnerable. For instance, people won’t go get their hair cut, either because they’re afraid of being infected or because a government-mandated shutdown has closed the barbershop. And because you can’t store the output of services—a barber can’t stockpile haircuts in a warehouse until demand picks up again—businesses quickly go bankrupt, and the layoffs come hard and fast. The human toll of such layoffs will be immense, because the service sector is where most Americans work. According to the latest estimate by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 71 percent of all non-farm payroll employees—more than a hundred million people—are in the service sector. Granted, services is a heterogenous category, encompassing everything from stockbrokers to fast-food workers. But most of the growth in recent decades has been on the lower end of the wage spectrum, and this is also where most of the pain will be felt. That pain is already being felt on a very large scale. In the week ending March 21, 3.3 million people applied for unemployment insurance. The following week, that number doubled to 6.6 million—nearly ten times the record set in 1982. The layoffs are concentrated in the service sector, particularly its lower-wage layers. The coming weeks will almost certainly bring more bad news. Goldman expects the unemployment rate to hit 15 percent; the St. Louis Fed says it could surge as high as 32.1 percent. These numbers reflect the disintegration of a central pillar of the US economic model. For decades, the service sector has played an essential role in stabilizing the labor market. Because services are more difficult to automate—it’s harder to automate the production of a haircut than the production of an automobile—they have lower rates of productivity growth, which means they need more labor. This is what has enabled the service sector to absorb the workers that the manufacturing sector began shedding in the 1970s as a global crisis of overcapacity set in. Services can’t serve as the growth engine that manufacturing did, as the worsening performance of the US economy since the 1970s makes clear. But they have provided a steady supply of jobs. The pandemic shuts off this safety valve. With the service sector in freefall, there is no longer anywhere for the surplus labor generated by decades of economic stagnation to go. Of course, some of those who were laid off will eventually find new jobs, particularly if the post-crisis rebound follows the more optimistic estimates. But the economy they return to will have permanently changed. Small businesses, which currently employ nearly half of the country’s private-sector workforce, will be decimated. Giants like Amazon and Walmart will tighten their grip over consumer spending. Amazon and its fellow tech firms will also benefit from how the crisis reprograms consumer behavior. The pandemic has already been a boon to e-commerce, as people try to buy the things they need with a minimum of social interaction. Amazon recently announced it would hire one hundred thousand workers amid booming demand; Instacart, the online grocery delivery service, is adding three hundred thousand. This trend could very well become permanent. Consumers may come to prefer getting their groceries delivered rather than going to the supermarket, for instance, whether out of habit, convenience, or continued fear of infection. The service jobs of the future, then, will likely be concentrated in transportation and warehousing. A growing portion of the US working class will make a (meager, precarious) living packing and delivering the goods that people in extended periods of isolation need to survive. The issue of survival brings us to another core theme of the coronavirus crisis: social reproduction. Social reproduction refers to the various systems—formal and informal, waged and unwaged—that make capitalism possible by raising, socializing, educating, healing, housing, and otherwise sustaining the workers whose labor power it runs on. These systems have long been under severe strain in the US. Stagnant wages and pitiful structures of social provision have placed most of the US working class on the brink of bankruptcy or worse, with nearly 80 percent of Americans living paycheck to paycheck. The pandemic demolishes this rickety arrangement. Soaring demand for unemployment insurance and food stamps is pushing the parsimonious US welfare state well past the breaking point. Meanwhile, the fragile condition of the country’s highly financialized healthcare system—which has spent the last decade enriching executives and investors in a mergers and acquisitions spree—has been cast into stark relief. But the pandemic isn’t just intensifying an existing crisis of social reproduction. The pandemic is also being intensified by the crisis. The poor quality of social-reproductive systems in the US has created the ideal conditions for contagion. To take one example, nursing homes emerged as hotspots early on. A large part of the blame lies with a wave of private-equity investment in the nursing home industry over the past decade, which has forced facilities across the country to cut costs in order to shovel more profits upwards. Many homes became extremely unsanitary as a result, with state inspections uncovering appalling cases of abuse and neglect. Now they have become major sites of infection. A virus isn’t just a biological phenomenon, but a social one. The vulnerabilities it exploits to propagate itself aren’t just the properties of human cells, but how human societies are organized. Societies that organize themselves around the accumulation of capital—that is to say, capitalist ones—place themselves at risk, especially societies like the US, where accumulation takes a particularly brutal form. There is a contradiction here: by undermining social reproduction, capitalism undermines its own stability. Squeezing the proletariat dry feeds the engine of capital up to a certain point—then it causes the machinery to seize up, as the feminist theorist Nancy Fraser has explained. The coronavirus crisis offers a vivid illustration of this dynamic. The extreme pressure that capital has placed on social reproduction in the US has produced a hospitable environment for a pandemic that is destroying the economy. Those private-equity capitalists, by strip-mining seniors for profit, have helped create a situation in which many of their fellow capitalists will no longer be able to set capital in motion. For accumulation to resume its normal course, the virus must be contained: the robustness of the Chinese response, for example, is motivated not just by the desire to preserve the political legitimacy of the Communist Party but to restart industrial production. In the US, returning to business as usual will require, among other things, modest increases in public support for social reproduction. This may explain how Congress managed to pass a bill mandating ten days of paid sick leave for a subset of US workers so quickly in the first week of the pandemic. Letting workers get sick and die is acceptable; letting workers get sick and threaten the accumulation process is not. In the industrial era, labor won concessions from capital because of a basic dependency: capitalists needed workers to run the factories. The economic slowdown since the 1970s has diminished this dependency, with the decline of manufacturing inaugurating an era of stagnation characterized by persistently low demand for labor, tilting the balance of power to capital’s advantage. The pandemic has the potential to partly reverse this development. Workers may hold less leverage over the accumulation process as workers, but they can now endanger that process as vectors of viral transmission. Perhaps this offers a new basis on which to win concessions. Of course, workers can also make trouble the old-fashioned way: by engaging in disruptive action in their workplaces and their communities. The space for such action is likely to grow dramatically in the coming weeks and months. Imagine a near future of 30 percent unemployment, widespread food and housing insecurity, and millions dead from the pandemic and from the increased mortality of an overwhelmed healthcare system. These are essentially wartime conditions. They are the conditions under which revolution becomes, if not likely, at least thinkable.

#### The global protests in 2019 are proof that the widening income inequality gap is leading to the mobilization of workers rights groups

**Its Going Down**, a digital community center from anarchist, anti-fascist, autonomous anti-capitalist and anti-colonial movement, Oct 21 **2019**, “Austerity On Fire: A Global Guide To Where It’s Going Down” https://itsgoingdown.org/austerity-on-fire/

We are witnessing a new round of insurrections kick off across the globe. While each of the revolts that we will briefly go over below are very different, there are certain aspects that unite them. First and foremost, many of these insurrections are the direct result of people violently rejecting austerity and by extension, decades of neoliberal reforms and structural adjustment programs (themselves simply extensions of past colonial systems) which have also led to economic precarity and crippling poverty. In Haiti and Ecuador, the most recent round of riots and uprisings was kicked off by increased gas prices; in the Sudan, it was the [price of goods tripling](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/sudan-bread-price-protests-rebellion-government-khartoum-a8697986.html), in Lebanon, it was over new taxes; in Honduras against [austerity cuts to the public sector](https://www.cnn.com/2019/07/06/americas/honduras-protests-explainer-intl/index.html); and in Chile, it was against the launch of a fare increase. In short, as in the United States, across the world since the collapse of financial markets in 2008, the capitalist class has rebuilt its wealth through a regime of austerity, increased costs, and the suppression of wages. Currently, we are seeing the limits of the proletariat’s patience with such a model. Second, another common factor of many of these revolts is the widespread anger over government corruption, especially in the face of increasing poverty. In Haiti this is the most clear, where massive amounts of aid that was supposed to go towards 2010 earthquake victims has instead been laundered and government nepotism is widespread, while in Honduras, people have been launching riots against Juan Orlando Hernández, who was installed by a US backed coup and is alleged to have taken money from drug cartels for his political campaign. Third, this new round of revolts often targets infrastructure and the circulation of commodities, including human labor itself. Thus we see massive demonstrations in Haiti which march on wealthy neighborhoods and shut down the entirety of society. In Chile, people have moved from evading fares to [burning down a major energy company building](https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/video/enel-green-power-building-burns-054451657.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAH9T72iMoOOcM33yM4gqIPNbJS3Tsdn77bnCci_EJT8efXSdHAyGTWRxLc8DsWEbHUT6tegMYWTumvfEt4ukGNA5kXO6kb61Xv1a0BSe7LUBXFISzVqpsPqyBxlnKn7iDXePI83RcYDvpWPixYt50SNqzPKVnNSX9LIu_aEFX5z1) and entire subway cars, while in Hong Kong, people have begun to set fire to banks. In most of these revolts, generalized rioting is seen as the standard avenue of struggle and has also been the vehicle in which these contestations have generalized; not isolated themselves from society. This stands in stark contrast to the [argument that we hear again](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_cyzgYLaK4) and [again from academics](https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/peter-gelderloos-how-nonviolence-protects-the-state) and protest managers in the United States: that looting, property destruction, and rioting alienate the majority of the population, especially so-called “middle class liberals,” and doom social movements to failure. Despite all the [evidence to the contrary in US history](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/27866254-smash-pacifism), if one needs a current rebuke of such an argument, simply look at what is happening across the world. Lastly, the current insurrections also showcase the State entering into a state of exception, through either enforcing when and where people can be, granting military or police special powers, passing new laws that made previous everyday actions now illegal, or simply giving the authorities the green light to open fire. In the Sudan, a three month state of emergency opened a window for the State to murder and disappear protest and opposition leaders. In Ecuador, curfews were enforced. In Chile, laws not used since the Pinochet dictatorship have been utilized to allow the military free reign on the streets to put down the revolt. In Hong Kong, the State attempted to ban masks and demonstrations, while in Spain, the government attempted to imprison Catalan leaders who had pushed for independence. Meanwhile in Rojava, a so-called ceasefire agreement between the US and Turkey has given cover for continued attacks by Turkish and Jihadi forces against the autonomous region. It’s worth pointing out that all of these current realities are playing themselves out within the United States as well. Since the 1970s we’ve seen both the build up of a repressive campaign of counter-insurgency aimed against black, brown, and poor communities, while wages have been suppressed and globalization and automation have worked to gut the former gains made by labor in the post-WWII period. Meanwhile, the cost of living, fuel, education, everyday commodities, health care, and especially housing has risen astronomically, resulting in the mass stratification of wealth along racial and class lines. This context has been compounded by a massive redistribution of wealth through the recent Trump tax cuts amid widespread corruption and cronyism within the administration and the wider political class, as attacks against immigrants, social movements, and the poor have increased behind a backdrop of Trump’s calls for “civil war.”

#### Capitalism’s innate drive for capital accumulation drives environmental disaster and nuclear warfare – therefore it must be abolished

Terry **Eagleton**, Distinguished Professor of English Literature at Lancaster University October 13, **2011** “Why Marx Was Right” Yale University New Haven, CT, pg. 224-226

The two great threats to human survival that now confront us are military and environmental. They are likely to converge more and more in the future, as struggles over scarce resources escalate into armed conflict. Over the years, communists have been among the most ardent advocates of peace, and the reason for this is ably summarized by Ellen Meiksins Wood. ‘‘It seems to me axiomatic,’’ she writes, ‘‘that the expansionary, competitive and exploitative logic of capitalist accumulation in the context of the nation-state system must, in the longer or shorter term, be destabilizing, and that capitalism . . . is and will for the foreseeable future remain the greatest threat to world peace.’’≤∑ If the peace movement is to grasp the root causes of global aggression, it cannot afford to ignore the nature of the beast that breeds it. And this means that it cannot afford to ignore the insights of Marxism. The same goes for environmentalism. Wood argues that capitalism cannot avoid ecological devastation, given the antisocial nature of its drive to accumulate. The system may come to tolerate racial and gender equality, but it cannot by nature achieve world peace or respect the material world. Capitalism, Wood comments, ‘‘may be able to accommodate some degree of ecological care, especially when the technology of environmental protection is itself profitably marketable. But the essential irrationality of the drive for capital accumulation, which subordinates everything to the requirements of the self-expansion of capital and so-called growth, is unavoidably hostile to ecological balance.’’≤∏ The old communist slogan ‘‘Socialism or barbarism’’ always seemed to some a touch too apocalyptic. As history lurches towards the prospect of nuclear warfare and environmental catastrophe, it is hard to see how it is less than the sober truth. If we do not act now, it seems that capitalism will be the death of us.

#### Thus, we affirm Resolved: A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right to strike.

#### The right to strike mobilizes working class movements and is the only way to create radical change

By Dirk **Hartford**. ‘South Africa: what about the working class?’ March 27, **1996** Issue [225](https://www.greenleft.org.au/glw-issues/225). Dirk Hartford is working on social entrepreneurship projects with the NGO sector in the Overberg. In previous incarnations, he was the founding CEO of Gauteng radio station YFM, a journalist and a trade unionist. He was an activist in the ANC for 30 years but faded away from that a decade ago and is feeling much better now thank you.  <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/south-africa-what-about-working-class>

JOHANNESBURG — It was reminiscent of the heady mass struggles of the '80s. For four hours on January 28, several hundred trade unionists listened to fiery speeches from workers and trade union leaders denouncing the government and its policy of national reconciliation as a "national disaster" between songs praising socialism as the only road to liberation.

The place — a community hall in Tembisa. The occasion — a memorial service for NUMSA [National Union of Metalworkers] organiser Heather Hills, a "trade unionist, revolutionary and socialist" and full-time organiser who died in a car accident. Whether it was Hills' unambiguous identification with a faction in the trade union movement who believe communist revolution is the only solution to capitalism, or whether ordinary workers are indeed increasingly angry at a government which is perceived as having sold out their interests, the mood of the meeting was one of militant socialist opposition to the new dispensation.

Speaker after speaker railed against the government and the COSATU leadership (who did not pitch up for the service, although they were on the program to speak) for allowing "the bosses' agenda to determine the future development of South Africa". National trade union leaders were lambasted for ignoring trade union resolutions and worker mandates.

"When we ask them to go and talk about nationalisation, they talk privatisation. When we ask them to talk about the right to strike, they bring workplace forums. When we ask them to organise a conference of the left to unite socialists, they organise a discussion amongst the right wing of the left and nothing happens", a NUMSA leader from Gauteng said.

Others said the Reconstruction and Development Program had been hijacked by big business, who were seeing it as an opportunity to make profits while the needs of the poor were not being addressed.

John Appollis, branch secretary for the Chemical Workers Industrial Union on the East Rand, said the new South Africa was a paradise for employers, who could now exploit workers at will. He rejected the new Labour Relations Act as a victory for employers because workers still did not enjoy **the unconditional right to strike.**

The president of NUMSA — arguably COSATU's most well-organised and militant affiliate — Mercedes Benz worker Mthutuzeli Tom, said he had built Mercedes Benz cars for 13 years but he could never entertain the notion of owning one in his lifetime. **"But it took our comrades who went to government only two months before they were driving Mercedes Benzes and living in the suburbs."**

Tom said democracy meant much more than the vote "because you can't eat votes, you can't live in votes". It was time for socialists to stop fighting among themselves and to unite around a program which could mobilise the mass of ordinary workers to call a halt to the policies and programs of government which favoured the rich. He bemoaned the fact that there were people in government — put there by the votes of the working class — who seemed to have forgotten where they came from and did not want to be called "comrade" any more.

A number of speakers referred to a "left" and "right" wing in COSATU, and national **COSATU leaders were castigated for pursuing right-wing policies which ignored workers' interests**. "If the stumbling block on the road to socialism is our own comrades, let us make sure we take them out and move forward", a speaker said to cries of "Viva!".'

Hills was, according to a pamphlet handed out at the memorial service, hostile to the "Stalinist adaptation to reformism" of the South African Communist Party and believed a new revolutionary workers party was necessary in South Africa. The SACP was a "fetter on the working class in its struggle for emancipation" and was "responsible for many of the compromises during the negotiations", the pamphlet said. Hills associated herself with a political program which her detractors call "ultra-leftist and Trotskyite".

South African Trotskyists have existed since Trotsky broke with Stalin and the Third International in the 1930s, but they have always been small in numbers and divided among themselves. There are currently a number of South African groupings who broadly identify themselves with Trotsky's idea of permanent revolution — the most prominent of which is Neville Alexander's Workers Party, which contested the 1994 election.

Most of them are active in mass organisations, including trade unions, civics and the African National Congress. The message they preach — which was echoed by numerous local shop steward leaders at Hills' service — is that the working class has nothing to lose and everything to gain by following the path of socialism.

With the gap between the rich and poor widening every day in South Africa, and with unemployment, homelessness and hopelessness on the increase among ordinary South Africans — despite the miracle of the new South Africa — it's a message that is increasingly unlikely to fall on deaf ears if Hills' memorial service is anything to go by. [This article first appeared in the South African Weekly Mail and Guard

#### The aff is a starting point for anti-capitalist working movements-- it gives workers collective power to change the conditions that capitalism creates.

**Gourevitch, 18** [Alex Gourevitch, “The Right to Strike: A Radical View,” American Political Science Review, 2018; https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/8B521F67E28D4FAE1967B17959620424/S0003055418000321a.pdf/the-right-to-strike-a-radical-view.pdf]

The Radical View: The Right to Resist Oppression The radical view has a number of advantages over the liberal and social democratic accounts. First and foremost, it is a more adequate response to the facts of oppression in actually existing liberal economies. Where the liberal view recognizes no particular injustice, and the social democratic view focuses primarily on inequalities of bargaining power, the radical view is based on the social analysis sketched in the second section of this article. That social analysis identifies the full range of oppressions, and their interlocking character, that are typical of actually existing class-divided liberal societies. That is why I call this view radical: not for the sectarian frisson sometimes associated with that word but because radical means going to the root of a problem. Second, the radical view goes to the root not just because it properly identifies all of the relevant facts, but because it thereby more accurately identifies the kind of interest that the right to strike is supposed to protect. It identifies the guiding interest of the right not as an interest (only) in creating fair contracts or in distributive justice narrowly conceived but, rather, as an interest in claiming freedom against its illegitimate limitation. Workers have an interest in not facing certain kinds of coercive restraints against their access to property, in not being subject to unfair ways of forcing them to work, in not being required to accept various kinds of labor contracts, and in not being dominated in the workplace. These are elements of the same interest that workers have in self-determination, or in enjoying those liberties that allow them to have the personal and political autonomy they ought to. This is the full sense in which the radical view is more responsive to the facts of oppression than other accounts. This further means that the radical argument is compatible with, or at least in the neighborhood of, any number of egalitarian theories of justice—such as those arguing for property-owning democracy or for workplace democracy and free time32—that are concerned with these wider forms of unfreedom. It is, for the same reason, compatible with a wide range of socialist and other left-wing criticisms of power and unfreedom in capitalist workplaces (e.g., Arnold 2017; Ezorsky 2007;Weeks 2011). The third virtue of the radical approach is that it gives a distinct explanation for the shape of the right to strike. Recall that the liberal and the social democratic approaches can have a tendency to explain the shape of that right by reference either to (a) the basic liberties of actual liberal societies, or (b) the liberties one enjoys in an ideal constitution, or (c) through a mixture of both arguments. That form of reasoning imparts a particular shape to the right: it must respect the basic liberties with which it comes in conflict. On the best version of the social democratic view, that methodological error is avoided.But it is present in any version of the argument in which the shape of the legal right to strike one ought to enjoy is the same as or similar to the right workers exercise when suffering economic injustice. But on the right to resist oppression view, the shape of the right is explained exclusively by reference to the liberty interest it is supposed to protect under conditions of oppression. The right is justified instrumentally, by reference to the fact that strikes are generally effective means for resisting the oppression to which workers are subject. And, further, the right is justified by reference to the interest workers have in using their own collective power to reduce and resist that oppression. Under conditions of oppression, that use of collective power is one of the primary ways workers can give expression to the demand for self-determination. But that aspect of the justification also depends upon strikes being generally effective means for resisting oppression, since otherwise they would just be collective acts of self-delusion or symbolic gestures of resistance but not acts self-determination. For that to be the case, the right to strike must include the use of at least some of the means that make strikes effective for those subject to oppression. That the right comprises permissions to use some effective means is a defining feature of the radical argument. After all, for the right to strike to protect the interest that justifies it, it must be shaped in ways that permit the right’s exercise in ways that actually protect that interest. That follows directly from the libertybased justification of the right. So, on this account, there would be no strict prohibition on the use of coercive strike tactics like sit-downs and mass pickets.33 A fourth virtue of the radical approach follows from the third. If the radical right to strike does not contain, internal to its justification, the same restraints on the means strikers may use, there is still the question of why the right to strike would have moral priority over other basic liberties in the case of labor disputes. On the radical view, the important point is not just that there is economic oppression but that the economic oppression that workers faced is in part created and sustained by the legal articulation and protection of those basic economic and civil liberties. Workers find themselves oppressed because of the way property rights, contractual liberties, corporate authority, tax and labor law create and maintain that oppression. If that is the case, then the normal justification of those liberties, which is supposed to establish their ‘basicness’ and thus priority is weak. Their priority is normally explained by the thought that, ideally speaking, the protection of those liberties creates more or less non-oppressive, non-exploitative relations of social cooperation.34 In reality, their legal protection achieves the opposite. Meanwhile, the right to strike, as a way of reducing that oppression has a stronger claim to be protecting a zone of activity that actually serves the aims of justice itself—of coercing people into relations of less oppressive social cooperation. That is why the right to strike would have priority over some of these basic economic and civil liberties, like property rights, freedom of contract, and freedom of association. For the foregoing reasons,we can see why the right to strike as a right to resist oppression resolves the opening dilemma in a forceful and distinctive way. Workers may use coercive strike tactics, like sit-downs and mass pickets, because those are necessary means for the most oppressed workers to go on strike with some reasonable chance of success. The radical right to strike does not ex ante prohibit the use of those means and, given the actual social effects of the legal protection of basic liberties, it has priority over the basic liberties. Moreover, those strikes can be aimed at the full range of oppressions workers in those industries might face— not just denial of adequate respect for their labor rights or poverty wages, but as acts of resistance to various features of workplace oppression and the unfair distribution of work requirements. We can also see that this version of the right to strike permits—though does not require—mass civil disobedience in those frequent instances where the state decides to enforce the law against strikers. For one, the property, contract, and related laws that strikers break are the ones that create systematic oppression. The systematic and serious character of that oppression undermines any general claim to political obligation, or local claim to an obligation to obey those laws.35 Moreover, when the state decides, as it historically has done, that coercive strike tactics violate the law or otherwise violate the fundamental rights of legal persons, it has used sometimes quite extraordinary violence to suppress strikes.36 Workers would be within their rights to resist that illegitimate use of violence, though it will often be prudential not to do so. It is important to draw this conclusion because it is a direct implication of the argument. Moreover, if one does not agree that workers are justified in mass civil disobedience as part of the exercise of the right to strike, then one is committed to arguing that the state is justified in the violent suppression of strikes—a violence with a long and bloody history. One might very well draw that latter conclusion, but then one must be clear about the side one is choosing. Either workers are justified in resisting the use of legal violence to suppress their strikes, or the state is justified in violent suppression of coercive strike tactics. There is no way around that stark fact about the liberal state and coercive strike tactics.

#### Lawful strikes are subject to conditions that protect property and the state rather than the employee. This limits the ability for the employee to successfully fulfill their demands

Gourevitch, 18 [Alex Gourevitch, “The Right to Strike: A Radical View,” American Political Science Review, 2018; https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/8B521F67E28D4FAE1967B17959620424/S0003055418000321a.pdf/the-right-to-strike-a-radical-view.pdf]

On what we can call the classical liberal view, the right to strike is a derivative right. It is understood as one way of exercising the right of free association and freedom of contract in the economy.As part of those rights, individuals are free to associate together and to decide to make contracts they all agree to. This is what the exercise of those basic rights can look like in the economy. John Stuart Mill made roughly this argument when saying the strike was an “indispensable means of enabling the sellers of labour to take due care of their own interests under a system of competition…Strikes, therefore, and the trade societies which render strikes possible, are for these various reasons not a mischievous, but on the contrary, a valuable part of the existing machinery of society.” (Mill 1909, V.10.32) Far from a rejection or critique of existing economic arrangements, the right to strike is a permitted, even “valuable part,” of the way they function. As with the exercise of any basic right, the right to strike is limited by the requirement to respect everyone else’s equal freedom to exercise their basic rights. Therefore, workers may not interfere in any coercive way with others’ exercise of their rights. As Mill put it, “It is, however, an indispensable condition of tolerating combinations, that they should be voluntary. No severity, necessary to the purpose, is too great to be employed against attempts to compel workmen to join a union, or take part in a strike by threats or violence. Mere moral compulsion, by the expression of opinion, the law ought not to interfere with; it belongs to more enlightened opinion to restrain it, by rectifying the moral sentiments of the people.” (V.10.33) While strikes are acceptable ways for workers to pursue their interests, their refusal to work must be unforced.Likewise, strikers may attempt to use moral suasion or otherwise reason with employers and replacement workers, but strikers may not coercively interfere with others’ personal or economic freedoms. One important feature of this classical liberal case is that it does not justify the right to strike by reference to any claim about economic injustice.22 The liberal case does not require us to think that there is some unfair limitation of workers’ freedom nor any other form of unfair disadvantage that workers face in the labor market in the name of which they claim a right to strike. In some cases, the liberal case explicitly denies any such disadvantage exists (Shenfield 1986, 29–38). Instead, the classical liberal right to strike is derived from the conventional set of legally protected basic liberties—of contract and association—that are adequate to secure the justice of a regime. That is why the right to strike is also limited by the same non-interference conditions 22 There are those who ground the right to strike in freedom of association who do appeal to economic injustices (e.g., Gernigon, Odero, and Guido 1998; Leader 1992). As I discuss below, they are best seen as versions of the social democratic argument. as the basic liberties from which it is derived. Strikers must respect the fundamental rules of the market— such as freedom of contract and property rights—as well as the general legal order of which those rules are a part. That is why those who think about the right to strike from within a broadly classical liberal framework tend to argue that legitimate strike activity must be strictly limited and regulated (Shenfield 1986, 9–28, 39–46; Hayek 2011, 384–404). It is not hard to see how this approach would resolve the dilemma with which this article opened. The right to strike would be subordinate to the basic liberties from which it is derived. That means that strikers would not be permitted to use any coercive strike tactics like sit-downs and mass pickets. Any such permission would render this account of the right to strike incoherent or contradictory since it would permit violation of some of the basic liberties from which this right is derived. Much American labor law fits closely with the classical liberal view that workers may go on strike but they (a) may not interfere with the “core of entrepreneurial control”23 that is said to inherent in the basic property rights of owners and (b) may not in any way coerce strikebreakers/other workers. That is the prevailing legal rationale in the US for prohibiting mass pickets and sit-ins, as well as for permitting employers to hire permanent replacement workers during most strikes.24 A second and related limit of the liberal argument for the right to strike is that, to the degree it makes an argument for the right to strike, it tends to do so by arguing that, ideally speaking, we ought to enjoy freedoms of association and contract. The right to strike is then derived from those rights. But workers already more or less enjoy those rights. Therefore, there is no significant disjunction between what they ought to be free to do and what they are already free to do, at least in the relevant area of economic activity. There are no grounds, then, for saying they should be permitted to do what they are not legally allowed to do—such as use coercive strike tactics that might violate others’ freedom of contract or association. That is because, on the classical liberal view, the right to strike is just an expression of already existing, adequately instituted rights, rather than a moral right claimed against unjust limitations on workers’ freedom. There is no room on this view even to consider the right to strike as a right to resist oppression, let alone explain the shape of that right.

#### Strikes spill-over to broader support of the labor movement and unions – every strike encourages more strikes

Hertel-Fernandez et al. 20 [Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, associate professor of public affairs at Columbia University, where he studies American political economy, with a focus on the politics of business, labor, wealthy donors, and policy, Suresh Naidu, professor of economics and public affairs at Columbia University, where he researches economic effects of political transitions, the economic history of slavery and labor institutions, international migration, and economic applications of naturallanguage processing, and Adam Reich, associate professor of sociology at Columbia University, where he studies economic and cultural sociology, especially how people make sense of their economic activities and economic positions within organizations, 2020, “Schooled by Strikes? The Effects of Large-Scale Labor Unrest on Mass Attitudes toward the Labor Movement,” American Political Science Association, https://sci-hub.se/https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592720001279]/Kankee

Strikes and Labor Power in an Era of Union Decline We examined the political consequences of large-scale teacher strikes, studying how firsthand exposure changed mass attitudes and public preferences. Across a range of specifications and approaches, we find that increased exposure to the strikes led to greater support for the walkouts, more support for legal rights for teachers and unions, and, especially, greater personal interest in labor action at people’s own jobs, though not necessarily through traditional unions. Returning to the theoretical expectations we outlined earlier, the teacher strikes appear to have changed the ways that parents think about the labor movement, generating greater public support. The results regarding workers’ interest in undertaking labor action in their own jobs also suggests evidence in favor of the public inspiration and imitation hypothesis, underscoring the role that social movements and mobilizations can play in teaching noninvolved members about the movement and tactics. Still, an important caveat to these findings is that strike-exposed parents were not more likely to say that they would vote for a traditional union at their jobs, possibly reflecting the fact that the strikes emphasized individual teachers and not necessarily teacher unions as organizations either in schools or in parents’ own workplaces. Further research might explore this difference, together with the fact that we find somewhat stronger evidence in favor of the imitation hypothesis (i.e., support for labor action at one’s own work) than for the public support hypothesis (i.e., support for the striking teachers). Before we discuss the broader implications of our findings for the understanding of the labor movement, we briefly review and address several caveats to the interpretation of our results. One concern is whether the results we identify from a single survey can speak to enduring changes in public opinion about the strikes and unions. Given the timing of the teacher strikes in the first half of 2018, our respondents were reflecting on events that happened 7–12 months in the past. We therefore think that our results represent more durable changes in opinion as a result of the strikes, in line with other studies of historical mobilizations and long-term changes in attitudes (Mazumder 2018). The AFL-CIO time-series polling data, moreover, further suggest that there were increases in aggregate public support for unions in the strike states after the strikes occurred. Nevertheless, follow-up studies should examine how opinion toward, and interest in, unions evolve in the mass teacher strike states, and it would be especially interesting to understand whether unions have begun capitalizing on the interest in the labor movement that the strikes generated. We also note that, despite the large sample size of our original survey, we still lack sufficient statistical power to fully explore the effects of the strikes on all of our survey outcomes. Future studies ought to consider alternative designs with the power to probe the individual outcomes that were not considered in this study. Another question is how to generalize from our results to other strikes and labor actions. Although it is beyond the scope of this article to develop and test a more general theory of strike action, there are factors that suggest that the teacher strikes we study here represent a hard test for building public support. The affected states had relatively weak public sector labor movements, meaning that few individuals had personal connections to unions; most were also generally conservative and Republican leaning, further potentially reducing the receptivity of the public to the teachers’ demands. And lastly, the type of work we study —teaching—involves close interaction with a very sympathetic constituency: children and their parents. This should make strike disruptions more controversial and increase the likelihood of political backlash (and indeed, we do find that the strikes were less persuasive for parents who may have lacked access to childcare). Nevertheless, additional factors may have strengthened the effects of the strikes; namely, that education spending in the strike and walkout states had dropped so precipitously since the Great Recession, giving teachers the opportunity to connect their demands to broader public goods. Considering these factors together, we feel comfortable arguing that strikes are likely to be successful in other contexts where involved employees can successfully leverage close connections to the clients and customers they serve and connect their grievances to the interests of the broader community. This is likely to be especially true in cases where individuals feel they are not receiving the level of quality service they deserve from businesses or governments. The flip side of our argument is that strikes are less likely to be successful—and may produce backlash—when the mass public views striking workers’ demands as illegitimate or opposed to their own interests or when individuals are especially inconvenienced by labor action and do not have readily available alternatives (such as lacking childcare during school strikes). This suggests that teachers’ unions’ provision of meals and childcare to parents (as happened in a number of the recent strikes) is a particularly important tactic to avoid public backlash. In addition, our results suggest that future strikes on their own are unlikely to change public opinion if all they do is to provide information about workers’ grievances or disrupt work routines. Our exploratory analysis of the mechanisms driving our results suggests that it was not necessarily information about poor school quality or the strikes themselves that changed parents’ minds, but perhaps the fact that the teachers were discussing the public goods they were seeking for the broader community. We anticipate that strikes or walkouts that adopt a similar strategy—similar to the notion of “bargaining for the common good”—would be most likely to register effects like ours in the future (McCartin 2016). Notably, that is exactly the strategy deployed by teachers in Los Angeles, who spent several years building ties to community members and explaining the broader benefits that a stronger union could offer to their community in the run-up to a strike in early 2019 (Caputo-Pearl and McAlevey 2019). In all, our results complement a long line of work arguing for the primacy of the strike as a tactic for labor influence (e.g. Burns 2011; Rosenfeld 2006; Rubin 1986). Although this literature generally has focused on the economic consequences of strikes, we have shown that strikes can also have significant effects on public opinion. Even though private sector strikes have long sought to amass public support, public-facing strikes are even more important for public sector labor unions, given their structure of production and the fact that their“managers”are ultimately elected officials. But how should we view strikes relative to the other strategies that public sector unions might deploy in politics, such as campaign contributions, inside lobbying, or mobilization of their members (cf. DiSalvo 2015; Moe 2011)? Given the large cost of mass strikes in terms of time and grassroots organizing, we expect that public sector unions will be most likely to turn to public-facing strikes (like the 2018 teacher walkouts) when these other lower-cost inside strategies are unsuccessful and when their demands are popular in the mass public. Under these circumstances, government unions have every reason to broaden the scope of conflict to include the mass public (cf. Schattschneider 1960). But when unions can deploy less costly activities (like simply having a lobbyist meet with lawmakers) or when they are pursuing demands that are more controversial with the public, we suspect that unions will opt for less public-facing strategies (on the logic of inside versus outside lobbying more generally, see, for example, Kollman 1998). Indeed, our results complement work by Terry Moe and Sarah Anzia describing how teacher unions work through low-salience and low-visibility strategies, such as capturing school boards, pension boards, or education bureaucracies, when they are pushing policies that tend not to be supported by the public (Anzia 2013; Anzia and Moe 2015; Moe 2011). Our results yield a final implication for thinking about the historical development of the labor smovement: they suggest that the decline of strikes we tracked in Figure 1 may form a vicious cycle for the long-term political power of labor. As we have documented, strikes seem to be an important way that people form opinions about unions and develop interest in labor action. As both strikes and union membership have declined precipitously over the past decades, few members of the public have had opportunities to gain firsthand knowledge and interest in unions. Moreover, strikes appear to foster greater interest in further strikes, feeding on one another. If unions are to regain any economic or political clout in the coming years, our study suggests that the strike must be a central strategy of the labor movement.

## Framing

#### The Role of the Judge is to be an activist teacher – unite in solidarity and support the fight against capitalism with your ballot

Michels 18 Michels, S., 2018. Striking as Pedagogy. [online] Medium. Available at: <https://medium.com/reformermag/striking-as-pedagogy-6afb116693b9> [Accessed 3 November 2021]. Steven Michels is associate provost and professor of political science at Sacred Heart University, in Fairfield, CT, where he’s been since 2002.

W ehave seen historic progressive backlash at the polls and on the streets, beginning with the Women’s March, the day after Trump’s inauguration. And since conservatives are only concerned with giving teachers guns, not raises, come the fall, there might be teachers in states to join those in West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Arizona in exiting the classroom to teach their students from the barricades. As Thomas Frank chronicled in What’s the Matter with Kansas, the Republican Party has succeeded in getting working class conservatives to think that hating gays and interfering with reproductive rights is more important than having access to a living wage and affordable health care. “I can hire one half of the working class to kill the other half,” quipped Jay Gould, the 19th century railroad developer, a statement that is no less true today. In addition to distracting and appealing to nativism and racism, the Right has also been highly successful at co-opting school boards and targeting curriculum. Long defended despite his mixed record on slavery, even Thomas Jefferson has been expelled. The recent wave of teacher strikes and activism are certainly a reason to be optimistic, even if no relief is expected from the legislative branch or the Supreme Court. In fact, workers are positioned to do more for themselves — and not only because they have no alternative. For many, this means running for office. For others, this could mean a blend of teaching and activism. Stakeholder Activism It is a great trick of neoliberalism to reduce communities to individuals and to reduce individual interests and happiness to short-term material gain. If progressivism is to have any kind of impactful future, it must focus on telling compelling stories about the flaws related to looking at the world through capital-colored glasses. Education, especially K-12 education, will be essential in realizing that future. In his landmark 1968 treatise Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Brazilian educator Paulo Freire argues that education is too much about simple narrative and the banking system, where knowledge is expected to accumulate. In that sense, “Education is suffering from narration sickness,” he writes, in that it does not expect nor prepare students to enter the world critically. It is a world not to be affected or changed, but merely observed. Freire also writes of the solidarity that must occur in the classroom insofar as teachers and students must act in full recognition of their common aims and common enemies. It did not hurt the striking teachers’ case that they were arguing not just for increased pay for better facilities and to improve the learning conditions and for the compensation for other school staff. It is not shareholder activism, as Boston University law professor David Webber calls it in his new book The Rise of the Working-Class Shareholder: Labor’s Last Best Weapon, in which labor can use the levers of capital against itself. Instead, this combination of workers and the greater community could engage in stakeholder activism, whereby the interests of any given profession or set of workers is understood as component of a social project. As one sign from a North Carolina teacher read, “Teachers Want What Children Need.” Teachers and the educational system is simply the clearest and most obvious example of what could be a larger trend in other areas, including health care, the service industry, and a post-carbon economy. Freire recognizes how dominants classes eschew any talk of class consciousness, much less class conflict. “Class conflict is another concept which upsets the oppressors, since they do not wish to consider themselves an oppressive class.” They seek to divide as an essential part of their oppression. That’s why Obama was mocked as a community organizer in the 2008 presidential election. Like Karl Marx, Freire is suspicious of labor unions as instruments of appeasement. But that is not an argument against unions as much as it is an argument about a particular kind of union and a particular kind of union leader. Indeed, we have seen union leadership lagging behind the rank and file in terms of its positions and its tactics.

#### The Role of the Ballot is to vote for the debater who best deconstructs capitalism – pre-requisite to any debate since capitalism infects education and prevents us from critically engaging with the world

Pal 20 Pal, T., 2020. (Mis)education, capitalism and critical consciousness. [online] Springmag.ca. Available at: <https://springmag.ca/miseducation-capitalism-and-critical-consciousness> [Accessed 3 November 2021].

After years of continued budget cuts and neoliberal austerity in the education system being met with strikes from teachers and students alike — we are given bitter reminders of the disregard that the capitalist class and government officials have for the future of critical education. Demands to defund police and prisons have drawn attention to the different priorities in government spending when it comes to police versus the education system. While cities spend up to billions without question on policing, schools are continually rushing to gather proper funding to meet their students’ needs. However, the decision to continually underfund schools is no mistake, it is deliberate. Public education plays a significant role in how we are socialized within the world, and what we do once we move on from its environment. When the structure of the school is deeply tied to our childhood and teen years, we must ask what it is they intend to teach us, how, and why. Just as the state is not a neutral institution, neither are schools. Capitalist miseducation Reducing funding to schools is only one of the many ways in which institutions control the knowledge and environment youth are exposed to. Students and teachers are given lacklustre resources while being expected to provide a proper, fulfilling education. In this sense, defunding schools does not necessarily mean that wealthy and corporate interests do not care for education — quite the opposite. They recognize the role that these institutions play in continuing to perpetuate the cycle of capitalism, imperialism and settler colonialism. Both throughout history and the present, schools have reflected the social, political and economic climate, while simultaneously being a social safety net that must attempt to handle the consequences of these conditions. Schools and teachers are expected to provide services that extend beyond a classroom, whether it be food, clothing, mental health support, or counselling. While curriculums revolve around the promotion of capitalist values, it is this same system which undermines the power of the educational process, and the difficulties that students and teachers face. The establishment of the education system in what is currently known as Canada was linked heavily to the beginning of the shift from agricultural work into the industrial, capitalist economy. In this same period, institutions were built to continue the ongoing genocide against hundreds of Indigenous communities through the government-sponsored residential schools that isolated thousands of Indigenous children and enforced colonial genocide. Colonialism has not only been consistently present in schools, but the education system itself has been integral in willfully erasing the history and violence of racial capitalism, and justifying subjugation in the name of empire. It should not be of any surprise that an education system built by an occupying settler state continues to maintain colonial, imperialist and capitalist violence both through its curriculum and the very core of its environment. Calls for ‘neutral’ curriculums and educators are meaningless when ‘neutrality’ has always favoured the status quo and the violence of neoliberalism and racial capitalism. We must not underestimate the impact that capitalism and settler colonialism has on a school’s curriculum, the manner in which students are expected to learn, and the very layout of the buildings and classrooms they navigate. All of these factors serve to dishearten our ability to imagine entirely new ways of living amongst our communities and the world, outside of a settler or capitalist future. ‘Critical consciousness’ and the imagination One of the leading authors in critical education and pedagogy, known for Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire emphasized capitalism’s insidious effects on repressing critical consciousness through what he deemed the “banking method” of education. The banking method treats students as objects separate from their environment and experiences, as mere ‘vaults’ into which knowledge must be stored by the teacher. Rather than critically engaging with the world to truly be able to understand and ultimately transform it (a process Freire called critical consciousness), the banking method of education encourages fatalistic disinterest to the conditions around us. This can still be seen in the standardized testing and percentage grades of the present, in which students ‘store’ knowledge with the goal of passing an upcoming test or raising their mark in a class. What would it mean to separate a students ‘success’ from the colonial, capitalist institution? What if people were able to critically engage with the knowledge they interact with, in order to enact real, tangible change in the world? Freire’s theories concerning education continue to have a profound impact on how students navigate the school system today. The distinct connection between the banking method of education and capitalism allows us to consider the ways in which people are conditioned to accept (and perpetuate) institutional violence. Test scores and memorization are prioritized, with students continually being told schools are a ‘place of business’ that are meant to prepare them for the workforce. In short, education is turned into a business of ideologically grooming people into servants of capital and white supremacy. We are conditioned to accept that there is no future outside of capitalism or settler colonialism; that these conditions are a permanent, fixed reality. Students are conditioned to become ‘good workers’, accepting their role in a capitalist society, in which their value is determined on their ability to constantly labour. Our collective and creative potential to imagine and act upon new ways of organizing within communities is intentionally discouraged. People are offered problems without being given a larger context as to why they exist in the first place, preventing them from being able to critically engage with issues. We are told that “poverty exists, so we must try to alleviate its effects as much as possible” (Or that poverty is a matter of personal choices). We are rarely told that “poverty is not normal but an intentional symptom of a larger system that does not have to exist”. The social, political and economic climate that we live in, along with their historical conditions, become mystified and hyper-individualized, steering criticism away from institutions and instead focusing on individual behaviour. Another world is possible I have heard both teachers and classmates alike declare that capitalism is bad, but that there are no viable alternatives. Similarly, when discussing the prison system with a teacher to whom I suggested abolition, I was immediately met with the response that “they definitely need to be reformed”. People recognize that there are contradictions within the violent institutions that currently exist—be it capitalism, settler colonialism, or the carceral complex. While our minds and bodies recognize that capitalism and colonialism violently exploit us, warping our ability to radically care for one another, we are instead conditioned to dismiss radical ideas without giving them any further thought. Capitalism has presented itself as natural, inevitable, and the only possible form of organization as a means of justifying its existence. It is thus a practice to continually remind ourselves that capitalism is not permanent. Considering the implications of these contradictions is vital if we are to approach education in a truly meaningful, honest manner that prioritizes critical consciousness. Organizers have long been working to cultivate critical education spaces within their communities, outside of the restrictions that may be faced within the current school system. While it is evident that the creation of a liberatory education requires a revolutionary transformation of the economic climate, teachers, students, and organizers outside of the school system continue to cultivate spaces in which communities can appreciate the power of critical education. From understanding media literacy through an anti-capitalist framework to deconstructing and unlearning colonial, white supremacist history, these spaces provide the opportunity to consider education as a process that is not limited to the confines of a classroom. It is through popular and political education networks that people have been able to democratize education and understand that the educational process relies on collective power. Capitalist miseducation encourages passivity, and discourages the unique, creative capabilities that humans have to critically problem solve and act upon new solutions. Radical imagination is discouraged and systematically suppressed specifically to prevent any fundamental structural criticisms and changes within our current social, political and economic climate. This fatalistic culture alienates people from their ability to actively transform the world they are a part of. However, fighting to cultivate and maintain a liberatory imagination cannot be bound to slogans, but must be met with and created alongside concrete actions. We cannot merely learn about change, we must learn to change. Through both reflection and action, we can widen the scope of what we are ‘allowed’ to imagine, and cultivate new and wonderful possibilities for community. The world is not a static fact, but a living entity in a constant state of motion and becoming. There is always a possibility to radically transform our material conditions, and truly work towards the abolition of capitalist exploitation.