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#### 1. Capitalism is unsustainable – causes environmental crisis, fascism, violence, instability, and over-commodification

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The New Global Capitalism and the 21st Century Crisis **The world capitalist system** is arguably **experiencing the worst crisis in its 500 year history**. World capitalism has experienced a profound restructuring through globalisation over the past few decades and has been transformed in ways that make it fundamentally distinct from its earlier incarnations. Similarly, the current crisis exhibits features that set it apart from earlier crises of the system and raise the stakes for humanity. If we are to avert disastrous outcomes we must understand both the nature of the new global capitalism and the nature of its crisis. Analysis of capitalist globalisation provides a template for probing a wide range of social, political, cultural and ideological processes in this 21st century. Following Marx, we want to focus on the internal dynamics of capitalism to understand crisis. And following the global capitalism perspective, we want to see how capitalism has qualitatively evolved in recent decades. The system-wide crisis we face is not a repeat of earlier such episodes such as that of the the 1930s or the 1970s precisely because capitalism is fundamentally different in the 21st century. Globalisation constitutes a qualitatively new epoch in the ongoing and open-ended evolution of world capitalism, marked by a number of qualitative shifts in the capitalist system and by novel articulations of social power. I highlight four aspects unique to this epoch.1 First is the rise of truly transnational capital and a new global production and financial system into which all nations and much of humanity has been integrated, either directly or indirectly. We have gone from a world economy, in which countries and regions were linked to each other via trade and financial flows in an integrated international market, to a global economy, in which nations are linked to each more organically through the transnationalisation of the production process, of finance, and of the circuits of capital accumulation. No single nation-state can remain insulated from the global economy or prevent the penetration of the social, political, and cultural superstructure of global capitalism. Second is the rise of a Transnational Capitalist Class (TCC), a class group that has drawn in contingents from most countries around the world, North and South, and has attempted to position itself as a global ruling class. This TCC is the hegemonic fraction of capital on a world scale. Third is the rise of Transnational State (TNS) apparatuses. The TNS is constituted as a loose network made up of trans-, and supranational organisations together with national states. It functions to organise the conditions for transnational accumulation. The TCC attempts to organise and institutionally exercise its class power through TNS apparatuses. Fourth are novel relations of inequality, domination and exploitation in global society, including an increasing importance of transnational social and class inequalities relative to North-South inequalities. Cyclical, Structural, and Systemic Crises Most commentators on the contemporary crisis refer to the “Great Recession” of 2008 and its aftermath. Yet the causal origins of global crisis are to be found in over-accumulation and also in contradictions of state power, or in what Marxists call the internal contradictions of the capitalist system. Moreover, because the system is now global, crisis in any one place tends to represent crisis for the system as a whole. The system cannot expand because the marginalisation of a significant portion of humanity from direct productive participation, the downward pressure on wages and popular consumption worldwide, and the polarisation of income, has reduced the ability of the world market to absorb world output. At the same time, given the particular configuration of social and class forces and the correlation of these forces worldwide, national states are hard-pressed to regulate transnational circuits of accumulation and offset the explosive contradictions built into the system. Is this crisis cyclical, structural, or systemic? Cyclical crises are recurrent to capitalism about once every 10 years and involve recessions that act as self-correcting mechanisms without any major restructuring of the system. The recessions of the early 1980s, the early 1990s, and of 2001 were cyclical crises. In contrast, the 2008 crisis signaled the slide into astructural crisis. Structural crises reflect deeper contradictions that can only be resolved by a major restructuring of the system. The structural crisis of the 1970s was resolved through capitalist globalisation. Prior to that, the structural crisis of the 1930s was resolved through the creation of a new model of redistributive capitalism, and prior to that the structural crisis of the 1870s resulted in the development of corporate capitalism. A systemic crisis involves the replacement of a system by an entirely new system or by an outright collapse. A structural crisis opens up the possibility for a systemic crisis. But if it actually snowballs into a systemic crisis – in this case, if it gives way either to capitalism being superseded or to a breakdown of global civilisation – is not predetermined and depends entirely on the response of social and political forces to the crisis and on historical contingencies that are not easy to forecast. This is an historic moment of extreme uncertainty, in which collective responses from distinct social and class forces to the crisis are in great flux. Hence my concept of global crisis is broader than financial. There are multiple and mutually constitutive dimensions – economic, social, political, cultural, ideological and ecological, not to mention the existential crisis of our consciousness, values and very being. There is a crisis of social polarisation, that is, of social reproduction. The system cannot meet the needs or assure the survival of millions of people, perhaps a majority of humanity. There are crises of state legitimacy and political authority, or of hegemony and domination. National **states face** spiraling **crises of legitimacy as they fail to meet the social grievances of** local **working** and popular **classes experiencing** downward mobility, unemployment, heightened insecurity and **greater hardships**. The legitimacy of the system has increasingly been called into question by millions, perhaps even billions, of people around the world, and is facing expanded counter-hegemonic challenges. Global elites have been unable counter this erosion of the system’s authority in the face of worldwide pressures for a global moral economy. An**d a canopy that envelops all these dimensions is a crisis** of sustainability **rooted in an ecological holocaust** that has already begun, **expressed in climate change and the impending collapse of centralised agricultural systems in several regions of the world,** among other indicators. By a crisis of humanity I mean a crisis that is approaching systemic proportions, **threatening the ability of billions of people to survive, and raising the specter of a collapse of world civilisation and degeneration into a new “Dark Ages.”**2 Global **capitalism** now couples human and natural history in such a way as to **threaten[s]** to bring about what would be **the sixth mass extinction** in the known history of life on earth. This crisis of humanity shares a number of aspects with earlier structural crises but there are also several features unique to the present: 1. The system is fast reaching the ecological limits of its reproduction. Global capitalism now couples human and natural history in such a way as to threaten to bring about what would be the sixth mass extinction in the known history of life on earth.3 This mass extinction would be caused not by a natural catastrophe such as a meteor impact or by evolutionary changes such as the end of an ice age but by purposive human activity. According to leading environmental scientists there are nine “planetary boundaries” crucial to maintaining an earth system environment in which humans can exist, four of which are experiencing at this time the onset of irreversible environmental degradation and three of which (climate change, the nitrogen cycle, and biodiversity loss) are at “tipping points,” meaning that these processes have already crossed their planetary boundaries. 2. The magnitude of the means of violence and social control is unprecedented, as is the concentration of the means of global communication and symbolic production and circulation in the hands of a very few powerful groups. Computerised wars, drones, bunker-buster bombs, star wars, and so forth, have changed the face of warfare. Warfare has become normalised and sanitised for those not directly at the receiving end of armed aggression. At the same time we have arrived at the panoptical surveillance society and the age of thought control by those who control global flows of communication, images and symbolic production. The world of Edward Snowden is the world of George Orwell; 1984 has arrived; 3. **Capitalism is reaching apparent limits to its extensive expansion**. There are no longer any new territories of significance that can be integrated into world capitalism, de-ruralisation is now well advanced, and **the commodification of** the countryside and of **pre- and non-capitalist spaces has intensified**, that is, converted in hot-house fashion into spaces of capital, so that intensive expansion is reaching depths never before seen. **Capitalism must continually expand or collapse. How or where will it now expand**? 4. There is the rise of a vast surplus population inhabiting a “planet of slums,”4 alienated from the productive economy, thrown into the margins, and subject to sophisticated systems of social control and to destruction – to a mortal cycle of dispossession-exploitation-exclusion. This includes prison-industrial and immigrant-detention complexes, omnipresent policing, militarised gentrification, and so on; 5. There is a disjuncture between a globalising economy and a nation-state based system of political authority. Transnational state apparatuses are incipient and have not been able to play the role of what social scientists refer to as a “hegemon,” or a leading nation-state that has enough power and authority to organise and stabilise the system. The spread of weapons of mass destruction and the unprecedented militarisation of social life and conflict across the globe makes it hard to imagine that the system can come under any stable political authority that assures its reproduction. Global Police State How have social and political forces worldwide responded to crisis? The crisis has resulted in a rapid political polarisation in global society. Both right and left-wing forces are ascendant. Three responses seem to be in dispute. One is what we could call “reformism from above.” This elite reformism is aimed at stabilising the system, at saving the system from itself and from more radical responses from below. Nonetheless, in the years following the 2008 collapse of the global financial system it seems these reformers are unable (or unwilling) to prevail over the power of transnational financial capital. A second response is popular, grassroots and leftist resistance from below. As social and political conflict escalates around the world there appears to be a mounting global revolt. While such resistance appears insurgent in the wake of 2008 it is spread very unevenly across countries and regions and facing many problems and challenges. Yet another response is that I term 21stcentury fascism.5 The ultra-right is an insurgent force in many countries. In broad strokes, **this project seeks to fuse reactionary** political **power with** transnational **capital** and to organise a mass base among historically privileged sectors of the global working class – such as white workers in the North and middle layers in the South – that are now experiencing heightened insecurity and the specter of downward mobility. **It involves militarism, extreme masculinisation, homophobia, racism** and racist mobilisations, including the search for scapegoats, such as immigrant workers and, in the West, Muslims. Twenty-first century fascism evokes mystifying ideologies, often involving race/culture supremacy and xenophobia, embracing an idealised and mythical past**. Neo-fascist culture normalises and glamorises warfare and social violence**, indeed, generates a fascination with domination that is portrayed even as heroic. The need for dominant groups around the world to secure widespread, organised mass social control of the world’s surplus population and rebellious forces from below gives a powerful impulse to projects of 21st century fascism. Simply put, the immense structural inequalities of the global political economy cannot easily be contained through consensual mechanisms of social control. We have been witnessing transitions from social welfare to social control states around the world. We have entered a period of great upheavals, momentous changes and uncertainties. The only viable solution to the crisis of global capitalism is a massive redistribution of wealth and power downward towards the poor majority of humanity along the lines of a 21st century democratic socialism, in which humanity is no longer at war with itself and with nature.

#### 2. Capitalism destroys commodifies every aspect of human life and restricts our freedom to engage in social activities.

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The problem may be summarized as follows. Capitalism has indeed created the conditions for general prosperity and therefore for its own supersession. But it has also blocked, and continues to block, any hope of realizing this transformation. We cannot wait for capitalism to transform on its own, but we also cannot hope to progress by appealing to some radical Outside or by fashioning ourselves as militants faithful to some “event” that (as Badiou has it) would mark a radical and complete break with the given “situation” of capitalism. Accelerationism rather demands a movement against and outside capitalism—but on the basis of tendencies and technologies that are intrinsic to capitalism. Audre Lord famously argued that “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.” But what if the master’s tools are the only ones available? Accelerationism grapples with this dilemma. What is the appeal of accelerationism today? It can be understood as a response to the particular social and political situation in which we currently seem to be trapped: that of a long-term, slow-motion catastrophe. **Global warming, and environmental** pollution and **degradation, threaten** to undermine **our** whole **mode of life.** And this mode of **life is itself increasingly stressful and precarious, due to the depredations of neoliberal capitalism**. As Fredric Jameson puts it, **the world today is characterized by** “heightened **polarization**, increasing **unemployment, [and] the** ever more desperate **search for new investments and** new **markets.” These are all** general **features of capitalism** identified by Marx, but in neoliberal society we encounter them in a particularly pure and virulent form. I want to be as specific as possible in my use of the term “neoliberalism” in order to describe this situation. I define **neoliberalism** as a specific mode of capitalist production (Marx), and form of governmentality (Foucault), that **is characterized by the following specific factors: 1. The dominating influence of financial institutions, which facilitate transfers of wealth from everybody else to the already extremely wealthy** (the “One Percent” or even the top one hundredth of one percent). **2. The** privatization and **commodification of** what used to be common or **public goods** (resources **like water and green space, as well as public services like education, communication**, sewage and garbage disposal, **and transportation). 3. The extraction, by** banks and other large **corporations, of a surplus from all social activities: not only from production** (as in the classical Marxist model of capitalism) **but from circulation and consumption as well**. **Capital accumulation proceeds** not only **by** direct **exploitation** but also by rent-seeking, by debt collection, and by outright expropriation (“primitive accumulation”). **4. The subjection of all aspects of life to the so-called discipline of the market**. This is equivalent, in more traditional Marxist terms, to the “real subsumption” by capital of all aspects of life: leisure as well as labor. **Even our sleep is now organized in accordance with the imperatives of production** and capital accumulation. 5. The redefinition of human beings as private owners of their own “human capital.” Each person is thereby, as Michel Foucault puts it, forced to become “an entrepreneur of himself.” In such circumstances, we are continually obliged to market ourselves, to “brand” ourselves, to maximize the return on our “investment” in ourselves. There is never enough: like the Red Queen, we always need to keep running, just to stay in the same place. Precarity is the fundamental condition of our lives. All of these processes work on a global scale; they extend far beyond the level of immediate individual experience. My life is precarious, at every moment, but I cannot apprehend the forces that make it so. I know how little money is left from my last paycheck, but I cannot grasp, in concrete terms, how “the economy” works. I directly experience the daily weather, but I do not directly experience the climate. Global warming and worldwide financial networks are examples of what the ecological theorist Timothy Morton calls hyperobjects. They are phenomena that actually exist but that “stretch our ideas of time and space, since they far outlast most human time scales, or they’re massively distributed in terrestrial space and so are unavailable to immediate experience.” Hyperobjects affect everything that we do, but we cannot point to them in specific instances. The chains of causality are far too complicated and intermeshed for us to follow. In order to make sense of our condition, we are forced to deal with difficult abstractions. We have to rely upon data that are gathered in massive quantities by scientific instruments and then collated through mathematical and statistical formulas but that are not directly accessible to our senses. We find ourselves, as Mark Hansen puts it, entangled “within networks of media technologies that operate predominantly, if not almost entirely, outside the scope of human modes of awareness (consciousness, attention, sense perception, etc.).” We cannot imagine such circumstances in any direct or naturalistic way, but only through the extrapolating lens of science fiction. Subject to these conditions, **we live under relentless environmental and financial assault**. We continually find ourselves in what might well be called a state of crisis. However, this involves a paradox. A crisis—whether economic, ecological, or political—is a turning point, a sudden rupture, a sharp and immediate moment of reckoning. But for us today, crisis has become a chronic and seemingly permanent condition. We live, oxymoronically, in a state of perpetual, but never resolved, convulsion and contradiction. Crises never come to a culmination; instead, they are endlessly and indefinitely deferred. For instance, after the economic collapse of 2008, the big banks were bailed out by the United States government. This allowed them to resume the very practices—the creation of arcane financial instruments, in order to enable relentless rent-seeking—that led to the breakdown of the economic system in the first place. The functioning of the system is restored, but only in such a way as to guarantee the renewal of the same crisis, on a greater scale, further down the road. Marx rightly noted that crises are endemic to capitalism. But far from threatening the system as Marx hoped, today these crises actually help it to renew itself. As David Harvey puts it, it is precisely “through the destruction of the achievements of preceding eras by way of war, the devaluation of assets, the degradation of productive capacity, abandonment and other forms of ‘creative destruction’” that capitalism creates “a new basis for profit-making and surplus absorption.” What lurks behind this analysis is the frustrating sense of an impasse. Among its other accomplishments, neoliberal capitalism has also robbed us of the future. For it turns everything into an eternal present. The highest values of our society—as preached in the business schools—are novelty, innovation, and creativity. And yet these always only result in more of the same. How often have we been told that a minor software update “changes everything”? Our society seems to function, as Ernst Bloch once put it, in a state of “sheer aimless infinity and incessant changeability; where everything ought to be constantly new, everything remains just as it was.” This is because, in our current state of affairs, **the future exists only** in order **to be colonized and made into an investment** opportunity. John Maynard Keynes sought to distinguish between risk and genuine uncertainty. Risk is calculable in terms of probability, but genuine uncertainty is not. Uncertain events are irreducible to probabilistic analysis, because “there is no scientific basis on which to form any calculable probability whatever.” Keynes’s discussion of uncertainty has strong affinities with Quentin Meillassoux’s account of hyperchaos. For Meillassoux, there is no “totality of cases,” no closed set of all possible states of the universe. Therefore, there is no way to assign fixed probabilities to these states. This is not just an empirical matter of insufficient information; uncertainty exists in principle. For Meillassoux and Keynes alike, there comes a point where “we simply do not know.” But today, Keynes’s distinction is entirely ignored. The Black-Scholes Formula and the Efficient Market Hypothesis both conceive the future entirely in probabilistic terms. In these theories, as in the actual financial trading that is guided by them (or at least rationalized by them), the genuine unknowability of the future is transformed into a matter of calculable, manageable risk. True novelty is excluded, because all possible outcomes have already been calculated and paid for in terms of the present. While this belief in the calculability of the future is delusional, it nonetheless determines the way that financial markets actually work. We might therefore say that speculative finance is the inverse—and the complement—of the “affirmative speculation” that takes place in science fiction. Financial speculation seeks to capture, and shut down, the very same extreme potentialities that science fiction explores. Science fiction is the narration of open, unaccountable futures; derivatives trading claims to have accounted for, and discounted, all these futures already. **The “market**”—nearly deified in neoliberal doctrine—thus works preemptively, as a global practice of what Richard Grusin calls premediation. It **seeks to deplete the future in advance. Its** relentless **functioning makes it nearly impossible** for us **to conceive of any alternative** to the global capitalist world order. Such is the condition that Mark Fisher calls capitalist realism. As Fisher puts it, channeling both Jameson and Žižek, “it’s easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism.”

#### 3. Endless economic growth under capitalism is actively destroying the climate – socialist alternatives are necessary to solve warming.

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Dawson, Ashley. “We Can’t Beat Climate Change Under Capitalism. Socialism Is the Only Way.” 15 April, 2019. In These Times. <https://inthesetimes.com/article/socialism-anti-capitalism-economic-reform>

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The Inter­gov­ern­men­tal Pan­el on Cli­mate Change (IPCC)’s land­mark [Octo­ber 2018 report](https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/" \t "_blank)declared that **pre­vent­ing run­away glob­al warm­ing will require ​“far-reach­ing tran­si­tions in ener­gy, land … and indus­tri­al sys­tems**” **for which there is ​“no doc­u­ment­ed his­toric prece­dent.”** Oxford Uni­ver­si­ty cli­mate sci­en­tist and report author Myles Allen explained, ​“It’s telling us **we need to … turn the world econ­o­my on a dime**.” Rapid and equitable decarbonization means putting corporations under public control. To make this turn hap­pen, we need a care­ful­ly planned and demo­c­ra­t­i­cal­ly admin­is­tered emer­gency pro­gram for eco­log­i­cal recon­struc­tion. But such a pro­gram is not remote­ly rec­on­cil­able with capitalism’s imper­a­tives of prof­it max­i­miza­tion and growth, not to men­tion pri­vate own­er­ship of the means of pro­duc­tion. In oth­er words: We need sys­tem change to beat cli­mate change. **Under cap­i­tal­ism, economies must grow at a min­i­mum com­pound rate of 3 per­cent to remain healthy. ​“Any slow­down or block­age in cap­i­tal flow will pro­duce a cri­sis,”**[wrote Marx­ist geo­g­ra­ph­er David Har­vey](http://davidharvey.org/2010/08/the-enigma-of-capital-and-the-crisis-this-time/" \t "_blank) in a 2010 paper. ​“If our blood flow stops, then we die. If cap­i­tal flow stops, then the body politic of cap­i­tal­ist soci­ety dies.” This gen­er­al­ly means a slow­down in invest­ment, falling wages and wide­spread unemployment. But giv­en our finite plan­e­tary resource base**, this inces­sant growth is killing us. A recent review of hun­dreds of sci­en­tif­ic stud­ies show­cas­es the direct link** over the last half-cen­tu­ry (dur­ing the so-called Great Accel­er­a­tion) **between eco­nom­ic growth, ener­gy use and car­bon emis­sions.** While the orig­i­nal New Deal helped spur this uptick, the Green New Deal must wind it down. **Some sec­tors of the econ­o­my require imme­di­ate con­trac­tion**. [Accord­ing to the think tank Car­bon Track­er](https://www.carbontracker.org/wasted-capital-and-stranded-assets-press-release/" \t "_blank), 80 per­cent of known **fos­sil fuel reserves need to be kept in the ground** if we are to avert tem­per­a­ture rise above 2 degrees Cel­sius (3.6 degrees Fahren­heit). **But** much of these **reserves are con­trolled by fos­sil fuel cor­po­ra­tions account­able only to investors. To main­tain their val­ue and mar­ket share, these com­pa­nies must con­tin­ue to extract** and sell these reserves and dis­cov­er new reserves to replace them. Con­trac­tion is inim­i­cal to growth, **so it’s ​“Drill, baby, drill.”** How can we dis­man­tle this plan­et-destroy­ing extrac­tive econ­o­my? **Free-mar­ket solu­tions and incen­tives like car­bon tax­es have, where imple­ment­ed, failed to sig­nif­i­cant­ly dimin­ish fos­sil fuel con­sump­tion** (part of why the big oil and gas com­pa­nies sup­port them). A dra­mat­i­cal­ly high­er car­bon tax might work to effec­tive­ly bank­rupt these cor­po­ra­tions, but it would not give the pub­lic any con­trol over how the clo­sure of these indus­tries takes place, risk­ing job loss and eco­nom­ic disruption. Rapid and equi­table **decar­boniza­tion**, then, **means putting these cor­po­ra­tions under pub­lic con­trol** — i.e., nation­al­iz­ing them, through buy­ing out the major­i­ty of their shares. Writ­ers at [The Democ­ra­cy Col­lab­o­ra­tive](https://democracycollaborative.org/content/plan-nationalize-fossil-fuel-companies-0" \t "_blank) esti­mate a price tag of around $1.15 tril­lion. This may sound expen­sive, but remem­ber: Over the next decade, Trump’s tax cuts will give [$2.3 tril­lion](https://www.politico.com/story/2018/02/28/tax-cuts-trump-gop-analysis-430781" \t "_blank) to the rich. This assault on pri­vate prop­er­ty will no doubt trig­ger fierce resis­tance from elites. To over­come this oppo­si­tion, **we will need a mas­sive, orga­nized anti-cap­i­tal­ist movement.** The phase­out of fos­sil fuels must be econ­o­my-wide, includ­ing wind­ing down, find­ing alter­na­tives to, and sup­port­ing affect­ed work­ers from fos­sil fuel-depen­dent indus­tries like petro­chem­i­cals, agribusi­ness and avi­a­tion, and much super­flu­ous indus­tri­al pro­duc­tion — not to men­tion [the arms indus­try and the mil­i­tary](https://www.tni.org/es/node/22587" \t "_blank). A cam­paign against mil­i­tarism, and for a Glob­al Green New Deal, would require chal­leng­ing the intra-state eco­nom­ic and mil­i­tary com­pe­ti­tion upon which cap­i­tal­ism relies. While the net effect will be to con­tract pro­duc­tion, we must also invest in selec­tive growth in cer­tain sec­tors, from renew­able ener­gy to organ­ic farm­ing, as well as low-car­bon, social­ly nec­es­sary activ­i­ties such as edu­ca­tion and the car­ing pro­fes­sions. This will involve revers­ing the neolib­er­al cap­i­tal­ist dog­ma that has imposed aus­ter­i­ty for decades. The Indige­nous Envi­ron­men­tal Net­work (IEN) applauds the vision, inten­tion and scope of the Green New Deal res­o­lu­tion but [insists on](http://www.ienearth.org/talking-points-on-the-aoc-markey-green-new-deal-gnd-resolution/" \t "_blank) ​“the fun­da­men­tal need to chal­lenge and trans­form the cur­rent dom­i­nant polit­i­cal and eco­nom­ic sys­tems that are dri­ving for­est destruc­tion, social injus­tice and the cli­mate crisis.” “An econ­o­my based on extract­ing from a finite sys­tem faster than the capac­i­ty of the Earth to regen­er­ate,” IEN argues, ​“will even­tu­al­ly come to an end.” Our demands for reform must pre­cip­i­tate what comes next. As the IEN puts it, ​“To reclaim our future, we must change the present.”

#### As an educator, the role of your ballot is to link your social location to the broader struggle against capitalism. To clarify, vote for the debater who presents the best strategy to combat capitalism. Educational spaces like debate are uniquely key to creating future revolutionaries, and judges are responsible for facilitating the conversations that create class-consciousness.

McLaren and Farahmandpur ‘01

Peter **McLaren and** Ramin **Farahmandpur** 20**01 (**Peter McLaren, Distinguished Professor in Critical Studies at Cambridge University, Ramin Farahmandpur, Phd at Portland State University, “TEACHING AGAINST GLOBALIZATION AND THE NEW IMPERIALISM: TOWARD A REVOLUTIONARY PEDAGOGY,” Journal of Teacher Education, Vol. 52, No. 2, March/April 2001) //Feng

This requires that students are able to see themselves in relation to their role as workers and to be provided with an opportunity to develop class consciousness. This does not mean that class consciousness excludes other aspects of identity. As Reed (2000) points out, The claim that being a worker is not the most crucial identity for members of marginalized groups is debatable. To say the least. But even if that claim were true, what it means simply is that people see themselves in many ways simultaneously. We all have our own sets of experiences fashioned by our social position, our family upbringing, our local political culture, and our voluntary associations. Each of these goes into the mix, modifying, cross-cutting, even at times overriding identities based on race or ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. . . . The fact of the existence of a capitalist economic order doesn’t automatically tell us how people interpret their positions within it. Class consciousness, no less than other identities, is contingent, the product of political debate and struggle. (p. 137) It is imperative in our view that the struggles of teachers in schools are linked to the struggles of other workers. A revolutionary workingclass pedagogy of labor stresses that the empowerment of workers (i.e., teachers, postal workers, factory workers) can be successfully achieved through organizing labor unions that committed to anticapitalist struggle and a proletarian praxis. Yet, we must also emphasize that the political and economic empowerment of workers will depend on their active participation and self-education. Here we oppose the tradition of “workerism” that is often anti-intellectual and looks on theory with suspicion and often contempt. Instead, we applaud the recent struggles of intellectuals such as Pierre Bourdieu of France to coordinate the efforts of numerous European social movements through his organization, Raisons d’Agir. **The ability of teachers and prospective teachers to interpret contemporary social relations of production as a set of interconnected social and material practices helps them to understand that success in a capitalist society is not the result of individual capacities but rather is constrained and enabled by asymmetrical relations of power linked to race, class, gender, and sexual economies of privilege**. We believe that workers committed to social justice have the opportunity to become liberatory intellectuals (what Antonio Gramsci, 1971, referred to as “organic” intellectuals) who possess the capacity to make meaningful choices and decisions in their lives (McLaren, Fischman, Serra, & Antelo, 1998). Thus, **teachers who are central to the process of raising students’ political consciousness must themselves become theoreticians of their own teaching practices.** Accordingly, **our task as organic and committed intellectuals is to create the conditions for the development of a revolutionary consciousness among** the working class in general and teachers and **students** in particular. In developing a framework for forging solidarity and collective action among workers and students, we find the three conditions that Weinbaum (1998) proposes to be particularly instructive. First**, the central role of critical educators must be directed at facilitating dialogues among** workers and **students** concerning everyday labor practices at the workplace and teaching practices within schools. Second**, teachers and workers must be presented with opportunities for transforming** those **relationships that link their individual interests and issues at the local and community level to broader social and economic relations at a global level**. And finally, Weinbaum stresses the active political role that critical educators in labor unions and schools must play both in their communities and in progressive organizations.

**Prefer:**

1. **Materiality – other frameworks hypothetically discuss what is ethical but mine focuses on a thing that is unethical, capitalism. That’s better because abstract theorizing is stuck in the Ivory Tower – workers don’t cite kant when they make decisions, they just know some things are materially bad. Framework based in materiality allow us to make more useful judgments about the world around us than abstract ones, which is better for real world education.**
2. **Advocacy Skills – defending a critique of something that exists in society is more applicable to real world activism than moral philosophy. Outweighs any other justification because advocacy skills are one of debate’s only external benefits.**
3. **Inclusivity – it’s easier for novices and traditional debaters to understand the material warrants of why capitalism is bad than it is for them to understand abstract phil – outweighs because debate is useless if people can’t access it.**

## Advocacy

#### I affirm Resolved: “A just government ought to recognize the unconditional right of workers to strike.”

#### Strikes are an articulation of worker power over production – they halt the operation of capitalist society and refuse capitalist organization of labor

Tronti 1966

“Workers and Capital.” Tronti, Mario. 1966. <https://libcom.org/book/export/html/42233>

Mario Tronti was the principal theorist of the radical political movement of the 1960s known in Italy as *operaismo* and in the Anglophone world as Italian workerism, a current which went on to inform the development of autonomist Marxism. His “Copernican revolution”—the proposal that working class struggles against exploitation propel capitalist development, which can only be understood as a reaction that seeks to harness this antagonism—has inspired dissident leftists around the world. // Park City NL

Adam Smith says - and Marx comments on the accuracy of his observation -that the effective development of the productive power of labour begins when labour is transformed into wage labour, that is, when the conditions of labour confront it in the form of capital. One could go further and say that the effective development of the political power of labour really begins from the moment that labourers are transformed into workers, that is, when the whole of the conditions of society confront them as capital. We can see, then, that the political power of workers is intimately connected to the productive power of wage labour. This is in contrast to the power of capital, which is primarily a social power. **The power of workers resides in their potential command over production**, that is, over a particular aspect of society. Capitalist power, on the other hand, rests on a real domination over society in general. But the nature of **capital** is such that it **requires a society based on production**. Consequently production, this particular respect of society, becomes the aim of society in general**. Whoever controls** and dominates **it controls** and dominates **everything**. Even if factory and society were to become perfectly integrated at the economic level, nevertheless, at a political level, they would forever continue to be in contradiction. One of the highest and most developed points of the class struggle will be precisely the frontal clash between the factory, as working class and society, as capital. **When** the development of **capital's interests in the factory** **is blocked, then the functioning of society seizes up: the way is** then **open for overthrowing** and destroying **the very basis of capital's power**. Those, however, who have the contrary perspective, of taking over the running of the "general interests of society", are committing the error of reducing the factory to capital by means of reducing the working class, that is, a part of society, to society as a whole. Now we know that the productive Dower of labour makes a leap forward when it is put to use by the individual capitalist. By the same token, it makes a political leap forward when it is organised by social capital. It is possible that this political leap forward does not express itself in terms of organisation, whereupon an outsider may conclude that it has not happened. Yet it still exists as a material reality, and the fact of its spontaneous existence is sufficient for the workers to refuse to fight for old ideals - though it may not yet be sufficient for them to take upon themselves the task of initiating a new plan of struggle, based on new objectives. So, can we say that we are still living through the long historical period in which Marx saw the workers as a "class against capital", but not yet as a "class for itself"? Or shouldn't we perhaps say the opposite, even if it means confounding a bit the terms of Hegel's dialectic? Namely, that the workers become, from the first, "a class for itself" - that is, - from the first moments of direct confrontation with the individual employer - and that they are recognised as such by the first capitalists. And only afterwards,after a long-terrible, historical travail which is, perhaps, not yet completed, do the workers arrive at the point of being actively, subjectively, "a class against capital". A prerequisite of this process of transition is political organisation, the party, with its demand for total power. In the intervening period there is the refusal - collective, mass, expressed in passive forms - of the workers to expose themselves as "a class against capital" without that organisation of their own, without that total demand for power. The working class does what it is. But it is, at one and the same time, the articulation of capital, and its dissolution. Capitalist power seeks to use the workers' antagonistic will-to-struggle as a motor of its own development. The workerist party must take this same real mediation by the workers of capital's interests and organise it in an antagonistic form, as the tactical terrain of struggle and as a strategic potential for destruction. Here there is only one reference point - only one orientation - for the opposed world views of the two classes - namely the class of workers. Whether one's aim is to stabilise the development of the system or to destroy it forever, it is the working class that is decisive. Thus the society of capital and the workers' party find themselves existing as two opposite forms with one and the same content. And in the struggle for that content, the one form excludes the 'other. They can only exist together for the brief period of the revolutionary crisis. The working class cannot constitute itself as aparty within capitalist society without preventing capitalist society from functioning. As long as capitalist does continue to function the working class party cannot be said to exist. Remember: "the existence of a class of capitalists is based on the productive power of labour". Productive labour, then, exists not only in relation to capital, but also in relation to the capitalists as a class. It is in this latter relationship that it exists as the working class. The transition is probably a historical one: it is productive labour which produces capital; it is the fact of industrial workers being organised into a class that provokes the capitalists in general to constitute themselves as a class. Thus we see that - at an average level of development - workers are already a social class of producers: industrial producers of capital. At this same level of development the capitalists, themselves, constitute a social class not of entrepreneurs so much as organisers: the organisers of workers through the medium of industry. A history of industry cannot be conceived as anything other than a history of the capitalist organisation of productive labour, hence as a working class history of capital. The "industrial revolution" necessarily I springs to mind: This must be the starting point of our research if we are to trace the development of The contemporary form of capital's domination over workers, as it increasingly comes to be exercised through the objective mechanisms of industry, and also the development of capital's capacity to prevent these mechanisms being used by workers. This would lead us to see that the development of the relationship between living labour and the constant part of capital is not a neutral process. Rather, it is determined, and often violently so, by the emerging class relationship between the collective worker and the whole of capital, qua social relations of production. We would then see that it is the specific moments of the class struggle which have determined every technological change in the mechanisms of industry. Thus we would achieve two things: one, we would break free of the apparent neutrality of the man-machine relationship; and two, we would locate this relationship in the interaction, through history, of working class struggles and capitalist initiative. It is wrong to define present day society as "industrial civilisation". The "industry" of that definition is, in fact, merely a means.' The truth of modern society is that it is the civilisation of labour. Furthermore, a capitalist society can never be anything but this. And, in the course of its historical development, it can even take on the form of "socialism". So.... not industrial society (that is, the society of capital) but the society of industrial labour, and thus the society of workers' labour. It is capitalist society seen from this point of view that we must find the courage to fight. **What are workers doing when they struggle against their employers?** Are they not they, above all else, **saying "No" to the transformation of labour power into labour**? Are they not, more than anything, **refusing to receive work from the capitalist**? Couldn't we say, in fact, that stopping work does not signify a refusal to give capital the use of one's labour power, since it has already been given to capital once the contract for this particular commodity has been signed. Nor is it a refusal to allow capital the product of labour, since this is legally already capital's property, and, in any case, the worker does not know what to do with it. Rather, stopping work - **the strike**, as the classic form of workers' struggle - **implies a refusal of the command of capital as the organiser of production**: it is a way of saying "No" at a particular point in the process and a refusal of the concrete labour which is being' offered; it is a momentary.' blockage of the work-process and it appears as a recurring threat which derives its content from the process of value creation. The anarcho-syndicalist "general strike", which was supposed to provoke the collapse of capitalist society, is a romantic naivete from the word go. It already contains within it a demand which it appears to oppose - that is, the Lassallian demand for a "fair share of the fruits of labour" - in other words, a fairer "participation" in the profit of capital. In fact, these two perspectives combine in that incorrect "correction" which was imposed on Marx, and which has subsequently enjoyed such success within the practice of the official working class movement - the idea that it is "working people" who are The true "givers of labour", and that it is the concern of workpeople to defend the dignity of this thing which they provide, against all those who would seek to debase it. Untrue...The truth of the matter is that the person who provides labour is the capitalist. The worker is the provider of capital. In reality, he is the possessor of that unique, particular commodity which is the condition of all the other conditions of production. Because, as we have seen, all These other conditions of production are, from the start, capital in themselves - a dead capital which, in order to come to life and into play in the social relations of production, needs to subsume under itself labour power, as the subject and activity of capital. But, as we have also seen, this transition into social relati9ns of production cannot occur unless the class relation is introduced into it as its content. And the class relationship is imposed from the very 'first moment and by the very fact that the proletariat is constituted as a class in the face of the capitalist.

#### Worker recognition of the power of refusal is the starting point for political organizing – tactics combined with mass passivity bring capital to its knees. History proves – Bolshevik and Spanish revolutionaries came from the trade union movement and organized into militant revolutions.

Tronti 1966

“Workers and Capital.” Tronti, Mario. 1966. <https://libcom.org/book/export/html/42233>

Mario Tronti was the principal theorist of the radical political movement of the 1960s known in Italy as *operaismo* and in the Anglophone world as Italian workerism, a current which went on to inform the development of autonomist Marxism. His “Copernican revolution”—the proposal that working class struggles against exploitation propel capitalist development, which can only be understood as a reaction that seeks to harness this antagonism—has inspired dissident leftists around the world. // Park City NL

Thus **the masses of working class demands** simplify and **unify into** one. There must come a point where all will disappear, except one - **the demand for** power, **all power**, **to the workers**, This demand is the highest form of the refusal. It presupposes already a de facto reversal of the balance of domination between the two classes. In other words, it presupposes that from that moment it will be the capitalist class putting positive demands, making their requests, presenting their Bill of Rights (in the name, naturally, of the general interests of society). And it will be the workers who are rejecting the pleas that are put to them. There must also be a point here, where all the requests and demands will come explicitly from the capitalists, and only the "No" will be openly working class. These are not stories of some far-distant future. The tendency is already under way, and we must grasp it from the start in order to control it. When capital reaches a high level of development it no longer limits itself to guaranteeing collaboration of the workers - i.e. the active extraction of living labour within the dead mechanism of its stabilisation - some-thing which it so badly needs. At significant points it now makes a transition, to the point of expressing its objective needs through the subjective demands of the workers. It is true - and we have seen - that this has already happened, historically. The spectre of capitalist necessities of production being imposed as working class demands, in the struggle, is a recurrent theme in the history of capital, and it can only be explained as a permanent working class articulation of capitalist society. But whereas in the past this happened as an objective functioning of the system (which was thereby virtually self-regulating), today it happens, on the contrary, by conscious initiative of the capitalist class, via the modern instruments of its power apparatus. And in between there has been that decisive experience of working class struggle, which no longer limited itself to asking for power, but actually conquered it. It was with 1917 and the Russian Revolution that the working class articulation of capital was subjectively imposed on the capitalists. What previously had functioned of itself, controlled by nobody, as a blind economic law, from that moment had to be moved from above, politically promoted by those who held the power: it was the only way to control the objective process, the only way to defeat the subversive threat of its possible consequences. This is the origin of that major development in capital's subjective awareness, which led it to conceive and put into practice a plan of social control over all the moments of its cycle, all conceived within a direct capitalist use of working class articulation. Thus, once again, an experience of working class struggle spurs a major advance in the capitalist point of view - an advance which it would never have made of its own accord. The demands of the working class are henceforth recognised by the capitalist~ themselves as objective needs of the production of capital: and as such they are not only taken on board, but are actively solicited; no longer simply rejected, but now collectively negotiated. The mediation of the institutional level of the working class movement, 'particularly at the trade union level, takes on a decisive and irreplaceable' importance. The platform of demands that the trade union puts forward is already controlled by those on whom it is supposed to be imposed: by the bosses who are supposed to "take it or leave it". Through the trade union struggle, working class demands can be nothing more than the reflection of capital's necessities. And yet capital cannot pose this necessity directly, of itself -not even if it wanted to, not even when it reaches its highest point of class awareness. Rather, at this point it acquires quite the reverse awareness: that it must find ways to have its own needs put forward by its enemies, it must articulate its own movement via the organised movements of the workers. We might ask a question: **what happens when** the form of **working class organisation** takes on a content which is wholly alternative; when it **refuses to function as an articulation of capitalist society**; when it refuses to carry capital's needs via the demands of the working class? The answer is that, at that moment and from that moment, **the systems whole mechanism of development is blocked**. This is the new concept of the crisis of capitalism that we must start to circulate: no longer the economic crisis, the catastrophic collapse, a Zusammenbruch, however momentary, arising from the impossibility of the system's continued functioning. Rather**, a political crisis [is] imposed by the subjective movements of the organised workers, via the provocation of a chain of critical conjunctures, -within the sole strategy of the working class refusal to resolve the contradictions of capitalism**. A tactic of organisation within the structures of capitalist production, but outside of, free from, its political initiative. Of course, it remains necessary to block the economic mechanism and, at the decisive moment, render it incapable of functioning. But the only way to achieve this is via the political refusal of the working class to act as active partner in the whole social process, and furthermore, the refusal of even passive collaboration in capitalist development: in other words, the renunciation of precisely that form of mass struggle which today unifies the movements led by the workers in the advanced capitalist countries. We must say clearly that this form of struggle - for such it is - is no longer enough. Non-collaboration, passivity (even on a mass scale), the refusal (insofar as it is not political, not subjectively organised, not inserted into a strategy, not practiced in tactical terms), the advanced font of spontaneity which has been forced on the class struggle for decades - not only is all this no longer enough to provoke the crisis, but it has become, in fact, an element of stabilisation of capitalist development. It is now one of those same objective mechanisms whereby capitalist initiative now controls and makes use of the class relationship that motivates it. We must break this process before it becomes yet another heavy historical tradition for the working class movement to bear. A transition to another process is necessary - without, however, losing the basic positive elements of this one. Obviously **non-collaboration must be one of our starting points, and mass passivity at the level of production is the material fact from which we must begin**. But at a certain point all this must be reversed into its opposite. When it comes to the point of saying '1No", **the refusal must become political**; therefore active; therefore subjective; **therefore organised**. It must once again become antagonism -this time at a higher level. Without this it is impossible to think of opening up a revolutionary process. This is not a matter of instilling in the mass of workers the awareness that they must fight against capital that they must fight for something which will transcend capital and lead into a new dimension of human society. What is generally known as **'class consciousness is**, for us, nothing other than **the moment of organisation**, the function of the party, the problem of tactics - the channels which must carry the strategic plan through to a point of practical breakthrough. And at the level of pure strategy there is no doubt that **this point is provided by the very advanced moment in which this hypothesis of struggle becomes reality: the working class refusal to present demands to capital**, the total rejection of the whole trade union terrain, the refusal to limit the class relationship within a formal, legal, contractual form. And this is the same as forcing capital to present the objective needs of capitalist production directly, as such. It cuts out working class mediation of development. It blocks the working class articulation of the mechanism. In the final event, this means depriving capital of its content, of the class relationship which is its basis. For a period the class relationship must be exercised by the working class, through its party - just as up till now it has been exercised by the capitalist class, through its State.

#### Collective trade union movements organized into socialist parties succeed – Greece proves.

Dean 16

Dean, Jodi. Crowds and Party. United Kingdom, Verso, 2016. I don’t have a link just ask for the document.

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**The new cycle of struggles has demonstrated the political strength that comes from collectivity**. Common names, tactics and images are bringing the fragments together, making them legible as many fronts of one struggle against capitalism. Where the proliferation of issues and identities disperses and weakens us -- inciting the snark that glorifies itself as critique even as it undermines solidarity -- the crowd events of the last decade are forcing a new sense of collective power. They have pushed expectations of multiplicity into experiences of collectivity. The question that emerges from these experiences pose is how they might endure and extend, how the momentary discharge of equality crowds unleash might become the basis for a new process of political composition. **Syriza, Greece’s coalition of the** radical **left,** is perhaps the most inspiring example of the potential for such a process today. Formed through a series of splits and re-combinations in the Greek communist movement, the coalition is an electoral alliance with distinct and heterogeneous currents. [[1]](#endnote-1) Synaspismos, the largest party in Syriza, **folds responsiveness to social movements into its communist framework.** As Stathis Kouvelakis explains, ‘It is a party that’s at ease among feminist movements, youth mobilizations, alter-globalization, and antiracist movements and LGBT currents, while also continuing **to make a considerable intervention in the trade union movement**.’ What makes Syriza more than just a combination of multiple elements is its assertion of a fundamental antagonism. Its elements come together in a class struggle against the current system. For this reason, Kouvelakis refers to Syriza as a ‘synthesis’ party. The Greek legacy of intense party politics is a unique feature of its political culture. Nevertheless, **Syriza’s success stems** in part **from** innovations in **communist party organizing: commitment to social movements**, respect for movements’ autonomy, **support of local solidarity network**s, **and** enough **involvement in institutions** ‘to seem capable of transforming the balance of forces at the level of national political life.’ For some Lefts, particularly in the US and UK, it is this last feature that has been conspicuously absent. Hence, our actions fail to gain momentum. Crowds amass, but they don’t endure. In contrast, Syriza demonstrates a dynamic relation between crowd and party: the crowd that pushes the party to exceed expectations, the party that finds the courage of the people in the haste of the crowd. Two additional aspects of Syriza’s political opening are indispensable to rethinking the party today. The first concerns the limits of political victory confined to the level of the nation-state. The institutions not only of Europe but of global finance and governance restrict national governments’ range of maneuver. This poses challenges to the Left internationally suggesting, at a minimum, the necessity of strong left alliances and coordinated institutional strategies. More maximally it directs us toward the party as an infrastructure for such alliances and strategies. The second aspect of Syriza’s political opening instructive for the Left concerns political will. Kouvelakis writes, ‘The Podemos experience in Spain as well as Syriza in Greece shows that if the radical Left makes suitable proposals, then it can arrive at an understanding with these movements and provide a credible political “condensation” of their demands.’ The making of ‘suitable proposals’ depends on political will, a Left able to put aside its differences and think strategically about the pursuit of political power. The problem posing itself today concerns less the details of party organization (membership requirements, centralization versus networked structure, mechanisms for accountable leadership) than it does solidary political will. Can the Left’s wide array of associations come together in a way that will achieve a real political advance? The supposition of *Crowds and Party* is that we have no choice but to answer ‘yes.’ To help us get to yes, to make a party of communists seem compelling to more of us again, I offer an approach to the party inspired by the crowd. **Faithful to egalitarian rupture of the crowd event, the party holds open the gap through which the people appear as the political subject**. Readers anchored in the classics of revolutionary socialism might balk at what seems at first glance to be an abandonment of Marxist terms. They shouldn’t. The ‘people’ has a rich legacy in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism: the ‘people’ are the revolutionary alliance of the oppressed. Under conditions of communicative capitalism, crowds are the proletarianized many, those whose communicative engagements are expropriated from them in processes of accumulation and dispossession that benefit capital as a class. Readers inspired by radical democratic, anarchist and post-Marxist theories might balk at a return to the party. They shouldn’t. The party is a basic form of political struggle. If innovation is necessary for finding our way out of the current political impasse, then the party, too, can be a site for experimentation and change. Different in structure and program, Syriza and Podemos already demonstrate such experimentation. Typically, socialist and communist discussions of the party gel around the themes of reform or revolution, mass or vanguard, factory or state. These discussions are too limiting. Missing is the affective dimension of the party, the way that the perspective of the party operates through or across different organizational structures. The party knots together a set of unconscious processes that enable a communist political subjectivity. To think through these processes as the effects of collectivity back upon itself, I draw out the psychodynamics of the party. Providing a strength and direction we would otherwise lack, the party generates the practical optimism through which struggles endure. Many eschew the party as a form for political power, decision and organization. They fall back into the affirmation of individual autonomy, reasserting capitalist ideology. Discarding the party form, they jettison the possibility of building collective power. I seek to demonstrate how the power the party unleashes is the power we already have to change the world.

## Underview

**1. I get 1AR theory. Otherwise, the 1NC can be infinitely abusive which outweighs on magnitude.**

**2. Interpretation: Debaters must check their theory interpretations in cross-examination before reading them. To clarify, debaters must ask if their opponent wants to engage in a theory debate or strike the violating arguments from the flow.**

**Violation: It’s pre-emptive, but you violate if you read a shell without asking**

**Standard:**

1. **Substance education – checking in CX means we avoid theory debates that neither debater want, so we can spend more time on substance. Substance education is a voter and comes 1st because it’s the most exportable benefit of debate – we can always apply knowledge of the world around us.**

**The same paradigm issues for 1AR theory apply because the time skew is still true.**

**3.Permissibility affirms. A) a debate being a moral wash means that I debated better because I had to deal with procedural disadvantages like a time skew. B) We assume that something is good or true before we know if it is. For example, you assume that my name is actually Noam and our legal system assumes that people are innocent until proven guilty.**

#### 4. Political and economic trends are empirically impossible to predict

#### Menand 05, Louis Menand (the Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Professor of English at Harvard University) “Everybody’s An Expert” The New Yorker 2005 <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/12/05/everybodys-an-expert//> FSU SS

“Expert Political Judgment” is not a work of media criticism. Tetlock is a psychologist—he teaches at Berkeley—and his conclusions are based on a **long-term study** that he began twenty years ago. He **picked two hundred and eighty-four people who made their living “commenting or offering advice on political and economic trends,” and** he started **asking them to assess the probability that various things would or would not come to pass**, both in the areas of the world in which they specialized and in areas about which they were not expert. Would there be a nonviolent end to apartheid in South Africa? Would Gorbachev be ousted in a coup? Would the United States go to war in the Persian Gulf? Would Canada disintegrate? (Many experts believed that it would, on the ground that Quebec would succeed in seceding.) And so on. By the end of the study, in 2003, the experts had made 82,361 forecasts. Tetlock also asked questions designed to determine how they reached their judgments, how they reacted when their predictions proved to be wrong, how they evaluated new information that did not support their views, and how they assessed the probability that rival theories and predictions were accurate. Tetlock got a statistical handle on his task by putting most of the forecasting questions into a “three possible futures” form. The respondents were asked to rate the probability of three alternative outcomes: the persistence of the status quo, more of something (political freedom, [e.g.] economic growth), or less of something (repression, [e.g.] recession). And he measured his experts on two dimensions: how good they were at guessing probabilities (did all the things they said had an x per cent chance of happening happen x per cent of the time?), and how accurate they were at predicting specific outcomes. The results were unimpressive. On the first scale, **the experts performed worse than they would have if they had simply assigned an equal probability to all three outcomes**—if they had given each possible future a thirty-three-per-cent chance of occurring. **Human beings who spend their lives studying the state of the world**, in other words, **are poorer forecasters than dart-throwing monkeys**, who would have distributed their picks evenly over the three choices.

#### 5. Reject worst case scenarios with low probability – cognitive science disproves that framework.

Sunstein 02**[Cass, Karl N. Llewellyn Distinguished Service Professor, University of Chicago, Law School and Department of Political Science, Probability Neglect: Emotions, Worst Cases, and Law, [http://www.yalelawjournal.org/pdf/112-1/SunsteinFINAL.pdf](http://www.yalelawjournal.org/pdf/112-1/SunsteinFINAL.pdf" \t "_blank))**

If someone is predisposed to be worried,**degrees of unlikeliness**seem to**provide no comfort, unless one can prove that harm is**absolutely **impossible, which**itself**is not possible.1**[A]ffect-rich outcomes yield pronounced overweighting of small probabilities . . . .2 On Sept. 11, Americans entered a new and frightening geography, where the continents of safety and danger seemed forever shifted. Is it safe to fly? Will terrorists wage germ warfare?**Where is the line between reasonable precaution and panic**? Jittery, uncertain and assuming the worst, many people have answered these questions by forswearing air travel, purchasing gas masks and radiation detectors, placing frantic calls to pediatricians demanding vaccinations against exotic diseases or rushing out to fill prescriptions for Cipro, an antibiotic most experts consider an unnecessary defense against anthrax.3 I. RISKS, NUMBERS, AND REGULATION Consider the following problems: • People live in a community near an abandoned hazardous waste site. The community appears to suffer from an unusually high number of deaths and illnesses. Many members of the community fear that the hazardous waste site is responsible for the problem. Administrative officials attempt to offer reassurance that the likelihood of adverse health effects, as a result of the site, is extremely low.4 The reassurance is met with skepticism and distrust. • An airplane, carrying people from New York to California, has recently crashed. Although the source of the problem is unknown, many people suspect terrorism. In the following weeks, many people who would otherwise fly are taking trains or staying home. Some of those same people acknowledge that the statistical risk is exceedingly small. Nonetheless, they refuse to fly, in part because they do not want to experience the anxiety that would come from flying. • An administrative agency is deciding whether to require labels on genetically modified food. According to experts within the agency, genetically modified food, as such, poses insignificant risks to the environment and to human health. But many consumers disagree. Knowledge of genetic modification triggers strong emotions, and the labeling requirement is thought likely to have large effects on consumer choice, notwithstanding expert claims that the danger is trivial. How should we understand human behavior in cases of this sort? My principal answer, the thesis of this Essay, is that **when intense emotions are engaged, people**tend to**focus on the adverse outcome, not**on**its likelihood.** That is, they are not closely attuned to the probability that harm will occur.**At the individual level**, this phenomenon, which I shall call**“probability neglect,” produces**serious difficulties of various sorts, including excessive worry and**unjustified behavioral changes. When people neglect probability, they**may also**treat some risks as**if theywere**nonexistent, even though**the**likelihood of harm**, over a lifetime**, is far from trivial.**Probability neglect can produce significant problems for law and regulation. As we shall see, regulatory agencies, no less than individuals, may neglect the issue of probability, in a way that can lead to either indifference to real risks or costly expenditures for little or no gain. If agencies are falling victim to probability neglect, they might well be violating relevant law.5 Indeed, we shall see that the idea of probability neglect helps illuminate a number of judicial decisions, which seem implicitly attuned to that idea, and which reveal an implicit behavioral rationality in important pockets of federal administrative law. As we shall also see, an understanding of probability neglect helps show how government can heighten, or dampen, public concern about hazards. Public-spirited**political actors**, no less than self-interested ones, can**exploit probability** neglect so as to promote attention to problems that may or may not deserve public concern. It will be helpful to begin, however, with some general background on individual and social judgments about risks. A. Cognition On the conventional view of rationality, probabilities matter a great deal to reactions to risks. But emotions, as such, are not assessed independently; they are not taken to play a distinctive role.6 Of course, people might be risk-averse or risk-inclined. For example, it is possible that people will be willing to pay $100 to eliminate a 1/1000 risk of losing $900. But analysts usually believe that variations in probability should matter, so that there would be a serious problem if people were willing to pay both $100 to eliminate a 1/1000 risk of losing $900 and $100 to eliminate a 1/100,000 risk of losing $900. Analysts do not generally ask, or care, whether risk-related dispositions are a product of emotions or something else. Of course, it is now generally agreed that**in thinking about risks, people**rely on certain heuristics and**show identifiable biases.**7 Those who emphasize heuristics and biases are often seen as attacking the conventional view of rationality.8 In a way they are doing just that, but the heuristicsand- biases literature has a highly cognitive focus, designed to establish how people proceed under conditions of uncertainty. The central question is this: When people do not know about the probability associated with some risk, how do they think? It is clear that when people lack statistical information, they rely on certain heuristics, or rules of thumb, which serve to simplify their inquiry.9 Of these rules of thumb, the “availability heuristic” is probably the most important for purposes of understanding risk-related law.10 Thus, for example, “a class whose instances are easily retrieved will appear more numerous than a class of equal frequency whose instances are less retrievable.”11 The point very much bears on private and public responses to risks, suggesting, for example, that people will be especially responsive to the dangers of AIDS, crime, earthquakes, and nuclear power plant accidents if examples of these risks are easy to recall.12 This is a point about how familiarity can affect the availability of instances. But salience is important as well. “The impact of seeing a house burning on the subjective probability of such accidents is probably greater than the impact of reading about a fire in the local paper.”13 So, too, recent events will have a greater impact than earlier ones. The point helps explain much risk-related behavior. For example, whether people will buy insurance for natural disasters is greatly affected by recent experiences.14 If floods have not occurred in the immediate past, people who live on flood plains are far less likely to purchase insurance.15 In the aftermath of an earthquake, the proportion of people carrying earthquake insurance rises sharply—but it declines steadily from that point, as vivid memories recede.16 For purposes of law and regulation, the problem is that the availability heuristic can lead to serious errors of fact, in terms of both excessive controls on small risks that are cognitively available and insufficient controls on large risks that are not.17 The cognitive emphasis of the heuristics-and-biases literature can be found as well in prospect theory, a departure from expected utility theory that explains decision under risk.18 For present purposes, what is most important is that prospect theory offers an explanation for simultaneous gambling and insurance.19 When given the choice, most people will reject a certain gain of X in favor of a gamble with an expected value below X, if the gamble involves a small probability of riches. At the same time, most people prefer a certain loss of X to a gamble with an expected value less than X, if the gamble involves a small probability of catastrophe.20 If expected utility theory is taken as normative, then people depart from the normative theory of rationality in giving excessive weight to lowprobability outcomes when the stakes are high. Indeed, we might easily see prospect theory as emphasizing a form of probability neglect. But in making these descriptive claims, prospect theory does not specify a special role for emotions. This is not a puzzling oversight, if it counts as an oversight at all. For many purposes, what matters is what people choose, and it is unimportant to know whether their choices depend on cognition or emotion, whatever may be the difference between these two terms. B. Emotion No one doubts, however, that in many domains, people do not think much about variations in probability and that emotions have a large effect on judgment and decisionmaking.21 Would a group of randomly selected people pay more to reduce a 1/100,000 risk of getting a gruesome form of cancer than a similar group would pay to reduce a 1/200,000 risk of getting that form of cancer? Would the former group pay twice as much? With some low-probability events, anticipated and actual emotions, triggered by the best-case or worst-case outcome, help to determine choice. Those who buy lottery tickets, for example, often fantasize about the goods associated with a lucky outcome.22 With respect torisks of harm**,**many of our ordinary ways of speakingsuggeststrong emotions: panic,hysteria**,** terror. People might refuse to fly, for example, not because they are currently frightened, but because they anticipate their own anxiety, and they want to avoid it. It has been suggested that people often decide as they do because they anticipate their own regret.23 The same is true for fear. Knowing that they will be afraid, people may refuse to travel to Israel or South Africa, even if they would much enjoy seeing those nations and even if they believe, on reflection, that their fear is not entirely rational. Recent evidence is quite specific.24 It suggests that people greatly neglect significant differences in probability when the outcome is “affect rich”—when it involves not simply a serious loss, but one that produces strong emotions, including fear.25 To be sure, the distinction between cognition and emotion is complex and contested.26 In the domain of risks, and most other places, emotional reactions are usually based on thinking; they are hardly cognition-free. When a negative emotion is associated with a certain risk—pesticides or nuclear power, for example—cognition plays a central role.27 For purposes of the analysis here, it is not necessary to say anything especially controversial about the nature of the emotion of fear. The only suggestion is that when emotions are intense, calculation is less likely to occur, or at least that form of calculation that involves assessment of risks in terms of not only the magnitude but also the probabilityof the outcome. Drawing on and expanding the relevant evidence, I will emphasize a general phenomenon here: In political and market domains, people often focus on the desirability of the outcome in question and pay (too) little attention to the probability that a good or bad outcome will, in fact, occur. It is in such cases that people fall prey to

probability neglect, which is properly treated as a form of quasi-rationality**.**28 Probability neglect is especially large when people focus on the worst possible case or otherwise are subject to strong emotions. When such emotions are at work, people do not give sufficient consideration to the likelihood that the worst case will actually occur. This is quasi-rational because, from the normative point of view,**it is not**fully**rational to treat a 1% chance of X as equivalent,** or nearly equivalent**, to a 99% chance of X,**or even a 10% chance of X. Because people suffer from probability neglect, and because neglecting probability is not fully rational, the phenomenon I identify raises new questions about the widespread idea that ordinary people have a kind of rival rationality superior to that of experts.29 Most of the time, experts are concerned principally with the number of lives at stake,30 and for that reason they will be closely attuned, as ordinary people are not, to the issue of probability. By drawing attention to probability neglect, I do not mean to suggest that most people, most of the time, are indifferent to large variations in the probability that a risk will come to fruition. Large variations can, and often do, make a difference—but when emotions are engaged, the difference is far less than the standard theory predicts. Nor do I suggest that probability neglect is impervious to circumstances. If the costs of neglecting probability are placed “on screen,” then people will be more likely to attend to the question of probability.31 In this light it is both mildly counterintuitive and reasonable, for example, to predict that people would be willing to pay less, in terms of dollars and waiting time, to reduce lowprobability risks of an airplane disaster if they are frequent travelers. An intriguing study finds exactly that effect.32 For similar reasons, market pressures are likely to dampen the impact of probability neglect, ensuring that, say, risks of 1/10,000 are treated differently from risks of 1/1,000,000, even if individuals, in surveys, show relative insensitivity to such differences. Acknowledging all this, I emphasize three central points. First, differences in probability will often affect behavior far less than they should or than conventional theory would predict. Second, private behavior, even when real dollars are involved,33 can display insensitivity to the issue of probability, especially when emotions are intensely engaged. Third, and most important, the demand for legal intervention can be greatly affected by probability neglect, so that government may end up engaging in extensive regulation precisely because intense emotional reactions are making people relatively insensitive to the (low) probability that the relevant dangers will ever come to fruition. C. Law It is not at all clear how the law should respond to probability neglect. But at a minimum, the phenomenon raises serious legal issues in administrative law, at least under statutes banning agencies from acting unless they can show a “significant risk”34 or can establish that the benefits of regulation outweigh the costs.35 If agencies are neglecting the issue of probability (perhaps because the public is doing so as well), they may well be acting unlawfully. Indeed, the law of judicial review shows an inchoate understanding of probability neglect, treating it as a problem for which judicial invalidation is a solution.36 The only qualification is that the relevant law remains in an embryonic state. There is much to be done, especially at the agency level, to ensure that government is alert to the probability that harm will actually occur. Outside of the context of administrative law, an understanding of probability neglect will help us to make better predictions about the public “demand” for law. When a bad outcome is highly salient and triggers strong emotions, government will be asked to do something about it, even if the probability that the bad outcome will occur is low. Political participants of various stripes, focusing on the worst case, are entirely willing to exploit probability neglect. Those who encourage people to purchase lottery tickets, focusing on the best case, do the same. An understanding of probability neglect simultaneously helps show why jurors, and ordinary officials, are not likely to be moved much by a showing that before the fact, the harm was not likely to occur. For many people, what matters is that the harm did occur, not that it was unlikely to do so before the fact. For law, many of the most difficult questions are normative in character: Should government take account of variations in the probability that harms will occur? Should government respond to intense fears that involve statistically remote risks? When people suffer from probability neglect, should law and policy do the same thing? At first glance, we might think that even if people are neglecting probability, government and law at least should not—that the tort system and administrators should pay a great deal of attention to probability in designing institutions. If government wants to insulate itself from probability neglect, it will create institutions designed to ensure that genuine risks, rather than tiny ones, receive the most concern. Such institutions will not necessarily require agencies to discuss the worst-case scenario.37 And if government is attempting to increase public concern about a genuine danger, it should not emphasize statistics and probabilities, but should instead draw attention to the worst-case scenario. If government is attempting to decrease public concern with a risk that has a tiny probability of coming to fruition, it may be ineffective if it emphasizes the issue of probability; indeed, it may do better if it changes the subject or stresses instead the affirmative social values associated with running the risk.38 On the other hand, public fear, however unwarranted, may be intractable, in the sense that it may be impervious to efforts at reassurance. And if public fear is intractable, it will cause serious problems, partly because fear is itself extremely unpleasant and partly because fear is likely to influence conduct, possibly producing wasteful and excessive private precautions. If so, a governmental response, via regulatory safeguards, would appear to be justified if the benefits, in terms of fear reduction, justify the costs. II. PROBABILITY NEGLECT: THE BASIC PHENOMENON When it comesto risk,**a key question is whether people**can imagine or**visualize the worst-case outcome**.39 When the worst case produces intense fear, surprisingly little role is played by the stated probability that that outcome will occur.40 An important function of **strong emotions**is thus to**drive out quantitative judgments,** including judgments**about probability, by making** the best case or the**worst case seem highly salient.41 But it is important to note that probability neglect can occur even when emotions are not involved. A great deal of evidence** shows that whether or not emotions are involved, people are relatively insensitive to differences in probabilities, at least when the relevant probabilities are low. A. Insensitivity to Variations Among Low Probabilities Do people care about probability at all? Of course they do; a risk of 1/100,000 is significantly less troublesome than a risk of 1/1000. But many people, much of the time, show a remarkable unwillingness to attend to the question of probability. Several studies show that when people are seeking relevant information, they often do not try to learn about probability at all. One study, for example, finds that in deciding whether to purchase warranties for consumer products, people do not spontaneously point to the probability of needing repair as a reason for the purchase.42 Another study finds that those making hypothetical, risky managerial decisions rarely ask for data on probabilities.43 Or consider a study involving children and adolescents,44 in which the following question was asked: Susan and Jennifer are arguing about whether they should wear seat belts when they ride in a car. Susan says that you should. Jennifer says you shouldn’t . . . . Jennifer says that she heard of an accident where a car fell into a lake and a woman was kept from getting out in time because of wearing her seat belt . . . . What do you think about this?45 In answering that question, many subjects did not think about probability at all.46 One exchange took the following form: A: Well, in that case I don’t think you should wear a seat belt. Q (interviewer): How do you know when that’s gonna happen? A: Like, just hope it doesn’t! Q: So, should you or shouldn’t you wear seat belts? A: Well, tell-you-the-truth we should wear seat belts. Q: How come? A: Just in case of an accident. You won’t get hurt as much as you will if you didn’t wear a seat belt. Q: Ok, well what about these kinds of things, when people get trapped? A: I don’t think you should, in that case.47 These answers might seem odd and idiosyncratic, but we might reasonably suppose that some of the time, both children and adults focus primarily on bad scenarios, without thinking a great deal about the question of probability. Many studies find that significant differences in low probabilities have little impact on decisions. This finding is in sharp conflict with the standard view of rationality, which suggests that people’s willingness to pay for small risk reductions ought to be nearly proportional to the size of the reduction.48 Perhaps these findings reflect people’s implicit understanding that in these settings, the relevant probability is “low, but not zero,” and that finer distinctions are unhelpful. (What does a risk of 1/100,000 really mean? How different is it, for an individual, from a risk of 1/20,000 or 1/600,000?) In an especially striking study, Kunreuther and his coauthors found that mean willingness to pay insurance premiums did not vary among risks of 1/100,000, 1/1,000,000, and 1/10,000,000.49 They also found basically the same willingness to pay for insurance premiums for risks ranging from 1/650, to 1/6300, to 1/68,000.50 The study just described involved a “between subjects” design; subjects considered only one risk, and the same people were not asked to consider the various risks at the same time. Low probabilities are not likely to be terribly meaningful to most people, but most educated people would know that a 1/100,000 risk is worse than 1/1,000,000 risk. When low-probability risks are seen in isolation and are not assessed together, we have an example of the problem of “evaluability.”51 For most people, most of the time, it is very difficult to evaluate a low probability, and hence isolated decisions will pick up small or no variations between people’s assessments of very different risks. But several studies have a “within subjects” design, exposing people simultaneously to risks of different probabilities, and even here, the differences in probabilities have little effect on decisions. An early study examined people’s willingness to pay (WTP) to reduce various fatality risks. The central finding was that the mean WTP to reduce such risks was, for over 40% of the respondents, unaffected by a large variation in the probability of harm, even though expected utility theory would predict significant effects from such variations.52 A later study found that for serious injuries, WTP to reduce the risk by 12/100,000 was only 20% higher than WTP to reduce the same risk by 4/100,000, even though standard theory would predict a WTP three times as high.53 These results are not unusual. Lin and Milon attempted to elicit people’s willingness to pay to reduce the risk of illness from eating oysters.54 There was little sensitivity to variations in probability of illness.55 Another study found little change in WTP across probability variations involving exposure to pesticide residues on fresh produce.56 A similar anomaly was found in a study involving hazardous wastes, where WTP actually decreased as the stated fatality risk reduction increased.57 There is much to say about the general insensitivity to significant variations within the category of low-probability events. It would be difficult to produce a rational explanation for this insensitivity; recall the standard suggestion that WTP for small risk reductions should be roughly proportional to the size of the reduction.58 Why don’t people think in this way? An imaginable explanation is that in the abstract, most people simply do not know how to evaluate low probabilities. A risk of 7/100,000 seems “small”; a risk of 4/100,000 also seems “small.”59 Most people would prefer a risk of 4/100,000 to a risk of 7/100,000, and I have noted that joint evaluation improves evaluability, which would otherwise be extremely difficult.60 But even when the preference is clear, both risks seem “small,” and hence it is not at all clear that a proportional increase in WTP will follow. As suggested by the findings of Kunreuther and his coauthors, it is likely that in a between-subjects design, WTP to eliminate a risk of 4/100,000 would be about the same as WTP to eliminate a risk of 7/100,000, simply because the small difference would not matter when each risk is taken in isolation.

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)