Outrounds Neolib AC

Neoliberalism, hereby referenced as NL, is a social reality that feeds off of subjugation and inequality within society – Giroux bracketed for clarity[[1]](#footnote-1)

We're talking about an ideology marked by the selling off of public goods to private interests; the attack on social provisions; **[NL is] the rise of the corporate state** organized around privatization, free trade, and deregulation; the celebration of self interests over social needs; the celebration of profit-making as the essence of democracy coupled with the utterly reductionist notion that consumption is the only applicable form of citizenship. But even more than that, it upholds the notion that **the market serves as a model for structuring all social relations**: not just the economy, but the governing of all of social life. I think that **as a mode of governance**, it is really quite dreadful because **it** tends to **produce[s] identities**, subjects **and ways of life driven by a kind of "survival of the fittest" ethic**, grounded in the notion of the free, possessive individual and committed to the right of individual and ruling groups to accrue wealth removed from matters of ethics and social cost. That's a key issue. I mean, this is a particular political and economic and social project that not only consolidates class power in the hands of the one percent, but operates off the assumption that economics can divorce itself from social costs, that it doesn't have to deal with matters of ethical and social responsibility, that these things get in the way. And I think the consequences of **these policies across the globe have caused massive suffering,** misery, **and the spread of** a massive **inequalities** in wealth, power, and income. These massive dislocations have also produced serious mental health crises. We are witnessing a number of people who are committing suicide because they have lost their pensions, jobs and dignity. We see the attack on the welfare state; we see the privatization of public services, the dismantling of the connection between private issues and public problems, the selling off of state functions, deregulations, **an unchecked emphasis on self-interest**, the refusal to tax the rich, and really the redistribution of wealth from the middle and working classes to the ruling class, the elite class, what the Occupy movement called the one percent. It really **has created a very bleak** emotional and economic **landscape for the 99 percent** of the population **throughout the world.**

NL policies have been justified with empty promises of freedom and well-being. These moral principles have been twisted and molded into excuses to subjugate people less fortunate than us. Giroux 2:

Democracy has really become two things for a whole range of anti-democratic politicians, anti-intellectuals, and the people who support these policies. Democracy basically is a word they use, but they empty it, and invert its meaning to justify the most anti-democratic practices and policies, meaning that it's a term that has nothing to do with questions of justice, nothing to do with questions of rights, nothing to do with questions of legality. As a matter of fact, it becomes a term of deception and diversion - a kind of counterfeit term that's used to justify a whole range of policies that actually are anti-democratic. It's oxymoronic. The other side of this is that the financial elite and oligarchs despise democracy since they know that **NL is the antithesis of** real **democracy because it feeds on inequality;** it feeds on privilege, it feeds on massive divisiveness, and it revels in producing a theater of cruelty. All you have to do is look at the way it enshrines a kind of rabid individualism. It believes that privatization is the essence of all relationships. It works very hard to eliminate any investment in public values, in public trust. It believes that democracy is something that doesn't work, and we hear and see this increasingly from the bankers, anti-public intellectuals and other cheerleaders for neoliberal policies. What shocks me about **NL** in all of its forms **is** how utterly **unapologetic** it is **about the misery it produces**. And it is unapologetic **not just in that it is indifferent** to the **violence** it causes, **but it is also blames** the very **victims that suffer** under these policies. The vocabulary of **NL posits a false notion of freedom**, which it wraps in the mantle of individualism and choice, **and** in doing so **reduces all problems to private issues**, suggesting that whatever problems bear down on people, the only way to understand them is through the restrictive lens of individual responsibility, character and self-resilience. In this instance, **the discourse of** character and **personal responsibility becomes a smoke screen to prevent people from connecting private troubles with larger social and systemic considerations.**

NL has had disastrous consequences both globally and domestically. For example, anti-blackness is rooted in the NL ideology of self-responsibility. Petersen-Smith[[2]](#footnote-2)

In 1968, a federal commission headed by Illinois governor Otto Kerner pointed to institutional racism as the explanation for the explosion of Black rebellions in cities across the country. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders charged that the country faced a “system of apartheid” in its cities and famously concluded, “Our nation is moving toward two societies—one Black and one white—separate and unequal.”5 Since the Kerner Commission’s admission, there has been a complete reversal in the dominant notions of who is to blame for persistent Black poverty, unemployment, and incarceration. Indeed, the imprisonment of millions of people from Black communities over the decades has been sold with the notion that violent criminality, drug addiction, and laziness are problems endemic to the Black population. An ideological component of the rollback of the civil rights and Black Power movements has been the widespread dissemination and acceptance of the notion that failure to succeed in US society is the result of the shortcomings of Black people. The idea that Black people simply need to “try harder” is voiced by prominent individuals ranging from conservative media pundits to prominent Black figures like Bill Cosby and President Obama. The front lines of structural racism against Black people are mass incarceration and police killings that take place on average every twenty-eight hours in the United States. This context explains the popularity of Michael Brown’s last words, “My hands are up, don’t shoot,” as a rallying cry in marches across the country. The meaning of the phrase is: We are doing nothing wrong; a system of racism is the aggressor, not us. Movement activists are consciously challenging the ideological consensus that poor Blacks are “responsible” for their conditions. The New York Times quoted activist Daniel Camacho, who explained, “We don’t need people shifting the blame to poor black and brown communities for these tragedies. I’ve heard enough people complain about sagging pants, gangster music, fatherlessness, black-on-black crime. Who’s focusing on holding the American state, the police, fully accountable?”6 The activists who are leading the movement are clear that it is not a question of this or that “bad” cop, but the system as a whole. “The energy on the street is about justice and accountability,” wrote Opal Tometi in Huffington Post. “The system of policing is what is making us unsafe. With months of protests and organizing, we are finally at a moment where more people are newly open to understanding the institutional and systemic problems with policing that hurt communities of color and disproportionately black people. Policemen and young people who are considering joining the police should understand this too—it’s the system.” Activists Rachel Gilmer and Ashley Yates, associate director of the African American Policy Forum and cofounder of Millennial Activists United, respectively, underscore this point when they highlighted the ways in which President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper Initiative (MBK), a call by the White House “for local municipalities to improve the well being of men and boys of color,” fails to concretely address the issues facing poor Black communities. “MBK isn’t rooted in a structural analysis,” they write. “Instead, it embodies an individualistic ‘racial uplift program’ that suggests that the violence perpetrated against people of color can be remedied through programs that seek to ‘fix’ the ‘tangled pathology’ of our communities.” Their analysis of the limits of MBK also highlights what a genuine program to challenge racial oppression would look like: MBK is a pretty good deal for cities like Ferguson looking to shore up their shoddy reputations with racial justice gestures on the cheap. To qualify, a city need not ban stop and frisk procedures, the killing of unarmed people of color, or the use of military-grade weapons on citizens operating within their constitutional rights. It need not eliminate segregation and housing discrimination, or commit to replenishing public services and ensuring a living wage for workers.7 While the greatest target of the post-sixties backlash has been Black people, it was the sharp edge of an attack aimed to push back the US working class as a whole. It is no coincidence that the introduction of neoliberalism, the ruling class response to the last major crisis of capitalism—with its slashing of social welfare, privatization and elimination of public services, rewriting of legislation decidedly in favor of business, and attacks on trade unions—came at the same time as the offensive against the gains of the Black struggle and the emphasis on the ideology of “personal responsibility.” The decades-long project of dismantling welfare, for example, was sold at its beginning with the demonization and caricature of Black women as “welfare queens.” While the virtual elimination of welfare has had a disproportionate and disastrous impact on poor Black people, it has also been devastating for poor white people, who actually comprise the majority of welfare recipients. There is an irony in the launching of neoliberalism under the banner of “small government” at the same time as the state was massively expanding its policing and prison system—a system that disproportionately ensnares people of color, but in the process also leads to the increase in mass incarceration of poor and working-class whites. The ideology of personal responsibility is pushed to justify all manner of attacks on the living standards of all workers. As Brian Jones explains, for the ruling class, “The political dynamic of the 1960s and ‘70s had to be turned around for the social gains of that era to be taken back.”8

This is true additionally since capitalist exploitation a) sparked the creation of the middle passage and (b) continues racial oppression by keeping certain minorities locked in positions of poverty and inferiority. The standard is **combatting neoliberalism,** defined by the cards above.

My advocacy text is that just governments ought to require multinational corporations pay living wages to employees.

Contention 1 is exploitation

The globalization of economic exchange has led to the exploitation of unskilled workers. The solution must be global not local. Roy[[3]](#footnote-3)

Freer capital flows, expanding global companies and expansive trade policies have made the world a smaller place for capital. At the same time, the gap between the rich and the poor has grown and precarious jobs overshadow hard-won security gained through numerous struggles in the twentieth cen- tury. According to the ILO, “since the mid-1990s, the proportion of people on low pay – defined as less than two-thirds of median wages – has increased in more than two-thirds of countries with available data” (ILO, 2010). Furthermore, “the number of workers in vulnerable employment is estimated at 1.53 billion workers globally in 2009, more than half of all workers in the world” (ILO, 2011, p. 58). According to the ILO, there are 555 million working poor, a significant percentage being female. It is important to note that the global labour force implicit in these discussions is often viewed as a homogenous bloc. However, in reality, this labour force is far from homogenous. It is highly segmented geographically and its characteristics depend on the poverty level of the region and the country. Asia the largest recipient of foreign investment, also holds the largest workforce and represents most of the global working poor among which women comprise an increasingly significant proportion. This is no coincidence because foreign investment seeks out the most pliant poor and undervalued working class. However, it is also this dual reality that makes Asia central to any strategy for making large-scale change – either from capital’s point of view or labour’s. In Asia, “South Asia has one-fifth of the world’s population and nearly half of its poor population. A large proportion of world’s unskilled workers live in South Asia. Given the relative scarcity of natural resources, South Asia’s comparative advantage is clearly in laborintensive goods” (Ramaswamy, 2003, p. 5). The garment industry is of course one such labour-intensive industry that absorbs low- and high-skilled workers. The common wisdom among governments is that the pliancy of labour force attracts foreign investment; and without foreign investment, develop- ment comes to a standstill. The architects of such globalization believe that unfettered corporate-led trade and investment, along with labour flexibility and capital market restructuring, are the tools for prosperity. The **multi- national companies** leading this approach are based primarily in the global North. Northern governments, through their disproportionate power in international financial institutions, help in forging the road to this illusive prosperity. Governments and corporations of the global South have, for the most part, acquiesced to such policies with varying degrees of resistance. This view of development “imposes a tremendous downward pressure on the quality of life of many societies in the developing world, for governments have bet their sustainability in power on customary centre-periphery relationships. They put emphasis on the attraction of so-called foreign direct investment (FDI) by offering cheap labour at misery prices to global cor- porations. The argument is that this jobs and triggers other multi- plying effects that benefit the overall economy” (de Regil, 2010, p. 3). The downward pressure on wages in already low-wage countries and re- gions demonstrates the power relations within a geographically segmented labour market. One could describe this phenomenon of taking advantage of pro- ducing in one currency and selling in another as “wage arbitrage”. The split between production and consumption is demarcated by different currencies, by different price levels, thus providing additional profit that is not linked to the production process per se. The multinationals’ access to high-price markets in high-wage countries and their power to deny direct access to firms of production countries to that market allows their unchallenged power in the global supply chain to continue. This power to access labour from countries with poverty-level low wages and to control simultaneously the high-price markets introduces a structural element. Wage share and purchasing power Within a framework of unequal regional and national development, un- equal and segmented labour market, and the power of multinationals to benefit from both these factors, labour rights have become one of the most threatened rights in the world today. According to one scholar: “There is no accurate data on the percentage engaged in global production systems, but case studies suggest that even in high value export sectors workers are not immune from vulnerability to poverty” (Barrientos, 2007, p. 18). As noted by another scholar, “in the 1950s to the 1960s, there was huge and shared growth. However, now there are stark and growing inequalities. In the United States, from 1980–2000, the topmost layer (0.1 per cent) increased its growth by ten times but the median family only by 22 per cent. Average income of workers declined or stagnated. Whereas the income of the CEO of General Motors compared to the average worker used to be 1:70, today the gap between the same in Wal-Mart is 1:140. Capital can only be forced to accept social compact (between workers, state and capital) through strong working class movements.”1 While the global economy grew at an average of 3.3 per cent per year between 1995 and 2007, annual wage growth was at 1.9 per cent. Wage share has been declining across the globe and, given its wide dispersion, this is a structural issue that must be attended to in order to avert further im- poverishment (Vaughan-Whitehead, 2010). The ILO’s Global Wage Report 2010/11 sounded the alarm: “the overall short-term impact of the crisis on wages should be looked at within the context of a longterm decline in the share of wages in total income, a growing disconnect between productivity growth and wages, and widespread and growing wage inequality” (ILO, 2010). It is useful to note here that the practice of “wage arbitrage”, as ex- plained above, has led to this disconnect between productivity and wages, es- pecially in the case of goods being produced in a poorer region and sold in a wealthier one. The net result is a fall in the purchasing power of the majority of people in Asia, over production of goods for which there are not enough con- sumers and unemployment in the global North. People’s purchasing power is falling and poverty levels are being pushed down so that few people can be listed below it (Patnaik, 2007). This has blocked out the majority of to- day’s consumers from the consumer market. Paying decent wages is an essential measure for a stable capitalism. “It is a non-partisan belief even among those who wish to save capitalism. During the Golden Era of capitalism in the 1950s and 1960s, the United States established a floor below which the wage would not drop; this acted as a shock absorber. Ironically, as the welfare state’s shock absorber prevented crisis in capitalism, it led to the false belief that capitalism had overcome the tendency for crisis.”2 It is not enough to create any kind of employment; it is important to create decent jobs – that makes for sound social and economic policy. Labour standards are an indicator of what the working conditions are and what they ought to be. From basic issues of wage and hours, decent labour standards ought also to tell us about the decency of the work in terms of its ability to support families and educate children, remove social inequities, give workers a fair share of wealth, a voice in work and society, and human dignity. Trade unions and labour organizations have learned that in today’s world, enforcement of labour standards and rights can no longer take place solely within the nation-state boundaries. Global capital flows and the global structuring of corporations have taken the initiative for labour standards from the hands of any one local employer or unit. The global supply chain, which is created, is the stage on which the enforcement of labour standards and rights must take place.

Roy isolates purchasing power as the key mechanism to combatting oppression. Living wage is uniquely key to solving this. Nolan[[4]](#footnote-4):

The **multinational corporation[s]** has evolved much more quickly than the laws designed to regulate it. Individual governments are no match for companies that can be anywhere, everywhere, and nowhere. It is seen as quixotic to hope that the world's largest companies might pay reasonable tax rates in the nations where they operate—even tax law experts bemoan the possibility of ever being able to cobble together a tax code that can handle multinationals effectively. Corporations **are**, in effect, **reaping profits** at a premium rate, just **because no system is equipped to properly tax them**. So let's do the next best thing: let's put that money directly into the pockets of workers. (Conservatives are always telling us that individuals are better at solving their own problems than government, anyhow.) The world's biggest corporations pocket billions every year by avoiding taxes internationally. Governments aren't able to get that money back. But **the workers**—the impoverished garment workers **in Bangladesh sewing t-shirts for Wal-Mart, the** harried FoxConn **workers in China making iPhones**, the faceless and forgotten and unseen low-paid factory workers around the world who live in penury so that we can enjoy cheaply manufactured goods—**can get that money back** themselves, **through a wage increase.** Wage increases cannot be avoided with armies of tax lawyers. Give the workers more money, and they will pay more local taxes. Two birds with one stone. A global minimum wage, set to a level at which humans might be able to actually live a minimally acceptable lifestyle. Yes, it can be pegged to each nation's cost of living; and no, it doesn't have to be extravagant. But it has to be enough to make life worth living. It has to be more than what we have now: wages that guarantee persistent poverty. This doesn't require the passage of laws in every single country around the world. We can do it ourselves. **We can pass a law saying** simply that **any multinational corporation** of [X] asize that wishes to sell goods in America **must pay all of its employees and subcontractors** a minimally **[an] acceptable wage.** Companies that don't wish to abandon the American market—virtually all of them—would comply. **Once** some major **European nations signed on** as well, **the law would be as good as global**, because to avoid it would mean forsaking too much of the consumer market.

The living wage is a literal AND paradigmatic shift away from Nl. Brooks[[5]](#footnote-5)

The reason all of this living wage organizing deserves to be called a social movement is because of the rapid growth and remarkable success rate of independent living wage campaigns over the past dozen years. Since Baltimore passed the first modern living wage ordinance in 1994, over 200 other coalitions have formed in cities, counties, states, and college campuses to fight for living wage ordinances. Over 140 campaigns succeeded in passing living wage ordinances (Living Wage Resource Center, 2006). These campaigns are a direct **challenge** to **the NL political economy that has dominated policy-making** over the past 30 years. **Features of NL policy include** privatization, tax cutting, downsizing, deregulation, outsourcing, and **a general outlook that markets are better than government intervention** in solving social and economic problems. The primary economic development policies most **cities and states** use to **attract [an] industry** is **[by] offering maximum tax breaks to companies and advertising low labor costs**. In this context, **140 new living wage ordinances are** quite **a backlash to recent trends in the political economy**. David Neumark, a policy fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California and a critic of living wage campaigns, stated, “I think what the living wage movement has done in the past 11 years is incredible. How many other issues are there where progressives have been this successful? I can’t think of one” (Gertner, 2006, p. 40).

Contention 2 is the political

Solutions to oppression need to be grounded in policy rather than abstraction. K’s must be tied to a implementable, political solution to be effective. **Bryant[[6]](#footnote-6) 12**

The problem as I see it is that this is the worst sort of abstraction (in the Marxist sense) and wishful thinking. Within a Marxo-Hegelian context, a thought is abstract when it ignores all of the mediations in which a thing is embedded. For example, I understand a robust tree abstractly when I attribute its robustness, say, to its genetics alone, ignoring the complex relations to its soil, the air, sunshine, rainfall, etc., that also allowed it to grow robustly in this way. This is the sort of critique we’re always leveling against the neoliberals. They are abstract thinkers. In their doxa that individuals are entirely responsible for themselves and that they completely make themselves by pulling themselves up by their bootstraps, neoliberals ignore all the mediations belonging to the social and material context in which human beings develop that play a role in determining the vectors of their life. They ignore, for example, that George W. Bush grew up in a family that was highly connected to the world of business and government and that this gave him opportunities that someone living in a remote region of Alaska in a very different material infrastructure and set of family relations does not have. To think concretely is to engage in a cartography of these mediations, a mapping of these networks, from circumstance to circumstance (what I call an “onto-cartography”). It is to map assemblages, networks, or ecologies in the constitution of entities.¶ Unfortunately, the academic left falls prey to its own form of abstraction. It’s good at carrying out critiques that denounce various social formations, yet very poor at proposing any sort of realistic constructions of alternatives. This because it thinks abstractly in its own way, ignoring how networks, assemblages, structures, or regimes of attraction would have to be remade to create a workable alternative. Here I’m reminded by the “underpants gnomes” depicted in South Park:¶ The underpants gnomes have a plan for achieving profit that goes like this:¶ Phase 1: Collect Underpants¶ Phase 2: ?¶ Phase 3: Profit!¶ They even have a catchy song to go with their work:¶ Well this is sadly how it often is with the academic left. Our plan seems to be as follows:¶ Phase 1: Ultra-Radical Critique¶ Phase 2: ?¶ Phase 3: Revolution and complete social transformation!¶ Our problem is that we seem perpetually stuck at phase 1 without ever explaining what is to be done at phase 2. Often the critiques articulated at phase 1 are right, but there are nonetheless all sorts of problems with those critiques nonetheless. In order to reach phase 3, we have to produce new collectives. In order for new collectives to be produced, people need to be able to hear and understand the critiques developed at phase 1. Yet this is where everything begins to fall apart. Even though these critiques are often right, we express them in ways that only an academic with a PhD in critical theory and post-structural theory can understand. How exactly is Adorno to produce an effect in the world if only PhD’s in the humanities can understand him? Who are these things for? We seem to always ignore these things and then look down our noses with disdain at the Naomi Kleins and David Graebers of the world. To make matters worse, we publish our work in expensive academic journals that only universities can afford, with presses that don’t have a wide distribution, and give our talks at expensive hotels at academic conferences attended only by other academics. Again, who are these things for? Is it an accident that so many activists look away from these things with contempt, thinking their more about an academic industry and tenure, than producing change in the world? If a tree falls in a forest and no one is there to hear it, it doesn’t make a sound! Seriously dudes and dudettes, what are you doing?¶ But finally, and worst of all, us Marxists and anarchists all too often act like assholes. We denounce others, we condemn them, we berate them for not engaging with the questions we want to engage with, and we vilify them when they don’t embrace every bit of the doxa that we endorse. We are every bit as off-putting and unpleasant as the fundamentalist minister or the priest of the inquisition (have people yet understood that Deleuze and Guattari’s Anti-Oedipus was a critique of the French communist party system and the Stalinist party system, and the horrific passions that arise out of parties and identifications in general?). This type of “revolutionary” is the greatest friend of the reactionary and capitalist because they do more to drive people into the embrace of reigning ideology than to undermine reigning ideology. These are the people that keep Rush Limbaugh in business. Well done!¶ But this isn’t where our most serious shortcomings lie. Our most serious shortcomings are to be found at phase 2. We almost never make concrete proposals for how things ought to be restructured, for what new material infrastructures and semiotic fields need to be produced, and when we do, our critique-intoxicated cynics and skeptics immediately jump in with an analysis of all the ways in which these things contain dirty secrets, ugly motives, and are doomed to fail. How, I wonder, are we to do anything at all when we have no concrete proposals? We live on a planet of 6 billion people. These 6 billion people are dependent on a certain network of production and distribution to meet the needs of their consumption. That network of production and distribution does involve the extraction of resources, the production of food, the maintenance of paths of transit and communication, the disposal of waste, the building of shelters, the distribution of medicines, etc., etc., etc.¶ What are your proposals? How will you meet these problems? How will you navigate the existing mediations or semiotic and material features of infrastructure? Marx and Lenin had proposals. Do you? Have you even explored the cartography of the problem? Today we are so intellectually bankrupt on these points that we even have theorists speaking of events and acts and talking about a return to the old socialist party systems, ignoring the horror they generated, their failures, and not even proposing ways of avoiding the repetition of these horrors in a new system of organization. Who among our critical theorists is thinking seriously about how to build a distribution and production system that is responsive to the needs of global consumption, avoiding the problems of planned economy, ie., who is doing this in a way that gets notice in our circles? Who is addressing the problems of micro-fascism that arise with party systems (there’s a reason that it was the Negri & Hardt contingent, not the Badiou contingent that has been the heart of the occupy movement). At least the ecologists are thinking about these things in these terms because, well, they think ecologically. Sadly we need something more, a melding of the ecologists, the Marxists, and the anarchists. We’re not getting it yet though, as far as I can tell. Indeed, folks seem attracted to yet another critical paradigm, Laruelle.¶ I would love, just for a moment, to hear a radical environmentalist talk about his ideal high school that would be academically sound. How would he provide for the energy needs of that school? How would he meet building codes in an environmentally sound way? How would she provide food for the students? What would be her plan for waste disposal? And most importantly, how would she navigate the school board, the state legislature, the federal government, and all the families of these students? What is your plan? What is your alternative? I think there are alternatives. I saw one that approached an alternative in Rotterdam. If you want to make a truly revolutionary contribution, this is where you should start. Why should anyone even bother listening to you if you aren’t proposing real plans? But we haven’t even gotten to that point. Instead we’re like underpants gnomes, saying “revolution is the answer!” without addressing any of the infrastructural questions of just how revolution is to be produced, what alternatives it would offer, and how we would concretely go about building those alternatives. Masturbation.¶ “Underpants gnome” deserves to be a category in critical theory; a sort of synonym for self-congratulatory masturbation. We need less critique not because critique isn’t important or necessary– it is –but because we know the critiques, we know the problems. We’re intoxicated with critique because it’s easy and safe. We best every opponent with critique. We occupy a position of moral superiority with critique. But do we really do anything with critique? What we need today, more than ever, is composition or carpentry. Everyone knows something is wrong. Everyone knows this system is destructive and stacked against them. Even the Tea Party knows something is wrong with the economic system, despite having the wrong economic theory. None of us, however, are proposing alternatives. Instead we prefer to shout and denounce. Good luck with that.

3 Impacts:

1. People flock to reactionary elites in the face of radical mindset shifts, meaning that your alt can never solve.
2. You cause more severe oppression to occur – the right becomes more powerful in your world and will go to through more efforts to impose its ideology upon the masses.
3. Real world advocacy outweighs the marginal impacts of their critique because identifying problems doesn’t matter if we can’t do anything to change them. Mindset shifts are also non-unique, we’ve heard tons of vague alts and can identify oppressive ideology but gain unique knowledge through discussion of oppression and the political.

Contention 3 is mobilization

The aff is not a palliative. My advocacy creates the framework for movements to challenge the system. McChesney[[7]](#footnote-7)

Building a popular movement is the primary task. Using such a popular movement to generate effective institutions to challenge political power grows from that. The issues that logically draw people together are demands for the right to full-time employment at a living wage, something considered entirely appropriate in the mid-twentieth century in the United States but that subsequently was dispatched in mainstream discourse to the outer limits of kooky ideas. It is not a kooky idea; it is the most important demand to organize around. It requires that the state put people to work if need be, and it shifts power to the working class so that the threat of unemployment, debt, poverty, and destitution cannot loom over a person's head like a guillotine. From this increased power a cascade of core progressive demands flows, including the need for a truly accessible and democratic media system. Many liberals who wish to reform and humanize capitalism are uncomfortable with seemingly radical movements, and often work to distance themselves from them, lest respectable people in power cast a withering eye at them. "Shhh," they say to people like me. "If we antagonize or scare those in power we will lose our seat at the table and not be able to win any reforms." Yet these same liberal reformers often are dismayed at how they are politically ineffectual. Therein lies a great irony, because to enact significant reforms requires a mass movement (or the credible prospect of a mass movement) that does indeed threaten the powerful. The influence of mild reformers rises greatly when people in power look out the window and see a million people demonstrating. If there is an iron law of politics, this is it. People in power certainly know this. Nothing frightens them like popular uprisings they do not and cannot control. For that reason, cynicism and political apathy are generally encouraged in the United States. It is not a fluke that voter turnout in the United States is well below that of nearly every other nation in the world. In the 1970s, on the heels of the popular uprisings of that era, people in power spoke candidly (to each other) about the need to have young people and the dispossessed return to apathy. Much of their work since then has been to achieve that goal. When we tune out politics, when we abandon hope, we aren't being cool or hip or ironic or even realistic—we are being played. This elite fear of genuine democracy should encourage all those dedicated to building a more humane and sustainable post-capitalist democracy. Those atop the system know we have the numbers on our side. They know the system is rigged for them, and they want to keep it that way. They know they cannot win a fair fight. Hence billionaires' energy goes to matters like wholesale voter suppression and flooding election campaigns with unlimited secretive spending. They must feed the machinery of pessimism and despair because they know they cannot defeat an aroused citizenry. That tells me that if we do effective organizing it will be like planting a seed in rich Iowa topsoil. Put this way, I like our chances. I like them a lot.

Even if there are NL elements of the aff, I control uniqueness. Neoliberalism justifies its expansion by targeting labor, the aff strikes at the core of the system and rallies workers against it. Amandla[[8]](#footnote-8)

The ideologues of business have started a systematic and sustained campaign against the wages and the laws that protect workers. The job crisis is central to their campaign and deregulation is their leading mantra. Opinion pieces, columnists and letters in the business press appear as voices of the same choir conducted by a singlemindedness to attack the alleged rigidities of the labour market and other regulations that undermine so-called economic freedom. So sustained seems this attack that Business Day of 13 June has Michael Bagraim of the Cape Chamber of Industries writing an op-ed piece, ‘Why Vavi’s socialist jobs ideas are bound to fail’, on one page and a letter on the opposite page titled ‘Unions creating fear’. The background for this is the debate concerning the direction of economic policy. Recently government published the Industrial Policy Action Plan, The New Growth Path Document and now Trevor Manuel’s National Planning Commission has published its Diagnostic Overview. A common thread running through these texts is SA’s unemployment crisis and strategies for creating jobs. This seems to be the opening for the corporate ideologues to unashamedly promote a set of failed policies, namely deregulation and liberalisation. The very set of policies that are widely understood to be the cause of the Great Recession and the long crisis gripping the global economy. Years of economic deregulation, liberalisation, privatisation, lower taxes and profits at the expense of wages – policies which we know collectively as NL – resulted in a massive redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich. The concentration of wealth and the global rise of inequality put an end to the post–Second World War dynamic of economic growth driven by the expansion of consumption of millions of workers based on expanding wage employment. Neoliberalism has not only led to wider levels of inequality but to an almost constant situation of overproduction and stagnant markets. In an attempt to overcome this crisis, the ruling class elite made things even worse through switching from production to financial speculation. A new phase of financial turmoil in the global economy resulted as speculative bubbles ballooned and then went bust. And Greece is just the latest example of this. In this period of economic crisis the powerful elites seek to pass the costs of the crisis on to working and poor people. Hence, the unemployment crisis is not seen as a result of wave after wave of corporate restructuring where millions of workers were expelled from the workplace as businesses tried to maximise profits in a situation of declining demand and intensified competition. Rather, supposedly high wages and remaining regulations that protect workers are opportunistically trundled out by the captains of industry as the cause of unemployment. As shown by official GDP statistics, ever since the end of apartheid, profit share of national income has increased over the wage share. Yet the ideological onslaught continues unabated. Mike Schussler of economists.co.za attacks the demand of public sector workers for a wage increase of 9%, claiming that public sector workers earn the equivalent of their Swedish and French counterparts. Yet, as the diagnostic overview report of the NPC states, a third of all employed people earn less than R1 000 and half of all employed people earn less than R2 500. The same NPC report points out that many working families in SA experience grave poverty because of the high number of dependents that share in the wage of the ‘lucky’ few that have employment. Cosatu has consistently pointed out that the wage of a single worker supports as many as ten dependents without income: ‘because many low-wage earners have to support so many people, many working households live near or below the poverty line’ (NPC, Diagnostic Report, p. 11). The same ideologues who attack wages as the cause of high unemployment have nothing to say about the high profits and income of the very wealthy. According to Statistics South Africa the richest 10% of households have more than 56% of the total income from salaries and wages. Each of the top 20 paid directors in JSE-listed companies earned 1 728 times the average income of a South African worker in 2008. The CEO of Edgars is reported to earn R755 million. This is the equivalent of 25 000 workers earning R2 500 per month. Take into account the steady decline in wage share of national income down from 56% in 1996 to less than 47%, and the reason for a combined struggle of the labour and social movements for decent work and a living wage becomes obvious. Last year, Cosatu general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi promised ‘the mother of all living wage campaigns’. To counter the offensive from big business, now and in the future, such a campaign should be rolled out as soon as possible. Since unemployment and job losses are such deep crises in our society, the labour movement would do well to build a common struggle with key social movements in fighting not just for a living wage but decent work for all.

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8. Why we need a living wage campaign Wednesday 10 August 2011, by Amandla http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article2239 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)