

Funding the Future

Of course you can try to beat the unions - but you'll d...

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Andrew Rawnsley [argues in the Observer tomorrow](#) that Ed Miliband can't retreat from his battle with the union bosses.

I'd point in response to the [same paper's editorial for tomorrow's edition](#), just out on the web:

In 1978, the typical male US worker was making \$48,000 (£30,700) a year (adjusted for inflation). Meanwhile, the average person in the top 1% was making \$390,000. By 2010, the median wage was \$33,000, but at the top it had risen to \$1m. This level of unfairness, as Reich points out, is not just a threat to the economy but to democracy.

Reich points out that this imbalance, and unfairness, stems precisely from the point where anti-union legislation was enacted in the US.

Of course neoliberalism can beat the unions through the hegemony of thinking it has created in our major political parties. But if it does so let's be clear it will beat democracy at the same time.

I am a democrat.

I believe in our unions and proud to work with and for them on occasion.

I do not believe democracy has any hope of surviving without a strong union moment - which has a strong input into a political system where the voice of ordinary people challenges the voice of the power of capital - which none of our major political parties are doing at present.

So of course Labour can beat the unions. But we need to ask at what cost to it and to us all.

And we have to ask what outcome it is seeking - because right now it is hard to see any strategy in this policy. I just hope there is - simply because this is too important for opportunism to be the guiding principle, as looks all too possible.