

Bring unions back

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An FT email includes the following this morning:

Bring them back! They may have been corrupt, but [trade unions were good for middle class Americans. Their obliteration is causing a bigger economic divide. A columnist makes a strong case for the return of the labour unions.](#)

The link is to a New York Times column by Nicholas Kristof, who admits to having once held all the stereotyped concerns about unions that helped stifle them in the US, and here.

But, as he notes:

To understand the rising inequality, you have to understand the devastation in the labor movement.

And as he concludes:

This isn't something you often hear a columnist say, but I'll say it again: I was wrong. At least in the private sector, we should strengthen unions, not try to eviscerate them.

I'd broaden that a little, but wholeheartedly endorse the comment. If we want a fairer society then we need people in unions who argue their case for a bigger share of the economic benefits that their labour creates. Nothing else will do if we are to tackle the massive economic asymmetry in negotiating power in society that now exists and which has so skewed rewards towards a few at the expense of most in the UK as well as the USA.

And yes I do work for the TUC, Unite and PCS. But I do so precisely because I believe this to be true.