

I was saddened to read this editorial. What could have been a thought-provoking piece on the labour movement and social democracy was instead little more than a predictable attempt at caricature.

It fails on a number of points, but most strikingly, misses the crucial role that unionized workers play in increasing the prosperity that the editorial appears to take for granted.



It is no coincidence that many of the world's most productive, competitive and innovative countries, including Sweden, Germany, Japan and Norway, are also highly unionized.

As evidence for closing up the union shop, you say that many of the things unions campaigned for have been achieved.

On the contrary, I ask that you stop to consider the nearly 800 workers who are killed, and the thousands who are injured, on the job each year in Canada because of unsafe work conditions. Or think about the millions of largely forgotten Canadian children who live in poverty. Or reflect upon the recent attacks by governments in this country on basic workplace rights, such as the right to organize and to free collective bargaining -- rights that are guaranteed under international treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As long as the fundamental human, social and economic rights of Canadians and people around the world face attack or subversion, the need for unions, and the left, will remain strong.

Lorne Nystrom,

Ottawa

MP, Regina-Qu'Appelle

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