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Letters

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## Unions need rights to fight poverty

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The Guardian, Friday 5 October 2007

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Seumas Milne (Pressure for a real break from Blairism is bound to intensify, September 27) is right to highlight the need to address growing inequality as a key break from Blairism. Trade-union members earn significantly more than non-members and better pay also means better pensions. It is not surprising that the removal of trade-union rights and the resulting fall in collective bargaining coverage has contributed to the marked increase in inequality in the UK.

That is why on October 18 we will be at Westminster to demonstrate our support for, and to urge MPs to back, the trade union rights and freedoms bill, listed for debate in parliament the following day. Punitive and bureaucratic restrictions that are placed on unions mean we have the most antiquated labour laws of any European country.

The bill would give trade unions the freedom to fight inequality and poverty. If the new government wants allies to fight the growing gap between rich and poor, it should back the bill and give the unions the tools to get on with the job.

**Tony Woodley** Unite joint general secretary

**Paul Kenny** GMB general secretary

**Bob Crow** RMT general secretary

**Brian Caton** POA general secretary

**Mark Serwotka** PCS general secretary

**Jeremy Dear** NUJ general secretary

**Matt Wrack** FBU general secretary

**Ian Lavery** NUM president

**Christine Blower** NUT deputy general secretary

**Patrick Roach** NASUWT assistant general secretary

**Gail Cartmail** Unite assistant general secretary

**Phil McGarry** STUC president

**Manuel Cortes** TSSA assistant general secretary

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