

# Opinion: How the 1% hijacked the news business

By Jack Mirkinson, Salon

Ah, Labor Day. A time to kick back, put your white clothes away, eat burned meat products and, if you really love to have fun, reflect on why it is that labor issues get such short shrift in our mainstream media. (See what I did there?) But really, the point of Labor Day is in the title, so, just for a second, let's talk about how we talk about labor.

Or, rather, how we don't talk about labor. Our media is filled to the brim with stories of, by and for the wealthy. We have three separate television channels focused solely on business. Newspapers come stuffed with sections devoted to real estate, fine dining and high fashion. When the public editor of the *New York Times* asked the paper's executive editor, Dean Baquet, why he was launching a new "anthropological" beat focused on the "superrich," he replied, "The *New York Times* does enough about poverty and the middle class."

Working people, meanwhile, find themselves lavished with much less attention. And forget about unions, which, even in their diminished state, still represent millions and millions of people. The number of outlets with reporters dedicated to covering labor issues has steadily shrunk in recent years, even as the technological revolution makes an examination of modern-day labor practices more important than ever. (To be fair to the Times, it is one of the few newspapers to maintain a labor beat, though that is dwarfed by the paper's coverage of high finance and technology.)

On TV, meanwhile, unions might as well not exist. A 2014 study by the stalwart media watchdog FAIR found that, over an eight-month period, exactly zero representatives of labor unions

appeared on any of the five main Sunday talk shows. Billionaire CEOs, meanwhile, got lots of chances to put forward their vision of the American economy.

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