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'Without fear and without favour'

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Welcome the demise of the corporation as organising force

Sir, Electronic markets that "supplant companies as the organising force behind economic exchange" may create a "social challenge" as Yochai Benkler argues ("The death of the company reignites the battle between capital and labour", Comment, January 24), but they will most likely bring more benefits than costs to society.

Improved efficiencies would more than compensate the alleged reduction of safeguards accompanying an on-demand economy.

Professor Benkler's statement that "company men and women were insulated from the vicissitudes of economic fortune" ignores the dark side of today's (especially, American) corporations, with their tendency of treating employees as line items, and workers at all levels as little more than disposable "assets".

It is no wonder that surveys suggest American millennials now expect to have 15 to 20 jobs in their lifetime ("Who will train the new cohort of 'plug and play' workers?", Andrew Hill,

Business Life, January 27).

The expected demise of corporations as the dominant economic institution driving exchange should be welcomed, as it would reduce three horrors: first, a corporation's limited liability, which permits the costs of production to be borne by the powerless; second, corporate political pressure which distorts democratic processes; and third, corporate welfare in the form of tax breaks and subsidies deforming the course of the economy.

Adam Smith, who warned in *The Wealth of Nations* that "negligence and profusion" would inevitably result when businesses are organised as corporations, would applaud the onset of a more automated economy — one that better harnesses society's idle resources while removing the mechanisms of corporate malfeasance.

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