



THE EAGLE

LOCAL 1103

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April 2011

The Politics of Economic Injustice: The Thirty-Year Plan to Widen the Gap



“CWA President Larry Cohen with CWA District One Vice President Chris Shelton before addressing crowd about worker rights.”

The Merriam-Weber dictionary defines policy as “a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions.” It is logical then, based on this definition, that we can determine the prevailing United States domestic economic policy by researching results over a period of time. When examining the nation’s economic policy and the decisions made by our elected leaders from 1979 until 2008, we

find the following:

- Loss of job security
- Stagnant Middle-Class wages
- Scores of home foreclosures
- Record breaking personal bankruptcies
- Skyrocketing personal debt

Now that we know the consequences of the last three decades, let’s see who the winners and losers were.

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Economic Injustice

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Elections Have Consequences !!

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Local 1103 SS Scholarship Program

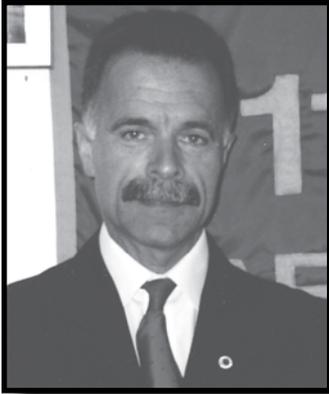
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In My View . . .



This month I dedicate my article to the long and difficult struggles of the Labor Movement, Frances Perkins the first female U. S. Secretary of Labor, and those brave Trade Unionist from the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire March 25, 1911, New York City.



of J.P. Morgan, and many of her powerful suffragist friends -- the so-called "mink brigade" -- took up their cause, and the press and public began to rally to the plight of the brave young seamstresses.

After the strike had continued for 11 weeks, the Triangle owners finally agreed to higher wages and shorter hours. But they drew the line at a union. Back on the job, the Triangle workers still lacked real power to improve the worst conditions of the factory floor: inadequate ventilation, lack of safety precautions and fire drills -- and locked doors.

When a tossed match or lit cigarette ignited a fire on the eighth floor of the building, flames spread quickly. Blanck and Harris received warning by phone and escaped, but the 240 workers on the ninth floor continued stitching, oblivious to the flames gathering force on the floor below. When they finally did see the smoke, the women panicked. Some rushed toward the open stairwell, but columns of flames already blocked their path.

A few workers managed to cram onto the elevator while others ran down an inadequate fire escape, which

Brown Brothers (The Triangle Factory after the fire)

A deadly fire broke out in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York's Greenwich Village. The blaze ripped through the congested loft as petrified workers -- mostly young immigrant women -- desperately tried to make their way downstairs. By the time the fire burned itself out, 146 people were dead. All but 17 of the dead were women and nearly half were teenagers.

The workers in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory were among the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who toiled in the city's garment factories at the time. They came from countries such as Italy and Russia in search of a better future, and all around them they saw the riches promised by the American Dream. New York was in its Gilded Age and the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory was not too far from the limestone mansions of millionaires and the elegant shops of the famed Ladies Mile. Two men who had achieved the dream were the wealthy owners of the thriving Triangle factory. Isaac Harris and Max Blanck, immigrants who had arrived from Russia only 20 years earlier, had become known as New York's "Shirtwaist Kings," and each owned fully staffed brownstones on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

The dream seemed a long way off for the young workers at the factory who toiled 13 hours a day for \$0.13 an hour. Though the factory was considered modern with its high ceilings and large windows, the working conditions were difficult. Only a year before the deadly fire, New York's garment workers had begun agitating for shorter hours, better pay, safer shops and unions. To the horror of Harris and Blanck, the young women of the Triangle factory joined the crusade and called for a strike, becoming leaders in what became the largest women's strike in American history. Within 48 hours, more than 50 of the smallest factories gave in to their workers' demands, but the Triangle bosses organized other owners and refused to surrender, paying prostitutes and police to beat the strikers. Their terrible treatment brought the women an unexpected ally. Anne Morgan, the daughter

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ELECTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

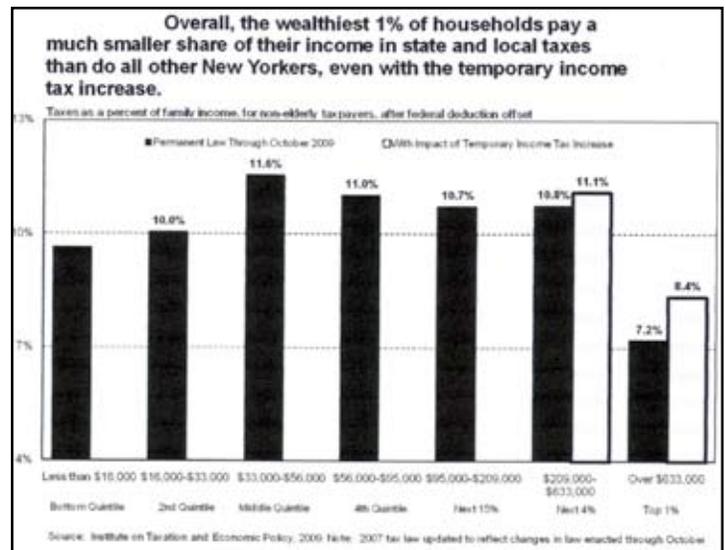
Middle Class Layoffs & Service Cuts pay for Tax Cuts for the Rich

For those who are worried that New York's wealthiest are being overly burdened with taxes, fear not. The ultra-rich in our state are paying less in taxes as a share of their incomes than the middle-class (see chart below). It's only going to get better for them thanks to Governor Cuomo and the NYS republican senate. By allowing the "Millionaire's Surcharge" in NY to expire, the governor and his pals in the senate will be putting an additional \$24,000 in the pockets of each family that earns over 1 million dollars of taxable income a year. That's great news for the wealthy because it comes on the heels of the extension of the Bush tax cuts that have already put \$124,000 in their wallets.

So the good news for the rich is they will get an additional 4.56 billion dollars in tax cuts. Of course, someone has to pay for these cuts, because you can't just take billions of dollars out of the state revenue and not figure out how to pay for it. Now, Cuomo's budget has already slashed programs to the bare minimum for the poor and elderly to reduce an 8.9 billion dollar deficit. Therefore, to pay for the tax breaks for those who need it the least, the Republican majority in the senate and the Governor plan to take it from the services and jobs of the Middle-Class. Cuomo's budget funds tax cuts to the rich by taking it from us in the following ways:

Education:	\$1.5 Billion cut
Healthcare:	\$2.85 Billion cut
Higher Education:	\$407 Million cut
Local Government:	\$1.8 Billion cut
Total:	\$6.667 Billion

The chart segments the taxable income of New Yorkers. Some legislators in an attempt to bamboozle the advocates of the surcharge have suggested that the "Millionaire Surcharge" will affect Middle-Class workers. Their argument, using exaggerated income levels of public sector workers does not hold water. The current "Millionaire Surcharge" family rate kicks in at \$300,000 of taxable income (\$407,000 gross at a field tech tax bracket). Even if we use the over-inflated income levels of a public sector family with both parents working, it does not rise above the "next 15%" level of the chart. The reality is CWA families where both parents work, fall between the top 4th Quintile" and lower end of the "next 15%" bars on the chart. Based on the chart, we pay between 11% and 10% of our income towards state taxes while the top 1% only pays 8.4%. If Cuomo and the Republican Senate have their way, the rich will pay as little as 7.2% and we in the Middle-Class will have to make up the rest in layoffs and service cuts.



March Lobby Day

CWA's March Lobby day focused among other issues Keeping the "Millionaire's Surcharge". Here's how the NY legislators in 1103 jurisdiction weighted in on the surcharge:

Assembly members:

Gary Pretlow (D) 87th:	Supports keeping Millionaire Surcharge
Amy Paulin (D) 88th	Will support some form of Millionaire Surcharge
Robert Castelli (R) 89th	Refused to give direct answer (only 13% of his district affected)
Sandra Galef (D) 90th	Does not support the Surcharge (only 4.6% of her district affected)
George Latimer (D) 91st	Supports keeping Millionaire Surcharge
Thomas Abinanti (D) 92st	Supports keeping Millionaire Surcharge
Mike Spano (D) 93rd:	Supports keeping Millionaire Surcharge
Steve Katz (R) 99th	Supports keeping Millionaire Surcharge for 3-5 more years

Senate

Jeff Klein (D) 34th	Does not support surcharge (only 1.8% of his district is affected)
Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D) 35th	Supports keeping Millionaire Surcharge
Ruth Hassel-Thompson (D) 36th	Supports keeping Millionaire Surcharge
Suzi Oppenheimer (D) 37th	Supports keeping Millionaire Surcharge
Gregg Ball (R) 40th	Staff does not know his position (only 5% of his district is affected)

**Joe Mayhew,
Business Agent**

From the post depression years to 1980, US workers enjoyed a “mixed economy” that formed the baseline for the middle class. With the regulatory practices put in place by FDR, growth was more or less shared across the spectrum of the American people. As the wealthy did better, so did the workers. It’s important to note the working middle class did not close in or lose ground to the rich; the gap simply stayed the same. That was until 1980, when the US began to resemble an oligarchy instead of a nation that shared sacrifice and prosperity. Unlike the coups of Central America, our directional change was not based on military force but occurred because of an obscene, disproportionate concentration of wealth.

Over a 30-year period, there was a drastic shift in fortune, literally. The poor became poorer and the middle-class lost ground because wages did not keep up with inflation, yet, during the same time, the top 1% earner’s worth increased astronomically. For example, in 1974, the top 1% earners took only 9% of the total gains made in the country. However in 2007, those gains nearly triple to an amazing 23.5%. That meant for every \$100 of gain in the entire US, \$23.50 was taken by the top 1%, while the other 99% stood in line to split the rest!

Translate those totals into actual earned wages and it becomes crystal clear how the Working Middle-Class has been short-changed. Using information from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and carving out the very middle of the middle class, we find those wages rose only 21% over three decades, factoring in inflation the story is much bleaker. Subtracting the rate of inflation, the very center actually earned only 0.7% in increases each year. Of course Union wages, especially those in the northeast tend to run higher, if we use top Union craft wages as the factor for this analysis we find these wages went up 32%; however, during that same time the cost of living increased 185%. We have lost ground.

The story is very different for the top 1 percent. With an average income in 1979 of \$337,100, their lot was much brighter. By 2007, their income exploded to \$1.2 million a year, raking in a whopping 260% in wage increases. Yet that’s only a small part of the story, if we carve out the top 0.1 percent, which equals about 300,000 people in the United States, we find their income went from \$4 million to \$24.3 million a year, an incredible 500% increase in just three decades!

If the Working Middle-Class had just kept pace with the regulatory days of FDR, where levels of inequality stayed constant, we would all have an extra \$10,000 more in after-tax income. In cases where we are just keeping up, it is not due to wage increases, it is because we are working longer hours and additional family members are working in the household. It is estimated that middle class American families work 406 – 576 more hours a year than they did in the 1979. That’s 11 hours more to our normal workweek, a fact that all CWA Members can relate to. The 2000’s are now largely regarded as the lost decade for the middle-class.

Besides the working middle-class wages not being able to keep up with costs, most private sector workers now have to plan for their senior years without the partnership of their employers. Since the 1980s, middle-class Americans have had to divert more and more of their income each year to shore up their retirement. Private industry has thrown more and more workers into 401k retirement account as the sole means of income for their golden years and stripped them of their defined benefit pensions. An additional troubling aspect of this diversion of resources from everyday expenses to retirement income is that while we struggled to provide for our families, others were amassing huge amounts of wealth that were to be used against us.

crumbled under the weight, crashing to the ground almost 100 feet below. The only remaining exit was a door that had been locked to prevent theft. The key was tucked into the pocket of the foreman, who listened to the women's cries for help from the street. Hundreds of horrified onlookers arrived just in time to see young men and women jumping from the windows, framed by flames.

In the days that followed, a temporary morgue near the East River was set up for families to identify the bodies of their loved ones. Nearly 400,000 New Yorkers filled city streets to pay tribute to the victims and raise money to support their families. It is noteworthy to know that one of the onlookers that faith full day was Frances Perkins a college educated thirty year old safety advocate, who previously studied "Workplace Fire Safety" in factory settings. She is shocked and appalled watching the catastrophe unfold before her. It is at this moment she is galvanized in what will become her mission in life and her social obligation. She learned quickly how to work the system and how to get things done, out in the open as well as behind the curtain. The then Governor of New York Franklin D. Roosevelt recognizing Ms. Perkins for the successful work she accomplished, appoints her as Lead Investigator to "The New York Committee of Safety". In very short order, working closely with Unions, she put into effect the most sweeping changes with respect to worker safety regulations in New York which soon after became a model for the nation. Knowing first hand about her relentless pursuit of worker safety, when FDR was elected President in 1933 he appointed Frances Perkins as the country's first Women "Secretary of Labor". You know the old saying "The Phoenix Rising from the Ashes" is how I describe Frances Perkins and the impact that she had and continues to have on the Rights of Workers. Every time you see a fire exit marked, a sprinkler system, occupancy limits, witness a fire drill, child labor laws or overtime rules think of Frances Perkins.

Unions have always been there for "Workers Rights" and now our very existence is under attack from the Right Wing of our own government, and the very, very, Rich. God help us, for if they get there way all workers will be at the beck and call of the Boss and the corrupt politicians.

In Solidarity,



Joey Barca Jr.

Politics of Economic Justice... continued from pg. 4

For the wealthy the formula for success was simple; the rich were able to save more money than the other 99% of non-rich. The money that they didn't spend turned into wealth and the amount is staggering. In 2004, it rose to \$15 million for each family in the top 1%. Remember that's \$15 million after they spent monies on their "basic necessities". Now carve out the top 400 of the wealthiest in this group and we find their savings reach into the stratosphere at \$4 billion each as of 2008, more than 6 times what they amassed in 1983.

The question is, did this huge income inequality happen all by itself or was it a matter of policy choices? The government shapes the economic landscape; it did so in creating the middle class with FDR's New Deal legislation, while shifting policy within the last 30 years to benefit corporations and the wealthy. The rich got richer while the disparity between the middle class grew, and it was due to sustained, well-thought out, selfish economic policy.

**Joe Mayhew ,
Business Agent**

Next Month:

*Part II: The Politics of Economic Injustice:
How the Wealthy Organized to Win*

Primary research for this series came from Winner-Take-All Politics, Hacker, Pierson; Simon & Schuster

2011 CWA Local 1103 Scholarship Program

We are proud to announce the opening of our 37th Annual Local 1103 Scholarship Program. Since its inception in 1973, \$213,751.00 in cash grants have been awarded to the sons and daughters of Local 1103 Members in good standing to help enable the continuance of their education. The eight scholarships offered are as follows:

22st Annual E. Gerald Horgan Memorial Scholarship \$2,000.00

Honoring the memory of our late Brother and Chief Steward; Edward "Gerry" Horgan who made the supreme sacrifice on the picket line fighting for us.

33rd Annual Daniel L. Keenan Memorial Scholarship \$2,000.00

Respecting the memory of our late President, who served in that office from 1964 to 1979.

38th Annual Eugene J. Mays Memorial Scholarship \$1,500.00

In remembrance of our late District One A.V.P., who served as Defense Fund Director during the 1971-72 N.Y. Telephone strike.

28th Annual Howard T. Miles Memorial Scholarship \$1,500.00

In tribute to our late Brother who helped found the Local 1103 Substance Abuse Committee.

Local 1103 Executive Board Scholarships \$1,000.00

Two additional \$1000 scholarships authorized by the members of your Executive Board.

Thomas J. Wonsor Memorial Scholarships - \$500

Two \$500 awards are presented by the Local in memory of the 1103 Life Members Club first President Tom Wonsor. These two scholarships awards are only for students currently in their 1st, 2nd or 3rd year of college and who will be continuing on.

PURPOSE

These grants are intended to give those first-year college students an extra helping hand during those crucial first months in a new academic world. There are no restrictions upon expenditure. The money may be applied toward tuition, books, clothing, or whatever else best helps the student to embark upon his/her academic new life.

ELIGIBILITY

All high school seniors who are the son or daughter of a Member, retired Member or deceased Member in good standing of Local 1103 and who are proceeding to an institution of higher academic or professional training.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Complete and return the Scholarship application below to Local 1103 Headquarters on or before May 31, 2011.

METHOD OF SELECTION

The eight winners will be determined by random drawing at the June 2011 General Membership meeting. The checks will be presented to the Scholarship winners at Local 1103's Annual Picnic July 2011 at Ridge Road Park in Hartsdale, New York. We wish everyone good luck in the drawings and hope you all do well in your scholastic endeavors.

*Douglas Sheahan,
Secretary/Treasurer*

C.W.A. LOCAL 1103 - 2011 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION *(Please Print)*

Applicant's Name _____

Address _____

Local Member's Name _____

Soc. Sec. # _____ Job Title (if active Member) _____

Work Location (if active Member) _____

I herewith apply for inclusion in the June 2011 drawing of the Local 1103 Scholarship Program. I certify that I meet the eligibility requirements set forth by the Local Executive Board as follows: I am the ___ son ___ daughter of a Member, retired Member or deceased Member in good standing of Local 1103 and either:

(1) A High School senior intending to continue my education at _____; or (2) A college Student entering my _____ year at _____ (Please Note: If your son or daughter is a 1st, 2nd or 3rd year college student and is applying for one of the Thomas J. Wonsor Memorial Scholarship awards. A transcript of last semester's grades must be attached to confirm eligibility.)

Applicant's Signature: _____

(Scholarship applications must be returned to Local 1103 headquarters no later that May 31, 2011.)

The Retiree's Corner..

The last few months have been disconcerting to say the least in regard to the onslaught being waged against working people especially in the public sector.

It is critical that we, as CWA Local 1103 retirees, keep ourselves informed and participate in any way possible to preserve our earned benefits and all workers' rights to bargain.

Two ways we have to stay active and informed are by joining the CWA Retired Members' Council and then by joining your local RMC chapter.

The CWA Retired Members' Council focuses on the critical issues facing retirees. The Council allows us to remain active in the life of our union. Because of the steady erosion in the retirement security of most Americans, we believe it is essential that we actively participate in the struggle to protect our benefits. Through the Council, CWA retirees have input into key retiree programs such as: health care benefits, pensions, Social Security, Medicare and more, which are shaped through contract negotiations and/ or legislation.

The Retired Members' Council works to safeguard and enhance our retirement in many ways:

-By monitoring company pension and health care policies.

-By tracking national legislation affecting CWA retired members

-By monitoring federal, state and local politicians and legislation in support of our goals and interests.

-By representing retired members' concerns and issues with CWA bargaining councils before and during contract negotiations.

There is a onetime \$25 fee to become a Lifetime member of the Council. You can join online at: www.cwalocal1103rmc.org

Or you can download an application form from the above website and then mail your check directly to:

CWA Retired Members Council

501 Third Street, NW

Washington, DC 20001

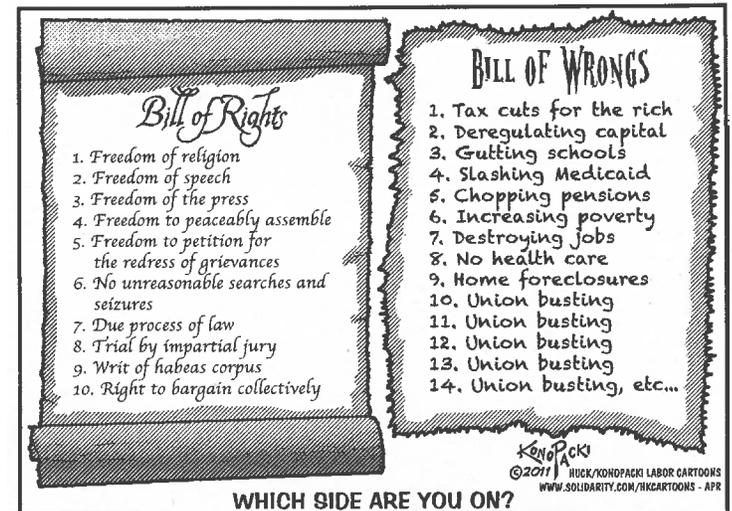
As a Lifetime Member of the Retired Members' Council, you will stay connected to CWA through the CWA News, and also weekly e-mails of the CWA Online Newsletter. You will have the opportunity to be involved in matters that directly affect you and your fellow retirees. Through the Council, you will also be joining forces with active CWA members in support of CWA goals, whether on a picket line, a phone bank or through other demonstrations of support.

Lifetime Council Members are also entitled to participate in one of the hundreds of Retiree Chapters sponsored by CWA local unions all across the country.

Active local chapters increase the power and reach of the Council, so we encourage you to join the CWA Local 1103 Retired Members' Chapter. The dues are \$20 per year or \$55 for 3 years. Sign up to join our chapter at or web site www.cwalocal1103rmc.org.

You must be a Lifetime Council member and an 1103 chapter member in order to vote in the upcoming chapter officer elections in November.

If you know of any retiree who is not currently receiving the Eagle, please let them know to call the hall and have their name added to the mailing list. Ask to have your email address added to the 1103 email blasts which go out regularly.



Also, go to our website www.cwalocal1103rmc.org and sign up with your email address to stay informed with our emails which go out regularly with news and information pertinent to retirees,

Stay informed; stay active; be aware of what is happening to union members and working people's rights across this country.

Negotiations have already begun for our contract which expires in August.

You know Verizon has our benefits in their cross hairs! Be ready, be prepared. We must stand together!

Jeanette Spoor

President CWA Local 1103 RMC

**Have a Drug,
Alcohol or
Gambling Problem ?**

**Call
Headquarters
939-8203 or 8204**

**Ask to be put in
contact with
Tom O'Halloran**

**☞
All Information
is Confidential**



COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA - LOCAL 1103

(AFFILIATED WITH A.F.L.-C.I.O.-C.L.C.)

345 WESTCHESTER AVENUE • PORT CHESTER, NY 10573



PERIODICAL

The Radical Right's Real Agenda

Workers and their allies should thank Scott Walker – the Radical Right Republican governor of Wisconsin – for one thing: Bringing the real “conservative” agenda, one that has been pursued for decades, out in the open.

It is an agenda that is scary, dictatorial, and designed to convert the U.S. into what was once called “Third World country,” with few or no rights for an oppressed majority.

If Walker, with aid from others of ilk, has done nothing else, he's blown the Right Wingers' cover.

If the Radical Right had its way:

* A small, rich, ruling Republican elite of corporate criminals and their political lackeys would totally control U.S. politics and the economy. The revenues of mega-corporations would go to their executives – or into devices to keep us under control, from financing political campaigns to buying and controlling the mass media.

* Civil and human rights would exist in name on Rights of workers, to organize or even to think for themselves, would be nullified.

The right of privacy, found in the Bill of Rights, would be dismantled by an invasive government – be it a federal government regulating a woman's body or a local sheriff regulating your citizenship. Courts and lawmakers would dismantle rights of women and minorities.

* The Bill of Rights itself would be a sham, ignored if not discarded in fact. Freedom of speech? Not if you're a worker. You'd get fired. Freedom of the press? Only those who have megabucks.

Freedom of religion? Not if you're Moslem, Catholic, Jewish or “none at all.” Trial by jury? Maybe that would survive, but who'd be on the jury? Due process of law? Ask the Supreme Court. The 14th amendment, banning slavery or involuntarily servitude? Repealed.

The “right of the people to be secure in their persons and property” from arbitrary government action? See “right to privacy,” above. Let's repeal the New Deal and the results of the Civil War, too.

* The economy would pass into the control of the Radical Right and the financial elite, if it hasn't already. Tax cuts for the rich. Poverty and onerous payments for the rest of us. Future economic security? Cut Social Security, turn Medicare into a voucher system, eliminate Medicaid and kill private pensions, just to make sure.

And our ever-declining share of the economy would be systematically shrunk by ever-rising “premiums” to rapacious health insurers, funneled into executives' pockets.

Could we do anything about this carnage, just as the Egyptians peacefully rose up and overthrew dictatorial President Hosni Mubarak? Well, we must try.

But what we would have to overthrow is the entire system the Radical Right is creating – not just the one-man wrecker in Wisconsin.

We hate to be so gloomy, and there's still time to turn this tide back. To do so will involve mass mobilization on a scale not seen since either the heady days of the Civil Rights movement or the depths of the Great Depression.

Maybe Wisconsin's Scott Walker is the spark that brings our millions into our Tahrir Squares. Let's hope so.

But make no mistake: Countering the Radical Right's real agenda will be, to quote JFK, “a long, twilight struggle,” not just against “tyranny, poverty, war and disease,” but against another implacable, powerful, constant and continuing foe.

