



THE EAGLE

LOCAL 1103

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TAKING IT TO THE STREETS **CWA Local 1103 LEADS “WE ARE ONE” RALLY**



WHITE PLAINS- On April 4 over 300 CWA Local 1103 Members joined with 27 progressive groups and Unions to support the We Are One to Save Our Middle Class. The event was hosted by CWA Local 1103, and included over 1000 protesters and 22 speakers.

A major goal of the rally was to send a clear message that we will promote the interests of all workers and protect our communities by coming

together to save our middle class. Tax breaks for the rich, Albany’s failure to support our schools, failure to protect our state’s seniors and poor, blaming our public sector workers for a budget problem they didn’t cause, and the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a civil rights leader and supporter of labor to raise the quality of life for all people were forefront at the rally.

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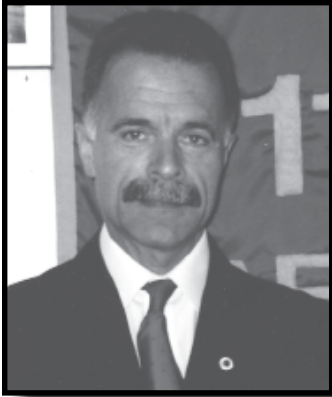
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In My View . . .



In 2010 the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) demanded a number of Employers pay \$26.6 million back to workers that were underpaid. This award is the second highest paid back to workers since the inception of the NYSDOL 110 years ago.

State Labor Commissioner Colleen C. Gardner said, "The current recession has made a bad problem even worse. The Labor Department will not rest until this crime wave of wage theft is halted in its tracks. Law-abiding, hard working New Yorkers deserve no less."

The Division of Labor Standards enforces minimum wage, overtime and other labor laws. In 2010 the division dispersed \$18.7 million to 19,000 workers. Proactive investigations of low-wage industries such as car washes, restaurants and the backstretch at hoarse racing courses took place throughout the year. Some examples are a \$1.9 million settlement with the owners of the Broadway Bridge Carwash in Upper Manhattan that failed to pay minimum wages and overtime to there employees and at the Saratoga Race Course a thoroughbred racing trainer's license was revoked for repeatedly ignoring orders to pay backstretch workers properly. In 2011 there is a greater chance of more money being returned to underpaid workers because of a new law that takes effect on April 12 known as the Wage Theft Prevention Act. Some highlights are as follows,

- 1- More stringent and transparent record-keeping along with posting requirements.
- 2 - Increase to 100 % the amount of damages for underpayments in addition to the lost wages. Previously it was 25 %.
- 3 - Creates stronger enforcement and collection tools.
- 4 - Raises criminal penalties up to a year in prison and a \$ 5000 fine for failure to pay minimum wage.
- 5 - Strengthens protections for whistleblowers.

In addition to the Labor Standards Division the NYSDOL has a Bureau of Public Work, which collected \$ 7.9 million in wages and interest for 2650 workers. The Bureau enforces the States prevailing wage law, which regulates the wages paid to employees on public work projects, or projects built by government entities for public purposes. They also work closely with the NYSDOL Office of Special Investigations that refers public work cases to local district attorneys for criminal prosecution.


One such case took place in September of 2010. Rockland County District Attorney Tom Zugibe charged Earl Galbreath Jr. with one count of Grand Larceny in the second degree for defrauding 66 employees out of \$ 298,000 in unpaid wages and benefits. This is only one example of many criminal indictments and convictions this department has achieved under the direction of the NYSDOL for prevailing wage violators. In addition to money penalties a contractor can be prevented from bidding on or being awarded any Public Work contract for five years for:

- 1- Two willful violations in a six year period or
- 2- One violation involving falsification of payroll records or kickbacks

I encourage anyone with information on workers being abused by an employer in New York to call the NYSDOL on 1-888-52-labor. Lets help workers get the justice they deserve.

In Solidarity,

**Joey Barca Jr.,
President**



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OFFICERS / STEWARDS

Joseph A. Barca, Jr. President
Kevin Sheil.....Vice President
Douglas Sheahan.....Secretary/Treasurer

BUSINESS AGENTS / STEWARDS

Mark Crumm John Gentile
Joe Mayhew Anthony Pugliese Kevin Scrobola

STAFF

Fran GottronOrganizer

Union Hall: 914-939-8203 Tape: 914-939-8205
website: www.cwa1103.org

EDITOR: Kevin Sheil

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TAKING IT TO THE STREETS.. continued from front cover

CWA Local 1103 Business Agent Joe Mayhew asked the crowd, "Who are we?" And each time he asked, a resounding answer of "We are one," was received.

Kevin Sheil, Vice President CWA Local 1103, urged the crowd to stay involved and said we don't have a choice, because the middle class is under attack in a way never seen before. "And it defies all of our beliefs that we hold to be true: our belief in equal rights, our belief in civil rights, our belief in workers' rights, our belief in our neighbors, our belief in society, our belief in each other," Sheil said.

"Across the country we are facing unprecedented and well funded attacks on our civil rights," said Lena Anderson, of the NAACP. "Martin Luther King Jr. preached that civil rights and worker rights are indivisible."

"We are at war," said Robert Buckley, the president of the Westchester County Corrections Superior Officers Association. "It's an undeclared war against the middle class, by right wingers."

"And worse, our tone deaf politicians like (Westchester County Executive) Rob Astorino, (New Jersey Gov.) Chris Christie, (Wisconsin Gov.) Scott Walker perpetuate these talking points and then want us to believe that the answer lies on the backs of these dedicated public servants only," Sheil said. "The one voice that consistently advocates for the middle class is the union."

We are not millionaires' and did not cause the fiscal crisis, yet we are paying for it in property taxes and sales taxes," said Dr. Rachel Estroff of Westchester for Change. "We simply tax the wrong people."

"I, too, am not a millionaire. I'm something much more important. I'm a firefighter," said Barry McGoey who spoke for the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 628,

This event was part of the nationwide day of action that was held on April 4 as a result of CWA President Larry Cohen's proposal to the AFL-CIO Executive Board. Middle class Americans and union workers are under attack and being blamed for economic problems that we did not cause, so on the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's assas-

sination, we reminded our elected politicians and the general public that Dr. King was in Memphis supporting striking sanitation workers when he was murdered, and to stop vilifying public sector worker and looking to the middle class only to solve budget problems. The rally in White Plains was a true cross section of Americans, which is probably the most amazing way we can pay proper tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King's legacy.

The following organizations were present:

AFSCME

APWU #51

APWU #522

*Blacks in Law Enforcement of America
Communities Voices Heard*

CSEA 9200

CSEA 860

CSEA Region 3

CWA 1103

CWA1105

DC9 IUPAT

Hogarth Center for Social Action

IAFF #2029

IAFF #273

IAFF#628

IUE 475

IUPA #16

NAACP

SEIU 1199

SEIU 32BJ

Sheetmetal Workers #38

UAW Local 21

UFCW #388

Utility 1-2

Westchester for Change

WC Corrections SOA

WC COBA

WestPAC

WC College Fed of Teachers

WP AFL-CIO

Yonkers Fed of Teachers

The Politics of Economic Inequality - Organizing to a wealthy win

Patient; very patient; if the wealthy are one thing, it is patient. To undo the safeguards of the post "Great Depression" and remove the counterbalance to any sense of economic fairness it was going to take a lot of time and patience. FDR's "New Deal" legislation and regulatory rules were designed to protect working class wage earners from the wild speculative and unbridled capitalism that caused the Crash of 1929 and put us into a 12 year depression. To the wealthy, those rules were very onerous:

Banks were regulated

Consumer deposits were insured

Separation of commercial investment banks

Separation of banks and insurance companies

Securities industry went under tight control

Taxes levied on rich and raised over time to fund public projects

Middle class democracy was bolstered by supporting Unions

Beginning in the mid 1970s, to relieve themselves of being responsible Americans, the wealthy and corporate America decided to take action. With lessons learned from the Unions, American's richest began to organize to gain political power. For those at the top of the economic food chain, politics would now become an organized combat.

Lobbyists: Assembling the Troops

Every young would-be actor knows if you want to get in the movies you have to move to Hollywood, but if you want to win in politics you have to live on "K" Street. The Washington Post called "K" street the road to riches. It's physically closer to the White House than to Capital Hill, but within the same striking distance to the pulse and pocketbooks of both. "K" Street is where domestic lobbyists make their offices. In 1960, corporate American had less than 100 offices in Washington; by 1982 there were 2500. By the use of upper income coalition building, lobbying groups representing America's most wealthy began to form almost overnight and soon made Washington DC their home.

The Chamber of Commerce from 1974 to 1980 doubled its membership and tripled its budget for lobbying. Its main thrust was to reduce regulations that have been enacted between 1969 – 1972 in areas of environment protection, occupational safety and consumer protections. The Business Roundtable, a group open to only the American's top CEOs, began to form groups of smaller firms to join the anti-middle-class lobbying efforts. Organizations such as the National Federation of Independent Business, (NFIB) a group made up of small business owners that opposed government regulations, began to spring up everywhere. While these smaller groups were being formed, high power corporate associations continued to take the lead. In 1972, The March

Group, controlled by the nation's most powerful CEOs, had 113 of the top fortune 200 companies' belonging to its organization as a collective lobbying force. The wealthy had learned an important lesson, that you can't go it alone and expect to win.

PAC: Funding the fight

While wealthy, American associations increased in numbers to pursue an anti middle-class agenda, corporate PAC's (Political Action Committees) increased in the same proportions. PAC's are the vehicle that an interest group uses to make contributions to federal candidates. During the build up of Big Business's influence, corporate PAC's grew from 300 in 1976 to over 1200 in 1982. Like never before, Corporate America were putting money into the pockets of politicians to change the swing of the political pendulum in order to favor the wealthy. In 1970, Labor led Big Business in political contribution, yet only 5 years later, Corporate America representing the wealthy pulled ahead. By 1980, business was way ahead of Labor, Big Business accounted for 75% of all the PACs. When it came to raising money, the wealthy were organizing at every level. To increase the money funneled to candidates the rich employed methods such as "Bundling". By coordinating donations from PACs and wealthy individuals they were able to double up on the donations of a single donor. America's most well off understood that funding the fight today would prove to be very profitable in future.

Propaganda: Stealing the truth

However, money alone wasn't going to accomplish the reversal of the political power that the wealthy sought. The rich needed a propaganda machine that could convince the working class that it was in their best interest to relax the safeguards of the "New Deal" and put their fate into the hands of the ultra-wealthy. Put simply, the working class had to believe that what was in the best interest of the rich was in their best interest, too. To accomplish this, conservative "Think Tanks" were created and their opinions were cited as fact. The American Enterprise Institution (AEI) and the Heritage foundation are classic examples of such groups. These "Think Tanks" did not provide objective views but rather they were used to shift public opinion in a conservative direction. The Heritage House formed in 1973, backed by money from Beer tycoon Joseph Coors is very open about its objective. It states its mission is to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values and strong national defense. A simple breakdown of this mission statement can be summed up as:

Limited government = No regulation

Individual freedom= No oversight

Free Enterprise = No Unions

Continued on page 5

Politics of Economic Inequality... continued from page 4

With its forces in place they were ready for their first defensive fight against their most powerful enemy; Labor. In 1977, buoyed by a Democratic president (Jimmy Carter) and congress, Labor sought to undo one of its greatest defeats since the "New Deal." The Taft/Hartley Act or the Labor Management Act of 1947 sought to reign in the powers granted Unions from the National Labor Relations Act of 1935. Specifically, the AFL-CIO sought changes to 14(b) of the act that allowed employers to shift operations to right-to-work states. In addition to the Taft/Hartley changes, Labor also sought to pass the Common Sites Picketing Bill, which would legalize picketing all entrances of a worksite.

Big Business sprang into action like never before against the picketing bill. Forming the Coalition of the Umbrella Organization, hundreds of business firms acted together to generate letters to the editors and OP ED pieces in magazines. The Chamber of Commerce organized a plan that consisted of targeted visits, calls and letters to congress, including specific freshmen Democratic Representatives from suburban districts that were recently taken from Republicans. These Democrats considered themselves vulnerable for re-election and were very susceptible to the wealthy coalition pressures. In the end, they proved to be weak partners for Labor. By the time the campaign had run its course, the bill was killed by 217-205 in the house. As a historical reference, the bill had passed both houses the year before, just to be vetoed by President Ford.

The second defeat at the hands of the wealthy machine took a little longer, yet, was just as bloody. The Chamber of Commerce refreshed from its latest win entered into the fray to kill the changes to 14(b). Labor still stunned from the last lost had regrouped and this time won the House 257-163. Labor wouldn't be so lucky in the senate. The wealthy machine found two champions in the senate in a young Orrin Hatch (Utah-R) and Richard Lugar (Indiana-R). Using the filibuster, the pair organized 3 teams into a finely oiled filibuster machine. In over 5 weeks, the Republicans offered over 1000 amendments and took turns leading the filibuster. The Democrats attempted six cloture votes and all were lost. The Democrats just couldn't get to a floor vote. The last vote failed with just 2 votes short of getting the bill to the floor in a 58-41 vote.

It was reported that 8 million pieces of mail bombarded Washington and you couldn't walk the halls of congress without tripping over a small business owner lobbying against the bill. Labor was stunned by the organized, well-funded action. It was a one-sided class war that we were not prepared to fight. It was also the first shot fired in a 30-year war that would result in mounting labor losses and membership declines.

With Labor bruised and battered, and President Carter haggard by a deep recession, Republican Ronald Regan literally walked into the White House in 1980 by a landslide. Empowered by the election, the Wealthy

seized their first opportunity for an offensive win. Key to the plan was the use of a Texas lobbyist (The Walker Group). The Walker Group (AKA the Carlton Group) was successful in stalling President Carter's tax reform efforts that would have diminished the income inequality gap between the rich and working class by:

- Raising capital gains taxes**
- Eliminating high-end deductions for the wealthy**
- Greatly simplifying the tax code**

The administration would use the Walker/Carlton Group's popular opinion against taxation to trick the general public into believing its axiom "What was good for Americans richest corporations and individuals was good for Americans." It worked. In his first term in office, Reagan made the most sweeping reductions to taxes for America's wealthiest since the pre-depression by fundamentally re-writing the tax code for the rich. The 1981 Economic Recovery and Tax Act did the following for the rich:

- Capital gains were cut in half from 48% to 23%**
- Tax cuts for business and affluent**
- New depreciation rules favored corporate America**
- Expense of tax loopholes**
- Reduction to overall taxes on corporations**
- Top income tax rates sharply cut**
- Top rate estate tax cut 70% to 50%**

Essentially the Wealthy machine took its first step in securing the funds for the next 30-year battle to widen the gap of economic inequality. Corporate and wealthy Americans now had their strike force, it was manned, funded and had a propaganda machine second to none.

Most Americans believe in the old axiom that people need to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. It's a uniquely American belief that we rise or fall due to our own personal efforts and we get what we deserve. The problem is that this belief is rarely true. American hubris has made us socially blind to the governmental organizations and resources that working class Americans use everyday.

Here is something to consider: The wealthy have not done it on their own! They have coalitions, political/legislative programs, and informational networks which advanced their well-being.

*Joe Mayhew,
Business Agent*

*Primary research for this series came from Winner-Take-All Politics, Hacker, Pierson; Simon & Schuster
Next Month - Part III-The Politics of Economic Injustice: Targeting Labor*

"A Rally Cry"

April 4, 2011, that was the day hundreds of socially conscious union workers, union retirees and union leaders along with union and middle class family supporters gathered beneath the watchful eye of the Martin Luther King Junior statue near the Westchester County Court. All came in the name of decency and to rally the troops in the upcoming battles that are sure to come in this ever increasing war against the middle class. While corporate greed and political machinations had previously been kept discreetly undercover, the policy makers and CEOs of today are blatantly showing us how little regard they have for our welfare or well being. They are on a mission to destroy the hard fought and hard won benefits that gave rise to the middle class. They are taking more from us, offering us less, and expecting us to accomplish even more with said less.

This unreasonable methodology of social, political and financial oppression has been brewing ever since the idiot actor who became President enthusiastically promoted the "trickle down" theory. All of his right wing buddies lauded him as the greatest US President ever. Even many in the middle class bought into the hysteria, after all, he set the Russians straight and got them to tear the wall down. He made the world take notice of the USA as a military power who swings a big stick. The world feared us, but the only thing is we should have been afraid of was him, and not Russia. He did more to damage the fabric of what makes this country great, her middle class of working people, than the Premier of Russia ever did. Don't urinate on our heads and say it's raining.

Charisma aside, we need to look closer at this vile hypocrite whose actions set the union busting mentality in motion. In 1981, the Air Traffic Controllers union, after years of haggling with the FAA about working conditions, was fed up with being summarily ignored. The union leadership presented the situation to the gentry and a strike vote was ordered. The workers, the people who make things happen for any company, agreed to the need to threaten a strike. When the FAA dug in their heels, with the help of the US government, PATCO (Professional Air Traffic Controllers union) realized they were in for a fight. But no one could've foreseen the US President stepping in the way he did.

He ordered the now belligerent air traffic controllers to get back to work within forty eight hours or consider themselves unemployed. No one could've believed he was serious and the union had no choice but to call his bluff. Only problem was this prune faced wizened old man who was half baked as an actor and was "acting" his way through a Presidency was not bluffing. He brought in the military air traffic controllers to replace the striking PATCO members and even when the real ATCs wanted to go back to their jobs, they were shut out. No one old enough to remember "Ray Gun" and his vociferous pro-union speeches of the fifties could believe he was

doing what he did. He made millions of American dollars as a member of SAG, the Screen Actors Guild, a UNION by any other name.

He owed his livelihood and the high salaries as well as the extravagant lifestyle it offered him and his family to UNIONS and the collective bargaining process. Hollywood producers are not different from corporate CEOs; they want ALL of the money for them and little to none for you. What the hell was wrong with him? Unions kept producers honest and they do the same to CEOs and corporations. The media chose to focus on the asked for pay raise which seems high to a layperson not under the incredible stress of making sure none of the tens of thousands of flights landing, taking off or flying at five hundred miles per hours don't hit each other. They were over worked and understaffed and very much over stressed. The ramifications to their inability to perform their jobs thoroughly would mean dead passengers....lots of them. They had been complaining for years but like good hard working American workers they sucked it up and kept on forging until they just couldn't go another day under those conditions. That was the true beginning of the shifting tides and sentiments against unions.

One of Dr King's admonitions to us was to "not let history repeat itself." The corporate raiders, the US government, the lobbyists, law makers, crooked politicians, all have been silently nibbling away at our livelihoods, our salaries and our benefits. We kept giving them chance after chance to redeem themselves but the time has come to take what is ours. We are dealing with unrepentant and unredeemable souls. We are not asking for a fair share any longer, the time is now to demand and take if necessary what is rightfully ours.

No company in existence would survive with only the corporate side of things; the suits don't want to get dirty in their daily routines, they don't want to work weekends or overtime when things go really wrong. These are the sacrifices to family, friends, children, and to ourselves that we union workers have made since the dawn of collective bargaining. It is worth more than they would have you believe. The fight is worth more than even you might believe, so do NOT give up. YOU are worth more than they would have you believe. We are not slaves and refuse to be treated as such. We are American workers, the backbone of this once and still mighty country. It's time for 'we the people' to take back this country. America is not the government or the military, America is you and me and your neighbor and your co-workers.

Honor each other as you honor yourself and fight this fight to the bitter end. Your children and mine will thank us for it. The future we are setting is theirs to inherit.

*Michael James,
Retired Verizon Member*

The Retiree's Corner..

Greeting Retirees:

At our March 29 General Membership meeting, we were pleased to have Amy Pratto, an Outreach Counselor, from the Veterans Administration ((Montrose / Castle Point) address our membership. Amy spoke about getting veterans enrolled into the VA Health Care system and, once enrolled, what health care benefits are available to them. She reminded the veterans in attendance that the definition of a veteran is any person who has served in the military and has an honorable discharge. Once you have met both of these criteria's, you are eligible to sign up immediately. If you have any questions, you can reach Amy or her counterpart Darrin Winston at 914-737-4400 x3524 for additional information.

Also, CWA Local 1103 Vice President, Kevin Sheil, addressed our members in regard to mobilization for the upcoming contract negotiations with Verizon. Please keep in touch with the local and our chapter to keep abreast of any mobilization events.

On May 5 the annual Verizon Stockholders Meeting will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana. Our District 1 RMC President, Patrick Welsh, is expected to attend.

On May 11 Patrick will hold a mobilization workshop for our members.

Upcoming General Membership Meetings schedule:

Tuesday, June 14, time and place to be announced.

AGENDA: Revisions to our by-laws, an update of contract negotiations and information in regard to the Verizon shareholders meeting.

Sept. 2011, time and place to be announced.

When we were active members we realized the importance of mobilizing to protect our benefits.

As retirees, we cannot afford to sit back and assume that these benefits will be here forever. We need to continue being activists.

To all members, our dues are annual, so if you have not sent in your 2011 dues, please do so at your earliest convenience. Our dues support the cost of our meeting place locations and refreshments, our mailings - to keep everyone up-to-date and for our attendance at important Local, County, State and National Conferences and meetings.

KEEP IN TOUCH via our RMC website at <http://cwalocal1103rmc.org>

and on Facebook at CWA Local 1103 RMC.

Jeanette Spoor, President

CWA Local 1103 RMC

Have a Drug,
Alcohol or
Gambling Problem?

Call
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939-8203 or 8204

Ask to be put in contact
with Tom O'Halloran



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"We Are One" Rally - April 4, 2011

