

'Triangle' Still Resonates

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March 25 marked the 108th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, in which an employer's negligence played a pivotal role in 146 young women losing their lives because the doors through which they might have escaped had been locked to keep them from stepping away from their work stations.

Ann Toback, the executive director of the Workmen's Circle, in an op-ed column written to commemorate the tragedy, warned of a political climate in this nation that evoked the anti-worker, anti-union ethos at the time of that blaze. Noting that last June's Supreme Court decision in the Janus case made it harder for public-employee unions to represent their members, she added, "Workplace safety regulations put in place after the 1911 fire are now in jeopardy, the right to collectively bargain, collect union dues, and to organize are all under threat of weakening or outright elimination."

Those are hardly the only threats to worker rights and safety. Last week we reported that a dozen key Inspector General positions have either been left unfilled or are held by employees designated on an acting basis. Inspectors General exist to keep agencies honest. As anyone who paid attention to Donald Trump's career knows, honesty has never been a major component of his business model. The neglect—or deliberate callousness—involved in leaving those jobs without a permanent head may seem like small stuff compared to some of the President's other transgressions.

But it all adds up, and not in a positive way for our nation.