

Wal-Mart and the International Supply Chain

Wal-Mart Workers' Testimonies

Today 60% of Walmart's total merchandise is imported from more than 6,000 suppliers in 63 countries. Their top suppliers are Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Thailand. (Frontline interview with Gary Gereffi, and Morgan Stanley, 03/04 and Latin American News Digest, 9/6/04)

Wal-Mart is driving down wages and working conditions worldwide by requiring its supplier factories to produce more goods for less money year after year.

What Workers are Saying:

One worker from a Wal-Mart supplier factory in China said:

“We tried to appeal to the government to help but the government always sided with the boss. So I and members of my unit decided we needed to organize a union. The factory fired all of us who spoke up, me and 2 other leaders. Even if they didn't fire us, the way they always treat people who speak up is the same. They give them the worst jobs, the most bitter and difficult, and they do the work of two people every day, but for only a few 10s of Yuan.” (Note: 30 Yuan is approximately minimum wage.) (United Students Against Sweatshops, 7/24/2005)

Workers in Wal-Mart supply factories in Africa have reported they are paid poverty wages, forced to undergo humiliating strip searches, have restricted use of the bathrooms, and are forced to work excessive hours of compulsive overtime. *One woman in Swaziland described her working conditions by saying:*

“They take us like slaves. They are always doing things with force.” (Clean Clothes Campaign, 1/6/03 and UNITE, 6/04)

Isabel Reyes, a worker in a Honduran clothing factory, whose main customer is Wal-Mart, explains:

“The goals are always increasing, but the pay stays the same.”

She sews sleeves onto shirts at the rate of 1,200 garments a day – two shirts a minute, one sleeve every 15 seconds, for only \$35 a week. (Los Angeles Times, 11/24/03)

More Wal-Mart Supply Chain Facts

- **In Guatemala, Wal-Mart sourced from factories where female employees were illegally given pregnancy tests prior to and during employment.** (Human Rights Watch, 2/12/02)
- **Workers at a Wal-Mart supply factory in the Philippines are forced to work 15 hour night shifts from 4pm-7am.** Most of these workers are contract workers, meaning they receive no benefits and are not eligible to join a union. The workers repeatedly report getting sick from the stress -- headaches and diarrhea are most common – and being told by management to rest and get back to work. They are not allowed to take sick leave.
- **Day shift workers at the same Filipino factory report being forced to produce 3500 spaghetti strap t-shirts in one day** – a quota that is nearly impossible to meet and leaves the workers extremely exhausted.



[This information comes to you from United Students Against Sweatshops, in collaboration with the Campaign for Labor Rights. For more information, visit us at: www.studentsagainstsweatshops.org, and www.campaignforlaborrights.org]

