

SWEATSHOP ALERT

How you can
make a difference.

GET INFORMED

Visit the Maquila Solidarity Network website for more information: <http://en.maquilasolidarity.org>

GET INVOLVED

Raise the possibility of a 'No Sweat' policy within your union local as a possible demand for bargaining your collective agreement.

Join a community group working on the issue or start one.

EDUCATE OTHERS

Write letters to the editor of your paper.

Ask someone to come to your union local, church, community centre, or city council and present on the topic.

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national
union

NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES

- B. C. Government and Service Employees' Union
- Health Sciences Association of British Columbia
- Health Sciences Association of Alberta
- Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union
- Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union
- Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers
- New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees
- Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union
- PEI Union of Public Sector Employees
- Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees

■ 15 AURIGA DRIVE
NEPEAN, ONTARIO
CANADA / K2E 1B7

■ [613] 228-9800
FAX [613] 228-9801

■ www.nupge.ca

■ national@nupge.ca

The National Union of Public and General Employees is an affiliate of the Canadian Labour Congress and a member of the Public Services International

SEW UNFAIR

NO SWEAT

CHANGING OUR CLOTHES TO CHANGE LIVES



'No Sweat' Policies

Changing our clothes. Changing an industry.

THERE'S A GOOD chance you own some clothes that were made in a sweatshop.

A sweatshop is a work environment where employees toil for long hours in unsafe conditions for low pay.

Sweatshop workers, usually women, are often intimidated and harassed and sometimes even subjected to violence and sexual abuse.

Sweatshop conditions are the norm in the apparel industry around the world and exist globally in many sectors.

In Canada, many workers sew brand-name clothes for piece rates that are less than the legal minimum wage. They don't receive benefits or overtime pay.

It doesn't have to be this way. All around the world, garment workers are organizing in their workplaces and communities (in Latin America, Asia, Africa and even in Canada) to improve working conditions and end sweatshop abuses.

Force policy change

One of the best ways for us to support workers trapped in sweatshops is for us to become

more conscious of what we buy and how it is made.

Better still we can change how our employers or governments, at all levels, purchase clothes and goods and services to pressure an industry to change.

Workplaces and governments throughout the world are passing 'No Sweat' purchasing policies that restrict them to purchasing uniforms, goods and services that are made in factories that comply with internationally recognized labour standards based on Conventions of the United Nations and the International Labour Organization.

A 'No Sweat' policy says "no" to child labour, forced labour, discrimination, harassment and abuse, and "yes" to fair wages and hours of work as well as workers rights and safe, healthy working conditions.

Ethical purchasing

We often don't think of the potential consumer power some workplaces and public institutions wield. But when you consider the number of uniforms, products and other

services they purchase on an annual basis you realize that they buy far more than any individual consumer.

Pushing your workplace or elected politicians to adopt a 'No Sweat' policy is a powerful tool to assist workers in winning better working conditions and respect for their rights.

Suppliers then must meet some basic conditions respecting worker dignity at their workplaces.

The code of conduct includes adhering to national and international labour laws as well as workplace policies against harassment and discrimination. It sets out a living wage for the workers.

Rights watchdog

Buyers can contract with a nonprofit and independent monitoring organization, such as the Worker Rights Consortium, to receive ongoing reliable information on production conditions.

When human rights or labour violations in a factory are reported, the purchaser demands that the supplier remedy the violations re-

ported. Should a supplier not fully respond to the recommendations, the purchaser can decide to not renew or terminate a contract, or remove a supplier from the list of bidders.

Savings a possibility

Worker wages are usually an extremely small percentage of the final consumer price. For example, garment workers in the U.S. earn only 5% of the consumer price. But it is even worse for garment workers in many parts of Latin America and Asia, where they often earn no more than 1% of the consumer price.

The point is, that when we purchase uniforms or any clothing we should be paying the lowest responsible price—not the price that can be met only by using sweatshops.

Furthermore, the cost of affiliation with an independent monitoring organization makes up just a tiny fraction of most procurement budgets.

In many cases it has been found that by paying greater attention to the manufacturing of the products purchasers actually save money.



Clean
out your
closet.
Close a
sweatshop.