



Learn More About...

Worker Justice

An Annotated Bibliography

Click [HERE](#) for more resources on the various interrelated issues affecting worker justice.

Web Links

Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras <<http://coalitionforjustice.info/>>

Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras is a coalition of religious, labor, environmental, community and women's groups in Mexico, the United States and Canada. They strive, in a coordinated and multi-disciplinary way, for a better quality of life, sustainable development, social justice, human rights and environmental stability. Their actions are carried out wherever companies and multinational corporations violate workers' rights or impact negatively on the right of communities to protect and safeguard their environment, particularly in the maquiladoras in Mexico.

Fair Trade Resource Network <<http://www.fairtraderesource.org/>>

The *Fair Trade Resource Network* is an information hub designed to grow the fair trade movement and create a market that values the people who make the food we eat and the goods we use.

Global Exchange <<http://www.globalexchange.org/>>

Global Exchange is a membership-based international human rights organization dedicated to promoting social, economic and environmental justice around the world. Since their founding in 1988, they have successfully increased public awareness of root causes of injustice while building international partnerships and mobilizing for change.

Green America <<http://www.greenamericatoday.org/>>

Green America focuses on economic action to solve social and environmental problems. By mobilizing people in their economic roles—as consumers, investors, workers, business leaders - they empower people to take personal and collective action.

Interfaith Worker Justice <<http://www.iwj.org/>>

Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) works to educate, organize, and mobilize the religious community in the U.S. on issues and campaigns that will improve wages, benefits, and working conditions for workers, especially low-wage workers.

Jobs with Justice <<http://www.jwj.org/>>

Jobs with Justice coalitions now exist in over 40 cities in 29 states in all regions of the country, made up of both member organizations and thousands of individual activists who sign the Jobs with Justice pledge to be there five times a year for someone else's struggle as well as their own. JWJ creates strategic alliances locally and nationally to develop a broad base of support. By building a base of diverse constituencies at the local level as well as providing training, coordination, and networking at the national level, Jobs with Justice is re-building the infrastructure that gives communities a sense of their own power.

National Labor Committee <<http://www.nlcnet.org/>>

The *National Labor Committee* (NLC) investigates and exposes human and labor rights abuses committed by U.S. companies producing goods in the developing world. NLC undertakes public education, research and popular campaigns that empower U.S. citizens to support the efforts of workers to learn and defend their rights. As they

work for the right to work in dignity and in healthy and safe workplaces, and to earn a living wage, NLC assists them by providing international visibility and backing for their efforts—and pressing for international legal frameworks with effective enforcement mechanisms that will help create a space where fundamental internationally recognized worker rights can be assured.

Political Economy Research Institute at University of Massachusetts Amherst <<http://www.umass.edu/peri/>>

The Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts Amherst is actively engaged in research, dissemination, policy advising, and graduate student education. The institute is committed to addressing basic issues of human and ecological well-being through research written for the general public, policy makers, and academic audiences. PERI researchers are currently involved in three broad and interrelated areas: globalization and macroeconomics; labor markets and living wages; development, peace-building, and the environment.

STITCH <<http://www.stitchonline.org/>>

STITCH is a network of women unionists, organizers, and activists that builds connections between Central American and U.S. women organizing for economic justice. *STITCH* seeks to create a world where women workers are able to improve their lives through organizing and exercising their rights.

Books

Miriam Ching Yoon Louie, *Sweatshop Warriors: Immigrant Women Workers Take on the Global Factory* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2001).

The testimonies of female immigrant sweatshop laborers show them challenging the corporate economy by refusing to stay at the bottom of the pyramid. These women provide inspirational examples of creative and successful resistance and positive social change. The author concentrates on community-based organizations in the Mexican, Chinese, and Korean immigrant populations, and in the process illustrates what makes the new labor movement new.

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* (New York: Henry Hold and Company, 2001).

Between 1998 and 2000, the author spent about three months in three cities throughout the nation, attempting to "get by" on the salary available to low-paid and unskilled workers. She describes how labor-intensive, demeaning, and controlling such jobs can be. She encountered full-time workers who sleep in their cars because they cannot afford housing and employees who yearn for the ability to "take a day off now and then-and still be able to buy groceries the next day." She takes on issues and questions posed before and during the experiment, including the reasons these wages are so low, why workers are so accepting of them, and what Washington's refusal to increase the minimum wage to a realistic "living wage" says about both our economy and our culture.

Arlie Russell Hochschild and Barbara Ehrenreich (Eds.), *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002).

The editors have gathered over 15 essays on aspects of "the female underside of globalization" (e.g., Filipina housekeepers in Hong Kong, Latina domestic workers in Los Angeles, sexual slaves in Thailand, Vietnamese contract brides) mostly written by academics working in the field, but largely jargon-free. While one small book can't say everything about a major global phenomenon, Ehrenreich and Hochschild have at least brought attention to these women's plight.

Ellen Israel Rosen, *Making Sweatshops: Globalization and the U.S. Apparel Industry*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

The only comprehensive historical analysis of the globalization of the U.S. apparel industry, this book focuses on the reemergence of sweatshops in the United States and the growth of new ones abroad. *Making Sweatshops* asks whether the process of globalization can be promoted in ways that blend industrialization and economic development in both poor and rich countries with concerns for social and economic justice – especially for the women who toil in the industry's low-wage sites around the world.

Articles/Papers

Alisa Gravits et al., "Guide to Ending Sweat Shops" *Co-Op America*, March 2008

<<http://www.coopamerica.org/PDF/EndingSweatshops.pdf>>

In a globalized economy, the supply chain – all the steps that go into delivering a product from a worker's hands to the consumer – can be very hard to follow. While most of us would never want to buy products that depend on exploitation at the point of production, too often the evidence we have to go on at the point of purchase is slim. Co-Op America has produced this guide to make it easier for consumers to avoid the worst companies, reward the best, and take action to keep sweatshop labor out of the supply chain.

Alisa Gravitz et. al., "Guide to Fair Trade" *Co-op America*, July 2007

<<http://www.coopamerica.org/PDF/GuideFairTrade.pdf>>

The Fair Trade marketplace is broader and more vibrant than ever before. In this latest edition of the *Co-op America's* "Guide to Fair Trade" you'll learn how Fair Trade provides a fair wage for farmers in crisis, invests in community infrastructure, preserves our environment, and more. You'll read interviews with producers and distributors across the Fair Trade supply chain, and – most importantly – you'll get tips on how to take action to build demand for Fair Trade.

Kari Lyndersen, "Target as bad as Wal-Mart? You Decide," *AlterNet*, 1 May 2006,

<<http://www.alternet.org/workplace/35610/>>

When it comes to wages, working conditions and effect on communities, the two big box stores are eerily similar.

Pope Leo XIII, "Rerum Novarum: Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on Capital and Labor" *The Vatican*,

<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html>

Although the Encyclical follows the lines of the traditional teaching concerning the rights and duties of property and the relations of employer and employee, it applies the old doctrines specifically to modern conditions. Opening with a description of the grievances of the working classes, it proceeds to refute the false theories of the Socialists, and to defend the right of private ownership. The true remedy, continues the pope, is to be found in the combined action of the Church, the State, the employer and the employed. The Church is properly interested in the social question because of its religious and moral aspects; the State has the right and the duty to intervene on behalf of justice and individual and social well-being; and employers and workers should organize into both mixed and separate associations for mutual protection and for self protection. All this is set forth with sufficient detail to reach the principal problems and relations of industrial and social life.

Pope John Paul II, "Laborem Exercens: On Human Work" *The Vatican*

<http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens_en.html>

"Laborem Exercens" is a sustained reflection on the meaning of human work, which John Paul considers to be "a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question..."

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Economic Justice for All" *Archdiocese of Minneapolis/St. Paul Office of Social Justice*, 1986 <<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/EconomicJusticeforAll.pdf>>

Pastoral letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy.

Periodicals/Newsletters

National Green Pages <<http://www.greenamericatoday.org/pubs/greenpages/>>

"Faith Works" Newsletter of Interfaith Worker Justice <http://www.iwj.org/materials/materials_fw.html>

Global Exchange e-Newsletter <<http://www.globalexchange.org/getInvolved/lists.html>>

National Farm Worker Ministry e-Newsletter <<http://www.nfwm.org>>

Audio/Visual/Interactive Resources

America's Income Inequality Prod. PBS NOW, 2007

In America, the top one-tenth of one percent of earners make about the same money per year collectively as the millions of Americans in the bottom fifty percent combined. This is putting a tight squeeze on the middle class, while leaving millions of others in the cold. NOW's David Brancaccio talks with Pulitzer prize-winning financial reporter David Cay Johnston, as well as author and advocate Beth Shulman, about the state of our country's vast income divide and how it's hurting those just trying to make ends meet. You can view the show online at <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/332/index.html> by clicking on video: Income.

Black Gold. DVD. Prod. Speak-it Productions, 2006

Tracing the path of the coffee consumed each day to the farmers who produce it, *Black Gold* asks viewers to "wake up and smell the coffee" by examining the unjust conditions under which it is produced. *Black Gold* also offers an introduction into the rapidly growing "fair trade" coffee market which enables consumers to use their purchasing power to ensure just wages and the protection of human rights for the world's coffee farmers.

Global Village or Global Pillage. Prod. Captured Time Productions. 1999

This video shows constructive ways ordinary people around the world are addressing the impact of globalization on their communities, workplaces, and environments. It weaves together footage of local and transnational activities, interviews, animation and music to show that through grassroots organizing combined with mutual support around the world ordinary people can empower themselves to deal with the global economy. Available at <http://www.capturedtimeproductions.com/films/global.html>

Matewan. Prod. Cinecom Entertainment Group. 1987

A little-known chapter of American labor history is brought vividly to life in this period drama from writer-director John Sayles. It's a fictional story based upon real-life labor wars among West Virginia coal miners during the 1920s. The tension begins when the Stone Mountain Coal Company of Matewan, West Virginia, announces a lower pay rate for miners, who respond by calling a strike under the leadership of a United Mine Workers representative (Chris Cooper). Proving strength in numbers, the miners are joined by black and Italian miners who were initially brought in to break the strike, and a fateful battle ensues when detectives hired by the coal company attempt to evict miners from company housing.

Wal-Mart: The High Cost of a Low Price. Prod. Brave New Films, 2005

Wal-Mart: The High Cost of a Low Price takes viewers beyond Wal-Mart's television ads and into the real lives of the workers business owners and communities affected by the big-box retailer, in an extraordinary journey that will challenge the way you think, feel and shop.