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Newsletter #17

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SweatFree Communities launches new look and improved website

Welcome to our new look!

We are excited to announce the launch of our newly designed website! Check it out: www.sweatfree.org. We would be glad to hear your suggestions and comments on the new site. Email liana@sweatfree.org with any feedback. Happy browsing!

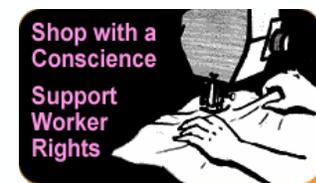
Shop with a Conscience Consumer Guide

Holiday shopping? Looking for that perfect gift? Make sure to shop sweatfree! SweatFree Communities, Sweatshop Watch, and International Labor Rights Forum are excited to bring you the 2007-08 [Shop with a Conscience Consumer Guide](#) filled with excellent products made in good working conditions. We believe that one of the most important criteria for meaningful and dignified work is that workers themselves have an effective, collective voice in determining their wages and working conditions. The products in this shopping guide are made by workers organized into democratic unions or worker-owned cooperatives. All retailers and wholesalers listed below have undergone a rigorous [application process](#) to give us and you the confidence that their products truly meet our sweatfree criteria.

Sweatshop Hall of Shame

Want to make sure that you're not patronizing companies that violate workers' rights? This year we have inducted the first twelve companies into the [Sweatshop Hall of Shame](#), companies that are allegedly flouting labor laws and basic worker protections. In an industry where sweatshops are the norm rather than the exception, the working conditions

2008 Inductees:
American Eagle
Carrefour
Cintas
Dickies
Disney
Guess
Hanes
New Era



highlighted in the Hall of Shame exemplify violations rampant within the global garment industry: paying workers poverty wages for long, hard hours of work under appalling conditions. The 2008 inductees have distinguished themselves by turning a blind eye towards well-documented, serious labor violations.

Speedo
Tommy
Hilfiger
Toys "R" Us
Wal-Mar

[Take action now](#) to hold the Sweatshop Hall of Shame companies accountable for human rights and worker rights violations.

Report from Clean Clothes and Fair Food

We are pleased to announce the release of the report from our conference held jointly with the Alliance for Fair Food in April.

Clean Clothes and Fair Food, A Conference to Promote Justice in Factories and Fields was a co-production of SweatFree Communities and the Alliance for Fair Food, held at Columbia Law School in New York City, April 27-29, 2007. About 135 people from a variety of organizations concerned with worker exploitation in a variety of industries participated in workshops, presentations, impromptu discussions, actions and performances.

Read: [Connecting People, Connecting Struggles: Voices from Clean Clothes and Fair Food.](#)

Procurement Officials in the Sweatfree Movement

This [new report](#), released November 28, presents our findings from a survey of purchasing officials that we conducted during the spring and summer. The results of the survey indicate both challenges and opportunities for sweatfree advocates to ensure effective implementation of sweatfree purchasing policies. Translating legislative victories into victories for workers requires a plan for engaging professional staff of procurement offices, people with significant specialized roles in the sweatfree movement. We welcome your thoughts on the survey findings - email us.

Indian Court Issues International Arrest Warrants for Dutch Labor Activists

In late 2005, the Clean Clothes Campaign, the India Committee of the Netherlands, and several Indian trade unions reported on severe human rights and worker rights violations at the Indian factory, Fibres and Fabrics International (FFI) and its subsidiary company Jeans Knit Pvt Ltd (JKPL). Based on worker interviews, the report revealed physical and verbal abuse of the workforce, hazardous working conditions, lack of proper employment contracts, long working hours, and non-payment of overtime entitlements. Following suit by FFI for "defamation," an Indian court issued a gag order on the local trade unions on July 28, 2006, denying them the right to disclose information on the working conditions of FFI and JKPL workers. On December 1, 2007, an Indian magistrate Court issued international arrest warrants for seven Dutch human rights activists accused of "cybernetic crimes," "racist and xenophobe acts," and "criminal defamation." Indian government authorities also claim that public criticism of labor conditions violates free trade rules. The activists could be arrested and sentenced to two years' imprisonment if caught on Indian soil.

This heinous attack on free speech is an attack on all of us who fight for worker rights anywhere in the world. Standing up for the rights of these activists and the FFI workers to speak out about poor working conditions is protecting our own rights as global citizens and workers. We will soon be calling for action in solidarity with the activists in the Netherlands and India by putting pressure on Indian authorities and the brand G-star, the only remaining brand producing at FFI. [Read more...](#)

Local Campaign News

As usual local sweatfree campaigns are continuing great organizing, and in many places preparing to introduce sweatfree bills in state legislatures early in January 2008. Please be sure to [check our website](#) and coming newsletters for updates. Also feel free to [contact us](#) to get the very latest news from local campaigns.

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