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[Home](#) > Good v. Bad Companies: 2010 Shopping Guide

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***** An additional statement regarding Hanesbrands ^[1] was released on December 23, 2009.**

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Good v. Bad Companies: 2010 Shopping Guide

Anti-Sweatshop groups release list of shameful and honorable brands and retailers, urge consumers to shop with a conscience

Just in time for the holiday shopping season, is the debut of two consumer shopping guides highlighting the good, bad and the ugly of the apparel industry. The Shop with a Conscience Consumer Guide sponsored by the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) and SweatFree Communities highlights companies that are transparent, pay a decent wage, and promote workers' right to organize. The Sweatshop Hall of Shame, sponsored by ILRF, is a list of "bad and ugly" companies that are flouting international core labor standards and basic worker rights.

The Shop with a Conscience Consumer Guide features clothing produced in shops where workers are organized into democratic unions or worker-owned cooperatives and have an effective, collective voice in deciding their wages and working conditions. The companies highlighted produce clothing in adherence to international core labor standards, pay decent wages, maintain healthy and safe working conditions, and treat workers with respect and dignity.

The 2010 Guide features the following brands: Autonomie Project, DeMoulin Apparel, Donnelly/Colt, Fair Trade Sports, Justice Clothing, Just Shirts, Kenneth Gordon, Leather Coats, Maggie's Organics, Metro Sportswear, Nicaraguan Garment Workers Fund, No Sweat Apparel, Rage Baby, SterlingWear, Traditions Fair Trade, and The Working World.

"This Consumer Guide is a valuable resource for consumers who want to use their dollars to support workers," said Bjorn Claeson, Executive Director of SweatFree Communities. "Sweatshops are still rampant in the global garment industry. But as consumers we can strengthen alternatives to sweatshops by using the Shop with a Conscience Consumer Guide for our holiday shopping this year."

Sweatshop Hall of Shame inductees are known for paying workers poverty wages to toil for excessively long hours under hazardous working conditions. This year's official inductees are: Abercrombie, Gymboree, Hanes, Ikea, Kohl's, LL Bean, Pier 1, Propper International, and Walmart. Most of this year's Hall of Shame inductees use suppliers that practice illegal tactics to suppress workers' rights to organize. And, some even use cotton riddled with child and forced labor.

In addition, there is an Honorable Mention of the American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA) for its selfish actions in response to the recent Honduran military coup. The trade association was a signatory of a letter addressed to President Barack Obama in July 2009 which, rather than calling for the protection of Honduran civil liberties and a restoration of a democracy amidst the crisis, merely requested “economic relations to be secured.” The profit-driven motives that caused AAFA to be more concerned with the stability of its members’ production in Honduras than for the rights of the Honduran workers responsible for producing its goods, is a testament to the entrenched interests of the apparel industry.

According to Bama Athreya, Executive Director of the International Labor Rights Forum “The Uzbekistan government currently mandates kids as young as 11 to pick cotton in order to meet excessive quotas. These children are taken out of their schools and forced to the fields to help meet the country’s demand as the second largest cotton producer in the world.” She continues, “There are several major U.S. brands that have joined forces to boycott Uzbek cotton but there still remains well-known companies that use Uzbek cotton in their production.”

The Sweatshop Hall of Shame also encourages consumers to act immediately by providing information on how they can contact the companies directly concerning the issues raised.

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The 2010 Shop with a Conscience Consumer Guide can be found at: www.sweatfree.org/shoppingguide [4]. The Guide features companies that produce clothing in accordance with international core labor standards.

The Sweatshop Hall of Shame is available at www.laborrights.org/sites/default/files/publications-and-resources/sweatshop_hall_shame_2010.pdf [5]. The Hall of Shame highlights some of most well known clothing companies that continue to allow its suppliers to violate workers rights.

The International Labor Rights Forum is an organization dedicated to advocating for the humane treatment of workers in international trade. Founded in 1986, by leaders in human rights, labor, academic and faith-based communities, ILRF was created as an agency responsible for monitoring the enforcement of international labor standards and to develop other means of protecting workers' rights around the world.

SweatFree Communities coordinates a national network of grassroots campaigns that promote humane working conditions in apparel and other labor-intensive global industries by working with both public and religious institutions to adopt sweatshop-free purchasing policies. Using institutional purchasing as a lever for worker justice, the sweatfree movement empowers ordinary people to create a just global economy through local action.

Source URL: <http://www.laborrights.org/creating-a-sweatfree-world/sweatshops/news/12215>

Links:

[1] <http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/cotton-campaign/news/12251>

[2] <mailto:trina.tocco@ilrf.org>

[3] <mailto:bjorn@sweatfree.org>

[4] <http://www.sweatfree.org/shoppingguide>

[5] http://www.laborrights.org/sites/default/files/publications-and-resources/sweatshop_hall_shame_2010.pdf