



ANOTHER WAL-MART BARGAIN

“Our lives are confined to the factory and dormitory.”

Sexual harassment; 15 to 16 ½-hour shifts, seven days a week; Working 100 hours a week; cheated of over 40 percent of their wages.

Centear Clothing Ltd.

Al Tajamouat Industrial City / Sahab
Amman, Jordan

Phone: 962 4 020 967

Ownership: Indian Capital —Mr. Razib

Opened in 2002

Number of workers: total 300—200 men and 100 women. Two hundred workers are from Bangladesh, 75 from India and 25 from Jordan.

Production: Wal-Mart’s “Athletic Works” label accounted for the majority of production in June, July and August 2005. (“Athletic Works”, UPC# 11783, Shell-100% polyester, Knit-100% polyester.)



SEWING WAL-MART’S “ATHLETIC WORKS” LABEL

- Routine 15 to 16 ½-hour shifts, seven days a week, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. or 12:30 a.m.;
- Some all-night 18 to 19-hour shifts, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 or 3:00 the following morning; after three or four hours of sleep, workers have to begin their next shift;
- One day off a month, no government holidays, no legal vacation days;
- Workers report working 100 hours a week;
- Paid below the legal minimum wage: for 100 ½ hours of work earning just \$36.92 a week, or 37 cents an hour—43 percent less than the legal minimum due them;
- Women report sexual harassment;
- No sick days—if absent, day’s wage is docked;
- Workers must ask permission to use the bathroom;
- Speaking during working hours is prohibited;
- Ten to twelve workers share small and unclean dorm rooms, with limited access to water;
- Guest workers will be deported for asking for their rights.

Centear Clothing Ltd. is a relatively small subcontract factory located in the Al Tajamouat Industrial Park in Sahab. Nearly 90 percent (87 ½ percent) of Centear’s workforce are “guest workers” from Bangladesh and India. They sew clothing for Wal-Mart, and the workers believe, also on occasion for K-Mart.

TYPICAL DAILY SHIFT AT CENTEAR CLOTHING LTD. --15 TO 16 ½ HOURS A DAY--	
8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	Work / 4 ½ hours
12:30 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Lunch / 30 minutes
1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Work / 7 hours
8:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.	Supper / 30 minutes
8:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. or 12:30 a.m.	Overtime / 2 ½ to 4 hours

HOURS

The standard daily shift is 15 to 16 ½ hours, from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. or to 12:30 a.m. There is no regular quitting time and the workers are not permitted to leave the factory until they complete their assigned production goals. They work seven days a week, with an average of just one day off a month. For example, in June, July and August 2005, the workers were allowed just three days off. Guest workers are also forced to work on national holidays at the Centear factory.

There are also grueling all-night 18 to 19-hour shifts up to twice a week, from 8:00 a.m. straight through to 2:00 or 3:00 the following morning. Usually these all-night

shifts rotate to different production lines or departments, depending upon who is falling behind on their mandatory production goals. After working such an all-night shift, the workers are allowed just three or four hours of sleep before they have to return to work.

The workers themselves estimate that they work over 100 hours a week. The following schedule, which is not uncommon, puts the workers at the factory 107 hours a week while working 100 ½ hours.

Such a 100 ½-hour workweek includes 52 ½ hours of overtime, which exceeds Jordan's legal limit by 379 percent! By law, overtime is to be limited to no more than 14 hours (13.85 hours) a week.

100 ½-HOUR WORKWEEK		
Friday	8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	(10 hours with ½ hour off for lunch)
Saturday	8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.	(15 hours with 1 hour off for lunch and supper)
Sunday	8:00 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.	(16 ½ hours with 1 hour off for lunch and supper)
Monday	8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.	(15 hours with 1 hour off for lunch and supper)
Tuesday	8:00 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.	(16 ½ hours with 1 hour off for lunch and supper)
Wednesday	8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.	(15 hours with 1 hour off for lunch and supper)
Thursday	8:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m.	(19 hours with 1 hour off for lunch and supper)



WAGES:

PAID BELOW THE LEGAL MINIMUM WAGE, CHEATED OF OVERTIME PAY

The regular legal workweek in Jordan is eight hours a day, six days a week, for a 48-hour week. The legal minimum wage is **set at 58 cents an hour and \$27.69 a week**. The **Centear factory routinely violates Jordan's wage and hour laws**, which is the definition of a sweatshop in the United States. In fact, the **Centear factory workers sewing Wal-Mart garments are being cheated of over 40 percent of the wages legally due them each week**.

First, Centear workers do not work a regular 48-hour week as the law mandates. Management arbitrarily—and illegally—increased the “regular” workweek for the guest workers to 60 hours, while paying the same weekly salary of \$27.69, despite the fact that the guest workers are now working 12 extra hours a week. This means that the guest workers are earning just 46 cents an hour, which is 12 cents—or 20 percent—less than the legal minimum of 58 cents an hour. The workers are even further cheated, when it comes to their overtime pay, through management's gross under-reporting of the overtime hours actually worked.

Centear workers report earning \$160 a month, including overtime. This comes to \$36.92 a week, but they are working 100 ½ hours to earn that. Legally the workers should be earning \$27.69 for the regular 48 hours of work, and 72 cents an hour—overtime must be paid at a 25 percent premium—for the 52 ½ hours of overtime they work, or **\$37.80. Their wage for the 100 ½ work-week should be at least \$65.49. Yet the workers report earning just \$36.92 a week, including overtime. This means they are being cheated of \$28.57 in wages legally due them each week. They are being paid 43 cents an hour less than required under Jordan's laws. In the course of a year, each worker is being short-changed of \$1,486 in wages—an enormous amount of money for someone who is earning an average wage of just 37 cents an hour.** ($\$36.92 \div 100.5 \text{ hours} = 36.7$ cents an hour.)

ABUSIVE AND ILLEGAL WORKING CONDITIONS:

- Workers report incidents of **sexual harassment**;
- Guest workers are shouted at and **threatened with immediate deportation** if they ask for their rights or even question their low wages;
- **No sick days or medical leave**—wages docked for days absent;
- **Workers need permission to use the toilet**;
- **Speaking during working hours is prohibited**;
- **There are no paid national holidays or legal annual vacations**;
- **There is no doctor or nurse in the factory**, and no health care;
- Ten to twelve workers must share each small dorm room. The rooms are not clean, nor is there sufficient ventilation;
- **Access to water is limited**, and is not available on a full-time basis;
- If workers are late three times in a month, a full day's wage will be docked;
- **No corporate codes of conduct were posted in the factory**, and the workers have never even heard of such codes;
- Workers feel that they are in a trap, with no rights and no way out. **They have no hope that conditions will ever change.**

However, if conditions could somehow change, their demands are very modest. The workers would like to be paid properly for their overtime hours, which would immediately and significantly improve their salaries; that

there be fewer threats and less an atmosphere of fear in the factory; and that the food and primitive living conditions be improved.

COMPANY CONTACT INFORMATION

WAL-MART STORES, INC.

702 SW 8th Street
Bentonville, Arkansas 72716
Phone: (479) 273-4000
Website: www.walmartstores.com
CEO: Lee Scott, pay in 2005 was \$5.37M