Boycott Wal-Mart

by Gary Whittaker

For the everyday individual, companies like Wal-Mart have been a source of great deals, where goods can be purchased at a relatively inexpensive sum. These companies preach never-ending low costs for the benefit of the consumer. Most of us have taken that as face value, resulting in hundreds of billions of dollars of revenue annually. Wal-Mart in particular has been one of the major beneficiaries of your hard earned dollar. They promote themselves as being concerned about the family, about customer server. Recent events however, have caused us to look a little more deeply into this chain of stores. Many of us have already heard about their North American corporate practices. They have responded to charges of forced overtime, pay inequity, unsafe working conditions with the usual corporate schpeal of having to better train their management staff. The average person has either accepted it, or simply chosen to ignore it, preferring to worry about the drama of their own lives. But that is not the end of this story. Wal-Mart recently decided to close down the first and only unionized store to date, sighting loss of profitability.

If a store like Walmart, who routinely subcontracts their manufacturing to companies that pays their employees much less than minimum wage, cannot make a profit in a unionized environment in North America, than what it that saying for the rest of the companies out there? Wal-Mart is not only in the business of providing low costs on merchandise, but in human labour as well. While they are not the only ones doing it, they are the ones that have profited the most by it. What prevents a company that sponsors 7 day a week, 12 hour shift with NO overtime in the 3rd world from trying to do the same legal equivalent here? This is a company that has made over 9 Billion dollars in 2004.

What does that have to do with the average everyday individual? Plenty. Many jobs in the manufacturing industry are being lost to those same 3rd world countries, because there is no protection for the common man. They do not enjoy the same freedoms and opportunities that we do in North America. They cannot just pick up and choose to work elsewhere. They cannot just choose to go back to school and get government loans. They will take, and stay with any job they can get, regardless of their working conditions because there simply are no other alternatives. So when North Americans lose their jobs in that industry, they are forced to work for lower and lower wages, and subsequently their buying power goes down. With a lowering buying power, companies like Wal-Mart make more profit as people seek to stretch their dollar as far as they can.

Old Mom & Pop stores cannot survive anymore either. When they moved out of the city and into the suburbs, Wal-Mart followed. Once the population on the outskirts of a city reach a certain density, you can be sure that there will be a Wal-Mart coming soon. One may even show up quicker on sites with highway access. Wal-Mart's own buying policy is such that small time operations cannot afford to sell to Wal-Mart and make a profit. Small companies cannot survive on the pennies Wal-Mart leaves them, nor can they compete with the chains themselves, so they close down. Since this impacts more than the clothing industry, more people will replace their lost jobs with lower paying ones, and have to rely on stores like Wal-Mart to maintain their own moderate lifestyle.

We are not powerless against this. Alone, we can do nothing. Together, we can change that policy. Wal-Mart will continue to attract customers, that is a fact. But we can make it so that there will only be Mercedes-Benz and BMW's in the parking lot. If we pull together, we can cut enough into Wal-Mart's bottom line for them to make serious changes.

If you are part of a social organization, let them know what we are doing.

If you run a website, put a link to this page.

If you are simply a concerned citizen, Boycott Wal-Mart!

Send the strongest message you can! Companies will not listen to your words, they will listen to your wallet. Only if we change our buying strategy can we get them to listen to us. You can still get great deals at other related companies. The point here is to send a message. Start with the chain that has the most to lose, and the most amount of money to do something significant to change things. The purpose is not to destroy, but to rebuild. Once Wal-Mart changes their policies, the others will follow suit or they will be next. We want to build a new type of Co-Op. A type of Co-Op that can change the world with members of the global community. A Co-Op of average everyday people.

Send A Message: Boycott Wal-Mart