

Paper Four Topics

Choose One:

- 1) Argue whether or not sweatshops are inherently good or bad for the people who work in them.
- 2) Do you believe globalization helps all people within the system? Think about workers in the participating countries in your response.
- 3) Do you believe most Americans benefit from sweatshop labor? Why or why not? Consider the price of goods, jobs that are lost or created by imports, and the competition on manufacturers to have better, cheaper products.
- 4) How does social awareness and conscience factor into people and how they shop? Is it significant enough to bring back American manufacturing? Are American companies being honest with people in disclosing where their products are either entirely or partially manufactured in other countries?

I. Introduction

- a. Identify the work being criticized
- b. Present thesis – argument about the work
- c. Preview your argument – what are the steps you will take to prove your argument

II. Summary/Evaluation of the work

- a. Does not need to be comprehensive – present only what the reader needs to know to understand your argument.
- b. Where does the argument go wrong (look back at the Rebuttal Powerpoint)?

III. Your argument

- a. Your argument will likely involve a number of sub-arguments –mini-theses you prove to prove your larger argument true.

For example, if your thesis was that the author's presumption that the world will soon face a "clash of civilizations" is flawed because he inadequately specifies his key concept, civilizations, you might prove this by: i. Noting competing definitions of civilizations ii. Identifying how his examples do not meet the example of civilizations iii. Argue that civilization is so broad and non-specific that it is not useful

- b. This should be the bulk of the paper – I want to read your argument about the work, not a summary.

IV. Conclusion

- a. Reflect on how you have proven your argument.
- b. Point out the importance of your argument
- c. Note potential avenues for additional research or analysis

Refutation

clashing with your opponent's arguments and evidence

Advocacy versus Refutation

- **Advocacy:** involves advancing your own case, e.g. what you are for
- **Refutation:** involves indicting your opponent's arguments, evidence, and reasoning, e.g., what you are against
 - also known as the “burden of clash” or “burden of rebuttal”
- Competent arguers can build a cogent case of their own or refute their opponent's position.

The process of refutation

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- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>□ Advocate 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Initiates an argument – Has the burden of proof – Must establish a <i>prima facie</i> case – Policy case: ill, blame, cure, advantages – Value case: establishment of criteria, application of criteria | <p>□ Advocate 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Refutes the position of Advocate 1 – Has the burden of clash – Must refute the core arguments offered by Advocate 1 – Needn't refute every argument made by Advocate 1 – May, but is not required, to offer an alternative position | <p>□ Advocate 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rebutts the indictments of Advocate 2 – Rebuilds his or her own case – Extends his or her own position – Counters any alternative position offered by Advocate 1 |
|---|---|---|

Illustration of refutation

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Pro</p> <p>The U.S. shouldn't have invaded Iraq the U.N. inspectors were working. France was right, there weren't any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.</p> | <p>Con</p> <p>Had France and the rest of the U.N. thought Iraq had WMD.</p> <p>France didn't agree on the need to invade, but France did agree that Iraq was hiding weapons from the U.N. inspectors.</p> <p>John Kerry, Hillary Clinton, and all the other key Democratic leaders voted for the war too.</p> | <p>Pro</p> <p>If perceptions are what count, France's perception was that military force should have been the last resort, and the U.S. should not have acted unilaterally.</p> <p>France's perception was that the U.N. inspectors should be allowed to finish their work.</p> <p>Democrats who voted for the invasion didn't know the White House was “cherry picking” the intelligence.</p> | <p>Con</p> <p>The U.S. didn't act unilaterally. Britain, Spain, Italy and a number of other countries were part of the “coalition of the willing.”</p> <p>The real reason France opposed military action was because it had lucrative oil contracts with Iraq.</p> <p>Democrats voted for the war for political reasons; they didn't want to look weak on national security.</p> |
|--|--|---|---|

Illustration of refutation

Pro	Con	Pro	Con
Gays should be allowed to adopt children because there is a shortage of heterosexual adoptive parents.	Kids need a two parent family with a mother and a father figure.	Laws don't prevent single, straight parents from adopting now, so lots of kids are raised by an adoptive mother or father.	Tax incentives would still help, and a two-parent, mother-father household is still the ideal situation.
Permanent adoption is far better in terms of child development and family stability than temporary foster care.	More instances should be taken to encourage adoptions by heterosexuals, such as tax incentives.	Gays are more willing to adopt children with problems (such as HIV positive kids).	Because children are so vulnerable, the state has a compelling interest in looking out for their safety and well being.
	Gays are less desirable as parents, they can't legally marry, and studies claiming kids of gays aren't harmed are based on small samples and conducted by researchers with an agenda.	Gays raised in gay households are no more likely to turn out gay. Gays aren't child molesters, and far more abuse occurs in foster care anyway.	

skills required for effective refutation

- use *active listening*: use paraphrasing and perception checking to verify your opponent's point of view
 - "So your position is... am I right?"
 - "Are you saying that..."
- avoid *selective listening*, distortion, and appealing to extremes
 - "Wrong! And here's why..."
 - "You are so misguided..."
- demonstrate *respect and tolerance*
 - avoid *ad hominem*s, focus on the issues, acknowledge good arguments when they are made
 - "Hmm That's a good point. I hadn't thought about it that way."

strategies for effective refutation

- argue that your opponent hasn't met his/her *burden of proof* (lack of a prima facie case, lack of evidence)
 - example: an ad for a miracle diet offers testimonials as proof, but fails to provide a controlled clinical study to prove the diet really works
- dispute the *relevance of the claim* ("that's not the issue," show your opponent has asked the wrong question, or raised the wrong issue)
 - example: Is Barack Obama "Black" enough to be president?
 - example: Is the world better off without Saddam Hussein? (Versus: Would the world be better off without George W. Bush? Did toppling Saddam reduce the risk of a terrorist attack on the U.S.?)
 - example: What jobs pay the most? (Versus: What jobs are the most prestigious or fulfilling? What job would make you enjoy going to work each day?)

Employ standard tests of evidence

- employ any of the standard *tests of evidence* (source qualifications, source bias, recency, suppressed evidence, unknowable statistics, etc.)
 - example of suppressed evidence: an advertisement claims a particular car has more horsepower and 0-60 speed, but fails to mention it also does worse in crash tests, gets lower mpg, and has worse reliability
 - example of source bias: pharmaceutical companies tend to selectively publish only the findings that favor their drugs

more strategies of refutation

- offer *counter-evidence* of your own, preferably from more qualified, more recent sources
 - example: CNN's Lou Dobbs, regularly uses a figure of "20 million" when discussing the number of illegal aliens on his broadcast "Lou Dobbs Tonight". However, the PEW Hispanic Center, a more neutral objective source places the number at 11 million
 - example: Clinton claimed on NBC's Today show that there were 13 gun-related fatalities among children every day. But that number only applies if 20 year olds are counted as "children". Only 17 kids ages 1-14 are killed per day by guns, according to National Center for Health Statistics, 1997.

Strategies of refutation

- identify *fallacies in reasoning* committed by your opponent (faulty analogy, faulty cause, faulty sign, etc.)
 - example: either-or fallacy: Bush "either your for America or you're for the terrorists"
 - example: equivocation: "We should legalize marijuana. Thomas Jefferson grew hemp on his plantation."

More strategies of refutation

- offer *counter-reasoning* of your own (counter-examples, negative signs, competing analogies)
- attack any of the *stock issues* for policy, value,
 - Stock issues for policy disputes
 - Ill/significance or harm
 - Blame/inherency or cause of the harm
 - Cure/solvency, plan or solution
 - Stock issues for value disputes
 - Value criteria
 - Application of value criteria

still more strategies of refutation

- expose any *inconsistencies or contradictions* in your opponent's position
 - example: Bush has blocked prescription drug imports from Canada over safety concerns, but he said the U.S. could rely on Canada for more flu vaccine
 - example: "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion before I voted against it," Kerry said regarding the Bush administration's request for more funding for the Iraq operation

More strategies for refutation

- employ the strategy of *reductio ad absurdum*, e.g., taking an argument to its logical conclusion (but avoid appealing to extremes)
 - example if cloning stem cells to treat diabetes, Alzheimer's or other illnesses is "unnatural" and violates "God's will," couldn't one say the same for polio vaccine or almost any form of medicine?
- use the strategy of "*turning the tables*," by showing the situation is the opposite of what your opponent claims
 - example The invasion of Iraq has made Americans less safe by spawning thousands of Islamic militants who are intent on killing Americans and becoming martyrs

even more strategies of refutation

- use a *two-sided, refutative* approach when 3rd parties will arbitrate the dispute
- use *inoculation theory* (forewarning) when 3rd parties will be exposed to the arguments
- *fight fire with fire*, by refuting arguments with like reasoning (examples with counter examples, signs with negative signs, etc.)
 - example your opponent uses an abortion analogy to describe stem cell research, because both involve the destruction of human life. You counter by saying a better analogy is organ donations—stem cells that would otherwise be discarded or destroyed are used to save lives

- avoid "*straw man*" arguments, resist the temptation to "beat up" on weak, tangential arguments. Concentrate instead on your opponent's best arguments
 - example an opponent of capital punishment says hanging and firing squads violate the 8th amendment's ban on "cruel and unusual" punishment. Yet, most states have adopted lethal injection as a form of execution.

My life as a sweatshop worker: Undercover reporter tells of crushing hours and terrible pay in Bangladeshi clothes factory where she worked for girl boss aged just NINE

- Raveena Aulakh documents life in garment factory
- Co-workers were young children forced out of school through poverty

By DAILY MAIL REPORTER

PUBLISHED: 15:54 EDT, 12 October 2013 | UPDATED: 16:09 EDT, 12 October 2013

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A Canadian journalist working undercover in a Bangladeshi sweatshop has revealed details of the back-breaking work and appalling conditions children as young as nine have to deal with.

Raveena Aulakh traveled to Dhaka to experience firsthand conditions in garment factories that mass produce products for the West.

Her account in the **Toronto Star** sheds light on the long hours, poor pay and dangerous and unsanitary conditions factory workers are subjected to.

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Heart breaking: Nine-year-old factory worker Meem was in charge of training undercover reporter Raveena Aulakh



Investigation: Toronto Star reporter Raveena Aulakh worked undercover at a Dhaka garment factory

Most shocking of all was how a nine-year-old girl named Meem, forced into work to help raise money for her family, was put in charge of training Ms Aulakh.

'The first time I saw Meem, which was also my first day at work at a sweatshop, she was having a good day despite the wretched heat. She sat cross-legged on the concrete floor, a tiny, frail figure among piles of collars, cuffs and other parts of unstitched shirts,' Ms Aulakh wrote in the Toronto Star.

The reporter's investigation came in the wake of the Rana Plaza factory collapse in April, when more than 1,100 workers died.

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After what became known as the worst garment factory disaster in the world, there was intense scrutiny of working conditions and child labor.

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© Raveena Aulakh / The Toronto Star / ZUMAPRESS.com

Child labor: Taaniya, 13, was one of the youngsters working 12-hour days at the factory

After being offered a trial, Ms Aulakh found herself arriving at the sweatshop on an oppressively hot day in August.

'The factory wasn't big: about two dozen sewing machines lined the walls of the windowless room, about half the size of a basketball court. Two cutting machines sat in a corner. The sewing machines had little benches for the operators, and almost all had piles of colorful fabric by the side. Three ceiling fans, covered with layers of dirt, hummed quietly,' she wrote.

A quick tour of the building revealed no fire extinguishers, only one exit - the front door - and little more than a hole in the ground, down a rat-infested hall, for the toilet.

Staff worked from 9am to 9pm with only a lunch break. The girls tasked with snipping off threads from the men's shirts being made, had to sit cross legged in the middle of the floor.

Ms Aulakh joined the girls on the floor and, under Meem's direction, was taught how to snip away loose threads without marking the clothes.

'It was back-breaking, it was finger-numbing. It was particularly rage-inducing,' she said.

'Not because it was painfully hard work but because children like Meem hunched over hour after hour, squinted at the threads, cleaned one collar after another, one cuff after another, one arm piece after another until the piles were depleted.'

Like many young factory workers, Meem was taken out of school when the family ran into hardship. With her mother pregnant and unable to work, the family needed Meem to help boost the income.

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Disaster: More than 1,100 factory workers were killed when a Dhaka sweatshop collapsed in April



© Reuters
Focus: Working conditions came under the spotlight after the Rana Plaza building collapsed

Her father found her the job at Hamid's factory because the girl's aunt also worked there and would be able to look after her.

Overnight, Meem went from being a carefree schoolgirl to a factory worker, toiling for 12 hours a day.

'It works for everyone,' Smitha Zaheed, of the Dhaka-based Independent Garment Workers' Union Federation, said. 'Factory owners get workers who are not demanding ... while the parents get to keep what the kids earn because the kids don't know any better.'

Meem's wages are paid to her father and she is allowed to buy herself a glittery hair clip each month and an occasional ice-cream.

'It is not as if Meem's parents don't care for her, they simply had no choice,' Ms Aulakh wrote.

Despite the long hours and aches caused from sitting hunched over for hours at a time, Meem was always smiling and her only complaint was that she was yelled at if she chatted too much or hummed too loudly.

Workers like Meem are paid about \$25 a month. They are allowed half a day off every Friday and do not get holidays or paid sick leave.

namer wear crop tops and tight shorts along with face masks to walk their dog in LA

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Michelle Pfeiffer covers her face as she inspects



© Raveena Aulakh / The Toronto Star / ZUMAPRESS.com

Ambition: Becoming a sewing operator like Lutfah, above, is the dream of girls like Meem

Taaniya also hoped she could earn enough to avoid being married off to a stranger.

'By all accounts, working women are changing their lives, their families' lives,' Ms Aulakh said. 'There is more food in homes, and cleaner clothes. There is electricity, even if it's one bulb, and there are toilets ... But it has come at a price.'

For children like Meem, the factory has become their life. Ms Aulakh may have been able to return to her comfortable home and office job, but the knowledge that thousands of girls remain trapped in such back-breaking work has stayed with her.

Read more:
I got hired at a Bangladesh sweatshop. Meet my 9-year-old boss

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Black underwear and fitted white T-shirt
Posed with one leg in the air

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Westlife announced on Wednesday that they've been forced to cancel their upcoming UK tour dates due to the coronavirus pandemic.

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	Saif Khan, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 6 years ago		
To the westerners who showed pity on child labour. ..did u think what will happened if these kid dont get any jobs in the name of anti-child labour movement? Who is going to look after them? It is very easy to say aha uhu from far...but realitu is harsh. ...yeah I do support child labour...and its a shameful reality...if you differ go and buy some macdonalds....			
		Click to rate	28 76
	Jill Buttons, this one, United States, 6 years ago		
The US had child labor and these children lost their lives and appendages (arms, legs, head) to make money for their families. People may have forgotten their history, but we learned from our own mistakes with child labor. Apparently, you have not learned.			
		Click to rate	66 9
	A.J., L.A. CA, United States, 7 years ago		
Hey, it aint easy workin for the Man ... I mean, the Girl.			
		Click to rate	15 38
	elliott4012, knuckles, United States, 7 years ago		

Hoodie

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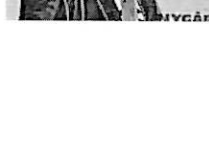
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Aubrey Plaza sports a face mask that says 'Go home' on the front as she gets a run in with her partner Jeff Baena



The New York Times Magazine

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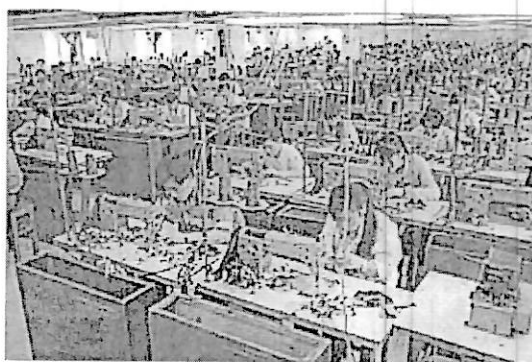
Two Cheers for Sweatshops

They're dirty and dangerous. They're also a major reason Asia is back on track. By NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF AND SHERYL WUDUNN

Related Link

- [First Chapter of "Thunder From the East," by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn](#)

It was breakfast time, and the food stand in the village in northeastern Thailand was crowded. Maesubin Sisoipha, the middle-aged woman cooking the food, was friendly, her portions large and the price right. For the equivalent of about 5 cents, she offered a huge green mango leaf filled with rice, fish paste and fried beetles. It was a hearty breakfast, if one didn't mind the odd antenna left sticking in one's teeth.



No sweat? Chinese workers, willing to put in long hours, are helping to revive the Asian economy. Photograph by Erica Lansner/Black Star.

One of the half-dozen men and women sitting on a bench eating was a sinewy, bare-chested laborer in his late 30's named Mongkol Latlakorn. It was a hot, lazy day, and so we started chatting idly about the food and, eventually, our families. Mongkol mentioned that his daughter, Darin, was 15, and his voice softened as he spoke of her. She was beautiful and smart, and her father's hopes rested on her.

"Is she in school?" we asked.

"Oh, no," Mongkol said, his eyes sparkling with amusement. "She's working in a factory in Bangkok. She's making clothing for export to America." He explained that she was paid \$2 a day for a nine-hour shift, six days a week.

Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, who received a Pulitzer Prize for their coverage of China, are the authors of "Thunder From the East: Portrait of a Rising Asia" (Knopf), from which this article is adapted.

"It's dangerous work," Mongkol added. "Twice the needles went right through her hands. But the managers bandaged up her hands, and both times she got better again and went back to work."

"How terrible," we murmured sympathetically.

Mongkol looked up, puzzled. "It's good pay," he said. "I hope she can keep that job. There's all this talk about factories closing now, and she said there are rumors that her factory might close. I hope that doesn't happen. I don't know what she would do then."

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He was not, of course, indifferent to his daughter's suffering; he simply had a different perspective from ours -- not only when it came to food but also when it came to what constituted desirable work.

Nothing captures the difference in mind-set between East and West more than attitudes toward sweatshops. Nike and other American companies have been hammered in the Western press over the last decade for producing shoes, toys and other products in grim little factories with dismal conditions. Protests against sweatshops and the dark forces of globalization that they seem to represent have become common at meetings of the World Bank and the World Trade Organization and, this month, at a World Economic Forum in Australia, livening up the scene for Olympic athletes arriving for the competition. Yet sweatshops that seem brutal from the vantage point of an American sitting in his living room can appear tantalizing to a Thai laborer getting by on beetles.

Fourteen years ago, we moved to Asia and began reporting there. Like most Westerners, we arrived in the region outraged at sweatshops. In time, though, we came to accept the view supported by most Asians: that the campaign against sweatshops risks harming the very people it is intended to help. For beneath their grime, sweatshops are a clear sign of the industrial revolution that is beginning to reshape Asia.

ADD YOUR THOUGHTS

Is it counterproductive for Westerners to attack sweatshops when many people in developing countries look to them for upward mobility? [Add your thoughts.](#)

Join a discussion with Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, the authors of "Thunder From the East: Portrait of a Rising Asia" (Knopf).

This is not to praise sweatshops. Some managers are brutal in the way they house workers in firetraps, expose children to dangerous chemicals, deny bathroom breaks, demand sexual favors, force people to work double shifts or dismiss anyone who tries to organize a union. Agitation for improved safety conditions can be helpful, just as it was in 19th-century Europe. But Asian workers would be aghast at the idea of American consumers boycotting certain toys or clothing in protest. The simplest way to help the poorest Asians would be to buy more from sweatshops, not less.

On our first extended trip to China, in 1987, we traveled to the Pearl River delta in the south of the country. There we visited several factories, including one in the boomtown of Dongguan, where about 100 female workers sat at workbenches stitching together bits of leather to make purses for a Hong Kong company. We chatted with several women as their fingers flew over their work and asked about their hours.

"I start at about 6:30, after breakfast, and go until about 7 p.m.," explained one shy teenage girl. "We break for lunch, and I take half an hour off then."

"You do this six days a week?"

"Oh, no. Every day."

"Seven days a week?"

"Yes." She laughed at our surprise. "But then I take a week or two off at Chinese New Year to go back to my village."

The others we talked to all seemed to regard it as a plus that the factory allowed them to work long hours. Indeed, some had sought out this factory precisely because it offered them the chance to earn more.

"It's actually pretty annoying how hard they want to work," said the factory manager, a Hong Kong man. "It means we have to worry about security and have a supervisor around almost constantly."

It sounded pretty dreadful, and it was. We and other journalists wrote about the problems of child labor and oppressive conditions in both China and South Korea. But, looking back, our worries were excessive. Those sweatshops tended to generate the wealth to solve the problems they created. If Americans had reacted to the horror stories in the 1980's by curbing imports of those sweatshop products, then neither southern China nor South Korea would have registered as much progress as they have today.

The truth is, those grim factories in Dongguan and the rest of southern China contributed to a remarkable explosion of wealth. In the years since our first conversations there, we've returned many times to Dongguan and the surrounding towns and seen the transformation. Wages have risen from about \$50 a month to \$250 a month or more today. Factory conditions have improved as businesses have scrambled to attract and keep the best laborers. A private housing market has emerged, and video arcades and computer schools have opened to cater to workers with rising incomes. A hint of a middle class has appeared -- as has China's closest thing to a Western-style independent newspaper, Southern Weekend.

Partly because of these tens of thousands of sweatshops, China's economy has become one of the hottest in the world. Indeed, if China's 30 provinces were counted as individual countries, then the 20 fastest-

growing countries in the world between 1978 and 1995 would all have been Chinese. When Britain launched the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th century, it took 58 years for per capita output to double. In China, per capita output has been doubling every 10 years.

In fact, the most vibrant parts of Asia are nearly all in what might be called the Sweatshop Belt, from China and South Korea to

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Malaysia, Indonesia and even Bangladesh and India. Today these sweatshop countries control about one-quarter of the global economy. As the industrial revolution spreads through China and India, there are good reasons to think that Asia will continue to pick up speed. Some World Bank forecasts show Asia's share of global gross domestic product rising to 55 to 60 percent by about 2025 -- roughly the West's share at its peak half a century ago. The sweatshops have helped lay the groundwork for a historic economic realignment that is putting Asia back on its feet. Countries are rebounding from the economic crisis of 1997-98 and the sweatshops -- seen by Westerners as evidence of moribund economies -- actually reflect an industrial revolution that is raising living standards in the East.

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Of course, it may sound silly to say that sweatshops offer a route to prosperity, when wages in the poorest countries are sometimes less than \$1 a day. Still, for an impoverished Indonesian or Bangladeshi woman with a handful of kids who would otherwise drop out of school and risk dying of mundane diseases like diarrhea, \$1 or \$2 a day can be a life-transforming wage.

This was made abundantly clear in Cambodia, when we met a 40-year-old woman named Nhem Yen, who told us why she moved to an area with particularly lethal malaria. "We needed to eat," she said. "And here there is wood, so we thought we could cut it and sell it."

But then Nhem Yen's daughter and son-in-law both died of malaria, leaving her with two grandchildren and five children of her own. With just one mosquito net, she had to choose which children would sleep protected and which would sleep exposed.

In Cambodia, a large mosquito net costs \$5. If there had been a sweatshop in the area, however harsh or dangerous, Nhem Yen would have leapt at the chance to work in it, to earn enough to buy a net big enough to cover all her children.

For all the misery they can engender, sweatshops at least offer a precarious escape from the poverty that is the developing world's greatest problem. Over the past 50 years, countries like India resisted foreign exploitation, while countries that started at a similar economic level -- like Taiwan and South Korea -- accepted sweatshops as the price of development. Today there can be no doubt about which approach worked better. Taiwan and South Korea are modern countries with low rates of infant mortality and high levels of education; in contrast, every year 3.1 million Indian children die before the age of 5, mostly from diseases of poverty like diarrhea.

The effect of American pressure on sweatshops is complicated. While it clearly improves conditions at factories that produce branded merchandise for companies like Nike, it also raises labor costs across the board. That encourages less well established companies to mechanize and to reduce the number of employees needed. The upshot is to help people who currently have jobs in Nike plants but to risk jobs for others. The only thing a country like Cambodia has to offer is terribly cheap wages; if companies are

scolded for paying those wages, they will shift their manufacturing to marginally richer areas like Malaysia or Mexico.

Sweatshop monitors do have a useful role. They can compel factories to improve safety. They can also call attention to the impact of sweatshops on the environment. The greatest downside of industrialization is not exploitation of workers but toxic air and water. In Asia each year, three million people die from the effects of pollution. The factories springing up throughout the region are far more likely to kill people through the chemicals they expel than through terrible working conditions.

By focusing on these issues, by working closely with organizations and news media in foreign countries, sweatshops can be improved. But refusing to buy sweatshop products risks making Americans feel good while harming those we are trying to help. As a Chinese proverb goes, "First comes the bitterness, then there is sweetness and wealth and honor for 10,000 years."

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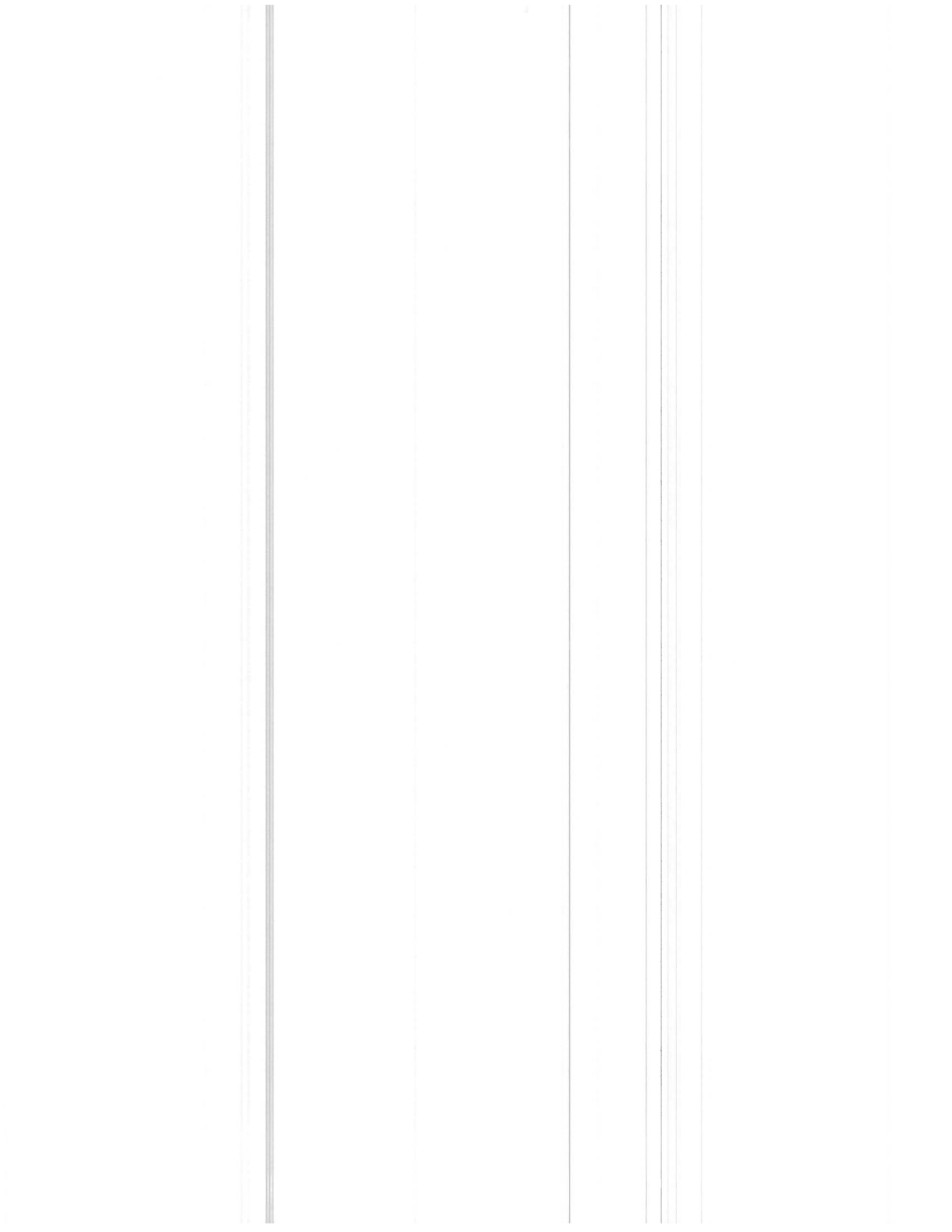
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Sweatshops Forever

Oppression raises wages

RONALD BAILEY | FROM THE FEBRUARY 2004 ISSUE

Want to improve the lives of poor workers in developing countries? Then rush out and buy a pair of Nikes or Levi Strauss jeans, says a new report by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

The authors decided to test the burgeoning anti-sweatshop movement's claims that multinational corporations oppress workers in developing countries. A recent *Albany Times-Union* column summarizes the familiar argument: "It's common knowledge [sweatshops] exist in Third World countries, and that much of the cheap labor that produces the most expensive sports apparel and sneakers are young children paid a substandard wage and working in horrendous conditions."

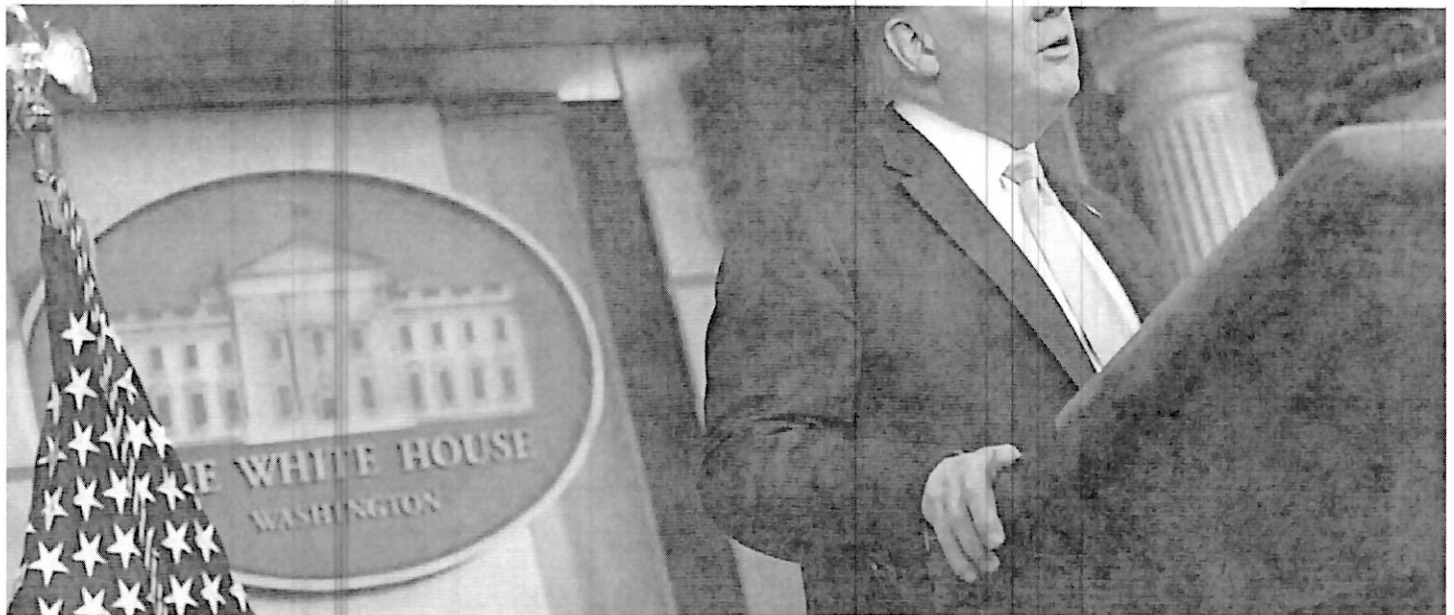
But when economists looked at reams of economic data on wages and workers' rights in developing countries, they found that multinationals generally paid more—often a lot more—than the wages offered by locally owned companies. The study cites evidence that affiliates of U.S. multinationals "pay a wage premium that ranges from 40 percent in high-income countries to 100 percent, or double the local average wage, in low-income countries."

Vietnamese workers in foreign-owned apparel and footwear factories rank in the top 20 percent of the population by household expenditure. Indonesian workers in Nike subcontractor factories earned \$670 per year, compared to the average minimum wage of \$134. In Mexico firms that exported more than 80 percent of their output paid wages that were 58 percent to 67 percent higher than wages paid by domestic firms.

The researchers point out that foreign direct investment is positively correlated with the number of International Labor Organization conventions ratified, and that multinational investment "is positively correlated with the right to establish free unions, the right to strike, the right to collective bargaining, and the protection of union members." The study concludes: "In short, there is no solid evidence that countries with poorly protected worker rights attract [multinational companies]." So you can shop at The Gap with a good conscience.

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RONALD BAILEY is science correspondent at *Reason*.

LABOR

NICHOLAS KRISTOF

Where Sweatshops Are a Dream



By Nicholas Kristof

Jan. 14, 2009

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia

Before Barack Obama and his team act on their talk about “labor standards,” I’d like to offer them a tour of the vast garbage dump here in Phnom Penh.

This is a Dante-like vision of hell. It’s a mountain of festering refuse, a half-hour hike across, emitting clouds of smoke from subterranean fires.

The miasma of toxic stink leaves you gasping, breezes batter you with filth, and even the rats look forlorn. Then the smoke parts and you come across a child ambling barefoot, searching for old plastic cups that recyclers will buy for five cents a pound. Many families actually live in shacks on this smoking garbage.

Mr. Obama and the Democrats who favor labor standards in trade agreements mean well, for they intend to fight back at oppressive sweatshops abroad. But while it shocks Americans to hear it, the central challenge in the poorest countries is not that sweatshops exploit too many people, but that they don’t exploit enough.

Talk to these families in the dump, and a job in a sweatshop is a cherished dream, an escalator out of poverty, the kind of gauzy if probably unrealistic ambition that parents everywhere often have for their children.

“I’d love to get a job in a factory,” said Pim Srey Rath, a 19-year-old woman scavenging for plastic. “At least that work is in the shade. Here is where it’s hot.”

Another woman, Vath Sam Oeun, hopes her 10-year-old boy, scavenging beside her, grows up to get a factory job, partly because she has seen other children run over by garbage trucks. Her boy has never been to a doctor or a dentist, and last bathed when he was 2, so a sweatshop job by comparison would be far more pleasant and less dangerous.

I’m glad that many Americans are repulsed by the idea of importing products made by barely paid, barely legal workers in dangerous factories. Yet sweatshops are only a symptom of poverty, not a cause, and banning them closes off one route out of poverty. At a time of tremendous economic distress and protectionist pressures, there’s a special danger that tighter labor standards will be used as an excuse to curb trade.



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When I defend sweatshops, people always ask me: But would you want to work in a sweatshop? No, of course not. But I would want even less to pull a rickshaw. In the hierarchy of jobs in poor countries, sweltering at a sewing machine isn't the bottom.

My views on sweatshops are shaped by years living in East Asia, watching as living standards soared ☐ including those in my wife's ancestral village in southern China ☐ because of sweatshop jobs.

Manufacturing is one sector that can provide millions of jobs. Yet sweatshops usually go not to the poorest nations but to better-off countries with more reliable electricity and ports.

I often hear the argument: Labor standards can improve wages and working conditions, without greatly affecting the eventual retail cost of goods. That's true. But labor standards and "living wages" have a larger impact on production costs that companies are always trying to pare. The result is to push companies to operate more capital-intensive factories in better-off nations like Malaysia, rather than labor-intensive factories in poorer countries like Ghana or Cambodia.

Cambodia has, in fact, pursued an interesting experiment by working with factories to establish decent labor standards and wages. It's a worthwhile idea, but one result of paying above-market wages is that those in charge of hiring often demand bribes ☐ sometimes a month's salary ☐ in exchange for a job. In addition, these standards add to production costs, so some factories have closed because of the global economic crisis and the difficulty of competing internationally.

The best way to help people in the poorest countries isn't to campaign against sweatshops but to promote manufacturing there. One of the best things America could do for Africa would be to strengthen our program to encourage African imports, called AGOA, and nudge Europe to match it.

Among people who work in development, many strongly believe (but few dare say very loudly) that one of the best hopes for the poorest countries would be to build their manufacturing industries. But global campaigns against sweatshops make that less likely.

Look, I know that Americans have a hard time accepting that sweatshops can help people. But take it from 13-year-old Neuo Chanthou, who earns a bit less than \$1 a day scavenging in the dump. She's wearing a "Playboy" shirt and hat that she found amid the filth, and she worries about her sister, who