



WALMART



OCCUCARD #16



EXPOSING AND OPPOSING THE CORPORATE STATE

Walmart Stores, Inc. is an American multinational retail corporation headquartered in Bentonville, Arkansas. With over two million employees and 8,500 stores, Walmart is the largest private employer in the world. It is also the third largest corporation in the world, ranked just behind the energy giants Shell and ExxonMobil.

There is perhaps no U.S. corporation that exploits its workers as brutally and effectively as Walmart. Paid on average only \$8.81 per hour, hundreds of thousands of Walmart employees—including many full-time workers—live below the poverty line. To keep these underpaid workers vulnerable and compliant, Walmart deploys numerous union-busting tactics and other dirty tricks such as forcing higher-paid, full-time employees to work inconvenient “flexible” shifts in order to get them to quit, imposing Darwinian-style policies on the sales floor to reduce worker morale, and pressuring employees to work overtime without pay or risk being fired. Walmart also systematically engages in illegal employee wage theft, as store managers are trained to falsify time sheets or simply not pay employees for all their hours worked. In fact, between 2005 and 2011, Walmart settled over 70 class action lawsuits involving the stolen wages of over a million current and former employees, costing the company more than \$1 billion in damages. And rather than providing affordable health benefits, Walmart offers each of its workers assistance in applying to state and federal welfare programs such as Food Stamps and Medicaid. Recent studies estimate that Walmart’s work force collects a staggering \$2.6 billion in taxpayer-funded welfare annually, a sum amounting to \$420,000 per store.

Walmart’s enormous market share combined with its business model of selling the cheapest possible products also puts downward pressure on wages along its entire supply chain of manufacturers and farmers, as thousands of Walmart suppliers (both in the U.S. and abroad) are forced to cut their own labor costs in order to compete. Walmart also destroys

many more jobs than it creates, eliminating approximately 150 retail jobs in every county it enters, along with many service jobs too, as Walmart’s arrival often decimates entire downtown shopping districts. Walmart’s main pretense—that its low prices save consumers money—is more than offset by the reduced spending power of large segments of the population resulting directly from Walmart’s negative impact on jobs and wages. For these reasons and more, there is no corporation more singly responsible for the impoverishment of American workers than Walmart.

- ▶ Walmart made \$15.4 billion in profits in 2011, despite the recession.
- ▶ If Walmart paid all their 1.4 million U.S. employees an extra \$5,000 per year, they would still make over \$7 billion in profit.
- ▶ The six heirs to the Walmart fortune are together worth \$93 billion, which is equal to the net worth of the bottom 41% of the U.S. population.
- ▶ The Walton family has given only 2.4% of their wealth to charity. By comparison, Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, Mark Zuckerberg and over 70 other wealthy people have given over 50%.

On October 9th, 2012, hundreds of Walmart employees in twelve states walked off the job in the first ever strike in the corporation’s fifty year history, achieving widespread public support and winning some early concessions from the corporation. Given Walmart’s size and influence over the entire economy, the continuing campaign by these courageous workers carries implications far beyond the behemoth’s own big box stores, as their efforts help promote the growth of a mutually-supportive grassroots movement of **education, protest and civil disobedience**.

GET INVOLVED!

forrespect.org • changewalmart.org
goodjobsfirst.org

References / more info /
other cards: www.occucards.com

