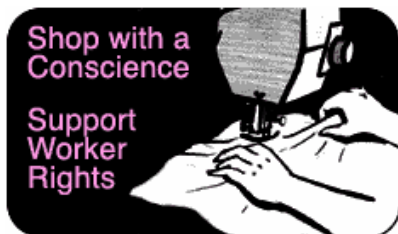


## Sweat-free Alternatives



Working for justice and living ethically is of great concern to the Jewish community. Jewish institutions have an opportunity to model a commitment to the fair treatment of workers, to set moral standards for the Jewish community and to practice *tikkun olam*, repairing the world.

**Jewish summer camps, organizations, and synagogues can make a difference by making purchasing choices based on a commitment to ending sweatshops.**

**Get your Jewish organization to commit to purchase “kosher” clothes: apparel from those businesses that ensure their workers are treated fairly.**

Organizations may ask:

“What will it cost us to be sweat-free?”

- Sweat-free apparel often costs little more than items produced through exploitation.
- If we refuse to pay the slightly higher cost, we are transferring those costs onto the world’s poorest workers, their children and communities.
- As more organizations insist on sweat-free products the cost will go down.

Economic limitations are real and need to be taken seriously – yet we must ask, “What will it mean for us and our community if we don’t act based on our Jewish ethics and values?”

This is why we call goods made under fair working conditions “kosher”: because choosing to be ethical consumers allows us to live our values daily.

Contact PJA  
to get started!

PJA can help you learn about the issue of sweatshops, research positive alternatives for garment purchases (including details like pricing and availability), and hear stories from religious communities all over the country that have successfully switched to sweat-free products. Contact us today!



Sign the Sweatfree Commitment:

\_\_\_\_\_ [Name of organization here]  
recognizes that Jewish tradition and values stand firmly in support of workers' rights and against any worker exploitation.

As an official representative of \_\_\_\_\_, I affirm that our organization has made a commitment to purchase our apparel from sweat-free suppliers, as identified in partnership with the Progressive Jewish Alliance.

We will encourage our members to purchase sweat-free apparel and will support efforts to get our local government, universities and school district to enact similar policies.

**PJA is a membership organization dedicated to the Jewish traditions of working for social and economic justice, promoting equality and diversity, and pursuing peace.**

Progressive Jewish Alliance  
“Kosher Clothes” Contacts

Northern California:  
Perry Bellow-Handelman  
Phone: 510 527 8620

Southern California:  
Zach Lazarus  
Phone: 323 761 8350

[pbandelman@pjalliance.org](mailto:pbandelman@pjalliance.org) [zlararus@pjalliance.org](mailto:zlararus@pjalliance.org)  
[www.pjalliance.org](http://www.pjalliance.org)

PJA's  
Kosher Clothes  
Campaign

Make your organization  
Sweatshop-Free!



 **pja** Progressive  
Jewish Alliance

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## What is a sweatshop?

A **sweatshop** is a workplace characterized by significant labor rights violations, such as long hours, low pay, or hazardous working conditions.

The garment industry (or *shmateh* business), which has been fraught with worker violations since its birth in the Industrial Revolution, has a unique relationship to the Jewish community. Beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Jewish immigration to the United States provided an easily exploitable workforce for garment factories. Not only did many of our ancestors work in sweatshops, they also formed unions, fought for labor rights, and helped pioneer groundbreaking initiatives like the 1910 Protocol of Peace that sought to eradicate sweatshop conditions.

Jews were also, and still are today, retailers, manufacturers, and factory owners in the garment industry. This history, and diversity of perspectives, allows us to better understand – and work to eradicate – modern-day sweatshops.



Two girls wearing banners with slogan "ABOLISH CHILD SLAVERY!!" in English and Yiddish, one carrying American flag; spectators stand nearby. Probably taken during May 1, 1909 labor parade in New York City.

[www.pjalliance.org](http://www.pjalliance.org)

## The Jewish Obligation to Pursue Worker Justice

Jewish texts and tradition provide standards on how to live as ethical Jews, including how to ensure fair treatment of workers. The Torah states:

*You shall not abuse a needy and destitute laborer, whether a fellow countryman or a stranger in one of the communities of your land. You must pay him wages on the same day, before the sun sets, for he is needy and he urgently depends on it.* (Deuteronomy 24:14-15)

Ramban (Nachmanides) comments on this passage, saying:

*The intention here is that we should pay him at the end of the day, for if we do not pay him immediately when he leaves from work, he will go home and he will die of hunger at night.*

This sentiment is echoed in the Babylonian Talmud, Bava M'tzia 3a:

*Whoever withholds an employee's wages, it is as though he has taken the person's life from him.*

As Jews, we recognize that these standards apply to today's workers and to our responsibility to stand with them as they struggle to provide for themselves and their families.



## PJA's Campaign and its Successes

PJA helps lead a Sweatfree coalition that:

- ✓ Passed Sweatfree Procurement Ordinances in the cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco
- ✓ Passed a Sweatfree Procurement Resolution in the LA Unified School District
- ✓ Passed a Resolution to join a Sweatfree Consortium in the city of Berkeley.

These laws are groundbreaking— California cities and school districts continue to lead the way in sweatfree enforcement. Our coalition includes Global Exchange, Chinese Progressive Association, UNITE HERE, Sweatshop Watch, and many others. Visit [www.globalexchange.org/sweatshops](http://www.globalexchange.org/sweatshops) for more information.



### Anti-Sweatshop Organizations

- Bay Area Sweatfree Coalition  
[www.globalexchange.org/sweatshops](http://www.globalexchange.org/sweatshops)
- SweatFree Communities  
[www.sweatfree.org](http://www.sweatfree.org)
- Sweatshop Watch  
[www.sweatshopwatch.org](http://www.sweatshopwatch.org)
- Worker Rights Consortium  
<http://www.workersrights.org/>

\*Image created by J Group as used by the Bangor Clean Clothes Campaign