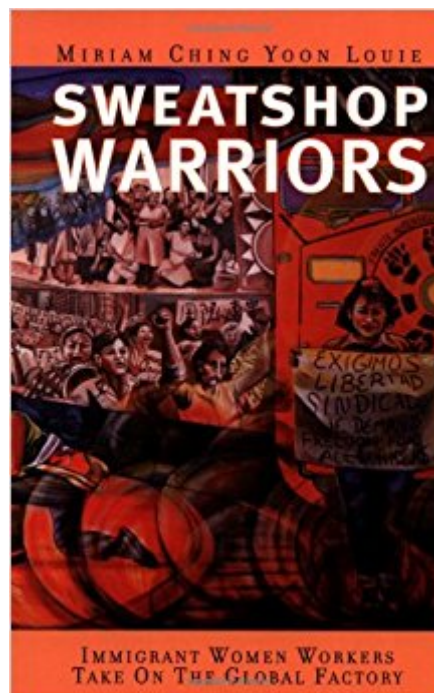




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# Sweatshop Warriors: Immigrant Women Workers Take On The Global Factory



## Synopsis

In this up-close and personal look at the heroines who make family, community, and society tick, Miriam Ching Yoon Louie showcases immigrant women workers speaking out for themselves, in their own words. While public outrage over sweatshops builds in intensity, this book shows us who these workers really are and how they are leading campaigns to fight for their rights. In-depth, accessible analyses of the immigration, labor, and trade policies, which together have forced these women into the most dangerous, poorly paid jobs, dovetail with vivid portraits of the women themselves. Louie, a longtime writer/activist and well-known figure in feminist, immigrant, and labor circles, is uniquely poised to make her case: that the labor of immigrant women worker-activists not only sustains families and communities, but the vibrant social activism that undergirds democracy itself. With chapters on successful campaigns against Levi-Strauss, Donna Karan, and restaurants in Los Angeles; Koreatown, among others. Miriam Ching Yoon Louie is a longtime writer/activist in campaigns to organize women of color. She is national campaign media director of Fuerza Unida, a board member of the Women of Color Resource Center, and former media director of Asian Immigrant Women Advocates. Her essays and articles on immigrant women and labor issues have been widely anthologized, including in the 1997 collection *Dragon Ladies: Asian American Feminists Breathe Fire* (South End Press) and she speaks at public events internationally. She is the co-author, with Linda Burnham, of *Women's Education in the Global Economy* (Women of Color Resource Center, 2000).

## Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: South End Press; Marking and Underling in Pages edition (July 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0896086380

ISBN-13: 978-0896086388

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.6 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #331,245 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 in Books > Business & Money > Economics > Commercial Policy #156 in Books > Business & Money > Job Hunting & Careers > Interviewing #228 in Books > History > Americas > United States > Immigrants

## Customer Reviews

Longtime writer/activist involved in campaigns to organize women of color, Louie is national campaign media director of Fuerza Unida, a board member of the Women of Color Resource Center, and former media director of Asian Immigrant Women Advocates. She is co-author, with Linda Burnham, of MU (WCRC, 2000) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The stories in this book are compelling and deserve to be told in a way that makes them accessible to the average reader. Unfortunately, this book feels more like the first draft of a college thesis. The material is important and worth the read. The narrative is difficult to follow and lacks cohesion. Throughout the book, I felt as if I were reading paragraphs constructed of 3x5 card notes strung together, one after another, and not always in a coherent sequence. The author refers to the women she interviews and their stories in the past tense, often with passive voice, making their stories much less accessible. Both the women and their stories deserve better. That said, the topic is of vital importance to any of us in the west, for we are the recipients of the cheap food and goods the women produce, often in slavery or near slavery conditions, and never in conditions most of us would care to endure. Every socially conscious citizen should read this book and become aware of the high human costs buried in the cheap--and the not so cheap--goods we purchase.

Miriam Ching Yoon Louie has a literary talent in exposing the ill effects of globalization on poor women of color in the American garment industry. Focusing on Chinese, Korean, and Mexican immigrants she documents how their labor is continuously being exploited without regard to their personal well-being. Transnational corporations seek their labor because it is cheap. It is these women who are the backbones of the forces of globalization and their stories need to be told. An added strength of this book is that the author doesn't just focus on the negative structural aspects but she also includes multiple instances of how these workers create social solidarity and fight for social change in their favor, even when up against the odds. Her personal involvement in these social movements is an added benefit. These poor women of color both produce and reproduce globalization on the local and global scale. It leaves one with the belief that there is hope after all for a fair and just world. This book will make you reevaluate the 'promises' of free trade agreements and economic growth. As one group prospers there is surely another group being disadvantaged. Overall, this book is accessible especially in discussions on the feminization of labor and migration that is not cluttered with jargon. Go ahead and take a gamble. I hope that it will alter your social stance on these important issues as it reinforced mine.

During my vacation, I've been reading "Sweatshop Warriors: Immigrant Women Workers Take on the Global Factory" by Miriam Ching Yoon Louie. Miriam has a multi-decade organizing history with low income women of color. She is the co-founder of the Women of Color Resource Center in Berkeley, and author of an amazing trainers' manual called WEdGE "Women's Education in the Global Economy." "Sweatshop Warriors" is one of my personal top ten books on radical organizing. It looks at transnational sweatshops through the eyes of Korean, Chinese and Mexican women forced to leave their homes of origin to take super exploited labor jobs in the world's sweatshops, ending up in the garment rows of NY, Oakland, LA, El Paso, etc. And there they have stood and fought. Against incredible odds, they've led international campaigns against the sweatshops industries, formed multi-purpose women workers centers, dealt with men in their families who were sometimes less than supportive of their activism, and learned to be world traveling organizers. The author mixes political economy, analysis, history, and the herstories of the women organizers she has interviewed. Race/class/gender/nationality -- all come into play in the lives and organizing work of these incredible women.

I teach a course on Women and Work and Miriam Ching Louie's Sweatshop Warriors is the first book I have found that really describes sweatshops from the workers' perspectives, as agents rather than victims. The students really got it. I plan to use the book in this course from now on.

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