

TARGET WORKERS @STORE#1292

Volume 1 / Issue 1 DEC 2017

WELCOME!

It's our first issue of the Target Workers @Store #1292.

We'll be featuring profiles on our coworkers, discussing important topics relevant for us all, and promoting coworker input for all future issues.

They say knowledge is power and that's what we are looking to build.

If you would like to get involved in editing future issues please contact us at NRVstrike@gmail.com



SOLIDARITY IS A POWERFUL WORD

In this day and age solidarity isn't a word you hear thrown around a lot. And that's not surprising as we consider the general situation of the working class. Real wages have steadily declined for the last 40 years here in the US. That means our dollar doesn't go as far as it once did.

Even though the minimum wage has increased over the last 40 years, the purchasing power of the dollar has remained the same as it was in 1979. Despite this stagnation, the cost of living for Americans has only risen. This all makes it harder and harder to afford the basics we need to live happy, modest lives. So how does the idea of solidarity play into these economic facts? The solidarity between workers - where we fight for one another, as a class, and improve our lot collectively - has also declined over this same period as conditions for workers deteriorate.

If we roll over, act individually, and let massive corporations have their way things will only continue as they have, in fact they will get worse for us as a whole. It is only when we are organized, as a collective force, that we have the power to stop this economic trend and reverse course.

“Even though the minimum wage has increased over the last 40 years our purchasing power remains what it was in 1979”

By not identifying with the word solidarity workers will continue to lose. We have to dare to struggle, otherwise we have no chance of winning. This means that if one of our coworkers is in trouble and facing tough times we stand by their side to help lift them up. If we don't lift one another up we can't even begin to improve the situation for the working class.

Some may say that we already support one another, but when we have coworkers who have given many years of their lives and labor to Target and yet don't have and cannot afford health care, hoping they don't get sick at best and not treating medical conditions at worst, we are missing solidarity in supporting one another. When we have workers not getting paid a living wage we are not supporting one another. When workers experience sexual harassment and nothing is done about it for years we are not supporting one another. We have the power to change things for the better, but that only happens when we act in solidarity with one another and commit to fight alongside one another so we all can win.

MEET YOUR COWORKERS - OLA EL SHA'AR



Q: How long have you worked for Target?

A: I've been working at Target for a year and a half now.

Q: What's your position at Target?

A: I work as a cashier.

Q: Tell us something interesting you'd like other Target workers to know

A: I used to be a journalist for 2 years. And then I had to give up everything back home and be here with my second family.

Q: You're from Egypt, what is it like growing up there and then coming here?

A: As a great ancient country, I would say that I'm so proud I grew up there. I used to live in Cairo "Capital of Egypt", it's hectic and very lively, unlike here in Virginia. It's a big change, kind of challenging too.

Q: What do you think about the Arab Spring?

A: Regardless what happens in Syria, The Arab Spring was the best thing has ever happened in some countries in the Middle East like Tunisia and Egypt. However, getting rid of a dictatorial and corrupt ruler is not enough. And it's awful what has followed the revolution in both countries.

Q: What things do you like about working at Target?

A: As I've never had worked at retails back home. I guess I like the experience itself. I love being around people. Every day I learn something different.

Q: What things would you like to see change at Target?

A: Things that I would like to see change at Target, maybe more fair hours to every team member, as they give the new hires many hours than the ones who are most experienced.

Q: What are your dreams and wishes?

A: I've always dreamed of having my own magazine, I wish I can be able someday to travel to some of the poor countries in the third world and do what I could to help them.

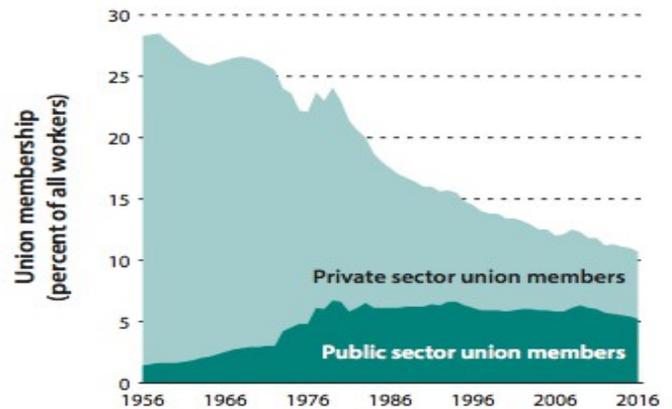
“INEQUALITY NEAR HISTORIC HIGHS, WAGES STAGNANT”

FIGURE 6A.
Federal Minimum Wage, 1968–2016



Source: Minimum Wage Laws in the States, BLS (1968–2016); authors' calculations. Note: The real minimum wage is expressed in 2016 dollars and is deflated using the CPI-U-RS.

FIGURE 6B.
Public and Private Sector Union Membership, 1956–2016



Source: BLS (1975); Hirsch and Macpherson (2017); Current Population Survey, BLS (1983–2016); authors' calculations. Note: Missing data interpolated for 1957, 1959, 1961, 1963, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1969, 1971, and 1982.

THE HAMILTON PROJECT
BROOKINGS

[FROM BUSINESS INSIDER]

There is a reason so many Americans feel the economy's recovery from the Great Recession has not benefited them: It hasn't. An expansion that began, believe it or not, more than seven years ago has extended a longer-run trend of wage stagnation for the average US worker, despite a sharp drop in the official unemployment rate to 4.4% from an October 2009 peak of 10%.

No wonder the recovery seems so lopsided, particularly given economic inequality levels not seen since before the Great Depression. A new report from the Hamilton Project, an economic-policy initiative of the Brookings Institution in Washington, offers a range of startling figures and charts that paints a rather dramatic picture of US economic disparities.

"The U.S. economy has experienced long-term real wage stagnation and a persistent lack of economic progress for many workers," wrote Jay Shambaugh, a White House economist under President Barack Obama who now heads the Hamilton Project. One big source of the problem: Starting around the 1970s, US productivity growth began rising much more rapidly than workers' compensation — meaning the share of growth was accumulating increasingly in corporate profits at the expense of pay. The report attributes this both to the increasing role of technology in the workplace but also to a loss of bargaining power brought on by anti-union labor policies and other wage-suppressing measures.

"Changes in worker bargaining power, competition within and across industries, and globalization can all influence the share of output workers receive," the report said. Then there's the sharp inequality in the nature of income growth. "Much of the growth in wages has been concentrated at the top," the Hamilton report says.

The richest 20% of Americans saw hourly wages grow from \$38 an hour in 1979 to \$48 an hour in 2016 — a 27% increase. In the bottom fifth, real wages fell slightly over the same period. A key reason for workers' waning bargaining power is the declining presence of unions in the workplace.

"In 1956 about 28% of all workers belonged to a union; in 2016 that number was a little more 10%. This decline has occurred principally among private sector workers, only 5% of whom now belong to a union," the report says.

MEET YOUR COWORKERS – SHARON KEEL



[Sharon and her son Kasey]

Q: How long have you worked for Target?

A: 10 1/2 years.

Q: What's your position at Target?

A: Sales, merchandising. Softlines.

Q: Tell us something interesting you'd like other Target workers to know

A: Before Target, I was a Hairdresser for 35 years. A State of Michigan, Park Ranger for 6 years.
I love gardening.

Q: What things do you like about working at Target?

A: Wearing uniforms, don't need an extensive wardrobe. Enjoy working with all of my co-workers

Q: What things would you like to see change at Target?

A: Full-time employment, health benefits. A predictable schedule. Living wage

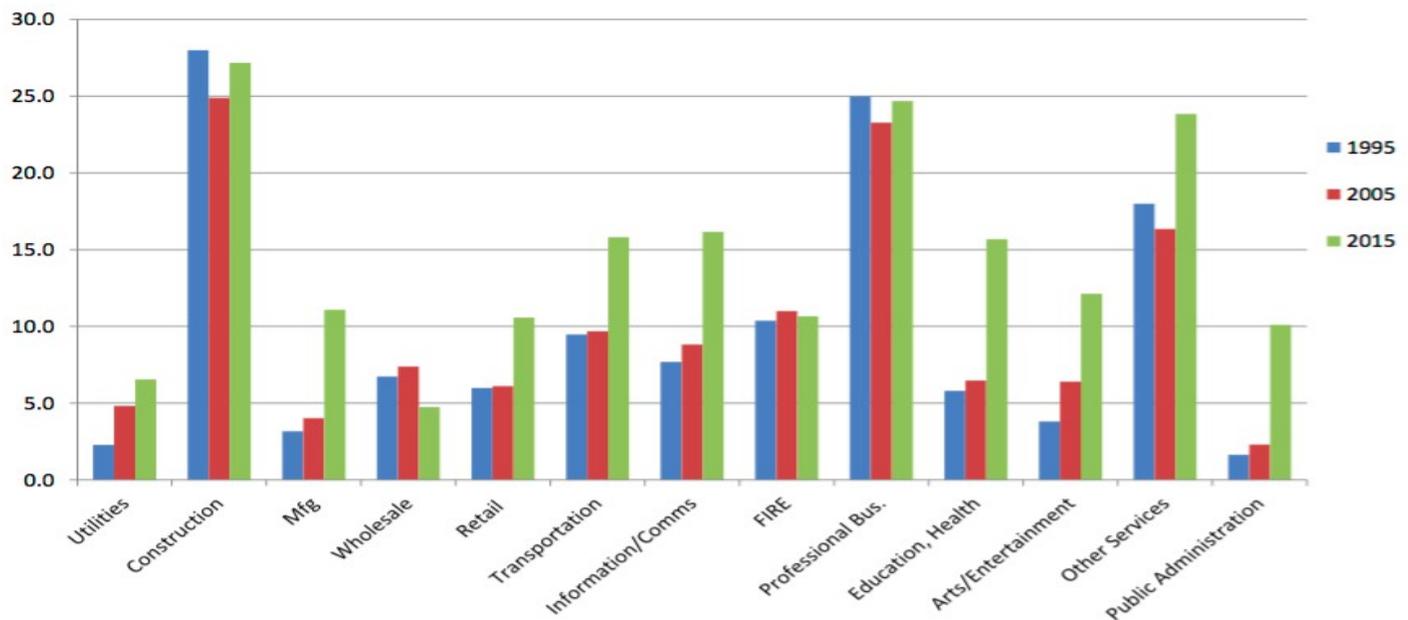
Q: What are your dreams and wishes?

A: Retirement in 5 years, to spend more time with my son and hopefully, by then, a grandchild or two?

Q: Any further comments?

A: Biggest dream, for all, is world peace. No hunger or homeless. Healthcare for all

“WHY CAREERS ARE GONE, AND JOBS ARE GOING NEXT”



Source: Authors calculations based on Bureau of Labor Statistics CWS 1995 and 2005 and Rand-Princeton CWS 2015.

[FROM MARKETPLACE.ORG]

The days of lifetime employment and a gold watch at retirement are long gone, but the CEOs who engineered mass layoffs in the 1980s and '90s might be shocked at just how tenuous our ties to employers have become.

New research from Harvard economist Lawrence Katz and Princeton economist Alan Krueger suggests that all the net job growth in the last decade is in “alternative work arrangements.” That includes temps, on-call and on-demand workers, contractors at companies, independent contractors and freelancers. Online “gig” work like Uber is a tiny slice of that. The chart above shows the percent of workers in alternative work arrangements, by industry.

"Most of this growth is the janitor who used to work for the auto company who now works for the janitorial services company," Katz said. "Or the accountant who used to work for a larger firm now works for a temp agency. Or the reporter who used to work full time now is part time and does a bunch of freelance to fill in their income."

Job stability hasn't defined the American workplace for decades. Just ask anyone who has been escorted out by security in a mass layoff or whose factory moved offshore. In a global marketplace constantly upended by technology, companies are under unrelenting pressure to cut costs and maximize profits. If companies can do business without permanent employees, they will. Technology and contractors make that easier every day, and companies are often rewarded for a lower headcount. The economist Gerald Davis, author of "The Vanishing American Corporation," said investors often cheer layoffs. "At minimum, Wall Street does not value having employees," he said. "At maximum, you might be punished."

Jeffrey Pfeffer, a business professor at Stanford's Graduate School of Business, said, "Employees impose overhead costs and burdens, and you have to fire them using some reasonable due process, and you have to pay benefits and social security and all this other stuff. And so it's much cheaper to just get rid of them." Weil described in "The Fissured Workplace" how various forms of outsourcing have affected wages and benefits, from the cable TV installer who works on contract at lower pay and no benefits while being treated like an employee, to the maid who works for a hotel that may be owned, operated and staffed by a dozen or more different companies. He argued all this subcontracting puts downward pressure on wages and benefits, and lets owners off the hook for working conditions.

**IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS,
COMMENTS, OR WANT TO
CONTRIBUTE TO THE STORE
NEWSLETTER PLEASE
EMAIL US AT
NRVSTRIKE@GMAIL.COM**