Fair Trade at Trent University

Includes:

Annotated Bibliography, Arthur Article, History of the Trent Fair Trade Working Group

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ABSRACT -- #645 Evaluation of Fair Trade Initiatives at Trent University

The report on the Fair Trade Trent (FTT) has three areas of focus. One, to give a history of the FTT group, secondly to give a comprehensive annotated bibliography of fair trade and, thirdly, to write an article for the Trent University student newspaper on fair trade.

The history of FTT began in 2003. The researcher documents clearly the defining moments in the groups in the group's efforts to move Trent towards an institution that offers fair trade products for sale. In particular the group's efforts during the 2003-06 time frames have concentrated on coffee and tea products to be sold at Aramark cafeterias. This struggle is documented by the researcher going back through the meetings that the group has held with various aramark representatives, group minutes of meetings, and interviewing various people in the movement in order to gather deeper insight into the group and its objectives.

The centre piece article in trents weekly newspaper was to promote the awareness of fair trade, and the group FTT to the campus students. The 1500 word article explained the concepts, documented the group's history and gave a brief history of the fair trade movement.

KEY WORDS

Fair, Trade, Coffee, Tea, Trent, Cocoa, Labour, Standards, Sweatshops, Aramark, Oxfam

Applied Research in Fair Trade Politics Cumulative Annotated Bibliography Kristen Rading 0150415 "Fair Trade Guarantees a Better Deal for Producers," Fair Trade Labeling Organizations International (FLO), 1988, Fair Trade Labeling Organizations International, Feb 2, 2006, www.fairtrade.net

FLO is the globally recognized Fair Trade Standard setting and Certification organization. The web site intricately traces the route from producer co-operatives to exporters, and finally to importers where it is fair trade approved, sealed and sent to retailers. The site also outlines the various fair trade and production standards and the state of the agricultural industry in less developed nations that has lead to the need for fair trade initiatives. This will be a useful reference for the feature piece in the Arthur.

"So Fair, So Good", *Equita*, 1996, Oxfam Canada, January 31, 2006, www.oxfamfairtrade.ca

Oxfam Fair Trade's mission is to promote fair trade across the country and encourage Canadians to make educated consumer choices. This website provides a list of products available in Canada, fundraising drives and links to fair trade organizations. It is relevant to my study of fair trade because it accompanies the theoretical overview of fair trade in Canada as it is a hands-on guide to practicing what you preach.

Compa, Lance. "Free Trade, Fair Trade and the Battle for Labour Rights" in *Rekindling the Movement: Labour's Quest for Relevance in the 21st Century*, edited by L.Turner, H.Katz and R.W. Hurd, pp.314-338. 2001 Ithica: Cornell University Press: 314-349

Rather than simply delineating the successes and setbacks of the battle for labour standards, Compa explores the historical context of the movement, the key players, frames the opposition and laments the difficulties faced in attempts to create enforceable corporate codes of conduct. The work's purpose is to validate recent contributions to the labour rights movement. This source will be useful for my research contextually because it provides the overarching socio-economic climate in which battles for labour standards are fought.

Maseland, R & de Vaal, A. "How Fair is Fair Trade?" *The Economist* 150 (2002) 251-272

This paper seeks to study the validity of the claim that fair trade is in fact fair compared to free trade and protectionism or whether it will lead to market distortions and other adverse effects. The authors frame their work within a Hecksher-Ohlin perspective, in other words, they focus on cost based, inter-industry trade. I will need to refute certain arguments contained in this article by properly framing the fair trade movement and addressing its shortcomings.

Elliott, K. & Freeman, R. "Can Labour Standards Improve Under Globalization?: Assessing the Achievements of Anti Sweatshop Campaigns." 2003: Institute for International Economics, Washington, D.C: 128-139

This article applauds activists for putting labour standards on the international agenda but cautions that lower exports from less developed countries and trade sanctions used to enforce standards may reduce the number of jobs for poor workers in the long run. The thesis advanced here is that despite battles waged and won, human rights activists have a long way to go to improve labour standards. A social conflict perspective is utilized. I think the evidence is reliable. It is a product of a reputable institute and provides a fair and balanced account of the fair trade movement.

Barry, Janice. Climbing the Ivory Tower. Peterborough, ON: OPIRG, 1999: 1-32

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize students with the University's bureaucracy in order to facilitate student participation in decision-making processes. Barry's theoretical framework is structural functionalist. Although instances of dissent and student protest are chronicled, the official roles of the various decision making bodies are presented as objective, interrelated players working together to run University governance as efficiently as possible. Due to OPIRG's mission to engage students in social justice causes, the handbook is invaluable in determining the appropriate channels needed to enact policies at Trent. I hesitate to except the evidence as wholly reliable as *Climbing the Ivory Tower* went to print in 1999 and since then, a fair trade purchaser has been added to the Trent University staff.

Grigg, H., Puchalski, T., Wells, Don. "Ethical Trade and University Purchasing Policies: McMaster University's "No Sweat" and "Fair Trade" Purchasing Codes." 2003: MacMaster University, Hamilton, ON: 1-13

In 2002, MacMaster began to push forward in their campaign to implement fair trade purchasing codes on campus. This is their documented account of progress made thus far. The paper situates the school's fair trade campaign within the larger context of the North American anti sweatshop movement of the late 1990s and traces the creation of a Code Committee and dealings with opposition. A most valuable resource for myself and the Fair Trade Working Group. It outlines steps that can be emulated and others that ought to be avoided. It will be unequivocally useful in the attempt to enact a fair trade policy at Trent.

Roberts-Davis, Tanya. "No Sweat at Trent." 2003: Trent University, Peterborough, ON: 1-1200

Roberts-Davis embarked on a twenty four month mission to implement a code of conduct for anti sweatshop Trent apparel. This was done to ensure that apparel manufactured for the University is made under humane working conditions in compliance with accepted international standards. Incredibly dense, this collection of email correspondences, newspaper clippings, preambles and press releases is helpful as a blueprint for all dimensions of the fair trade campaign. Of particular relevance to my role in the research will be a follow up investigation to see how the No Sweat policy has or has not been enforced.

Roberts-Davis, Tanya. "Fair Trade Purchasing Policy for Apparel at Trent University." 2003: Trent University, Peterborough, ON: 1-7

Roberts-Davis' hard work paid off when the culmination of her research, the final draft of a purchasing policy complete with definitions of the terms in question, standards and principles of implementation, was approved by the administration. The policy statement has been most meticulously researched down to the exact sections of the International Labour Organization's legal code. The legal jargon utilized in such a professional and fluent format introduces me to the policy terms and argumentative frameworks I'm certain I will come across and be required to analyze.

Fair Trade Trent. Fair Trade Trent Meeting Minutes: 2003-2005. Peterborough, 2003-2005. 15 April 2006: OPIRG Peterborough Resource Library.

This source consisted mainly of e-mail correspondences between the administration, Aramark and Fair Trade Trent and documentation of meeting minutes. A reoccurring central tenet intertwining this disorganized cluster of information was that Fair Trade Trent's main objective was, and *will be* until it is accomplished, to persuade Aramark to offer exclusively Fair Trade coffee and teas. Obviously an account of the hurdles overcome and milestones accomplishes in Fair Trade Trent's own words was invaluable to my chronological documentation of the organization. I felt a bit like a detective trying to piece together the events and make sense of handwritten notes scribbled nearly illegibly, conveniently undated items and e-mails that could sometimes go off on tangents.

Fick, Reykia. Personal Interview. 8 March. 2006

Reykia is the sole remaining member of Fair Trade Trent from its first tentative steps in 2003. The central point she drove home during our interview wound up being used in the article as a quotation: she wants people to know that fair trade should not be framed as a consumer choice issue. In Ontario, we set universal standards for minimum wage. It would be unfathomable and highly unacceptable by our standards, both legal and moral, for some employers to pay their employees less than that standard wage. So why are we allowed to choose between free trade (where the international labour standards are

disregarded) versus Fair Trade (where we as consumers are ensured labour standards are met). She was very eloquent and knowledgeable and cleared up minor confusions I was having. This interview was useful because it confirmed I was on the right track with my writing and reaffirmed my belief in fair trade as a worthy cause.

MacAdam, Rosemary. Personal Interview. 9 March 2006

Speaking with Rosemary, Trent's Fair Trade Coordinator, quelled my suspicions that there had been no just cause for all of Tanya Roberts-Davis' hard work. In fact, her policy *had* been implemented and there was a concerted effort on the part of Rosemary to enforce it. The principal complaint Rosemary voiced was that fair trade policies for apparel are fundamentally more complicated to enact than for coffee or tea or sports balls because there is no central body doing the monitoring, making it all that much harder to track working conditions all the way back to the manufacturing stage in Mexico or wherever the apparel might be made. This interview was helpful in framing what I believe to have been an important angle addressed in my article: To pass a policy with neither the proper infrastructure in place to enforce it nor perhaps any real *intention* to bother enforcing it in the first place is hollow *window dressing* for just labour standards and respect for human rights. Rosemary has begun networking to form a central governing body similar to the Fair Trade Labeling Organization. Her concerns were paraphrased and expanded upon in the article.

MARCH 21, 2006

Trent: Becoming a Fairer Trader?

Anyone who has spent time on campus this term has probably come across the fairly traded handicrafts for sale in front of Wenjack Theatre, or noticed the arrival of a fair trade option for coffee drinkers in the Otonabee and Champlain College Cafeterias. Fair Trade Trent is an Ontario Public Interest Research (OPIRG) Working Group that since 2004 has been on a mission to raise awareness of fair trade amongst the Trent community. Fair Trade Trent's focus this year is the implementation of a purchasing policy for on campus food providers, with a specific goal in mind: persuading Aramark to carry only certified fair trade coffee, tea, sugar and cocoa at their on-campus outlets, with the exception of Tim Horton's, who would offer a fair trade option. In 2004-2005, Fair Trade Trent gathered over 1500 signatures in support of the on-campus sale of fair trade products. To date, over 300 university campuses across Canada and the United States have enacted fair trade purchasing policies, including McMaster University here in Ontario.

Increased exposure and availability of fair trade products at Trent echo a growing global concern over the issue of worker exploitation. Oxfam is the human rights organization that brought the fair trade movement into the public consciousness with their clever ad campaign featuring the likes of Colin Firth and Chris Martin of Coldplay. They report that a decade ago, the cost of coffee per pound was 70% more than it is today. This plunge in prices on the international market has cost the approximately 15 million family farmers in coffee-producing countries around the world a loss of upwards of 8 billion dollars in profits. Of primary concern is the "dumping" phenomenon, what Oxfam describes as "rich countries dumping subsidized produce on developing countries, driving down the price of local produce - with devastating effects on the economy." No wonder human rights groups are seeking greater equity in international trade. But what exactly do the buzz words "fair trade" mean? "I don't drink coffee so I don't know an awful lot about fair trade," weighs in Stephanie Hansen, a 3rd year History and English major. "I assume it refers to a lack of worker exploitation and that the trading is done under humane conditions. I assume it is a positive thing." Is it possible though that any Jack or Jane Incorporated can claim to engage in ethical trading practices and market their products accordingly? McDonald's hamburger supplier, for example, was able to call itself "100% Beef" and operate under the auspice that its brand name spoke to the purity of the contents of its product. Is the catchphrase "fair trade" also misleading the public?

"In Canada, we don't choose between shopping at a store that pays its employees minimum wage versus shopping at one that doesn't. Our minimum labour standards apply to everyone equally. Why should it be any different in developing countries?"

The answer is a resounding NO. FLO (Fair Trade Labeling Organizations International), an umbrella organization, is the governing body responsible for coordinating various national Fair Trade initiatives, including their Canadian branch, Transfair Canada. They are the ones who set the internationally recognized Fair Trade labour standards for family farm co-operatives. According to www.fairtrade.ca, these labour standards include a minimum asking price for Fair Trade products based on the cost of production, prohibition of banned pesticides and a ban on forced or hired child labour. To claim Fair Trade status, all fair trade products in Canada must visibly bear the Transfair label (see right). This official seal guarantees to the customer that producers in developing countries have been compensated for the cost of production and are receiving a living income. To date, over 50 Fair Trade certified products are available around the world: Fair Trade certified coffee, tea, sugar, cocoa, bananas, sports balls, cut flowers, rice and quinoa are all for sale here in Canada.

But who is doing the buying? Jennifer Couch, a 4th year Con-Ed student, is skeptical of whether a tight student budget can be reconciled with the purchasing of Fair Trade products. "When I think of Fair Trade I associate it with high cost," says Couch. "The specialty stores that sell fair trade coffee seem to cater mostly to the well-off." Fair Trade Trent's campaign is specifically targeting this concern. According to Oxfam, the proceeds from the extra premium we pay for

Fair Trade coffee is divided as follows: the cooperatives, made up of family farms, start by paying export and processing fees. Next, five cents goes to community programs targeted at improving schools and driving environmental initiatives. Finally, the fate of the remaining profits is decided democratically by the members of the co-op. Because Aramark is a multi-million dollar corporation that is able to absorb the disparity in costs between fair trade and regular options, Fair Trade Trent is insisting that Fair Trade certified products be priced such that "cost alone will not be an overriding factor in consumer selection."

Furthermore, the market for Fair Trade products is growing rapidly. In 2003 alone, global sales shot up 56% and the demand continues to grow. Food-borne illness scares and exposes on the hidden realities of global food production, like the wildly popular Fast Food Nation, are creating a demand for food traceability systems to ensure that the food we are buying is not only fit to eat, but produced under humane working conditions. Increased public pressure forces companies to consider ethical issues related to agricultural production in the south. Organic foods, for example, have recently made the transition from a niche market to the aisles of our local supermarkets. Thomas Dobbs, a sustainable-agriculture economist at South Dakota State University, estimates that if just 1/3 of shoppers were to buy organic products on a regular basis, prices would fall to meet the non-organic priced offerings.

"Ultimately, it is our money. Where do we want it to go?"

The disconnection that exists between the customer sipping her "Cup o' Joe" in the OC caf and the workers growing coffee in impoverished regions of the world is another reason that people may be hesitant to support fair trade initiatives. In the context of our everyday lives, the exploitation of Third World workers isn't likely to be our primary concern. Karl Marx coined the term commodity fetishism back in 1867 to describe the lack of direct contact between producers and consumers that has arisen out of our complex capitalist market system. Unlike pre-capitalist societies, when you and I would have traded with each other a yak in exchange for a goat, let's say, today's producers and consumers make no conscious agreement to provide for one another. Instead, goods reach the neighbourhood retailer through a long, roundabout chain of suppliers and middlemen. Exploitation of workers in poor countries is out of sight and, therefore, out of mind. For this reason, ensuring decent labour standards for factory and plantation workers abroad by tracking and monitoring the production process can be a daunting task. Just ask Rosemary MacAdam.

As Fair Trade Coordinator for Trent University, MacAdam's role is to implement and raise awareness of Trent' new "No Sweat" fair trade purchasing policy for apparel, passed in 2002. She notes that in her efforts to get the policy implemented, some of the clothing companies in contract with the university have been reluctant to disclose the location of their manufacturing facilities, despite a legally binding agreement that says they must do so in a matter of months. Some clothing companies genuinely consider their practices to be ethical yet are actually in the dark about whether the apparel they manufacture is made under conditions that comply with the local laws and accepted international standards. "My job is to pressure these companies to enact codes of conduct for the companies they supply from," explains MacAdam, "so that they become more aware of their supply chain and how and where their clothes are made."

The Fair Trade Purchasing Policy for tea, coffee, sugar and cocoa that the Fair Trade Trent Working Group is pushing to implement for the next school year is more straightforward. Fair Trade standards for coffee, tea, sugar, cocoa, bananas, sports balls, cut flowers and quinoa are universally recognized by one central governing body, FLO, so the policing of unjust working conditions in producing countries can be done in a more linear, less complicated fashion.

A good thing about having both free and fair trade options available on campus, it is argued, is that people can make their own choices. Reykia Fick, a 4th year IDS student and founding member of Fair Trade Trent, sees things differently. "It frustrates me when the issue of fair trade is framed as a consumer issue," she says. "In Canada, we don't choose between shopping at a store that pays its employees minimum wage versus shopping at one that doesn't. Our minimum labour standards apply to everyone equally. Why should it be any different in developing countries?"

Buying Fair Trade certified products from our local retailer means that the products are guaranteed to have been grown or manufactured in a sustainable, cooperative and democratic fashion. We're buying products directly from the producers rather than through a long chain of suppliers and multinational corporations. Through this process, family farmers in poor producing countries are given the opportunity to maintain their land and earn a living income. Ultimately, it is our money. Where do we want it to go?

To find out more about fair trade and how you can support Fair Trade Trent initiatives, please visit:

- www.transfair.ca and
- www.opirgpeterborough.ca

The following businesses in the Peterborough area sell Fair Trade products:

Dreams of Beans 138 Hunter Street West

Haaselton's Coffee & Sweets 394 George Street North

JoAnne's Place 904 Water Street

Main Ingredient Too Willowcreek Plaza, 400 Lansdowne St. E.

The Garden Market 166 Brock St. (705) 741 4408

The Main Ingredient 326 Charlotte St.

Kristen Rading

A History of the Fair Trade Trent Working Group 2003-2006

"Fair Trade is an international system of doing business based on dialogue, transparency and respect. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions for producers and wokers in developing countries. Behind the principles and goals of Fair Trade is a rigorous international system of monitoring, auditing and certification."

-Transfair Canada

October 2003

-Fair Trade Trent meets for the first time to discuss a direction and an action plan. It is decided that they will focus on two goals: awareness raising and persuading Aramark to serve fair trade coffee and teas. Their primary objective is yet to be determined: should they get Aramark to offer a fair trade option or to sell fair trade products exclusively? -Tentative plans are made to set up an information booth educating the student body about fair trade, to draft a petition with the aim of garnering support from the Trent community for fair trade initiatives and to draft a proposal to become an official OPIRG working group.

January 2004

- -Fair Trade Trent's plan to lead a student-run campaign demanding Aramark provides Fair Trade coffee and tea is unveiled. FTT outlines its aim to collect 500 petition signatures. Their intent to educate students and faculty about the benefits of Fair Trade and to do everything in their power to bring Fair Trade to Aramark is emphasized in a press release.
- -A demonstration is staged in front of Bata Library to allow students to show support for the cause, tally the petition signatures and ceremoniously deliver an open letter to the Aramark office. Unexpectantly, an Aramark representative shows up and informs FTT that Aramark already sells Fair Trade products at Trent. This fact is checked and turns out to be bogus. Over 1050 signatures are collected.
- -FTT announces plans to begin networking with other university fair trade campaign organizers in hopes of learning from others' missteps and successes
- -The Peterborough Examiner runs a feature on the Fair Trade Trent Working Group. FTT feels the issue was represented in a positive light but that the article was extremely unprofessional.

February 2004

- -Arthur, Trent's student newspaper, does a news article about FTT's campaign. This is received enthusiastically by FTT.
- A spokesperson for Oxfam, a human rights group running a Make Trade Fair Campaign, gives a talk at Trent
- -Cross-campus correspondence begins. FTT receives responses from more than 7 other schools but most are also in the initial stages of their campaigns. McMaster is the only school to serve as a template; they are the only school thus far to have drafted an official contract for Aramark's proposed Fair Trade coffee purchasing.

- -plans are made to draft enquiries for official support from other student groups, unions and the Trent administration
- -FTT approaches the Seasoned Spoon, the student run café selling fair trade and organic offerings, to determine whether or not they want to form an alliance with FTT: FTT fears that their lambasting of Aramark might jeopardize the future of the Seasoned Spoon by provoking Aramark to lash out at the student-run, Fair Trade supporting café as retaliation. The Seasoned Spoon confirms it *does* in fact support FTT's mission.
- -A meeting with the on-campus director of Aramark runs smoothly. She expresses a willingness to look into FTT concerns and begin assessing the feasibility of implementing the following FTT demands: that the Fair Trade Trent option to be organic, to have a fair trade tea option, to have Fair trade served at all cafeteria outlets, to have Fair Trade coffee served at all University functions, and ultimately, in the long-run, to have Aramark provide Fair Trade teas and coffees exclusively.

March 2004

-A Cross-Campus Fair Trade Network Conference Call is a rousing success. A formalized, coordinated cross-campus network is begun. A website describing fair trade and providing links to resources and contact information for student groups working on Fair Trade on their respective campuses is scheduled to be launched by September 2005. -Aramark begins selling a Fair Trade certified coffee option.

February 2005

- -FTT picks up where it left off the previous year by kicking off a ribbon campaign to raise Fair Trade awareness. It coincides with the second circulation of a petition. Several hundred more signatures are collected.
- -Women from Chiapas arrive at Trent as part of a colloquium on fair trade attended by OPIRG. TIP and the Women's Centre.
- -FTT member writes article about Fair Trade and FTT events.

March 2005

-Visitor from Sri Lanka arrives at Trent to speak about Fair Trade

December 2005

- -FTT drafts Purchasing Policy for Fair Trade Certified Products at Trent University.
- -FTT protests the administration's proposed plan to bring Starbucks to Trent. They suggest a cooperative, student run café similar to Seasoned Spoon to be set up at Gzowski instead. A formal proposal is drafted but ultimately rejected by the administration. Starbucks, however, *is* denied an invitation to set up shop at Trent as a result of the FTT lead anti-Starbucks protests.

January 2006

-A fair trade Exploration Group is launched. Representatives from the Trent administration, the Athletics department, the college cabinets, the TCSA and FTT are present at the first meeting. It is suggested that it be demanded of Aramark to offer not just Fair Trade certified teas and coffee but also other products that can be Fair Trade

certified in Canada including sports balls and cocoa. Sub-committees are formed to explore the feasibility of this suggestion.

February 2006

-FTT solicits student groups at Trent for letters of support-in-principal of the Fair Trade purchasing policy

March 2006

- -Fair Trade Awareness Week is launched. Fairly Traded jewelry and handicrafts are sold in front of Wenjack Theatre and gold ribbons and Fair Trade info sheets are handed out to students to promote support for the on-going negotiations with Aramark and the Trent administration.
- -A feature piece on Fair Trade appears in the Arthur
- -Fair Trade Certified chocolate and hot chocolate from the Cocoa Camino Cooperative arrive at Champlain and Otonabee cafeterias
- -Negotiations and monthly meetings are extended into the summer. FTT feels that their ultimate objective, to offer exclusively Fair Trade coffee and teas on campus, is progressing slowly but are hopeful it will soon be achieved.

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