



*'Fascinating and eye-opening, FOOT WORK shows brilliantly how a simple everyday object can shed light on the hidden costs of globalisation and environmental degradation'* Owen Jones

# FOOT WORK

## WHAT YOUR SHOES ARE DOING TO THE WORLD

### by TANSY E. HOSKINS

**Published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson on 19 March 2020 in trade paperback at £14.99, eBook: £7.99 and audio at £19.99**

*'Tansy is one of the sharpest and committed analysts of the true cost of the stuff we own. FOOT WORK is an absorbing, meticulous and at times completely horrifying account of the shoes on our feet and how that supply chain is marching (all puns intended) us towards an even more dystopian future, especially for the workers in the system. Read this and you will make better decisions about all fashion, and all consumer goods in the future'* Lucy Siegle

**FOOT WORK: What Your Shoes are Doing to the World** is an urgently needed exploration and exposé of the shoe industry, and the damage it is doing to workers, consumers and the planet.

In 2018, 66.3 million pairs of shoes were manufactured across the world every single day. This adds up to a total of 24.2 billion pairs. They have never been cheaper to buy, and we have never been more convinced that we need to buy them. Yet their cost to the planet has never been greater. Over-production, accompanied by over-consumption in rich countries, have collided to create a world that feels disposable, with innovation and progress funnelled into producing merchandise that can be piled high and sold cheap.

In this urgent, passionately argued book, Tansy E. Hoskins opens our eyes to the dark origins of the shoes on our feet. Taking us deep into the heart of an industry that is exploiting workers and deceiving consumers, we begin to understand that, if we don't act fast, this humble yet essential household object will take us to the point of no return. Tansy E. Hoskins argues that:

- Shoes are the propulsion and consequence of globalisation. Among the first objects to undergo globalised production, shoes represent the interdependencies and injustices shaping our world.
- Every shoe we own is a world within a world, the vast majority of them made from complex component parts on dangerous, low-waged production lines.
- Standards in the shoe industry are ten years behind the rest of the fashion industry in terms of wages, conditions, and corporate standards. Poor factory conditions include no fire escapes, lack of ventilation, ingestion, inhalation and absorption of toxic chemicals.
- Workers in Bangladesh's tanneries have been found to have a 50% chance of being dead by the age of fifty. Leather chemicals include chromium six, cadmium, lead, and mercury.
- Dangerous levels of chromium six do not stay in Bangladesh, they have been found in 'first walker shoes for babies' on sale in Europe.

*Contd./*

**For further information contact Elizabeth Allen, Campaigns Director**

**T: 020 3122 6810 | E: [elizabeth.allen@orionbooks.co.uk](mailto:elizabeth.allen@orionbooks.co.uk)**

- The monthly wage of a shoe factory worker in Macedonia is €197. Across Eastern Europe, shoe workers receive 25-35% of a living wage.
- Syrian refugee children as young as six make shoes in Turkey for £25-35 per month.
- The ILO (International Labour Organization) estimates there are 50m homeworkers across SE Asia, 80% of them women. A family of four homeworkers stitching shoes in Pakistan 8am till late at night can earn a collective wage of 800 rupees – under \$8 per day
- Minimum wage in Pakistan is 15,000 rupees. Homeworkers earn 3-4,000 rupees per month which equates to \$28-30.
- Asia accounts for 83% of shoe production. Between 1990 – 2015 China's urban population grew from 26% to 56%. By 2013, 62.9% of all shoes were being made in China.
- The ILO estimates that 9m garment and footwear workers risk losing their jobs to robots and automation across ASEAN. In Cambodia 90% of garment and footwear jobs are at risk.
- The impact of footwear upon the biosphere, upon billions of animals, upon the rainforest and the living world remains unconscionable. In 2018 Brazil exported \$1.4 billion worth of leather – 182 million square feet of skin. Cattle farming is the number one cause of deforestation in Amazonia.
- 90% of shoes are not recycled. Instead they end up in landfill where the component parts can last for over 100 years.
- Our consumer culture means that people, including children, buying hundreds of pairs of shoes to the detriment of their own lives and of global society.
- If we forget that the source of all wealth is ultimately the planet and human work, we forget that we already have everything we need to make things right, to create a society that is equitable, sustainable, and which provides for all.

A hard-hitting book with powerful first-hand reporting, **FOOT WORK** will open discussions about overconsumption, capitalism, the working conditions of the world's poorest people and our relationship with the 'things' in our lives. Is it worth destroying the rainforest to make trainers? Is it right that factories churn out billions of pairs of shoes a year, yet wealth is distributed so unequally that tens of thousands of kids get sick walking barefoot to school? Should people tanning leather have a life expectancy of fifty?

**FOOT WORK** explores shoe factories across the globe, from China to the Balkans, and exposes an Italian shoe brand making shoes in sweatshop conditions. It follows the supply chain to meet factory workers – including refugee children – and a hidden, secret pillar of globalisation: homeworkers. It exposes the dark side of leather production, the industrial slaughter of billions of animals, and the tearing down of the rainforest. It also asks what happens next when these complex, handmade, and intensively resourced items are discarded. And it looks at how robots have already changed the shoe industry and what the rise of automation has in store for the future. However, the book ends on a positive message, looking at how things could be done differently and offers practical steps that we can all take to help turn the situation around.

**Tansy E. Hoskins** is an author and journalist based in London. She can be found writing about the textile, clothing and footwear industries for *The Guardian*, *Al Jazeera*, *i-D*, and the *i* paper, or making TV documentaries. This work has taken her to Bangladesh, Kenya, Macedonia, and to the Topshop warehouses in Solihull. Her award-winning book *Stitched Up: The Anti-Capitalist Book of Fashion* made Emma Watson's 'Ultimate Book List'.



For further information contact Elizabeth Allen, Campaigns Director

T: 020 3122 6810 | E: [elizabeth.allen@orionbooks.co.uk](mailto:elizabeth.allen@orionbooks.co.uk)