In April 2005 a factory making sweaters for the European market collapsed like a pack of cards during the nightshift in Savar near Dhaka, Bangladesh. The circumstances of this disaster, which caused the deaths of 62 clothing workers and injured a further 84, proved to be a final straw for trade unionists and NGO activists, who had long been concerned about the state of factory safety and the inadequacies of social protection in the Ready Made Garment industry in Bangladesh.

This book presents a detailed account of the national and international campaign efforts to bring the owner and his multinational buyers to book. It is also an account of the emergence of two quite different but replicable buyer approaches to the provision of relief for workers in such calamitous circumstances. Hopefully, this sheds light on some of the contradictions of corporate social responsibility in the globalized economy in which we live today.

‘A massive and impressive piece of work.’

Ineke Zeldenrust, Clean Clothes Campaign

‘This book has been a long time coming. At last we have the full story behind the efforts of what can be achieved through sustained national and international campaign pressure by trade unions and labour rights organizations.’

Roy Ramesh Chandra, President, United Federation of Garments Workers, and General Secretary, Jatio Sramik League and Bangladesh National Council (BNC) of Textile Garments & Leather Workers
‘Read this book for a vivid account of the devastating consequences to garment workers of chronic health and safety failures in the industry. Read this book for inspiration – new protections can be established for workers when government, manufacturers, trade unions and international buyers work together in a more accountable way. Read this book!’

Dan Rees, Director, Better Work (a programme of the ILO and IFC)

‘This book serves as a reminder that with all such cases, multinationals need to first connect with the workers in their supply chains at a human level, especially when they look at issues of compensation and remediation post a disaster. More importantly, each of us has to look beyond just what is expected of us legally, to our wider moral responsibility, in order to stay civilized and “humane” in the challenging and often heartless world of the global fashion industry…’

Lakshmi Bhatia, Fair Labor Association