

No Sweat: Action against Gap

Stamp out sweatshop labour!

On Saturday 1 December an international day of protest action was organised against Gap. Pickets and street meetings were held outside many of the 3,000 Gap, Banana Republic and Old Navy Stores world-wide to demand the end to the use of sweated labour in the production of Gap clothes.

Cambodian and Chinese workers producing for Gap stores can earn as little as 22 pence per day. There are reports suggesting some Russian clothing workers are earning as little as 11 cents an hour. Gap workers in Tehuacan, Mexico, make only 28 cents an hour.

Meanwhile, in 1999 Gap had sales over \$11.6 bn and net profits of \$1.1 bn. In 2000 Gap CEO Millard Dexter "earned" a massive £23,000 per day.

A Panorama programme (October 2000) found Gap clothes being produced in Cambodian factories by children under 15.

Gap state in their Code of Conduct that they support free trade unions. However they do not have a recognition agreement in Britain and use factories in countries like China where free trade unions are illegal. Gap has still not honoured a pledge to allow independent factory inspection of factory working conditions beyond a single experiment in a Central American factory.

In America trade unions are campaigning for Donald Fisher, Chair of Gap, settle a law suit being brought against the company over the treatment of workers on the island of Saipan. Saipan is a US territory half-way between China and America. The company is accused of hiring immi-

grant workers from China, Thailand, Philippines, Bangladesh and Vietnam on Saipan, making workers sign contracts which effectively make them indentured labourers after paying large recruitment fees; workdays are often 12 hours, seven days a week; workers are housed in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions; and unions are stopped from organising.

The US's Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA) has cited over 1,000 health and safety violations on Saipan - including insufficient clean drinking water, blocked factory exits, fire hazards and exposed electrical wiring.

The US unions want a "living wage" clause written into Gap's Code and threaten that until Gap settles they will "continue to pressure [Gap] through educating consumers and protesting your stores and headquarters."

In Britain No Sweat has helped petition and protest against Gap's anti-worker policies. We campaign for practical solidarity with workers abroad. In November the Indonesian trade union organiser, Dita Sari, was in Britain on a No Sweat speaker-tour as part of this process of making links.

We also exist to help organise British sweatshops. At our recent conference the GMB London Region launched a drive to help unionise 250 East End sweatshops.

Want to help our work? Get in touch. Join us!

Protest!

Want to help our work? Get in touch:
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Individual membership is £1.00, cheques to "No Sweat"