

Anti-sweatshop student groups fighting Gap, Nike

by Jennifer Lin
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PHILADELPHIA — In a poster going up on college campuses across the Philadelphia area, the dour face of an older Asian woman is displayed in what appears to be a Gap ad for vests. Until you read the headline: "My name is Chie Abad. I used to work in a GAP sweatshop."

For a hip retailer trying to get everyone to wear cords, sing "Mellow Yellow" and swing-dance in khakis, that stings.

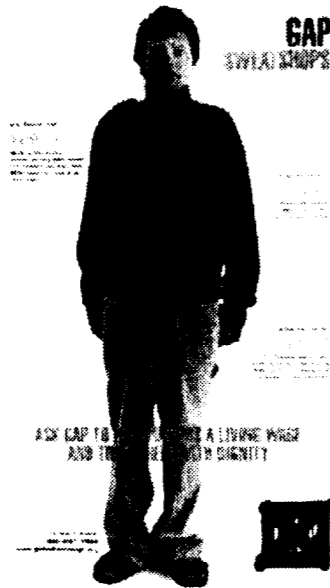
But this poster and others, as well as a coast-to-coast college speaking tour by Abad, are the latest salvos in an expanding campus crusade against sweatshops. At more and more colleges across the country, students are speaking out against U.S. companies such as Nike and Gap that buy goods from overseas factories.

The anti-sweatshop groups, which have cropped up in the last several years, are trying to draw attention to low wages and harsh working conditions. They also are pressuring universities to stop licensing college logos to companies that employ sweatshop labor. Student organizations are getting help and encouragement from labor rights groups and unions. Global Exchange, a San Francisco human rights organization, for example, paid to print 4,000 anti-Gap posters and ship them to campuses. It also organized the speaking tour for Abad.

"Our campaign has really taken off," said Miriam Joffe-Block, a 21-year-old Penn senior who helped to start Penn Students Against Sweatshops in the spring. "It's a very complicated issue — global economic justice — but this is a very tangible way for students to see themselves connected to the issue."

In other words, money talks. Gap is one of the largest and most profitable clothing companies in the

world. Campus chic is its stock in trade. Gap Inc., which also runs the Banana Republic and Old Navy chains, posted a 32 percent gain in earnings for the third quarter, ending Oct. 30. The San Francisco company had a profit of \$315 million, or 35



TMS PHOTO
Anti-Gap ad made by college groups.

cents a share, on sales of \$3.05 billion. In the 1998 period, it had earnings of \$237 million, or 27 cents a share, on sales of \$2.4 billion.

Alan Marks, a Gap spokesman, said the company employed 40 monitors — soon to increase to 60 — who travel around the world, inspecting the company's 2,000 suppliers every three months to make sure they are abiding by Gap's formal code of conduct. "What's important is to understand what we're doing to address this issue, and we're doing quite a bit," Marks said. He said that if a factory violates the company's code of conduct, it could lose its Gap business. He would not elaborate.

"Sweatshop factories are problem

factories," Marks said, speaking generally. "It doesn't make sense to do business with those kinds of factories."

Chie (pronounced Chee) Abad paints a different picture. In 1993, the now 39-year-old Filipina moved to Saipan, the largest of the Northern Mariana Islands in the western Pacific. She was hired at a South Korean-owned garment factory, Sako Corp. Of the 500 workers, most were Chinese and Filipino women who had paid upward of \$3,000 to middlemen to secure their jobs.

Abad said that Gap and its sister chains were the main customers of the factory. She remembers being shocked that polar fleece vests made by her factory were being sold at Banana Republic for \$78. Abad started work as a seamstress earning \$2.15 an hour — the island's minimum wage at the time — before getting her hourly wage increased to \$3.05 an hour.

Even though Saipan is a U.S. commonwealth, it can set a lower minimum wage than the states. It also does not have to abide by U.S. immigration laws. Garment factories can import their entire work forces from Asia, pay them less than the U.S. minimum wage and still sew "Made in the U.S.A." into their products. Abad said the factory where she worked flouted U.S. regulations that protect the rights of workers. She said the factory routinely fired workers if they became pregnant. When workers complained, the factory made a concession: it stopped firing pregnant workers, but they had to pay for their own medical expenses.

Abad said when she tried to form a union, she was fired and reinstated only by court order. "All of us were aiming to save money and go back home," Abad said. "Especially for workers from the Philippines, we studied American history. We saw the United States as the champion on

basic rights. I didn't expect to face such terrible conditions."

Abad said Gap monitors visited the factory but had little effect. "I admire the Gap's code of conduct for vendors, I really do," she said. "But workers don't understand it." She said at her former factory, there was only one copy posted by the manager's office and it was printed in English. Most of the workers spoke Chinese.

Marks, the Gap spokesman, said he could not comment about conditions at the Sako factory. "I do not have specific knowledge of her complaint," he said.

In June, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filed two lawsuits on behalf of Abad and the fired pregnant workers. In a separate action, Gap and 17 other companies were named in a class-action lawsuit filed in January on behalf of Saipan workers who allegedly were denied overtime pay. Nine retailers and clothing companies involved in related litigation have agreed to settle complaints. Gap continues to fight.

Abad said Gap was singled out for the campus campaign launched in late October because it was the largest customer of Saipan factories. The campus movement against sweatshops began building three years ago with backlash against Nike Inc. At the time, the footwear company was dogged by charges that contractors in Vietnam and Indonesia ran unsafe factories and employed underpaid workers.

Still the target of labor and campus activists, Nike said in November it was offering students the chance to inspect its contract factories during spring break. Meanwhile, the pressure against Gap is heating up. "It's just another way that companies try to rip us off," said Emily Pope, a 20-year-old junior at the University of Delaware who helped to start the Student Labor Action Committee. "We shouldn't let this happen."

"HANGING OF THE GREENS"



TMS CAMPUS PHOTO BY LYNN MAY

University of Missouri freshman Ali Leoni decorates an ornament at the University of Missouri's "Hanging of the Greens" celebration, held December 1. "I'll give this one to my mom," she said.

Committee examines GPA requirements for student government

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CARBONDALE, Ill. (TMS) — An affirmative-action committee at Southern Illinois University examined the grade-point average requirements for members of the undergraduate student government senate after fielding charges that the standards were discriminatory.

A GPA of 2.25 is required to become a USG senator, and a 2.5 is necessary to become president. Rob Taylor, a senior in philosophy who requested that the committee's review, said the requirements barred nearly 40 percent of African-American and disabled male students from running for USG president, and almost 30 percent of those students from campaigning for a senate seat.

"All of these students pay a fee," Taylor told the *Daily Egyptian*. "The issue is that there's an arbitrary number that restricts certain groups from participating in student

government at a higher rate than other groups."

Associate Chancellor for Diversity Seymour Bryson said that the GPA

"All of these students pay a fee."

-Rob Taylor,
senior in Philosophy

standard was reasonable and that lowering the standards for minorities set the wrong kind of precedent.

"The worst kind of racism is changing the standard because you cannot believe that [minorities] can meet the standard," Bryson told the *Egyptian*. "I think that if you raise the bar, you raise expectations, and the behavior will follow."

The blotter: a weekly look at campus crime reports

by William Lee

Campus Correspondent - Western Illinois University
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LOS ANGELES (TMS) — A gay and lesbian student group at the University of California at Los Angeles said it believes that a recent theft of artwork from a campus exhibit may be a hate crime. According to the *Daily Bruin*, the stolen artwork, valued at \$4,125, was being presented by La Familia, an organization for UCLA's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered students.

"It was a hate crime attacking the homosexual culture," said group member Wendy Sanchez. "It sets a hostile environment for queers. It's basically saying 'We don't want your art here, and we don't want you here.'"

PEORIA, Ill., (TMS) — A Bradley University freshman could be in big

trouble if accusations that he tried to hack into the Web sites of 400 European corporations are correct. Companies from around the world notified university officials that someone from the campus' network had tried to break into their computer systems.

According to the Bradley Scout, Bradley police traced the would-be hacker to the residence hall room of Blake Ferguson, 18. Ferguson was using a computer provided by the university.

Police said Ferguson told them an on-going joke between him and a buddy from high school prompted him to try to hack into his friend's PC. While trying to do so, Ferguson told police he unintentionally scanned corporate Internet Protocol addresses. That access, investigators said, could have resulted in the alteration of computer settings ranging from turning desktop icons upside-down to

disabling a keyboard.

Still unclear is whether any of the affected companies will press charges against Ferguson. While most attempts to hack into sites failed, Ferguson did gain potentially damaging access to about 12 systems. The case is being reviewed by the Illinois State's Attorney's Office.

MIAMI (TMS) — With final exams rolling around soon, police at the University of Miami said they're preparing for more bomb scares on campus. Police have fielded five threats already this semester and predict at least three more will follow given the campus' average number of bomb scares.

"At peak periods we check specific rooms prior to exams and post guards after the checks are made," said Maj. Henry Christensen, director of public safety at the University. "Professors are also designating alternate locations

for exams in the case of a bomb threat." For students hoping to avoid — or at least delay — a final exam by calling in a bomb threat, Christensen warns that "great strides have been made in immediately obtaining caller ID information."

DAVIS, Calif. (TMS) — When deciding whom to ask for help, consider this: police at the University of California-Davis arrested a man who asked an officer for directions. The officer, realizing that the man smelled of marijuana, detained him and asked him to produce identification. When the man did so, the officer discovered he was wanted on an outstanding warrant with the Sacramento Police Department. Davis police arrested the man. A subsequent search revealed that the man possessed 5 grams of marijuana. Davis police charged the man with drug possession, too.

Oklahoma law lets college researchers enter private partnerships

by Sonya Colberg
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Finally, researchers at Oklahoma universities can compete with overseas scientists.

That's what a no-longer-frustrated Paul Brauer has found. He recently signed a technology agreement with two University of Oklahoma professors and a recently graduated OU doctoral student. The deal clears the way for a new testing product — a tensiometer — useful to the petroleum, chemical and food industries. Before state law was changed in November of 1998, Brauer's Tulsa-based Temco tried to reach an agreement with an OU professor. The professor was willing. Brauer was willing. But Brauer said state law prevented them from forging an agreement so that he could license the technology, manufacture it at his business at 4616 N. Mingo Road and get it to the marketplace.

What Brauer couldn't accomplish in his own state, he accomplished with France. So now a French company handles one product line. But since Oklahoma voters passed State Questions 680 and 681, which legalized cooperation and business deals between universities and private companies, Brauer has been able to work in his own state to sign an agreement with OU and Andrew Slagle, Sherril Christian and John Scamehorn.

The business-university partnership can be an important one that Oklahoma had been missing. In 1996, universities nationwide earned nearly \$600 million in research-generated royalties, a study has found.

Brauer met the OU scientists last spring during a trade show where they were presenting a paper on their new instrument developed during Slagle's preparation for his dissertation. "From that, we've gone ahead and licensed that instrument, and we have the right to manufacture, market and distribute

it throughout the world," Brauer said. The tensiometer developed by OU measures surface tension between a liquid and gas.

"Products from detergent companies that are used in cleaning laundry, dishes and cars all function by modifying the forces acting at the interface between water and the dirt or oil particles," Slagle said. "Our tensiometer provides a way to measure those forces." The instrument also could be used in the petroleum and food industries, Brauer said. "They've got the basic mechanical system, and we're going to automate it and take it out to the marketplace."

Much of the industry has already accepted the device because of the university researchers' published papers, Brauer said. "The relationship we have been building with Temco gives my colleagues and me the opportunity to continue with the developmental research that resulted in our instruments," Slagle said. He said the scientists' original idea was to start a business and continue their research.

When he met Brauer, he said that he realized Temco had the contacts, expertise and experience to get the tensiometer into the marketplace.

"I saw with Temco the chance to keep our business an Oklahoma concern," said Slagle, an Oklahoma native who has become a chemistry professor at Rose State College in Midwest City.

The mechanical version of the instrument is available now, and Brauer said they're shooting for the second quarter of next year to get out the automated version. To his staff of 14, he has hired an engineer who will work specifically on the tensiometer beginning in January.

He said it's just the beginning of an alliance between the university and Temco. "They've already come to us with another product," Brauer said. "We'll constantly be evaluating new products."

Ex-Rutgers students threatening suit over naked sprints

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Three former Rutgers students will file a lawsuit Tuesday, Dec. 7, against the university and its men's basketball coach, charging that their civil rights were violated during a drill that involved sprinting naked, according to a source involved in the case.

The December 1997 practice was all in good fun, coach Kevin Bannon said earlier this year, when some of the players told their story to *The Record*. But two ex-players and a former student-manager for the team claim that they were improperly

forced to strip and run wind sprints in the gymnasium as retribution for missing free throws in practice.

Information about the lawsuit came from the family of one of the players and associates of the Newark law firm of Ginarte, O'Dwyer, Winograd, and Laracunte. The firm will detail the charges at a news conference today when the court papers are filed. The lawsuit will name as plaintiffs Josh Sankes and Earl Johnson Jr., who were scholarship athletes on the team, and Juan Pla, a former student-manager.

Bannon doesn't deny what took place that day in Louis Brown

Athletic Center in Piscataway. The players and the student-managers were told to form two teams for a free-throw shooting match. For every shot missed, everyone on the teams had to remove a piece of clothing. In the end, four team members ran wind sprints in the nude while the rest of the team and staff watched.

"It was well-intentioned — to provide some levity and fun for the guys during a difficult period," Bannon told *The Record* earlier this year.

"Absolutely no one was forced to remove his clothes or to run. The only people in the gym were my

team, my coaches, trainer, and manager."

Sankes and Johnson since have transferred to other schools. Sankes is currently playing for Holy Cross. Johnson is a student at Iona, sitting out a transfer year under NCAA regulations. Pla stayed at Rutgers and became a graduate assistant in athletic sports marketing.

On Monday, Nov. 29, Gary Sankes, father of Josh Sankes, said the lawsuit wouldn't exist had the players "ever received so much as acknowledgment or an apology from the university that 'the strip practice' happened."