

Gap Campaign 2001 – Leafleting Guidelines

Purpose: Use these guidelines—tips, talking points, your legal right to leaflet, and answers to frequently asked questions—when you are leafleting in front of Gap stores or tabling, that is, handing out Gap Boycott literature, at an event. When leafleting or tabling, our purpose is to inform Gap customers and other passers-by that they can use their consumer dollars to change the world!

Approaching Shoppers. Here are five ways you can approach shoppers and passersby, as you are handing them a leaflet:

“You can help save the redwood forest and protect workers rights today—just by boycotting the Gap [Banana Republic or Old Navy]! We’re very close to winning—won’t you help?”

“Your consumer dollar is more powerful than your vote! Use your consumer dollar to VOTE for forest protection and workers' rights! Boycott the Gap!”

“The people who control the Gap are destroying redwood forests in northern California. And they're paying sweatshop workers as little as 11 cents an hour to sew Gap clothes. YOU CAN CHANGE THESE POLICIES WITH THE POWER OF YOUR CONSUMER DOLLAR. Please boycott the Gap!”

“Do you realize how much POWER you have as a consumer? YOU can save the redwood forest in California. YOU can get a better deal for Gap sweatshop workers. YOU can make these things happen with the POWER of your consumer dollar. Boycott the Gap!”

“Have you received your alternative shopping guide yet? Here are sources of fair trade/green goods! ...Fair trade means that the people who made the product received a living wage for their work. Green means that the product was made with care for the environment.”

Tip: Don't waste your time talking to people who just want to argue with you. There are MANY people who WANT forest protection and fair labor practices--but they don't know what the Gap is doing. Concentrate on THEM. If you waste time on argumentative people, you will miss many potential supporters.

Tip: Please be respectful, polite and don't hassle people. You can be funny, colorful and entertaining--but don't block their way (to the store), and don't lay guilt trips on them. Just hand them the flyer with a smile and a few words. Look for the people who are open to your message.

Tip: If there are questions you can't answer, refer them to the www.gapsuck.org or www.globalexchange.org web sites, or take their contact information and send it to us.

Talking Points – Brief. Use these to give the shopper the broad brush strokes of the situation.

-Boycott Goals in a Nutshell: To convince powerful, billionaire Fisher family (founders and major shareholders of Gap Inc), to stop logging redwood forests in northern California, and create a wildlife refuge instead; 2) To convince the Gap to pay their sweatshop workers a living wage.

-Boycott Goal - Wildlife Preserve: We want the Fisher family to stop the logging and to create a badly needed wildlife refuge. The Fishers are clearcutting, using toxic herbicides and logging the last old growth on 350 square miles of redwood forest in Mendocino and Sonoma Counties, in northern California. This logging program is destroying all the wonderful wild things that live in the forest. The marbled murrelet--a seabird that nests in the tops of old growth trees. The coho salmon that used to swim up these rivers and streams by the thousands. The small, vulnerable northern spotted owl. These creatures are facing extinction, as the Fishers (and others) chop down the last of their forest habitat. The Fishers can afford NOT to do this. They don't need the money! They can

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afford to have their forest workers restore the forest, rather than log it. Gap customers need to convince them to take the better road.

-Boycott Goal - Living Wage: The Gap pays its contract workers far less than a living wage, and these people work in oppressive conditions with no rights. We want the Gap to pay the workers who sew Gap clothes a living wage, and to acknowledge their human rights. These sweatshop workers are treated like slaves. This must stop! The reason they're paid so little (as low as 11 cents an hour) is to make a few people very rich. This is not okay. This is not fair. Gap workers deserve a decent wage. Gap customers can achieve this--very simply--by not shopping Gap! If enough people do this, the Gap will be compelled to share the wealth.

-Consumer Power. Consumer dollars are a POWERFUL TOOL to achieve change. Consumers need to learn how POWERFUL they are. To corporations like the Gap, consumers ARE EVERYTHING. Without customers, there is no Gap, no trade, no money, no stock, no board of directors, and no fortunes to invest in logging and land speculation. Customers are IT. Customers are the KING AND QUEEN of the board room. Their opinions and desires are GOLD COIN to the people who run the Gap.

-Close to winning. With Gap profits down 12% from last year, we feel we are very close to winning. If everyone pitches in and boycotts Gap, Banana Republic, and Old Navy this year—we will achieve our goals for redwoods and workers!

-Two beautiful goals. One simple way of getting there: STOP SHOPPING GAP.-

Talking Points – Detailed. Use these when a shopper wants in-depth one-on-one discussion.

1.) FISHER LOGGING – Details.

1-a) What kind of logging, and where? The people who control the Gap--the Fisher family--have used the riches they've gained from consumer dollars and sweatshop labor, to invest in the logging of redwood forests in northern California (mostly in Mendocino County, about 5% in Sonoma County). They're clearcutting. They're using toxic herbicides. They're logging the last old growth. They're polluting the rivers. They're killing off the last endangered species. The Fishers bought these 350 square miles of overlogged redwood forest from Louisiana Pacific in 1998. L-P logged them rapaciously. The Fishers are logging them one last time, in violation of numerous environmental laws. The old growth is mostly gone from these forests. The wild birds have almost nowhere left to nest. The salmon are choking and dying in rivers of mud from logging operations.

Local environmental groups have sued the Fishers' logging company to stop illegal logging. They've won two lawsuits against them. The Fishers ignored these court rulings, and re-filed logging plans in the lawsuit areas that commit the same offenses. They have over 200 logging plans. 80% of these plans contain some form of clearcutting. 104 of these plans were purchased from L-P. The clearcutting is followed by toxic herbicide use to kill unwanted trees (native tanoaks that grow up quickly in clearcut areas). (Note: The solution is NOT to continue clearcutting and applying poisons, but to STOP logging and let the forest heal itself. The big conifer trees--redwood and Douglas fir--WILL come back, given time. And they're not just clearcutting tanoak. They're clearcutting redwood and Douglas fir--an idiotic contradiction. It's about money, not forestry.)

The Fishers are very clever at public relations (that's how they made their fortune). They've come up with a lot of good lines, like "We want to be good stewards of the land," or "We have to clearcut these forests to restore them." (Where have we heard that one before?) At first they tried to blame younger brother John Fisher for the logging. (Gap put out a press release to that effect.) However, we know that Robert Fisher and Donald Fisher are deeply involved, as investors. (They've both admitted it—Donald only recently.) Now they're saying, "We're logging better than Boise Cascade." They even went and bought themselves a phony "green label" to put on their lumber (a "green label" that permits clearcutting and toxic herbicide use!). All of this is mere P.R. cover, so they can get the last timber from these forests.

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The truth is that the Fishers--with a fortune of over 12 billion dollars--should be saving redwood forests, not destroying them.

1-b) The connection between the Gap and the logging

While Gap employees (store managers, retail clerks, etc.) have nothing to do with the logging, it is ridiculous (and naive) to say that the GAP has nothing to do with it. The logging is an investment of the people who CONTROL the Gap--the Fishers.

The Fisher family--founders and major shareholders of Gap Inc--have segregated the logging company (called "The Mendocino Redwood Company") from Gap Inc, but it is still part of the Fisher empire, which includes over 3,000 Gap, Banana Republic and Old Navy stores, and numerous properties, businesses and development schemes in San Francisco and elsewhere.

The Fishers are major players in the corrupt and lawless global "free trade" movement. Donald Fisher--chair of Gap Inc--helped write the "free trade" textile rules that have permitted the proliferation of sweatshops around the world. His son, Robert Fisher--former president of the Gap--supported a scheme to "privatize" forest management in California, by putting a phony "green label" on lumber products. (He's a board member of the Natural Resources Defense Council, a major promoter of this scheme to undermine California environmental law.)

Both are investors in the logging, along with John Fisher and possibly other Fisher family members. (Their logging company states, at its web site, that the Fishers are the "primary investors" in the company.) Given the very depleted condition of the forests they are logging, it's probably a real estate speculation. They may mean to develop Mendocino (where there is currently not a single Gap store). Meanwhile, they are reaping profits from the last of the big trees.

The Fishers' wealth--the riches they used to invest in logging--was created by Gap stores, and is at least partially dependent on Gap sales. A Gap boycott affects them directly--in the pocketbook.

We also urge wood consumers to boycott "Mendocino Redwood Company" lumber at Home Depot and other outlets. Don't believe the phony "green" sticker on this wood! (The Fishers bought this label in a secret process paid for by their logging company. The label says "Forest Stewardship Council." This means clearcutting, toxic herbicide use and logging of the last old growth.)

We can't get our government agencies to enforce the law in California's forests. Our elected officials only respond to big campaign contributors. So we have to go to the source--to the people who are destroying these forests--and apply consumer pressure. That's the only thing they fear--loss of customers.

2. GAP SWEATSHOPS – Details.

The Gap operates sweatshops around the world--in Saipan, Cambodia, Russian, Mexico--where working conditions are abominable, and personal rights do not exist. People sew Gap clothes 6 days a week, 12 hours a day, or worse--for pittance wages. They can't marry. They aren't allowed to get pregnant. They live in guarded barracks and are constantly monitored.

The Gap puts a phony "Made in U.S.A." label on Gap clothes sewn by sweatshop workers in Saipan (the Mariana Islands), an American territory where U.S. labor laws do not apply. Young Asian women and other poverty-stricken people are transported to Saipan from their distant homelands, on the promise of an "American lifestyle," and then their wages are indentured for the transport, and take years to pay off. There is no other word for this but slavery.

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Sweatshop workers are paid as little as 11 cents an hour to sew Gap clothes. Workers in Mexico say they can live decently on a dollar an hour, but get paid only 28 cents. Workers in Saipan get about \$3 an hour (but the wages are often indentured). To say that these workers should be grateful for their jobs is to totally misunderstand this situation. Should slaves be grateful?

The Gap and other corporations have deliberately and methodically created a global slave labor market--by purchasing politicians, writing global trade rules (agreements among the pirates and robber barons) and undermining local laws at every turn. In this lawless world of "free trade," poor people in poverty-stricken countries have no choices. The dislocations and displacements that they suffer are caused by entities like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund which assist international corporations in exploiting natural resources and destroying local economies. Making poor people dependent on sweatshop jobs is a key design component of the global exploitation plan. Sweatshops are not a gift. They are an outrage.

Global Exchange has sued the Gap to stop these dreadful labor practices. The Gap refuses to discuss the matter, and refuses to change its policies.

YOUR RIGHTS. Your First Amendment rights of free speech and assembly in public places under the U.S. Constitution. Download the Legal Packet for details.

Public sidewalks, streets, parks, plazas. In short, you have a Constitutional right to stand on in a public place, such as a public sidewalk in front of a Gap store, and hand people leaflets and speak to them. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Security guards may try to intimidate you. The police IN GENERAL understand your right to be there. (There are always exceptions.) The police may ask you not to block the sidewalk (if you are a group), and not to block people's passage in and out of the store, and on the sidewalk. If you are a group and block the sidewalk (by your sheer numbers)--and the police ask you to move—remember that you have a right to PICKET, that is, to move around in a picket line on the sidewalk in front of the store.

Shopping Malls. The California State Supreme Court in their famous “Pruneyard Decision” declared shopping malls public places in which our First Amendment rights must be protected, though malls are typically privately owned. Shopping malls can place some restrictions on you, depending on the nature of the public space, but they CANNOT legally tell you to leave, if all you're doing is handing out leaflets and talking to people, and they CANNOT legally force you to stand far away from the bulk of the crowd. If the shopping mall tries to hassle you, and the Gap store has a public sidewalk entrance, use the public entrance (or, if you wish, stand your ground within the mall). If you want to bring table and chairs and have a sit-down space in the mall, call the mall ahead of time, and fill out their permit papers for petition activity. Another thing they CANNOT do is tell you WHEN to leaflet. (Mall managers may try to restrict you to non-peak hours, or weekdays.)

They may try to wrongfully restrict your free speech rights. Know your rights! They can ask you not to bring picket signs or large displays (or they can ask you to remove them, if you do). They CAN restrict where your table is, but they CANNOT put you in a remote spot, where there are few or no people. If you are peaceful and polite, there is nothing they can do to stop you from leafleting.

***Important Note:** Not all states support First Amendment rights in shopping malls. Contact the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union or the National Lawyers Guild to find out what your rights are in your state.*

If you have information about First Amendment rights and shopping malls in your state, or if you have guidelines for leafleting in places outside the US, please email them to us for posting chalice@wco.com.

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Gap Campaign 2001 – Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ: Why a Boycott? Aren't there laws protecting forests and workers' rights?

Forests: The current political climate in the US and California is to ignore environmental laws and give corporations carte-blanche when it comes to turning a profit in our forests. (This has been documented by CalPEERs, the CA public employees group, among others.) Politicians direct our regulatory agencies to ignore the law in exchange for campaign contributions. The system is extremely corrupt on both the federal and state levels.

Workers: Gap sweatshops operate outside U.S. law. There are no protections for the workers who sew Gap clothes. On the trade policy level, powerful trade groups like the World Trade Organization and trade agreements like NAFTA (for which Donald Fisher helped draft the textile rules) put corporate profits before human needs and environmental integrity. These agreements undermine democratically enacted laws that protect the environment and people. That is their main purpose—to weaken and eliminate all regulation. Check out <www.stopftaa.org> for more info on global trade agreements.

That's why boycotts are necessary. These people have nothing to fear from our government, our politicians or our laws. The only thing they fear is loss of customers. Consumer dollars can therefore be a powerful force for change—if consumers can learn to use their dollars like a vote.

-FAQ: What is the connection between the Gap and redwood logging? The Fisher family founded the Gap and owns 1/3 of all Gap stock; they dominate the Board and control every major decision made at that company. The Fisher family are also the primary investors in the redwood forest venture and make every major decision at Mendocino Redwood Company, the company they created to manage their investment. The Fishers control both companies—they are the connection.

-FAQ: Won't a Boycott hurt workers? It is our conviction that exerting financial pressure on the Gap is the *only* way to convince them to change their exploitative labor practices. We believe that the corporation will change those practices before they allow themselves to be hurt financially by them, that is, before they curtail production.

-FAQ: Don't all big clothing retailers use sweatshops? Why single out Gap? Yes, all major retailers contract with sweatshops. Gap is the biggest clothing retailer in the US—if we can get them to change, the others will follow suit. Also, 19 retailers have settled the Saipan sweatshop lawsuit (filed Jan 1999 by Global Exchange and others on behalf of exploited workers)—Gap has not. See www.globalexchange.org for the list of retailers who have agreed to independent factory monitoring and to pay back-wages to workers. Finally, just because “everyone is doing it,” doesn't make it right!

-FAQ: Aren't workers better off with sweatshops than without them? It is our conviction, and that of the thousands of shoppers with conscience who are boycotting Gap, that corporations should not take advantage of desperately poor people to increase their profits. Corporations can still make a profit, while paying all their workers a living wage—we call this Fair Trade. *In 1999, Gap Inc earned \$1.1 billion in profits off \$11.6 billion in sales—it can afford to pay its workers a living wage!*

-FAQ: Where can people, who want to shop fair trade and green, shop? Here's our Fair Trade & Green Shopping Guide [from the Action Packet page at the gapsucks.org web site].

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