

In 1996, Kathie Lee Gifford swore, with teary eyes, that her line of clothing would never again be made in sweatshops.

Workers at Caribbean Apparel make 60 cents an hour and work six days a week, 11 hours a day. Production lines in the factory produce 2,000 pieces of Kathie Lee garments every day. Workers get no sick pay and their bathroom visits are restricted and monitored. Every new employee must pay for a mandatory pregnancy test, and if the results are positive they are fired immediately.

The National Labor Committee and United Students Against Sweatshops (the national student group of which SOLE is the U-M chapter) uncovered these ongoing outrageous conditions during their summer fact-finding mission. In the 225 maquila factories in El Salvador, where 70,000 mostly young women sew 581 million garments a year for export to the U.S., there are no union contracts.

While investigating factory conditions in El Salvador this August, the NLC/USAS delegation conducted video taped interviews with workers and activists from the Caribbean Apparel factory. Later they were able to enter what appeared to be an unguarded factory producing apparel for Nike, where they were accosted by guards. Armed guards and representatives of factory management physically confronted members of the delegation and confiscated students' cameras.

Following this confrontation, the management of Caribbean Apparel fired Lorena del Carmen Hernandez, a worker at the factory, and threatened Giovanni Fuentes, a local union organizer, using the tape confiscated by the Nike factory as evidence of their activities.

Ms. del Carmen Hernandez and Mr. Fuentes, along with another maquila worker recently testified before the U.S. Congress about conditions in factories owned by U.S. companies. Intense media coverage and public support are critical to ensuring their safety upon returning to El Salvador.



Four years later, nothing has changed.

SOLE

**Support the workers and demand an end to these abuses!
Steps of Angell Hall Noon Thursday Sept. 30**