

**AGAINST THE APPAREL INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP'S
APPAREL INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT
(THE FAIR LABOR ASSOCIATION AND THE WORKPLACE CODE OF CONDUCT)**

A Resolution Approved by General Synod XXII (1999)

WHEREAS, the People of Faith Network (PFN), a national interfaith network of clergy, congregations, and faith activists who work together on campaigns for social and economic justice, have been organizing an educational and letter-writing campaign to expose sweatshop conditions and unfair labor practices condoned, or at least tolerated, by major U.S. corporations, including but not limited to Phillips Van Heusen and Liz Claiborne (current members of AIP);

WHEREAS, Phillips Van Heusen summarily closed the only plant in Guatemala with a union contract illegally without notice, two weeks before Christmas, forcing the majority female workforce to return to sweatshop conditions in non-union plants producing the same Van Heusen shirts;

WHEREAS, these women reported to PFN in late March of this year that, even working sixty or more hours a week, they are barely able to get by;

WHEREAS, similarly, young women working at Liz Claiborne's Doall factory in El Salvador earn 60 cents an hour though they work 13 to 15 hours per day, an amount which is just half what they need to live;

WHEREAS, many people in the U.S. became aware of the horrible conditions under which children and impoverished women and men labor during the Kathie Lee Gifford sweatshop exposé in 1996;

WHEREAS, President Clinton convened The White House Apparel Industry Partnership (AIP) bringing together business leaders, human rights groups, consumer and religious organizations and labor unions to establish a standard for safe, fair, child-free manufacture of products in the U.S. and abroad;

WHEREAS, in November 1998, the AIP established an Apparel Industry Partnership Agreement (the Fair Labor Association and the Workplace Code of Conduct) which purported to address concerns about sweatshop conditions, child labor, and labor rights;

WHEREAS, the AIP Agreement provides neither credible standards for public disclosure of workplace conditions nor adequately addresses the use of child labor and fails to support workers' right to organize or to receive a living wage; and

WHEREAS, the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, an instrumentality of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. which is supported by the United Church of Christ, and labor groups, refused to support this "Agreement" and withdrew in protest from the AIP;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, while the United Church of Christ seeks to eliminate child labor, the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ supports the following principles for a meaningful AIP Agreement: allow children under the mandatory educational age, who are working in the apparel industry, to complete their schooling; establish a regular work week of forty-eight hours, the common standard world-wide; all overtime should be voluntary; for those corporations choosing to operate in countries run by dictators, require these corporations to support workers' rights to organize, and stand up to, rather than profit from dictatorships; pay employees a living wage that can sustain an individual and his or her family; establish a monitoring organization that is totally independent from the corporations, neither controlled by those corporations nor utilizing the accounting firms or reporting services of those corporations for its work; and establish a grading system or other process that would reliably differentiate companies based on their human rights records; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourage its members, and others sympathetic to the plight of disadvantaged clothing workers, to become more discerning consumers willing to pay for the increased costs of goods manufactured in accord with the guidelines of this resolution; that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirm the People of Faith Network's statement against the Apparel Industry Partnership Agreement (the Fair Labor Association and the Workplace Code of Conduct); that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ send this resolution to the members of the Apparel Industry Partnership; that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourage member Conferences, Associations and local churches to sign the PFN Statement against the AIP Agreement and contact the People of Faith Network to educate themselves further on these issues; and that the Twenty-second General Synod of the United Church of Christ send a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States.

Funding for this action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.