

Child Slavery

Treat or Trick?



On August 28, 2001, I wrote a Notmilk letter describing a horrible injustice in which tens of thousands of children have been kidnapped and/or sold into slavery to support America's love for milk chocolate and chocolate milk.

Six years ago, I asked the readers of this column to write letters of protest to their own members of congress and to local newspapers to urge them to publicize this cruel and unjust system. You responded magnificently, or so I had thought. Your letters made a difference, or so I believed. The bad guys promised to change. They lied to us. We've been tricked. What appropriate behavior for those who profit most by selling Halloween candy. Treat or trick, anyone?

We did everything in our power to expose the support of slavery by Hershey, Nestle, and Mars, and also accused the phonies who owned the Chocolate SILK soymilk line of supporting slavery as well. SILK has subsequently been sold to America's largest dairy producer, Dean Foods.

Today, most of the world's cocoa beans are grown on the more than 600,000 cocoa farms located in the nation of Ivory Coast.

Tens of thousands of children have been kidnapped from their homes and sold into slavery. These children plant, pick, bag, and carry the beans for plantation owners.

After the 2001 Notmilk articles, word of these outrages spread and the members of the chocolate industry were shamed into signing a pact to end their support of chocolate slavery by 2005.

Unfortunately, we were naive enough to take them at their word. This scum of industry have done nothing but lie about the problem and make it worse. They should be held accountable. The dairy industry is an active co-conspirator, as four pounds of milk are required to manufacture one pound of milk chocolate.

During the summer of 2007, the United Nations International Labor Organization (ILO) reported that 284,000 child laborers now work and live in slavery on Ivory Coast cocoa farms.

Chocolate consumers must be made aware that the purchase of each candy bar continues to support the world's most horrifying secret.

Enervation: The Great Divide

Are you part of the problem or part of the solution?

Is America a nation made up of moral people? If so, I ask you not to write any more letters. I ask you only to spread the word by attaching today's column to every person you know. Ask them to join you in a nation-wide boycott of chocolate this October 31st (Halloween), November 22nd (Thanksgiving), December 25th (Christmas), and January 1st (New Year's Day).

Slavery exists, and its victims are children. Please search your heart and turn your passion and compassion into action.

Please remember that with each bite of chocolate you will receive enormous pleasure while causing pain for the innocent. Together, we can end this injustice by sending a message to chocolate companies that they have created the problem and continue to support this morally corrupt system.

Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth went insane with the guilt of imagining bloodstains on her hands, and continuously was heard saying, "Out, damned spot!" For those of you with chocolate-stained hands, the guilt is yours and can only be relieved by washing your hands of this injustice. Please become part of the solution to this horror story. Out damned spot!

Boycott all chocolate products and let as many people know why you are doing so. Let manufacturers know why you will no longer eat chocolate chip cookies or Brownies or drink hot cocoa.

Do this for the kidnapped and abused boys and girls.

Robert Cohen

<http://www.notmilk.com>

10/07