

Disposable People By Emma Bayliss.

When was child slavery last on the front page of the Sunday telegraph? The last time I checked it was telstra being sold by John Howard. Not many people speak of child slavery. Is this because society is ashamed that we are neglecting the facts, such as 1 in 12 of the world's 5 – 17 year olds are used as child slaves?

According to the 3rd edition Budget Maquarie Dictionary the definition for slavery is:

Slave: Someone who is the property of or wholly subject to another.

In this essay, I will discuss a small number of the issues relating to child slavery, including: child prostitution, the cost of slavery and how industry turns it's back on slavery.

Families in 3rd world countries sometimes find themselves unable to afford to care for their children. When slave traders offer them money and freedom for their child, they eagerly take it, believing it is the best option for their family. It never is. Prior to leaving with the children, slave traders give the parent's a small amount of money, (\$15 - \$20) this is the last payment they will ever see, and their children are gone forever. This is the case in Haiti where children as young as three years old are abused and treated as slave labour. In 1998 the United Nations estimated that there were 300,000 children in this situation ((New Internationalist).

Thailand is extremely strict when it comes to drug trafficking, however, they fail to show the same intolerance when it comes to enforced prostitution of minors.

For example, a shocking case sighted by Kevin Bales (2001), is of a 14 year old girl who was sold to a working class brothel in Thailand. She was bought for less than \$1000. Her 'owners' told her that to regain her freedom, she must repay four times that amount-a debt she would in reality never be allowed to repay. The amount of money she earned for her "owners" was \$75,000, which is far more than the amount that she was bought for, and due to false accounting she will never see a cent of that money, or her freedom.

Major Industries including Chocolate companies fail to intervene in child slavery. Nearly 50% of the world's early stages of chocolate production occurs in the Ivory Coast and the children are unpaid, malnourished and beaten. They are stolen from their parents whom they will never see again (S.L.Millman 2006). One would think a massive industry such as the chocolate companies could prevent this – or is the problem that it may reduce their profits?

I came across this topic by accident when I was looking at a magazine. I doubted the information I read and so like any curious twelve year old I used the internet and began to feel disappointed that the stories I read were true and very sad. I cannot imagine how it would be to be beaten or not have my parents around. I feel sad that these children will never know how nice it is to feel loved.

References

New Internationalist Issue 337. *The burden of slavery.*

New Internationalist Issue 337. *Restaveks: Child slaves*

Millman, S.L. (2006) *Child slaves may be making your chocolate.*

www.radicalthought.org

Websites:

www.newint.com.au

www.radicalthought.org