



January 11th

National Awareness Day:

Human Trafficking — Modern Slavery

‘Going Up River’

Remember the story of a group of villagers who noticed injured people floating down the river? Each day they did their best to rescue as many as possible, providing them with food and medical attention. After many months of doing this, of recruiting more helpers, someone got the idea to go up the river to see the cause for the injuries. With this discovery, the daily toll of rescue was no longer necessary.

The origin of the products that are a part of our daily lives are as invisible as the reality of the slavery that produces these products. Here we will ‘go up the river’ to take a look at forces creating the conditions for slavery.

Jeans

This pair cost \$355.
www.neimanmarcus.com



In 1938 the Fair Labor Standards Act became law. It sets a minimum wage, requires overtime pay after 40 hours a week, and prohibits child labor and industrial homework.

Yet today the U.S. Dept. of Labor says 50% of 22,000 registered garment contractors pay less than minimum wage, 67% do not pay overtime and 33% operate with serious health and safety violations. Workers who try to organize and protest poor working conditions are often fired.

Most sweatshop workers are women of Latina and Asian descent. Yet Caucasians, African Americans, and other ethnic groups are among the 100,000 people working 50+ hour weeks in over 4,000 factories in the Los Angeles garment industry alone. Paid by the piece rather than by the hour, they earn well below the minimum wage. Older, slower workers may earn as little as \$20 a day.

ACTION: Write to your U.S. Senator in support of S.1631 A ‘Customs Re-authorization’ bill, which extends the prohibition against the importation of goods made with convict, forced, or indentured labor to include goods made by means of coercion (i.e., an employer withholding the passport of a foreign worker to compel production of the good) or by one or more individuals who were being subjected to human trafficking.

WHY SWEATSHOPS TODAY?

- Sweatshop workers, disadvantaged by cultural and language barriers, fear losing their jobs if they complain. Undocumented workers fear being discovered and deported.
- There are only 800 Dept. of Labor inspectors to check 6,000,000 U.S. work sites. Sweatshops can easily become mobile operations, making them even more difficult to regulate. “Just rent space, pay the electric bill, have a few sewing machines, and you’re in business,” said a UNITE (Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees) representative.

TO ‘GO UP the RIVER’

tracing the supply chain for products we buy, the many steps that deliver a product from a worker’s hands to ours, is not easy!

To help you, use GreenAmerica’s ‘Guide to Ending Sweatshops’ With knowledge you can help keep sweatshop labor out of our supply chain. Read tips on how to shift spending toward sweat-free companies, demand corporate responsibility from offenders, and advocate for fair labor conditions. You may download the Guide from: www.greenamericatoday.org/PDF/GuideSweatshops.pdf

Favorite Chocolate Bar?



A \$1.00 chocolate bar is probably produced by M&M/Mars or Hershey Chocolate.

- Of the price of the candy bar, the producer gets 95¢, The cocoa farmer gets 5¢.
- Hershey’s and M&M/Mars control 67% of the US chocolate market, generating \$13 billion in retail sales (2001).
- The Ivory Coast produces 43% of the world’s cocoa. Research by the *International Institute of Tropical Agriculture* revealed 248,000 children between ages 9 to 12 work in hazardous conditions on West African cocoa farms. 67% of these children do not regularly attend school.
- Cocoa pickers are boys — underfed, locked in filthy sleeping quarters, forced to work 12 hours a day, hauling 50 pound bags of beans. These boys have never tasted chocolate. To see for yourself, go to: <http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/cocoa/>

Going up the River:

- Google ‘Fair Trade Chocolate’ to find places where you can purchase Fair Trade Chocolate.
- Use Fair Trade Chocolate for the next fund raiser at your school or parish.

Your Morning Cup of Coffee & the aroma of roasted coffee beans!

The largest percent of the cost of a can of coffee goes to the retailer. The retailer pays a percentage of the coffee price to the distributor, who in turn pays the coffee company, who pays the exporter, who pays the processor, and the middle man. The farmer, who grew and harvested the coffee beans, earns 1¢ when you buy a \$1.50 cup of coffee.

To eke out a living, the coffee farmer often uses children as cheap labor to harvest the coffee beans.

Go up the River!! Buy Fair Trade: www.justcoffee.org/

Find local stores carry Fair Trade coffee: Eg. •Whole Foods •Trader Joes •Peets Coffee & Tea •Starbucks (on request)

