

INFANT FORMULA ACTION COALITION (INFAC)

1701 University Avenue S.E. Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414

Dr. Elizabeth Hillman, a pediatrician on the staff of the Kenyatta National Hospital, Nairobi, told this story: "A short while ago ... the Nestle's representatives came to visit us at the hospital ... They really wanted us to say that the Nestle Company did not kill babies, and we discussed this at length with them and were not able to say that Nestle's either does kill or does not kill, statistically speaking.

"But to illustrate the point, I mentioned to these two gentlemen that there was a child over in our emergency ward ... who was very near to being dead, because the mother was bottle-feeding with the Nestle's product (Lactogen, a milk preparation), and for interest I asked whether they would like to see the baby.

"I took the two representatives over into our emergency ward and as we walked in the door the baby collapsed and died ... And, after the baby was pronounced dead, we all of us watched the mother turn away from the dead baby and put the can of Nestle's milk in her bag before she left the ward ... In a sense, it was a vivid demonstration of what bottle-feeding can do because this mother was perfectly capable of breastfeeding.

"The Nestle's representatives walked out of that room, very pale, shaking and quiet, and there was no need to say anything more."

QUESTION: If a corporation behaves immorally,
how can you make it act in a moral way?

Dear Friend,

The answer to that question is really what the Nestle Boycott -- now the largest non-union boycott in history -- is all about.

If you don't yet know about the Nestle Boycott, let me explain.

The giant Swiss-owned Nestle Company and a few other multi-national corporations are selling powdered infant milk formula in parts of the world where:

- clean water is unavailable, fuel for sterilizing is expensive and scarce, and few families own refrigerators. The result: an otherwise nutritious product becomes a lethal, contaminated brew that produces diarrhea, malnutrition, and even death...
- illiterate mothers can't read the instructions on the labels, and feeding bottles are inevitably prepared incorrectly...
- family income is so low that feeding an infant can cost from 20% to 80% of everything a family earns. This leads to overdiluted mixtures of "white water" that can literally starve babies to death.

Obviously, use of artificial infant formula under these conditions is totally inappropriate -- especially when virtually all women, even if malnourished themselves, are able to breast feed. But the formula manufacturers, led by Nestle (which controls about 50% of sales in Africa, Asia and South America), have built a huge and growing market with blatantly unethical advertising and promotion.

As a result, millions of Third World babies are suffering from "bottle baby disease" while Nestle and the others grow fat with profits.

Doctors and nutritionists spoke out about bottle baby disease as long as forty years ago. In "Milk and Murder" (1939) Dr. Cicely Williams stated, "among ... the really poor people ... the death rate among artificially fed babies is at least twice as high as that of breast fed babies."

Nevertheless, in recent years the situation has become critical. At the 1978 hearings of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Health, chaired by Senator Edward Kennedy, Dr. Derrick Jelliffe, head of the Division of Population, Family and International Health of UCLA's School of Public Health, estimated that as many as ten million infants fall prey each year to diseases caused by bottle feeding.

One significant reason for the tremendous growth of the Third World infant formula market (now approaching a billion dollars a year in sales) is clearly
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the aggressive, unscrupulous promotion of their products by the infant formula manufacturers.

Beginning in the 1960's, mass consumer advertising campaigns promoted milk formula as a miraculous product of modern western progress, and discouraged breast feeding as "old fashioned" and "inconvenient." Posters, calendars, name tags, baby bottles displaying the insignia of the products of Nestle, Bristol-Myers and other companies appeared in maternity wards and doctors' offices.

To back up their message, the manufacturers ingeniously created their own "health authorities" -- saleswomen dressed in nurse-like uniforms, called "milk nurses" or "mothercraft personnel," who would visit maternity wards and homes of newborn babies armed with free samples and advice. Walking symbols of the modern health profession, complete with order books and commission contracts!

Ultimately, the companies set out to infiltrate the legitimate medical profession itself. They contributed equipment and formula to hospitals and clinics. They gave gifts to doctors and their wives. They sponsored medical conventions.

While sales boomed as a result of these promotion tactics, many health professionals, nutritionists and international agencies became increasingly alarmed at the extent of infant malnutrition, disease and death in the Third World.

In 1970, the Pan American Health Organization declared that "strong action should be taken to prevent (a) advertising of commercial milk products on government premises, especially hospitals... (b) access of 'commercial milk' nurses to government premises... (c) acceptance of 'free' milk samples."

In 1974, the World Health Organization condemned "misleading sales promotion" and urged implementation of "remedial measures, including advertisement codes and legislation where necessary."

And in September, 1978, more than 250 health professionals attending the 11th International Congress of Nutrition signed a petition that declared:

"As nutritionists professionally concerned with the well-being of infants in low-income countries, each of us is personally aware of many infants who have died because their mothers substituted inadequate bottle-feeding for breast feeding..."

"We believe that the time has come for Nestle to change its marketing strategies in the developing world (and) energetically recommend that Nestle immediately... (a) discontinue all promotion of milk formulas ... (b) discontinue all promotion of the use of feeding bottles..."

Despite the pleas and petitions of these prestigious organizations, Nestle and the others have persisted in their pursuit of profits... and disregarded the welfare of Third World babies. That is why INFACT -- the Infant Formula Action Coalition -- was formed.

INFACT is an assembly of nutritionists, educators, church representatives and many other individuals and groups throughout the U.S. Our goal is to stop the immoral promotion of infant milk formula in areas where its incorrect use is predictable and dangerous.

To accomplish this, we are hitting the Nestle Company in the wallet, with grass-roots economic pressure, through a boycott of the products of Nestle and its many subsidiaries. And it's working!

Just two years ago we began writing to ask people to help. We asked them to join the Nestle Boycott; to let Nestle's executives know why they weren't buying Nestle chocolate bars or Libby's string beans or Taster's Choice coffee or any of the other Nestle-owned companies' products; and to support us with donations so INFACT could reach more and more people with the facts.

The response has been extraordinary -- so strong that Nestle now claims it has halted all consumer advertising of powdered formula in the Third World, and changed their milk nurses' uniforms from white to something less nurse-like. (In spite of Nestle's claims, evidence of violations of these new policies reaches us regularly.)

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But the change in Nestle's policies does not reflect a change of heart... only a change in strategy. The Boycott's success has been treated by Nestle as a public relations problem, not a moral one. They hired Hill & Knowlton, the largest public relations firm in the world, to defuse the Boycott with elaborate mailings sent to religious leaders and other influential people. They stepped up their advertising of consumer products in the U.S. They trained executives in twenty-five cities to defend the Nestle position in public. They developed letters and pamphlets to send to individuals who wrote to them in protest.

How this multi-million-dollar public relations effort is going to save the lives of Third World babies remains a total mystery to us.

When it became clear that Hill & Knowlton's efforts were not keeping a lid on the Boycott, Nestle fired them and hired another prestigious agency, Daniel J. Edelman, Inc., to try its hand. And while all this public relations activity was going on in America, the promotion of artificial milk formula in the Third World simply shifted emphasis.

Why buy billboards and advertising space, the Nestle marketing people have now concluded, when they can target new mothers effectively with the help of the medical profession?

- At Jose Fabella Hospital in the Philippines, every baby is bottle-fed from birth. When it's Nestle's turn to provide the "flavor of the month," each mother leaves with a free sample of Lactogen, Nestle's largest selling formula product. Jose Fabella is a charity hospital: 90% of its patients can't afford to pay even the slightest hospital fees.
- In the words of a Nestle milk nurse, "if a doctor is attending a conference, we would recommend him to the company for sponsorship. The company would then pay his travel expenses and other expenses."

Giving gifts to influence doctors and hospital workers to recommend Nestle formula products isn't new, but this strategy appears to be rapidly expanding. Said one hospital administrator, "It is a very corrupting influence. You are always aware that you could have virtually anything you ask for."

If a corporation behaves immorally, how can you make it act in a moral way? By demonstrating that its immorality will dent its profits. By showing that each can of formula sold in a poor village in Africa can be offset by your refusal, and my refusal, to buy a package of Stouffer's frozen food or a carton of Souptime soup here in America.

So I'll say to you what I've said to others: If you think it's wrong for babies to starve so that corporate profits can be increased, join the Nestle Boycott! Join INFAC in demanding that Nestle STOP ALL PROMOTION OF INFANT FORMULA IN THE THIRD WORLD, including:

- 1) STOP promotion of formula to the health profession and health care institutions...
- 2) STOP distributing free formula samples to doctors, hospitals, clinics, and the homes of newborn babies...
- 3) STOP the use of company "milk nurses"...
- 4) STOP all advertising of artificial formula, as recommended by the World Health Organization.

The Nestle Boycott will not end until these demands are met. And the Boycott is only one part of INFAC's efforts to save Third World infants from exploitation. At present we are supporting new legislation before the U.S. Congress to control the marketing policies of American manufacturers whose formula products are sold in the Third World.

We've debated Nestle representatives all over the country, and offered testimony at Congressional hearings and symposiums. We've compiled evidence of the milk companies' promotion activities in all parts of the world, and initiated research to measure the effects of formula feeding.

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We have been asked by the World Health Organization and UNICEF to participate in an upcoming meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, to consider the subject of infant feeding and the formula problem. And our ongoing public information program has brought the truth about Third World formula promotion to millions of Americans.

Now we need your help, especially on the eve of the WHO/UNICEF meeting. Even greater participation in the Boycott here at home will weaken Nestle's obstinacy and strengthen the hand of the international health agencies.

Please share this message with your friends; more people have to know. I ask you to join us financially, too. Your contribution of \$15, \$20, \$25, or whatever you can spare, will help us bring the truth about Nestle to all America.

Please write to Nestle (use the enclosed postcard, if you wish), to let them know you oppose their Third World promotion of infant formula, and that you've joined the Boycott. In the U.S., write to Mr. David Guerrant, President, The Nestle Company, 100 Bloomingdale Road, White Plains, N.Y. 10605. It will cost only 31¢ postage to write to Mr. Arthur Furer, Managing Director, Nestle S.A., Vevey, Switzerland, to tell him you won't buy any Nestle products until the exploitation of Third World infants is stopped.

Nestle's response to such letters in the past has been to send out expensive public relations packets brimming with brochures, pictures and statements from "experts." The Nestle materials are carefully planned to sidestep the real issues by characterizing the company's marketing activities as charitable and educational.

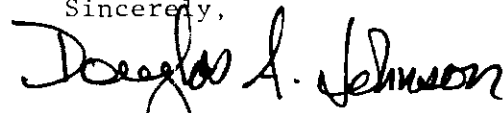
But let's be clear -- the real purpose of promotion is to expand sales. If it didn't work, Nestle wouldn't be spending millions regardless of the inevitable toll in human suffering. To learn the truth about how the promotion of infant formula affects infants in the Third World, consider the statements by health professionals contained in the enclosed pamphlet.

Remember -- Nestle owns dozens of American companies producing goods under various trade names. The Boycott includes all the products listed on the enclosed card. (Carry it with you as a reminder when you shop.)

I believe that with your support the Nestle Boycott and INFAC can force a twelve-billion-dollar corporation to back away from one source of its enormous profits. I hope you do, too -- because, regardless of all of Nestle's smoke screens, it is wrong, terribly wrong, to persuade a mother to buy something with which she can innocently poison her own baby.

Please join INFAC now, with your contribution, and your participation in the Nestle Boycott.

Sincerely,



Douglas A. Johnson
National Chairperson,
INFANT FORMULA ACTION COALITION

DAJ:mp

P.S. Your contribution to INFAC is tax-deductible, of course.

"Because of the lack of an adequate diet, many mothers cannot even satisfactorily breast feed their baby ... All this means that in the developing countries, breast milk is not sufficient in many cases except during the first three or four weeks of the baby's life."

Nestle publication, 1977

"Available evidence points to a mother's need, or desire, to work, as the principal reason for the breast feeding decline."

The Infant Formula Controversy:
A Nestle View, Fall 1978

"(Third World women) must have supplements. Their breast size is smaller than women in this country."

Steve Kosen, Nestle public relations director, interview with *The Philadelphia Tribune*, September 1977

MOTHER/CHILD MALNUTRITION AND SUPPLEMENTATION

"The quantity and quality of breast milk is usually surprisingly good, even in poorly nourished women."

Conference Report of the National
Academy of Sciences, August 1978

"Unsupplemented human milk is all that is required to sustain growth and good nutrition for the first six months of life in the babies of well-nourished mothers ... the volume and composition of human milk in poorly nourished women is surprisingly good..."

Drs. D.B. and E.F.P. Jelliffe, *Human Milk in the Modern World*, 1978

"If a mother were to eat all the additive calories recommended during nursing ... the cost would still be less than a third of that necessary to provide artificial feeding to the infant."

Dr. Alan Berg, chief nutritionist,
World Bank, *The Nutrition Factor*, 1973

"Adequate nutrition for the mother who is pregnant and then breast feeding is the cheapest and most efficient protection for the health of the infant."

Drs. Baumslag and Sabin, "Perspectives in Maternal Infant Nutrition," Office of International Health, H.E.W., September 1978

"A widespread misconception is that a main reason (for the decline in breast feeding) is the mother's need to participate in paid labor outside home. This is not borne out by the studies. Even in the North European countries the need to work outside the home accounts for less than 10% of the cases of cessation of breast feeding."

Dr. E. Helsing, October, 1978

Morality vs. Profits -

INFANT FORMULA PROMOTION IN THE THIRD WORLD

MOST NEW MOTHERS in poor countries in Africa, Asia and South America don't need, and can't afford, artificial baby formula products; their own breast milk is all their babies require in the first 4-6 months. Nevertheless, millions of mothers are abandoning breast feeding for expensive powdered milks, encouraged by the aggressive promotion campaigns of a profit-hungry industry.

Inappropriate use of these products — caused by poor sanitary conditions, contaminated water supplies, overdilution, and inability to read instructions for safe preparation — inflicts "bottle baby disease" on millions of infants every year. Acute diarrhea, early infancy malnutrition, and even death result.

The manufacturers have long known what effect their products have had on the populations of developing nations, but have allowed the profit motive to overrule any humanitarian considerations. They have spent millions on public relations to defend such immoral behavior. Their strategy is to use exceptional situations to justify indiscriminate promotion.

The quotations which follow provide a basis for INFAC's demand for a halt to *all promotion* of infant formula in areas where their misuse is predictable and dangerous.

INFAC **INFANT FORMULA ACTION COALITION**
1701 University Avenue, S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414



FORMULA USE AND INFANT HEALTH

"In developing countries, babies who are not breast fed die. Contaminated water, poor hygiene, lack of refrigeration, and poverty, causing formulas to be "stretched" to nutritional impotency, make safe preparation virtually impossible. It's hard enough for these babies to survive under the best of circumstances; exploitative marketing and merchandising is tantamount to mass infanticide."

Dr. Samuel J. Fomon, University of Iowa,
Vice President of the 12th International Congress
on Nutrition, December 1978

"Where poor socio-economic and cultural conditions prevail, both early weaning and artificial feeding of infants are dangerous practices. They limit a child's natural defenses against enteric infections and greatly increase his exposure to an unhealthy environment."

Dr. Moises Behar, Chief, Nutrition Section,
World Health Organization, September 1975

"With the seductive advertisements of the companies producing infant formula we felt that urgent action was required to stop or even reverse the growth in use of feeding bottles. A survey carried out in Port Moresby revealed that ... 23% of artificially fed infants were below 60% weight for age as compared with just 3% of breast fed infants."

J.N. Lambert, Government Nutrition Planner,
Papua-New Guinea, July 1978

"Among the coolie population, the really poor people of Chinatown and the kampongs, the death rate among artificially fed babies is at least twice as high as that of the breast fed babies."

Dr. Cicely Williams, "Milk and Murder,"
Singapore, 1939

"Under the unfavourable economic and sanitary conditions found in low-income urban groups, the consequence of bottle feeding is a high prevalence of diarrhea and gastrointestinal tract infections which, coupled with frequent overdilution of the milk, leads to increased incidence of Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM). Bottle feeding is also associated with an earlier age onset of malnutrition."

Food and Agriculture Organization of the
United Nations, The Fourth F.A.O. World
Food Survey, 1977

"You will be told (upon walking into Nestle's public relations office) that in parts of the world where artificial feeding is widespread, the infant mortality rate has dropped. This is correct. But to assume that this is related to the artificial feeding is totally incorrect. It is more related to the fact that in those countries there has been a parallel increase in the social, economic, and environmental hygiene of the particular society. In fact, the area of the world where the IMR has dropped most spectacularly is in China, and in China breast feeding is still very much the norm. But because there has been the parallel increase in the environmental, in the food distribution, and in the economic equity of Chinese society, the IMR has dropped..."

Dr. Derrick Jelliffe, UCLA School of Public Health,
with 26 working years in developing nations as
pediatric nutrition specialist, November 1977

"My interpretation of the scientific evidence leaves absolutely no doubt in my mind first that bottle feeding is a major cause of morbidity and mortality in developing countries and secondly that the promotion of formulas by corporations such as Nestle has contributed significantly to this most tragic of problems."

Dr. Michael Latham, Director, Program of International Nutrition, Cornell University, statement before the National Council of Churches,
November 1978



"Statistics show that infant mortality rates have declined sharply in the very countries where artificial feeding has increased most."

Infant Feeding in the Developing
Countries: Some Considerations
on the Contribution of Nestle,
1977 Nestle publication

SANITARY CONDITIONS AND FORMULA USE

"We have seen no evidence that there is a vast amount of abuse."

Frank Sprole, Bristol-Myers Co.,
CBS Reports, July 1978

"The formula products are usually purchased by people who can afford them."

Infant Formula in Developing
Countries: The Nestle Position,
Fall 1978

"(Once the manufacturer has sold the product) to a distributor ... he has no way to assure that the product will be sold where it should be sold and not sold out in the bush somewhere."

Doug Groner, Nestle Co.,
WCCO-TV, April 1979

"In Colombia, it was learned that only 29% of rural populations and 72% of urban populations have the potable water required for mixing with powdered infant formula. And yet, formula was available to consumers and promoted to health personnel throughout that nation. No manager familiar with this issue could authorize distribution and marketing in Colombia without also knowing that there was a high probability of misuse."

Dr. James Post, School of Management, Boston
University, testimony to U.S. Senate Subcommittee
hearings, May 1978

"It would appear that gross contamination occurred in the preparation of the milk ... nearly one half of these children had suffered an episode of diarrhea within the last month, a high rate for this population ... It is clear that improper preparation of milk feeds leading to gross bacterial contamination and incorrect formula strength occurs in a substantial proportion of cases..."

Dr. Dan Surjono *et al.*, "Bacterial Contamination
and Dilution of Milk in Infant Feeding Bottles,"
Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 1978

"I questioned the nearly 200 mothers in my sample in depth about bottle feeding hygiene, and there is no question that it is absolutely impossible for the vast majority of them to maintain the necessary cleanliness, let alone sterility. Few had electricity, fewer still a refrigerator, and none had access to safe water ... The financial impact of bottle feeding at the family level is also disastrous..."

Theodore H. Greiner, M.A. Ed., M.S.,
Nutrition Consultant, F.A.O., Affidavit
to U.S. District Court, 1977

MILK NURSES AND FREE SAMPLES

"The main duty of Nestle medical representatives is to assist the health services. In keeping with this concept, appropriately qualified personnel may assist in nutrition and health education work if requested to do so..."

Nestle Infant Food Policy,
February 1978

"Infant milk samples may only be given to mothers by official health personnel."

Nestle Infant Food Policy,
February 1978

"Hopeless, dreadful. Their business is to sell milk, it isn't to look after children... (In Singapore, I) found that Nestle had nurses, these girls dressed as nurses, dragging a good lactating breast out of the baby's mouth and pouring in baby milks."

Dr. Cicely Williams, interview with
The Lansing Star, October 1978

"It is difficult to justify the continuation of the practice of handing out free samples, given their purpose. If a mother is poor enough to need a free sample she is too poor to use it properly, and the promotional impact of that sample on her and her friends is unjustifiable."

Dr. S.C.E. Abraham, Senior Consultant Ped.,
Head, Dept. of Pediatrics, General Hospital,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1977

"The inducement to artificial feeding in place of breast feeding can result, in as little as three days, in the drying up of the breast ... the mother thus becoming prey to bottle milk."

Dr. G.F. Ebrahim, Tropical Health Unit,
Institute of Child Health, London, July 1976

"As a medical representative, my main responsibility is to promote the Nestle infant formula products... We give away Nestle infant formulas ... to doctors, pediatricians, and midwives, and of course to mothers too... In return for these free samples, the recipients would of course recommend, in one way or another, Nestle formulas."

Statement of a "medical representative" of Filipro,
Nestle's Philippines subsidiary, September 1978

"(The public health midwife) resorts to the path of least resistance by prescribing artificial milk formula, especially if there are starter cans donated by representatives of the milk companies..."

from a forthcoming *World Health Organization
Study on Breast Feeding in the Philippines*

"Dissemination of propaganda about artificial feeding and distribution of samples of artificial baby foods in maternity units should be banned immediately."

International Pediatrics Association, 1975



"The health services are recognized as the main intermediary between the manufacturer and the mothers."

Nestle Infant Food Policy,
February 1978

"Our promotion consists principally of providing infant formula as free goods for hospital use, free samples for distribution at doctors' discretion, the donation of incubators, scales and other equipment for hospital use, and the support of medical symposia ... any suggestion that professional judgment is compromised by such promotion is unjustified and offensive."

Frank Sprole, Bristol-Myers Co.,
U.S. Senate Health Subcommittee
hearings, May 1978



FORMULA PROMOTION TO HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

"University Hospital stopped the milk nurses from coming on the wards. But now they come not in uniform to see patients. They come during visiting hours when we are not around to stop them. They are often friends of the government nurses and they make new friends with liberal gifts and samples ... But they still find out names and visit mothers in their homes. Supposedly they are only allowed to pay visits if the doctor or nurse agrees. But this is not true. They still find a way."

Dr. S.K. Teoh, Obstetrician, University Hospital,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1978

"When the pediatricians graduate from college, it seems like the American Home Products Company is very generous in providing about 20,000 boliveras' worth of liquor ... which comes to almost \$5,000 U.S. Whenever there are professional meetings of pediatricians and so on, Nestle, for example, will fly in certain doctors and they will always have the last banquet..."

Fr. Daniel Driscoll, 11 years' service in Venezuela,
U.S. Senate Health Subcommittee hearings,
May 1978

"All the pediatrics conferences are organized by the milk companies. It defeats the purpose of these conferences. Doctors are understandably 'grateful' to the companies, so they tone down their voices..."

Dr. Mohammed Sham Kasim, General Hospital,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, July 1978

"If a regular doctor is attending a conference, we the medical representative would recommend him to the company for sponsorship. The company would then pay for his travel expenses and other expenses."

Statement of a "medical representative" of Filipro,
Nestle's Philippines subsidiary, September 1978

"And when a new nursery is being set up, the companies fall all over themselves with offers of assistance."

Pediatrician, private hospital,
Manila, Philippines, July 1978

"To be fair, I have to point out that maybe 5% or 10% of the doctors do not accept gifts but the majority do. For example, if you need new tires for your car, some people say, O.K., we'll get you new tires — prescribe our products."

Dr. Rafael Mena, Santo Domingan pediatrician,
CBS Reports, July 1978

"Promotion is intense and it works. They do it for the survival of the companies. We have to counter them with breast feeding promotion for the survival of Thai babies."

Pediatrician, Ramathibodi Hospital,
Bangkok, Thailand, August 1978