



ROTARIANS

AGAINST CHILD SLAVERY



Injustice Anywhere Is A Threat To Justice Everywhere (Dr.Martin Luthar King) Our Website : www.racsrag.org

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“If we are going to stop slavery we must convince the world that human rights need even more protection than property rights” (Kevin Bales – Disposable People)

Issue : 23

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Editorial

I had not expected to produce another Newsletter so soon after the previous one, but there is one Article reference which is now out of date and needs to be brought to your immediate attention.

The error is in the penultimate paragraph of the draft COL Resolution which was shown in the Annex of the previous Newsletter (22).

Under the draft Resolution headed “Purpose and Effect”, Article 42 of Rotary International's Code of Policies is mentioned as relating to the rights of children.

Russell Green from the Rotary Club of Walkerville in Australia was first off the blocks to inform me that Article 42 no longer relates to Rotary's

responsibilities to protect the rights of children.

An examination of the current Code shows that he is correct. Article 42 now refers to Rotary Fellowship and therefore has no relevance to the Resolution shown in the previous Newsletter.

So what has happened to the words contained in the original Article 42 ? Did I imagine its contents ?

To find the answer to these questions I revisited the paperwork relating to the “Memorial” submission of two Clubs in District 1080 in England nearly three years ago and was relieved to find that Article 42.020.3 did then refer to rotary clubs' commitment to protecting the rights of children etc. The Memorial is discussed in the next section.

Norwich Memorial

In November 2008 the Rotary Clubs of Norwich and Norwich St Edmund in England submitted a Memorial to the RI Board. The Memorial included several requests, one of which was the inclusion of the words “*and slavery*” after “*freedom from abuse and violence*” in Article 42.020.3 of Rotary's Code of Policies. This request was accepted by the Board in January 2009 and the Article was thus amended.

An extract from the minutes of the Board's meeting is attached in the Annex to this Newsletter. This minute refers to Article 42.020.3 and confirmed Rotary International's need to support “*the rights of children to food, shelter, health care, education, and freedom from abuse, violence*

and slavery. Rotary clubs around the world are committed to protecting these rights for all children, regardless of race, creed or nationality”.

The Code of Policies needs to be amended from time to time and as a consequence Articles do change their number and their placement in the Code. However, attempts to find the above wording in the current Code failed. **Consequently RI General Secretary, John Hewco's help was sought** to explain what had happened to the contents of the previous Article 42. The General Secretary's office has now provided an explanation and this is included on the next page of this Newsletter.

CHANGES TO THE CODE OF POLICIES

The General Secretary's office has just dispatched the following explanation to the disappearance of the former Article 42 which committed Rotary Clubs to protect the rights of all children.

“The RI Board amends the Code of Policies from time to time. A few years back, the Board agreed to eliminate the Menu of Service Opportunities from the Rotary Code of Policies and to instead place increased emphasis on service through the Avenues of Service. The Board also believed that other sections of the Code related to the Menu of Service Opportunities were obsolete and should be rescinded. In addition, the Board felt that the adoption of the RI Strategic Plan priority to "Focus and Increase Humanitarian

Service" meant certain sections of the Code pertaining to humanitarian service should be rescinded to ensure consistency with the plan. Therefore, at its January 2010 meeting, the RI Board rescinded Article 42 of the Rotary Code of Policies”.

So we now know that the message/Rotarian responsibilities written into the former Article 42 no longer exist. It is as well we know this now because the inclusion of the reference to Article 42 in our draft Resolution would not have helped the progress of that Resolution – hence the need to communicate this message to clubs who may wish to submit a similar Resolution to their District Councils for onward transmission to the Council on Legislation.

Rotarians and the rule of law

A scrutiny of the current Code of Policies has revealed another Article which places certain obligations on Rotarians in relation to freedom of the individual and universal justice. Under a section relating to International Service, **Article 8.050.3** provides a list of Rotarian responsibilities. These include the following two obligations.

Rotarians should

- defend the rule of law and order to preserve liberty of the individual so that all may enjoy freedom of thought, speech and assembly, freedom from all persecution and aggression, and freedom from want and fear,
- uphold the principles of justice for humankind, realizing that these are fundamental and must be worldwide.

So, in the absence of the responsibilities included in the former Article 42, Article 8.050.3 of the Code of Policies is a worthy substitute in the paragraph with the heading “Purpose and Effect” in the draft Resolution

Here are two Rotary obligations which demand that we take action when an individual's freedom is denied and servitude exists. The reality is that most Rotarians do not know of the existence of these obligations because they are hidden within the 500 plus pages of the Code of Policies. Apart from an organization like the proposed Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery who else would bring this Article to Rotarians' attention ?

Question: Why are such politically sensitive responsibilities enshrined in our Code, when at the same time we are not exactly encouraged to act in certain circumstances, because to do so might offend the cultural customs or sensibilities of certain peoples or be regarded as involvement in politics ?

Answer: Because to act thus is to support the principles enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other similar accepted anti-slavery Conventions. Four of these Articles are included over page.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- Article 1: All human beings are borne free and equal in dignity and rights.
- Article 4: No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.
- Article 13 (1): Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- Article 23 (1) Everyone has the right to the free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

LET US HOPE THAT NO ONE EVER RESCINDS THESE ARTICLES !!!

PLEASE ENCOURAGE FELLOW ROTARIANS TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND SIGN ON AS A MEMBER. THE WEBSITE IS: www.racsrag.org.

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20th August 2011**

MINUTES of the JANUARY 2009 MEETING

Board of Directors of Rotary International
**The Board of Directors of Rotary International held its third meeting of the year on
27-30 January 2009 in Evanston, Illinois, USA**

An Extract

DECISION: The Board, the Executive Committee acting on its behalf,

1. Requests the general secretary to follow through on the memorials received at this meeting in accordance with discussion at this meeting
2. Amends *Rotary Code of Policies* section 42.020.3. is : Rights of Children Following is a statement on RI's position on the rights of children:

Rotary International, recognizing that:

- 1) children, because of their vulnerability, need special care and protection;
- 2) in all countries of the world there are children who are living in exceptionally difficult conditions;
- 3) all children should be able to grow into adulthood in an environment of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom and equality; endorses and supports the rights of all children to food, shelter, health care, education, and freedom from abuse, violence, and slavery. Rotary clubs around the world are committed to protecting these rights for all children, regard-less of race, creed or nationality.