



# ROTARIANS

## AGAINST CHILD SLAVERY



And who is responsible for this appalling child slavery? Everyone. *Mary Harris Jones* Our Website : [www.racsrag.org](http://www.racsrag.org)

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**RACSRAG WEBMASTER**

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**“Ending slavery won't end crime, but it will mean things will be stolen, not lives”**

**(Kevin Bales)**

**November '11 Issue : 26**

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Akha Children supported by Rescue Mission for Children



Akha Children who have hope with Rescue Mission for Children

## *Editorial*

I have had a mixed bag of post from members following last month's Newsletter. The mixture revolves around two issues. The first relates to the RI Board's reluctance to take a stance on "child slavery"; the second relates to the formation of a relevant RAG.

In addition to several letters from members, some of which are published here, I have also had a letter from a member of the RI Board who has kindly offered to help us attain RAG status but has also advised that *"alienation of the Board and actions deemed confrontational only makes it more difficult for me to garner empathy for your position and has probably hardened the Board's resolve to be very strict in interpretation of efforts as being action, not advocacy."*

The Board member's comments, which I know are meant to be helpful, compels us to refocus upon priorities. Should we be seeking from the RI Board, empathy for our position to form a new RAG, or empathy for the millions of enslaved children, which will be sufficient to galvanise the Board to place itself in the forefront of the struggle to eradicate this most disgracefully overlooked crime against humanity.

For me the latter objective is the more important. The proposal to form a RAG only arose because of our failure (since 2007) to persuade the RI Board to take a first positive step to indicate its support for the efforts of those who work to end child slavery.

I have accepted, albeit with a heavy heart, the Board's refusal to recognize our proposed RAG. I can accept it because I know that with our next submission, the Board will find it difficult to deny us approval because of

the projects which we have completed in the last 12 months.

Even if we receive another knock back, I am comforted by the fact that we can still be effective as a RACS and continue to implement the type of projects which we have already achieved.

But as a Rotarian who wishes to follow RI's own Code of Policies, I find it difficult to accept, without protest or action, a world where one individual can be held as the property of another. I find it disappointing to accept that the leaders of one of the world's greatest service organizations have not yet recognized that the issue of child slavery is very much on the global agenda, that media coverage on the practice from organizations like Al Jazeera and CNN is growing and that their organization should be at the forefront of the struggle to end slavery NOW.

In summary persuading the RI Board to take a first positive stance against the practice of child slavery is a much more important issue than our submission for Board approval for our Action Group. Indeed if that positive stance had been taken in the first place, there would be no Action Group against Child Slavery and no need to continually remind the RI Board that basic Rotary principles demand that we address the issue of human rights, especially in relation to children.

Good News ! I have just discovered that the RI Board has changed the rules relating to RAGS. Action Groups which were refused approval, can now reapply 1 year after refusal instead of 2 years. So, we shall be initiating a further submission sometime in January 2012.

## *Rescue Mission for Children* by David Black, Rotary Club of Dunedin Central, New Zealand

There has never been a better time for "Action".

May 2012 is poised to offer an amazing opportunity for Rotarians across the globe to actively engage in a humanitarian aid project that is literally saving the children of an entire culture from extinction.

The Akha children of the hill tribes of Northern Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and China belong to a "stateless" race of peaceful people, who have not formed an army in over five hundred years of history. Their statelessness means they have no legal right to live in this world... at least in the eyes of the child sex traffickers who prey upon our youngest generation.

Akha children are prized amongst those who are stolen or removed from their families through deception. They contribute to a multi-billion dollar industry in Thailand, where they are highly valued because, unlike illegal arms and drugs, children can be sold over and over every day.

Their status in society provides them no protection because they have no rights. They disappear into brothels where they are abused, raped and tortured as many as fifteen to twenty times every day. Even when the abuse abates there is no rest for these precious children, who cannot sleep because of the intense pain between their legs. We continue to hear the tales of atrocities perpetuated against innocent Akha children. Children who have contracted AIDS, and are of no further use to the brothels, sometimes escape and return to their villages, where, devoid of access to any health care or pain relief, they die unspeakable deaths. Children have escaped brothels, only to be hunted down by the police who are paid by the brothel owners. They are brought back and punished. One girl was shot in the head in front of the other girls as a warning to anyone else who should be contemplating running away. Another young girl died, after her appendix burst while being raped.

Rotarians are compassionate, kind and helpful individuals and through our efforts as individuals, clubs and districts, we achieve some pretty major results in the world. As members of the proposed RAG, you have openly demonstrated a commitment to achieving even higher objectives, by saving the children of the world from slavery in all its forms.

My commitment is to save our "new generation" from what must surely be acknowledged as the darkest form of slavery in our world today. I need the help of Rotarian "activists" to deliver the results these children so desperately need in order to survive. It is our responsibility not only as service focused Rotarians, but as compassionate men and women to embrace humanity in its purest form and protect our children from those who would make them suffer and die at the hands of paedophiles.

Project opportunities are many and vary in scale, from buying a few sacks of rice to keeping the children at the Centre fed, to raising funds to complete the primary school. From helping develop the administration infrastructure at the Centre, to establishing a plantation that will offer the Akha children a sustainable future. It all is working against child sex slavery.

Come to Bangkok in May 2012, support our exhibition booth, and that of the proposed RAG. Join us after the R.I Convention at the Akha Training Centre and experience the joy of working alongside children who are literally building their own futures, as they work alongside Rotarians to complete the school construction. Raise funds to assist us in this project and live Kalyan's theme by "embracing humanity" and "being the change you wish to see in the world". Contact me at [Dblack@mainlandpoultry.co.nz](mailto:Dblack@mainlandpoultry.co.nz) to find out how to be involved. Let's show the world that we are people of "Action"

**Editor's footnote:** *David has been generating support from Rotary Clubs in Australia and New Zealand for the work which is being undertaken in Northern Thailand by "Rescue Mission for Children" - an organization which is based near Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand. Now he is asking for more help and volunteer workers from our global membership. I will know in January if I have been allocated a stand re "Child Slavery" at the RI Convention in Bangkok. If I am successful, I shall be going to Bangkok and will consider spending a few days at the Akha Training Centre. How about coming along to the Centre next May? I understand also that any hands on project work at or near the Centre will be scrutinized by senior psychologists specializing in Humanitarian Work Psychology. These specialists have been granted permission to use the project as a pilot for the Smart Aid project that David's President, Steve Atkins, is spearheading. This in itself is an exciting venture. More about this initiative in a future issue of this Newsletter.*

## *Letter to the Editor*

**Note:** *Published letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor. The opinion of the writers may include errors of fact.*

Dear Editor

Rotarians have not immunized millions of children, five years old and younger, against polio, only to see them enslaved at six years, eight or older.

Rotarians have not provided blood lab equipment in Honduras, a blood bank in India and their own blood donations for transfusions throughout the world, to see healthy blood spilt during the beatings and rape of child-slaves.

Rotarians are not providing access to fresh, clean drinking water, to watch child-slaves fetch containers of it for slaveholders.

Rotary International is already involved whether it chooses to recognize it or not. Rotarians are already combating the root causes of slavery—illiteracy, poverty, starvation, displacement because of war, vulnerability. Some Rotarians have already begun to address directly the needs of survivors of child slavery and trafficking; they are accomplishing projects and raising awareness of this growing monster.

The tide is rising. Every day, more people learn that slavery exists outside their front doors and that products they touch daily are made with slave labor. They are unwilling to tolerate the situation and seek ways to make change.

Will Rotary International become a courageous leader, an advocate, or an ostrich in this matter? Will the organization and its members direct the tide, ride it, or be swallowed up in irrelevancy?

I have made my decision—where I stand as a Rotarian, humanitarian and human. I will fight against child slavery and work for its survivors—the way I have fought polio and aided its survivors, raised funds for water projects and blood lab equipment, read to immigrant families, gathered food for hungry neighbors, provided coats for homeless men and women, and worked for the betterment of my community locally and globally, alongside my fellow Rotarians. Would the RI Board of directors and others please join me and my circle of friends in our work to change the world...again?

Yours in Rotary,  
Carol Metzker  
RC of West Chester Downtown  
District 7450, USA

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Dear Editor

Are the RI Board saying we should just ignore child slavery?

It would appear that child slaves are slipping through the Polio Immunisation programme, which all RI Clubs probably support. If we cannot help child slaves how are we to finally eliminate polio?

John Bracewell  
RC of Accrington  
District 1190  
England

**Ed:** *No. The RI Board are saying that “the primary reason it had not approved such a campaign (ie to stop the practice of child slavery) was because of RI's commitment to Polio Plus as the association's only corporate project”*

## Letters (Con't)

Cher Rédacteur

Je tenais à t'exprimer ma profonde solidarité dans le magnifique combat que tu mènes contre l'esclavage des enfants. Je suis consterné par la réaction du Rotary International et t'assure de mon soutien total ! Avec l'expression de ma sincère amitié  
Bon courage

Dominique Potier  
RC de Reims St Remi  
District 1750  
France

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Dear Editor

I am so saddened by this news I do not know what to say.

I thank you for pursuing this and I know "RACSRAG" will win the fight to gain notability.

Keep up the good work. God is with you this is just a hiccup and I am speaking from the heart. I do not have the knowledge to give but I do know right from wrong and regardless of what we call ourselves what we are doing is right. I shall continue with my fundraising for the children of AHKA and still inform Rotarians of "RACSRAG".

I must remember what the new abbreviations mean.

Val Kirk  
RC of Walkerville  
District 9500, Australia

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Dear Editor

Thank you for the latest newsletter. I am sure you are becoming frustrated, but please do not give up on the efforts you are making to involve Rotary in ridding the world of child slavery.

I do not understand how R.I. in the U.S.A can consider this a political action group. Slavery is abhorred by all democracies throughout the Western world, even my grandchildren will not purchase anything that has a hint of slave labour attached, and they are far from political. IT IS SIMPLY A MATTER OF ETHICAL STANDARDS. which are currently being denied by R.I.

I would have thought as slavery was abolished in the USA American citizens would be the first to support all your hard work.

All the best with your continuing efforts.

John Minns

*Ed: Although the RI Board meets in the USA, it's Directors come from all over the world. At the moment apart from the President (India) and the General Secretary, there are 6 Directors from the USA, 2 from India, 1 from Japan, 1 from New Zealand, 1 from Korea, 1 from Italy, 1 from the Netherlands and 1 from Norway. At grass roots level there are 103 members of our Action Group from the USA, ie 24% of the total RACS membership.*



## *Letters (Con't)*

Dear Editor

I was saddened to receive the email telling me about the action of RI with regard to the proposed action group "Rotarians Against Child Slavery". As a Rotarian of some 38 years standing I cannot understand the attitude expressed by RI. I hope that you will work towards getting this group recognized and give them the support they deserve. We are all working towards a better world and what could help it more than the work of this group. It is on a level footing with Polio Plus although the scale may be different.

Ian Hacking  
RC of Great Harwood & Rishton  
District 1190, England

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Dear Editor

Child Slavery is a moral, ethical and political disgrace around the globe! If RI worries about trying not to offend anyone, they will ultimately offend everyone. At any level it is impossible to please everyone all of the time. Will there be political fallout if RI takes a public stand on this issue? Almost certainly. We will even upset some global criminal elements. Unfortunately that is part of the price one pays when determined to do the right thing, but RI will survive and be stronger because of it. Rotary commands respect around the world and because of its worldwide stature and proven leadership has the ability to mobilize and lead global forces already engaged in this mission. We will not stand alone in this quest. Just imagine the synergies and ultimate power for good that could be generated if RI took a leadership role in this effort.

R. C. "Dick" Eisenach  
RC of Phoenix  
District 5490, USA

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Dear Editor

I totally agree the RI Board should spend its time SUPPORTING efforts of Rotarians to "create awareness and TAKE ACTION" instead of putting up barriers and obstructing good efforts Rotarians create to benefit the downtrodden of this world. The response of the RI Board is infuriatingly arrogant and short-sighted. I also totally agree with you that we ARE, in fact, an "action group" and unless RI has put a patent on the words "action group", we have a God given right to use those words as long as they're in lower case. The stand of RI Board is SO contrary to the U.N. Millennium statement, I think the U.N. would be appalled to learn one of its founding entities (RI) from the origin of the UN in 1945 had taken such a ..... and unjust stand regarding child slavery.

I hope to attend the Rotary Convention in Thailand in May; rest assured I will do everything I can to bring this reprehensible behavior to the attention of those in power. This is shameful behavior on the part of our RI leadership.

Susan O'Neal  
RC of Washington DC  
District 7620  
USA

## *Letters (Con't)*

Dear Editor

I must agree with your thoughts on the Board's inability to see the proposed RAG for what it is purely and simply. It is a global group of Rotarians who are wanting only to be.....well, Rotarians!! Being a Rotarian for me personally, is something that cannot fully be achieved without a natural passion for helping the world and everyone in it. I have met Rotarians who enjoy a nice meal with silver service laid on, a couple of glasses of red and enjoy a good speaker. What they are reluctant to embrace is the need that is outside their own comfort zone, outside their own country. We simply cannot "be the change we wish to see in the world" from the comfort of our own doorstep. We must get out in the international community, get alongside those who so desperately need our help and roll our sleeves up. If not, we can still enjoy a nice meal, a couple of reds and a good speaker.....by joining Probus!!

I am struggling to understand how the world's oldest and largest service organisation, with 1.25 million members, consultative status with the U.N, etc, etc can duck when the hard issues are facing them. It is okay to tackle Polio and take the pats on the back and the warm fuzzy handshakes with Bill Gates, but what if Child Slavery was the next Polio Plus? There are people who said Polio could not be dealt to, but we are still fighting it. Why can we not get as enthusiastic about the possibility of really focusing our energies on saving our youngest generation, our "new generation". Is this not supposed to be the latest avenue of service for Rotary?

David Black  
RC of Dunedin Central  
District 9980  
New Zealand

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Dear Editor

Thanks for your latest news letter and its interesting items.

Regarding Rescue Action Group Against Slavery: I can understand RI Rotarian Action Groups Committee being displeased about Rotary Clubs/Districts using their "RAG" heading before having the Committee's approval.

Your change of the name to "Rescue Action Group" should get over this irritation and be acceptable to RI.

However, the real answer - and the simplest and most useful to RI - would be for the RI RAG Committee to welcome the RAG Against Child Slavery, which you have led, into their list of approved Action Groups. Hence, problem solved!

What possible reason can RI have for not welcoming and supporting this Action Group. It would be so meaningful and helpful to Rotary Clubs all over the world to know that they have the backing of RI in their local efforts to control intolerable slavery practices wherever they might be.

We must continue developing this theme.

John Helmsing,  
RC South Cambridge  
District 1080  
England

## *Children / Human Rights*

**Editors Note:** This Newsletter is constantly referring to “Children's Rights”. So what are these rights ? The answer is set out below but may not be exhaustive. Knowledge of these human rights is essential/useful for those who intend to understand modern slavery, give presentations or merely make people aware of what is happening to the millions of children around the world who are illegally forced to work, without pay and under threat of violence.

### *Rotarians' Responsibilities*

#### **RI 's Code of Policies.....Article 8.050.3 (see also RI Manual of Procedures)**

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 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.

**NB** Until it was rescinded in January 2010, Article 42 of the RI Code of Policies stated the following specifically for children....” *Rotary International recognizing that children because of their vulnerability, need special care and attention.....& should be able to grow into adulthood in an environment of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom and equality, endorses and supports 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 Object of Rotary**

To encourage and foster the ideal of service above self as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

- **High ethical standards in business and professions;** the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and the dignifying by each Rotarian of his occupation as an opportunity to serve society.

#### **The 4-Way Test**

Of the things we think, say or do

1. Is it the TRUTH
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned
3. Will it build GOODWILL & BETTER FRIENDSHIPS
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned.

## **Mankind's responsibilities**

### **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)**

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.

### **ILO Convention No 182 concerning the worst forms of child labour (1999)**

Article 1. ....Each Member which ratifies this Convention shall take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency.

Article 3... The term “the worst forms of child labour” comprise:

- a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery , such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.
- b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances.
- c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs.
- d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Article 6....Each Member shall design and implement programmes of action to eliminate as a priority the worst forms of child labour.

Article 7... Each Member shall....take effective and time-bound measures to:

- a) prevent the engagement of children in the worst forms of child labour.
- b) provide the necessary and appropriate direct assistance for the removal of children from the worst forms of child labour and for their rehabilitation and social integration.
- c) ensure access to free basic education and wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training, for all children removed from the worst forms of child labour.
- d) identify and reach out to children at specific risk, and
- e) take account of the special situation of girls.



## **UN Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the UN convention against transnational organized crime (2000)**

Article 2....The purpose of this Protocol are:

- a) to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, paying particular attention to women and children.
- b) to protect and assist the victims of such trafficking with full respect for their human rights, and
- c) to promote co-operation among State Parties in order to meet those objectives..

Article 3.....For the purposes of this Protocol

- a) "Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.
- b) the consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph a) have been used.
- c) the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph a) of this article.
- d) "Child" shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

## **ILO Convention 29 1930**

Article 1.....Each member of the International Labour Organisation which ratifies this Convention undertakes to suppress the use of forced or compulsory labour in all its forms within the shortest possible period.

Article 4.....The competent authority shall not impose or permit the imposition of forced or compulsory labour for the benefit of private individuals, companies or associations.

Article 25....The illegal exaction of forced or compulsory labor shall be punishable as a penal offence, and it shall be an obligation on any Member ratifying this Convention to ensure that penalties imposed by law are really adequate and are strictly enforced.

## **UN Supplementary convention on the abolition of slavery, the slave trade, and institutions and practices similar to slavery (1956)**

Article 6.....The act of enslaving another person or of inducing another person to give himself or a person dependent upon him into slavery, or of attempting these acts, or being accessory thereto....shall be a criminal offence.

## **ILO Convention No 105, concerning the abolition of forced labour (1957)**

**Article 1**...Each Member of the International Labour Organisation which ratifies this Convention undertakes to suppress and not to make use of any form of forced or compulsory labour

- a) as a means of political coercion or education or as a punishment for holding or expressing political views or views ideologically opposed to the established political, social or economic system.
- b) as a method of mobilizing and using labour for purposes of economic development.
- c) as a means of labour discipline.
- d) as a punishment for having participated in strikes.
- e) as a means of racial, social, national or religious discrimination.

**Article 2**...Each Member undertakes to take effective measures to secure the immediate and complete abolition of forced or compulsory labour as specified in Article 1 of this Convention.

### **Examples of regional & national conventions & acts**

#### **Article 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights (1950)**

1. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.
2. No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.

#### **US Congress “Victims of trafficking and violence protection Act (2000)**

Refer to Sec 102 – Purpose & findings; Sec 106 - Prevention of trafficking; Sec 107 – Protection & assistance for victims of trafficking.

#### **UK - Section 4 of the Asylum & Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc) Act 2004**

This Act creates an offence of “trafficking people for exploitation” and provides that a person creates an offence if he or she arranges or facilitates the arrival in the UK (or subsequent travel within the UK) of an individual and intends to exploit the individual or believes that another person is likely to do so.

#### **UK – Coroners & Justice Act (2009)**

For the first time, ie 60 years after the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights (see above), two criminal offences were created in the UK, ie 1) for holding someone in servitude and 2) for subjecting someone to forced or compulsory labour.

**PLEASE ENCOURAGE FELLOW ROTARIANS TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND SIGN ON AS A MEMBER.  
THE WEBSITE IS: [www.racsrag.org](http://www.racsrag.org).**

Mark Little, RC of Norwich St Edmund  
District 1080, England  
12 November 2011