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Collection on the Baby Formula Abuse Action Group of Philadelphia, 1973-1981.

- Author/Creator:** Lear, Walter J. (Walter Jay), 1923-, collector.
- Publication:** 1973-1981.
- Format/Description:** Manuscript
1 box.
- Arrangement:** Arranged in seven series: Statement of Principle, 1976; Minutes, 1976; Correspondence, 1976; Treasurer's Records, 1976; News Clippings, 1973-1980; Programs, 1976; Related Materials (Other Organizations), 1974-1981, n.d.
- Subjects:** Nestlé.
Infant formula industry -- Developing countries.
Infants -- Developing countries -- Nutrition.
- Biography/History:** Founder, Institute of Social Medicine and Community Health; treasurer, Baby Formula Abuse Action Group.
- Summary:** Materials, including minutes, correspondence, financial records, and publications, from a small organization formed in the mid-1970s to stop major milk substitute manufacturers, most notably Nestlé, from continuing exploitative business practices in Africa. In coordination with other groups such as the International Nestlé Boycott Committee, the organization showed films and distributed literature promoting an international boycott. Also included are articles and other publications on the same issue collected by the organization from other sources.
- Notes:** Forms part of: U. S. Health Activism History Collection.
- Provenance:** Gift of Walter J. Lear, 2005.
- Contributor:** Baby Formula Abuse Action Group of Philadelphia.
- Status/Location:** See availability details. Rare Book & Manuscript Library - Manuscripts. Ms. Coll. 586.
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PHILADELPHIA BABY FORMULA ABUSE ACTION GROUP

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

March 16, 1976

In all activities involving the delivery of health care, fulfillment of the needs of people should be the sole priority. This means the promotion of good health care and nutrition within the context of native culture and resources. It does not mean (and is often directly in conflict with) the sale of a product for profit or the exportation of Western values.

Our specific goal is to halt the promotion of infant formula in Third World countries by multinational corporations. We feel that the presence and actions of these corporations constitutes a destructive influence, resulting in death, disease, and economic exploitation in the course of establishing a market for products whose value is highly questionable.

During recent years there has been a striking decline in the practice of breast feeding in the Third World. While the causes of this trend are complex, the promotion of infant formulas by multinational corporations has surely aggravated the situation. It has been well established that human milk is the best form of nutrition for all human infants, but the need for breast feeding in the Third World is dramatic. Parents there cannot afford the high price of commercial infant formula, and are poorly prepared to use it properly due to poverty, environmental conditions, and lack of formal education. Yet these people have been convinced that bottle feeding is best for their babies. As a result, the infant often receives an overdiluted solution of formula, contaminated with bacteria from the local water supply. In addition, these infants are deprived of the natural protective effect of breast milk against infection. There is a strong association between early weaning and infant death under such conditions.

A diet consisting solely of breast milk is now considered the ideal regimen for infants up to six months of age. The introduction of even supplemental bottle feeding exposes the infant to malnutrition and infection at an age when brain growth and development are particularly rapid and good nutrition is crucial. Thus, bottle feeding in infancy has directly caused needless death and untold mental and physical damage to the infants of the Third World. Moreover, the economic impact of the sale of infant formula serves to deplete urgently needed resources from the rations of the Third World, while the multinational corporations get richer.

~~BEAACP~~

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE
~~PHILADELPHIA~~ ^{FORMULA ABUSE} BABY ~~FEEDS~~ ACTION GROUP OF PHILADELPHIA

March 1, 1976

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A diet consisting solely of breast milk is now considered the ideal regimen for infants up to six months of age. The introduction of even supplemental bottle feeding exposes the infant to malnutrition and infection at an age when brain growth and development are particularly rapid and good nutrition is crucial. Thus, bottle feeding in infancy has directly caused needless death and untold mental and physical damage to the infants of the Third World. Moreover, the economic impact of the sale of infant formula serves to deplete urgently needed resources from the nations of the Third World while the ^{corporations} multinationals get richer.

March 16, 1976

BABY FORMULA ABUSE ACTION GROUP

American Home Prod. (Wyeth)
Abbott (Ross)
Bristol Myers (Mead Johnson)

Resolutions introduced by
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility

Project Areas

Education

literature distribution
tables at meetings & conferences
showing of film

Research on Corporations

National Social Action Groups
contacts

{ YWCA
NOW
La Heche League
MCHR

Action re Wyeth

purposes: public exposure
economic pressure

possibly: boycott
street demonstrations

March 30 1:30

(D)

Important to involve more 3rd world people

Mass meetings

city + suburbs
afternoon + evening

Calvary Baptist Church
48th Baltimore

"Preview"

Month lead time

Common Sense

April 12-19

Monday night in City

Tuesday ~~afternoon~~ ^{midday} in City

Center { ^{Br Cent.} Women's Center *

{ AFSC *

{ Unitarian Church

Handbills and Other Publicity { Community Spots

Child Care

Categories: Women's Groups
Hospitals

Political Organizations
Black Organizations

Media

Fat Cats

Minutes: Philadelphia Baby Formula Abuse Action Group
Tuesday, March 16, 1976

Present: Alan Meyers, Phyllis Taylor, JoAnne Wolf, Walter J. Lear, M.D., Emma Stephens, Stephanie Judson, Willfried Schmidt, Pat Mathis

I. Film

We previewed the Film and shared our reactions. We agreed that the film was very powerful in presenting the problem and in raising issues. We reintroduced ourselves and explained our interest in the workgroup.

II. Business

Alan reviewed the draft of the Statement of Principle that he and Phyllis prepared. It was accepted with a few minor changes. We agreed that it was important to make our challenge of the role and activities of multi-national corporations explicit. Alan will prepare a corrected version for our next meeting.

JoAnne raised some questions re: the name Baby Food Action Group. She has found it misleading because people associate it with the problems associated with high cost/low quality baby food. We changed the name to the Baby Formula Abuse Action Group of Phila. (can't we do better?)

Walter will open a bank account (we have some printing bills already) and get a Post Office box. Alan's number will be used temporarily for information 387-0786.

III. Future Plans

We decided to plan for a community showing (s) of the film aimed at activists, and interested persons who would become part of the action group and help organize additional film showings and discussions in neighborhoods. Emma expressed concern that more third world groups be involved. She suggested groups like Yellow Seeds and Black church leaders.

Tasks for "Film Preview"

- 1- Emma and JoAnne will compile a list of persons to be invited and make up invitations. Emphasis should be a) Third world groups and activists, b) Media representatives, c) representatives of Women's, church, social action and health organizations, d) Wealthy liberal folks. (Note: Everyone should send names, Rm. 1300, 1400 W. Spring Garden St., Phila 19130 238-7599)
- 2- JoAnne will check the Bicentennial Women's Center for free space for a 4/12 pm and 4/13 afternoon meeting. Stephanie will check the Friend's Meetinghouse. Alan and Willfried will check West. Phila. locations. (Note: Bicentennial Women's Center is available, JoAnne will explore suburban showings with C.E.A. people.)
- 3- Pat will explore child care provisions. She will check with Peggy McGarry at the Germantown Women's Center.

- 4- Phyllis, Alan, Pat, and Willfried will prepare the agenda for the meeting. They will create "involvement" mechanisms for participants.

(Education, -speakers, fundraising, economic action, and research activities were suggested)

- 5- Publicity - Alan will see that posters are put up in hospitals, at Penn, etc. JoAnne and Doris Smith will contact the media.

IV. Evaluation

(+) People expressed appreciation for the pre-meeting work (getting materials printed and distributed, organizing the booth at the International Women's Day Fair, securing the film, and preparing the draft of the statement of principle) and agenda. Everyone volunteered to take some responsibility for the April film showing and meeting.

(-) Not enough effort was made to get Third World groups to attend the meeting. The meeting was too businesslike - lacking necessary personal contact.

V. Next Meeting

Tuesday, March 30th - 1:30 p.m.
at

JoAnne's House
325 South Camac St. (note change)
Phila., PA 19107
(between 12-13th & Spruce & Pine Sts.)

Alan and JoAnne will prepare agenda. Alan will facilitate - record?