

Slave Labor Marketing in the U.S.A. and the World

This report further exposes the widespread phenomena of China's "re-education-through-labor" camp and prison system, in which unlawfully detained Falun Gong practitioners have been forced into manufacturing products without pay ever since the nationwide persecution of Falun Gong was initiated by the Jiang Zemin regime in 1999. Over 100,000 Falun Gong practitioners are illegally detained in China's forced labor camps, where they suffer physical and mental torture from exploitation and inhumane working conditions. Falun Gong practitioners have been driven to work overtime shifts, are punished or deprived of food or sleep if assigned quotas are not met, and tortured if they refuse to cooperate (1). They are often arbitrarily detained beyond their release dates because of the huge profits that camps stand to gain as a result of cheap labor (2). The Chinese government has declared that all property rights belonging to jails and enterprises in the labor camp system are exempt from income tax and land use tax, in order to stimulate and encourage growth of this kind of enterprise and attract more foreign investment (3). Some camps, seeking to acquire more Falun Gong practitioners so as to increase profits, even bribe other camps into transferring practitioners to their facilities (4). Advertisements from economically developing areas in some Chinese provinces and cities promote cheap labor where prisons and labor camps are located, as a way to attract foreign investment (5).

Products are mostly exported to over 30 countries and regions, including the United States, Canada, Australia, France, Germany, New Zealand, and Southeast Asia. The forced labor system not only violates the basic human rights of the detainees, but also encourages abuse and torture as camps raise their quotas in pursuit of even more profit. Meanwhile, the camps use part of the profits to construct more forced labor facilities (6). In addition, the products produced through forced labor are competitive and highly attractive in international markets because of their extreme low cost. As a result, this has led some foreign companies not aware of a product's background to participate in joint venture production, importing and selling the forced-labor-produced items. This not only violates the laws of their own countries and international laws, as many countries forbid the importation and selling of products manufactured through forced labor (7), but also shakes the stability of international labor and trade markets, threatening some of their homeland companies that

share the same market sectors.

A good example is the lobbying campaign initiated by the six largest U.S. textile and fabric trade organizations during their summit in Washington, D.C., on June 10, 2003. On July 2, 2003, the American Textile Manufacturers Institute (ATMI) published a shocking report stating that with the quota removal for Chinese textile products, more than 1,300 textile plants in the U.S. would have to close by early 2004, resulting in the loss of over 630,000 jobs. The U.S. textile and apparel market would be under China's control if protective measures were not implemented in a timely manner (8).

Ample evidence indicates that manufacturers such as the Shanghai Three-Gun Group Co., Ltd. the Shandong Leader Handicraft Articles Co., Ltd., and Henan Rebecca Hair Products Inc., China, collaborate with "re-education-through-labor" camps or detention centers to force Falun Gong practitioners into unpaid hard labor during their detention. The unlawfully detained practitioners are forced to endure more than 10 hours of hard labor per day or even overnight shifts in addition to their regular hours. Those who cannot meet their assigned quotas due to physical difficulty are beaten and tortured.

Products from these manufacturers are sold not only in Chinese cities but also worldwide. The "Three-Gun" brand series of underwear products by the Shanghai Three-Gun Group Co., Ltd., are sold in more than 70 countries and regions (9). The handcrafted cotton quilts made by Shandong Leader Handicraft Articles Co., Ltd., are sold in more than 40 countries and regions including the U.S., Canada, Chile, Argentina, EU countries in western Europe, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Australia, Japan, Korea, and Singapore, with US\$10 million in annual export (10). Henan Rebecca Hair Products Inc., China, has good sales channels in the U.S., Japan, Korea, Russia, Europe, and Africa, as well as in over 20 provinces and cities in China (11). Having these forced-labor-produced items in the market is deceiving to the public in these countries, since many countries have laws against importing and selling products manufactured through forced labor. It can cause the public to unknowingly participate in the wrongdoing, which is disturbing to any consumer with conscience.