



Reasoning with Ethics

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Ethics in action creates character.

Use this blog to:

1. Lead class discussions in social studies, civics, ethics or advisory classes.
2. Teach students skills to analyze cases with core ethical values.
3. Recognize skills in support of SEE's Tri-Factor Model of ethical functioning.

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Forced Labor in China

Multiple news agencies are reporting that Uyghurs, a distinct ethnic population in Xinjiang province of northwest China are being sent as forced labor by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to work in the manufacturing in supply chains throughout the country. This, while Disney credits the CCP and provides a romanticized image of the region in their newest action movie.

While Disney exploits the region for its cinematography, many other famous brands like Nike, Adidas, Apple, Gap, BMW, Samsung, Sony, VW, and Lenovo are exploiting its people. These brands may be using second or third-tier manufacturing sites in their supply chain and thus claim they are not aware of the use of forced labor. VW and BMW should have a greater awareness of the moral failure here as they have historically expressed regret for willingly participating in slave-labor in support of Nazi Germany during WWII.

It is public knowledge that possibly 1 million Uyghurs have been moved into CCP reeducation camps to break their connection to their isolated culture and Muslim faith. From these camps, one report estimates 80,000 to 150,000 Uyghur laborers are being dispersed to manufacturing plants throughout China as involuntary labor.

Ads in public Chinese papers and online forums note that manufacturers can place orders for 100 to 200 government-subsidized workers who can be delivered in one to two weeks. The Chinese government insists all workers are voluntary, but reporters have discovered the workers are still under detention as forced labor. One Nike manufacturing site is using Uyghur workers and is surrounded by high cement walls, barbed-wire fences, and guard towers.

What are the core ethical values that should resist the forced movement of individuals into reeducation camps and then onto involuntary labor? Is there any action students might take to resist the practice of a giant foreign government providing forced labor for international businesses?

Supplemental Links

Youtube links to ABC (Australian Public Broadcasting) story—Slave labor for large brands. (7:49) https://youtu.be/_zYdCiJsyCM

British public broadcasting- (4:16) new footage of Chinese re-education of Uyghurs and placement in camps. -- <https://youtu.be/Mx0JFgwATho> also notes forced labor use of Uyghurs

CBS News: Boycott Mulan-- <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/boycott-mulan-china-uyghur-muslims-xinjian-hong-kong/>

CBS News: China's Treatment of Uighur Muslims-- <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/china-puts-uyghurs-uyghurs-muslim-children-in-prison-re-education-internment-camps-vice-news/>

CBS News: Forced birth control of Uighurs in China-- <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/china-uighur-muslims-forced-birth-control-demographic-genocide-experts-tell-ap/>

Forbes- German companies and ties to WWII forced labor--

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/maddieberg/2019/04/02/more-than-a-dozen-of-europes-wealthiest-billionaires-and-their-families-had-nazi-ties/#3fa72f5c6015>

The Nation: VW's use of forced labor during WWII--

<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/volkswagens-nazi-era-blood-crimes/>

US companies sell products made by Uyghurs in forced labor by China.



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