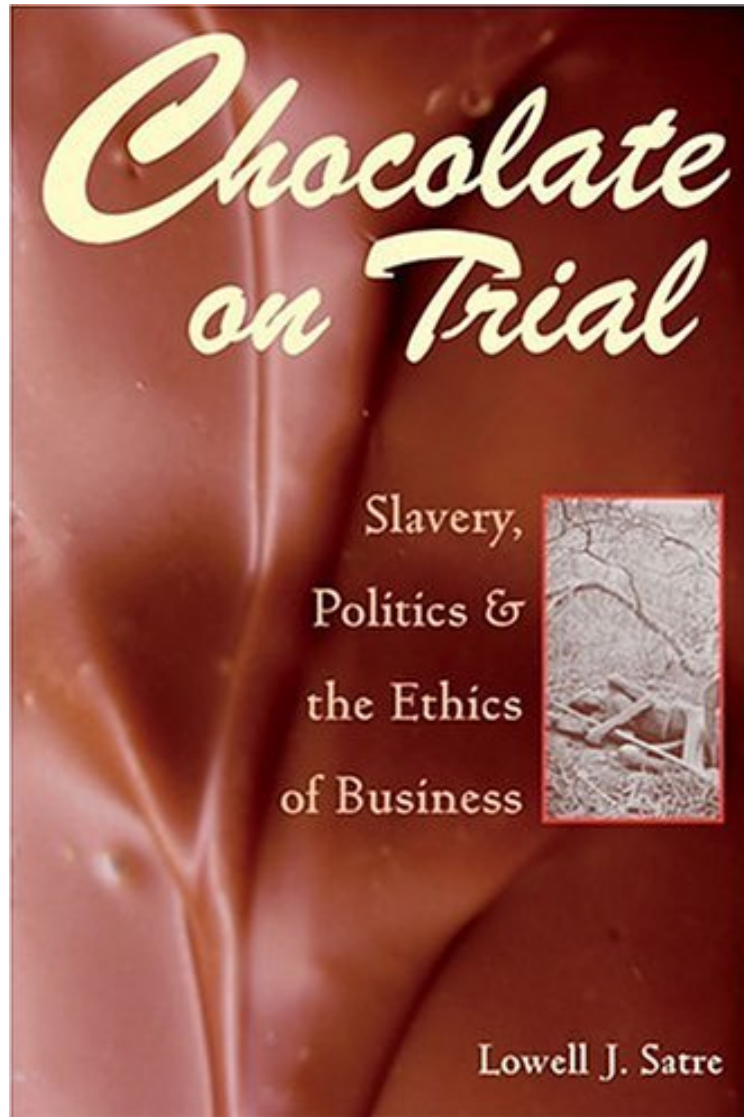


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Chocolate on Trial: Slavery, Politics, and the Ethics of Business

Prof. Lowell J. Satre

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Prof. Lowell J. Satre : Chocolate on Trial: Slavery, Politics, and the Ethics of Business before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chocolate on Trial: Slavery, Politics, and the Ethics of Business:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book to learn more about the history of the ...By D. C.Great book to learn more about the history of the slave trade and ethical business. I recommend this book for business people.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Chocolate and slavery in the early 1900's - exhaustive account of British commercial, philosophical and political attitudesBy Adrenalin StreamsLowell Satre's book provides

an exhaustive account of the positions of British anti-slavery activists, the Cadbury company, and British government officials with regard to the use of Portuguese colonial slave labour to produce cacao on Sao Tome (off the coast of Angola) in the first decade of the 20th Century. The first half of the book, in particular, is very completist in terms of detailing what must be virtually every statement or piece of correspondence by or between the three camps on the subject of slave labour and what should be done about it. This is brilliant if you want to use the book for academic research, but can be a little hard going (with some repetition) if you do not. In essence, all parties agree that something needs to be done about the use of Portuguese slave labour (nominally contract labour), but each adopts a different approach as to how to go about it. The activists want the Cadbury company (and other chocolate companies) to boycott cacao from Sao Tome, and for the British government to use force if necessary to ensure the Portuguese government honours existing laws prohibiting slavery, and allowing for repatriation of workers at the end of their contracts. The Cadbury family come out strongly against slave labour but hold a view that they must be guided by the government and that, at least initially, a boycott would exacerbate rather than resolve the situation. The British government do not like the use of slave labour but are loathe to openly antagonise their Portuguese allies, preferring to apply a certain diplomatic pressure over time. All this leads up to the famous Cadbury Bros v The Standard Newspaper libel trial of 1909. The Standard accused Cadbury's of hypocrisy over its position on Sao Tome, and Cadbury's felt the need to defend its reputation. Two of the leading barristers of the day represented the two parties, and this is where the book moves from being a largely academic work to being one of genuine pace and excitement. The trial, and its verdict, makes for riveting reading, and the final few chapters neatly sum up the consequences for its players, as well as letting the reader know what eventually happened to the use of colonial labour in Sao Tome. If you want to skip all the detail of the first part of the book, and cut to the chase, then I recommend reading pages 145-148, in which the author neatly summarises everything said to that point. To sum up, not a perfect book, but a highly praiseworthy one, written in a non-partisan manner and one that lets the facts speak for themselves. A highly worthwhile read.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding study of capitalism in practice
By William Podmore
This superb book studies the connection between slavery in West Africa and the British, and Quaker, firm of Cadbury, particularly in the first decade of the twentieth century. From the 15th century, the slave trade was the foundation of the Portuguese empire. Even in the early 1900s, Angola was still a slave state, with half its people enslaved. The British Empire was an ally of Portugal, so it was complicit in the slavery. Portugal's islands of Sao Tome and Principe, 150 miles off Africa's west coast, had 40,000 slaves producing cocoa beans which Cadbury had been buying since 1886. From 1901 to 1908, Cadbury got half its beans from the islands. A Foreign Office official noted, "The fact of the matter is that the system is neither more nor less than slavery but that we do not dare to say much as we might thus offend the Portuguese with whom we desire to stand well." In the 1900s, the British Empire was trying to recruit African labour from Portuguese Africa for its gold mines in South Africa. The Foreign Office warned against the "danger of learning inconvenient facts which might oblige us to make representations to the Portuguese Govt. which we don't want to do." So Britain, like Portugal, ignored the treaties obliging them to act to halt the slave trade. Prime Minister Lord Salisbury ordered, "Leave it alone." In 1901, William Cadbury first heard rumours of slave labour on the islands. All the evidence that he later received confirmed that there was a brutal slave trade in Angola, that the labourers on the islands were forced, that the death rate was huge (often 20% a year), and that none was free ever to leave. Yet Cadbury did not boycott the products of slave labour until 1909. The company claimed that discreet diplomacy, and continued purchase of Sao Tome's cocoa, would improve the workers' position. Their position, however, did not improve: 6,000 slaves died every year, though profits certainly increased, as did the number of slaves and the amount of cocoa exported. Humanitarian pressure groups tried to get the British government to act in the labourers' interests. It responded with endless promises to press the Portuguese state to reform, and repeated investigations and commissions. This all proves the folly of relying on companies, pressure groups, treaties or governments to effect improvement. Angola and the islands used forced labour until they won independence from Portugal in 1975. How we have progressed since then! Such outrages are long gone. Yet in 2001, the Financial Times reported, "Nestle and Cadbury were accused of turning a blind eye to child slavery in the cocoa industry." A 2002 study estimated that 284,000 children worked in West Africa's cocoa farms. Another study concluded that there were 15,000 child slaves in the Ivory Coast alone. Cadbury responded, "We were completely unaware of the allegations concerning cocoa growing in the Cote d'Ivoire." Plus ca change. The USA spends \$8.5 billion a year on chocolate products, Britain spends 4 billion, while the children who produce the chocolate toil in poverty and slavery.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Cadbury Bros. Ltd. was a successful, Quaker-owned chocolate manufacturer in Birmingham, England, celebrated for its model village, modern factory, and concern for employees. In 1901 the firm learned that its cocoa beans, purchased from Portuguese plantations on the island of So Tom off West Africa, were produced by slave labor. *Chocolate on Trial: Cadbury, Slavery and the Economics of Virtue in Imperial Britain* gives a lively and highly readable account of the events surrounding the libel trial in which Cadbury Bros. Ltd. sued the London Standard, following the newspaper's accusation that the firm was hypocritical in its use of slave-grown cocoa. As compelling now as at the turn of the previous century, the issues probed by Lowell J. Satre give invaluable

historical background to contemporary issues of business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and globalization. The story Satre tells illuminates what a stubbornly persistent institution slavery was and shows how Cadbury, a company with a well-regarded brand name and logo, endured ethical dilemmas and challenges to its record for social responsibility. Chocolate on Trial brings to life the age-old conflict between economic interests and the value of human life. Satre illuminates the stubborn persistence of the institution of slavery and shows how Cadbury, a company with a well-regarded brand name from the nineteenth century, faced ethical dilemmas and challenges to its record for social responsibility. Chocolate on Trial brings to life the age-old conflict between economic interests and regard for the dignity of human life.

From Publishers Weekly This exhaustive history of forced labor practices on the Portuguese colonial islands of So Tom and Princip from 1901-1913 and the failed efforts on the part of the British government and British chocolate companies to force change brings to life the journalists, community leaders, businessmen and politicians whose goal of abolishing slavery was the same, but whose efforts were too often derailed by ego, politics and interpersonal conflict. Satre focuses on Cadbury Bros.-specifically William Cadbury, contrasting his well-intentioned efforts with those of journalist Henry Nevinson, whose book, *A Modern Slavery*, was the first to paint a vivid picture of the islands' brutal conditions and to stir popular ire. Cadbury Bros. later sued the *Standard* newspaper for libel, claiming one of the paper's editorials had injured the company's credit and reputation. Satre's title would lead readers to believe that the ensuing trial is the main feature of the book, when, in fact, it takes up two chapters. However, it reinforces Satre's contention that no matter how well-intentioned and philanthropic William Cadbury and the British government seemed, they waited far too long to take action. Photos. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. This is a well-written, marvelously researched, and utterly fascinating study of an episode in the social, political, economic, and even religious history of imperial Britain. Thomas C. Kennedy, author of *British Quakerism, 1860-1920: The Transformation of a Religious Community*