The Milk of Human Kindness
Defending breastfeeding from the global market & the AIDS industry
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Mothers and their supporters continue to be in a life-and-death struggle with the milk formula industry and the global market. By 1996 only 1/3 of babies in the world were exclusively breastfed. As a result, at least 1.5 million infants, overwhelmingly in the South, die each year. People’s immune systems are further undermined in countries where food is scarce but also where it is plentiful.

Breastfeeding, which protects the lives and health of infants and lays the basis for the health of the whole population, seems increasing again. But the attack against it has intensified. HIV/AIDS is the latest excuse for promoting breast milk substitutes. Yet while 4% of child deaths are attributed to HIV/AIDS, 60% are caused by malnutrition, largely the result of mothers’ lack of food and formula use. It is AIDS which (like war) attracts massive funding, not food security.

The privatization of the UN, to which we have traditionally looked to uphold hard-won international standards that kept the formula industry in check, now assists the pharmaceutical industry to join the attack on breastfeeding. Unicef, once the leading advocate of “Breast is best”, is now promoting formula, the first junk food, and making deals with McDonald’s and Coca-Cola, the second junk food attack on our children.

Despite evidence that all babies thrive on breast milk, HIV+ mothers are accused of endangering their infants by breastfeeding. In some countries they can even lose custody of their children if they breastfeed. UN agencies, along with governments, are now distributing formula, and are themselves breaking the World Health Organisation's Code which regulates industry’s marketing of formula.

More women are in positions of power, but women are no less penalized for their biological and social contribution, which is devalued and “dissed”. Women worldwide demand recognition that the production of life and caring for it work they do outside the Market, has social value. What, they keep asking, is more important than this?

The attack on breastfeeding is an attack on all of us, on our right to the best, from birth, freely given. With The Milk of Human Kindness we see not only the value of breastfeeding, but the forces for and against this caring work of women, in fact for and against life itself. The book introduces us to the new movement against “the baby killers” and the urgent action needed now to protect new life.

✧ A path-breaking perspective on the true value of women's vital biological and caring work.  
✧ An economic balance sheet: how much is spent supporting breastfeeding and how much undermining it.
Over 100 facts on the economic value of breastfeeding, lives saved as well savings to both individuals and countries in healthcare, birth control costs and formula costs; the unique qualities of breast milk compared to those of any formula; and its environmental friendliness.

The work of breastfeeding, the skills it requires, the time and energy it takes and saves.

A do-it-yourself guide to measuring and economically valuing the work of breastfeeding and all unwaged work.

An account of how much money and resources the formula industry invests in influencing governments, the media, the medical profession and NGOs to undermine breastfeeding.

Another view of HIV and breastfeeding: breast is always best. What the AIDS “experts” don’t tell us.

An expose of the control over researchers, UN officials, policy makers, health professionals and NGOs, of the pharmaceutical industry often one with the formula industry. The millions spent to “prove” that breastfeeding by HIV+ mothers leads to AIDS in children and to undermine research that disproves it.

Information about the movement to defend breastfeeding and mothers’ resistance to HIV/AIDS terrorism, South and North, which is integral to the movement against globalisation.

Reports from the successful campaign to defend mothers’ rights to paid nursing breaks during the 1999 and 2000 ILO review of its Maternity Protection Convention.

The right to breastfeed: an Indigenous woman’s perspective from Peru.

A list of 22 demands for action to promote breastfeeding and first of all to protect and support the breastfeeding worker.