

Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery

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Website www.racsrag.org

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To contact a RAG Board Member or Co-ordinator, please see email addresses on the back page of this Newsletter



Front page of the Daily Telegraph – 22 Nov 2013



Editor: Mark Little – Rotary Club of Norwich St Edmund, England

“In this great land of the free, we call it human trafficking. And as long as we don’t partake in the activity, ignoring slavery is of no consequence. It is much easier to look away and ignore the victims. The person who ignores slavery justifies it by quickly deducting the victim is a willing participant hampered by misfortune” (D’Andre Lamokin)



Women slaves held in UK for 30 years

Three women kept as slaves for more than 30 years in a South London house, appear to have been held by “invisible handcuffs” because of the fear instilled in them by their captors.

The youngest of the three women, who is 30 years, is thought to have spent her entire life in servitude

Detectives from a human

trafficking unit said that it was the worst case of modern slavery that they had come across in Britain.

The three slaves were never allowed outside the vast majority of their lives confined to the property in Lambeth, South London which police described as an “ordinary house in an

ordinary street”

The women’s ordeal came to an end last month when one of the women contacted a charity after watching a television programme about domestic slavery. She told charity workers that she had been held against her will in the house for more than three decades.

NB See Editorial comment on page 2

Slavery continues in Uzbekistan

The Uzbek Government has once again ignored pleas from anti-slavery organizations to stop the use of hundreds of thousands of children from working (without pay) in the cotton fields for up to three months (Sept– Nov) at the expense of their education.

As a result of the adverse publicity it previously received because of its use of young children working in the cotton fields, the Uzbek Government has this year redirected its mass mobilisation efforts to use older children from secondary schools and adults instead. In its most recent journal Anti-Slavery International (ASI) reports “employees of hospitals and students of colleges were forced to sign documents stating that they will pick cotton “voluntarily”. There were reports of teachers showing up on the doorsteps of students with a police presence demanding that students go to the fields or pay fines. Owners of private businesses were given the alternative of sending their staff to the fields or paying to employ someone to pick cotton in their place”

Editor’s Note: If you want to know more about this issue or how to help end this evil practice, please visit the website of Anti-Slavery International www.antislavery.org



Editorial

Anyone who has been under the delusion that slavery and the slave trade were abolished two centuries ago in the UK, will have been shocked by the recent discovery of three women enslaved in a Lambeth (South London) home. But for those of us who have been monitoring the burgeoning growth in the criminal activities of human traffickers and modern day gang masters, the news will have come as no surprise.

Slavery and human trafficking is flourishing in every country in the world with the exception of Greenland.

Even those who acknowledge that slavery does still exist, often find it difficult to believe that such practices could possibly happen in the so called "civilised" countries in Europe and North America.

The Lambeth case has led to comparisons with Josef Fritzl, the Austrian man who kept his daughter confined to the cellar of his house for 24 years. In May this year three women were freed from a house in Cleveland, Ohio, after being kidnapped and held for more than a decade.

These are not one-off cases – modern slavery is alive and well everywhere. It is walking our streets, supplying shops and supermarkets, working in fields, factories and nail bars, trapped in brothels or cowering in an ordinary street being forced to beg to fill the purses of others.

According to Theresa May, the UK Home Secretary, in Britain the number of victims of slavery has risen 25% over the last year.

In recent years there have been countless examples, reported in the daily newspapers, of men, women and children trapped in similar circumstances in this

country.

Remember the twenty two Chinese cockle pickers who perished a few years back in Morecombe Bay or the 24 slaves held in appalling conditions, two years ago, in a gipsy camp near Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire. When they were discovered, some of the victims were starving, whilst one had been kept as a slave for 15 years.

We Rotarians have a choice on this issue. We can either despair that exploitation is an age old problem, that human nature will never change, that in any case slavery and human trafficking is a problem for government and then do nothing. Or we can remember the tenets of the 4-Way Test, Part 2 of the Object of Rotary and our responsibilities, (previously enshrined in our Code of Policies) to defend the rule of law and order to preserve the liberty of all individuals.

The first positive step that you can take to help in the struggle to end slavery and trade in slaves is to enrol as a member of the RAG via the Action Group's website www.racsrag.org.

By joining the Group, you will learn why slavery exists, where it is prevalent, how its supporters can help to rescue, rehabilitate and reintegrate the survivors of slavery and what project opportunities exist for clubs to protect children from slavery and its consequences.

Slavery often comes to light when a member of the public sees something odd and speaks up. So what are the signs which may indicate that someone has been trafficked or forced into slavery?

Some signs (eg no passport or documentation, lack of control

over earnings, bodily injuries etc) can only be available as a result of interrogation by skilled investigators, following rescue or arrest. But there are other indicators that all is not well.

One is the presence of visible distress as a result of facial injuries or bruising which might indicate a pattern of physical abuse. Another possible signal is a person's demeanor. Does he or she appear frightened, reluctant to communicate, or generally withdrawn? Slaves are generally programmed to fear or avoid external contacts. Very often they are brainwashed to believe that the local police are cruel and corrupt and that any connection with the outside world could result in jail, torture or deportation.

On the next page is a selection of the clues which could indicate that someone is being exploited by slave masters. The list is by no means exhaustive.

If you suspect that someone has been trafficked or forced into slavery then the best course of action is to phone a dedicated call line.

In the USA there is one national hotline which is operated by Polaris Project. The number is 1-888-3737-888. In the UK there are a number of hotlines operated by different organizations. These and other hotlines are listed on page four.

I may be speaking out of turn here but it would seem to be preferable in the UK to have one dedicated hotline instead of several. Several hotlines must be a little confusing for the public and the victims of slavery. **Even better would be one hotline telephone number worldwide!**



*"In Britain the number of victims of slavery has risen 25% over the last year"
(Theresa May – UK Home Secretary)*



The signs which may indicate that someone has been trafficked and/or forced into slavery

In a sauna or massage parlour

- the woman is a foreign national
- she appears to be unhappy, has signs of abuse and doesn't smile
- she is frightened or in physical pain
- she sees a large number of clients each day/night
- she is able to keep little, or none, of the money she receives from clients
- she has little or no time off
- she may only know how to say sex-related words in English



On a farm or in a factory

- the workers are foreign nationals
- they are using unsuitable equipment or wearing unsuitable clothing
- they are living in overcrowded accommodation and appear malnourished
- they may seem fearful and are poorly integrated with the wider community
- minibuses pick them up at unusual hours of the day and night
- they have no days off or holiday time
- their passports and legal documents are held by their employer or someone else



Working as a nanny or a domestic servant

- the worker is rarely allowed out of the house, unless the employer or guardian is with them
- they show signs of abuse and are malnourished
- they have no private space or a proper place to sleep for example on the floor or a sofa
- they have a poor diet or is given the family's leftover food to eat

On the high street

- a young, elderly or disabled foreign national who begs in public places or on public transport
- they may show obvious signs of being abused such as bruises, cuts or mutilation
- they seem fearful of authority (especially law enforcers) or their behaviour is jumpy
- one adult is the guardian of a large group of children
- a large group of adult or child beggars are moved daily to different locations but return to the same location every night – they appear to lack control over their movements
- on public transport they move as a group, such as walking up and down the length of a train or bus.



Young girls

- a teenage girl meets an older male who becomes her boyfriend. Initially he flatters her, buys her gifts such as a mobile phone, and introduces her to alcohol or drugs. He makes her feel incredibly special
- the man controls her more and more. He claims she owes him for drugs and forces her to do sexual favours as a means of payment
- She is taken from her family home and returned after varying lengths of time; her relationship with her family or guardians gradually becomes severed
- pictures or films of her engaging in sex activities are used to make her feel guilty, fearful her family will find out. Her 'boyfriend' uses this to control her, making her sleep with his friends
- he takes her to different flats (even in different towns or cities), getting her to sleep with different men



Hotlines for Victims



- United States - 1 888 3737 888 (Polaris Project)
 United Kingdom - 0800 783 2589 (Metropolitan Police)
 - 0300 303 8151 (Salvation Army)
 - 0800 555 111 (Crime Stoppers)
 - 0845 607 0133 (Freedom Charity)
 Brazil - 100
 Canada - 613 993 7267
 India - 91 022 2388 1098 (Child Line)

For a list of hotline numbers in more than 75 countries, go to:

<http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/other/2011/168859.htm>

Raise a Wall, Elevate a Girl, Lift a Community

by Carol Metzker, Member of the One World Rotary Club

Two previous RACSRAG Newsletters included articles calling for funds to increase the height of a wall around Punarnawa Ashram, a Center for girls rescued from sex slavery in India. Dollar by dollar, funds are increasing to build up the wall inch by inch and brick by brick. Will you or your club help those funds grow?

Why is it so important to increase the height of the wall? Because when a new, paved road was built in the developing village, changes in grading and the addition of materials made the road much higher than it was. It effectively made the Ashram wall three feet shorter. Thus, it's a lot easier for traffickers to take back a girl—to steal her to stop her testifying or to re-victimize her.

What are other ramifications of protecting the girls at Punarnawa? Since the Center opened its gate in 2010, 91 rescued girls have taken shelter there. Of the 63 residents who were discharged by December 31, 2012, 70 percent have been successfully reintegrated into their communities. They take home skills that can help create a positive future: tailoring, computer skills, agriculture, animal husbandry, beautician techniques, reading and writing.

When girls and young women from the ashram are reintegrated into their home communities, this is often the entry point for Free The Slaves and its anti-slavery partners to organize those communities against slavery. Survivors from Punarnawa share what they have learned in the Ashram about human rights and female empowerment; they take strong roles in Community Vigilance Committees that work toward self-sustained slavery eradication.

By helping raise the wall, you're giving a rescued girl the chance to receive medical and psychological treatment, education and vocational training, which she will take home to strengthen her community.

Will you help with this project (\$18,100 for 1800 linear feet of brick wall) and with the larger effort of ending child slavery? To contribute to this project, please contact Carol Metzker in the United States, echmetzker@aol.com, or Mark Little, mark.little@btinternet.com, in England.

Editor's Note: For further details of the cost estimates please see Pages 3 and 4 of Newsletter 42

"I've been held down like a piece of meat while monsters disguised as men violated me again and again"

(Gladys Lawson)



Photo: FTS/FitzPatrick



Trafficking in Human Beings

(Statement arising from Vatican Workshop 2/3 November 2013)

In the last issue of the Newsletter we reported that our RAG Coordinator in Italy, Laura Dryjanska and RAG member, Roberto Giua were invited to attend the Vatican Conference on Human Trafficking earlier this month. Laura has now provided our Action Group with a copy of the Document which has been produced as a result of the deliberations of the anti-slavery experts who attended the Vatican Workshop. Below are a few extracts from the document. A copy of the document which includes the names of the signatories and 42 suggestions for the Holy See to pursue, will be dispatched to readers of this Newsletter under separate cover.

“Each human being is a free person, whether man woman, girl or boy, and is destined to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity.

Any relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people – men, women, girls and boys – are equal and have the same freedom and dignity constitutes a grave crime against humanity.

Despite the efforts of many, trafficking in human beings – the most extensive form of slavery in our twenty-first century – is a plague on a vast scale in many countries across the world. Victims are hidden away in private homes, in illegal establishments, in factories, on farm, behind closed doors, in families, houses and other places in the cities, villages and slums of the world’s richest and poorest nations. The situation is not improving but, on the contrary, is probably deteriorating.

There is now a compelling need to put an end to trafficking in human beings and in all forms of exploitation, particularly prostitution, forced labour, the harvesting of human organs and the use of children as drug dealers

Trafficking in human beings in all its forms, and in particular trafficking in sexual exploitation and prostitution, must be declared a crime against humanity”.

RAG Board

Chairman: Mark Little, RC of Norwich St Edmund (D1080), England. mark@racsrag.org
 Vice Chairman: Bob Christie, RC of Dalkeith (D1020), Scotland. bob@racsrag.org
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 Board Member: Girish Mittal, RC of Mumbai Boravali East (D3140), India girish@racsrag.org

RAG Coordinators

Americas: Dave McCleary (For contact details see above)
 Africa: Mark Doyle, RC of Pretoria West (D9400), South Africa. mpdoyle@mweb.co.za
 Zambia: Arnfinn Solli, RC of Livingstone (D9210), Zambia. arnfinn@microlink.zm
 Oceania and parts of SE Asia: David Black, RC of Dunedin Central (D9980), New Zealand
dblack@mainlandpoultry.co.nz
 India: Girish Mittal (For contact details see above)
 Italy: Laura Dryjanska, RC of Roma Centenario (D2080), Italy.
Laura.dry@windowslive.com

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