

**Testimony of Lisa L. Thompson  
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**The Sexual Gulag:  
Profiteering from the Global  
Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children**

**Testimony before the Financial Services Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
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## **Introduction**

I am here as a representative of The Salvation Army<sup>1</sup> USA. The Salvation Army was founded in London, England, in 1865 by William and Catherine Booth. The organization is first and foremost a church, which now exists in 110 countries carrying out wide-ranging forms of ministry and human service from school and hospital administration, micro-credit programs, HIV/AIDS and community health work, elderly residential centers, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, disaster and emergency relief, and a growing number of specific programs aimed at combating human trafficking, to mention a few.

The Salvation Army founders, the Booths, were revolutionaries in their time. They went against every Victorian convention and took their ministry to the dirty and dangerous streets of London's east side where they reached out to the destitute and desperate. They tackled the issue of sexual trafficking by, among other things, forming Midnight Rescue Brigades for "Cellar, Gutter, and Garret" work, going at night to the back allies and attics in which they might find women and girls longing to escape from the snares of their traffickers, brothel keepers and pimps to another life. Commenting on this work, Catherine Booth said, "I felt as though I must go and walk the streets and besiege the dens where these hellish iniquities are going on. To keep quiet seemed like being a traitor to humanity."<sup>2</sup> Once again, The Salvation Army finds itself fighting this same fight and once again we must raise our voices or betray not only humanity but also our faith.

## **Sexual Gulags: Slavery on an Industrial Scale**

Many times I have heard human trafficking referred to as modern-day slavery. It's a powerful and apt analogy that shocks and challenges us. Americans in particular are moved by this comparison. Slavery is an anachronism – something that was supposedly put behind us years ago. However, reports like the State Department's *Trafficking in Persons Report* and the Department of Justice's annual *Assessment of U.S. Government Activities to Combat Trafficking in Persons* prove to us otherwise.

Today I would like to take the slavery analogy a step further, and give to you another framework with which to conceptualize sexual trafficking. Today I want to introduce to you what I call the "Sexual Gulag."

I'm sure you are all familiar with the term gulag. Generally it's used to describe networks of prisons or labor camps. But the word GULAG (Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei) is a Russian acronym meaning Main Camp Administration.<sup>3</sup> The Soviet Union built a network of prisons for slave labor so vast and so brutal that the word gulag has been adopted into the English language and today the word's usage is synonymous with inhumane, torturous prison conditions, and industrialized death.

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<sup>1</sup> The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love for God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and meet human needs in his name without discrimination.

<sup>2</sup> Green, R. *Catherine Booth, a biography of the cofounder of The Salvation Army*. p258.

<sup>3</sup> Applebaum, A. (2003). *Gulag: a history*. p(i).

“In the course of the Soviet Union’s existence, at least 476 distinct camp complexes came into being, consisting of thousands of individual camps . . . The total number of prisoners in the camps generally hovered around two million, but the total number of Soviet citizens who had some experience of the camps, as political or criminal prisoners, is far higher. From 1929, when the Gulag began its major expansion, until 1953, when Stalin died, the best estimates indicate that some eighteen million people passed through its massive system.”<sup>4</sup>

The Soviet regime and its gulags have collapsed, but a new gulag system, stretching far beyond the borders of the former Soviet empire, has risen to take its place – the Sexual Gulag. The Sexual Gulag is a global system made up of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of brothels, bars, strip clubs, massage parlors, escort services, and street corners where people are sold for sex.

The Sexual Gulag entraps and exploits women and children turning them into sexual commodities. The State Department’s *Trafficking in Persons Report* and its tier ranking of 142 countries testifies to the fact that this gulag exists the world over and that vast numbers of women and children are trapped within its confines. How many women and children exactly? No one knows. But consider these statistics:

- UNICEF reports that across the world, there are over one million children entering the sex trade every year and that approximately **30 million children** have lost their childhood through sexual exploitation over the past 30 years.<sup>5</sup>
- In Southeast Asia alone, there are currently around a million children involved in the sex industry, some younger than 10 years old.<sup>6</sup>

Thus in scale, both in terms of geographic breadth and the number of those impacted, the comparison of the Soviet’s developed and complex gulag system to the modern day Sexual Gulag, is if anything, inadequate.

While there were a great many forms and varieties of camps in the Soviet system and people were sent to them for a variety of reasons, their primary purpose was an economic one.<sup>7</sup> In her book *Gulag: A History*, Anne Applebaum writes: “They produced a third of the country’s gold, much of its coal and timber, and a great deal of almost everything else. . . .”<sup>8</sup> So the Soviet gulag and the Sexual Gulag share the same purpose, an economic one, and the real difference between the two is that in the Sexual Gulag there is only one industry in which people are exploited — the sex industry.

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<sup>4</sup> Applebaum, A. (2003). *Gulag: a history*. p(xvii).

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF UK. (2004, January 28). “Commercial sexual exploitation position statement.”

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Applebaum, A. (2003). *Gulag: a history*. p(xxxviii).

<sup>8</sup> Applebaum, A. (2003). *Gulag: a history*. p(xvi).

The Sexual Gulag is flourishing and highly profitable. The value of the global trade in women as commodities for sex industries has been estimated to be between seven and twelve billion dollars annually.<sup>9</sup> However, as the information I'm going to share with you demonstrates, these estimates are astonishingly low based on a review of just a few statistics regarding the global sex industry.

As I share this information, it's important to keep in mind the following four items:

- 1) All prostitution of persons under 18 is de facto sex trafficking;
- 2) A high prevalence of foreign-born women in any given country's sex industry is highly indicative of sex trafficking;
- 3) The vast majority of adult women in prostitution in any given country experience levels of physical and psychological coercion, abuse, and torture that plainly classify them as victims of sex trafficking; and
- 4) Victims are trafficked into and are used in various forms of commercial sexual exploitation such as prostitution, pornography, and stripping. Thus prostitution and sexual trafficking are symbiotically related — the existence of prostitution is the only reason sex trafficking exists.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Sexual Gulag is Big Business**

- In Japan, where prostitution is not legal, but widely tolerated, the sex industry is estimated to make ¥10,000bn (US \$83 billion).<sup>11</sup> There are an estimated 150,000 foreign women in the sex industry.<sup>12</sup> Many of them are known to be trafficked from the Philippines, Thailand, Korea, Russia, and Latin America each year.
- Prostitution in the Philippines is a de facto legal industry that is now the fourth largest source of gross national product (GNP) for the country.<sup>13</sup> Estimates vary but the likelihood is that there are nearly half a million persons in prostitution in the country<sup>14</sup> and an estimated 100,000 of them are children.<sup>15</sup> 300,000 sex tourists from Japan alone are believed to visit the Philippines every year.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Hughes, D. (2000, Spring). "The 'Natasha trade' – the transnational shadow market of trafficking in women." *Journal of International Affairs*.

<sup>10</sup> Hughes, D. (2004.)

<sup>11</sup> Tsutsumi, K. & Honda, S. (2004, November 1). *OAS rapid assessment report: trafficking in persons from the Latin American and Caribbean region to Japan*.

<sup>12</sup> International Organization of Migration. (1997, June). "Prostitution in Asia increasingly involves trafficking." *Trafficking Migrants Quarterly Bulletin*, No. 15.

<sup>13</sup> Trinidad, A. (2005). *Child pornography in the Philippines*. Psychosocial Trauma and Human Rights Program, UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies and UNICEF Manila, p14.

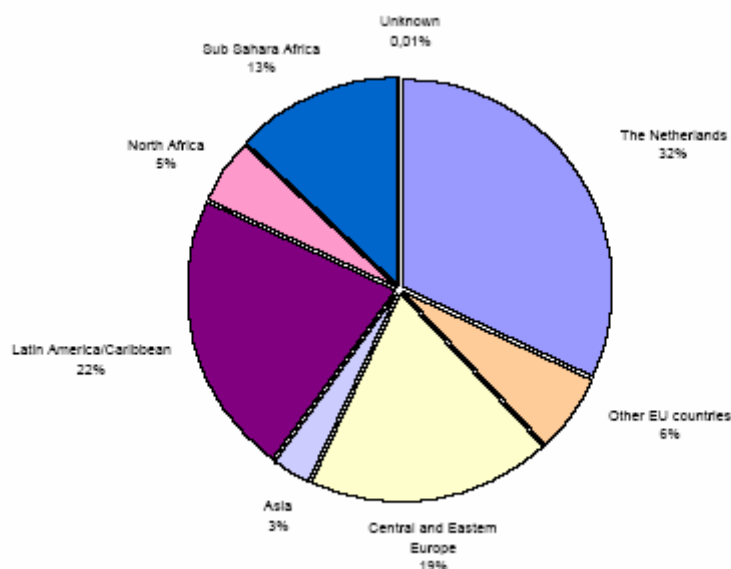
<sup>14</sup> International Labor Organization. (1998, September/October). "Sex as a sector: economic incentives and hardships fuel growth." *World of Work*, No. 26.

<sup>15</sup> UNICEF New York. (2001). *Profiting from abuse: an investigation into the sexual exploitation of our children*.

<sup>16</sup> Marks, K. (2004, June 28). "In the clubs of the Filipino sex trade, a former RUC officer is back in business." *The Independent*.

- The sex industry in the Netherlands is estimated to make almost **\$1 billion** each year.<sup>17</sup> It is a major destination country for trafficked women in Western Europe, with 2000 brothels and numerous escort services, using an estimated 30,000 women.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, 68% of women in its sex industry are from other countries (see figure). Other estimates put this figure as high as 80 percent.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, representatives of its government have openly defended the demand for women in prostitution. “The demand is already there. We can’t eradicate the demand. We will regulate it. Grant permits. Make them pay taxes.”<sup>20</sup> This official also commented that, “Other countries may have women with working skills that will benefit the Netherlands. We could create special permits that will allow foreign nationals to engage in prostitution.”<sup>21</sup>

Figure 1. Country of origin of Dutch population of prostituted women:<sup>22</sup>



<sup>17</sup> United Nations Economic Commission of Europe. (2004, December 12). *Economic roots of trafficking in the UNECE region fact sheet 1*.

<sup>18</sup> Hughes, D. (2002, September 23). *The corruption of civil society: maintaining the flow of women to the sex industries*. Encuentro Internacional Sobre Trafico De Mujeres Y Explotacion, Andalusian Women’s Institute, Malaga, Spain.

<sup>19</sup> Budapest Group. (1999). *The relationship between organized crime and trafficking in aliens*. Austria: International Center for Migration Policy Development.

<sup>20</sup> Hughes, D. (September 23, 2002). *The corruption of civil society: maintaining the flow of women to the sex industries*. Encuentro Internacional Sobre Trafico De Mujeres Y Explotacion, Andalusian Women’s Institute, Malaga, Spain.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Commission on the European Communities DG Justice & Home Affairs. (2001). *Research based on case studies of victims of trafficking in human beings in 3 EU member states, i.e. Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands*, p277.

- In Germany, where prostitution and brothels are legal, an estimated 400,000 prostitutes serve 1.2 million buyers a day in an industry with an annual turnover of €14 billion (**US \$18 billion**).<sup>23</sup> No one knows definitively how many of these are trafficked women, but the German news agency DPA has reported that approximately 200,000 prostitutes in the country have been “smuggled” into Germany from Central and Eastern Europe and that most of the prostitutes arrested in Germany in recent police raids come from Russia, Lithuania and Bulgaria.<sup>24</sup>
- In London suburbs, there are approximately 1000 brothels. According to Scotland Yard’s Vice Squad the Eastern European crime gangs that run them make £50 million (**US \$91.6 million**) a year.<sup>25</sup> In London, a pimp can make £300,000 to £400,000 (**US \$549,000 to \$733,000**) a year from prostituting a 16-year-old girl.<sup>26</sup>
- More than 2.3 million girls and women are believed to make up India’s sex industry.<sup>27</sup> The U.N. reports that an estimated 40 percent are below 18 years of age.<sup>28</sup> In 2004, it was reported that transactions in prostitution are worth Rs 185 million (**US \$4.1 million**) a day; Rs 370 billion (**US \$8.5 billion**) per year.
- In Antwerp, Belgium, legalization of prostitution has brought in nearly \$800,000 of tax revenue to the city. Officials have gone so far as to encourage a business man who was planning to convert a warehouse into loft apartments to convert it into a brothel instead. He took their suggestion and has constructed the city’s biggest brothel and is now considering opening a brothel chain.<sup>29</sup>
- In 2003, an IPO of brothel shares was introduced on Australia’s stock exchange.<sup>30</sup> The Daily Planet Ltd., the first such traded stock, has plans to launch a “sex Disneyland” in Sydney, and intends expansion to the U.S.<sup>31</sup>
- A 1998 study by the International Labor Organization on the sex industries of four Asian countries, reported that Indonesia’s sex industry was as much as 2.4% (**US \$3.3 billion**) of the gross domestic product and as much as 14% (**US \$27 billion**) of Thailand’s gross domestic product.<sup>32</sup> The report stated, “The stark reality is that the sex sector is a big business that is well entrenched in the national

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<sup>23</sup> [Duetshe Welle]. (2005, January 24). “The license to have sex.”

<sup>24</sup> Novinite.com. (2003, September 4). “Women forced into prostitution in Germany.”

<sup>25</sup> Davenport, J. (2003, January 16). “Suburban brothels exposed,” *The Evening Standard*.

<sup>26</sup> [The Northern Echo]. (2005, April 19). “Were these missing girls sold for sex?”

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. (2005, February 28). “Country reports on human rights practices.”

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Bilefsky, D. (2005, May 26). “Belgian experiment: make prostitution legal to fight its ills.” *The Wall Street Journal*.

<sup>30</sup> [Dow Jones Business News]. (2003, May 5). “Australian brothel shares soar one day after debut.”

<sup>31</sup> [Financial Times Limited]. (2003, May 1). “Australia’s first listed bordello plans sex disneyland.”

<sup>32</sup> Lim, L. (1998). *The sex sector: the economic and social bases of prostitution in Southeast Asia*. International Labor Office, Geneva, p10.

economies and the international economy,' with highly organized structures and linkages to other types of legitimate economic activity.”<sup>33</sup>

According to the report, the revenues generated by the sex industry were crucial to the livelihoods and earnings potential of millions of workers beyond the “prostitutes” themselves.<sup>34</sup> Owners, managers, pimps and other employees of the sex establishments, the related entertainment industry and some segments of the tourism industry make **the number of workers earning a living directly or indirectly from prostitution several million**.<sup>35</sup> Support staff like cleaners, waitresses, cashiers, parking valets, security guards, medical practitioners, operators of food stalls in the vicinity of sex establishments, vendors of cigarettes and liquor, and property owners who rent premises to providers of sexual services are just some of those who profit from the existence of the Sexual Gulag.<sup>36</sup>

In an interview of Ms. Lin Lim, who edited the report, she said government policies had “encourage[d] the growth of tourism, promote[d] migration for employment, promote[d] exports of female labour for earning foreign exchange” and thus contributed indirectly to the growth of prostitution.<sup>37</sup>

Clearly then, many governments and economic sectors have a vested interest in the continued existence and expansion of the Sexual Gulag.

### **Open Promotion**

The Soviet gulags were often in remote and harsh locations, and when located within cities, “physical barriers such as walls and fences were meant to keep outsiders from seeing in.”<sup>38</sup> Not so with the Sexual Gulag. The fact that the Sexual Gulag is often fully integrated into the landscape of a community and that it openly seeks to attract outsiders as customers is a key distinction between the two systems.

For example, there is the famed red-light district of Amsterdam where women are put on display in windows for passersby on the street. The women are exhibited in much the same way as zoo animals, or as merchandise for sale in a hardware store. There is also Tijuana’s notorious “Zona Norte” where on any given evening, scores of young women and girls are sexual fare openly for sale on the city streets. In this country, yellow pages and newspapers in most major cities run advertisements clearly offering sex for sale. The masters of the Sexual Gulag also opportunely take advantage of special events which lure large numbers of potential consumers as in Dortmund, Germany, one of 12 cities to host World Cup matches. There a series of drive-in wooden “sex huts” are being installed in

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<sup>33</sup> International Labor Organization. (1998, August 19). “Press release: sex industry assuming massive proportions in Southeast Asia.” Geneva and Manila.

<sup>34</sup> International Labor Organization. (1998, September/October). “Sex as a sector: economic incentives and hardships fuel growth.” *World of Work*, No. 26.

<sup>35</sup> Lim, L. (1998). *The sex sector: the economic and social bases of prostitution in Southeast Asia*. International Labor Office, Geneva.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> <sup>37</sup> International Labor Organization. (1998, September/October). “Sex as a sector: economic incentives and hardships fuel growth.” *World of Work*, No. 26.

<sup>38</sup> Applebaum, A. (2003). *Gulag: a history*. p186.

time for next year's soccer World Cup and an expected boom in the local sex trade. Experts estimate as many as 40,000 prostitutes may travel to Germany to offer their services to fans during the tournament.<sup>39</sup> City officials in Antwerp are reported to be considering putting decorative gates on the city's legal commercial sex zone to mark it as a tourist attraction.<sup>40</sup>

### **Dehumanization**

One of the hallmarks of both the Soviet-styled system and the Sexual Gulag is that they rely upon methods of treatment of prisoners that dehumanize their captives. Applebaum writes, "Within the [Soviet] system, prisoners were treated as cattle, or rather as lumps of iron ore. Guards shuttled them around at will, loading and unloading them into cattle cars, weighing and measuring them, feeding them if it seemed they might be useful, starving them if they were not. They were, to use Marxist language, exploited, reified, and commodified."<sup>41</sup>

The same is true of the captives of the Sexual Gulag. Women and children are bought and sold for prices ranging from \$50 U.S.,<sup>42</sup> to prices exceeding \$16,000.<sup>43</sup> They are inspected, shuttled, and traded. They are objects, things to be used for profit as long as their shelf life allows, not human beings.

Like inmates in a prison system, women in some brothels are even given ID numbers. For instance, one brothel in Antwerp, Belgium, has begun using biometric technology to keep track of the women. The women's finger prints are scanned into the system, and after being matched with their fingerprints in its database, the brothel's system clocks them in and flashes an ID number.<sup>44</sup> Another brothel, this one on the outskirts of Ocana, a city approximately 100 kilometers from Madrid, Spain, is surrounded by electrical wire, has barred windows and attack dogs on the grounds to prevent the women from escaping.<sup>45</sup>

### **Life and Death in the Sexual Gulag**

In their lives as sexual commodities, many of the women and children in the Sexual Gulag will experience a long litany of physical, psychological, and spiritual health harms from such things as:

- Bodily injuries such as broken bones, concussions, burns, as well as vaginal and anal tearing from violent assaults, stabbings, rapes, and torture;

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<sup>39</sup> [Reuters]. (2005, June 8). "German city builds 'sex huts' for World Cup. Dortmund wants to provide discreet spots for prostitutes, clients."

<sup>40</sup> Bilefsky, D. (2005, May 26). "Belgian experiment: make prostitution legal to fight its ills." *The Wall Street Journal*.

<sup>41</sup> Applebaum, A. (2003). *Gulag: a history*. p(xxxviii & xxxix).

<sup>42</sup> UNICEF UK. (8/03). *End child exploitation: stop the traffic*, p11.

<sup>43</sup> Associated Press. (2000, July 7). Man pleads guilty to smuggling.

<sup>44</sup> Bilefsky, D. (2005, May 26). "Belgian experiment: make prostitution legal to fight its ills." *The Wall Street Journal*.

<sup>45</sup> Inter Press Service. (2003, March 11). "More than a million labor in sex trade."



- Traumatic brain injury (TBI): resulting in such things as memory loss, dizziness, headaches, numbness, etc.;
- STDs such as HIV/AIDS, gonorrhea, syphilis, UTIs, and pubic lice;
- Sterility, miscarriages, and menstrual problems;
- Diseases like TB, hepatitis, malaria, and pneumonia;
- Drug and alcohol addiction;
- Forced abortions; and
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The magnitude of these harms often does irreversible damage and hastens death. And to point out a statistic on just one of these harms, a study of 827 people in different types of prostitution in 9 countries found that 68% of those surveyed suffered PTSD symptoms in the same range as treatment-seeking combat veterans and refugees of state-organized torture.<sup>46</sup>

This degree of trauma is hardly surprising. As Dr. Wendy Freed, in her research of brothel prostitution in Cambodia, explains:

“Sexual trauma is a violation of the most intimate and personal aspect of the self. One’s own body becomes the setting in which the atrocities are perpetrated. For the women and adolescent girls living in a brothel, the sexual violations take place inside the tiny cubicle (smaller than most prison cells) that is their only private living space. There is no safe haven for them.”<sup>47</sup>

Echoing the findings of researchers, one survivor described her experience this way:

“I feel like I imagine people who were in concentration camps feel when they get out . . . It’s a real deep pain, an assault to my mind, my body, my dignity as a human being. I feel like what was taken away from me in prostitution is irretrievable.”<sup>48</sup>

A Canadian constable described a situation he observed where a man was picking up a prostitute, saying that the prostitute “was the most asexual human being I’ve ever met. She was (like) a concentration camp victim — she looked exactly like the photos of the Jewish women at Auschwitz and Dachau.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Farley, M. (Ed). (2003). *Prostitution, trafficking and traumatic stress*, p56. Binghamton, NY: The Hayworth Maltreatment and Trauma Press.

<sup>47</sup> Freed, W. (2003). “From duty to despair: brothel prostitution in Cambodia.” In M. Farley (Ed.), *Prostitution, trafficking and traumatic stress* (p138). Binghamton, NY: The Hayworth Maltreatment and Trauma Press.

<sup>48</sup> Farley, M. et.al. (2003). “Prostitution and trafficking in nine countries: an update on violence and posttraumatic stress disorder.” In M. Farley (Ed.) *Prostitution, trafficking and traumatic stress*, p65. Binghamton, NY: The Hayworth Maltreatment and Trauma Press.

<sup>49</sup> Gardner, D. (2002, June 8). “The hidden world of hookers, part 2.” *The Ottawa Citizen*.

Not very many women and children actually make it out of the Sexual Gulag. One reason: the homicide rate among prostituted women is many times higher than for women and men in other “occupational” environments: 204 per 100,000 among prostituted women, versus 4 for female liquor store workers.<sup>50</sup>

This hazard of life in the Sexual Gulag is known by gulag masters and captives alike. For example, the owner of the Antwerp brothel mentioned above has also equipped rooms with panic buttons in case of trouble from buyers. Ironically comforted by this, one prostituted woman in this brothel said, “If something should happen to me and I turn up dead tomorrow — the technology here means that police will know exactly who I am.”<sup>51</sup>

### **Seasoning**

Understanding of the systematic coercive techniques — known as seasoning<sup>52</sup> — used to break women and girls into prostitution is essential to understanding the power and control the masters of the Sexual Gulag have over their captives. Professionals in the fields of torture, domestic violence, child sexual abuse, and commercial sexual exploitation know that torturers, abusers, pimps, and traffickers use systematic methods to groom and reduce their victims “to the condition of slavery.”<sup>53</sup> “Binderman’s Chart of Coercion,” published by Amnesty International in 1973, describes these methods in detail.<sup>54</sup> Techniques used on political prisoners — like those in the Soviet gulag — such as isolation, induced debility and exhaustion, threats, degradation, enforcing of trivial demands, granting of occasional indulgences, to mention a few, are the same means used to subjugate women in prostitution and pornography.<sup>55</sup> In the Soviet system these types of procedures and others came to be called “the meat-grinder.”<sup>56</sup> Those in prostitution have described their trauma similarly: one fourteen year old stated: “You feel like a piece of hamburger meat — all chopped up and barely holding together.”<sup>57</sup>

Captives of systems like the Soviet and Sexual Gulags develop strategies to enhance their survival. In her history of the Soviet gulags, Anne Applebaum dedicates an entire chapter to a discussion of “Strategies of Survival.”<sup>58</sup> But survival strategies can deceive outsider observers into believing there is no abuse. This is particularly true of those captive to the Sexual Gulag.

“As people find the best way to survive, some of their behaviors may raise questions if viewed out of context. For example, the woman’s and

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<sup>50</sup> Potterat, J. et. al. (2004). “Mortality in a long-term open cohort of prostitute women.” *American Journal of Epidemiology*, vol 159. no. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Bilefsky, D. (2005, May 26). “Belgian experiment: make prostitution legal to fight its ills.” *The Wall Street Journal*.

<sup>52</sup> Herman, J. (1997). *Trauma and recovery*, p76. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>53</sup> Farley, M. (Ed). (2003). “Introduction: hidden in plain sight: clinical observations on prostitution.” *Prostitution, trafficking, and traumatic stress*. p2.

<sup>54</sup> Herman, J. (1997). *Trauma and recovery*, p76. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Applebaum, A. (2003). *Gulag: a history*, p(xvi.)

<sup>57</sup> Weisberg, K. (1985). *Children of the Night*. Lexington Books, Toronto.

<sup>58</sup> Applebaum, A. (2003). *Gulag: a history*.

adolescent girl's flirtatiousness, seeking out clients, and getting clients to feel pity or love for them may represent strategies aimed at enhancing their survival.”<sup>59</sup>

“When an individual has been beaten into submission, and has become passive and accepting of what is done to her because she is a captive, then any sexual encounter she has is rape. Even if she has worked hard to attract the customer, because she has no right to refuse consent, she is being raped.”<sup>60</sup>

Thus we can understand that the woman we see on the street corner — the supposed “voluntary prostitute” — may give every appearance of choosing to be there, while the unseen forces that keep her there are every bit as real as if they were made of yards of barbed wire.

### **Recommendations**

It's clear from the monumental profits generated by the sex industry that the fight against the Sexual Gulag is a battle like that of David against Goliath. Those who have profited have grown extremely powerful and it will take our relentless energy, creativity, sizeable resources, and a strategic plan to bring this giant down.

Current U.S. policy recognizes the innate harm in prostitution, and acknowledges the symbiosis between prostitution and sexual trafficking. In February 2003, a National Presidential Security Directive was signed by President Bush which states, “Prostitution and related activities, which are inherently harmful and dehumanizing, contribute to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. . . .” This is an excellent policy foundation from which to begin. But to take new ground in the fight against sexual trafficking there are specific actions that should be taken:

#### **1). The minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act should be enhanced to include the following provisions:**

- Whether the government of the country sponsors and supports law enforcement programs and non-governmental organizations tasked with reducing demand for international and domestic trafficking in persons and commercial sex acts as a factor for tier placement advancement.
- Whether the government of the country has legalized its sex industry specifically including the activities of pimping, pandering, brothel keeping, and soliciting a prostitute as a factor for tier placement reduction.

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<sup>59</sup> Freed. W. (2003). “From duty to despair: brothel prostitution in Cambodia.” In M. Farley (Ed.), *Prostitution, trafficking and traumatic stress* (p141). Binghamton, NY: The Hayworth Maltreatment and Trauma Press.

<sup>60</sup> Freed. W. (2003). “From duty to despair: brothel prostitution in Cambodia.” In M. Farley (Ed.), *Prostitution, trafficking and traumatic stress* (p138). Binghamton, NY: The Hayworth Maltreatment and Trauma Press

2). **The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act should mandate a study of the economics of trafficking**, including a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the money flows and connections to transnational organized crime, to be conducted by the U.S. Department of States Bureau of International Narcotics and Law. If we better understand how sex trafficking financial operations work, we will have a better chance of bringing them down.

3). **Congress should pass the End Demand for Sex Trafficking Act of 2005.** Passage of this bill will among other things strengthen prosecution and punishment of traffickers under the Mann Act. It authorizes federal funds for programs to establish model law enforcement programs for the prosecution of purchasers of commercial sex, as well as to enhance prosecution efforts of traffickers and pimps through surveillance efforts, prosecution for rape, sexual assault, as well as tax evasion.

### **Conclusion**

Timerman, a Holocaust survivor, said in his book *Prisoner Without a Name*, “The Holocaust will be understood not so much for the number of victims as for the magnitude of the silence. And what obsesses me most is the repetition of the silence.”<sup>61</sup> This brings me back to the remarks of Catherine Booth whose challenging words I shared with you earlier: “I felt as though I must go and walk the streets and besiege the dens where these hellish iniquities are going on. To keep quiet seemed like being a traitor to humanity.”<sup>62</sup>

So I thank you for your interest and concern about this tragic issue, and the opportunity to speak out on behalf of humanity; about what I believe is clearly a brutal and massive system — supported and advanced by traffickers, pimps, brothel keepers, organized crime, corrupt government official, buyers of commercial sex, and a growing moral bankruptcy within civil society; a system which is sentencing and condemning women and girls to lives of brutal captivity in the Sexual Gulags of the world’s brothels, massage parlors, and streets.

But neither speaking out nor learning about a problem are sufficient. With knowledge comes responsibility — the duty to take action. On the wall of The Salvation Army National Headquarters where I work there is a plaque hanging in the lobby with these words of the founder General William Booth:

“While women weep as they do now, I’ll fight;  
While little children go hungry as they do now, I’ll fight;  
While men go to prison, in and out, in and out, I’ll fight;  
While there yet remains one dark soul without the light of God, I’ll fight –  
I’ll fight to the very end.”

I agree with Booth. While women and children are captive to the Sexual Gulag, I’ll fight — I’ll fight to the very end.” Will you?

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<sup>61</sup> Herman, J. (1997). *Trauma and recovery*, p93. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>62</sup> Green. R. *Catherine Booth, a biography of the cofounder of The Salvation Army*, p258.