

# **Human Trafficking**

## **Maggie Lee**

### **Willan Publishing, 2007**

### **ISBN 978 1 843 922414**

**Book Review by Sally Ramage, *The Criminal Lawyer***

At last, a practical and sensible law book about human trafficking. This book consists of 240 pages and 10 chapters, each a complete essay by an academic in the field.

Human trafficking is one of organized crime's most lucrative markets, with the size of the annual trade ranking behind only drugs and arms. It is almost impossible to know precisely how many people are trafficked every year, but the US State Department estimates the number at between 600,000 and 800,000. Some non-governmental organizations put the number as high as 2 million annually. Of the victims, some 80 percent are female and half are minors at the time they are trafficked.

This book mainly deals with human trafficking as it affects immigration policies, prostitution, and cheap labour in the European Union and in particular, in the United Kingdom. It does not particularly address child trafficking, which UNICEF estimates as being more than 300,000 children under 18 who are currently being exploited in more than thirty armed –conflict countries worldwide.

Rather, it addresses forced labour, most instances of this occurring as unscrupulous employers take advantage of gaps in law-enforcement to exploit vulnerable workers and acknowledges that female victims of forced or bonded labour, especially women and girls in domestic servitude, are often sexually abused. Forced labour is a form of human trafficking that can be harder to identify and estimate than sex trafficking. It often does not involve the same criminal networks profiting from transnational trafficking for sexual exploitation, unlike the salaciousness of the media who feed on scurrilous, often unauthenticated, reports. This book takes a historical approach to the economic, social, political, and cultural aspects of this slave trade, referred to as “chattel slavery” and describes “chattel slavery” as “a condition whereby labourers are legally owned as property.”

Child labour, the worst form this being targeted for eradication by nations across the globe, is barely addressed in this book. Any child who is subject to involuntary servitude, debt bondage or slavery through the use of force, fraud or coercion is a victim of trafficking regardless of the location of that exploitation.

The overall flavour of the book is domestic and a particular subject that it tackles admirably is the ‘rights of strangers’ into Britain, ie. the rights of non-citizens. This section addresses the rights of citizens as defined by various UK and EU laws and policies. It states:

“UK and EU legislation and policy are centred on giving effect to classifications of wanted and unwanted migrants. The categories constructed through attempts to manage migration in the interests of nation states are the basis of inclusions and exclusions from national and EU territories, and are treated as though they are reflections of real differences in the motivations and circumstances of migrants.”

It is enlightening to see the subject of strangers treated, not by pinning the human rights of asylum seekers to the subject, but in a more noble way, by introducing the concept of the “duty of hospitality,” a noble, theoretical construction introduced by the moral philosophers Kant and others.

In all, the book’s essays are subtle and philosophical and they remove much of the brashness and the crassness

from this emotive topic, yet bringing the reader back to the legal quandaries of free movement of people, human rights, immigration, and emigration, earning the book a place among the best-written expositions on human trafficking.

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