

The USA generated child sex trafficking hysteria and its implications for the adult sex work debate in Ireland.

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Dear Enda Kenny, Taoiseach, Alan Shatter, Minister for Justice, Eamon Gilmore, Tanaiste, and Minister for Health, James Reilly,

In order to understand the current campaign against prostitution in Ireland, north and south, we have to address the underlying global child sex trafficking hysteria. Current global child sex trafficking hysteria began in the United States with the passage of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act in the year 2000. I have already written something on this in my second letter to the SDLP's Justice spokesperson Alban Maginness here.

<http://paulcarr.wordpress.com/2014/04/08/my-second-letter-to-alban-maginness-on-clause-6-of-lord-morrrows-human-trafficking-and-exploitation-bill/>

I will reproduce the relevant section below between the lines:

The present global sex trafficking hysteria began when the US Congress enacted the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act in 2000.

<http://www.state.gov/j/tip/laws/61124.htm>

This act distinguished between sex trafficking and labour trafficking.

For example, Section 102 (b) (3) states that "Trafficking in persons is not limited to the sex industry. This growing transnational crime also includes forced labor a violations of labor, public health, and human rights standards worldwide."

Implicit throughout this Act is the non recognition of sex work/prostitution as a legitimate form of labour.

This act has been reauthorized 4 more times, in 2003, 2005, 2008 and 2013.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victims_of_Trafficking_and_Violence_Protection_Act_of_2000

Prior to each reauthorization faith based groups and neo feminist groups lobbied hard for more money to be made available for what they termed "Commercial Sex Children" and "Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking". To accompany each lobbying effort, a sex trafficking hysteria was whipped up in the media in the USA. So called dodgy and opaque methodology were published giving vastly inflated numbers of alleged victims of sex trafficking within the USA or trafficked into the USA. Perhaps such report was the [Richard] Estes and [Neil] Weiner report of 2001.

<http://maggiecneill.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/estes-weiner-2001.pdf>

This study claimed that the number of children, adolescents and youth (up to 21) at risk of sexual exploitation in the USA was as many as 100,000 to 300,000 per

But their methodology was dodgy. [Sex Work Campaigner] Maggie McNeill explains: "Sex trafficking" was the least prevalent form of "exploitation" in their definition. Classed as "exploitation" included stripping, consensual homosexual relations, and merely viewing porn. Two of the so-called "risk factors" were access to a car a Canadian or Mexican border. When interviewed by reporters in 2011, Estes himself estimated the number of legal minors actually abducted into "sex slavery" as talking about a few hundred people."

<http://www.cato-unbound.org/2013/12/11/maggie-mcneill/responses-weitzer-post-wagner-dont-be-swayed-exaggerated-claims>

Maggie McNeill writing on her blog about this Estes and Weiner study states that "The paper is very revealing; if you peruse it you will see that Estes and Weiner "exploitation" by frequency, and that domestic and international "sex trafficking" are second and third from the bottom. Even these highly biased and excitable get "sex trafficking" affected only a tiny part of their "youth at risk". The categories are, in order from most common to least common, sexual molestation by acquainta by family members, pornography (including, apparently, just looking at porn), gay sex, stripping, sexual contributions by girls to gangs, pimped prostitution (for girl prostitution (for boys)."

Note the rampant sexism in the final two categories. Underaged girls in prostitution are apparently too stupid to be entrepreneurs and therefore need pimps in cor boys. Note that gay sex is included as a category of at risk of sexual exploitation. Note that just looking at porn suffices too as at risk of sexual exploitation. This is r prejudice.

It is perfectly clear that this so-called study used dubious methodology and was informed by ignorant prejudice. Yet, its findings have since been inflated in the U! media. So, up to 100,000 to 300,000 youth up to the age of 21 in the USA at risk from sexual exploitation has become magically transformed into even more alan 100,000 to 300,000 children between the ages of 12 and 14 years old are victims of the child sex trade in the United States.

<http://maggiecneill.wordpress.com/2011/04/02/a-tale-that-grew-in-the-telling/>

This alarming statistic and others like it then becomes the fuel to keep the flames of the child sex trafficking hysteria roaring and not without coincidence every few neo feminist organizations, NGOs and charities seek more federal and state funding for their anti sex trafficking campaigns in the USA whenever the Victims of T Protection Act comes up for renewal in the US Congress. The backdrop of this media driven sex trafficking hysteria helps them to secure their funds, funding that may otherwise go into funding groups and law enforcement dedicated to combating the most prevalent form of trafficking worldwide, labour trafficking, as confirm Labour Organization statistics from 2012. Just 4.5 million of a total of 21 million people in forced labour globally are subjected to sexual exploitation according to 1

http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_181961/lang_en/index.htm

Most of these "anti sex trafficking" organizations are faith based. Maggie McNeill explains: "...and their rhetoric often extends to legal forms of sex work they would

criminalized, such as stripping and the making of adult video. [Linda Smith] the founder of Shared Hope International, one of the largest "anti-trafficking" organiza that "efforts to stop the sell [sic] and trade of minors in the sex industry should be an extension of the "pro-life" cause."

This sex trafficking hysteria has since been transmitted around the world as faith based groups and neo feminist organizations seek to secure their objectives of prostitution/sex work and other sex related activity such as stripping and pornography. It would not be an exaggeration to say that they are authoritarians and anti campaigning against sex itself. They draw upon a sex negative canvas.

US government policies have also helped the hysteria to spread. The 2000 Trafficking Victims Protection Act also provided for the setting up of the Office to Monitor Trafficking in Persons within the US Department of State.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Office_to_Monitor_and_Combat_Trafficking_in_Persons

This Office publishes annual Trafficking in Persons reports on countries around the world and grades them on how they are combating trafficking according to the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act. Countries are graded annually into 3 tiers. Tier 1 is the best tier and Tier 3 the worst tier.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trafficking_in_Persons_Report

I will add a number of points. This ludicrous and alarmist figure of 100,000 to 300,000 children between the ages of 12 and 14 in the United States of America being trafficked in any given year has been twisted even further by 2011, as Maggie McNeill points out, to 100,000 to 300,000 *girls* in the United States of America being trafficked in any given year or at any given time. That is the story still doing the rounds of the US and non US media. That means it is claimed that up to 5% of girls are trafficked at any given time since there are approximately 5.8 million girls between the ages of 12 and 14 in the US. This is clearly ludicrous.

Also, whilst this hysteria started out as a child sex trafficking hysteria, it has since been extended to adults too which is why adult sex workers all over the world find themselves being accused of being trafficked despite the fact that these people made a choice to do sex work.

Thaddeus Russell, who teaches history and american history at Occidental college, also provides evidence that the current child sex trafficking hysteria began around 1998. Google Scholar searches for the term "human trafficking".

"A Google Scholar search shows only 50 results for the term in 1998 and 71 in 1999, but 161 results in 2000, 293 in 2001, 496 in 2002, 758 in 2003, and 1,100 in 2004. The number continued to grow to roughly 6,000 in each of the last three years. The movement against human trafficking, or "modern-day slavery," is now a global phenomenon and a major scope of the anti-white slavery cause."

This kind of moral panic is not new. A strikingly similar sex trafficking panic reached its crescendo in the United States between the establishment of the Dillingham Commission that investigated alleged sex trafficking ("importation and harboring of women for immoral purposes.") in 12 US cities and 1910 when the US Congress passed the Mann Act.

Thaddeus Russell argues in the following Reason piece that for both the moral panic of the first decade of the 20th century and the ongoing moral panic that started in the 21st century, the outcome could be an increased surveillance and law enforcement state where all of our civil liberties are trampled under foot.

<http://reason.com/archives/2014/04/22/sex-slaves-and-the-surveillance>

Writing of the first moral panic, Thaddeus explains: "Thousands of newspaper articles, books, sermons, speeches, plays, and films depicted a vast underground economy of pimps and pimps holding godlike power over young female sex slaves. Historians now generally agree that those depictions were mostly or entirely fabrications." This is the economy of exploiters sounds strikingly similar to the drumbeat of warnings that you will find on the Turn Off the Red Light twitter feed. Looking at some tweets from the @turnoffRL twitter feed, I have harvested some tweets.

"A teenager sold for 3,000 euro forced to have sex with men 15 times a day in Dublin. That's the reality, end this <http://turnofftheredlight.ie/action> RT"

"Sex buyers in Ireland will give about 648,000 euro TODAY to pimps, traffickers, organised crime. End this <http://turnofftheredlight.ie/action> RT"

"8 out of every 10 trafficking victims found in EU was sexually exploited. End this <http://turnofftheredlight.ie/action> RT"

"800 women for sale online in Ireland tonight and every night, end this <http://turnofftheredlight.ie/action> RT"

The first tweet is a reference to Hannah, a Moldovan woman who says she was sold for 3000 euros by her brother-in-law in Moldova and put to work as a prostitute to pay the debt when she was 15 years old.

Were her traffickers convicted in court? The second tweet is a reference to the dubious assessment that the Irish sex work industry is worth 250 million euros a year. If it is criminalized, as it is in the Republic of Ireland with the exception of the sale and purchase of sex, how can a reasonable estimate of the overall monetary worth of the industry be arrived at in the first place? Also, note how Turn Off The Red Light assumes that the pimps, traffickers and organized crime take all the money, that is, the sex workers get nothing. Sex workers say themselves this is simply not the case. Their adulthood and agency is insultingly denied by the anti prostitution campaign. The third tweet from the International Labour Organization's 2012 report I linked to earlier that estimates the number of people in forced labour around the world at 21 million in total but that 4.5 million of that. Most of the rest are labour trafficked or trafficked into domestic servitude. Also, it ought to be pointed out that that 4.5 million in sex workers do not necessarily mean that they have been exploited in prostitution. It could mean other things such as sexual assault, sexual indecency or coerced into pornography. In his December 20th 2013 letter that accompanied the Anti Human Trafficking Unit report on trafficking for 2012. The final tweet is once again insulting to the sex workers. They take that guesstimate of "800 women for sale" from the escort-ireland count. They are not selling their bodies, they are not selling themselves, they are selling their time. They involve sexual activity. They are selling companionship. They are escorts.

The endless drumbeat from the TORL twitter feed shows that they seek to play to people's prejudices and emotions.

To return to Thaddeus Russell's article, in the US, as a consequence of the first moral panic, prostitutes were targeted and arrested. Many foreign prostitutes were arrested. Finally, the Mann Act was passed by the US Congress in 1910. This law, which by the way is still in force with amendments in the US to this day, made it a crime to transport across state lines a woman for prostitution.

across state lines "for the purpose of prostitution or debauchery, or for any other immoral purpose." Two years previously, the Bureau of Investigation was established (the FBI) in part to investigate the importation and transportation of prostitutes. "With the expanded mandate of the Mann Act, the Bureau grew rapidly, from some 350, opening up a White Slave Division and operating in every major city in the country within just five years."

The Mann Act was used not just to convict those involved in prostitution but also "relations between older men and girls, adultery, promiscuous teenage girls, and One famous scalp during this period was heavyweight boxing champion, Jack Johnson. "Through the 1920s and 1930s, the Bureau launched tens of thousands of prosecutions and secured more than 7,000 convictions for cases involving bigamy, adultery, "previously chaste, or very young women or girls," or relations between white women and men in several states, there was an even darker side to this: "In several states, a conviction for "white slavery" automatically made a woman eligible for sterilization. Between some 40,000 women were forcibly sterilized, most for prostitution or sexual immorality".

Within 4 years of the passage of the Mann Act, every state in the US criminalized prostitution and closed down their red light districts. It remains so to this day. All work is criminalized in all US States, except for some rural counties of Nevada where brothels are allowed. Both the purchase and sale of sex is criminalized in the exception of legal brothels located in some remote, rural counties of Nevada.

Today, anti prostitution campaigners in the United States will stop at nothing to end prostitution even if it means attempting to bring down commerce itself. Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996 is in their crosshairs. This Section provides immunity from prosecution to third party hosting websites and Internet Service Providers. "The provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider". In other words, intermediaries that host or republish speech are protected against a range of laws that might otherwise be used to hold them legally responsible for what others say. Bloggers for example from being held liable for the comments of users or the posts of guest bloggers. It provides a shield that, for example, allows Craigslist and classified ads, and Facebook and Twitter to host users' posts. Without it, websites and Internet Service Providers would be more expensive, operate with less effort, and be more likely to censor.

One website in particular offends the anti prostitution campaigners, backpage.com. Rather like escort-ireland.com, it has a section that advertises the services of escorts in the US and overseas. To force backpage.com to close down all these listings that explicitly advertise sex, anti prostitution campaigners want Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act amended so that law enforcement and the surveillance state can target more effectively the activities of these sex workers and their clients by making backpage.com independently posted. This ongoing campaign is an appalling assault on commerce and freedom of speech.

Thanks to the child sex trafficking hysteria and successful lobbying from anti prostitution campaigners, last July, the National Association of Attorneys General wrote asking them to amend Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act.

<http://endslaveryandtrafficking.org/national-association-attorneys-general-congress-amend-communications-decency-act-prevent-child-sex>

I want now to turn to the malign influence of feminism in all of this.

In the UK and the Republic of Ireland, women and men vote in roughly equal numbers. Not so in the USA: women vote more, not just as a result of the fact there are more female(s)/male (2010 est.) but also because there is a higher voter turnout for women than for men. It has consistently been that way since 1980. So, for the last 30 years between 7 and 8 million more women than men voted. In the Presidential election of 2008, voter turnout was 65.7% for women and 61.5% for men.

<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2009/04/30/voter-turnout-rates/>

The consequence of this is that politicians in the USA, regardless of their gender, have to pitch their policies to appeal to the larger women's vote. This has resulted in a feminist movement in the USA. This feminist movement claims to represent all women, their union so-to-speak.

I'll give you concrete examples of what this means. In 1994, the US Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act. This Act expanded programs and services for battered women but neglected similar services for men. It did not provide equal protection to both men and women. There are plenty of battered women today. Very few shelters in the US offer any help to battered men.

An extensive bibliography has been built up of scholarly investigations, empirical studies, reviews and analyses that show that women are as likely to be as violent as men are.

<http://www.csulb.edu/~mfiebert/assault.htm>

Erin Pizzey, who set up one of the first Battered Women's Shelters in Europe in London in 1971, commented that of the women who came to her shelter, about 60% she termed "violence prone", in other words they hit their husbands/partners/boyfriends/children too. The rest were "genuinely battered"

The Violence Against Women Act doesn't reflect the reality that in a domestic violence situation, men hit women as much as women hit men and at all levels of severity.

Another example is that sex offender registries in the US are made available to the public. No other country in the world does that. In fact, outside of the Anglosphere, national sex offender registries full stop. The federal law mandating publicly available sex offender registries in all the states was introduced during the Clinton administration and Megan's Law and was passed by Congress in 1996 as an amendment to the 1994 Jacob Wetterling Act which had already provided for mandatory sex offender registration. This is another example of successful lobbying by the feminist movement.

Read about the Jacob Wetterling Act and Megan's law here.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob_Wetterling_Crimes_Against_Children_and_Sexually_Violent_Offender_Registration_Act

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megan%E2%80%99s_Law

Another example is the war against prostitution and as far as these feminists are concerned this is a war against the demand created by male clients. The common feminist lobbying efforts is a hatred of men.

The US government seeks to export the war on prostitution abroad. Consider PEPFAR, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS relief, set up in 2003. All NGOs receiving US government money abroad released under that program must sign an anti prostitution pledge. Organizations such as SANGRAM and VAMP in India for example

from drawing down funds from PEPFAR because they were unwilling to sign the anti prostitution pledge as it interfered with their harm reduction efforts to comba

As I wrote previously, the Victims of Trafficking Violence Protection Act passed by Congress in 2000 set up the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Perso of State. It prepares annual reports on countries around the world on how they are combating trafficking as defined under this Act, and under this Act, prostitution legitimate work. In other words, it is considered unambiguously to be sex trafficking.

Finally, I want to focus on one particular US based private foundation that appears to be giving a large amount of money to certain NGOs in tranches and in such it is seeking to steer the national conversation in the Republic of Ireland towards sex work abolition as in the Swedish model of criminalizing the purchase of sex.

This private foundation is called Atlantic Philanthropies and, according to its website, it funds organizations in the Republic of Ireland that support the Turn Off the TORL organizations have received nearly 41 million dollars since 2002.

<http://sexwork.ie/2013/12/10/atlantic-philanthropies/>

Human Rights organizations have also been funded by Atlantic Philanthropies such as Amnesty Ireland, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties and the Irish Human F have received nearly 18 million dollars since 2002. Notwithstanding that criminalizing the sex work industry is a human rights issue, they are silent on the questio model of criminalizing the purchase of sex or the New Zealand/New South Wales, Australia model of decriminalization of sex work in its entirety be introduced in Amnesty Ireland had a conference a week ago and there was a vote taken on the question of supporting decriminalization of sex work in its entirety in line with a that has been in circulation since February. We should know the result of that shortly.

Atlantic Philanthropies give no money to sex worker organizations or organizations that give legal advice to sex workers or help sex workers in any way.

Messrs Kenny, Shatter, Gilmore and Reilly, Fine Gael and Labour are pragmatic parties and pro-European parties. I believe that you are weary of trends that con States of America and believe that all of them should be subject to scrutiny. What I have outlined in this letter is that the US government not only has a zero toler: sex work in all 50 US States but that it seeks to export this value abroad, via the PEPFAR anti prostitution pledge and via annual reports from the Department of : and Combat Trafficking in Persons as well as via other annual reports from anti sex work NGOs such as Shared Hope International and the Polaris Project. Atlan been identified as another US based NGO organization that is exporting the US government's anti prostitution stance abroad.

I think we should recognize where the wind of the anti prostitution campaign is blowing from in the Republic of Ireland. In my view, it is not blowing from Sweden, people think, but from the United States of America. Do we want to be like the USA in this regard?

Do we want a Project ROSE in Dublin in addition to the one in Phoenix, Arizona?

I wrote about Project ROSE already here.

<http://paulcarr.wordpress.com/2014/03/18/why-we-need-to-decriminalize-sex-work-in-the-republic-of-ireland-part-1/>

Sex workers are rounded up twice a month there by the police and "taken to a windowless church room at Bethany Bible Church, where they are offered housing support. Although they have not been officially arrested, they are allegedly detained in handcuffs and prohibited from speaking to a lawyer. If the worker accepts i prison. Those who have outstanding felony warrants are not eligible for the programme a second time."

<http://uk.news.yahoo.com/project-rose-arizona-sex-workers-forced-choose-between-151304382.html#A1Ht10>

36 hours of class time during this diversion programme are run by Catholic charities.

The law enforcement route is also expensive. "According to Project ROSE's website, most costs are absorbed by taxpayers, who pay the salaries of the officers c Fifteen-hundred dollars more per day goes to the Bethany Bible Church. Volunteers, including students from Arizona State University fill in the gaps. SWOP-Pho organization by and for sex workers, is filing freedom-of-information requests to discover ROSE's other sources of funding."

<http://www.vice.com/read/in-arizona-project-rose-is-arresting-sex-workers-to-save-them>

I can imagine that if something along the lines of Project ROSE was set up in the Republic of Ireland, Ruhama would be very interested in getting involved in such taxpayer funded diversion program.

Or how about Hawaii? Police officers insist there on the right to have sexual intercourse with a sex worker before arresting her in order to prove that the sex work crime.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-26687065>

Or how about Chicago?

Sex work commentator, Melissa Gira Grant writes, "A 2012 examination of prostitution-related felonies in Chicago conducted by the Chicago Reporter revealed th during the past four years, 97 percent of the charges were made against sex workers, with a 68 percent increase between 2008 and 2011. This is during the sam lobbied for the Illinois Safe Children Act, meant to end the arrest of who the bill describes as "prostituted persons" and to instead target "traffickers" and buyers th stings. Since the Act's passage in 2010, only three buyers have been charged with a felony."

<http://reason.com/archives/2013/01/21/the-war-on-sex-workers/1>

According to FBI Bureau of Justice Statistics, compiled by sex work activist, Norma Jean Almodovar, arrests of female sex workers has declined from nearly 90.0

29,000 in 2012. Arrests of male sex workers has declined from a peak of nearly 41,000 in 1997 to 14,000 in 2012.

http://www.policeprostitutionandpolitics.com/pdfs_all/Database%20Spreadsheets/multi%20year%20docs/pdf_pages_arrests_prost_1981_2012/11_Prostitution_a2012.pdf

Meanwhile arrests of female minors for prostitution has declined from nearly 2,100 in 1981 to 470 in 2012.

http://www.policeprostitutionandpolitics.com/pdfs_all/Database%20Spreadsheets/multi%20year%20docs/pdf_pages_arrests_prost_1981_2012/9_Prostitution_ar2012.pdf

Male minors arrested for prostitution has declined from just over a 1000 in 1982 to 146 in 2012.

http://www.policeprostitutionandpolitics.com/pdfs_all/Database%20Spreadsheets/multi%20year%20docs/pdf_pages_arrests_prost_1981_2012/9_Prostitution_ar2012.pdf

In the USA, the child sex trafficking hysteria took off after 2000 driven by anti trafficking legislation, NGOs, bogus reports, politicians and inaccurate media reports show that, although prostitution arrests remain high in the United States, they have continued to fall even after 2000 when sex trafficking hysteria convulsed the establishment in the US. We have to ask ourselves if this hysteria is not based on a expanded phenomenon of sex trafficking on the ground then what has been trafficking hysteria? A genuine concern to liberate children and adults trapped into prostitution or just another excuse to expand the domestic surveillance/law enf

Do we really want to copy the USA's failed war on prostitution, Messrs Kenny, Shatter, Gilmore and Reilly? Criminalizing the purchase of sex would be doing just model that criminalizes the purchase of sex only (but not the sale) is merely the USA model for slow learners.

Best Wishes,