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**HUMAN FOR SALE.
A REPORT ON CONTEMPORARY WORLD**

This article describes horrid and yet common social phenomena, such as hunting, trading and smuggling people, growing human embryos as well as children for sale, surrogate motherhood, not always legal and ethically acceptable cloning and transplantation. The author aims at a description rather than philosophical or sociological analyses. This is what the author is intellectually capable of. Lack of proper research instruments could constitute an easy excuse here. However, it is not the case. The truth is that I already feel exhausted while dealing with these issues in a superficial way. For more I lacked in intellectual power. Consequently, this article could be called a report on contemporary, ethically ambivalent social phenomena rather than scientific dissertation.

As a European, humanist and philosopher, intellectual heir of Descartes and Kant I would like to see the world as a rationalistic creation, lit with clear reason. The world governed by wise laws which are equal for everybody. Societies governed by ethical principles respecting rights of an individual. And I am not the only one who thinks like that. Plato dreamt of that in his 'the State', Thomas More in 'Utopia' Francis Bacon in 'New Atlantis', or Thomas Campanella in 'The State of the Sun'. Their works were called utopias and their way of thinking dubbed 'wishful thinking'. It does not come as a surprise that the world is not as the philosophers would wish it to be. And, definitely, our contemporary world is not the one.

Many people are convinced that trading with such a peculiar commodity as human beings is a shameful incident of the colonial era. They think that the problem does not exist any more. If they accept the idea of enslavement usually referring to head hunters, who look for the best specialists in a field, human resources exploitation in international companies, or selling, exchanging or hiring football or basketball players. Finally, they think of kidnapping for ransom, hostages taken during terrorist attacks, prisoners of war (both soldiers and civilians), never-ending wars round the world. The wars are sometimes waged close to us – in the former Soviet Union, or Yugoslavia. But human being trading?

And yet this practice still exists, unchanged as it was in the archaic era. The main centre for slave trade and hunting was and still is Africa, especially Ivory Coast. Young women and children are being abducted from their homes – they sell the best. The purchasers, powerful plantation owners, treat them as cheap and easy to replace labour force, as actual slaves. There is no need to worry about their insurance or sick leaves. They can be easily replaced by a new equally cheap or even cheaper group. Few NGOs who buy out these poor people from the traders add to the problem creating higher demand for slaves on the market. Economy laws work. (economics is a driving force)

Many abducted get to brothels and porn industry. Also kids. This phenomenon is not only restricted to Africa but also exists in Europe and Asia. The drama is that not all victims have been abducted by traders and forced to leave their homeland. Many children are being sold with premeditation by their parents. Because of poverty, for small profit, to get rid of another child to feed. In Honduras there are farms where children are ‘reared’ till the purchaser is found. In Guatemala, just a few years ago, military units used to take children away from the members of rebellious opposition and exported them abroad. In China or Vietnam, it is possible to buy, quite cheaply, an heir or ‘a life assistant’. The mildest version of child trading is adoption. In the former Soviet Union and Romania, legal adoptions were particularly numerous. Nevertheless, the demand for Rumanian children is rather limited...

Trading in humans, undoubtedly, is as old as the hills. One of its manifestations is prostitution. There is no need of buying a human for ever; you may buy one by hours. On one hand there is a significant migration of prostitutes of both sexes from poorer to richer countries, on the other, opulent tourists travel to poor countries such as Thailand. Apart from declared prostitutes who are aware of what they do, there is a number of transient groups such as various kinds of girls for hire, call-girls, tarts, courtesans, mistresses, lovers, geishas, business hostesses, who, although they indirectly offer sex are not so severely condemned by society. It is possible to negotiate with go-go or lap-dancers (do they dance? rather wriggle on your lap) about the possible follow-up. It is hard to imagine that not long ago gigolos, paid dancers caused public resentment. (abhorrence)

Those who would like to solve an unsolvable for centuries problem of prostitution may find the story about Theodore of Rome useful. Being trained in the oldest world’s profession since childhood she had made a remarkable career marrying Emperor Justinian of the Eastern Empire. She knew well hardships of her job; consequently she decided to ease the hardships of Constantinople prostitutes. She ordered to catch some 1,500 hookers from the streets and place them in a special palace, built for this purpose. They actually did not have to do anything there, anything dirty. All their needs were to

be met. They were only not allowed to sell themselves. And what was the outcome? Many of the committed suicide, others became apathetic and depressed. The experiment was finally terminated...it was too dangerous.

Distribution, trade and transport of people is undoubtedly lucrative enough for organized criminal gangs. Transport of fugitives to wealthy countries has become an industry. Polish, Czech or Italian border officers could elaborate on this. Poland is only a transit country, I presume that profits made on smuggling people equal to those resulting from selling tax free cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. The Chinese who suffocated in sealed containers during their illegal trip to Europe paid for their lethal venture about EUR 25,000.- per person. It was a very costly trip. No return.

The price for human life is an interesting issue. It depends on numerous factors and circumstances. Ambulance doctor taking facing several casualties on various ages and state of health has to make such calculations within seconds. However, there are contracts specifying in advance the cost of losing various parts of the body, consequences of accidents, impairments or loss of lives. (the last issue is essential for a commissioned professional killer) Many of us sign such contracts with insurance companies. Everything is stated in advance: how much for the finger, how much for the toe.

Does it mean that particular parts of human body can be materially, financially assessed? Yes, it does. It has been estimated that the body of a young healthy man dissected into organs is worth about \$ 1 million. Much more than a living man as a whole. These problems appeared due to progress in transplantology. Transplantation of hearts, lungs, kidneys (even the skin) gave many patients the hope of recuperation, better life, saved many from death. Not everybody.

The demand for internal organs is much bigger than supply. Patients waiting for the kidney or the heart realize that they are sentenced to death and meet their end sooner than other people. In addition to that they are protected by their own, individual and extremely strict guardian: their immunological system. That is why sometimes for some people the price for immunologically suitable organ is not an issue. Bidding for particular organs can sometimes be followed in the Internet and final figures are enormous.

The Chinese, whose number exceeds 1,2 billion (1/6 of world's population) have dealt with this issue in a practical and innovative way. Chinese citizens are treated as natural resources, available for exploitation in a process of a specific social recycling. Convicts sentenced to death are partitioned. The number of spectacular publicly performed executions amounts to 5,000 annually. In countries where capital punishment is not performed (e.g. because of moratorium as it is in Poland) extracting organs from convicts is treated as an important argument and perceived as some vital social advantage. Even catholic moral scientists, disapproving of death penalty, subscribe to this thought.

After a few skirmishes in the mountainous region of Chechnya, many disembowelled human bodies were found, instances of not only horrid atrocities resulting exclusively from bestiality (either side) but having also some mercantile background. In poor regions of India, villagers make their living on selling their kidneys. In both 'civilised' European states and the USA trade in human organs is perceived as a kind of business. Organs, blood and genetic material is traded not in wholesale stores but, which sounds better, in 'banks'. And so does the more or less official trade in human spare parts goes.

The phenomenon of cloning has brought about another danger and possibility for corrupt practices. I am not denying that cloning of such big creatures as mammals is a remarkable scientific success, an ultimate achievement of long time research. Nevertheless, it has caused many problems both in medicine and social life. Presently, there are scientists based in private biotechnological institutes eager to clone a human being and a few leaders of religious sects are willing to sponsor those impatient pioneers anxious to do it. Most European governments and the government of the USA imposed a quarantine on human embryos' cloning. Is it going to be effective? I doubt, in this respect I am rather skeptical.

Another activity conducive to trade in humans is institution of surrogacy. A surrogate mother is usually a young woman who, for some payment specified in the contract, declares to get pregnant and bear a child using an implanted genetic material provided by the donor. After the child is born she is obliged to pass the child to its legal owners. She plays merely a role of a live incubator and is treated quite instrumental. (Kant definitely would not like it) The donor is usually a man unable to inseminate his partner successfully in a conventional way. When the man is impotent an anonymous donor may be used. Thus the recipients of the baby are 'parents' with an assistance of a third party.

This institution is becoming more and more popular, especially in the USA, constituting an alternative and competition for adoption. Surrogacy offers (let alone its technical aspect) something remarkable for impotent or homosexual couples: a child with genetic material from at least one of the partners. Or even both after a proper technical 'treatment' of the material.

It seems to me that surrogate motherhood is bound to succeed and become a popular social phenomenon. Especially, when we take into consideration something that has been observed for the last decades: the quality of male semen is deteriorating which results in general man reproductive potential. The sperm cells are of poor quality, weak and do not function properly. This is why – however, not only – the number of couples experiencing problems with procreation is increasing. The demand on the market is increasing keeping doctors and lawyers busy. The latter carefully produce contracts with surrogate mothers, just in case they would not like to part with their babies. Who should the child belong to? Such cases will be judged by court.

Surrogate motherhood is peculiar in many ways: It is a common misconception to think that surrogate mothers are recruited mostly from lonely women from the lowest social class; healthy but poor. It is not material issues that they sign in this specific contract. Statistics are surprisingly reveal that an average surrogate mother is a married (sic!) well educated, career woman. Such women are physically, psychically and socially stable. Most of the have already delivered one or more healthy children. This makes an objective criterion; a satisfactory but not complete one. Taking into account ethical and social qualifications (they are usually married) surrogate motherhood is not accepted by catholic church. But life goes on its own way.

It may seem that the most important issues regarding the contemporary people trading were already discussed. But there is something attractive and interesting left: some new and very lucrative sort of white-slave traffic. The point is: buying and selling human egg-cell.

Not all women who according to the contract agree to bear a child is equipped in so wide range of psycho-physical properties, as to fully satisfy the receivers. Who, amongst

the parents, wouldn't like to equip their beloved children in all properties they dream about? Who, amongst the parents, wouldn't be able to do their best make it happen? The more, when it is possible and within the reach of their financial possibilities. Why should they confine only to the healthy offspring and not be able to afford to increase the probability to make it additionally wise, strong, athletic etc?

The customers are often rich, fanciful and fastidious. They want to buy "the real thing". They commission specialized agencies to find the donors. The agencies recruit the volunteers by press advertisements. In the U.S. that is the phenomenon which is becoming more and more popular. Of course, white, fair-haired and blue-eyed women are preferred. It is good if they are tall and athletic. It is perfect, if apart from the above mentioned features they additionally have good marks at the university. And those are the women who are most desired and best paid for the products of their bodies. The prices in conversion to Euro reach about 50 thousand. The additional attraction is the possibility to contact the egg-cell donor personally to evaluate in a direct way her intellectual capabilities, appreciate her physical assets and make sure how athletic she is.

Friedrich Nietzsche was awaiting the coming of the superman called super-human. Perhaps there is coming the time when we can buy it in the super-market. Or choose it from the catalog and order in the e-shop with home-delivery.