Roundtable Discussions on

Forced Labor in the Global Economy

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
May 14, 2005

An interdisciplinary discussion organized by the MIT Program on Human Rights and Justice, MIT’s Center for International Studies, and the BBC World Service Trust.
Introduction

This report summarizes the closed-door discussions that took place at the MIT Faculty Club on May 14, 2005 on the subject of 'forced labor in the global economy.' The discussions were part of a day-long event organized by the MIT Program on Human Rights and Justice, and the MIT Center for International Studies, in a unique collaboration with the BBC and the International Labor Organization (ILO). The discussions brought together an extraordinary range of intellectuals, academics, officials of international agencies, activists, former slaves, journalists and trade unionists for an invigorating discussion of forced labor, often reflecting on the contents of the two public media-recorded events in the morning. The discussions had two goals: first, to explore the main themes of research, advocacy and policy action required to successfully reduce or eliminate the problem of forced labor; and second, to lay the foundations for a network among the attendees that would contribute to the first goal. The meeting contributed substantially toward the achievement of both goals.

The discussions—and the day-long events—took place three days after the official release of a global report by the ILO, which calculated, for the first time, the number of people living in conditions of forced labor, as defined by the relevant ILO conventions. That number—12.3 million people worldwide—was disturbingly large considering that the countries of the world had pledged to abolish forced labor several decades ago. What is even more disturbing is that even today, the large majority of forced labor in the world consist of bonded labor in South Asia, an 'old form' of forced labor that has been known and acknowledged for decades. So the question that arises is why, despite the plethora of international treaties, global advocacy, national laws and bureaucracies, court judgments and larger economic changes, South Asia continues to have bonded labor.

A second, equally worrying, finding of the ILO report is that new forms of forced labor are rapidly increasing, aided by new forms of production and manufacturing in the global economy, the establishment of global supply chains reaching down to the household level with weak vertical enforcement of standards, the increase of transnational migration coupled with a sharp tightening of border controls and immigration rules especially after 9/11, the disarticulation of regulatory structures since 1989 due to neoliberalism, and the rise of global criminal networks in zones of chaos and violence that engage in trafficking of human beings for labor and sexual slavery. These new forms of forced labor are found not simply in developing countries, but even in the most advanced industrial democracies of the West. These new forms of forced labor raise very difficult and complex questions about possible responses. The older approach—an agreement on global standards by countries and national employer/employee organizations through the ILO, followed by national-level enforcement—appears to be inadequate. The new, transnational sources of forced labor, need new transnational, multi-level responses through law, policy and activism. Besides, forced labor is no longer simply a 'labor problem' for which the labor law and institutions could supply answers. As with the case of trafficking, the answers may be supplied through other policy and legal frameworks such as criminal law, human rights or immigration.

The conversations began at MIT on May 14 went a long way in identifying some of the key frameworks, policy dilemmas, theoretical conundrums and successful cases of advocacy and action. We hope to maintain that conversation through this network during the coming years with a view to addressing one of the world's most pressing problems.

Cambridge, MA
Balakrishnan Rajagopal
Ford International Associate Professor of Law and Development and Director, Program on Human Rights and Justice
MIT
Session One

Defining Forced Labor and Identifying Key Actors

Led by Balakrishnan Rajagopal
Ford International Associate Professor of Law and Development, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Director, MIT Program on Human Rights and Justice

Balakrishnan Rajagopal: I’ll start with a couple reflections. The morning session [the taping of BBC Television’s The World Debate and On Point by WBUR/NPR] struck me in two ways. On the one hand, it created room for optimism when dealing with forced labor—we are dealing with something obnoxious, something that resembles slavery and can therefore be named. We can identify it and make progress as an alliance. The second impression I had was more negative. In this view, forced labor may in some ways be an old problem, but something that must now be understood as part of a broader, newer problem produced by the general weakening of labor standards and deregulation, which are in turn produced by competitive pressures that countries and companies face in the globalized world. If the problem is deeper, it is harder to analyze and solve than if it were just a problem of twelve million people, which the ILO estimates as the victims of forced labor.

So the question is whether this is simply a problem that requires an advocacy strategy where we name and isolate the target, or a problem that requires a more systemic approach.

This session deals with the definition of forced labor. The classic definition is the one that ILO’s Roger Plant mentioned this morning, namely, that forced labor has two qualities: the work is exacted under the menace of penalty (coerced) and is involuntary. But what is involuntary? When does coercion kick in? Coercion can be economic. How far can this go? Can we talk about private contractual situations that are coercive?

Another thing that struck me about the morning’s panels was how victims of forced labor tend to be racial or caste minorities, indigenous people, and girls/women. Given the nature of the victims, should we reframe forced labor as a discrimination rather than a labor rights issue, something that readily appeals to moral consciousness, something that compels action? Is this a question of framing? If so, what resource allocations and action does framing this as an issue of equal protection entail? Where do we draw the line?

As someone who studies precarious work, it appeared to me from the ILO report that this phenomenon and forced labor rise in tandem, both driven by economic insecurity. Forced labor bears striking resemblance to other common practices mentioned in the

You cannot divorce forced labor from the overall weakening of labor around the world.

-Thomas Kochan

Note:

-Thomas Kochan: Forced labor cannot be seen as isolated from labor markets because the same forces that degrade general labor conditions create forced labor. The globalization process and the opening of borders to people and products create opportunities for forced labor. The growth in supply chains and increased reliance on contractors and subcontractors let companies remove visible signs of responsibility for production conditions from the consumer. You cannot divorce forced labor from the overall weakening of labor around the world. That is true even in the United States. In the developing world, where these conditions are most severe, we have never had strong labor institutions that could combat these problems. We need to think about how to build labor institutions at the grassroots to complement what governments, more centralized labor federations, and corporations are doing.

On framing, we have missed opportunities to reframe the issue away from the liberal market/deregulatory perspective. The crises Kerry Rittich mentioned gave these opportunities: We have to think about what tools are needed to aid government when a crisis hits.
The stress on definitions may focus attention on international actors, global supply standards and officials who built alliances with the press and NGOs. About a press in Brazil that was on the back of state and local governments about violations of slavery and forced labor but about what a Labor Department does. You also had lauding President Lula as playing an important role against forced labor. That is true.

Judith Tendler: Whether or not this is a human rights issue is important. In a global economy, we need a common moral code, as Rajagopal has written. Grabbing onto an issue like forced labor or slavery is a way to develop that code. There are some pitfalls, but I have no problem making this agenda central.

But as a labor issue, it is a mistake to have a single definition. I'm struck today by how categories that need analytical separation for the development of solutions get mixed up. It is not helpful to look at forced labor that grows out of a bonded labor tradition as the same thing as forced labor that comes from modern supply chains and migration. We need to take these matters separately.

For example, in American immigration law there are opportunities to create traps that produce circumstances resembling forced labor. This occurs, for instance, whenever we tie visas to employers. Many public school systems in this area hire temporary workers under H1B visas. The workers work for nothing for months until they get visas during the school year. They get laid off at the end of the year because they lack seniority. These abuses occur systematically whenever visas are tied to a single employer, and they arise on forced labor. You can easily see how to design laws to minimize this problem. So analytically you need to make distinctions to come up with solutions that you wouldn't on forced labor. You can easily see how to design laws to minimize this problem. So analytically you need to make distinctions to come up with solutions that you wouldn't make if you are thinking of forced labor as a human rights issue and trying to gain consensus.

Balakrishnan Rajagopal: The U.N. Convention has a definition of slavery, which says that the relationship with the slave must be characterized by ownership rights. What's the institutional implication of calling something slavery? One consequence is that a practice that resembles slavery could be called a crime against humanity, which may even involve the International Criminal Court, which can indict and refer the offending nation to the U.N. Security Council, which could in turn authorize the use of force to stop the practice. Should we think through those implications?

Judith Tendler: Earlier, Roger Piore mentioned Brazil positively two or three times, landing President Lula as playing an important role against forced labor. That is true. But it is important to see what was behind that outcome. Those successes were driven by years of effort by a faction of Brazil's Labor Department that was passionate not just about slavery and forced labor but about what a Labor Department does. You also had a press in Brazil that was on the back of state and local governments about violations of labor standards and officials who built alliances with the press and NGOs.

The stress on definitions may focus attention on international actors, global supply chains, the ILO and international NGOs, but the bottom line is whether there are local institutions that buy into the idea of creating and enforcing labor standards. Because we do not generally know the Brazil story, we risk giving credit to Lula or something else and missing the real story. We need to understand what happened to create reform. We need to research the national and sub-national level to understand what improves labor conditions.

I also want to point out the importance of business elites. The almost exclusively international focus of these kinds of conversations causes labor standards to be seen by business elites in developing countries, those whose help we need, as an imperialist and protectionist approach from the north. This is not just a left-wing view. These are modern, wealthy people who come to see labor standards as foreign. Emblematic of this problem is that there is no one here from a developing country's Department of Labor, the main and weak actor that needs our support.

We can talk endlessly about definitions of forced labor, but we need to talk about what we should do to get reform and what we need to study. Labor Departments in developing countries do not have vehicles to make unannounced visits to firms. They often use manual typewriters. These institutions are weak and lack support. Their nations' focus is often on making industry more competitive. We need to look at the national level and find commonalities in successes across nations.

Jacqueline Bhabha: First, definitions are important, but they should not become an obsession. You might want to be sloppy about definitions of slavery and forced labor in some cases. Calling something slavery creates emotional buy-in in the public that forced labor cannot. So you might merge the two, depending on the circumstances. We have a lot of legislation that gives definitions. We may have done that kind of work too much to the detriment of enforcement work.

Second, using a labor rights framework is very important. But human rights and migration frameworks are also important. In each of these three frameworks, there are legal/legislative and procedural/policy/organizational levels. We need to operate on both levels in each case. We need to think within each framework about what the legal apparatus, domestically and internationally, should be and what the relevant organizations—labor unions, NGOs, and other organizations—we should draw on. It is important to see the three dimensions as being present most of the time. Some situations are country specific. But the three frameworks have to be part of the tool kit generally.

Third, as much as it is as important to talk about culture, what matters are interests. Even if people have a culture of rights or labor standards, reform means redistributing wealth and power. That is a question of advancing someone's interests at someone else's expense. That makes reform hard.

There is tension between two of the frameworks. To create labor standards, we are looking for resources for administrative capability, standards, enforcement, etc. On the other hand, when we are trying to advance human rights and trying to help undocumented workers, we might not want inspections that will cause workers to be deported. The vulnerability of workers may militate against official intervention. So what is needed is a combination of a strong comparative framework and a specific fact picture in a given situation that will lead to a strategy.

Regina Abrami: I agree that we might not want to focus too much on definitional divisions. The difference between forced labor and slavery or the difference between supply chain-based exploitation and debt bondage used to break down into market and non-market transactions, but this distinction may be disappearing as the supply reaches down to the village gate. So the distinction may hide more than it yields.

Related to that, there is legislation out there with definitions. Every trade agreement,
including GATT and the WTO, dealt with slavery, because it has always been a dilemma. Despite this fact, the solution has been to ignore the problem because it is hard to manage. But if we have a world that rejects forced labor, why is the problem never solved? The answer is not interests but fear. What prevents people from saying something? The WTO’s exceptions clause has a public morals clause. Why isn’t it invoked? Probably because some think that invoking the clause would be ineffective and not something that could change institutions at the grassroots level. So I come back to what Judith said about how to get at the grassroots. Deregulation of labor markets has made people more fearful of pushing standards. So there may be a role for NGOs and philanthropic organizations to make it safe to speak for local actors and support organizations like the ILO when they take bolder positions.

Balakrishnan Rajagopal: That suggests that states have a range of contradictory goals. Take the Haiti case. A question was asked about why United States can’t do something about the slaves (the Restevec problem), given its leverage. The bilateral aid agreement that the United States reached with Haiti was ostensibly about structuring Haiti’s economic relationship with the outside world. The dark side of the agreement was about weakening the state in certain areas and freeing up certain sectors from regulation. The state had a package deal to buy. The United States might be able to get rid of slavery or forced labor, but may have other agendas that weaken labor regulation. Do we take on those agendas?

Simon Aban Deng: There has to be distinction between slavery and forced labor. I was born as a slave, as property and given away as a gift. This is a different thing than forced labor where there is payment.

When people this morning talked about these issues and Africa, they mostly talked about West Africa. They did not elaborate which country they meant. We should look at Sudan and Mauritania, where Arabs hold slaves.

Phillip Thompson: There is a need for an analytical distinction between slavery and forced labor for analysis or policy development, but politics is another matter. From a political standpoint, it is unwise to draw a distinction between slavery and forced labor. There are at least 100 million descendants of slaves in the Americas who might embrace the fight against forced labor if it is tied to slavery. There is a historical link between the slaves (the Restevec problem), given its leverage. The bilateral aid agreement that the United States reached with Haiti was ostensibly about structuring Haiti’s economic relationship with the outside world. The dark side of the agreement was about weakening the state in certain areas and freeing up certain sectors from regulation. The state had a package deal to buy. The United States might be able to get rid of slavery or forced labor, but may have other agendas that weaken labor regulation. Do we take on those agendas?

In our reporting for the BBC, we found that the problem is not a lack of law but a lack of prosecution and enforcement, partly because enforcement is hard, but also because governments are not made to put their money where their mouth is.

- Simon Aban Deng
- Gerry Northam

Sharon Stanton Russell: On definitions, there is a continuum between voluntary and forced work. There is a difference between slavery and forced labor, but slavery is at the extreme end of a spectrum, all of which we can call forced labor. Having these distinctions, as Michael Piore said, is important for coming up with solutions. If we had an analytical framework that included the voluntary/forced continuum and then a role for the perspective—whether it is a labor, human rights, or migration perspective—and another role for the sector, we could begin to distinguish among problems, issues, and solutions and determine how they may differ in various situations.

Kevin Bales: I’m writing a book called How We End Slavery, a blueprint on how to end slavery. I will use all these ideas mentioned today. I hope you can share with me any further ideas.
Session Two

Regulatory Mechanisms and Implementation

Led by Judith Tendler
Professor of Political Economy
MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning

Judith Tendler: This session is on regulatory mechanisms and implementations. It is clear from the conversation we’ve had that we are talking about actions that occur at the international, national, and local levels. We talked about organizing social movements and trade unions. Reform can also come from street level bureaucracies, like labor inspection services, or from groups of business elites who want better trained labor. The press also has to play a role, given that it is impossible for under-funded inspection agencies to do their jobs alone.

To get the discussion going, I’m starting with Lucas Benitez, the co-founder of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida, an association made up citrus and tomato workers.

Lucas Benitez: Mine is a community group in Southwest Florida that spans three communities: Haitians, Guatemalans, and Mexicans. We have worked with the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division for seven years. We have helped them investigate and prosecute five cases in that time. These cases sent people to prison for having enslaved hundreds of workers.

But we do not want to keep going case by case—we’ll never finish. For years, we have fought the agriculture industry. Florida is huge producer of fruits and vegetables. Ninety percent of the tomatoes that come up here in the winter are from Florida, largely from my area. We fight for better working conditions on farms and try to eliminate abuses and slavery. The U.S. agriculture industry has changed a lot in last two or three decades. It is now controlled by agribusiness. We focused for years on growers. But when you ask them for better wages, growers can sometimes honestly say that they cannot afford it. The growers are pressured by their buyers, like the fast food industry, to hold down prices. They cannot get cheaper products from John Deere or Monsanto, so they squeeze the farm workers. And Taco Bell, McDonalds, Subway and the rest get cheap vegetables.

So we went to the buyers. We started with Taco Bell. We asked them to guarantee that their tomatoes were free of forced labor or sweatshops in fields. They did not respond. In 2001, we started a national boycott against Taco Bell. This boycott got a lot of publicity. People around the country—Hollywood celebrities, students, churches, politicians like Jimmy Carter and the Kennedy family—got involved. After four years of the boycott, we won. On March 8, 2005, we signed an agreement with Taco Bell (YUM! Brand, Inc.). Taco Bell agreed to pay one penny more per pound of tomatoes. That nearly doubled wages. Taco Bell also agreed to bring growers to the table. We will now review information with growers and Taco Bell. Third, Taco Bell agreed to make its corporate code of conduct stronger. Now on the Taco Bell website they mention their zero tolerance policy for slavery or forced labor in their supply chain.

We are now starting a campaign for fair food, rather than fast food. Taco Bell is only the first. We are looking at McDonalds, Burger King, and other fast food chains. Taco Bell agreed to help us push other buyers to follow their leadership. We think that this approach gets at the root of the problem of slavery better than a case-by-case approach. Finally, it is important to note that farm workers, like domestic workers, cannot be unionized under the National Labor Relations Act right now. Some states, like Ohio and California, have their own acts that allow farm workers to unionize.

Michael Power: There is a problem in just focusing on grassroots actions and international agencies. Successful efforts from the grassroots are rare. Current law makes it difficult to succeed that way in America.

On one side are grassroots movements, and on the other side are international agencies issuing moral statements. These two types of efforts will never be enough. Labor market conditions are determined by structures within national societies. Most countries have structures to enforce labor rights and written standards, including the right to unionize. These standards have been undermined in the last thirty years by the international policy of the United States, operating through international agencies. Unless we revive national enforcement systems and update local standards and enforcement capabilities to meet changing technologies and economic conditions, no amount of grassroots organization and international agency pressure will work. What we need is more research and technical assistance for governmental enforcement.

The problem with ILO policy is that by focusing on core labor standards and things like forced labor, it has turned its organizational efforts away from its traditional role in providing technical assistance and support for national labor regulation. To put things starkly, the ILO’s focus plays into neoliberalism by suggesting that states can have a free market economy except for bare minimal labor standards that everyone supports. That isn’t enough even for minimal standards.

To get better labor conditions, we have to create effective national regulatory structures, along with the right to organize, which gives you grassroots movements. Without that, you cannot even enforce minimum standards. Without enforcement, international standards become celebrations of a human rights consensus that, whatever it merits, does not deliver improvements in labor conditions.

What we’re trying to do at MIT is to revive the traditional concern with the day-to-day mechanics of enforcing labor statutes. How does factory inspection work? What salary structures make regulators effective? What kind of local unions and social movements are needed to help the inspection services? At a recent seminar on Latin America labor, the most surprising thing I heard was that in the 1990s, during a time of seeming neoliberal consensus, several Latin American countries, like the Dominican Republic, Chile, and Brazil, reformed their labor inspection practices and developed innovations in administrative policy. There is a lot going on out there at the national level. We need to supplement broad statements of policy goals with academic research and focus from international agencies on assistance that helps build national regulatory institutions.

Mexico is an example. The split between federal and local jurisdiction creates complexity, so there is enormous variation among states, ranging from effective local administration to states with no inspection service whatsoever. That variation lets states learn from each other.

What is most interesting to me as an academic is that in Mexico and a lot of Latin America, contrary to abstract economic theory, there is not much evidence of the conflict between labor rights and economic efficiency. It is true that international markets remain labor standards. But it is also true that the most egregious violations of labor standards come from small firms that do not know how to compete internationally. These small firms were swamped by international competition once they came out of closed economies. Meanwhile the family-based system of norms and support that effectively created labor rights was no longer sufficient. These firms do not know how to
create quality, so they compete by sweating their workers. You could upgrade conditions in these industries if companies understood international competition better.

The most capable inspectors help firms. The inspectors know a great deal about what goes on locally; they deeply understand production. There is opportunity to link labor enforcement with upgrades in industrial policies, which have also been undermined by neoliberalism.

Some of this has occurred ad hoc. But we have so ascribed to the idea of a conflict between efficiency and standards that we failed to explore what these agencies can do to reconcile efficiency and development with labor standards. Because of the neglect of the public sector, techniques of government service, of public management, are now behind techniques used in private management. But the experience that will enable us to catch up is there on the ground. The knowledge that could be shared among countries is enormous. The role of international agencies in that interchange about ground-level experience has been neglected, especially by the ILO, in favor of forming consensus statements. For instance, in Haiti we cannot talk about enforcing any law until there is effective government. The United States has not helped in this, but the dilemma that the United States faces is what we can do to create effective government there. Effective government is the key to labor standards and economic welfare.

Jean Robert Cadet:

"A system of accountability, credibility, and empowerment works by letting people see the potential to win, ministries will take up fights. Accountable, credible, empowered governments do not like doing revolutionary things. How do you get them on your side? There are three factors. You need accountability, credibility, and empowerment. These are for buy-in among government, labor, and NGOs. These three factors go together if you have a horizontal element, meaning standards that local actors will accept. You need buy-in to standards; you cannot impose them.

Regina Abrami:
The Cambodia agreement and its implementation are relevant. I agree that the idea of an inevitable conflict between labor standards and efficiency is wrong. Any economist would tell you that relative wages and relative productivity should correlate. Labor standards that drive up wages will give you better managers that improve efficiency. So it’s win-win.

We are talking about redistributing power in societies, not wealth. That is revolutionary. Governments do not like doing revolutionary things. How do you get them on your side? There are three factors. You need accountability, credibility, and empowerment. These get you buy-in among government, labor, and NGOs. These three factors go together if you have a horizontal element, meaning standards that local actors will accept. You need buy-in to the standards; you cannot impose them.

Cambodia is great example. The labor agreement gave people weapons to use. Labor could complain about its rights to the government and the ILO. Small- and medium-sizes foreign investors could complain to the Commerce Ministry about bribery. Everyone got sticks. We should be talking about empowering not just the government and political leadership will not come from U.S. leaders and probably not from other governments. We have to be forceful about our ideas and not be paralyzed by not having the right analytical categories.

Balakrishnan Rajagopal:

"I wanted to make the same point. The ILO report speaks of an alliance. That word is key. It will be hard to get things done given the dominant free trade and deregulatory ethos. Maybe it is good to begin by focusing on the general weakening of state and labor standards. How do we use this window of opportunity to get consensus, even a minimal one. I accept that we are talking about a continuum from voluntary to coerced activity. Some forms of compulsion are not going to provoke new laws or prosecution. We are talking about structural problems. We have to work through policy and academic institutions with the help of the media to get a debate going. We need to begin a conversation about these larger issues? I also have a substantive question for Lucas Benitez: You mentioned that there are state Labor Relations Acts in Ohio and California. Did having these laws help? Did having street-level bureaucrats help labor organizations?"

Lucas Benitez:

"You mention inspections. The Department of Labor in southwest Florida has one inspector. Also, I should mention that Taco Bell now inspects not just the quality of tomatoes on its growers’ farms, but the quality of labor standards they provide. We don’t need more National Labor Relations Acts; we need an international labor relations act. Under our agreement with Taco Bell we got the right to go into the fields and talk to workers to investigate complaints. That’s more useful than a state inspectorate that has one inspector."
**Participant List**

**Roundtable Discussions on Forced Labor in the Global Economy**

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology, May 14, 2005**

**Regina Abrami** is Assistant Professor and Hellman Faculty Fellow in the Business, Government and International Economy unit of the Harvard Business School. Her work focuses on globalization and its effects on state-labor and government-business relations in emerging markets, as well as the politics of entrepreneurship and private sector development in the developing and post-communist world. Professor Abrami is working on a book entitled Economies Under Different Command: Socialist Era, Neocons, Entrepreneurship and Market Transition in Vietnam and China. Professor Abrami has consulted with the World Bank, the UNDP and the Ford Foundation. She speaks Vietnamese and Chinese.

**Kevin Bales** is President of Free the Slaves, the U.S. sister organization of Anti-Slavery International (the world’s oldest human rights organization), and Professor of Sociology at the University of Surrey Roehampton, in London. Mr. Bales’s 1999 book, Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy, was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. Mr. Bales has won numerous humanitarian awards and is currently based on his work received Peabody and Emmy Awards. He recently edited an Anti-Human Trafficking Toolkit for the United Nations, and published, with the Human Rights Center at Berkeley, a report on forced labor in the U.S. He is working with the chocolate industry to remove child and slave labor from the product chain. Mr. Bales’s next book, Understanding Global Slavery, will be published in September 2005. He is a Trustee of Anti-Slavery International, serves on the Board of Directors of the International Cocoa Initiative, and was a consultant to the United Nations Global Program on Trafficking of Victims Abroad.

**Lucas Benitez**, co-founder of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), immigrated from Guerrero, Mexico to the United States when he was 17 to work in the fields. He helped organize the first-ever general strike in Immokalee history, with 3,000 workers staying out of the fields for a week. He also helped workers escape from a labor camp of the violent Ramos slavery operation in Lake Placid. Mr. Benitez helps to run WCIW, the community radio station inaugurated by the CIW in 2003. In 1999, he received the Rolling Stone/Brick Award as America’s Best Young Leader. In 2003 he was named a Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award Laureate for his work in combating modern-day slavery and leading a boycott of Taco Bell. In July 2004 he was featured as the Hellraiser of the Month in Mother Jones.

**Jaqueline Bhabha** is Executive Director of the University Committee on Human Rights Studies at Harvard University, the Jeremiah Smith Jr. lecturer in law at Harvard Law School and an adjunct lecturer on public policy at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. From 1997 to 2001, she directed the Human Rights Program at the University of Chicago. Prior to 1997, she was a practicing human rights lawyer in London and at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Professor Bhabha’s writing on issues of migration and asylum in Europe and the U.S. includes a co-authored book, Women’s Movement: Women Under Immigration, Nationality and Refugee Law, an edited volume, Asylum Law And Practice in Europe and North America, and many articles. She is currently working on issues of transnational child migration, trafficking, adoption and citizenship, and teaches international human rights and refugee law. She serves on the board of the U.S. section of International Social Services and the Journal of Refugee Studies.

**Janie Chuang** is a Professor at Washington College of Law at American University, where she is a Practitioner-in-Residence in the International Human Rights Law Clinic. She specializes in issues relating to violence against women, specifically trafficking in women, and draws on her work in these areas for the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. On behalf of the UN human rights agency, Professor Chuang developed policy and actively participated in the negotiations of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, in an effort to include human rights standards into the international law on human trafficking. Prior to joining WCL, she practiced with the law firm of Cleary, Gottlieb, Steers & Hamilton, representing foreign governments in international litigation/arbitration and pro bono clients in asylum and human rights cases. Professor Chuang was recently appointed U.S. Representative to the International Law Association Committee on Feminism and International Law.

**Polly Deblank** has worked for BBC World Service Radio since 1997, and is currently working on investigative programs and documentaries for the African Service. She has produced programs on a range of topics, including migrant prostitution, fasting, and African contemporary art. In addition, she produced the BBC radio series, Slavery Today.

**Simon Aban Deng** of the anti-slavery group iAbolish is a refugee from Sudan and a survivor of child slavery: A native of the Shiluk Kingdom in southern Sudan, Mr. Deng narrowly escaped death during a government raid on his village as a young child. Mr. Deng spent several years as a domestic slave in northern Sudan. After his escape, he worked as a messenger in the Sudanese parliament and later became a national swimming champion. Today he is a U.S. citizen, working as a lifeguard in Coney Island, New York, and leading the struggle to stop genocide in Sudan. Mr. Deng is devoted to reminding Americans about the thousands of children who remain in slavery today.

**Phillip Fishman** is the AFL-CIO’s Assistant Director for International Affairs, with responsibility for the U.S. Labor Federation’s policy in Asia. Mr. Fishman formerly worked for the AFL-CIO’s Asian American Free Labor Institute (AAFLI). While with the AAFLI, he served as the AFL-CIO Country Representative in the Philippines from 1979 to 1982, in South Korea from 1982 to 1986, and in Thailand from 1986 to 1991. For the last seven years, Mr. Fishman has been a member of the U.S. delegation to the International Labor Conference (ILO-UN), where he sits on the Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CACR). The tripartite CACR is the primary ILO mechanism for reviewing action taken by countries to implement international labor standards embodied in ILO Conventions. A native of Detroit, Mr. Fishman is a long-time member of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). He has also been a member of the United Automobile Workers (UAW).

**David W. Kahler,** Manager for Asia Programs and Special Projects Division at World Education in Boston, is a nonformal education and curriculum design specialist with more than 40 years of experience in the field. During the last 15 years, Dr. Kahler has specialized in developing strategies for adapting and linking technical content, especially from the health and agricultural fields, to nonformal education delivery systems. His duties include new program development and technical and administrative support to field projects in Asia and Latin America. He serves as the Senior Technical Advisor to the REACH India Program, a five-year initiative to strengthen the service delivery capacity of India NGOs working with vulnerable children. He also provides technical assistance to child labor programs in India, Nepal, Lao PDR and Cambodia, and to a cross-national inquiry into family decision making about adolescent migration.

**Stephen King** was appointed in 2001 as Director of the BBC World Service Trust, which was created by the BBC World Service in 1999 to promote development through the innovative use of media and to build media expertise in developing countries. The Trust is responsible for running the Africa Service and the Arabic Service, and supporting the work of the World Service Trust’s international partners in developing media initiatives in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Prior to joining the World Service Trust, Mr. King worked for more than 15 years with international development agencies in Asia, Africa and North America. From 1998 to 2001 he was based in Montreal and London as Executive Director of the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), a network of NGOs working worldwide to promote social development. He worked closely with
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Gerry Northam became a news reporter in 1970 at BBC local radio in Stoke-On-Trent. His programs have since covered a wide international range—from the failure of food aid policy in Bangladesh, the activities of CIA-supported death squads in South America, and the exposing of top-level political collaborators with the Sicilian Mafia, to corruption and incompetence under the American-led Coalition after the 2003 war. In Britain, he regularly reports on education and health issues and has taken a special interest in the criminal justice system, particularly the police—exposing the secret militarization of riot squads, the failures of police complaints investigators and persistent racism through the ranks. Mr. Northam also reports for BBC television current affairs, most recently for the program Panorama.

Julia O’Connell Davidson, Professor of Sociology at Nottingham University, has been involved since 1993 in research on prostitution, sex tourism, child prostitution, and trafficking for prostitution. Her work pays particular attention to the diversity of power relations that can be involved in prostitution, and has explored the moral, political and theoretical problems that attend on the indiscriminate use of the terms ‘slavery’ and ‘forced labor’ in relation to both children and migrants in the sex trade. Professor O’Connell Davidson is currently working on an Economic and Social Research Council funded project examining the markets for migrant domestic and sex workers in Spain and Britain. She is author of Prostitution, Power & Freedom and Children in the Global Sex Trade.

Michael Pioro, a labor economist, is David W. Skinner Professor of Economics and Management in the MIT Department of Economics and an affiliate at MIT’s Center for International Studies. He is best known for the development of the concept of the internal labor market and the dual labor market hypothesis, and more recently for work on the transition from mass production to flexible specialization. Professor Pioro has worked on a number of labor market and industrial relations problems, including low-income labor markets, the impact of technology upon work, migration, labor market segmentation, and the relationship between the labor market, business strategy and industrial organization. The central theme in Professor Pioro’s work is the social, institutional, and cognitive dimensions of economic activity.

Roger Plant is Head of the Special Action Program to Combat Forced Labor at the International Labor Organization, and principal author of the May 2001 ILO report “A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour.” He has been a leading investigator and activist on forced labor and modern slavery for more than 30 years. His influential book Sugar and Modern Slavery was one of the first to bring the world’s attention to the nature and dimensions of slavery-like practices in the modern world. He has also exposed slavery-like conditions affecting migrant workers and indigenous people throughout Asia and Latin America. Prior to working with the ILO, Mr. Plant worked with the International Rescue Committee in the United Kingdom Department for International Development; the Inter-American Development Bank, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; Shell International, the Danish International Development Agency; and several international human rights NGOs. His books include Guatemala: U-natural Disaster and Labour Standards and Structural Adjustment.

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Kerry Rittich joined the Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto in 1998 as an Assistant Professor of Law and Women’s Studies and Gender Studies. She served as Law Clerk to Madame Justice Claire L’Heureux-Dubé at the Supreme Court of Canada. Professor Rittich’s scholarly and teaching interests include international law and institutions, human rights, labor law, critical legal theories and feminism. She is the author of Recharacterizing Restructuring: Law, Distribution and Gender in Market Reform and recently completed a report for the Law Commission of Canada, Violence Against Workers: Legal and Policy Issues in the New Economy. She is co-editing a comparative collection on the legal regulation of the work/family divide in labor law. Her current research is focused on the ‘socialisation’ of the development agenda, and the effects of governance reforms on gender equality and labor market regulation.

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John Tirman, a political scientist, is Executive Director of MIT’s Center for International Studies. Tirman is the author of the forthcoming Spoils of War: The Human Cost of America’s Arms Trade and The Fallacy of Star Wars, the first important critique of strategic defense, and Spills of War: The Human Cost of America’s Arms Trade. In addition, he has published more than 100 articles in periodicals such as the New York Times, the Washington Post, the World Policy Journal, Esquire, the Wall Street Journal, Boston Review, and the International Herald Tribune. Before coming to MIT in 2004, he was program director of the Social Science Research Council. From 1986 to 1999, Dr. Tirman was executive director of the Winston Foundation for World Peace, a leading funder of work to prevent nuclear war and promote non-violent resolution of conflict. He is recipient of the UN Association’s Human Rights Award, and serves as a trustee of several NGOs, including International Alert (London). In 1999-2000, Dr. Tirman was Fulbright Senior Scholar in Cyprus and produced an educational Web site on the conflict (http://www.cyprus-conflict.net).

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John Tirman, a political scientist, is Executive Director of MIT’s Center for International Studies. He is author, or coauthor and editor, of six books on international security issues, including The Falacy of Star Wars, the first important critique of strategic defense, and Spoils of War: The Human Cost of America’s Arms Trade. In addition, he has published more than 100 articles in periodicals such as the New York Times, the Washington Post, the World Policy Journal, Esquire, the Wall Street Journal, Boston Review, and the International Herald Tribune. Before coming to MIT in 2004, he was program director of the Social Science Research Council. From 1986 to 1999, Dr. Tirman was executive director of the Winston Foundation for World Peace, a leading funder of work to prevent nuclear war and promote non-violent resolution of conflict. He is recipient of the UN Association’s Human Rights Award, and serves as a trustee of several NGOs, including International Alert (London). In 1999-2000, Dr. Tirman was Fulbright Senior Scholar in Cyprus and produced an educational Web site on the conflict (http://www.cyprus-conflict.net).

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The World Debate (BBC)
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/story/2005/05/050527_boston_debate.shtml

On Point (WBUR/Boston and NPR)
http://www.onpointradio.org/shows/2005/05/20050516_b_main.asp

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