

Fighting Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Over the last two decades, fighting modern slavery and human trafficking has become a *cause célèbre*. Yet large numbers of researchers, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, workers, and others who would seem like natural allies in the fight against modern slavery and trafficking are hugely skeptical of these movements. They object to how the problems are framed, and are skeptical of the “new abolitionist” movement. Why? This book tackles key controversies surrounding the anti-slavery and anti-trafficking movements head on. Champions and skeptics explore the fissures and fault lines that surround efforts to fight modern slavery and human trafficking today. These include: whether efforts to fight modern slavery displace or crowd out support for labor and migrant rights; whether and to what extent efforts to fight modern slavery mask, naturalize, and distract from racial, gendered, and economic inequality; and whether contemporary anti-slavery and anti-trafficking crusaders’ use of history are accurate and appropriate.

Genevieve LeBaron is Professor of Politics at the University of Sheffield and an award-winning expert on the contemporary business of forced labor. She is the author of *Combatting Modern Slavery: Why Labour Governance Is Failing and What We Can Do About It* (Polity, 2020), among other books and articles. Her research has been featured widely in the media, including *The New York Times*, the BBC, *Forbes*, and the *Financial Times*. She was elected to the College of the Royal Society of Canada in 2020.

Jessica R. Pliley is Associate Professor of Women’s and Gender History at Texas State University and holds a PhD from the Ohio State University. She is the author of *Policing Sexuality: The Mann Act and the Making of the FBI* (Harvard, 2014) and *Global Anti-Vice Activism* (Cambridge University Press, 2016). Her work has appeared in the *Journal of Women’s History*, the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, the *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, and several anthologies.

David W. Blight is Sterling Professor of American History at Yale University. He is the author of Pulitzer Prize-winning *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (2018, Simon & Schuster), among other books, book chapters, and articles. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2012.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83062-1 — Fighting Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
Edited by Genevieve LeBaron, Jessica R. Pliley, David W. Blight
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Slaveries since Emancipation

General Editors

Randall Miller, *St. Joseph's University*
Zoe Trodd, *University of Nottingham*

Slaveries since Emancipation publishes scholarship that links slavery's past to its present, consciously scanning history for lessons of relevance to contemporary abolitionism and that directly engages current issues of interest to activists by contextualizing them historically.

Also in this series:

Hannah-Rose Murray, *Advocates of Freedom: African American Transatlantic Abolitionism in the British Isles*
Catherine Armstrong, *American Slavery, American Imperialism: US Perceptions of Global Servitude, 1870–1914*
Elizabeth Swanson and James Brewer Stewart, eds., *Human Bondage and Abolition: New Histories of Past and Present Slaveries*
R. J. M. Blackett, *The Captive's Quest for Freedom: Fugitive Slaves, the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, and the Politics of Slavery*
Anna Mae Duane, ed., *Child Slavery before and after Emancipation: An Argument for Child-Centered Slavery Studies*

Fighting Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

History and Contemporary Policy

Edited by

GENEVIEVE LEBARON

University of Sheffield

JESSICA R. PLILEY

Texas State University

DAVID W. BLIGHT

Yale University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-83062-1 — Fighting Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
 Edited by Genevieve LeBaron, Jessica R. Pliley, David W. Blight
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
 New Delhi – 110025, India
 79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
 It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
 education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108830621
 DOI: 10.1017/9781108902519

© Genevieve LeBaron, Jessica R. Pliley, and David W. Blight 2021

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
 no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
 permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2021

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: LeBaron, Genevieve, editor. | Pliley, Jessica R., 1977– editor. | Blight, David W., editor.

TITLE: Fighting modern slavery and human trafficking : history and contemporary policy / edited by Genevieve LeBaron, University of Sheffield, Jessica R. Pliley, Texas State University, San Marcos, David W. Blight, Yale University, Connecticut.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2021. | Series: Slavery since emancipation | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2020040220 | ISBN 9781108830621 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108822404 (paperback) | ISBN 9781108902519 (ebook)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Slavery—History—21st century. | Human trafficking—History—21st century.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC HT867 .F54 2021 | DDC 306.3/620905—dc23
 LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020040220>

ISBN 978-1-108-83062-1 Hardback
 ISBN 978-1-108-82240-4 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of
 URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication
 and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,
 accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>List of Tables</i>	viii
<i>List of Contributors</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	
<i>David W. Blight</i>	xv
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xxi
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xxiv
1 Introduction: Fighting Modern Slavery from Past to Present <i>Genevieve LeBaron and Jessica R. Pliley</i>	i
2 Counting Modern Slaves: Historicizing the Emancipatory Work of Numbers <i>Gunther Peck</i>	34
3 Working Analogies: Slavery Now and Then <i>Anna Mae Duane and Erica R. Meiners</i>	56
4 Free Soil, Free Produce, Free Communities <i>Kevin Bales and Alison Gardner</i>	73
5 Ambivalent Abolitionist Legacies: The League of Nations’ Investigations into Sex Trafficking, 1927–1934 <i>Jessica R. Pliley</i>	97
6 Mexico’s New Slavery: A Critique of Neo-abolitionism to Combat Human Trafficking (<i>la trata de personas</i>) <i>Grace Peña Delgado</i>	119

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
7	Undermining Labor Power: The False Promise of the Industry-led Antislavery Initiatives <i>Elena Shih, Jennifer (JJ) Rosenbaum, and Penelope Kyritsis</i>	141
8	A Market in Deception? Ethically Certifying Exploitative Supply Chains <i>Genevieve LeBaron</i>	156
9	Preventing Human Trafficking: The Role of the IOM and the UN Global Compact on Migration <i>Janie A. Chuang</i>	179
10	Integrated and Indivisible: The Sustainable Development Agenda of Modern Slavery Survivor Narratives <i>Zoe Trodd, Andrea Nicholson, and Lauren Eglen</i>	203
	Afterword <i>Luis C. deBaca</i>	225
	<i>Index</i>	251

Figures

4.1	<i>The Black Man’s Lament, or How to Make Sugar</i>	page 74
4.2	Roles for the church in antislavery partnerships	88
8.1	Under-provision of services for basic needs on certified and non-certified tea plantations	167
8.2	Average daily wages on certified and non-certified tea plantations	167
8.3	Wage violations on certified and non-certified tea plantations	168

Tables

1.1	Overview of UN trafficking protocol	<i>page 8</i>
1.2	Breakdown of modern slavery	12

Contributors

Kevin Bales (PhD, social science, London School of Economics; CMG; FRSA) is Professor of Contemporary Slavery and Research Director of the Rights Lab, University of Nottingham. He is a member of the Gilder Lehrman Center's Modern Slavery Working Group at Yale University. He co-founded the nongovernmental organization (NGO) Free the Slaves. His research focuses on contemporary slavery. His 1999 book *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* has been published in twelve languages. Other titles include *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today's Slaves* (2007) (Grawemeyer Award), *The Slave Next Door: Modern Slavery in the United States* (with Ron Soodalter, 2009), and *Blood and Earth* (2016), also published in Chinese and Japanese, awarded the Green Prize for Sustainable Literature 2017. The Association of British Universities named his work one of "100 World-Changing Discoveries."

David W. Blight (PhD, history, Wisconsin) is Sterling Professor of American History at Yale University and Director of Yale's Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition. He is the author of Pulitzer Prize-winning *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (2018), *American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era* (2013), and *A Slave No More: Two Men Who Escaped to Freedom, Including Their Own Narratives of Emancipation* (2007), among other books, book chapters, and articles. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2012.

Luis C. deBaca (JD, University of Michigan) is Senior Fellow of Modern Slavery at the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance,

and Abolition and Visiting Lecturer in Law at Yale Law School. His research and teaching examine the development of US antislavery laws in the wake of emancipation, the development of modern supply chain transparency laws, and the problem of forced labor in the built environment. As US Ambassador at Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, he led US bilateral and multilateral diplomacy and coordinated US government activities against contemporary forms of slavery. Among other official positions, he served as the US Justice Department's Involuntary Servitude and Slavery Coordinator. He played a key role in the drafting of the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 and subsequent reauthorizations.

Janie Chuang (JD, Harvard Law School) is Professor of Law at American University Washington College of Law and a member of the Gilder Lehrman Center's Modern Slavery Working Group at Yale University. She teaches and writes in the areas of international law, human trafficking, and labor migration. Professor Chuang's articles have appeared in the *American Journal of International Law*, the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, the *UCLA Law Review*, and the *North Carolina Law Review*, and have been cited in *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and the *Guardian*, among others. Drawing on her expertise on human trafficking issues, Chuang has served as an adviser to the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Grace Peña Delgado (PhD, history, UCLA) is Associate Professor of History at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC). She is also a member of the Gilder Lehrman Center's Modern Slavery Working Group at Yale University. Delgado is the author of *Making the Chinese Mexican: Global Migration, Localism, and Exclusion in the US-Mexico Borderlands* (2012) and a forthcoming work on sexuality and border control, *Freedom of Movement: Intercourse, States, and Intimacies at the U.S.-Mexico Border*. She is also the coauthor of *Latino Immigrants in the United States* (2011). She is the author of several articles and book chapters, and her piece in the *Western Historical Quarterly*, "Border Control and Sexual Policing," received numerous best article awards. In addition to her research, Delgado received UCSC's top teaching award conferred by its Academic Senate.

Anna Mae Duane (PhD, English, Fordham University) is Associate Professor of English at the University of Connecticut and a member of

List of Contributors

xi

the Gilder Lehrman Center's Modern Slavery Working Group at Yale University. Her research focuses on how children experienced slavery in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century United States. She is the author, editor, or coeditor of six books, including *Child Slavery before and after Emancipation: An Argument for Child-Centered Slavery Studies* (2017) and *Who Writes for Black Children?: African American Children's Literature before 1900* (2017). Her most recent book is *Educated for Freedom: The Incredible Story of Two Fugitive Schoolboys Who Grew up to Change a Nation* (2020). Her work has been supported by Fulbright and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grants.

Lauren Eglen (MA, race and resistance, University of Leeds) is a PhD student in the Department of American and Canadian Studies at the University of Nottingham, UK, and a research fellow in survivor narratives with the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham. Her research focuses on women's activism and print culture in the US Black Freedom Struggle, and her work with the Rights Lab includes expanding a database of modern slavery survivor narratives.

Alison Gardner (PhD, politics, University of Nottingham) is Associate Director for Communities and Society at the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab. Her work focuses on place- and community-based responses to modern slavery and includes publications in the *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, *Anti-Trafficking Review*, and the *Journal of Human Trafficking*. Gardner holds a Nottingham Research Fellowship and is coinvestigator on a Global Challenges Research Fund Global Engagements Network Grant to investigate the social determinants underpinning exploitation. She has career experience and expertise in local government and public policy.

Penelope Kyritsis (BA, postcolonial legal studies, Brown University) is Director of Strategic Research at the Worker Rights Consortium, an independent labor rights monitor that investigates working conditions in garment factories across major apparel-exporting countries. Her research areas include forced labor, corporate accountability, and worker-centered strategies for combatting labor abuse. She coauthored *Confronting Root Causes: Forced Labour in Global Supply Chains* (2018) and coedited *Domestic Workers Speak: A Global Fight for Rights and Recognition* (2017).

Genevieve LeBaron (PhD, political science, York University) is Professor of Politics at the University of Sheffield, UK. She is co-chair of the Gilder

Lehrman Center's Modern Slavery Working Group at Yale University. Her research investigates the political economy and business of forced labor and effectiveness of initiatives to combat it. She is the author of *Combatting Modern Slavery: Why Labour Governance Is Failing and What We Can Do About It* (2020) and editor of *Researching Forced Labour in the Global Economy: Methodological Challenges and Advances* (2018), among other books, and has published in leading political science and international relations journals.

Erica R. Meiners (PhD, education, Simon Fraser University) is the Bernard J. Brommel Distinguished Research Professor at Northeastern Illinois University. A writer, educator, and prison abolitionist, her current work includes a coedited anthology *The Long Term: Resisting Life Sentences, Working Towards Freedom* (2018), and *The Feminist and the Sex Offender* (2020). She has published articles in a range of journals, including *Meridians*, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, *Radical Teacher*, *American Quarterly*, *Captive Genders*, and *In These Times*.

Andrea Nicholson (PhD, American and Canadian studies, University of Nottingham) is a Nottingham Research Fellow in the School of Politics and International Relations and in the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham, UK. Her research focuses on the narratives and antislavery ideas of survivors of slavery and other forms of extreme human exploitation, working closely with survivors and NGOs. She has provided consultancy to international governmental bodies, including the UN Special Rapporteur for Contemporary Forms of Slavery. She has published articles on survivors' own definitions of slavery, the support needs of survivors of slavery, the value of survivor narratives to the antislavery agenda, and international law and antislavery politics in the nineteenth century.

Gunther Peck (PhD, history, Yale University) holds a joint appointment in the History Department and the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University. He is a member of the Gilder Lehrman Center's Modern Slavery Working Group at Yale University. His research focuses on the intertwined histories of human trafficking, race relations, and antislavery. In his first book, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North American West, 1885–1930* (2000), Peck explored how and why immigrant workers in the West lost their ability to quit and to move during the half century after the end of Reconstruction. One of the first scholars to historicize the origins of modern slavery, Peck has

List of Contributors

xiii

recently completed a second book which explores the complex relationship between human trafficking and white supremacy and the twined historical resistance to both. Entitled *Race Traffic: Radical Antislavery and the Long Resistance to White Supremacy, 1660–1860*, the book is forthcoming from the Omohundro Institute with the University of North Carolina Press.

Jessica R. Pliley (PhD, history, Ohio State University) is Associate Professor of Women's and Gender History at Texas State University. She is co-chair of the Gilder Lehrman Center's Modern Slavery Working Group at Yale University. Her current research explores the long history of anti-trafficking movement from the late nineteenth century to the early twenty-first century. She is the author of *Policing Sexuality: The Mann Act and the Making of the FBI* (2014) and *Global Anti-Vice Activism: Fighting Drink, Drugs, and 'Immorality'* (2016). Her work has appeared in the *Journal of Women's History*, the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, and the *Journal of the History of Sexuality*.

Jennifer (JJ) Rosenbaum (JD, Harvard Law School) is Executive Director of Global Labor Justice- International Labor Rights Forum (GLJ-ILRF). GLJ-ILRF is a strategy hub supporting transnational collaboration among worker and migrant organizations to expand labor rights and new forms of bargaining on global value chains and international labor migration corridors. Rosenbaum was a Robina Fellow at Yale Law School's Orville H. Schell Jr. Center for International Human Rights and is a member of the Gilder Lehrman Center's Modern Slavery Working Group at Yale University. She is a lecturer in law on international labor migration at Harvard Law School.

Elena Shih (PhD, sociology, UCLA) is Manning Assistant Professor of American Studies and Ethnic Studies at Brown University and director of a human trafficking research cluster through Brown's Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. A former faculty fellow (2016) at the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition, Shih is also a member of the Gilder Lehrman Center's Modern Slavery Working Group at Yale University. Her forthcoming book *Manufacturing Freedom: Trafficking Rescue, Rehabilitation, and the Slave Free Good* is a global ethnography of market-based efforts to combat trafficking in China, Thailand, and the United States. Her research brings sex worker rights and racial justice frameworks into the transnational movement to combat human trafficking.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83062-1 — Fighting Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
Edited by Genevieve LeBaron , Jessica R. Pliley , David W. Blight
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Zoe Trodd (PhD, American studies, Harvard University) is Professor and Director of the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham. She is a member of the Gilder Lehrman Center's Modern Slavery Working Group at Yale University. Her research focuses on modern slavery and strategies to end it, including the role of survivors' leadership and ideas in today's global antislavery movement. Her books about historical and contemporary slavery and antislavery movements include *To Plead Our Own Cause: Personal Stories by Today's Slaves* (2008), *Modern Slavery* (2009), *The Tribunal: Responses to John Brown and the Harpers Ferry Raid* (2012), and *Picturing Frederick Douglass* (2015).

Preface

David W. Blight

Men tilled the soil long before they wrote books, and would never have written books if they had not tilled the soil. All the present rests upon all the past.¹

How humbling it is to contemplate the weight of what Frederick Douglass called “all the past” in any present. The past is indeed infinite and no matter how hard we try we can only know parts of it. But search and know we must. Such a quest is among the highest of human callings. In its storehouses of human folly and tragedy as well as human imagination and progress, history itself can be overwhelming, what James Baldwin once called a “terrifying deity . . . to which no sacrifice in human suffering is too great.”²

This depends of course on our essential conceptions of the nature of history. If we seek only evidence for a triumphal narrative in order to bolster the present and win power in contemporary affairs, then history may be only a loving and delivering deity, and easily satisfied or manipulated. We please the gods and they please us back. But those gods will prove false in the end. Trained, serious approaches to the past that help us cope with the darkneses that history unfolds about human character need clearer-eyed vision and moral backbone. All witnesses and scribes of the story of slavery and other forms of human exploitation and their

¹ Frederick Douglass, “Address before the Tennessee Colored Agricultural and Mechanical Association,” September 18, 1873, Nashville, Tennessee, in Howard Brotz, ed., *African-American Social & Political Thought, 1850–1920* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 284–297.

² James Baldwin, “The Crusade of Indignation,” *Nation*, July 7, 1956, in Baldwin, *Collected Essays* (New York: Library of American, 1998), 613.

abolitions understand that knowledge of these experiences of inhumanity across time is painful in its truths, while liberating and inspiring in its realization. This book of cutting-edge essays on what research and strategies have had the most efficacy in the struggle against modern slavery is a tribute to that dual inheritance of all social scientific and historical inquiry. Telling the story is our way through the darkness. History may or may not be a god at all. But we surely learn not to test and abuse it with our petty needs, our unchecked prejudices, or our powers of denial.³

In the same 1873 oration to an agricultural convention of African American freedmen when Douglass spoke of the apparent infinity of the connection of past and present, he also left this caution: “I shall attempt no solution of the origins of evil in the world. Whether it came by the fall of Adam or the fall of anybody else, I neither know or care . . . It is enough to know that we have it and it is in abundance, and that the best use we can make of it is to resist and destroy it as far as we can.”⁴ Such might be the charge for scholars and activists alike who seek to abolish forms of modern slavery from our contemporary world. It is surely the aim of the scholar-activists in this volume. We have a challenge equally as daunting as that faced by the abolitionists of the nineteenth century who set standards of moral and political activism which are difficult to match.

In Eric Hobsbaum’s *The Age of Extremes*, his history of the “Short Twentieth Century,” (1914–1991), published in 1994, he opens with epigraphs from twelve eminent thinkers, artists, or scientists. Each was asked what they believed was the most compelling or lasting legacy of the twentieth century through which they had lived. The most prevalent answer in the group was the scale of violence, war, massacre, or genocide. Others named the emancipation of women, astonishing advances in science, electronics, the destruction of ideals, and one said that however

³ Among the growing works on the links between historical and contemporary forms of slavery and abolition, see especially Elizabeth Swanson and James Brewer Stewart, eds., *Human Bondage and Abolition: New Histories of Past and Present Slaveries* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018). I have personally found the introductory essay, as well as essays by David Richardson, James Sidbury, Allison Gorsuch, Kerry Ward, Anna Mae Duane, and Jessica R. Pliley, extremely helpful in my own evolving understanding, as a nineteenth-century historian, of the complex phenomenon of modern slavery. All of these scholars have been fellows and conference participants at the Gilder Lehrman Center as well. The leadership of Randall Miller and Zoe Trodd as general editors of this Cambridge series has been pivotal for the growth of this field.

⁴ Frederick Douglass, “Agriculture and Black Progress: An Address Delivered in Nashville, Tennessee,” September 18, 1873, in *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, vol. IV, ed. John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 391.

Preface

xvii

devastating the results of history, humankind had learned that it can always “start all over again.” Primo Levi said that too many “survivors” did not return or “returned wordless.” One, anthropologist, Julio Caro Baroja, worried about the “contradiction” of having experienced a full life cycle despite the “terrible events” of the century.⁵ Survivors’ guilt, or better a sense of humane responsibility, has been a deep source of many reforms and social movements.

Hobsbaum wrote just after the end of the Cold War and the Soviet era. He named “globalization” as one of the three most significant transformations the world had realized by the 1990s, with its heretofore “unimaginable acceleration of communication and transport,” and its identification of the “globe” as the “primary operational unit” of capital and labor. His other two most salient transformations were that the world was no longer “Eurocentric” because of changing geopolitics and mass consumer culture, and that, in his view most disturbing of all, the ties between past and present in world cultures were steadily disintegrating in the face of the “a-social individualism” at the heart of world capitalism. Capitalism, Hobsbaum believed, had become a “permanent and continuous revolutionizing force” that severed social bonds between tradition and modern growth, opening whole new realms of exploitation and wealth.⁶ Hobsbaum’s criteria and conclusions are all debatable, but they serve as a poignant starting point to understand why and how human trafficking and modern slavery emerged by the twenty-first century as a major world crisis.

As the twenty-first century arrived, and now after its first two decades, the world Hobsbaum surveyed has transformed again. Today’s world faces at the very least a series of new challenges it has only begun to collectively fight: rising ethnic and religious terrorism; the fragmentation of post-World War II alliances; a resurgent nationalism in forms some thought the end of the Cold War had thwarted; a growing global crisis of refugees from famine and civil wars; an emergent authoritarianism in all parts of the earth, including the United States; a widely recognized but as yet dangerously unaddressed existential problem of climate change; huge chasms of economic inequality between the global North and South; and now a once-in-a-century viral pandemic that may kill millions and throw our economies into a spiraling depression of unpredictable dimensions.

⁵ Eric Hobsbaum, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York: Pantheon, 1994), 1–2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 14–17.

This list of twenty-first century rolling crises are, of course, all inter-related. In late April 2020, the International Labour Organization announced that an estimated 1.6 billion workers in the world were newly vulnerable to exploitation and potential enslavement due to collapsing economies in the Covid-19 pandemic. A week later, on May 1, 2020, the *New York Times* reported in a front-page story that such a number may be closer to 2 billion workers. Two million garment workers in the already fragile economy of Bangladesh were among the recently fired and newly vulnerable to extreme poverty.⁷ The significant traction gained in the quest to intercept and stop sex trafficking and to create ethical supply chains in the even larger labor trafficking across the world faces a new scale of challenge as this book goes to press.

In the past two decades billions of dollars have been spent, hundreds of NGOs have launched crusades, foundations have created task forces, governments have tried to act, and many academics in universities and lawyers in political institutions have devoted their careers to the fight against the systems of human trafficking and labor slavery tied to production supply lines that have emerged in this new world order. Indeed, a new abolition movement has appeared in this century; its participants are a motley assortment of litigators, prime ministers, researchers and field workers, big data scientists, activist nuns and entrepreneurs, religious and secular reformers, scholars in many disciplines, filmmakers, journalists, and many slavery survivors telling their own stories.

At the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at Yale University (GLC) we assembled an international working group on modern slavery in 2016–2019, with generous funding from the Robina Foundation. That group's two co-chairs, Genevieve LeBaron and Jessica R. Pliley, are also the intrepid organizers and architects of this book. Each of them has held one of our full-year fellowships in modern slavery and written books at Yale during their residence. They mingle the instincts and methods of a political scientist and a historian. Further, over the past eight years or so the GLC has also hosted two major international conferences on modern slavery, including one in 2018 built around this working group of writers and scholars. This book is a product of that conference as well as of the energy and intellectual sizzle of our long weekend meetings of the working group.

The essays in this volume contain and enrich all the tensions and divisions in this field. These authors do not all agree on the best methods

⁷ *New York Times*, May 1, 2020.

Preface

xix

for fighting modern forms of slavery, but they have respectfully assembled together in New Haven, Connecticut, at least five times and in a literary sense in this book of original pieces. The work is a tribute to the best traditions in scholarship. The volume contains a good deal of ambivalence and certainty, passion and activism, and at its heart rests some of the most important research and field work ever done on the vast story of twenty-first century enslavement of vulnerable and disposable people. This is scholarship with great moral consequences.

As the editors' Introduction carefully indicates, the authors include both "sceptics" and "champions" of today's antislavery crusade, and they represent many disciplines: history, political science, sociology, law, business management, and anthropology. All of them are among the new era's abolitionists, and they have all walked the walk of archival, participant observation, court room, or field work engagement in order to talk the talk. But as was the case in the nineteenth century in British and American abolitionism, they differ in strategy, in vision, and in methodology. They sometimes argue fruitfully about how best to use and understand history as a guide to this new era. Disagreements endure over the numbers debate about modern slavery. And they do not always find common ground on just who benefits most from antislavery activism. They do not differ, however, on the overall goal, as painfully difficult as it is, of ridding the world of the scourge of modern slavery in this century if not in our lifetimes. They all seek solutions to this global dilemma through what we scholars know how to do best – create knowledge and teach it to the world in our demonstrations of evidence and in our stories.

The greatest story ever told by a former slave sings psalm-like in Frederick Douglass's autobiographies. His story has much to inform today's new abolition movement. In *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), Douglass wrote of his time under many kinds of owners and overseers. He experienced savage brutality from some, but even while rented out to a good master, Douglass said he learned that "the kindness of the slavemaster only gilds the chain of slavery, and detracts nothing from its weight and power." Brutality could benumb his desires at times for liberation. But even while only a teenager, he said, he had "ascertained . . . the natural and inborn right of every member of the human family" to personal freedom. Even when losing hope the desire to breathe free "only needed a favorable breeze to fan it into a flame." Such might be said of countless entrapped fishermen on shrimp boats in the South China Sea, or on tea or cocoa plantations in India and Africa, in garment factories or brick kilns on several continents, in mica mines or

brothels in South Asia, or in various stops on supply chains for making surgical gloves or various kinds of electronic devices. They lack what Douglass so lyrically described in remembering his own enslavement. “The thought of only being a creature of the present and the past troubled me,” he wrote, “and I longed to have a future – a future with hope in it. To be shut up entirely to the past and present is abhorrent to the human mind; it is to the soul – whose life and happiness is unceasing progress – what the prison is to the body . . . a hell of horrors.”⁸ The natural rights tradition is not dead in the twenty-first century unless we allow it to die.

Today’s millions of enslaved people across the globe need their own favorable breezes to fan their hope of release from conditions that bind them down economically and physically. They too need futures. The authors in this book are devoting themselves to the intellectual, organizational, legal, and moral work to bring that about.

⁸ Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855; rpr. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 218.

Acknowledgments

This book comes from the Gilder Lehrman Center's Modern Slavery Working Group at Yale University, initiated and hosted by the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition (GLC), which is a unit of The Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale University.

Founded in 2016 by the Center's Director David W. Blight, and Working Group Co-Chairs Genevieve LeBaron and Jessica R. Pliley, the Gilder Lehrman Center's Modern Slavery Working Group at Yale University provides a platform for interaction for a diverse group of top scholars researching Modern Slavery and Trafficking to come together and explore opportunities of intellectual exchange and collaboration. Group members are experts on different dimensions of contemporary slavery and trafficking who share a commitment to big-picture thinking, rigorous scholarship, public engagement, and to carving out the policy relevance of their work. The group is multidisciplinary and includes historians, social scientists, lawyers, and scholars of the arts and humanities. Support for the Working Group came from a generous grant from the Robina Foundation to the GLC.

The Group's members are David W. Blight, Genevieve LeBaron, Jessica R. Pliley, Kevin Bales, Andrew Crane, Janie Chuang, Anna Mae Duane, Gunther Peck, Grace Peña Delgado, Joel Quirk, J. J. Rosenbaum, Elena Shih, and Zoe Trodd. We are grateful to all of the Group members for their participation, collaboration, and contributions, for being willing to challenge and encourage each other, and for continuing to work together across intellectual and political differences.

We are grateful to the fantastic staff at the GLC who have supported our Group, including by organizing meetings and events, booking travel, recording and editing podcasts and films, and helping us to get our research out into the world. Special thanks go to Michelle Zacks, Melissa McGrath, Tom Thurston, David Spatz, and Daniel Vieira.

Thanks are due to our wonderful editors at Cambridge University Press, Cecelia Cancellaro and Debbie Gershenowitz, and their teams, especially Rachel Blaifeder. As well, we are grateful to the series editors for the Slavery since Emancipation series for their support. Charline Sempéré was a terrific help in pulling together the final manuscript.

Draft chapters of this book have been presented at universities around the world, including at Yale; we are grateful to all who took part in those discussions and helped us to improve our work. We are especially grateful to fellow panelists and audience members who attended the GLC's 20th Annual International Conference, entitled *Fighting Modern Slavery: What Works?*, at Yale University, which was organized and hosted by our Group. Thanks to the scholars, journalists, activists, and advocates who joined us as keynotes and speakers, including Martina Vandenberg, Tim Bartley, Lyndsey Beutin, Eileen Boris, Austin Choi-Fitzpatrick, Amb. Luis C. deBaca, Laura Germino, Kieran Guilbert, Elizabeth Hinton, Todd Landman, Tracey L. Meares, Neha Misra, Krishna Patel, and Cathy Zimmerman. All of these colleagues, as well as the audience members, gave us valuable feedback on the chapters within this book and this book project as a whole.

Not only has the GLC provided a home for our Working Group, but several of us have also been fortunate enough to hold funded fellowships at the GLC, which helped to make our individual scholarship and publications possible. The GLC has long been a hugely important hub and support for scholarship on slavery, and in recent years, has been influential in shaping and nurturing scholarship on contemporary slavery, forced labor, and human trafficking.

Beyond the GLC, other departments and colleagues at Yale have also supported and collaborated with our group. Colleagues at the Yale Law School, Yale School of Management, and Yale's Program of Ethnicity, Race, and Migration have been wonderful collaborators and cosponsors of Group events and activities. As well, librarians and staff within several of Yale's libraries and the Yale Digital Humanities Lab have assisted us along the way.

We are profoundly grateful to David W. Blight, who leads the GLC and whose vision and ambition have propelled this volume and our Group

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-83062-1 — Fighting Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
Edited by Genevieve LeBaron , Jessica R. Pliley , David W. Blight
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Acknowledgments

xxiii

from the start. David is a mentor and friend to many in our group. He is a public intellectual, meticulous and ambitious scholar, accessible writer, and brilliant storyteller; in other words, a powerful model of the scholar and activist that many of us would like to be. This Group and book simply wouldn't have happened without him. And without his encouragement and generosity, we wouldn't be the scholars we are today.

Genevieve LeBaron and Jessica R. Pliley

Abbreviations

CIW	Coalition of Immokalee Workers
GEMS	Global Estimates of Modern Slavery
GLC	Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at Yale University
GSI	Global Slavery Index
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TIP Report	Trafficking in Persons Report
TVPA	US Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UK	United Kingdom