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Why Would Someone Agree to Bonded Labor?

Agreeing to bonded labor is a horrible way to get something or go somewhere. Even though agreeing to bonded slavery will eventually pay off, it takes way too long to become free again. People should not just agree to bonded slavery because that is supposedly the only way. According to Wikipedia, “Bonded slavery is a debt bondage were a person pledges their services or labor to pay off their debt.” Debt bondage happened a lot in the olden days like when there was famine or a disease going around that eventually wipe out an entire town. Because all the rich people leave that area trying to survive, than the lower class or “peasants” would ask if they could take them too if they were to work for them for a certain amount of time. A large example of this is when the Titanic left from England. The poor people would ask the rich if they can take them with them if they are their servant for a time period because they want to get to America so they can have a new start. Overall bonded labor has been taken way too far. In the past the person didn't have to spend their entire life and their children’s entire trying to pay off their small debt.

Why would someone even agree to bonded labor even though he has to spend years of his life just to repay even the smallest of amount of money? According to endslaverynow.org, the article “Bonded Labor” says that bonded labor was a form of labor to exploit the workers. For instance, a laborer may begin with an initial debt of $200. While working and unable to leave, this worker needs a shelter, food and water. The employer tacks on $25 per day to the debt to cover those expenses. Consequently, the employee only grows his debt while continuing to labor for his debtor, and repayment is impossible.” So this quote right here shows how people are trapped by bonded labor for few years or for a few generations. In other words the owners tries to hold on to the worker as long as possible while making excuses so they can extend their stay. But this still doesn’t say why someone would join this type of slavery. Maybe because the owner says that they are only going to work for a few months. This \ is without how much they the owners charge for food and shelter. Even know they feed them very little and the shelter is very poor they still charge a very high price while the worker gets paid a very low wage.

Why would someone be accepted to be put into bonded labor? For an example, in this article by Ian Urbina they talk about bonded sea slaves. “Lang Long’s ordeal began in the back of a truck. After watching his younger siblings go hungry because their family’s rice patch in Cambodia could not provide for everyone, he accepted a trafficker’s offer to travel across the Thai border for a construction job.” This is why people would join bonded labor (Urbina, 2015, P.1). So since Lang Long’s rice farm failed and his family was starving he chose to get another job to try to help support his family. Jobs are rare in Cambodia, so he had to accept the conditions of the trafficker so he can get to the construction jobs thats across the border. One thing that Lang Long didn’t know is that he would have to serve as a sea slave for a few years until he was let free.

Some people may say that paying off debt with physical labor isn’t that bad. But if anyone leaves their family saying they are off to start their new job and then get sucked into bonded labor no matter what your can do. You just practically abandoned your family for a either a few months or a few years. So why would someone really want to be put into bonded labor? I’m still confused, especially on Lang Long’s case how he left his family farm to get a job but yet didn’t return until years later. How did this benefit his family when he was still in bonded labor? From a debt from even $100 the owner will still make someone stay there for years on end. As an example, Lang Long was in bonded labor for a couple years. So for those couple of years how does he help his family? He can’t the owner pays them just enough to be able to say you will be free once again. But also remember that Lang Long did years of work just to cross the border between Cambodia and Thailand. So what happens to the people that aren’t just in small debt?

So with all this information really why would someone within this era really put himself into a brutal, dirty, smelly, unsafe work environment? Is it really worth it if you can avoid it? How we used animals before machinery was created is better than how these workers are being treated. According to Ian Urbina this is how the workers were treated.

“Meals on board consist of a once-daily bowl of rice, flecked with boiled squid or other throwaway fish. In the galley, the wheel room and elsewhere, countertops crawl with roaches. The toilet is a removable wooden floorboard on deck. At night, vermin clean the boys’ unwashed plates. The ship’s mangy dog barely lifts her head when rats, which roam all over the ship, eat from her bowl.Crew members tend to sleep in two-hour snatches, packed into an intensely hot crawl space. Too many bodies share the same air, with fishing-net hammocks hanging from a ceiling that is less than five feet above the floor. Deafening, the engine turbines throb incessantly, shaking the ship’s wooden deck. Every so often, the engine coughs a black cloud of acrid fumes into the sleeping quarters.”

With all of these condition could work at 100% and be healthy. So overall this is why someone would or would not join bond labor.

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