

Britain / Prostitution

Marxism versus moralism

The recent murder of five women in Suffolk has underlined the vulnerability of sex workers.

Helen Ward argues that those who see it as simply violence against women misunderstand fundamental features of women's oppression under capitalism

"PROSTITUTION IS only a particular expression of the universal prostitution of the worker".¹ This quote from Marx might suggest that prostitution is a relatively straightforward issue for socialists, but instead it has proved a real challenge, with leftist positions ranging from advocating repression and abolition on the one hand, to decriminalisation and union organisation on the other.

Much of the current debate centres on whether prostitution can really be considered as work or whether it is best dealt with as a form of violence against women.² The two positions lead to diametrically opposed strategies. If prostitution is work, then fighting for self-organisation and rights are a key part of the socialist response. If, on the other hand, prostitution is violence and slavery then the participants are victims who need rescuing.

Kathleen Barry, organiser of an international feminist conference on trafficking in 1983, expressed the latter view when she refused to debate sex worker activist Margo St. James, arguing that "the conference was feminist and did not support the institution of prostitution . . . (it would be) . . . inappropriate to discuss sexual slavery with prostitute women".³ More recently writer Julie Bindell has echoed this view, writing about the GMB decision to start a branch for sex workers, she argues, "how can a union on the one hand campaign against violence against women, but unionise it at the same time? Rather than society pretending it is a career choice, prostitution needs to be exposed for what it is – violence against women. Unionisation cannot protect the women in this vile industry".⁴ Most recently the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP) has entered the fray and declared that prostitution is violence against women [see page 17].

A Marxist position on prostitution

Prostitution is the exchange of sex for money. However, since there are other situations in which such an exchange occurs – in some forms of marriage, for example – most dictionary definitions go a little further. In the *Oxford English Dictionary* a prostitute is "a woman who offers her body to indiscriminate sexual intercourse especially for hire".

A more extensive definition is offered by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, where prostitution is the "practice of engaging in sexual activity, usually with individuals other than a spouse or friend, in exchange for immediate payment in money or other valuables." These definitions add "indiscriminate" or "other than a spouse" to try and encapsulate what we all intrinsically understand – prostitution is sex outside of those relationships where sex is usually permitted.

The term prostitution appears to unify many different people and relationships over time. The hetaerae of ancient Greece, the Japanese geisha, the European courtesan, the street walkers of Soho and the brothel workers of Mumbai, all share the label of prostitute. This appearance of a timeless occupation, contained in the cliché of the "oldest profession", shields many different social relations. The thing these women share is that they perform sex outside of the private family sphere where sex is linked to reproduction and maintenance of a household.

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This is important since it gets to the heart of the matter – prostitution can only be understood at all in relation to monogamous marriage. As Engels put it, “Monogamy and prostitution are indeed contradictions, but inseparable contradictions, poles of the same state of society”.⁵ Bebel, writing on women and socialism in the 1880s explained, “Prostitution thus becomes a necessary social institution of bourgeois society, just as the police, the standing army, the church and the capitalist class”.⁶

To understand this dialectic, the “interpenetration of opposites”, we need to look first at the essence of prostitution in capitalism, consider how it varies according to the mode of production, and then return to explore the relationship between private and public sex and the oppression of women.

Prostitution: the commodity

Like most commercial transactions under capitalism, prostitution is based on the sale and purchase of a commodity. In common parlance, a prostitute “sells her body”. But this is a misnomer, since at the end of the transaction the client does not “own” the prostitute’s body. What the client buys is a sexual service. Some feminists and socialists object to the idea that the woman sells a service rather than her body, but, recognising that it is temporary, describe it as the sale of the use of her body for their sexual pleasure.

But even that is misleading. If you go to any place where prostitution takes place, whether it is on the streets, in a brothel or through an agency, there will be a tariff. It is not generally written down because of legal restrictions, but it is clear: there is a price for masturbation, usually higher prices for oral, vaginal or anal sex. Some escorts will charge by the hour, but will also clearly state what sexual services are, and which are not, included in that fee. The commodity is sex – or rather a particular sexual service.

Turning sex into a commodity is regarded by many people as the fundamental “sin” of prostitution. Mhairi McAlpine from the SSP writes, “prostitution is the commodification of sexual relations, taking it out of the sphere of mutual pleasure and into the domain of the market.”⁷ I have had similar discussions with many comrades over the years – surely such an intimate behaviour should never be turned into an alienable thing to be bought and sold? This rather romantic view of sex as mutual pleasure is itself an abstraction from social relations. Under capitalism, and previous class societies, sex is highly regulated and has an economic dimension. The regulation is based on the need to defend private property through inheritance.

In the *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels outlined how monogamy (for women) arose alongside private property. The monogamous family “develops out of the pairing family . . . It is based on the supremacy of the man, the express purpose being to produce children of undisputed paternity; such paternity is demanded because these children are later to come into their father’s property as his natural heirs.”⁸

The exact form of the family has changed through different forms of class society, but the centrality of female

monogamy has not, which explains the extensive and consistent laws, religions and customs that ensure its defence. It was not prostitution that took sex “out of the sphere of mutual pleasure” but the monogamy required to defend private property. Daughters became property to be bought and sold for their capacity to produce heirs in return for deals of land, cattle or cash.⁹

Prostitution emerged from the same process, since no society yet has been able to enforce monogamy for men as well as women. Demosthenes, a Greek orator, summed up the attitude to women in the slave society of Athens, “We resort to courtesans for our pleasure, keep concubines to look after our daily needs, and marry wives to give us legitimate children and be the faithful guardians of our hearth.”¹⁰

But is this view not outdated? Surely in the 21st century sex is predominantly for mutual pleasure rather than production of heirs or transfer of cash? There has been considerable sexual liberalisation over the past 40 years, due to changes in the social position of women and the development of effective contraception, and prostitution is not the only form of non-marital sex. However, social structures still favour monogamous heterosexual relationships in relation to property, and women worldwide are still condemned as whores and sluts if they openly seek non-monogamous sex.

The class structure of prostitution

On the surface prostitution does not appear to fit into standard economic categories. One historian writes:

“. . . the prostitute does not behave like any other commodity; she occupies a unique place, at the centre of an extraordinary and nefarious economic system. She is able to represent all the terms within capitalist production; she is the human labour, the object of exchange and the seller at once. She stands as worker, commodity and capitalist and blurs the categories of bourgeois economics in the same way as she tests the boundaries of bourgeois morality . . . As a commodity, therefore, the prostitute both encapsulates and distorts all the classic features of bourgeois economics.”¹¹

While it is wrong to suggest that a single prostitute can represent all the elements of capitalist production, it does point to the many different roles that prostitutes can play. They can indeed appear as worker, commodity, seller and even capitalist, but this is because different prostitutes can have different relationships to the commodity they sell.

Commodities have both a use value and an exchange value. The use value in prostitution is satisfying the client’s desire, the provision of sexual pleasure. The exchange value is the social labour embodied in that commodity, that is, the physical and mental labour involved in providing the sexual service. This is equivalent to what the sex worker needs to reproduce herself under socially average conditions for the industry.

Like many service and some productive industries under capitalism, prostitution takes place in a variety of ways, with the prostitute having a different relation-

ship to the means of production and to the purchaser in each. Many prostitutes are wage labourers: they are employed by an individual or business and required to work certain hours. This is the case for millions of women working in brothels, saunas and bars across the world. They are paid a wage based on the hours worked or on the numbers of clients seen.

In this case they are not selling the sexual service directly to the client – they sell their labour power to the boss. This boss (a pimp, madame, brothel or bar owner) takes money from the clients and passes a proportion back to the sex worker (or requires a proportion of the sex workers' fee to be handed over to them). It is actually in this sense that the sex worker, like all other wage labourers, can most be said to “sell their body” in that they sell their capacity to labour. However, as Marx explains in Volume 1 of *Capital*, this is not the same as selling oneself:

“... the owner of the labour power [worker – HW] should sell it only for a definite period, for if he were to sell it rump and stump, once for all, he would be selling himself, converting himself from a free man into a slave, from an owner of a commodity into a commodity.”¹²

There are indeed sex workers who exist in such conditions of slavery – where they are sold and bought as commodities themselves, and then put to work for the

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slave-owners. The revival of this modern slavery, mostly reported in relation to trafficking of people, is not exclusive to prostitution but exists in domestic work and other menial tasks. The fact that slavery exists in some parts of the sex industry should not blind us to the fact that far more prostitution takes place in the more common condition of wage slavery.

Most sex workers are neither slaves nor wage labourers – largely because legal restrictions on prostitution have impeded the expansion of a “legitimate” industry

SCOTTISH SOCIALIST PARTY

The errors of zero tolerance

THE SCOTTISH Socialist Party (SSP) has been debating prostitution in response to proposals to create toleration zones for street sex work in Scotland. They issued the following statement:

“The SSP after much debate and discussion concluded that prostitution by definition was violence against women and therefore harmful to them. There can be no tolerance of it.”

This line then informed a motion they put to the Scottish Parliament in December 2006 in response to the Ipswich murders. They urged that “society, government and all agencies must work towards the eradication of abuse of women through prostitution and the harm it causes”, and later, “... there should be a zero tolerance approach to the men who buy the use of women's orifices and who are violent to women and that the emphasis of the discourse on these issues must switch to the swift identification of men who present a risk to women rather than on the lifestyles of women.”

Their position is based on a number of false understandings. First, they see prostitution as the way that sex (and therefore women) have become commodities, and do not recognise that monogamy and the family are at the centre of link between sex and private property, and that prostitution flows from that relationship, not the other way round.

This false idea runs through their discussion pamphlet. The leading article from Mhairi McAlpine argues that “prostitution allows men to assert their power over women in a manner which is unacceptable in any other sphere.” This will come as news to the millions of women who are regularly abused and beaten by their husbands and fathers with the full backing of bourgeois morals and, in some cases, the bourgeois courts.

Secondly, they begin with a description of prostitution in which the overwhelming pattern is of abused women forced into street prostitution to support

a drug addiction. In fact most sex workers do not work on the streets but indoors, most are not drug addicts, and most opt for prostitution rather than other jobs, the majority of which are also dreadful and pay far less.

Thirdly, their demand for zero tolerance for men who pay for sex will not protect women but will give the state more licence to interfere and harass them. If men are violent and abusive then they should be prosecuted for that, not for the economic basis of the sex.

Finally, they ignore the demands of the people involved. Hundreds of thousands of sex workers across the world have organised unions and demand decriminalisation, toleration and an end to the harassment of them and their clients. Sex workers see organisation as the way to tackle exploitation and abuse – while it remains a crime to sell or buy sex then the industry will be in the hands of criminals and workers will have no protection.

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and have kept it in the shadows of the black market and criminal economy. Many sex workers are direct sellers; they do not work for anyone but trade directly with the client. In this situation they are still selling a commodity, but this time it is not their labour power but the commodity in which their labour is incorporated, i.e. the sexual service, and they sell this directly to the purchaser. They are, in effect, self-employed, although in most countries they cannot be legally registered as such. Some have resources and own or rent their means of production – the premises, phones and other tools of the trade. They are classic petit bourgeois.

But most women in this situation are far from the image of the middle class, self-employed business person. Most of them are poor with few resources, and for some the trade is more akin to a primitive form of barter. For example when sexual services are traded directly for subsistence, such as food and shelter, or for drugs. These people are only peripherally involved in the capitalist economy – they are part of what Marx would have called the *lumpenproletariat*.

And then there are prostitutes who employ others to work for them. Some sex workers go on to run their own businesses, as madames and brothel owners. As bosses they own the means of production and exploit the labour of others, while often continuing, for a while, to sell sex themselves. Thus some prostitutes are workers, some are slaves, most are petit bourgeois, and a few are capitalists.¹³

Exploitation or oppression?

It is at this rather high level of abstraction – of commodities, use values and exchange values – that Marx identified the nature of exploitation. Workers are exploited by capitalists not through deceit or trickery, but by the nature of wage labour itself: workers exchange a commodity for a wage. The commodity is not the product of their labour but their capacity to labour, their labour power.

The exploitation exists in the difference between the value of that labour power and the value of the commodi-

ties they produce during the time their labour power is used by the capitalist. Exploitation results from the fact that the worker does not own the product of their labour but merely their capacity to labour. Even when the wage is paid at the full value of the labour power, a fair exchange in capitalist terms, the worker is exploited.

Roberta Perkins, writing about the sex industry in Australia, provides a useful description of how this operates in sex work businesses:

“Brothels, or parlours (bordellos, bagnios, stews, seraglios) are the equivalent in structure to a small to medium sized factory, a hotel, or other building used solely as a workplace, involving large capital expenditure, high overheads and a large regular profit. The ‘owner of the means of production’ may be an individual, a partnership, or a company of shareholders, who employ auxiliary salaried staff, such as managers, receptionists, barmaids, or cleaners and commissioned staff, or the prostitutes. The prostitutes here work in the proletariat tradition in which their labour is hired and exchanged for cash. The prostitute’s exchange-value is usually half the exchange value of the goods (sex) purchased by the client (customer or consumer). This is her commission [or wage – HW] in a shared arrangement with the owner, whose share is a surplus value from which wages for auxiliaries, rent, power, telephones, advertisements and other overheads, and capital for re-investment into the business (for example, improvements or expansion) must be extracted. The balance of this surplus value is the profit for the owner(s).”¹⁴

As with other wage labourers, exploitation and profit lies in the difference between what it costs to employ the sex worker and the income she can generate through the commodity she delivers. For the petit bourgeois there is no exploitation in that sense, and profit comes from raising the price above the costs of the business.

This analysis is rejected by feminists who argue that the client also directly exploits the sex worker. Certainly in the prostitute-client relationship, the client is almost always in a privileged economic position, but he is not exploiting the prostitute. His role in the relationship is that of consumer. There are many others who exploit her – the employer who may be a pimp, a business or a madame – but in economic terms it is not the client.¹⁵

Here Engels’ analogy about prostitution and monogamy is relevant. In the family the husband has many advantages over his wife in terms of power within the household, disposable income and freedom from many mundane tasks. But he has not in general achieved this through economic exploitation of his wife – he has “inherited” this from the general position of men and women within capitalism.¹⁶

To say that prostitutes are not exploited by clients is not the same as saying they are not oppressed by them. Many sex workers are brutally oppressed by clients who treat them in a degrading and often violent way. The state also treats sex workers in this way, often denying them basic human and legal rights. For example, until recently in the UK, a woman who had previous convictions for soliciting was labelled a “common prostitute”. Once this was on her record she had fewer rights than anyone

LINKS

A series of articles and discussions on prostitution can be found on the Permanent Revolution website at www.permanentrevolution.net – search for prostitution

Bebel on prostitution

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/bebel/1879/woman-socialism/ch12.htm>

Sex worker rights organisations/unions

International Union of Sex workers www.iusw.org/

International Centre for Trade Union Rights, special newsletter on sex worker union organisation (2005)

www.ictur.org/IUR124.pdf

International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers In Europe

www.sexworkereurope.org

Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee

www.durbar.org

else. Future convictions did not require the evidence of two witnesses but could be obtained on the statement of a single police officer, and her previous record was brought up in court.

In many countries, women with prior convictions for prostitution have restrictions on their rights to travel, they are often denied custody of their children, and today in England street working women are served with anti-social behaviour orders which lead to effective curfews for an activity that is not actually a crime. More extreme examples of the oppression of prostitutes include the high rate of murder and violent assault, and the vicious way in which prostitutes are treated in the press. Women who are "outed" as prostitutes can find themselves cast out by families and friends, can lose their children and can never move into "straight" jobs. They become outlaws.

These legal and social sanctions not only affect women working on the street; they extend to any woman found to be a "whore". But it is clearly the most vulnerable women – those with no money, poor education and little social support – who suffer most. They are reviled from all sides. It is unsurprising that many of them develop drug or alcohol addictions and other mental health problems. But the popular stereotype of women who were abused as children being driven into prostitution to "feed" a drug habit is not the most common story.

There is usually a combination of circumstances that lead women to start sex work, and the common denominator is not drug addiction or abuse, although these are factors, but lack of money. The lack of money may be absolute or relative – many women find the sex industry to be a better option than the low paid, highly exploited jobs available to them in the formal sector.

The situation is no different in other countries. Sex workers in India produced a manifesto in 1997 that includes this statement about why women take up sex work:

"Women take up prostitution for the same reason as they may take up any other livelihood option available to them. Our stories are not fundamentally different from the labourer from Bihar who pulls a rickshaw in Calcutta, or the worker from Calcutta who works part time in a factory in Bombay. Some of us get sold into the industry. After being bonded to the madam who has bought us for some years we gain a degree of independence within the sex industry. [We] end up in the sex trade after going through many experiences in life, often unwillingly, without understanding all the implications of being a prostitute fully. But when do most of us women have access to choice within or outside the family? Do we become casual domestic labourer willingly? Do we have a choice about who we want to marry and when? The 'choice' is rarely real for most women, particularly poor women."¹⁷

Public and private

This Marxist analysis demonstrates that prostitution developed as the other side of the coin of monogamy which exists to defend private property, and that sexual relations cannot be fully separated from economic rela-

Policies on sex work

› Prostitution must be decriminalised and those who sell or buy sex should not be persecuted. Remove all laws specifically on sex work. This is not the same as legalising prostitution which would mean creating a specific legal regulatory framework, such as toleration zones or a list of registered workers. Such regulation is not designed to protect workers but to protect "polite society" from such workers. We oppose such "sex worker" specific regulation as it gives the state the power to control sex workers, forcing them to have health checks, for example, in ways that would not be tolerated in other industries. Where state control of sex work exists, as in Austria and Greece where registered workers are required to have tests and certificates, this form of legalisation perpetuates hidden sex work and state harassment. Forms of regulation designed to protect sex workers from criminals, violence and so on, can and must be developed, as they have been in other industries, by unions representing sex workers once their work itself has been decriminalised.

› There must be no toleration of exploiters and abusers. Unions of sex workers along with equal rights with other workers will allow sex workers to challenge their exploiters. While they remain on the fringes of legality or are actually criminalised they will have no effective recourse to the law.

› For the free movement of labour across borders; no immigration controls. This is the only way to undermine the power of the sex traffickers.

No enforced sex work; within a decriminalised framework sex workers themselves can ensure under age and vulnerable adolescents are not exploited.

› We need campaigns against the hypocrisy surrounding sex work – with sex workers in general unions this will become easier within the working class, but we need also to tackle the vile position of the press and the state.

› We reject the forced testing of sex workers for HIV and other STDs, and the detention of sex workers found to be infected. For women, men and children who work as sex workers, HIV and other infections are an occupational risk, and they must not be punished. Education for sex workers and clients should promote the use of condoms and safe sex practices.

› Recreational drugs should be legalised, with their distribution regulated and made safe. Hard drug use and dependency should be treated as a medical/social problem. This will undermine the drug crime that is linked to much of the violence around prostitution.

› We need to challenge the double standard that tries to deny women the right to free sexuality while encouraging it in young men. This is part of the fight against sexism.

› Any campaign for sex worker rights should be linked to improving the education and training of young women and providing decent jobs and wages.

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tionships in class society. Women's oppression is rooted in the separation of private domestic toil and reproduction from social production and social life.

Prostitution poses a threat to society because it threatens to blur this sharp distinction – taking sex out of the home and into the market. Secondly it shows that under capitalism prostitutes are not a single class. Our programme on prostitution should reflect this understanding, and be based neither on our own romantic ideas about what sex should represent, nor on our horrors at the most extreme exploitation of sex workers.

Sex workers organise

Over recent years there has been a huge growth in organisations of sex workers. In North America and Europe many of these organisations grew out of women's groups and other social movements, but have had to break with feminist positions on sex work in order to campaign for their rights. Many feminists want to abolish prostitution, regarding it simply as violence against women. They argue that it must be eliminated through sanctions against managers and clients and rescue missions to save prostitutes. Indeed many will not talk of prostitutes, let alone sex workers, but use the term "prostituted women". This particular form of patronising language reveals their attitude – they regard sex workers as dupes, and accord them no role in liberating themselves from any oppression or exploitation they endure.

So sharp is this dispute between the feminist saviours and the sex workers' rights groups that they will rarely share a platform. The Women's Library in London recently organised an exhibition on prostitution, and did not allow any representations from sex workers' organisations, leading to protests outside from the International Union of Sex Workers (IUSW).¹⁸ The most extreme position is taken by the writer Julie Burchill, who wrote, "Prostitution is the supreme triumph of capitalism. When the sex war is won prostitutes should be shot as collaborators for their terrible betrayal of all women, for the moral tarring and feathering they give indigenous women who have had the bad luck to live in what they make their humping ground."¹⁹

Sex workers' organisations have been criticised for romanticising prostitution, and representing only the middle class "professionals". But in India, a mass organisation of sex workers exists and takes exactly the same positions. The Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (or "Durbar", which in Bengali means unstoppable or indomitable) is based in West Bengal, India, and grew out of the Sonagachi AIDS prevention initiative. Durbar has 65,000 members, working in some of the poorest areas of the country:

"Durbar is explicit about its political objective of fighting for recognition of sex work as work and, of sex workers as workers and for a secure social existence of sex workers and their children. Durbar demands decrimi-

nalisation of adult sex work and seeks to reform laws that restrict the human rights of sex workers, that tend to criminalise them and limit their enfranchisement as full citizens."²⁰

Their 1997 manifesto, cited earlier, reveals an understanding of sexual oppression that would put many socialists to shame:

"Ownership of private property and maintenance of patriarchy necessitates a control over women's reproduction. Since property lines are maintained through legitimate heirs, and sexual intercourse between men and women alone carry the potential for procreation, capitalist patriarchy sanctions only such couplings. Sex is seen primarily, and almost exclusively, as an instrument for reproduction, negating all aspects of pleasure and desire intrinsic to it . . . The young men who look for sexual initiation, the married men who seek the company of 'other' women, the migrant labourers separated from their wives who try to find warmth and companionship in the red light area, cannot all be dismissed as wicked and perverted. To do that will amount to dismissing a whole history of human search for desire, intimacy and need."

Organisations of sex workers are a key to fighting exploitation and oppression. Given the class divisions within prostitution these organisations need to be run for and by those sex workers who are employed or who work for themselves, and not be left to be recruiting grounds for those who want to employ and exploit others.

The unions and community organisations of sex workers need to have strong links with other workers' organisations – as part of a united and strong workers' movement they will be better able to fight against widespread prejudice.

Over the past decade several unions have agreed to organise and represent sex workers. In the UK, the International Union of Sex Workers (IUSW) persuaded the general union the GMB to form a sex industry branch in Soho, and it has successfully unionised a brothel and negotiated recognition agreements in lap dancing clubs. Sex workers are also included in general unions in German (Verdi) and the Netherlands (FNV).²¹

Prostitution and socialism

The life of sex workers is often hard and dangerous, not least because it is criminalised and repressed exposing sex workers to abuse from pimps and clients. Many sex workers are unhappy with their work and would like to leave if there were realistic alternatives. But is a form of alienated labour like others under capitalism.

Prostitution, in this form, would not exist in a socialist society, neither would the family nor work in their current form. There may well be specialist sexual entertainers and experts, but freed from the links with private property and state sanctified or enforced monogamy, sexual relations will evolve in ways that we can only

speculate about. The key thing is that the distinction between public and private, in the sense of public social work and private reproduction, will have to dissolve and in that process women will be truly liberated.

About the author

Helen Ward, a PRN supporter, is a public health doctor and researcher who has worked with sex workers in London and Europe for over 20 years. Together with anthropologist Sophie Day she has researched HIV and other health risks, occupational mobility and life course in sex work, and established one of the largest projects for sex workers in the UK. She is a supporter of the International Union of Sex Workers.

ENDNOTES

1. Marx K. *Economic and philosophical manuscripts*, 1844. This and the other classic texts are available on www.marxists.org
2. In the article I use the terms prostitution and sex work. There has been extensive debate about which is preferable, and sex work is generally preferred by activists and refers to a wider group of people involved in the sex industry. However, historical, and current debates about the role of commercial sex in society have tended to refer to prostitution (exchange of sex rather than sexual imagery, for example) and therefore I think it important to continue to use it. I also refer exclusively to female sex workers and male clients when discussing the general features of prostitution. This is because this is the dominant form and most closely linked to general sexual oppression. However, this is not to deny that a large number of men also sell sex. The UK government estimates there are 70,000 sex workers in Britain today.
3. RS Rajan, "The prostitution question(s). (Female) Agency, sexuality and work", in *Trafficking, sex work, prostitution, Reproduction* 2, 1999
4. J Bindell, *The Guardian*, 7 July 2003
5. F Engels, *The origin of the family private property and the state* Section II part 4, Lawrence and Wishart, 1972

6. A Bebel, *Woman under socialism*, Schocken Books, 1971
7. Scottish Socialist Party Women's Network, "Prostitution: a contribution to the debate", 2006, at www.scottishsocialistparty.org/pages/prostitution.html
8. F Engels, op cit
9. Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International 1986, "The origin and changing nature of women's oppression", In *Theses on women's oppression*, at www.permanentrevolution.net/?view=entry&entry=375
10. JA Symonds, "A problem in Greek Ethics", 1901, at www.sacred-texts.com/lgbt/pge/pge00.htm
11. S Bell S, *Reading, writing and rewriting the prostitute body*, Indiana University Press, 1994
12. K Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1, Penguin, 1976 (emphasis added).
13. This class heterogeneity is not unique to prostitution. One can make an analogy with the peasantry, who can range from serfs tied to the land, through small farmers relying on their own labour alone (plus family) selling their products, to richer farmers employing others.
14. R Perkins, *Working girls: prostitutes, their life and social control*, Australian Institute of Criminology, 1991
15. Of course, clients can and do rip off prostitutes by refusing to pay for the sexual service they have had, but this is theft not exploitation.
16. The exception to this is where the family is a productive unit, most commonly in peasant and early industrial societies, where the husband is both head of the household and head of the business, exploiting the work of his wife and children.
17. *Sonagachi Project, Sex workers' manifesto*, Calcutta, 1997, at www.bayswan.org/manifest.html
18. For details of the exhibition, which runs until the end of March 2006, see <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/thewomenslibrary/whats-on/prostitution.cfm>
19. http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Julie_Burchill
20. Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee www.durbar.org
21. G Gall, *Sex Worker Union Organising*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006

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