

## *Part IV- “Prostitution is violence against women...”*

*The argument that many prostitution abolitionists make about legalization and decriminalization is that, according to them, violence against prostitutes doesn't decrease and prostitutes are no safer than when they were considered criminals. But this is not a credible argument for many reasons; primarily because violence against any group of people does not justify criminalizing the individuals or group of individuals regardless of how much violence they experience for being part of the group. Violence against wives and children by husbands, boyfriends and fathers would not justify outlawing marriage or personal relationships, regardless of how many incidents of such violence were reported.*

*In countries where prostitution has been legalized or decriminalized, for obvious reasons we cannot know how accurately incidents of violence against prostitutes were recorded prior to a change in the law, or how many prostitutes reported the crimes against them while they were still considered criminals. Many prostitutes simply endure the violence knowing that reporting the crime to the police might very well lead to their own arrest, or possible rape or extortion at the hands of the law enforcement officer.*

*Therefore, when they are no longer outlaws themselves, prostitutes who previously refrained from reporting crimes against them now can seek help from the police. Suddenly there is a spike in reported violence against prostitutes, which is used as ‘proof’ by the abolitionists that prostitutes **are no safer after decriminalization than they were before.** Yet that is not valid evidence of anything.*

*From the sex worker's perspective, however, being able to report crimes of violence- rape, robbery, assault etc.- to the police who are no longer going to threaten to arrest you, is certainly preferable to knowing that you have no recourse when you are victimized by clients, employers or those who hate prostitutes.*

*Homosexuality is no longer a crime in most countries, yet hate crimes against gays have not gone away. One might observe that decriminalizing homosexuality has not made gays any safer either. Would that be a valid argument to re-criminalize homosexuality? When gays were outlaws, the cops physically and sexually abused and assaulted them. And when they were incarcerated for being gay, they were raped in jail... just as prostitutes are now. Can anyone argue that it would be better for gays to return to the days when they were considered criminals and could be rounded up and arrested just for being in a place known for having gay patrons?*

*The abolitionists argue that intangible harm is done to us merely by being ‘objectified’ by men. They claim that men see us as ‘sex objects,’ abrogating our individual personhood. Yet they cannot see that they themselves ‘objectify’ prostitutes, turning individuals into ‘victim objects’ without agency. We are no more individual human beings to them than they claim we are to men. However, their ‘objectification’ of us doesn't pay the rent or feed our families, while being a sex object does.*

*In a system where neither the prostitute or his/her non violent, non abusive client, employer or associate are facing the possibility of arrest and can report violence against them, everyone IS safer. **Prostitution prohibition is violence against women.***