

# Prostitution should stay a crime

I have a few criticisms to make about your editorial on prostitution (*Gateway*, Feb. 17). First of all you have both represented and misinterpreted the views of those opposed to the legalization of prostitution. For example, you state that those in favor of forcing existing laws against prostitution are committing the error of using "public funds to try to stop a situation which has always and will always be with

Actually these people are perfectly aware of the fact that the degree of prostitution existing in almost all societies and as a result it is highly unlikely it could be completely abolished in a place like Edmonton. Their practical aim then is to reduce the quantity and not the quality of prostitution, as far as possible. Your implied contention that it is necessarily necessary to attempt to limit an activity because it cannot be completely controlled is simply a

You are certainly correct in stating that one of the most common (and most important) arguments against the legalization of prostitution is that "by condoning the selling of one's body, the government of this nation is condoning transactions in the marketplace." However, your contention that the maintenance of the present laws regarding prostitution is somehow tantamount to presenting a false front to the world on this issue is simply astounding and surely incorrect. To pass laws condemning a practice is certainly not to deny

its existence, as you seem to assert. Our laws against prostitution are in fact an admission that there are people in our society willing in your words "to reduce — sex to the level of supply and demand." Whether we condemn or condone their actions we can hardly be accused of pretending that such people do not exist.

Of course you do present some persuasive arguments in favor of the legalization of prostitution. I am thinking particularly of your claim that government supervision would tend to clean up the industry, by regulating health standards among prostitutes etc.

However, there are other practical considerations regarding the legalization of prostitution which you do not discuss. For example, it is extremely likely that if prostitution was legalized in Canada the number of people involved in it would increase, perhaps quite sharply. Certainly abolishing the laws which prohibit prostitution and placing it under government supervision would give it an aura of respectability which it does not presently possess. This would have the effect of encouraging people (including some that might never have seriously considered the possibility under other circumstances) to partake in an activity which you freely admit is undignified and debasing.

If we tacitly condone prostitution by repealing the laws which presently prohibit it, then it will be justifiable to say we are presenting a false front to the world, by seeming to condone what we in fact recognize as worthy of condemnation.

I would like to consider one more small point about your editorial. You seem quite convinced that the proper function of government is merely "to ensure every person is given as equitable a share of the common wealth as the next person." You make it clear that you believe that government has no business at all telling people how they should live, or more appropriately perhaps, how they should not live.

If I may be permitted to speculate about this, I believe that it is your dogmatic acceptance of this view, your firm belief that it is somehow obviously correct, which causes you to misunderstand and underestimate the arguments of those who oppose you on the issue of prostitution. I just don't think you take their views seriously Kevin. That is why you use words like foolishness, idiocy, and backwardness in describing their position. To you the answer seems so obvious. Once we understand what the proper function of government is it is clear that acts like prostitution are outside of its legitimate jurisdiction, or so it seems to you.

If you considered the question of what the proper role of government is to be a contentious issue, surely you would have felt compelled to buttress your claims with some supportive arguments. As it is you merely announce your view as if it were self-evidently correct.

In fact, nothing could be farther from the truth. Wiser men

than you or I have spent their entire lives reflecting on this issue (the proper function of government) and few have ever taken as bold and unqualified a stance as you. Certainly none of these men have advanced a position at all without rigorously evaluating what their opponents had to say and providing as many arguments as they could, in support of their own position.

This is not to say that it is inappropriate for us to discuss such issues or for you to hold the views you presently proclaim. I merely wish to remind you that it is highly immoderate to deal with so profound and contentious an issue (the proper role of government) in such a glib fashion. To ridicule those who do not share your view without adequately assessing their position, or for that matter without properly defending your own, is unacceptable behaviour for an academic or a journalist.

Tom Barrett  
Arts IV

**Ed. Note:** When I read your letter, Tom, it sent me back to my editorial for a re-read as I was quite sure I did not say — as you misinterpret me as saying — the function of the government is merely to ensure every person is given as equitable share of the common wealth as the next person. And sure enough I didn't. Perhaps you should also have reread the editorial, Tom, because if you had you would have noted that I say "a government is

necessary to ensure every person ..." and then assert they have "no business in the bedrooms ... of the nation." Hardly an assertion that a government's function is only economic, as you would have me say it, or "that government has no business at all telling people how they should live," (your words).

I was using a specific instance, not, as you suggest, arguing a general philosophic treatise on the role of government in society. Perhaps you understand there is a difference.

I was also assuming that people understand the amount of prostitution is presently accepted by the government (implicitly) and how much the police will use "prostitution crackdowns" as good publicity, to appease those "moral minded" people in our society. As any good police reporter will tell you, police in any city across Canada know most prostitutes and do not generally bother them (disregard for the law?). Income tax people make sure prostitutes file voluntary income tax returns (if it sounds incredible, phone Tax Canada and ask). The only time police will get rough with prostitutes is if they don't know who the prostitutes are (ref. the current crackdowns on travelling prostitution rings in Western Canada) or if they get pissed off at the individual prostitute i.e. when she backtalks a cop when he's throwing her out of a bar.

Still, perhaps the law is valuable — if only as an anachronism.

## Reynold's protest wrong

If Ken Reynolds had decided to make his morning coffee break the Humanities undergraduate lounge two days ago (Tues, Feb. 22) he might have had second thoughts about his appeal to the Board concerning a possible election practice by the work slate.

It seems that two Reynolds campaign posters and one Spark campaign poster were taped to concrete pillars in the lounge. Surely these posters weren't taken down Thursday evening when they were put back up Monday. Spark and Reynolds are

equally at fault. The critics will probably comment, "Who ever goes into that lounge, wherever it is?" Sure, a small percentage of U of A students do; a lot less than those that frequent HUB. But then; how many people read the Chinese posters in HUB? A small percentage. Will this change any of the results of the appeal? I doubt it. But at least one more fact is brought out into the open; what happens after that is up to the parties involved.

Glenn R. Karlen  
Ed. III

## Tune in to Lydia and CKSR

Since this country has equal legislation this letter is my opportunity for rebuttal to Mr. Klinge's nefarious complaint about CKSR's "forced listening policy."

I too enjoy listening to Radio Alberta, and it was with great interest I observed the recent broadcast of thirty-five speakers at the CAB's lounge area. So now it is time to turn to beef.

Someone paid for those new speakers, and they were installed for some purpose, so how come I had to sit with cocked ear to pick up the harmonious strains of the Nelson's pickin'? The first time the new woofers and speakers were in service it was beautiful; I had a cup of coffee (?) in the machine and was enjoying my first cigarette of the day and lol! Classical Gas drifting through the air and making my morning. Those halcyon days are lost forever it seems.

Jim, can you really study in the Babel of a thousand voices rising around you? I find it hard to concentrate on my Torrance in those surround-

So, regarding CKSR's so-called forced listening policy,

allow me to say one thing in conclusion about the new speakers in CAB — turn the damn things up!

G. Smith  
Agr.

Although I detest the apartheid system of South Africa, I must also take objection to people who try to rationalize very simple everyday acts (drinking beer, reading the *Gateway*, playing cricket) into what they feel are, quote "ultimately acts of personal involvement in the maintenance of apartheid." (*Gateway*, Feb. 22). This nit-picking attitude is merely a vehicle with which people are advertising their concern for South Africa. Why don't they just state their concern directly? Their contempt for a particular brand of beer or a cricket team from New Zealand can only breed more contempt.

It is this type of contempt which cost Filbert Bayi a chance to fulfil a dream at the Olympics, may involve the loss of African nations competing in Edmonton's 1978 Commonwealth games, may "ultimately" cost Joe Bloo his job at Carling O'Keefe, and could "ultimately" cause a

\$25 increase in students' union fees due to the loss of advertising revenue for the *Gateway* (this could "ultimately" lead to riots). This may sound ridiculous but it shows how easy it is to rationalize something into blown out of proportion. "ultimate"

In response to the criticism of the *Gateway's* inconsistency in advertising Carlsberg beer, I would like to enlighten readers to a fact or two they may not be aware of. The O'Keefe Sports foundation has, in its four years of operation, donated over \$2 million to 52 different amateur sports in Canada. This money is used to provide expert coaching to those sports groups with the most need.

Without these contributions there would be many athletes in Canada, possibly of even Olympic class, who would not receive the standards of coaching needed to advance in their field.

In conclusion, I leave Messrs. Johnson, Tupper, et al. with three simple statements. Sport is sport. Beer is beer. Politics is politics. Maybe, someday we'll stop mixing them up!

Kelly W. Kimmett  
Pharm III

Another service provided by Carling O'Keefe is the Carling Community Arts Foundation which provides financial assistance to cover operating expenses for community arts organizations.

In view of this, it is my opinion that Carling O'Keefe's contributions to Canadians far outweigh the implications of their distant ties to South Africa. It does not offend me, therefore, to see advertisements for Carlsberg, the glorious beer of Copenhagen, not of South Africa, nor will I stop drinking their beer.

Bob Smith

Quebec — Land of lakes, Levesque, and Labatt's Cinquante (50) — has once again proven itself to be La Belle Province. As Harry Gunning

yesterday stated, "they are truly a magnanimous and wonderful people, the Quebecers, to have made a gesture such as this ... especially," he added, "considering the way we've treated them lately."

The latter part of this statement was referring, of course, to

the recent publicity given certain anti-French racist shenanigans by our beloved engineers. The point in question is a gift presented to the University of Alberta from the Province of Quebec, with an adjoining statement saying it is to "... acknowledge and reward the valiant attempts at academic endeavour being made at this institution." The note goes on to mention the engineers and their recent well publicized antics, "... no, we do not frown upon such actions, we can only be astounded and admiring of any and all intellectual feats these protectors of moral fortitude (the engineers) have achieved. We can only applaud them ... it is for this reason" the note continues, "that we wish to honour them particularly."

The gift is a 400 lb. bronze statue and adjoining plaque — depicting a young man holding a calculator in his left hand, and an

outthrust sword in his right hand. The motto below is a Latin inscription which translates to "without engineers; without light." The statue is to be placed, at request of the government of Quebec, in the main foyer of the engineering building.

Reaction on the part of the Engineers is one of confusion, not just concerning their receiving the gift but also with regard to its construction. "Those stupid frogs don't know how to build nothin'" one member of the faculty told me, "one of the idiots must have left his watch or somethin' inside here. Listen ..." he said drawing me closer to the artwork, "See? It's ticking' ain't it?"

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**BY THE WAY** my brother Frank has somehow wrangled himself a job at that University radio station, so be listening this Friday at 2:00 for the **Frank Mutton Show**.

# JOE MUTTON SPEAKS OUT

Our Man in Leduc