

What you need to know about Amnesty International's policy on 'sex work'



The Amnesty Dossier

Chelsea Geddes - currently in prostitution in New Zealand had this to say:

"I'm a prozzie myself and I have never met another one who wants our pimps and johns to be decriminalised, or who want to be made to pay tax on top of what the pimps already take. We are given zero social services that would help us to exit; rehabilitate ourselves; get an education and a real job for the future. Instead we are told it's perfectly acceptable for us to stay right where we are. None of us want that, even those who are here by 'choice', because we need the money. We all want it to be temporary. We would all leave immediately if we could. Most of us are uniformed about government policies and have never heard of the Nordic Model. We might support decriminalisation but only because we think the alternative is for us to be criminalised and arrested along with our abusers. Everyone who knows about the Nordic Model supports it. I would give me life to bring the Nordic Model to my country – not that it's much of a life to give."

Apparently it is not new for Amnesty International to ignore the plight of women in the sex trade.

After she was [suspended and subsequently resigned] the former head of the gender unit in the organisation, Gita Sahgal, told the Observer that an "atmosphere of terror" prevailed within the organisation. That 'debate is suppressed' and staff are cowed into accepting the party line. She also called the leadership **"ideologically corrupt"** saying **"there is a deep misogyny in the human rights movement and the kinds of issues that women have to face tend to bring that out."**

(Raquel Rosario Sanchez)

<http://www.feministcurrent.com/2015/08/17/how-to-manufacture-consent-in-the-sex-trade-debate/>

Background to Amnesty's 'sex work' policy proposal



John Dockerty and Douglas Fox, previously Christony Companions 'escort agency'

UK based journalist **Julie Bindel**'s forensic investigation into the development of Amnesty's "sex work" policy provides essential background to understanding why Amnesty International came to develop its retrograde policy on "sex work" and how this was implemented. In a recent article about 'sex worker' front groups she wrote:

'Britain's third biggest union, the GMB, which was formed in 1889, had been persuaded by lobbyists for legalisation of the sex trade that prostitution is a job, and that those selling sex deserve "worker's rights." In January 2002, to a fanfare of publicity, the Adult Entertainment branch was officially sanctioned by the GMB.

The Adult Entertainment branch began life as the International Union of Sex Workers (IUSW) - the brainchild of two academics who were not involved in prostitution. The IUSW - now operating mainly as a website - has never been a union, but a lobbying group for the decriminalisation of pimping. Academics, sex buyers and pimps were welcomed as members of the IUSW, which eventually led one of its more leftist members to break ranks and spill its secrets to me.

In the early days, two gay men were the main spokespeople for the IUSW, making their rather unrepresentative voices dominant in the "sex worker's rights" debate. One of them, Douglas Fox, a Conservative Party activist and co-owner of a large "escort agency" based in northeast England, was also an activist for Amnesty UK. In 2008, Fox proposed a motion for blanket decriminalisation of the sex trade at the Amnesty International (AI) Annual General Meeting, a proposal that became international AI policy seven years later.'

http://www.truthdig.com/report/page2/a_union_of_pimps_and_johns_20170518

Phillip Bradfield exposed more of Douglas Fox's activities:

Sex trade 'was asked to join Amnesty and lobby internally'

'In 2008, he unsuccessfully proposed a resolution at the Amnesty UK AGM calling for backing for

legalised prostitution. But in Saturday's Newsletter, he claimed credit for Amnesty's new draft policy in favour of legalised prostitution, saying he started the internal debate and research.

Yesterday, he confirmed he wrote a report in 2008, telling his supporters that Amnesty's **internal "violence against women campaign group" was the key opposition to a legalisation policy**, adding that he had "caused a rumpus" at their AGM stall. In that report he asked his supporters to join Amnesty and lobby this group from within. **"We need to pursue them mercilessly and get them on side,"** he said. However Amnesty responded yesterday that Fox has not been a member for some years and had "zero" input regarding their new draft policy on legalised prostitution.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/sex-trade-was-asked-to-join-amnesty-and-lobby-internally-1-5854040>

Anna Djinn explains more about Amnesty's denial about Douglas Fox' role in the policy process:

'Here is an excerpt from the Official Hansard Report of the 30 January 2014 session of the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Justice.

(NB: Ms Teggart is from Amnesty International and Mr Wells is a committee member)

Mr Wells: Who else is Douglas Fox?

Ms Teggart: I will look to you for that.

Mr Wells: I think that you know who Douglas Fox is, do you not?

Ms Teggart: I think that, after your e-mail inquiry, based on what my colleague Googled, he came up as an International Union of Sex Workers (IUSW) activist.

Mr Wells: Douglas Fox runs the largest prostitution ring in the north-east of England. He has been on the front page of 'The Northern Echo' and is quite proud of that fact. Douglas Fox was running the largest prostitution ring in the north-east of England, he was a member of Amnesty International, in one of your north-east branches, and he proposed the motion at your AGM in Nottingham in 2008. Is that correct?

Ms Teggart: He did not propose the motion. The motion was proposed by the Newcastle upon Tyne group.

Mr Wells: But he was instrumental in that motion, which went before your group.

Ms Teggart: He was a member of the group that brought forward that motion.

Mr Wells: You allowed a person who ran the largest prostitution ring in the north-east of England to have major input in your policy development.'

Anna expands on convictions for sex trafficking of key members of 'sex worker' front groups which either worked with or were funded by UNAIDS and also advised Amnesty on its 'sex work' policy:

15 October 2015

Alejandra Gil, the Vice President of the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP), was exposed as having been jailed for 15 years for trafficking by Teresa Ulloa, CATW Latin America and Caribbean in Mexico. In 2009 the NSWP was appointed co-chair of UNAIDS and advised on their prostitution policy. Both NSWP and UNAIDS were referenced by Amnesty in its draft policy.

See: A Human Rights Scandal for more information.

5 November 2015

Claudia Brizuela, a former leader of Asociacion de Mujeres Meretrices de Argentina (Association of Women Prostitutes of Argentina) (AMMAR) and a founder of the Latin American-Caribbean Female Sex Workers Network, was arrested and charged for sex trafficking a year ago. The latter network was also represented by Alejandra Gil in Mexico, also found guilty of sex trafficking this spring.
See: Ex dirigente de Ammar procesada por liderar red de trata.

<https://thefeministahood.wordpress.com/2015/08/24/what-amnesty-did-wrong/>

Minutes from an Amnesty International UK meeting held in 2013 show that the International Secretariat had set in motion a fast track process to push their pre-determined 'sex work' policy through regardless of the enormous predicted opposition from members or AI sections:

Saturday 16 November 2013 10.00am-4.00pm

Conference Room

Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA

3. Consultation on policy relating to sex workers

3.1. Background

The Board Chair has asked IISC to conduct consultation on this policy with AIUK members. IS strongly advocating. Note: All to be aware that it is International focus policy, not a specifically UK issue

3.2. Initial Feedback:

- **Clarification needed on who authored which document**
- **Should consult other sections doing policy consultation**
- **Should be aware of potential controversy (relations between IS and AIUK, religious groups who might have moral issues with this argument) NOTE: AI does not take position on morality**
- **Should be mindful of terminology especially when broadening out on international level**
- **Need a clear timeline**
- **How to ascertain distinct transaction? Issue of exchange for food and shelter is hard to track.**

• Would decriminalisation be sufficient to allow some of the arguments to become realised, or would it take legalisation? (* Only two options given. No THIRD WAY, ie Nordic Model)

• Need to look into present state of law on this and the overlap between trafficking, slavery and forced labour

3.3. Response from IISC:

• Broadly supportive of decriminalisation

• Decriminalisation of both demand and supply side are part and parcel of achieving whole objective

• Suggest consultation with other similar sections.

• Karen to consult other sections. Lucy to ask Swedish section.

• Fiona to ask about autonomy issues

3.5. Consultation and resolution:

• Objective: consulting in order to be able to feed back to IS (deadline end of March to be discussed at Chair's forum). This will lay ground for support of potential AGM resolution to go forward to 2014: giving board mandate to pave way for AIUK support. Deadline for Resolution: 10th Feb

• IISC members to take responsibility for getting in touch with key stakeholders (Youth Advi-

sory Board, Student Groups

- **Wider membership:**
- **Give info in advance, with clear documents with a few points to consider**
- **Something will go out in advance to groups in New Year (Will keep Paisley group informed.)**
- **Look at ways to engage with existing parts of the structure**
- **Flag up that it may be on agenda at AGM**
- **Get additional fringe meeting built into AGM to add debate. Pre-working party working party - incorporate 10 Reasons to Decriminalize Sex Work**
- **give people access to further reading**
- **give two sides to story, but clear question whether they support Amnesty developing a policy on decriminalisation of sex work (*Again only two sides, no third option)**
- **Main question: Do you support Amnesty International adopting a policy to support the (Note MAIN QUESTION! Misleading. Does NOT ask members if they should have a policy to decriminalize pimps and johns.) decriminalisation of Sex Work?**
- **Group mailing to be done centrally. Staff time allocated to this**
- **Karen to work out doc and q and a. Fiona to help in editing. Agree draft Pre-Christmas approve it. Ready to send out mid-January**
- **Karen to talk to Liz to identify external stakeholders for risk analysis**
- **Karen to do mapping and send round to allocate responsibility (Karen: Women's action network, Fiona: Disability rights groups, Raj and Fiona: Women's organisations). Staff to help where possible.**

Darren Geist has identified five reasons why Amnesty's policy should be questioned:

1. It will increase sex trafficking.

Under Amnesty's approach, prostitution would not be made legal and then regulated. Instead it would be decriminalised, with limited government regulation or oversight. Decriminalisation has not reduced sex trafficking or criminal activities and, in fact, drastically increases the demand for prostitution by reducing the associated stigma and costs. Even Amsterdam had to impose greater restrictions on its prostitution industry to deal with rising crime. In Denmark, where prostitution was decriminalised in 1999 the demand for prostitution rose by 40%. It has four times as many sex-trafficking victims as nearby Sweden, even though Sweden's population is 40 percent larger. Consequently, pimps resort to sex trafficking to keep their customers supplied with unrestricted sex. (Ed. Even where legalisation occurs it shows an increase in trafficking/harms to women.)

2. It will reduce the quality of life for prostitutes, and hinder efforts to provide protection and improve health care.

Amnesty's assertions that decriminalisation will improve access to health care and allowing prostitutes to get employment contracts and form labour unions are not supported by the weight of the evidence. In fact, because of the increase in trafficking and worsening "work" conditions, prostitutes' health is likely to be at even greater risk.

Prostitution's decriminalisation typically has a race-to-the-bottom effect where prostitutes are pressured by men to offer more for less - including unprotected sex, anal sex, group sex, BDSM and acting out torture or rape fantasies. Prostitutes in Germany, for instance, often put in 18-hour days and live in

the rooms out of which they work - hardly a healthy environment. Because the trade is socially sanc

tioned, there is no incentive for the government to provide exit strategies for those who want to get out of it. These women are trapped. Attempts to form labour unions have failed in the Netherlands, and according to a German government study, very few prostitutes have employment contracts. All of this results in increased exploitation and abuse of prostitutes.

3. It ignores complicated issues of consent in prostitution, where most prostitutes are victims of exploitation.

Over the past several years, consent to sex has been a hot topic of debate - but Amnesty largely ignores its complexities. What counts as voluntary prostitution is highly contested. We know that prostitutes are predominantly from disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. We know that entry into prostitution is often preceded by prolonged and repeated trauma, that rape was the first sexual experience of most prostitutes, and that a majority of prostitutes were victims of child sexual abuse. We know that many sex traffickers groom their victims, fostering romantic relationships with them before leveraging those attachments into commercial exploitation. We also know women who enter into prostitution do so at a very young age. While exact numbers are impossible, several controversial studies have put the average age of entry between 12 and 14; others have found that the majority entered prior to 18, and an international study found that 47 percent entered before age 18. Under the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act, any minor - person under 18 - in prostitution is a victim of sex trafficking. Yet in Amnesty's framework, regardless of a prostitute's history of exploitation or age of entry into sex work, prostitution is considered consensual from the day she turns 18. Amnesty's relies on a troubling report by the United Nations Development Programme Global Commission. The UNDP report is so radical that even the sale of sex to feed a drug habit failed to raise any red flags: "Sex work is not always a desperate or irrational act; it is a realistic choice to sell sex - in order to support a family, an education or maybe a drug habit." Though not all these cases entail sex trafficking, it is irresponsible to not consider regulation in an area so rife with exploitation and abuse. Even consensual prostitution must be viewed within a context of the prostitutes' history of sexual exploitation and of an industry preying upon the insecurities and vulnerabilities of predominantly young girls.

4. It will fuel a rape culture.

Amnesty's embrace of commercial sex feeds rape culture by trivialising sex, weakening gender equality and treating sex as something that can be bought and sold. But sex is - and should be - treated differently from other activities. It is a uniquely personal and private act. Rape is categorically worse than other forms of assault precisely because it is a more intimate violation. The human rights push against anti-sodomy laws was also grounded in a belief that sexual activity deserved special protection. Decriminalisation of prostitution will lead to bizarre (and morally troubling) legal problems. If a client and prostitute reach an agreement for services and the client "exceeds" those agreed-upon services, is that theft of services or rape? If police are investigating the incident, should they, at first instance, treat it as a contract dispute or a sexual assault? These problems are created by Amnesty's framework, in which sex is treated as just another commodity.

5. It is promoting a form of economic libertarianism, typically anathema to the human rights left.

Amnesty frequently criticised restrictions on prostitution as paternalistic, as regulating the private conduct of primarily women. Yet it is Amnesty's proposal that moves sex from the private to the public sphere. It is one thing to interfere in the private, personal actions of a person, and quite another for the government to regulate the public sale of goods and services. The government prohibits a wide range of economic activity, and groups like Amnesty usually advocate for robust regulation because of concerns about labour-right violations, work conditions and abuse of workers. But in this case, Amnesty proposes a decriminalisation of an industry known to be highly dangerous, rife with corruption and violence, frequently if not by definition sexually exploitative and at a high risk of sex trafficking.

Instead, Amnesty should have adopted the Swedish or Nordic model, which has had great success in reducing sex trafficking and prostitution, while also expanding the services for victims of sexual exploitation.

Amnesty's proposal perverts human-rights and women's-rights principles. It sacrifices the concerns and welfare of the vast majority of prostitutes, who are caught in an exploitative and brutal industry. As a result, Amnesty has staked out a position that will be a boon to pimps and sex traffickers, and will do great damage to the human rights of the men, women and children caught in the sex industry.

Simone Watson, a Survivor of prostitution recalls her experiences at the 2014 Amnesty International Australia AGM which she attended in Melbourne:

“As survivors of the sex trade with post traumatic stress disorder, we were informed that we should not refer to ourselves as survivors but as “former sex workers”. What other group of people who have experienced torture were told they could not call themselves survivors? None. Unlike any other survivors or victims of torture, we were informed our experiences of suffering were merely how we “perceived” them. Not only did the board members of Amnesty International Australia allow us to be jeered at and subjected to slurs, two of us had to actively flee the room to escape the attacks on us The hecklers were allowed to remain with impunity.

You know, I was actually there as the democratically elected Amnesty International Human Rights Delegate for Western Australia. The board had no inclination to respect that democratic process, even if it meant allowing me to be bullied and traumatised. We were there as experts in legal, illegal and decriminalised prostitution. It wasn't merely a suspicion that Amnesty wanted to ignore our expertise on policy and legislation, deliberate plans were put in place to silence us. Every trick in the book was thrown at us to discredit us and our proposed resolutions. Everything, from refusing to inform us who we would be debating, from telling us our alternative proposals had a one letter typographical error and therefore would now be invalid, to inviting a group of people, some of whom were not even Amnesty members, to call themselves “sex workers” to propel these heinous jeers and slurs at us. Have you ever heard of a marginalised group of people being treated that way by a human rights organisation? Are others with PTSD subjected to this kind of abuse by Amnesty International? Have you ever heard of a human rights organisation that says sex-buyers and pimps should have rights over the prostituted? Well, you have now.”

Chris Hedges, as a sufferer of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from his years as a war correspondent, recognises what prostituted women with PTSD endure after his interviews with them in refugee and displacement camps in Latin America, Africa and the Balkans. Prostituted women in and near war zones are as commonplace as corpses. He has outed Amnesty's neo-liberal approach to the global sex trade.

Lee Lakeman, the Canadian feminist, told [him] by email,

“In sheer numbers, it is the poor brown women of the world who pay with bruises, humiliation and deaths for this ignorant and hideous decision that has brought Amnesty International so low.

When Amnesty International's 'progressive leftists' blithely refer to 'free choice to prostitute,' do they choose to forget prostitution as imperialism? Third world brothel cities, the tourist brothels sprung up where once armies were stationed, man-camps of resource thieves that overrun indigenous communities, UN troops buying sex from women in refugee camps by offering them food? Abandoned migrant addicted kids and women in the ghettos of the world's cities being bought for the price of a quick hit?

Or are they [Amnesty and those who support its decision] imagining this free choice: the women, babes in arms migrating from war zones and environmental deserts who are bought with rides, food and water or with a chance to save a child? Surely they know how indigenous girls are groomed with drugs and alcohol and rides to the city from hopeless homelands. But they cannot have missed the inherent racism of prostitution that makes exotic every racial stereotype of woman on the back pages and internet sites of the world.

And what of those of us, women of the global north, who have food and shelter? We fight now for the public life of full citizens. Are we obliged every time we leave our houses to face a barrage of men bloated with entitlement of class and race and sex, who sit scanning as we pass for our price tag? Consciousness, in part, knows who is standing with you. We know Amnesty International sold us out."

Once a culture descends into the sickness of violence, once a culture allows human beings to become racial objects of exploitation, there is an explosion of rape and prostitution, along with pornography. War, like neo-liberal economics, sees only commodities, not sentient beings with the ability to feel pain and joy. Making war on people, as well as the planet, lies at the heart of neo-liberal economics.

Amnesty International has, in essence, legitimised the weapon of male objectification and violence in the war against women.

http://www.truthdig.com/report/page3/amnesty_international_protecting_the_human_rights_20150816

In **The Framing of Gender Apartheid: Amnesty International and Prostitution** by **Taina BienAiam**, Director of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, the questions we must be asking of Amnesty are made clear:

'What would happen if every country decriminalised prostitution? Not just the few that have already disastrously done so, but what if every government legitimised pimps and brothel owners and failed to hold men accountable for purchasing human beings for sex? Would the United Nations and its member states launch a #2050 Agenda for Investing in the Sex Trade as a Solution and Sustainable Development for Women and Girls, Especially the Most Indigent?

What marketing slogans would ensue? Might public agencies launch poverty alleviation campaigns? "First Nations, Indigenous, Aboriginal, African - Americans and Global South Populations: Are you Poor, Young, Victim of Incest, Transgender, Homeless? With our help, the Sex Trade will provide you with shelter, food, free condoms and the opportunity to contribute to your (or a foreign) country's Gross National Product. No experience or education required."

"We need to eroticise equality. Prostitution is about buying a body, not mutual pleasure and free choice",

says **Gloria Steinem**, whose pleas to Amnesty were also left unanswered. **"The most successful way to**

tackle this dangerous inequality is not criminalisation or legalisation, but the 'Third Way': decriminalise the prostituted while offering meaningful exit strategies and hold the buyers accountable."

The lack of understanding of the indivisibility of the human rights of women and girls is not new to Amnesty. From refusing to speak out in the nineties against harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, to dragging its feet to include reproductive rights in its mandate, Amnesty preferred siding with countless governments on characterising such violations as mandated by culture or religion.

The Afrikaans term apartheid means "apart and aside" and evokes one of the most brutal regimes in modern history. By encouraging governments to enshrine the sex trade as just another potential employer, Amnesty is promoting gender apartheid, the segregation of women between those who deserve access to economic and educational opportunities and those who are condemned to prostitution. Make no mistake: as long as women are for sale, no woman will be viewed as equal in corporate boardrooms, in the halls of legislature, or in the home.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tainabienaim/the-framing-of-gender-apa_b_8273268.html

Anna Djinn expands on the flawed consultation process and how many members of Amnesty were kept in the dark about the policy and the selective and biased research that underpinned it.

'At a meeting in Dublin on 11 August 2015, Amnesty International's International Council adopted a resolution to authorise their International Board to develop and adopt a policy on 'sex work'.

Amnesty presented the arguments dishonestly and in such a way that, unless you were already well informed, you would get the impression that many people are calling for those involved in prostitution to be criminalised. However, in fact not a single feminist or human rights group or organisation working in the field is calling for this. This way of arguing is sometimes called a straw man argument - often the sign of a poor argument or an ulterior motive. It is not the behaviour we would expect from an international human rights organisation.

Similarly Amnesty disguised the fact that they were calling for the full decriminalisation of the entire sex industry, including pimps, punters and brothel owners, behind phrases like "the operational aspects" of the industry and by lumping sex buyers and sellers together. This means that Amnesty members and supporters were asked to make a decision on the basis of incomplete information.

The consultation was a sham

When the draft policy/background paper was leaked in early 2014, many survivor and feminist groups condemned the proposal. Members were then offered three weeks (2-21 April 2014) to provide feedback on the document, although most members did not receive notification of this and members are spread around the globe in more than 70 countries.

An internal Amnesty document dated 11 June 2014 summarised the feedback and included another draft of the policy. Of the 29 countries that responded, all supported the decriminalisation of those in prostitution but only 4 countries supported the full proposal and almost as many (3) called for the criminalisation of those buying sex, and more than twice as many (11) called for more consultation.

The document does not, however, provide unbiased information about the arguments against the proposal received in the consultation – for example, arguments and evidence for the Nordic Model.

The final draft of the policy was released to members on 7 July 2015.

It appears that this was removed because the consultation had shown this to be hard to justify. However, the other changes did not fundamentally alter the proposal to fully decriminalise prostitution including punters and the “organisational aspects,” by which they mean pimps and brothel owners.

The new draft did not even mention the criticisms from feminist and survivor groups or research that shows that full decriminalisation leads to greater trafficking and child sexual exploitation, and arguments for the Nordic Model do not even get a mention, not even a reference. And every single reference provided supports their position. By omitting the large body of writing and research that shows an opposing position, they gave a very one-sided and biased view.

Many organisations, including survivor groups (such as Space International) and feminist groups criticised Amnesty’s new draft policy. The Coalition Against Trafficking of Women (CATW) published an open letter signed by over 400 advocates and organisations, condemning

“Amnesty’s proposal to adopt a policy that calls for the decriminalisation of pimps, brothel owners and buyers of sex - the pillars of a \$99 billion global sex industry.”

Amnesty’s research was flawed

Amnesty conducted research in 4 countries (Papua New Guinea, Norway, Argentina and Hong Kong) that have a variety of legislative approaches to prostitution, including one country (Norway) that has implemented the Nordic Model. Amnesty did not make the full reports publicly available but the leaked final draft

policy includes a summary of the “overarching” research findings. This states that they interviewed “80 sex workers” - i.e. an average of 20 in each of the four countries - too small a sample to draw conclusive results. Also, as we saw earlier, the “sex worker” term may include pimps and others with vested interests in the decriminalised approach that Amnesty recommends.

A more honest approach would be to compare a country that has implemented a fully decriminalised approach (such as Holland) with a country that has implemented the Nordic Model. Sweden would make the best choice as an example of a country that has implemented the Nordic Model, as it has the longest experience with that approach and has had time and, importantly, the political will to iron out some of the teething problems.

Amnesty lied about who they’d consulted.

Resources Prostitution, a feminist campaigning organisation, confirmed in a tweet that after months of calling Amnesty begging to talk to them about their proposals, Amnesty responded after the crucial vote on 11 August.

Shortly after Amnesty voted on the issue, Rachel Moran, Survivor from SAPCE was asked to appear on the BBC’s “The World This Week” to debate with Amnesty. She agreed but Amnesty refused to debate directly with her and insisted that the show was segmented so that Rachel would speak first and they would follow. They refused to meet Rachel Moran in a head on discussion.’

In talking to a single survivor of prostitution, what has Amnesty got to be afraid of – except, perhaps, the truth?

<https://thefeministahood.wordpress.com/2015/08/24/what-amnesty-did-wrong/>

TELL AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL THE 'SEX WORK' POLICY HAS TO GO

At the 2017 Amnesty International UK National Conference and AGM the internal conflict over the "sex work" policy continued with the defeat of a resolution proposed by Anna Cleaves supporting the overturning of the "sex work" policy. The resolution, below, was defeated by 65.61% against to 34.39% for.

Summary: Re-evaluation of Amnesty International Policy in the light of evidence of consequences of models adopted across Europe.

This AGM calls on AIUK to advocate to the international secretariat board to:

1- Undertake balanced, rigorous research to make comparisons from recent findings between countries where prostitution is either decriminalised or legalised or which have adopted the Swedish legal framework (the latter being countries by which the UK is now practically surrounded).

2 - Use inclusive terminology to represent people in the sex trade rather than the term 'sex worker' and 'sex work', terms not representative of how most people in prostitution identify. The terms fail to include the vast majority of those in prostitution, 90% of whom are women. A more inclusive term would be 'prostituted persons'

3 - Work with survivors of prostitution, to support their human rights and to recognise what survivor organisations are saying about the men who buy and pimp women.

4 - Review the framework in which any policy on prostitution should sit. Alternative policy frameworks such as the elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women (CEDAW), prevention of torture and trauma or ending violence should be considered. To recognise that the Harm Reduction principle identified in AI's policy is inappropriate in the context of prostitution.

https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/2017-04/Decisions%20booklet%202017%20FINAL.pdf?Rb.L8Mxfsk_Qm_hWGTkUBH3YhmhJgRil

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(Taina Bien-Aime)***

“The end of prostitution might be a distant ideal, but it is still far better than Amnesty’s grubby collusion with misogyny.” Julie Bindel





Photo Credit: Lynn Savarese

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