

Prostitution: Oldest profession

by Harris Levon McRae

As much as prostitution is in the news these days, it is not a problem unique to our time. The selling of sex has shown a remarkable persistence in different times and cultures. Before we can come to terms with prostitution and before we can decide what we want to do about it as a society and a community, we have to look at the many factors that relate to it. These factors include cultural, sociological, and economic ones. When we have done this, it will be shown that there is no one answer to the social questions posed by prostitution.

"It's just a fact of life—some people prefer to pay or have to pay for sex, and if there are people willing to pay, there will be people like me willing to sell," says Mary, a woman I talked to on Union Avenue who accepts money for sex.

"Everybody has to make a living somehow. I do whatever I have to do to survive," Peaches Johnson told me.

Officials have wrestled with the problem of how to handle prostitution for a long time. Consistently, across the nation, street prostitutes are hassled and fined but never to the point of eliminating them from the streets. Portland Police Chief Ron Still blames Portland prostitution on "lack of jail space. These women know that if they are arrested they will be back out on the streets in no time."

One prostitute who declined to give me her name told me that, "As long as there is a demand for sex by

people that are willing to pay, there will be no big interference with those who supply it. When cops hassle us it's a way of showing the community that they are trying to keep up it's moral standards."

Prostitution promotes the cultural value that men should have sexual services provided to them on any terms they choose as long as they pay for it. It is very related to traditional dominance of men over women in our society, expressed in various ways including: the feeling of some men that women are property, the double standard for men and women, and the belief that the sexual needs of women don't deserve any serious consideration by men.

A look at the laws governing prostitution and the enforcement of these laws shows how the double standard of male morality is carried out. In a system where women are criminals, protection and justice are seldom in their favor. The social status of "criminal" further exploits prostitutes and many times prevents them from giving it up.

"The only people I associate with are hos [whores]—they are the only ones that can understand where I'm coming from," Peaches Johnson said.

There are many different voices crying out for many different reasons for the removal of prostitutes from the streets. Many people are concerned citizens who see prostitution as contributing to the downfall of their community. Others have different reasons. Visible prostitution is uncomfortable to the men who need to have social distance

and separation between prostitutes and wives. Also it makes police officers who must uphold morality look bad because they allow prostitution to exist. Many people crying out for the removal of prostitutes from the streets never stop to think that it exposes the double standard of our white-male dominated society which accepts prostitution as a needed outlet for men while condemning it as immoral. If prostitution took place only in motels, "whore-houses," etc. then the double standards that promote and protect it would be hidden away.

There is a set of beliefs about prostitution that are far from being fact. Many people believe that only poor and minority women are prostitutes despite the fact that many white females are visible "hooking" on the streets, and despite the fact that pimps many times recruit girls who are run-aways from middle class homes. (Ever check out the bus stations?) There are many people who believe that all pimps are Black and from the ghetto. Not true. Pimps are represented by every minority and ethnic group you can think of. Also traditionally prostitution has been defined in terms of females, but there are a large number of male prostitutes on the streets as well.

As I mentioned before we can decide what to do as a society or a community about prostitution we have to look at the many factors that relate to it. Today's piece is the first of a series of articles relating to prostitution. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write me c/o the Observer.

Street Beat

Our Street Beat question this week is, "How would you react if Oregon were to institute a sales tax?"



Geneva Adams, housewife—"I wouldn't like it. It makes the cost of living too high."



Ernie Wayaman, cook—"I think it stinks. I've lived in California and it's a big hassle because it's hard to price an item. But I know that it might help property taxes."



Michael Roberts, clerk—"I'm against a sales tax. The items that are taxed won't bring in enough money. The people who are having it hard now, their situation will be worse."



Aaron Pruitt, unemployed—"It will happen anyway and we should get it over with. I'm against it but I have no choice but to pay it."



Hilda King, housewife—"It depends on what the tax is for. If the money is used to train for better jobs and to help people than I'm for it. But people are hurting and all it would do is raise the cost of living."



Mitch Phillips, unemployed—"If a sales tax was instituted there would be a cut elsewhere. It will help the people of Oregon, so I'm for it."

by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown

Nuclear strategy impossible

by Paul Magnolia
Pacific News Service

The current drive to greatly expand and modernize the nation's nuclear arsenal is the operational aspect of a fundamental shift in nuclear strategy toward a posture of fighting and winning a controlled, limited nuclear war. But while current plans call for producing some 17,000 new nuclear weapons over the next decade, at a cost of about \$300 billion, little concrete attention is being paid to the one aspect of strategy which is absolutely essential for limiting nuclear conflicts—the command and control system.

Needless to say, a controlled conflict requires an effective command and control structure. Pentagon planners periodically point to the need to improve and "secure" this vital component. But despite the warnings, little has been done and many military experts agree that, in its present form, the complex web of command, communications and control (C-3) can not survive a nuclear attack. Experts estimate that 50-75 Soviet nuclear warheads, out of the 7,000 they now possess on strategic delivery systems, could effectively destroy or paralyze U.S. decision-making ability within minutes.

This is how the system is supposed to work, and how it would probably disintegrate in a nuclear strike:

***Command:** Provisions have been made to evacuate the President and the Secretary of Defense, the two individuals primarily responsible for decisions related to nuclear weapons, from the Washington area in times of acute crises. Since no ground command center is deemed sufficiently secure, the evacuation requires that they board at Andrews Air Force Base the National Emergency Airborne Command Post.

At the most optimistic, the time needed to move from Washington to the air base is a bit more than ten minutes. The flight time of a submarine-launched Soviet missile, the anticipated mode of a sudden Soviet attack, is between five and ten minutes. The likelihood, therefore, that these key figures would survive an initial nuclear strike against Washington is very uncertain. What is certain, however, is the loss of the remaining political/military leadership.

***Communications:** Presumably communications with Moscow would have to be maintained even during a nuclear attack if the intent were to "limit" the nuclear exchange in some controlled fashion.



Peace march in Europe

Without some form of ongoing dialogue, there simply would be no way of "managing" the conflict. The sole communication link between Washington and Moscow remains the Hot Line. It is located in the Pentagon, with exposed satellite dishes placed in the surrounding countryside. No special measures have been taken to shield this system from a nuclear blast. Thus, any attack against the Washington area would probably cut communications between the two adversaries.

***Control:** At the heart of the command structure, and situated in the Pentagon, is the National Military Command Center (NMCC). Because the NMCC is unprotected against nuclear explosions, secondary command posts have been established nearby. One is at Fort Ritchie, Maryland, and the other in Mount Weather, Virginia. Although both are underground, neither could survive a direct nuclear attack.

Since all ground stations are considered vulnerable, the U.S. has airborne command posts. While several command planes are always airborne, and thus rather invulnerable to a surprise attack, their ability to function is limited by human and technical factors within the aircraft. Without access to land facilities, these planes can operate independently for only 10 to 50 hours.

Just how effectively these planes, or for that matter any remaining ground station, could communicate under a nuclear attack is simply unknown. Nuclear explosions, particularly those occurring at high altitudes, give off enormous amounts of radiation which not only interfere with radio and radar, but also can permanently damage electronic circuitry. Electromagnetic pulses emanating from a handful of relatively large airbursts could cut

communications throughout the U.S.

U.S. officials conceded in a series of interviews that the Soviets could destroy the command structure. They say it is "fragile," "very weak," and "it will be terribly difficult to get the President out of Washington." They also conceded that even if Washington were not attacked and some of the back-up systems survived, there is simply no certainty that the remaining portion of the command structure could function effectively.

Indeed, the only argument made on behalf of "survivability" is that the Soviets won't attack the command structure. Perhaps, but it's questionable whether any use of nuclear weapons would leave the command structure unscathed, regardless of where the warheads fell. Further, this argument merely compounds the problem, for it intensifies the uncertainty factor. How much confidence will we have in our capacity to respond when our ability to exercise command responsibilities depends on Moscow's behavior. This situation would place incredible strains on the U.S. decision-making process.

Given the emotional and physical impact of only a few Soviet missiles striking the U.S., combined with the known fragility and vulnerability of the command structure, the pressures to make decisions rapidly and "completely" would weigh down with inconceivable force on key officials. "Respond while you can" would likely be the order of the moment. The idea of "Control" would quickly lose any meaning.

Therefore, regardless of how much effort contemporary strategic thinkers put into the idea of "controlled escalation," the consequence of this command vulnerability is likely to be a very rapid escalation of any US/USSR nuclear exchange into total, all-out nuclear holocaust.

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