

ZEROMACHO

MEN AGAINST PROSTITUTION

PROSTITUTION

ZEROMACHO'S REPLIES

**Men working against prostitution
and for equality**

A network with members in 58 countries

website zeromacho.org

ZEROMACHO

Men working for a world without prostitution

*When we hear,
“Prostitution doesn’t seem like a problem to me,
it seems more like it offers solutions”,*

HERE IS WHAT WE REPLY

For the 37 most frequently raised objections to our stance, here are the replies we propose.

We have the same knowledge of prostitution as the general public that we want to address. Statistics and in-depth information can be found in books and on specialised websites (*see links to the Zeromacho website*), but it takes motivation to find it and a willingness to acknowledge it.

Our reactions are those of men committed to working against the violence of the prostituting system, men who can empathise with people involved in prostitution. Many of the objections we encounter are clichés that seem rational at first glance only; our replies are based on thoughtful consideration based on our experience and insight.

Translated by Regan Kramer

Words matter

INSTEAD OF WE SAY

<i>girl</i>	woman
<i>prostitute</i>	woman in the prostituting system
<i>escort girl</i>	woman in the prostituting system
<i>prostitution</i>	the prostituting system
<i>client or john</i>	prostitutor
<i>visiting a prostitute</i>	paying for a sex act
<i>service sexual</i>	sex act or sexual (oral, vaginal, anal) penetration
<i>sex industry</i>	mass sexual exploitation
<i>sexual tourism</i>	prostituting travel
<i>pedophile</i>	sexual criminal who abuses children
<i>sexual abuse</i>	sexual violence

THE 37 MOST COMMON OBJECTIONS

INITIAL OBJECTIONS

- 1. I'm not concerned by prostitution.***
- 2. I can't be bothered.***

FREEDOM

- 3. They have the right.***
- 4. Men have a right to pleasure.***
- 5. It's their private life.***
- 6. What about sexual liberty?***
- 7. Puritanism vs. free love.***
- 8. Your morality is not my problem.***
- 9. How many men pay?***

NEEDS

- 10. Men have their needs.***
- 11. What about when I'm older?***
- 12. Sexual initiation.***
- 13. What about handicapped people?***
- 14. Some people have unsatisfied needs.***
- 15. It keeps society stable.***
- 16. It prevents rape.***
- 17. Sexual deprivation.***

IT'S BETTER THAN...

- 18. It's their life.***
- 19. What if it's their choice?***
- 20. They make a lot of money.***
- 21. There are worse jobs.***
- 22. What if it's only now and again?***
- 23. Escort girls.***
- 24. It's better than abject poverty.***

"CONSENTING" TO A "PROFESSION"

- 25. Liking it.***
- 26. Sex workers.***
- 27. A profession.***
- 28. With their consent.***

OTHER OBJECTIONS

- 29. They would be better off in brothels.***
- 30. It would only drive it underground.***
- 31. Marriage and prostitution.***
- 32. Brothels for women.***
- 33. Women who pay.***
- 34. Criminal organisations.***

FATALISM

- 35. The "oldest profession in the world"***
- 36. A necessary evil.***
- 37. It will always exist.***

Zeromachos' replies

*"The only courage is to speak
in the first person."*
Arthur Adamov, *L'Aveu* (1946)

INITIAL OBJECTIONS

Objection 1: Prostitution doesn't concern me.

I'm not concerned by prostitution, it has nothing to do with me.

Zeromacho response. Prostitution exists and it does concern me. I live in a society where men exercise their financial power: they buy the right to sexually penetrate a person who feels no desire for them, and, in the vast majority of cases, is subjected to a pimp. I think that violence is unacceptable, and I'm doing my part to change it, with the Zeromacho network against the prostituting system and for equality of the sexes.

2. I can't be bothered.

I share your convictions but not to the point of signing an on-line petition.

What a shame! You have the possibility of doing something to reduce violence in the world, a little less disdain for women in society. You know that the most cutting insult, "ho" for "whore", is also one of the most banal.

FREEDOM

3. They have the right.

We live in a democracy. If some men want to pay a prostitute, why stop them? What harm does it do?

Consider the power relationship. The prostitutes abuse people in a situation of weakness, distress and, in the majority of cases, subjected to pimps' control. By buying the right to sexual penetration, they exercise macho domination using power based on money. They contribute to perpetuating an international system of violence and criminal trafficking.

You are lucky enough to live in a democracy, most of which are founded on the principles of freedom and equality. Do you honestly believe that people in prostitution are treated according to those principles? Imagine the lives of those women whose daily lot consists of humiliation, brutality and repeated unwanted penetration. Put yourself or a woman you love in their place! Now do you understand the violence the prostitutes perpetrate?

Times have changed. Women no longer have to submit to men or satisfy their desires. Prostitution is has been.

4. Men have the right to pleasure.

Isn't obtaining sexual pleasure a human right?

Indeed, that's why masturbation was invented! Seriously, in sexuality another person is involved and that changes everything. The sex act is a possibility, the fruit of an encounter. Saying that one person has the right to a sex act implies that the other has a sexual duty. We have evolved on that score, since women have been freed from the concept of conjugal duties. They have right to pleasure too!

5. It's their private life.

The state should not interfere in the private lives of sexually consenting persons.

The state already intervenes to protect the most vulnerable. For instance, in many countries, the law forbids paying for a sex act with a person under 18 years old even with their consent.

And just how private is it? Even if it takes place in a private place, prostitution is actually mass exploitation of misery and masculine domination. Money cannot erase the power relationship.

6. What about sexual freedom?

Prostitution is part of “sexual freedom”.

Whose freedom? The freedom of someone to disregard the freedom of another, their situation and their desires? Doesn't sexual freedom go both ways? If not, it's not freedom, it's just might makes right. In prostitution, the power of money allows men to buy oral or vaginal penetration from a woman who cannot refuse.

7. Puritanism vs. “free love”

Wanting to abolish prostitution comes from a puritan kind of feminism. I believe in libertinage and freedom.

“Free love”? “Freedom”? You're confusing free trade with free love. When it comes to Puritanism, let's face it, that is precisely what supports prostitution by dividing women into “mothers” and “whores”. We believe in truly free sexuality based on mutual desire and pleasure.

8. Your morals are not my problem.

You're trying to impose your morality. Just because you don't like it doesn't mean you should turn other people off!

Our stance protects fundamental human values, including equality and respect: no one has rights over another person's body, and certainly not to buy undesired sexual penetration. To keep silence about these abuses is cowardly, and people who say nothing are consenting to these outrages.

9. How many men pay?

How many men resort to prostitution?

Too many! They are a minority, but it's still too much. Not enough men oppose the violence of the prostituting system. Their silence makes them accomplices of the system of male domination.

NEEDS

10. Men have their needs.

Isn't turning to prostitution a natural, unavoidable need? Men aren't like women, they have strong, sometimes urgent sexual drives.

Men's sexual "needs" are never "urgent" or "uncontrollable"! Needing to piss is a natural need, as are hunger, thirst, and the need to breathe and sleep. Sexual desire can be very strong, but no one has ever seen a man's balls explode, and no one has ever died from lack of sex. We can always masturbate, and it doesn't even cost anything!

Pornography tries to impose simplistic models with males in a permanent rut, but not all men are obsessed by sex.

It's better to avoid generalising about all men or all women. A lot of our supposed "needs" are manufactured by those who want to turn us all into consumers.

Sexual desire depends on many factors, including age, but not on being male or female.

11. What about when I'm older?

Right now, everything's fine, I don't need to resort to a prostitute, but maybe when I'm older..., if no woman wants me ...

So you'll choose an attractive young girl, because you have a choice and she doesn't? When you're older, wouldn't it make you uncomfortable to impose yourself on a woman who doesn't feel the slightest desire for you? That's not my idea of sexuality: if I were in that situation, I'd satisfy myself. Long live Doing It Yourself!

12. Sexual initiation.

Prostitutes are professionals who can initiate young men who don't feel confident about what to do into the mysteries of sexuality.

What a way to learn! By touching the naked body of a woman who feels no desire for you, by not caring about the other person's pleasure, and by associating your erection with money.

Do you really think that some perfunctory caresses and a premature

ejaculation is the best way to start your sex life? That's no way for a young man to become a good lover, who cares about his partner's pleasure.

He'd be better off starting by practicing putting on a condom: for the rest, he'll find that they couples learn from each other, together.

13. What about disabled people?

What about disabled men? They should have access to sexual assistance.

How nice! So you think they can't form relationships on their own and must pay for their sexual pleasure! If disabled men suffer from solitude, what gives you the right to decide that they want to be machos and impose their desires?

Do you worry about accessibility of public buildings for them? That would be a lot more helpful in terms of increasing their mobility and their chances of dating! Why are so many people more concerned about the sexuality of disabled men (not women) than with other, more fundamental needs for improving their wellbeing and their place in society?

14. Some people have unsatisfied needs.

What about men with unsatisfied needs because their partner doesn't feel like it or can't?

What do you know about their situation? Saying "my wife doesn't want to" is simpler than discussing the problem with her, which implies putting yourself in question. Perhaps the woman no longer feels any desire (this can also happen to men) and if it lasts, it's an issue to discuss together. Perhaps she refuses to do what the man has seen in porn films. Perhaps the man won't suggest things that he sees as dirty or perverse to "the mother of his children". In any case, dialogue is helpful, sometimes with the help of third person.

Speaking of frustration, are you worried about unmarried women, like the millions of widows? Are you prepared to do something for those who are sexually frustrated?

15. It keeps society stable.

I think that prostitution promotes fidelity in couples and keep families together.

Your concept of a couple then is based on hypocrisy! A couple that needs prostitution to stay together is not an ideal.

16. It prevents rape.

Isn't prostitution a good way to channel some men's aggressive sexual impulses? If there were no prostitutes, frustrated men and perverts would attack ordinary women. I think prostitution prevents rapes.

So in your opinion, one category of particularly vulnerable persons should be asked to be subjected to the desires of the violent perverts of the world! But aren't those women human beings, just like you and me?

Besides, let's take that concept to its logical conclusion: why not have a category of persons that I could hit and torture if I paid them, on order to channel my violent impulses?

Can't we find a better way to control aggression, sexual or otherwise?

We all learn from childhood to control our impulses, otherwise society could not exist.

For me, prostitution is very much like rape, it's just that money replaces the knife: in both cases the desires of the other are ignored; the woman forces herself or is forced.

Prostitution is in fact invitation to sexual violence, because it encourages the idea that a woman's body is a public object that any man can take, either by force or with money.

17. Sexual deprivation.

Personally I don't need prostitution, but I think it serves a social purpose for lonely, frustrated or shy people. Prostitutes provide a service: they relieve sexual deprivation.

Aren't they actually suffering from affectional deprivation, loneliness, and a need for social interaction and dialogue? How does a paid ejaculation solve those problems? Women in prostitution aren't magicians or psychotherapists. It's up to lonely men to break out of their isolation and to learn to relate to others!

The more they practice domination by money, the more they distance themselves from the possibility of one day forming a genuine relationship with a woman who could see them as a real person, not a wallet or credit card.

IT'S BETTER THAN...

18. It's their life.

Those women need to earn a living somehow.

Would you like that life for yourself or a member of your family? To be wrenched away from your family and leave Moldavia, Nigeria or elsewhere at a very young age to go to an unknown country to suck cock after cock? With that kind of fatalistic reasoning, children would still be working in mines. Certain situations are just unacceptable; it's important to say this and to act to bring them to an end.

Do you really believe that the intrusion of a stranger into the intimacy of a person forced to perform sex acts for which she has no desire has no impact on her mental stability, health or life expectancy?

19. What if it's their choice?

You're confusing forced prostitution, which is obviously wrong, with prostitution by choice. Certain women and children are victims of human trafficking, but others choose to be prostitutes. If a person chooses to make money this way, what's the matter with that?

It's not about opposing this or that person, more about a system of violence that victimises millions of people across the world, who have no choice. Those that do "choose" it always choose it by default. Nobody chooses between being a prostitute and being a doctor.

Furthermore, the existence of prostitution has negative consequences for all women: the only role models proposed by our macho society are the alternatives of "mother or whore". How can a woman recognise her own desires? Everything conspires to categorise the expression of sexuality into stereotypical attitudes of a sexual object conforming to macho fantasies.

20. They make a lot of money.

They earn in one night more money than a cashier or a cleaning woman could make in a month.

So what? Do you think that money justifies everything? That it erases violence? That poor women and immigrants have only two choices, housework or prostitution, i.e. cleaning rich people's homes or emptying their balls? Don't you see the class relationship at work there? Rather than defending prostitution, why not use your energy to get better paid jobs for women? That would be progress!

21. There are worse jobs.

It's better than working in a factory or other degrading or frustrating jobs.

Have you tried both options yourself, or is that just your impression based on TV and cinema? Have you sought the opinion of a cashier, a factory worker or a cleaning woman? You should know that those women know full well the difference between that kind of paid work, even if it's difficult or not very rewarding, and the violation of their person.

22. What if it's only now and again?

What about those who do it occasionally to make ends meet on a low income, like students?

Rather than seeking to justify the fact that rich men take advantage of women in precarious situations, I prefer to take action to improve social security and guarantee student incomes.

23. Escort girls.

It's better for escort girls with their rich clients.

Did the Strauss-Kahn affair give you this impression? Would you take it up the arse if it paid well enough? Do you think it hurts less with a better class of clients?

24. It's still better than abject poverty.

Women always have that option as a last resort if they're really in need.

So do men! That attitude only shows the extent of how masculine domination affects out thinking. It's up to us to raise and educate our daughters, and influence society, so that they'll have more professional options for a brighter future!

“CONSENTING” TO A “PROFESSION” SEP

25. Liking it

Some women like it.

What do you mean by “it”? Being subjected to oral, vaginal and anal penetrations day and night? Do you really think somebody can like it? Would you like “it”? And even if someone says they do, it doesn’t change my position: I refuse to pay for sexual penetration.

26. Sex workers.

I saw a prostitute on TV defending her right to sell sexual services. She says it’s her profession, she’s a sex worker.

Repeated penetrations without desire: a job? A job like any other? Should we consider it as a job and suggest it to unemployed women. To the young for work experience? To your sister, mother or daughter?

What about you, would you like to be penetrated by a disgusting stranger, then another, again and again, all night for months and months? Not me, not even once!

27. A profession.

It’s a bit like a masseuse except they go all the way. So it’s just a job.

If you can’t see the difference between massaging shoulders and masturbating a cock, I can! The difference is not in the degree (more or less difficult) but in the nature of the act: a massage concerns the skin and the exterior of the body, a sex act concerns the interior and most intimate parts of one’s body. Besides, there are other activities involving financial transactions, like drug dealing, that are not recognized as professions.

28. With their consent.

There are prostitutes who are okay with it.

Is that enough for you? For me there’s a difference between “I’m not against it,” – that is to say “I give in,” “I consent,” “I’ll do it even though I don’t really want to,” “do what you will,” “I’m resigned to my fate,” and “I’m up for this,” – that is to say, “This is what I want,” “I want to do this with you.” I want to know that my partner is on the same wavelength, and isn’t for sale.

What do you know about the women's motivation, about what drove them to prostitution: childhood violence, rape, blackmail, pressure, manipulation, depression, debts, drug addiction? Whatever the person in prostitution says, whether she says she's free, consenting or forced, it doesn't change my position. I refuse to pay for sexual penetration.

OTHER OBJECTIONS

29. They would be better off in brothels.

After all prostitution exists: why not regulate and control it? In brothels, prostitutes are protected from violence and can be medically checked to avoid disease.

Can you imagine yourself or someone you love in a brothel? Not in a fantasy brothel but a real one: that is one where you are locked in, without contact with the outside world, obliged to follow the rhythm imposed by the bosses (more than a hundred men one after the other) and obliged to satisfy the most perverted desires of the prostitutes? If you wouldn't accept this yourself, why do think it suits other people?

Your question shows that you care about the quality of life of women in prostitution, perhaps you feel compassion for them. If you care about their well-being, why not open a door to those who want to get out of prostitution?

30. It would only drive it underground.

Preventing prostitutes from working will only make it clandestine and deteriorate their situation.

Clandestinity has never prevented prostitutes from finding what they want, particularly on line. The living conditions of the majority of these women are already deplorable and frightening under the constant menace of men who could turn out to be dangerous.

We demand: an end to the harassment of persons in prostitution, to their punishment, to leaving them to their fate. We should offer them the possibility of another life. Shelter them and assist them in finding a way out. These women, children and men have the right to another future.

31. Marriage and prostitution.

Some marriages are little more than prostitution.

For you, perhaps, but I find the comparison humiliating for women. A married woman doesn't submit to the violence of many strange men. A married woman has rights and legal and social status, and she can get divorced. A woman in prostitution loses the right to complain about the daily violence and aggression she suffers. Who would listen? For many people "she's just a whore".

32. Brothels for women.

We could envisage brothels with men specially trained to service the needs of unsatisfied women.

Would you do it? (see spot <https://vimeo.com/29131913>)

No! So why do you suggest it for other men? And of course you know that few women seek this sort of mechanical and frustrating sexuality.

33. Women who pay.

There are women who buy men, too.

So what? Does that cancel out the violence done by men to millions of persons – women, children and men – in prostitution? This violence is specific: international criminal organisations that brutalise and move men for the pleasure of women just do not exist. Female prostitutes do exist, and that is also a form of violence, because it is always the rich who buy access to the bodies of the poor.

34. Criminal organisations.

Why don't you focus your actions on criminal organisations and pimps instead of clients?

Why not both? We demand the repression of criminal gangs AND the penalisation of prostitutes. We insist on the responsibility of prostitutes because it's their demand that drives the international system of criminal violence that makes tens of millions of victims among the most vulnerable and poor. Without prostitutes, the pimps would be out of work!

FATALISM

35. The “oldest profession in the world”.

People say that it’s the “oldest profession in the world”.

When you say “profession”, you imply training, school, degrees, a career, collective bargaining... Prostitution implies none of that!

In terms of how long it’s been around, prostitution is actually the oldest form of patriarchal violence, because it is inseparable from macho domination. Some men believe that they have the right to dominate women, to control their sexuality both within and outside of marriage, and to enslave women in prostitution to satisfy their desires.

To state that prostitution is the oldest profession in the world and will therefore always exist is simply a way to prevent debate. Prostitution is a historical phenomenon: it had a beginning, and it will have an end, just like slavery.

The death penalty is the oldest punishment in the world, and that has been abolished in many countries.

And in actual fact, the oldest profession in the world for women, the know-how that women have exchanged for payment since the beginnings of society, is midwife.

36. A necessary evil.

We can’t do anything about it. Prostitution is a necessary evil.

People have said the same thing about slavery, child labour, torture and the death penalty.

If it’s evil, it’s unnecessary. I refuse to accept it. I think it’s my duty to combat evil by participating in collective action to stop it.

Perhaps you don’t want the world to change. Personally, I think we can act against the prostituting system, that everyone can do something: resist, denounce and propose solutions – preferably through collective actions, because together we are stronger.

It will always exist.

Wanting to abolish prostitution is a pipe dream.

There will always be prostitutes.

Laws don't change the world immediately. The law that we are asking would draw a line by stating: buying a sex act is illegal. Just as for slavery, it will take a great deal of time, decades at least, and much money invested in prevention, education, training and assistance for the victims of violence. It will require a lot of energy supported by true political will.

Granted there are still slaves in the world, but the principle is generally accepted in democracies: **human beings are not merchandise.**

Although it was justified for centuries by great thinkers using excellent arguments, slavery has lost its legitimacy, and international politics of state has been transformed. Thanks to the change in mentalities that Zeromacho is part of, it will be the same for prostitution one day.

Founded in 2011, Zeromacho is an international network of men working against the prostituting system and for equality for men and women. It organizes meetings, training sessions, and discussion groups about masculinity.

***If you are a man,
join the Zeromacho network!***

All you have to do is sign the manifesto on the website

zeromacho.org

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***Leaders and spokespeople
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