

Beware “Liquid Evil”

This new metaphor for Evil was coined by Dr Leonidas Donskis. It has melted into a liquid - no longer the graven images of idolatry or the distortions of rational ideology published in manifestos or little red books. It is now in liquid form - wrapping itself around, seeping into and inundating Good pervasively.

You have heard me rail against alcohol abuse often enough that some may have wondered if I would use double entendre to re-visit the pain caused by alcoholics not to mention the casualties of drunk drivers? Not today.

I am responding to an article in today's City Press called “*Blessed and proud of it*”. The byline reads: “This blessee calls what is frowned upon for being tantamount to prostitution a lifestyle choice”. Essentially, young women are having multiple sexual relationships for cash. The men are now called “blessers” (no longer sugar daddies) and the women are blessees (not even sex workers, the language used by decriminalizationists who promote legalization of the “sex trade”). To me this is an example of Liquid Evil.

Polyandry does exist in some cultures such as Nepal, where women have more than one husband. But only polygamy is legal in South Africa. And prostitution is still a crime - on the books. Though it is rarely prosecuted any more. And now adultery has been decriminalized.

There are NGOs like the Rahab Project that assist prostitutes to leave their vocation and start an alternative lifestyle. Some of these are religious and some are motivated by gender rights or by AIDS prevention. The fact is that a majority of Feminists worldwide still regard prostitution as a vice, from which women need to be liberated. They regard men who pay for sex as exploiters (not blessers at all) and the focus of “abolitionism” has changed to penalizing the men who pay, not the prostitutes. In Sweden, they claim that this “sanctions” approach has reduced the number of prostitutes by 50% over 10 years - forcing the other half into other vocations. France had adopted this same approach earlier this year 2016.

But not all Feminists are against prostitution. A vocal minority are pro-legalization. They say it's a vocation just like being a plumber or a pilot. They say it's safer for the women to work in licensed brothels which also pay tax. Australia has gone this route of decriminalization, for example. The fact is that no issue has split Feminism so deeply in its history as a movement.

Public policy in South Africa is changing, with the ANC Women's League and the Commission for Gender Equality having endorsed decriminalization. But policy always stems from convictions; it is rooted in values. Sweden is very religious compared to Australia which is very secular. So whether deep African customs and the prevalence of faith in South Africa will permit its citizens to endorse such change remains to be

seen? Deeper concerns like these should make voters seek out parties whose platform contains policies that align with these values.

Prostitution is a vocation, it is not an identity issue like homosexuality or transgender. It is not about who you are - it is about what you do. It is about the Law, not about inalienable rights. Government can lower the speed limit, set tolls along the roads, raise the drinking age, and legalize the sex trade or reduce prostitution by switching emphasis to penalizing the men who pay for sex, not the prostitutes. Regardless how unpopular policy may be, no one is born an alcoholic or a prostitute. Selling sex is not a right, it is an enterprise.

Abolitionists have two strong arguments. First, that paying women for sex degrades them and de-humanizes them. This is really about *Equality* - that paying for sex really maintains the status quo in which men hold the advantage. It perpetuates patriarchy and keeps women down. Second, because of the huge STD risk to public health - and the main concern of course is HIV transmission. Because the highest risk behaviour of all is "multiple sexual partners". (Ironically, Australia claims that condom use has increased from 5% to 70% because sex workers are so much better informed and protected.)

But when prostitutes say that they want to be normal, have a home, even raise children, you never find that they expect a husband to go along with that! It rather goes along with single-parenting. I recently read that a gender-activist used "to escort" for a period of time. So she can now speak credibly about the sex trade. Now she is in another career, in which she encourages those that remain in the sex trade to mobilize and lobby for their rights, and to organize in cooperatives, etc. - like everyone else does! But I did not read the word "husband" once in all those pages. I cannot see that these women whose gender ideology allows them to "escort" men, to earn a respectable living, doing it out of legalized institutions, *do that concurrently to marriage?* In fact, I read that some of them STOPPED doing it to get married, or went back to it AFTER a period of marriage to support themselves. It is simply incompatible with either model of *marriage* - and more especially with a Customary Marriage.

This at least seems consistent. The new language of "blesser and blessee" is Liquid Evil because married men are paying young women for sex with no intention on either side of commitment or permanence. I would even go so far as to suggest that the ancestors would agree with me that what they are doing is "moral insanity". A nation has to line up its policy and practice with prevailing beliefs and core values.

Is the party of the great church leaders John Dube and Albert Luthuli going to decriminalize prostitution? The ANCWL and CGE are endorsing its legalization. So before long, the sex trade will be regulated - and taxed. You will pay VAT on the bill that your call girl gives you after your contact session. You can go down to the tavern

and have a drink, a dance and then sex. Taverns will have rooms for rent to increase their revenue - and thus of course they will pay more into the fiscus.

Well adultery may no longer a crime - but it is still in the Ten Commandments. We don't have to abandon our religion, our traditions, or betray our ancestors just to earn some extra tax revenue. A human rights ethos does not have to trump tradition or religion. Even if your religion is *Equality*, your views on this issue will line up with abolitionists like Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela. And what will be next? Legalizing drug mules, because they have a right to an income?! Legalizing get-away car drivers - because they don't take any active part in the robbery inside the bank!?

We should not trade our core values and beliefs for some extra tax revenue. We don't want our future youth going into taverns where they can legally pay for a prostitute along with buying a drink - right down the street, in our neighbourhood. That is not the way forward. Above all, the near and present danger of HIV transmission will be far worse if prostitution is legalized. Too many lives have already been lost. Too much effort and resources have been invested keeping this HIV scourge at bay - just to let prostitution be legalized.

Last of all, there seems to be a disconnect between the new National Liquor Policy and the views of the ANCWL and CGE on prostitution. This new Liquor Policy mentions various health concerns - from Foetal to all the related Dept of Health costs of repairing the damage caused by heavy drinking. It also mentions the economic concern - that they don't want taverns to have revenue that is not taxed. But they only mention bootleg chibuku; PROSTITUTION IS NEVER MENTIONED. Surely the health concerns around HIV transmission should close this logic gap?

Let's be realistic. Right now in my town, White River, there are probably 12 taverns where I can go for a drink. Legally.

But the sex trade operates on street corners, as it is still illegal. On paper. But it is very visible, no one is opposing it. The men congregate near Toyota - if you need extra manpower you can find unemployed guys waiting there all day. Whereas the women congregate near Spur - if you need a prostitute that's where you can find one. Prostitutes are not prosecuted anymore, because of fatalism and also perhaps due to the supercrisis of youth unemployment.

In five years, if they legalize prostitution, many/most taverns are going to become brothels.

I have traveled a lot. In Asia, I have checked into hotels where they ask you if you want a smoking or non-smoking room, then they ask you if you want company or not... This is where decriminalization is going. You will be offered the option of

company when you check into some hotels, and in some taverns they will have rooms for rent by the hour. Your waitress will bring you your drinks and then you can take a break from drinking and visit a room with a prostitute. Is that what we want?

When Maputo was called Lourenco Marques it was famous for its radio, prawns, beer and prostitutes. When Socialism arrived, two vocations disappeared overnight - shoe-shine boys and prostitutes. You had to shine your own shoes under Samora Machel, and prostitution was a vocation of the past. Socialists need to take a stand. Their mantra is *Equality*. What's good for the goose is good for the gander. Most South Africans, including a majority of Feminists, are Abolitionists. But they have not got their thinking straight! They get confused. They hear talk of decriminalization - maybe they even think that penalizing-the-men is somehow part of policing that new trend, a step in that same direction? Moving us towards legalization? BUT IT'S NOT. Penalizing the men would move us deeper into Abolitionism - the other way. It says that prostitution de-humanizes women. It sends a message to prostitutes to find another line of work.

Those who endorse the new National Liquor Policy, with Socialist resolve and discipline, have to make a distinction between the "liquid evil" of decriminalization on the one hand and humanity striving for *Equality* at all levels, on the other.