

# Globalizing Sex Workers' Rights

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*Cet article examine les travailleuses du sexe et les organisations vouées aux droits des travailleuses du sexe et leur combat pour transformer le travail du sexe en un travail plus digne, plus respectueux et dans des conditions plus décentes. L'auteure assure que ces coalitions qui se dessinent à l'intérieur des résistances quotidiennes des travailleuses du sexe apportent une autre dimension aux mouvements des femmes et au féminisme.*

Sex work across national boundaries is not new to the world. Donna Guy observes that "foreign prostitutes and pimps were already ensconced in Buenos Aires (Argentina) by 1860" and that between 1889 and 1901, 75 per cent of the registered working women hailed from Europe and Russia (14-16). Between 1865 and 1885, around one quarter of the registered prostitutes in Bologna, Italy, were migrants, and during the 1880s young British women worked in Belgium and other parts of Europe (Gibson; Walkowitz). In India, a number of European women worked as prostitutes in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the majority of whom originated from Central and Eastern Europe, but also among them were English women (Levine). In Russia, in the late 1880s, "non-Russian and foreign prostitutes" comprised around one-sixth of the registered prostitute population (Bernstein 97). During World War II, "haole" (white) women were the majority in brothels in Hawaii. Korean and Thai women were forced to "comfort" the Japanese military, and Cuban and Venezuelan women serviced the Dutch and American navies in Curacao (Bailey and Farber; Hicks; Kempadoo). Specific political, eco-

nomic and social events shaped the women's involvement in the sex trade at different times, in different places,

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within the context of a globalizing capitalist system, colonialism, and masculinist hegemony.

In the late 1980s, Licia Brussa estimates that between 30 and 60 per cent of the prostitutes in the Netherlands were from Third World countries, particularly Latin America and Asia. Today the migrant sex working population has been joined by women from Eastern Europe and West Africa. In 1991, around seventy per cent of the sex workers in Japan were reported to be Filipino, and young Afghan and Bangladeshi women worked in prostitution in Pakistan (Korvinus). In the same period, the red light district in Bombay, India, relied predominantly upon migrant female labour, much of which originated in Nepal. By the mid-1990s, Eastern European, Rus-

sian and Vietnamese prostitutes were reported to be working in China while Russian women appeared in the Egyptian sex industry, and Mexican women moved into sex work in Japan (*BBC World Service*, April 28, 1994; *New York Times*, June 9, 1995; Azize et al.). Besides these trends, research points to Thai sex workers in Australia and Japan, Brazilians and Guyanese in Suriname, Dominicans and Colombians in Curacao, Ghanaians in the Cote d'Ivoire and Austria, Nigerians in Senegal and Italy, Polish, Bulgarian, Czech and Ukrainian women in Germany and Austria, and so forth (Kempadoo and Doezema).

Indeed, transnational sex work has continued over the past hundred years, but the question arises about whether it has intensified, as many will argue, during the twentieth century and particularly over the past two decades. Given the lack of figures and documentation of what in most countries is an outlawed and underground activity, and the multiplicity of activities worldwide that constitute "sex work," it is virtually impossible to state with certainty that numbers have increased. Also, as with any activity in the informal sector, information on populations involved, income, types of activities, and international migration or trafficking routes is imprecise. A glaringly obvious example of the inaccuracies that exist is related to the number of prostitutes in Asia. Figures for the city of Bombay in India range from 100,000 (*Asia Watch*) to 600,000 (Barry)—a difference in half a million. In the case of Thailand, figures for "child prostitutes" range between 2,500 and 800,000, with the age range being

equally as imprecise (Black). To any conscientious social scientist, such discrepancies should be cause for extreme suspicion of the reliability of the research, yet when it comes to sex work and prostitution, few eyebrows are raised and the figures are easily bandied about without question.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, since the 1970s a global restructuring of capitalist production and investment has taken place and this can be seen to have wide-scale gendered implications and, by association, an impact on sex industries and sex work internationally. New corporate strategies to increase profit have developed, involving the movement of capital from industrialized centers to countries with cheap labour, the circumvention of unionized labour, and so-called flexible employment policies. Unemployment and temporary work plagues the industrialized centres as well as "developing" countries. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that in January 1994, around 30 per cent of the world's labour force was unemployed and unable to sustain a minimum standard of living (Chomsky 188). The power and influence of transnational institutions such as the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and various corporations has superseded that of national governments and national businesses.<sup>2</sup> Measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for national debt-repayment, such as Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), and international trade agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) squeeze national economies, creating displacement from rural agricultural communities, rising unemployment in urban centres, drops in real wages, and increasing poverty. Free Trade and Special Economic Zones for export-oriented production, cuts by governments in national expenditures in the social sector and the removal of trade restrictions, local food subsidies and further hardships on work-

ing people.<sup>3</sup> The corporate drive to increase consumption, and hence profit margins, has also led to a proliferation of new products, goods and services and the cultivation of new desires and needs. Alongside apparel, automobile, electronic, computer, and luxury good industries, sex industries have grown since the mid-1970s to fully encompass live sex shows, sex shops, massage parlours, escort services, phone sex, sex tours, image clubs, and exotic dancing, and

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to creating, as Edward Herman states, "one of the booming markets of the New World Order—a multi-billion dollar industry with finders, brokers, syndicate operations and pimp 'managers' at the scene of action" (5). Sex tourism has become a new industry. Recruitment agencies and impresarios link the local sites and sex industries in various parts of the world, indicating a parallel with transnational corporations in the formal global economy. "The 'success' of the sex industry," writes James Petras and Tienchai Wongchaisuwan about Thailand,

is based on a "special relation" of shared interests among a complex network of military leaders, police officials, business tourist promoters, godfathers and

pimps. At the international level, airline and hotel chains have worked closely with the local business-military elite to promote the sex tourist industry. The World Bank's support for the open economy and export oriented development strategy results in financial support of tourism. (36).

In Thailand, the authors estimate, direct and indirect earnings from sex enterprises is about five billion dollars a year. Elsewhere, as in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, the specter of sex tourism has become embedded in the economy. The sexual labour of young brown women in these playgrounds of the West has become increasingly important to national economies, while prostitution remains condemned as degrading and destructive. In Cuba's case, it is viewed as a counterrevolutionary engagement. Nevertheless, State support or tolerance of this form of tourism is evident. Sex work fills the coffers of countries whose economic survival is increasingly dependent on global corporate capitalist interests.

The emerging global economic order has already wreaked havoc on women's lives. Recent studies document an increasing need of women to contribute to the household economy through waged labour, yet having to deal with declining real wages, lower wage structures than men and longer working hours.<sup>4</sup> Seasonal or flexible employment is the norm for women all over the world. Skilled and unskilled female workers constitute the main labour force in the new export-oriented industries—for shoe, toy, textile, and garment production, agribusinesses and electronic factories—where they are faced with poor working conditions, are continually threatened with unemployment due to automation, and experience mass dismissals due to relocations of whole sectors of the industry. In many instances, minimum wage, health, and safety laws are overridden by the transnational

corporations in these new production zones, leaving women workers in particularly hazardous situations. Furthermore, with disruptions to traditional household and family structures, women are increasingly becoming heads of households, providing and nurturing the family. With dwindling family resources and the Western emphasis on the independent nuclear family, women must also increasingly rely on the state for provisions such as maternity leave and childcare, yet fewer funds are allocated by governments for social welfare programs.<sup>5</sup> Informal sector work and "moonlighting" is growing and engagement in the booming sex industries fills a gap created by globalization.

Migration is a road many take to seek other opportunities and to break away from oppressive local conditions caused by globalization. A 1996 ILO report describes the "feminization" of international labour migration as "one of the most striking economic and social phenomena of recent times" (1). This "phenomenon" according to the authors of the report, is most pronounced in Asian countries where women are migrating as "autonomous economic agents" in their own right, "trying to seize economic opportunities overseas" (1). The Philippines has put more women into the overseas labour market than any other country in the world (Rosca). Within all this dislocation and movement, some migrant women become involved in sex work. However, laws prohibiting or regulating prostitution and migration, particularly from the South, combine to create highly complex and oppressive situations for women if they become involved in sex work once abroad. The illegal movement of persons for work elsewhere, commonly known as "trafficking" also becomes a very real issue for those who are being squeezed on all sides and have few options other than work in underground and informal sectors. Traffickers take advantage of the illegality of commercial sex work

and migration, and are able to exert an undue amount of power and control over those seeking political or economic refuge or security. In such cases, it is the laws that prevent legal commercial sex work and immigration that form the major obstacles.

A related dimension to globalization with the expansion of sex industries, a heightened necessity for transnational migration for work, and increasing immiseration for women worldwide, is the spread of AIDS.

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Paul Farmer links the pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa to the social realities of the migrant labour system, rapid urbanization, high levels of war with military mobilization, landlessness and poverty that have been exacerbated by an economic crises caused by "poor terms of trade, the contradictions of post-colonial economies which generate class disparities and burdensome debt service" since the mid-1970s (71). These factors, he contends, are intricately intertwined with pervasive gender inequality and specific socially constructed meanings of gender and sex, creating a very complex situation regarding the epidemiology and, consequently, the prevention of AIDS. Around 82 per cent of AIDS cases worldwide in 1996, he points out, were found in Africa, with women and children

bearing the brunt of the epidemic. A similarly complex interrelationship between changing agriculture systems to meet New World Order demands, fueled by gendered traditions and inequalities, inadequate subsistence, a felt lack of desired consumption, goods, tourism and the drug trade enables the spread of AIDS in Asia (Farmer 82-88). For the Americas, Bond et al. note that labour migration between the Caribbean and the United States has been an important factor in the spread of HIV and AIDS, and that "the development of tourist industries, frequently based on U.S. capital as a replacement for the decline in profits from older colonially established sources such as sugar cane, has also traced the routes for HIV to follow" (7). With only an estimated four per cent of the world's AIDS cases being registered in North America and Western Europe, it is particularly evident that it is the rest of the world that is at greatest risk (Farmer).

This relatively new sexually transmitted disease and identification by world health authorities of a concentration of the epidemic in developing countries has led to government interventions. The attention has produced contradictions for sex workers around the world. As in the past, with state concern for public health matters, prostitutes are placed under scrutiny, subject to intense campaigning, and roped into projects that define them as the vectors and transmitters of disease (Zalduondo; Murray and Robinson). Sex workers are continually blamed for the spread of the disease, with Eurocentric racist notions of cultural difference compounding the effect for Third World populations. Consequently, inappropriate methods of intervention have been introduced and sex workers burdened with having to take responsibility for the prevention and control of the disease. Farmer points out that

... while public health campaigns target sex workers, many

African women take a different view of AIDS epidemiology and prevention." In their view, the epidemiology of HIV and Africa's economic crises suggest that HIV spreads not because of the "exotic sexual practices" of Africans but because of the daily life within which women struggle to survive. (74)

Bond et al, in their studies of AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean apply a similar analysis. Arguing there is "more to AIDS than 'truck drivers' and 'prostitutes'" the authors consider it of vital importance to examine relations of political and economic power in relationship to the spread of AIDS, with specific attention to the disempowered such as women and children (xi). Placing the focus and blame on sex workers does not necessarily address the root of the problem, but serves to push them further into marginality and social isolation. On the other hand, some AIDS-prevention work has contributed to the formation of new sex worker organizations, inadvertently empowering sex workers in other areas than just in health matters.

### The Global Movement

Since the 1970s sex work has been an organizing basis for women, men and transgenders in different parts of the world. But while the emergence of prostitutes' rights groups and organizations in Western Europe and North America up to the early 1990s has been well documented, there is little written on the global movement. Over the past ten years, the main recorders of the prostitutes' rights movement, Frederique Delacoste and Priscilla Alexander, Laurie Bell, Gail Pheterson, Nicky Roberts, Valerie Jenness, Shannon Bell, Wendy Chapkis and Jill Naigle, describe the beginning of a self-identified prostitutes' movement with the establishment of the prostitute organization Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics (COYOTE) in San Francisco

in 1973 and sister or similar kinds of groups in various parts of the United States around the same time. They locate the emergence of a highly politicized prostitutes' rights advocacy movement in Europe, starting with the strike by French prostitutes in 1975 which led to the creation of the French Collective of Prostitutes and which in turn inspired the formation of such groups as the English Collective of Prostitutes in England (1975), the New York Prostitutes' Collective

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(1979), that later became USPROS, the Australian Prostitutes' Collective of Victoria (PCV), and the Italian Committee for the Civil Rights of Prostitutes (1982). The Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes (CORP), the Dutch Read Thread, and HYDRA in Germany also assume a significant place in the history of the sex workers' rights movement as chronicled by these authors. The writings also signal the formation of the International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights (ICPR) in 1985, the two World Whores' Congresses held respectively in Amsterdam, the Netherlands in 1985 and Brussels, Belgium, in 1986, and the creation of the World Charter of Prostitutes' Rights through these two congresses, as epitomizing a worldwide prostitutes' rights movement

and politics. Nonetheless, the international character of the movement has been more wishful thinking than political reality. As Pheterson, rapporteur on the two congresses and co-director of ICPR notes about the first congress, Third World sex workers did not formally participate and prostitute advocates represented sex workers for three countries, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam (1989). At the second congress, a similar dominance of the West was evident. Pheterson further points out in her reflection on the ICPR's work at the end of the 1980s, "the numerous nationalities not represented point to work yet to be done in building a truly world movement of whores." Thus, much of what was laid out in the Charter and discussed at the congress was defined by (white) western sex workers and advocates. Third World prostitutes' rights organizations, such as the Ecuadorian Association of Autonomous Women Workers, established in 1982, or the Uruguayan Association of Public Prostitutes (AMEPU), founded in 1985, were at this point not an integral part of the "international" movement, although Pheterson attempted to correct this omission by including "new voices" in her report on the prostitutes' rights movement. And despite Pheterson's awareness of the problem and her insistence that the movement needed to truly "internationalize," many writings in the 1990s have continued to reproduce a skewed representation of the prostitutes' rights movement and to ignore sex workers' rights groups in developing countries.

Despite this lack of recognition, sex workers in Third World and other non-Western countries have been busy, taking action, demonstrating against injustices they face, and demanding human, civil, political and social rights. Thus not only was an Ecuadorian association formed in 1982, but they held a sex workers' strike in 1988. In Brazil, a national prostitutes conference took place in 1987, giving rise to the es-

establishment of the National Network of Prostitutes, Da Vida. In Montevideo, Uruguay, AMEPU inaugurated its childcare centre and new headquarters after making its first public appearance in the annual May Day march in 1988. The Network of Sex Worker Projects, founded in 1991, began to make links with sex workers' rights and health care projects in the Asian and Pacific region, slowly creating a truly international network that today includes at least forty different projects and groups in as many different countries around the world. 1992 witnessed the founding of the Venezuelan Association of Women for Welfare and Mutual Support (AMBAR), with the Chilean group Association for the Rights of Women, "Angela Lina," (APRODEM) and the Mexican Union Unica following suit in 1993. Two national congresses were held by the Ecuadorian sex workers' rights association in 1993 and 1994. The Max Linder Association in Suriname, the Indian Mahila Samanwaya Committee, and the Colombian Association of Women (Cormujer), were also all established by 1994. In the same year, around 400 prostitutes staged a protest against the closing of a brothel in Lima, Peru, with the slogan "We Want to Work, We Want to Work" and in Parimbo, Suriname, sex workers made a first mass public appearance on World AIDS Day, marching through the city with the banner, "No Condom, No Pussy," drawing on attention to their demands for safe sex. Also, 1994 witnessed the founding of The Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Task Force (SWEAT) in South Africa. In 1996 groups in Japan and the Dominican Republic—Sex Workers! Encourage, Empower, Trust and Love Yourself! (SWEETLY), and Movement of United Women (MODEMU)—were formed, and in the same year the Indian organization held its first congress in Calcutta, as well as organizing several protests and demonstrations against harassment and

brutality. In 1997, with the help of AMBAR in Venezuela, the Association for Women in Solidarity (AMAS) became the first Nicaraguan group, comprised mainly of street workers. Other sex worker organizations have been reported to exist in Indonesia, Tasmania, Taiwan and Turkey. Several of these hitherto unrecognized groups and activities are described in this volume, through the eyes and words of the leading activists.

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While this list of organizations is not exhaustive, and keeps growing, we must keep in mind that each group has a history that pre-dates its formal founding date. Sex workers as individuals and in informal groups have battled against stigmas and discriminatory laws, denounced social and political injustices, and fought for their basic human rights in non-western settings for many years and there are often several years of organized activity before a formal organization appears on the map. Furthermore, in some instances the seeds of a contemporary organization are much older. The present Uruguayan organization, for example, claims a history lodged in the struggle of Polish sex workers during the nineteenth century in that country. Everyday resistances have also been docu-

mented for the mid-nineteenth century in Lucknow, India (Oldenburg) and Guatemala (McCreery), and in colonial Kenya in the 1920s to 1930s (White). Sex workers' struggles are thus neither a creation of a western prostitutes' rights movement or the privilege of the past three decades.

The lack of Third World sex worker representation in the international arena began to be redressed in the 1990s, as the international AIDS conferences provided a new opportunity for sex workers to get together. Jo Doezema writes, "AIDS was an issue that gave new impetus to the flagging international movement by providing an issue around which to organize much-needed funds and new alliances with gay organizations." Under-funded sex worker organizations in both the First and Third Worlds who would have been hard-pressed to persuade their funders of the necessity of sending a representative to a "whores' conference" found it easier to get money when public health was, supposedly, at stake. Thus, the AIDS conferences provided a platform for a revitalization of the international movement, and, for the first time, signaled the presence of Third World sex workers as equal participants in the international scene. A notable instance, as Doezema further notes, was the AIDS conference in Yokohama, Japan, in 1994, when the Network of Sex Work Projects organized its first Asia-Pacific regional conference, parallel to the AIDS conference. Sex worker delegates from around the world put together an action plan for activism, during the AIDS conference itself and beyond. During the conference delegates were addressed by a panel of sex workers from countries including Brazil, Mexico and Malaysia, who presented their own analysis and strategies of AIDS prevention in the context of sex workers' rights. The United Nations Fourth World Congress on Women in Beijing, China, in 1995 also drew various international sex workers'

rights activists—many of whom formed a united delegation, spear-headed by the NWSP.

In 1997, an international prostitution conference took place in California, U.S., divided into a sex worker-only pre-conference organized by the NWSP and COYOTE and the University of California at Northridge. Sex workers representing organizations from countries including Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela, Brazil, Nicaragua, India, Thailand, Japan and Malaysia helped insure that the pre-conference worked to an agenda that reflected a truly international perspective.

### **New Directions**

Building upon the definition of sex work, prostitutes in the state of New South Wales in Australia became the first to gain acceptance as an official sex workers' union in 1996, under the umbrella of the Australian Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers' union. Exotic dancers working at the "Lust Lady" in San Francisco in the United States followed suit. In April 1997, they entered into an agreement with the management of the theatre and labour union, Local 790, the Service Employees International Union of the AFL-CIO which includes provisions on discrimination, sexual harassment, family and personal leave, pay, job evaluation, breaks and lunches, and dismissals. The notion of "sex worker" has then enabled prostitutes and others in the sex trade not only to articulate their needs as working peoples, but has brought a legitimacy hitherto unknown, and these examples may provide models for groups in the future.

And while participation by Third World sex workers in the international movement is on the rise generally, not all regions participate equally. Central and South American, and increasingly Asian sex workers' organizations are becoming a major voice in the international movement. In the former Soviet Union, Eastern

Europe, Africa, and in the majority of Asian countries, however, independent organizing by sex workers is not yet visible. Here, as elsewhere, the AIDS pandemic has meant an upsurge in interest in sex workers as vectors of disease. While this has led, in some cases, to repressive measures against sex workers, it has also provided an opportunity for possible sex worker organizing. The projects such as Bliss Without Risk in the Czech Republic, SYNVEV in Senegal,

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EMPOWER in Thailand, ZiTeng in Hong Kong, and others included in this volume, while not run by sex workers, are committed to the empowerment of sex workers. It is from groups such as these that autonomous sex worker organizations have begun. Continued AIDS prevention work of the type described here could thus lead to a strengthening of the movement, and to many more sex workers' groups worldwide.

Finally, in the global movement, struggles against western imperialism and racism within prostitutes' rights activism continues. The 1997 international conference provides an example of this struggle. Early Internet discussions between sex workers about the conference planning was dominated by those with access in the U.S., and focused al-

most exclusively on western, especially United States issues. This focus was later challenged by other sex workers, and resulted in fierce debate about the nature of an international conference (Doezema). Sex workers from Chile also frustratedly pointed out prior to the conference, that the organizers' claim to internationalism was empty, given that there was an absence of travel funds and facilities for translation to enable Third World sex workers to participate in the conference. From Australia, Alison Murray withdrew from the conference, noting, among other things, that the conference was overly "North America centred."<sup>6</sup> The main conference reflected deep-seated ignorance of the importance, and even the existence, of sex worker organizations outside the United States and Europe. Third World and non-western sex workers felt marginalized, hurt, and angry as promised interpretation facilities never materialized and as sessions highlighting the activities and issues of importance to Third World sex workers were relegated to difficult time slots or cancelled when, due to scheduling problems, they threatened to conflict with "more important" sessions. This led to a storming of the podium during the final plenary session by Central and South American sex worker delegates, who, with full support from other sex workers and activists, denounced the academic organizers for the ill treatment they received. The conference thus ended in a strong anti-imperialist, anti-racist demonstration with the uproar forcing western sex workers to recognize and deal with these dimensions of power and inequality. Such consciousness within the movement can only continue to grow.

While clearly there is a need for autonomous organizing and consolidation of each group's position, within its own political, economic, and cultural context, it is evident that sex workers do not view the struggle as isolated from that of other members of society. As prostitutes, mi-

grant workers, transgenders, family breadwinners, single parents, HIV-positives, or teenagers, many recognize the multiple arenas in which their lives play, and consequently the multiple facets of social life that must be addressed. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender organizations, legal and human rights activists, health care workers, labour unions, and other sex industry workers are potential allies in the struggle to transform sexual labour into work that is associated with dignity, respect, and decent working conditions. The coalitions that are taking shape through everyday resistances of sex workers also brings new meanings to the women's movement and feminism. It is hopefully from this matrix of resistance and coalitions that sex workers' rights will be embraced in decades to come.

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<sup>1</sup>As an example of this careless use, see Friedman.

<sup>2</sup>See Anderson and Kavanaugh. In this survey of the world's largest corporations, Anderson and Kavanaugh found that "of the top 100 largest economies in the world, 51 are now global corporations, only 49 are countries," with Wal-Mart bigger than 161 countries, Mitsubishi, "larger than the fourth most populous nation on earth: Indonesia," and Ford's economy larger than that of South Africa.

<sup>3</sup>See Chomsky; Brecher and Tim Costello. See also Danaher.

<sup>4</sup>For details on gender inequalities worldwide see the United Nations publications: *Human Development Report 1995* and *The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics*.

<sup>5</sup>Among the many who have written specifically about women in the New World Order, see Carmen Diana Deer, et al., *In the Shadows of the Sun: Caribbean Development Alternatives and U.S. Policy* (Boulder: Westview, 1990); Sheila Rowbotham and Swasti Mitter, eds., *Dignity and Daily Bread: New Forms of Economic Organizing Among Poor Women in the Third World and the First* (London: Routledge, 1994); M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, eds., *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Edna Bonachich et al., eds., *Global Production: The Apparel Industry in the Pacific Rim* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994); and Annie Phizacklea and Carol Wolkowitz, *Homeworking Women: Gender, Racism and Class at Work* (London: Sage Publications, 1995).

<sup>6</sup>In an E-mail correspondence sent in January 1997 to James Elias, co-organizer of the conference.

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## LENORE WEISS

### North Lake Merritt Bench Crone

Whenever you get there, she sits on her bench  
wearing a carved tree resin rose and beveled milk glass  
surrounded by a shopping cart and black garbage bag  
filled with acorns, eucalyptus leaves, her bandages of flesh,

whatever she finds gets stuffed into a special place  
of her hotch-potch pot, a crack pipe to catch the first sun,  
water bottles thrown at her feet after a three-mile run,  
souvenirs from a prior engagement

or for right now, as she works a crowd of seagulls  
squawking at her feet for their lack of pedicure,  
reaching into her bag to quickly silence  
one of the regulars,

as she collates night with day,  
biting each pair together until they stay