



**INTERNATIONAL
WHORE'S DAY
ZINE**

commissioned by Kink Out

IWD Zine Intro

International Whores Day (also known as Día Internacional de las Putas, International Sex Workers Day, Puta Dei, Journée Internationale des Putes, Día Internacional de la Trabajadora Sexual) is a day to gather sex working people, our co-conspirators, accomplices, and affected communities together in protest to demand an immediate end of police and state violence, the end of whorephobia, and call for the decriminalization of all sex workers and survival strategies now!

June 2nd of each year commemorates the occupation of Saint Nizier Church in Lyon, France by more than a hundred sex working people in 1975 who were protesting police terror and brutality. During this 8 day long occupation sex workers demanded among other things an end to police harassment the reopening of the hotels where they worked and the scrapping of anti-pimping laws that targeted their lovers, coworkers, and friends. The day is actively celebrated internationally and organized with especially large demonstrations in Argentina, Peru, Brazil, Spain, India, the UK, France, and Germany.

This has been a day to assert collective sex worker power and make demands on society since 1975!

Carrying on in this radical tradition of organizing, our IWD actions must center and uplift our most vulnerable community members. The state (and their armed agents--the cops) most often target immigrant, undocumented, POC, trans, gender non-conforming, drug-using, and cash poor workers for violence. The New York City Police Department came for Yang Song. The Cook County Sheriff's Department came for Alisha Walker. The Prince George's County cops came for GiGi Thomas. We say no more.

We want to amplify the ongoing struggles within these (often

intersecting) communities for self-determination, respect and liberation and rally around those who also face oppression as people engaged in any aspect of sex work/trade. All (sex) workers deserve dignity, respect and should be able to work in safe conditions free from harassment; in conditions that they determine. Like all workers, we also deserve the right to work together, collectively and to form workers' organizations and unions. We deserve for our labor to be seen as labor.

Sex work is work, but today goes even beyond labor to demand we can not only survive, but thrive. Sex workers are resilient af, but goddamn, we shouldn't have to be.



artist: niko



artist: jett george



artist: mistress velvet

THE WOMEN OF
STORYVILLE
NEW ORLEANS



LULU
WHITE

CA. 1868 - 1932

MADAM OF MAHOGANY HALL,
AN UPSCALE BROTHEL FOR
MIXED RACE SEX WORKERS.
HER NICKNAME WAS
THE DIAMOND QUEEN.

BY ARIEL WOLF

iWD 1975



A banner was hung from the facade of the Church of St. Nizier during the occupation that read, “Nos Enfants Ne Veulent Pas Leur Mere En Prison,” which translates to “Our Children Don’t Want Their Mothers In Jail”

Excerpts from “Prostitutes, Our Life”

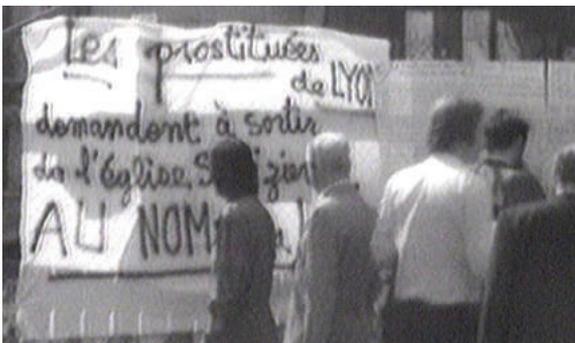
“Prostitute women in Lyons were spending a lot of time, energy and money having to ward off the police and courts, and they weren’t getting very far with it. They saw it would be more economical for each woman to join her efforts and to pool resources.”

“Finally, a woman proposed occupying a church and they all agreed. Nothing could be against finding asylum in a church. So women who could, made babysitting arrangements immediately.”

“...the women invented a prostitutes’ strike by themselves as they went along. The strike spread from town to town until it was everywhere.”

“The decision to occupy the churches was obvious -- once they had made it. First of all, many of the women were already due to go to prison, and in church you are supposed to find sanctuary even from the police. Second, the church is considered the moral centre of the community. By occupying churches, the women were demanding that all those who chatter about morality take a position against the government’s robbery with violence of prostitute women.”

“The church occupations were an enormous victory. First, the murders stopped. Second, prostitute women had gained a tremendous amount of confidence and experience by working with other prostitutes and with women who were not prostitutes. Just that one fact--working with other women--cannot be minimised... From then on, every time police wanted to attack prostitutes, they had to consider that other people were watching and concerned.”



*Lyon occupation of Saint Nizier Church June 2, 1975 .
Stills from 1975 documentary Les Prostituées de Lyon Parlent
by Carole Roussopoulos*



“On 9 June 1975, in the midst of the occupations, the women in Paris made their position clear:

WHAT WE DEMAND

1. Abolition of article 34: incitement to debauchery. No more fines, no more summonses. We propose: non-punitive taxes giving us the right to welfare and pensions, like every other French woman who is a mother.
2. We affirm that prostitution is a job determined by the sexual needs of one part of society.
3. We want to be full citizens.

WE REFUSE FIRMLY

1. The reopening of brothels, even in their modern and luxurious forms of Eros Centres.
2. To be civil servants of sex completely without freedom.
3. To be nationalised.
4. To be municipalised.

OUR IMMEDIATE DEMANDS

1. The dropping of all jail sentences facing the people in Lyons.
2. Abolition of the law concerning jail sentences for repeated offenders.
3. To meet a government representative capable of understanding the problems of prostitutes and finding ground for agreement.
4. Reopening of the hotels in the neighbourhoods where prostitutes work.
5. Enforcement of the laws allowing the reintegration of prostitute women into society.

WHEN WE OCCUPY THE CHURCH, YOU ARE SCANDALIZED, RELIGIOUS BIGOTS! YOU WHO THREATENED US WITH HELL, WE HAVE COME TO EAT AT YOUR TABLE, AT SAINT NIZIER

THE REVOLTING WHORES OF LYON, 1975

this church is the only place where the police cannot touch us

we are victims of a gross injustice.

IN 1975, SEX WORKERS IN FRANCE OCCUPY CHURCHES TO PROTEST POLICE HARASSMENT.

Madame! you are under arrest for solicitation.

FUCK YOU!

PROSTITUTION WAS LEGAL IN FRANCE BUT IT WAS ILLEGAL TO SOLICIT CLIENTS OR TO "LIVE OFF THE EARNINGS OF PROSTITUTES." THE FAMILIES OF SEX WORKERS WERE CRIMINALIZED, POLICE ABUSED SEX WORKERS AND FAILED TO INVESTIGATE VIOLENCE AGAINST THEM.

THE NYT REPORTED ON THE OCCUPATION, NOTING —

"They have lived on oranges, pâté, cakes... and, in their ample spare time, have been watching movies."

(the 1952 Western "High Noon" was a crowd favorite)

I hope they are successful and I am ready, with my friends in the women's liberation movement, to support this movement

...the occupiers were supported by labor organizations, women's movement groups, "home" sexual militants, even a group of Parisian priests.

SIMONE de BEAUVOIR

THE STRIKE ENDED BY FORCE, BUT THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

JB BRAGER '20

THE OCCUPATION IS COMMEMORATED EVERY YEAR WITH PROTESTS & ACTIONS FOR THE LIBERATION OF SEX WORKERS AROUND THE WORLD.

SEX WORK IS WORK

NO BAD WHORES JUST BAD LAWS!

iWD 2018



photo by Melissa Gira Grant

International Whore's Day NYC Reflections

Lift each other up today! This is a day to collectively make demands and resist state violence, specifically police enforced criminalization. The whorestory of this day is militant and beautiful. You're all so beautiful!

In 1975 over 100 migrant, and mostly outdoor sex workers occupied a church in Lyon France to oppose state violence, police surveillance, and brutality.

Their legacy of struggle lives on as sex workers around the world rally today for decriminalization, workers' rights and bodily autonomy! For a world without racist and rapist police! Solidarity will smash the fear that criminalization has created. Sex workers and criminalized survivors, united in struggle, will help us all get free!

Say with us:

No more criminalizing legislation like FOSTA/SESTA!

No more Massage Parlor or Strip Club raids!

No more police entrapment tactics like "John Stings!"

No more "Walking while Black and trans" arrests or attacks from cops and violent clients!

No more incarceration for sex work or self-defense!

The above lines are taken from the remarks I gave at the International Whores' Day demonstration in NYC in 2018.

We were standing in Washington Square Park, hundreds of us, mostly clad in red, carrying our umbrellas high, hoisting bullhorns and signs exclaiming "Sex Work Is Work!" "Solidarity Smashes SESTA!" "Let Us Survive!" and "Black Trans Sex Workers Matter!" I was surrounded by comrades, chosen family and co-conspirators.

We had marched from Stone Wall Park, chanting things like "Not the Church, Not the State, Sex Workers must decide their fate!" and "When I say fuck, you say FOSTA: Fuck! FOSTA! Fuck! FOSTA!"

It was hot, the summer sun was glinting off of rhinestoned g-strings and the acrylic of pleasers. Our makeup melted and our hearts sore, we screamed and cried and raised our voices. It was a messy day, and it was exactly what most of us seemed to need.

Red S. (they/them) is a community organizer, zine maker and underemployed sex working art historian. They are a current collective member at Bluestockings Bookstore & Activist Center and facilitate Zine Consignment for the shop. They also coordinate the Justice for Alisha Walker Defense Campaign, are a member of Survived & Punished NY, Hacking//Hustling and are a founding member of the Support Ho(s)e collective. They formerly organized with Survivors Against SESTA (which sunset active organizing in July 2018) and Red Canary Song.



Sign-making for Whore's Day by Blunt



photo by Melissa Gira Grant

I am here on behalf of the Lysistrata Mutual Care Fund. Lysistrata is a peer-led community care fund providing financial assistance to marginalized members of our community who are struggling. It should not come as any surprise that “financial resources” -- MONEY -- are imperative to our survival. Shifting financial resources is a form of harm reduction. With direct financial aid our members are EMPOWERED to avoid dangerous bookings and accept riskier work conditions they would otherwise be incentivized to accept because of economic hardship.

The passing of SESTA has directly increased these hardships, and empowered abusers and bad dates. It will continue to do so. It will continue to harm the most marginalized sex workers until SESTA is REPEALED. These are the individuals most harmed by criminalization and policing. Shifting resources to folks most in need is critical right now; this is the mission of Lysistrata’s Mutual Care Fund.

It is downright nauseating to see our mutual care fund strained and our members facing ever physical and financial stress after the passing of FOSTA/SESTA while millions pour into the coffers

of anti-prostitution organizations. Those funding them think they are better experts on what sex work is than sex workers themselves. They don't know what sex work is, which is perhaps why they fail to understand the necessity of organizations such as Lysistrata.

Let me making this abundantly clear: sex work is WORK. Sex work is LABOUR. Sex work is a solution more accessible than many others. It provides immediate income to its workers across a multitude of genders, races, nationalities, and abilities. When other doors are shut, sex work is open - it is an industry not of victims, and not even an industry of enthusiastic "happy hookers" ...THAT IS OKAY - because it absolutely is a community of rational actors.

Lysistrata is an organization of people determined to survive - with every right to survive. So I implore our representatives to Cast off [Your] Old Tired Ethics and keep the door of internet sex work open.

Let us work.
Let us live!

Daniella (she/her), I entered sex work out of necessity, but I found my voice in it.



*photo by
Melissa
Gira Grant*



Danielle Blunt (one of the organizers for IWD 2018 in NYC) interviews her mom and dad who came to show their support at IWD.

Mom: I don't want to say it was eye opening, because you've already opened my eyes. But it was invigorating to be around all of these amazing people. The energy was really high, the joy of community was palpable. It was a high moment in my life; being able to connect with you and the people you love. And having my family be there, the whole family to support you, we were all there to support you.

To be able to see the work you do for your community felt important for our family. Your maternal grandma and paternal

grandfather (Zayde) were very involved in organizing too. Your maternal grandma was involved with teacher organizing and was instrumental in getting significantly better pay for teachers. Let's put it this way, my life changed at sixteen because my mom fought for better pay. Our ability to do things was different. And Zayde was a union organizer.

My parents were always involved in local politics, they always did a lot of volunteer work for things they felt were important to them. Grandpa worked at the food kitchen, he was president of the library system. They were both presidents of their synagogue. It was always important to me that we give back to the community, and I wanted that to be important to you (kids) too. And it took to you.

I don't believe in a god, but I believe that whatever good comes from inside of you, not from an outside source. You need to do good to help other people. It's just what people should do.

It's your community, and you're caring for it. It's what we do. We care for our communities.



Dad: Are you talking about the parade in New York? I enjoyed being there with the family, everyone came together to support you.

It was very hot and I had to sit in the shade, and I don't like crowds, but I was glad to see the unity and people coming together. And I support the cause. It was nice to see the support and the turnout at the event and I got to meet some of your friends which was nice. They are all nice people.

Zayde was a teamster organizer, an organizer for DC37, the hospital workers in NYC, and he strongly believed that workers needed a better deal. I think that everyone should have the right to earn a good living and have health benefits. People should be able to support themselves without restrictions. I always felt that sex work should not be criminalized. I don't like the government infringing on our rights to earn a living or the religious connotations behind the criminalization of sex work and restrictions around abortion. I disagree with religious ideas being foisted on us by the government. I hate that, and I try to fight it.

I don't speak extemporaneously a lot, I just like to listen. I've learned a lot from you.

Do I get to have a pseudonym too? Also put down that I can do 50 push ups still. Well, I can, but I usually only do 40 because otherwise it tends to hurt.

Danielle Blunt (she/her) is a NYC-based Dominatrix and co-founder of Hacking//Hustling. She enjoys watching her community thrive and making men cry.



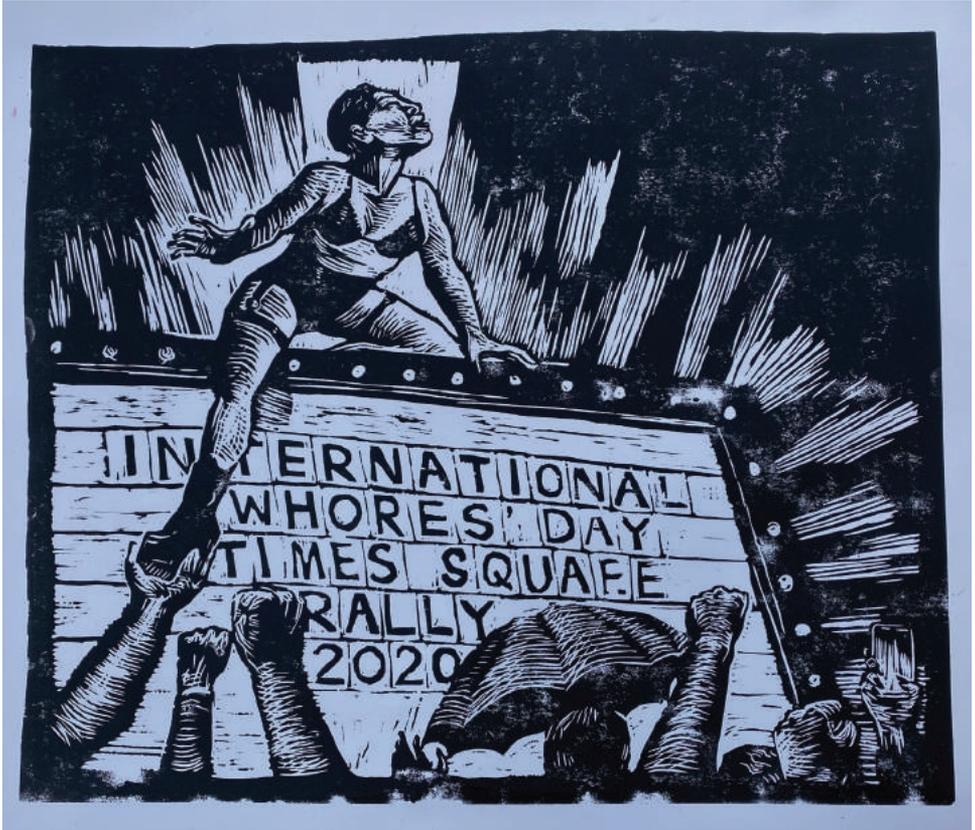
polaroid held by Blunt

iWD 2019



IWD NYC 2019 Bluestockings

iWD 2020



artist: niko

In this moment of global pandemic, care work is finally being recognized as most essential work. People who cook, clean, care for our homes, care for our health, and meet our most essential needs are continuing to work to ensure that our communities survive this crisis, and beyond.

And yet, the state has maintained a stark divide between the communities it sees as worthy of care, safety, and health, and the communities that it sees as disposable. In New York City, and nationwide, Black and Latinx people — who make up the majority of the low-wage, essential workforce — are contracting and dying from COVID-19 at the highest rates.

The disease itself doesn't discriminate, but our healthcare, economic, and legal systems do.

In the name of protecting the health and safety of white and wealthier communities, there has been increased surveillance, policing, and criminalization of people who are Black and brown, trans and queer, sex working and housing insecure. Police have continued to brutalize our communities and incarcerate those who are most vulnerable in jails, prisons, and immigrant detention centers where the possibility of participating in social distancing is nonexistent, and the risk of infection is higher than anywhere else in the world.

We are in a moment that is illuminating most clearly what is truly needed to keep our communities safe: housing, healthcare, care work, and the basic necessities to promote our hygiene and health. Our communities have never needed cops, cages, and criminalization.

Those of us who survive at the intersections of multiple systems of oppression have known this all along. On International Whores Day, under quarantine, we have to keep finding creative ways to uplift the message that we are all we need to keep *all of us* safe.

Leila Raven (she/her) is a queer mama and community organizer working to build safety without prisons or policing.



*I wrote this piece, “Whore...?” because I’m incarcerated for being a whore who survived, so I’ll never turn my back on whores. Hasn’t the government done enough to try and separate us? I’m writing this as a young, queer, Black, mixed woman. I wrote this poem to celebrate International Whores Day. Whores are the hardest working people I know, I’m proud to be in their ranks. I didn’t know about this day when I was working, but now I’m locked up and I know about it, and I need it. I wanna be connected to whores around the world fighting. I want us to shut down the shame, shut down the racist pigs. **Whores will rise.***

Whore...?

Why use such a nasty word? Wait.

Wasn't this word nasty, tasteless not too long ago?

Do we credit the rapper who put it in a song and made it sexy?

What about the word "feminist?" Does the stigmatization of feminists being "men hating," "sex hating" women stick?

Now all y'all want to support the feminist movement?

Come on! What the fuck!

Sex workers, prostitutes, escorts, strippers, a list could go on and on including the word whore.

I'm not ever going to disown being a **whore**.

I'm a "dirty," "nasty," whore and I'm proud! So what?

Just because it's been used as a demeaning word, just like nigga, or bitch— whore should be taken back just the same. A term of endearments nowadays. Don't let our enemies hold that word power.

Whores provide. We give love, attention, care and a listening ear. For coin. Being a whore IS WORK. This ain't all I am, but it's an important part.

Honestly, I thought we all evolved as a society...

Putting the reins on a word because some like it and some don't is ridiculous.

Say, when International Whores Day started in 1975, the whores of France banded together because they were sick and tired of being harassed, and abused by the same people who used their services. They were tired of the cops. They were tired.

Isn't that our fight? To bring awareness to us whores, to stop the neglect and abuse caused to us,
by the ones who still can't stamp us out?

Being a whore isn't a category of sexuality.

It is a right to express one's self as a worker.

Why is everyone scared of "whores?" Well shit, maybe they should be. Whores taking power
back.

In solidarity and hoe love.

Signed a whore for life,
LeLe

Alisha Walker (she/her) is a multi-media visual artist, poet, inside organizer, (former) sex worker and criminalized survivor. LeLe is a mixed ethnic, Black woman and self-described unapologetic whore. She is a member of the Support Ho(s)e Collective. Alisha is currently (forcibly) based in Decatur, Illinois.

I'M HERE TO SAVE YOU
FROM YOUR SUFFERING

YOU'RE GONNA PAY MY RENT?!

NO I'M GOING TO PUT YOU
IN THESE HANDCUFFS



Jacq the Stripper'19

Free the

artist: Paul Glover

rem LLC

I've been a sex worker / for eighteen years

In that time / I've lost too many friends

Many of them / died believing that their lives
were less valuable / because of the work they'd done

Many times I've asked myself

Why and how I'm still here

The only answer I can find

Is that I'm here / because of you

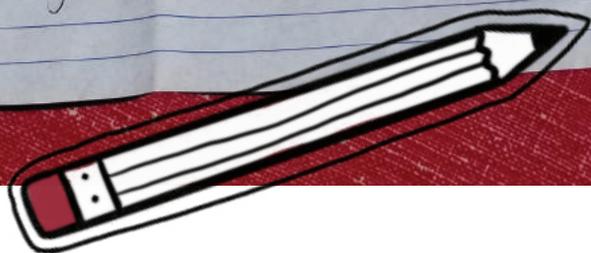
When politicians / and police / and our own
families

Don't believe we deserve safety

When survival is criminalized

When racism / and whore stigma /

and trans stigma / are enshrined in law



My sex worker self has almost always been an isolated one. Few people in my life know more than one name, and no one has every phone number and email. Even when I worked in a house, I would often keep to myself, and the few people who I did know I have lost contact with; often because we never actually knew each others' names. Keeping clear lines between worlds helps me enter and exit on my own terms. Each name has its own face, personality, desires and back story. Each persona exists in its own physical location – at home, at work, in pictures online, on the busted couch of a break room, in nicer apartments than mine and in hotels rooms with hospital corners. Each persona had her own role in my life and comes with her own lighting scheme.

My first protest was small; small enough to where when I see pictures of it, I can see the clear outline of my body, and recognize my presence without hesitation. I was a young sex worker, a woman of color, put on display by every photograph and gawking on-looker. I was my work name, I was an anonymous body, I was a distinctive face who had to figure out who had seen me, and wonder who would go looking for me.

But as protests and public spaces for sex workers have grown in size and number, it has brought about a space which can hold all of these delineated and sectioned identities. I take up the space of one body, but of myriad names and ways in which I come. Sex-worker-led and created protests are not simply a space for visibility to the public, though this serves a much-needed role. Protests of sex workers are the creation of a space set apart where we can all be both individual and integrated. They are not defined by their anonymity, but their hyper-present community. We are unable to be ignored while remaining shockingly anonymous. International Whores/Sex Workers' Day is many things – it is global, it is singular and collective, it is one day, and it is an un-ending annual tribute to taking up space, each of us, together, at once and for good.

*AP (she/they) is a sex worker and organizer living in the DMV.
She does not have a cat, but thinks yours is very photogenic.*



artist: squiggles.and.sluts

Fight Flight Freeze

There's a siren outside and one in my head —
as if ripped from ribcage, it's bloody fluorescent
joined by church bells, a brass comedy

sings

polished punctuation—

it rattles

it rings

a snake with a tail meant for clacking

foreboding in slither

cooing to sailors, they coil and laugh

the sirens like garnets, fireflies

how they scream

*

1-900

scented finely, I'm a sparkling wash of chartreuse
garter belt gameshow meet peepshow pandemic!

paper-doll pulley bent on drunk dotted hip

the galloping of hooves across hotel marble haunt

like klaxons — every eyebrow raised at the race

cleavage catalogued like the gemstones that shatter
when hit quite precisew

a pearl necklace, thread popped, like a salt shaker shook

a bruise in bloom, my leopard fur rosette

I was frightened, a fawn, separated from deer

a pin-cushion, a goddess, an eye-roll in heels

lollipop scars sewn up like a doll
whose stuffing came fluffing and tumbling out —

like cotton

or cloud

or

a dandelion burst

with a sneeze

my piston brain whistles like tea kettle scream

this oven mitt singed, ruby lip and bird knee

This International Whore's Day, We Drug-Using Sex Workers Have Finally Arrived

For many years, I felt like an oddity in the sex workers' rights movement for constantly drawing attention to the issues facing drug-using sex workers--a little Johnny one-note, shrilly repeating ad naseaum what no one wanted to hear.

I knew what other workers thought of me, especially the middle-to-high-end workers that the movement of the aughts loved to make into microcelebrities. Did I think I was the white girl who'd invented heroin or something? Couldn't I do the decent thing and be closeted about it?

Drug-using workers were an unfortunate minority. We were walking arguments for prohibitionism, reifying stereotypes through our very existence. The less said about us and our pathetic lack of agency and vulnerability to trafficking, the way our lives seemed like hoary old jokes from bad movies to the rest of you, the better.

I never imagined that fifteen years later, I'd be the sex worker liason for my country's national drug users union, the first national drug users union to prominently include sex workers in its mission statement as a population impacted by the drug war. I couldn't have conceived that I'd one day put together our union's sex worker organizing group, composed of of a national network of sex worker activists working on the intersection of sex work and drug use, many of us actively drug-using workers ourselves.

The sex workers' rights movement has entered an era in which organizations built around mutual aid, representing multiply marginalized sex workers in a truly intersectional manner, are the order of the day, and drug-using sex workers have naturally found their place here.

I'm finally living in an age in which, for example, USU sex worker

organizing group member Tamika Spellman's powerful Black-trans-women-led SWAC coalition has advocated for both decriminalization of drug possession and sex work in Washington D.C., not from some facile libertarian angle---which was all we could expect from that position in the aughts--but from a deep understanding of criminalization that communities of color on the ground have gained.

Hell, I could never even have imagined a relatively mundane moment the other week:

....See, a month ago, SAMHSA had issued the laxest federal guidelines in 60 plus years of methadone maintenance--up to 28 days of take-home privileges for patients who were stable on their doses and up to 14 days for patients who were less so, regardless of urine test results---and most state opioid treatment authorities complied with the new framework. The DEA had even relaxed telehealth regulations to the extent that people could now be inducted into suboxone treatment through a simple phone call!

The problem was, clinics weren't obliged to take advantage of these reforms. And as hidebound as clinics are, many across the nation were still forcing patients to dose at site daily, leaving us huddled together in long lines every morning, coronavirus risk be damned. Suboxone prescribers were still requiring new patients to walk into medical offices and pee into cups in public bathrooms in order to get on suboxone.

This when opioids already depress respiration and so many people who use drugs have comorbid conditions which make our immune systems more vulnerable to COVID-19 to begin with.

Not only were these clinics dangerous sites of contagion which refused to follow federal guidelines that would keep drug users and our families safe, it was our opinion as the national drug users union that the feds didn't go far enough. Drug users shouldn't have to be faced with choosing between increased risk of overdose and increased risk of coronavirus transmission while staring down both epidemics.

So, Urban Survivors Union wrote a letter demanding widespread regulatory reform for opioid-agonist-assisted treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic. We asked for pharmacy distribution and mobile delivery of methadone, an end to x-waivers which limited the amount of patients medical professionals could prescribe suboxone to, methadone telehealth prescription, and an end to toxicology requirements. We outlined the draconian framework which made opioid agonist assisted treatment, the evidence-based gold standard for opioid treatment, so difficult to obtain, and asked for its elimination---at least during a pandemic in which jumping through many of these hoops presented a lethal danger to us. (Our letter can be found here: <http://ncurbansurvivorunion.org/2020/04/09/mat-treatment-recommendations/>)

The letter was signed by scores of other organizations, from Harm Reduction Coalition and the Drug Policy Alliance to Families for Sensible Drug Policy and Voices of Recovery.

But the kicker for me was that when I asked a bunch of large, national sex workers' rights organizations to sign on, they displayed not even a moment of hesitation or bemusement. "Where can I sign?" they collectively asked.

How things had changed.

If you were one of my interlocutors from that old guard of moneyed sex worker activists from the sex posi empowerment model aughts, you might interject at this point to say that this issue seems to have little to do with sex work besides maybe some good faith alliance building.

And I'd answer saying that you just haven't been paying attention. Fentanyl's harshly ticking biological clock to withdrawal, a much shorter half-life which provides only a couple of hours of well being to heroin's four to six hours, has injected desperation into a street sex work market already oversaturated post SESTA/FOSTA. Opioid-using street sex workers--well, all opioid-using sex workers--require opioid-agonist treatment so that they can avoid

being forced to take on risky clients just to get off empty. And now that drug distribution networks are inevitably failing and their product becomes even more unreliable, we need MAT more than ever, just as all opioid users do.

If you hadn't been paying attention, you wouldn't know how even the smallest details of the repressive MAT regulations we were trying to overturn could soundly fuck up a marginalized sex worker's life. But then, you weren't there the other week when my clinic finally allowed each of us 13 days of take-homes---but only if we all bought the huge, expensive lockboxes clinics customarily require for storing the take-home bottles...though everyone agrees that a tamper-proof cap is enough to protect a bottle of much shorter-acting oxycodone. Lockboxes have never been proven to decrease incidences of drug poisoning or prescription diversion, but clinics are still mightily attached to them.

Even SAMHSA itself had always advised against them, writing, "This [lockbox] policy should be considered carefully because most such containers are large and visible, which might serve more to advertise that a patient is carrying medication than to promote safety."

That week, I got a frantic call from a houseless, street working friend in the middle of the night. She was trying to work, but she kept on being followed by opioid-using clients and pimps on the stroll who were alerted to the fact that she had a significant amount of methadone on her by the enormous lockbox she had to drag along. By the time she got to my apartment and begged me to store it, she'd been chased down several blocks.

Of course, by the time she came back to me to retrieve it, she'd lost the key to that lockbox she needed to pick up her next series of take-homes. Thankfully, I'm now part of a local organization of drug-using sex workers which knew enough to buy out the local Home Depot so that we had enough of them to give her a new one.

This movement still has a ways to go. "Harm reduction," a phrase

that's entered mainstream vocabulary with the opioid crisis, a philosophy that's been appropriated and diluted by bourgeois professionals with no connection to the drug-using and sex working communities under siege which first developed the methodologies and outlooks we now understand as "harm reduction" to survive--is not enough. For the sex workers' rights movement to be a truly radical movement, we require class consciousness . We need to understand, in a seamless and organic manner, that drug users' concerns are sex workers' concerns...are the lumpenproletariat and all criminalized people's concerns. We need to move beyond good intentions to a sex workers' rights movement which is immediately accessible to the most disenfranchised criminalized person, which offers that person substantial material aid and true systemic change.

But on this International Whore's Day, even in the midst of a global crisis, I'm just overjoyed that I'm finally part of a movement that knows enough to include that street working friend of mine.

Caty Simon (she/her) is a Russian Jewish first generation immigrant and opioid-using low-income sex worker who's been in the sex workers' rights movement since dinosaurs roamed the earth in 2002. She's the co-editor of Tits and Sass, the only national media site by and for sex workers, and the sex worker liaison for Urban Survivors Union, the national drug users union, where she also sits on the board. Together with her brilliant co-organizer Naomi Lauren and genius criminal justice subcommittee head Leo Foxx, she also does activism with Whose Corner Is It Anyway, a Western Mass harm reduction/political education/mutual aid/organizing group by and for poor sex workers who use stimulants and opioids, work the street, and/or experience housing insecurity.

JESSICA RAVEN + MICAH BAZANT

WE CAN
ALL
BE SAFE

Decrim
NOW

SEX WORKERS AND TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS
NEED HOUSING NOT HANDCUFFS

 DecrimNY

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artists: Micah Bazant, Leila Raven & Nona Conner

Do I suffer from Whorephobia?

A SUPER CUTE FLOW CHART!

Do I judge other people for having different boundaries than me?

NO

YES

COOL. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK OF MINDING YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

OH SHIT. YOU'VE GOT SOME GROWING TO DO, HUN, BECAUSE RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE SUFFERING FROM WHOREPHOBIA. AND WHEN YOU SUFFER, OTHERS SUFFER TOO.

HOWEVER, IF YOU CAN, TALK TO THIS PERSON OVER HERE ABOUT BODILY AUTONOMY



Jacq the Stripper '19

Solidarity (not charity) forever.

Sex workers all over the world have always practiced mutual aid and collective care.

“Caring for each other is political work.”

- Molly Smith and Juno Mac, *Revolting Prostitutes: The Fight for Sex Workers' Rights*

At its core, mutual aid is about challenging the oppressive capitalist structures and social relations we live under in order to build community care and survive. State violence and abandonment of sex workers from social safety nets, police brutality, state and corporate surveillance, nation borders, mass incarceration, and rampant whorephobia are just some ways that criminalization works to cut off sex workers and their loved ones from vital resources, pushing them to engage in mutual aid. Sex worker autonomous self-reliance and solidarity have long fueled radical community building and care networks independent from carceral institutions. These sex worker-led mutual aid practices are typically not well documented, and frequently get left out of conversations on movement efforts and tactics. But for people who sell sex, having access to radical community and resource sharing is quite literally a matter of life and death. Sharing clients, organizing support groups, borrowing workspaces, raising bail funds, swapping work advice, screening information, income, and outfits have all been fundamental aspects of sex worker care. Barred from countless social spaces and arrangements, those in sex work communities often raise their children collectively, challenge nuclear family structures, and deeply cherish moments of collective celebration, grief, and rage. From distributing harm reduction supplies to doing peer outreach and compiling bad date lists, we can thank sex workers—specifically Black and Brown queer and trans sex workers—for much of what we know about mutual aid.

Sex workers live and breathe mutual aid because you really have no choice when you're denied access to the formal economy.

Mutual aid is, and has always been, an often-necessary political strategy for sex working communities. It directly addresses the conditions of criminalization and whorephobia by finding community-based solutions to financial precarity, housing instability, food insecurity, mass incarceration, job discrimination, deportation risks, and so many other intersecting issues. The state has always failed to provide the resources sex workers need to work safely and stay alive, but with increasing surveillance, now more than ever sex workers are building vibrant mutual aid networks to combat the pitfalls of our capitalist system. These networks exist, of course, in mutual political struggle with other forms of criminalized and informal labor, shining a light on the common overlap between these workforces. It is not a coincidence that the only people consistently looking out for sex workers are fellow sex workers and other criminalized and informal workers in similar situations: young people selling sex, queer and trans communities, people who use drugs, those being targeted by criminalization and surveillance.

Sex workers' mutual aid efforts resist the criminalization of survival.

"We need each other to survive; we need to be part of each other's survival."

-Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*

Sex workers employ mutual aid not only to survive, but also to assist their and their community members' efforts to collectively organize. Sex worker survival can be protest. Sex worker survival can be solidarity. Sex worker survival can be mobilization. Sex worker survival can be beautiful and resilient. Sex worker survival can also be hell. And when your survival is criminalized, mutual aid becomes absolutely necessary. Forced to operate underneath a microscope constructed by hyper-visibility and total paradox, sex workers know better than most how to fight for a better world, fulfill each other's needs, and widen our vision for

worker liberation. Through a long history of mutual aid and community care, collective sex worker power is building and continuing to sustain whole groups. Sex workers' ability and passion to build political imagination, instill hope, radical love, solidarity, and joy is greater than any other I have ever known.

Solidarity (not charity) forever.

Emily Coombes (they/them) is a researcher and organizer with the Las Vegas Sex Worker Collective and the Hacking//Hustling collective. They currently help manage a mutual aid fund for sex workers in Las Vegas facing financial precarity during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Solitude of Self (1892) – Elizabeth Cady Stanton

“The strongest reason why we ask for woman a voice in the government under which she lives; in the religion she is asked to believe; equality in social life, where she is the chief factor; a place in the trades and professions, where she may earn her bread, is because of her birthright to self-sovereignty; because, as an individual, she must rely on herself.”

The reason why we ask for sex workers to have a voice in the government; equality in social life; and a place in the trades and professions, where we earn our bread, is because of our birthright to self-sovereignty; because, as Americans, we must rely on ourselves.”

This speech is adapted
from an 1892 women’s rights speech.
It still holds true for all the people gathered here today.
Bodily autonomy and freedom to earn a living/livelihood is the
American way.
We are not just outsiders.
We are part of the American fabric.
There would be no GAY PRIDE
without the blood and sweat of brown skinned trans sex workers.
They ignited a movement for LOVE to WIN.
Stand with us to fight hate,
to fight violence,
to fight for basic human rights.

I am a sex worker and I am YOU, America.
I am a queer, first generation Chinese American.
I am your daughter. I am your sister.
I am a spouse. I am a mother.
I am a caretaker of an elder.

I care deeply about the victims of exploitation and trafficking.
Sweeping a whole society of legitimate workers
under a blanket of censorship and criminalization
escalates the violence done to all.

Shame and Silence equals death.
Feminists, Stop Shaming Me.
Liberals, Stop Saving Me.
GAY PRIDE, Stop ignoring me.

I am a tax payer, a voter.
I am on the PTA. I am a mother of two girls.
I care deeply about their future.
I stand here, not just for myself and for my friends,
I stand here for my daughters
so that one day when someone says to them “Your mother is a
whore,”
They answer “Fuck Yeah.”

Speech by Yin Q



artist: [squiggles.and.sluts](#)

IWD Call to Action from the Urban Survivors Union Sex Worker Organizing Group

For this International Whore's Day, drug-using sex workers and trafficking survivors with experiences of domestic violence can help us take action by just talking to us on the phone for a half hour!

The Urban Survivors Union Sex Worker Organizing Group is working to stop the PROTECT Act, a bill introduced by Ohio's Senator Sherrod Brown--one of the people who brought you SESTA/FOSTA. If passed, it would define furnishing drugs to a sex worker as trafficking, even if no force, fraud, or coercion are involved. As the legislation is written, this could include both licit and illicit drugs--alcohol, Tylenol, or even Narcan.

Existing jurisprudence has already created precedent against cases in which actual force, fraud, or coercion through drug provision were in play. We don't need this law for those nightmare cases in which an abuser is forcing someone to do sex work through the threat of withdrawal. Instead, given our experience as activists in a nation in which we sex workers have literally been charged with trafficking ourselves, we already know that this law would be used to prosecute sex workers who give drugs to other sex workers. We already know it will be used to isolate drug-using sex workers from their friends and intimates, during a deadly overdose epidemic in which using alone is itself one of the highest risk factors for overdose.

What the Urban Survivors Union sex worker organizing group is doing is brainstorming to offer legislators proactive alternatives to actually help drug-using sex workers and trafficking survivors. Based on our own experiences as vulnerable drug-using sex workers and as organizers, we determined that the biggest problem facing drug-using, sex working survivors was not a lack of criminalization but a lack of available resources. Over and over

again, we kept coming up against the problem of drug-using sex workers' exclusion from domestic violence shelters. Right now, we're discussing what an ideal domestic violence shelter for drug-using sex workers would look like. In collaboration with the Sex Workers Rights Subgroup of the National LGBTQPLHIV Criminal Justice Working Group, we hope to craft these ideas into policy proposals to offer our representatives.

Here are some things we've already come up with:

- The ideal domestic violence shelter could not mandate abstinence from drug use as a condition of shelter. Asking people to detox while they're leaving their abusers---statistically one of the most dangerous times in their lives---is setting them up for failure.
- An ideal domestic violence shelter could not mandate cessation of sex work as a condition of shelter.
- An ideal domestic violence shelter could not exclude people on the very basis of being drug-using sex workers.
- Domestic violence shelters should have money and resources to offer to be able to help people travel to their community of origin where they could be safe---abusers love to isolate people, and sometimes survivors just need help getting home.
- Domestic violence shelters need to have broad definitions of abuse and some cultural competency around what abuse looks like for drug-using sex workers. Narrow definitions of abuse and perfect victim models restrict many from getting help.
- Domestic violence shelters should not ask us to separate ourselves from everyone we know--because everyone in our close-knit community could possibly know our abuser! Shelters should not isolate us the same way our abusers did. Shelters should not impose classism by seeing everyone we know and

love as disreputable, unhealthy, or somehow dangerous.

- Domestic violence shelters should not recreate the financial abuse we suffered by asking us to get straight jobs and then keeping our money for us in a savings account as a condition of our stay, taking some for a security deposit which we won't see again if we're expelled from the shelter, etc.
- Domestic violence shelters should not separate us from our teenaged male children--who is going to take care of our thirteen year old sons?
- Domestic violence shelters need to be inclusive of trans people, especially trans women---sex working trans women of color are the most vulnerable to violence against sex workers.
- Domestic violence shelters should offer same-day enrollment. Again, asking us to get into a methadone clinic or any other form of treatment before we can be shelter guests is asking us to languish on a waitlist while we're forced to stay with our abuser---and it's asking us to pile the stress of treatment and detox on top of the life-or-death struggle of escaping an abuser.
- Domestic violence shelters should not employ mandated reporters who will report our drug use to child protective services and break up our families, regardless of our ability to parent.

Please help us add to this list! We are paying \$30 to have recorded half hour phone conversations on this topic with drug-using sex workers or trafficking survivors with experience of domestic violence. Experience accessing domestic violence shelter services is a plus. We need your expertise!

Email caty@urbansurvivorsunion.org or lindsay@urbansurvivorsunion.org If you have to, you can also text 413-799-1005. Capacity is limited.

Zine Afterward

This zine is a creative call to action, a recommitment to hope and collective strength in ongoing uncertain times. For those of us contributing, we've known and called out existing pandemics running rampant, destroying lives: capitalism, racism, the prison industrial complex, whorephobia, transphobia, the US war machine, and environmental attacks and now we're drawing upon our existing mutual aid networks to once again build community care and safety. We share whorestory and art to ready our hearts for our continued struggle.

We were supposed to be rallying together, clutching our red umbrellas, holding each other, sweating in the city sunlight, perched upon our Pleasers. We say, we are still together. We are a digital scream, we are a virtual chant, we are thousands of red images defiantly circulating in an online world that would rather silence us.

We do this for Lorena, we do this for Marsha, we do this for Sylvia, for Alphonza Watson, for Yang Song, for Sisi Thibert, for Alloura Wells; we do this for us all.

The Zine Makers, Contributors & Artists

Leila Raven (she/her) is a queer mama and community organizer working to build safety without prisons or policing.

Daniella (she/her): I entered sex work out of necessity, but I found my voice in it.

Mistress Velvet (they/them) is Chicago's Premier African Dominatrix. They are a Marxist-Leninist worker, sex & pleasure educator, and specialize in BDSM therapy.

Niko (she/her) is an alter ego born through the synchronicities of sex work and artwork. She works as a dominatrix in NYC. She has exhibited with the collective Stigma Unbound, and has worked with the organization Red Canary Song.

Alisha Walker (she/her) is a multi-media visual artist, poet, inside organizer, (former) sex worker and criminalized survivor. LeLe is a mixed ethnic, Black woman and self-described unapologetic whore. She is a member of the Support Ho(s)e Collective. Alisha is currently (forcibly) based in Decatur, Illinois.

Ariel Wolf (she/her) is an artist, writer, researcher, and former sex worker. She has a BFA from the School of Visual Arts and her research about sex work has been published in the Journal of Sexuality & Relationship Therapy and the Anti-Trafficking Review.

AP (She/They) is a sex worker and organizer living in the DMV. She does not have a cat, but thinks yours is very photogenic.

Emily Iris (she/her) is an aspiring nun.

Lorelei Lee (they/she) is a nonbinary disabled femme writer, sex worker, and activist. They owe their life to other sex workers.

JB Brager (they/them) is a cartoonist living in Brooklyn NY, Lenapehoking. They can be found online at jbbrager.com and on social media @jbbrager.

Blunt (she/her) is a NYC-based Dominatrix and co-founder of Hacking//Hustling. She enjoys watching her community thrive and making men cry.

Jacq the Stripper (she/her) is, as her name suggests, in addition to an artist, writer, comedian, and dope-ass cunt who likes money.

squiggles.and.sluts (they/them and he/him) is a Baltimore based queer/trans prettyboy, Libra, stripper, e-slut, fssw, artist and so much more. I make work about life in the sex industry as a trans person who has to change their identity for work.

Caty Simon (she/her) is a Russian Jewish first generation immigrant and opioid-using low-income sex worker who's been in the sex workers' rights movement since dinosaurs roamed the earth in 2002. She's the co-editor of Tits and Sass, the only national media site by and for sex workers, and the sex worker liaison for Urban Survivors Union, the national drug users union, where she also sits on the board. Together with her brilliant co-organizer Naomi Lauren and genius criminal justice subcommittee head Leo Foxx, she also does activism with Whose Corner Is It Anyway, a Western Mass harm reduction/political education/mutual aid/organizing group by and for poor sex workers who use stimulants and opioids, work the street, and/or experience housing insecurity.

Melissa Gira Grant (she/her) is the author of "Playing the Whore: The Work of Sex Work," and a staff writer covering justice at The New Republic.

Emily Coombes (they/them) is a researcher and organizer with the Las Vegas Sex Worker Collective and the Hacking//Hustling collective. They currently help manage a mutual aid fund for sex workers in Las Vegas facing financial precarity during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Audrey Ryan (she/her) is a visual artist consumed by the human figure. Their work focuses on our duality as both physical and psychic beings, examining the interchange between psychological states and physical bodies. They are heavily informed by punk, hardcore and BDSM communities, years of classical ballet training and a personal history of disorder and recovery. With a voyeuristic perspective and exhibitionistic gesture, Audrey's work probes social performance and seeks to provoke the questioning of our architecture of shame, control and power.

Paul Glover (he/him) is a visual artist who lucid dreams about flying, hiking, and strategic arson.

Red Schulte (they/them) is a queer, non-binary femme educator, community organizer and zinester. They are a current collective member, and the zine coordinator for Bluestockings Bookstore, Cafe and Activist Center. They are also a member of the Support Ho(s)e collective, Survived & Punished NY, Hacking//Hustling, and help coordinate the Justice for Alisha Walker Defense Campaign. Red's zine-making centers collage-as-therapy, sex worker-led resistance, currently incarcerated comrades' stories, and (decriminalizing) survival.

Jett George (they/them) is a queer/trans jewexx, survivor, educator, and illustrator making art as activism. Jett organizes with Survived + Punished NY for a future without prisons.

Yin Q (they/she) is the founder of Kink Out and co-Director of Red Canary Song. Their sex work activism derives from the desire to tear off clothes, incite anarchy, and empty the wallets of the patriarchy.

Acknowledgements

The Zine Makers wish to acknowledge Kink Out Productions for sponsoring and commissioning this piece of resistance art.

Kink Out produces empowering events that bring people of intersectional identities with lived experience in BDSM culture together to share art, activism, work, and conversation. They provide an arena for the diverse leather and kink communities in NYC to celebrate and build alliances with each other.

We wish to thank MoMa PS1 for their support.

We wish to acknowledge the whores of Lyon, France.

We wish to acknowledge our incarcerated family.

We wish to acknowledge our labor in the sex trade, without which our survival and acts of resistance ought not be possible.

We acknowledge and uplift the love and support of our trans elder leaders.

We acknowledge the fire and struggle within all of us.



artist: Audrey Ryan