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A  
VINDICATION  
OF THE  
RIGHTS  
OF  
WHORES

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Tema: Situación  
de las prostitutas  
en Israel.

wait . . . here, and whoever wants to be served by me . . . comes to me. A moment bargaining, and off we go. We may go to her house, or to a friend's, we have our play there . . . if I make the contact through a friend (the mediator), it suffices to give her three packages of cigarettes or an amount of money of that size (March, 1984).

There are also some heterosexual women who prefer women clients in order to avoid risking pregnancy. There are even a number of married women who prostitute themselves by consent of their husband:

My husband does not forbid me to do this. After all, he joins in eating from my money. Besides, I will certainly not get pregnant. That means that my husband is very pleased. And I, certainly I will not endlessly be doing this work . . . There will certainly be a moment that I shall stop. . . . (March, 1984).

Lesbian prostitutes generally stay in a recreation place like a bar in the Cikini region (a quarter in Jakarta-Central) or in a coffee shop in Jakarta-South. In those areas, lesbians comprise about twenty percent of all prostitutes; about eighty percent of their customers are women, in particular lesbian women.

May, 1988

Djakarta, Indonesia

Part III is translated from Indonesian by Cisca Pattipilohy

*Footnote:*

1. Translator's note: Women in localization centers are officially referred to as WTS, meaning "women without morals." One example of "rehabilitation": The transport of two hundred WTS (i.e. prostitutes) on February 8, 1988 from Semarang in Central Java to Ambon on the Moluccan Islands for the purpose of working in the wood industry.

## PRELIMINARY REPORT ON ISRAEL

Esther Eillam

Tel-Aviv and its surroundings contain one-quarter of the Israeli population. Inside its territory, there is a suburban beach called Tel-Baruch where a concentration of prostitutes work. They work mostly inside the cars of their clients. Police patrol the place day and night. Most prostitutes have "their place" on the beach. The area was established about ten years ago under Tel-Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat. According to one spokesperson for the municipality, the police encouraged the formation of a working area on the beach as a deterrent to prostitution (and prostitution arrests) in town. Besides the beach, there are many "Massage Parlors" and "Company Services" which are sometimes very luxurious.

There are no statistics available from the government on prostitutes and no department in the Ministry of Labor and Welfare which deals with this population. On a municipal level, specifically Tel-Aviv, a public health official did call for prostitutes to come to the clinic for an AIDS test. She was unwilling, however, to answer my questions and showed no interest in the material I showed to her from the International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights. In fact, no one on a government level seems open to discussing the issue of prostitution or the rights of prostitutes.

On the other hand, there is a long list of detailed laws in the penal section on "Prostitution and Obscenity." In short, these laws outlaw: (1) Anyone who lives on the earnings of a prostitute (and this includes anyone who lives with a prostitute unless he can prove that he does not profit from her earnings); (2) Anyone who asks a woman to have prostitutional relations with another man; (3) Anyone who owns or manages a prostitution work place, including cars and ships; (4) Anyone who rents a place for the purpose of prostitution; (5) Anyone who asks someone to leave the country for the purpose of prostitution; (6) Anyone who allows a twelve to seventeen year old person who is under her or his responsibility to visit or live in a place of prostitution; (7) Anyone who tempts another in a public place, by gestures or talk, to

commit an immoral act; (8) Anyone who turns to a person under sixteen years or to a woman with promiscuous gestures; (9) A man, entering a woman's place dressed like a woman. All of the above are illegal regardless of force or contractual agreement and regardless of adult or child status although penalties are higher for conditions of force and higher for facilitating the prostitution of someone under eighteen years old. Prison sentences for each crime range from three months (for tempting someone to commit an immoral act) to five or seven years (for living on the earnings of a prostitute or for facilitating prostitution; five years when the party is an adult; seven years when the party is under eighteen). There is no probation for the above crimes. Exactly how the police, courts and local authorities apply the laws is an open question. Some members of parliament have been demanding the "legalization" of prostitution for many years. Legalization to them means more control. Clearly, prostitution in certain forms and in certain places is already tolerated.

It has been difficult to get information about prosecution of prostitutes from authorities and I am only beginning to make contact with prostitutes themselves. I have some connections with street prostitutes and massage women, and I hope to broaden the connections and to help connect feminists to prostitutes. This issue has not yet been taken up by feminists or other activists. It takes time and it's difficult in Israel. In the feminist movement we try to act toward peace and to support peace forces.

### *Tel-Baruch*

I spoke with a few prostitutes in the beach area of Tel-Baruch, the "official" prostitution place near the center of Tel-Aviv. The main interviewee is Zippy, as she calls herself. She tells me that it is not her real name. She doesn't want to be publicly identified.

Zippy is willing to talk with me while undressing herself inside her car. While interviewing Zippy, another prostitute is standing with me but is silent. I introduce myself as a reference person for the International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights.

Zippy estimates that about three hundred to four hundred prostitutes work in this area of Tel-Baruch which till now has been a rocky, somewhat neglected beach. She has no complaints about the police; to the contrary, she praises them and is positive about their patrolling the area. She says that the police never arrest the women (or their clients) in Tel-Baruch. But she is very worried about something

else, a very essential thing: The area is being rebuilt by the municipality which means that prostitutes will not be able to work there anymore. Although the work conditions in the area are not satisfying at all—"We are freezing in winter and burnt from heat in summer"—now it will be worse. Prostitutes will be forced to return to the middle of town "among children" and will be arrested regularly by the police and held for forty-eight hours. "We are thrown to the dogs!" says Zippy. "Most of the women here are mothers, like myself, and they have to work," she points out. Outside the area, she doesn't tell what she is doing: "When officials ask my occupation, I say I am a housewife." But she wants to be recognized and to work in a house with official status and to pay taxes "like any decent worker." She has no roof over her head now as a worker.

About AIDS, Zippy says that of course everyone is worried. She and the other women work only with condoms, also for fellatio. When the Health Department of the municipality demanded that every prostitute have an AIDS test, the majority were willing to do it and cooperated. "They themselves were interested," said Zippy. She accuses the journalists of frightening the public which affects the clients who don't show up like they used to. "They have to be afraid of the amateurs, not us, the professionals [who use condoms]," she says.

Zippy is hesitant about organizing. She is afraid of a lack of cooperation, which is her experience till now, and she is afraid of being exposed, given her way of life. While talking, Zippy whistles to a passing car. "A regular client of mine," she explains, but he doesn't hear her. At the end of the interview another client (or the same one) comes by. Zippy is dressed suitably now and she hurries up to the car, waving her hand to me: "Excuse me, I must leave, see you."

I stay with the other woman who was silent most of the time. A car with young men is stopping in front of us and they ask us for a "sucking." The woman near me refuses. When they persist, she throws a stone at them and they go away. She says to me, "I have my own regular clients. I don't go with young men." She also says that it's a common practice to give discounts to soldiers. Unlike Zippy, who has a lot of friends, she does not want to make any friends here. "Everyone for herself," she says. I give her my phone number and ask her to pass it to Zippy too. I leave.

Fifty meters on I see Zippy and Dalia and Esther. I had met Dalia and Esther earlier in the afternoon but they had no time to talk then. I ask Esther about organizing. She thinks it's necessary, especially now.

facing the crisis of leaving this place to "god-knows-where." But she says that it is very difficult. I encourage her and promise to keep contact.

Later I went to town. In Tel-Baruch there is a safe and relatively free atmosphere. In town, however, I was impressed with the fear and violence. Near Ben-Yehuda Street in the center of town, I met Edna. While we were talking, I was witness to the harassment of a prostitute by her "ex-husband." When I tried to help her, Edna said not to get involved. Edna told me that she is afraid of the police who make arrests from time to time, sometimes arbitrarily and sometimes because of citizen complaints. When prostitutes are arrested, they are automatically held for forty-eight hours and then let out on bail. Later there is a trial: If the prostitute has no previous arrests, she is fined; if she has a record of prior arrests, she is sentenced to jail for some weeks or even months. Edna told me that the police sometime arrest clients, but only to get information. After the client's testimony, he is set free.

*April, 1988*

*Tel Aviv, Israel*

*Translated from Hebrew*