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would recall power from its own self-destruction. Such weeping is thus action undertaken on behalf of the powerful as well as the powerless.

To the extent that a globalized world enables the better broadcasting and better hearing of Rachel weeping for her children, it offers possibilities for hope, if not for optimism.

**"CULTURING" SURVIVAL: AFRO-CARIBBEAN MIGRANT CULTURE
AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN UNDER GLOBALIZATION**

*by Hope Lewis**

The reality for working-class Afro-Caribbean women migrants (called "lionheart gals" by one Caribbean feminist organization) is that both "the rule of law" and "cultural authority" can enhance, or undermine, the protection of fundamental human rights. For lionheart gals, the choice is not between a liberating rule of law and a static, cocoonlike cultural authority. For them, the primary imperative is to use law and culture in a creative struggle for survival against the onslaught of racism, sexism, poverty, nativism and globalization.

Like the eighteenth-century Caribbean rebel leader Ni (also called "Nanny"), contemporary lionheart gals are agents in their own survival. In recent years, they have taken on the previously male role of "migrant providers." As household workers in the United States, they send millions in cash and goods home to support island economies.

These "small-*n* nannies" encounter numerous violations of their human rights in their home islands and in the United States. They are subject to high rates of violence that are inadequately addressed by legal and social measures. They suffer unemployment rates higher than the already staggering rates experienced by men in the Caribbean. Many are single heads of households and do not have legally recognized rights to maternity leave, child support or shared property upon dissolution of common-law marriage.

Economic dependence on export crops, tourism and garment assembly subcontracting arrangements makes Caribbean governments less willing to protect the rights of lionheart gals. When these women cross U.S. borders, they are subjected to racial profiling (many are targeted for strip searches at airports), arbitrary detention and deportation, sexual harassment and labor abuses. Under the rule of immigration and welfare "reform" laws, even their women's fundamental human rights to medical care, disability benefits and social security have been threatened.

To ensure their survival against such complex, transnational challenges, lionheart gals use strategies that are legal, extralegal and illegal. They obtain tourist visas to the United States and "overstay" them. They find work and housing by maintaining labor-scouting networks among female relatives. They compensate for the lack of child care by leaving children in the care of grandparents on the home island. They respond to discrimination in the extension of bank credit by forming traditional *susus* (peer lending circles).

Many lionheart gals embrace the power of international law to address violence against women and abuses of household workers. But they also recognize the equally powerful role of culture; they use religion, street theater, music, poetry and storytelling to sustain their communities. They assertively claim their legal rights, but they also rely on kinship networks and collective self-help to supplement or replace the power of the state. The strategies they use can teach us a great deal about protecting the human rights of women under globalization.

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