There will be no feminist revolution without an end to racism and white supremacy. When all women and men engaged in feminist struggle understand the interlocking nature of systems of domination, of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, the feminist movement will regain its revolutionary progressive momentum.

(hooks, 1995: 107)

Women and their fate occupied me all my life and concern for their lot brought me to socialism.

(Kollontai, 1977: 30)

In the previous chapters, I delineated the connections between capital and the culpable state in the exploitation of the wage labor of sex and domestic workers. In this final chapter, I ask: How might we break this systemic hold? What role can feminism play in challenging the structures of a global ruling class that tightly adheres to a hegemonic doctrine and uses all means possible to obfuscate its politics?

Most of us seem to be bystanders to the spectacle of security and “globalization with a human face,” a mirage promulgated by capital, multinational corporations, the states, IR, and even feminist theorists. Instruments of justice themselves presuppose the export and import, abuse, and near-enslavement of numerous migrant women (Trepanier, 2003; Rajalakshmi, 2003; Lepp, 2003). The peripheral economic state seems to follow closely the doctrine of capital and
designs policies to sustain low inflation, fiscal retrenchment, and flexible labor markets, to facilitate the free flows of goods and capital to promote the interests of investors, employers, as well as the interests of the owning-class through the exploitation of working-class peoples. Ideologies about “globalization with a human face” and flexible labor (Psimmenos, 2000) obscure the politics of neoliberalism including its weakening grip even among those who have been its proponents (Rupert, 2000). It is within this context that ideological contestations and struggles as well as feminist critiques are crucial in the creation of solidarity among different active transnational grassroots movements such as women’s groups, NGOs, labor unions, indigenous groups and environmental groups. They enact a critique of transnational capitalism, its property relations, as well as its antidemocratic politics and governance that further loosen the grip of neoliberalism on people’s lives.

Accordingly, intellectuals cannot understand themselves as mere professionals or neutral bystanders. Only through working as a movement to produce collectively a vision with an alternative ontology and progressive social change by incessant critique and expanding the horizons of limiting social self-understandings (Gramsci, 1971: 164–165, 375–377) could we transform the conditions that subordinate all of us, women and men of color, indigenous and transgender peoples and working-class peoples to the logic and coordinates of capital. In this book I offer not only an analytic framework to help us analyze the conditions that sex and domestic workers face daily in the peripheries. I am also offering knowledge and practice that challenge the dominant, feminist ivory tower as individuated from and independent of the struggles of migrant workers. This critique not only explains the situation of women in the peripheries, dealing with problematic racial relations, but it also shows what could be instead of simply what is. Women in the peripheries exemplify what academics talk of: desire as an expression of freedom. Indeed, they reap the brunt of that desire on their bodies daily and experience its ineluctability on their personhoods (Anderson, 2000). Their daily struggles along with the work of several NGOs that address the exploitation and violence they face (Kadin Kapis in Turkey; the Association for the Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants; Istanbul Inter-Parish Migrants Programme; Caritas; Catholic Migration Commission; Social Center in Cyprus) constitute a “movement in progress” to change the racialized and gendered division of labor.

Working together, they find the self-determination to change their conditions. Sex and domestic workers are beginning to make connections previously unimaginable, resisting in many different ways