

## *Sweatshop Warriors: Immigrant Women Workers Take on the Global Factory*

By Miriam Ching Yoon Louie. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2001. 306 pp.

Reviewed by Ann Byrn

In a scene in David Riker's 1998 film, *Latino World*, the Latina heroine sits at her sewing machine at the sweatshop weeping quietly as her supervisor leans over her, yelling. The heroine, worried about her sick child back at home and frustrated in all her efforts to get together money to help the little girl, doesn't look at the supervisor but bows her head and cries, helpless. But, as the supervisor's rage rises, the machines in the factory fall silent one by one until the moment when the screaming woman realizes what has happened and she too falls silent. She slowly looks around at the faces of the workers. Suddenly, she is no longer a boss but one person confronted by a powerful wall of silent solidarity.

Miriam Ching Yoon Louie's *Sweatshop Warriors* tells part of the story of what can happen next. Based largely on interviews with dozens of Mexican, Chinese and Korean women who have worked in the sweatshops of New York, Texas and California, this work recounts the frustrations of lives lived at the mercy of abusive employers but also tells what can happen when workers use their solidarity as a platform from which to challenge those employers, winning withheld back pay, better working conditions and recognition in return. It is a book with very many stories of the oppression of women immigrants and their suffering at the hands of

