

CAFRA Trinidad and Tobago joins all in the Caribbean region in expressing our appreciation for the life of our Guyanese sister Andaiye.

The establishment of CAFRA back in 1988 brought together social justice and women's rights activists, thinkers and academics from across the Caribbean. We came together around the shared analysis that the Caribbean reality for too many was one of poverty, insecurity and inequality. CAFRA was founded on the idea that we could transform the Caribbean if in our work we confronted the intersecting gender, class, race and colour inequalities.

For us in CAFRA, women's freedom and autonomy in the home and in our communities cannot be achieved if we do not recognize and address the legacies of our histories of ethnicity and class violence and oppressions. And it was this analysis that Andaiye insisted upon, pushing CAFRA not only to work for sexual and reproductive rights and freedom from sexual and domestic violence but also to address poverty and labour exploitation. While she may not always have described herself as a CAFRA kind of feminist, we certainly claimed her and all her wisdoms.

Andaiye also insisted on attention to the Caribbean geopolitics and the ways in which internal and external economic and political interests continued to subvert and destabilize Caribbean development and peoples, whether in Haiti, Cuba and more recently in Venezuela.

In her beloved Guyana, she was a political actor, being a founding member of the Working People's Alliance, and someone engaged in people to people solidarity through her engagement with Red Thread which has done so much to address poverty, violence against women and children and poor governance in Guyana. This solidarity was deeply practical. She supported where she could materially and for several years coordinated medical support in Trinidad for Guyanese women seeking treatment for cancer.

She spoke for those without voice and for the powerless. But more often, she did all that she could to support marginalized and oppressed peoples to speak for themselves. She was an ardent supporter of Caribbean domestic workers as they organized for decent wages and working conditions. And she insisted on Caribbean governments' accountability for non-corrupt governance which improved the quality of life for the many on a basis of equality.

Andaiye was a passionately political person, in the sense of someone alert to the dynamics of power and unequal relations, whether between women and men, between employers and employees, between rich and poor, between adults and children or between those with state power like government bureaucrats or police and citizens. Her spirit rebelled against injustice and she used her abundant talents to confront exploitation, injustice and plain foolishness. She was not one to stay silent in the face of ignorance. She demanded intellectual light and she delighted in the shared struggle for a better Caribbean.

She was outraged by the treatment of Guyanese people all over the Caribbean by immigration officials and spoke often with derision and grief about the 'Guyana bench' at various airports throughout the region. She was no doubt quintessentially Guyanese and but also of the Caribbean. But then again, those two are or should be the same thing.

Andaiye was impatient and then she was patient again, understanding that the scale of change that is needed now in the Caribbean is a wholesale cultural, economic and political change, a change that holds us all responsible for just and kind relations with each other in families and communities. But she also knew that those with state power or resource power, like big businesses, have a greater duty to create conditions for fairness and the development for the many and not just the few.

Despite years of failing health, she remained available to discuss, disagree and strategize. Sometimes she was disappointed by our limitations of vision and ineffective actions. And then she would steups long and hard, but only as a signal of renewed commitment to dialogue and action.

For women like Andaiye who inspired us, we honour them only if we continue their work.