

## Salutations

**I bring words of respect and regard to our sisters and brothers here in Guyana, the family and extended family of our sister Andaiye and particularly our Brother Eusi and family. I bring these not only on my behalf, but on behalf of Brother Khafra kambon, the Chairman of the Emancipation Support Committee of Trinidad and Tobago and its members; and Sister Hazel Brown and the Members of the Network of NGO's for the Advancement of Women, (two organisations with whom Andaiye shared decades of work, laughter and hard times).**

For Andaiye it would always be ... Too soon, too soon...

When there is someone, who demonstrates courage in their convictions and those convictions have to do with ending the exploitation of the have nots, by those who have; and rectifying the injustices sustained by race, class and unequal power relations .... It will always be ...Too soon, too soon.

I like to think that Andaiye and I must have come of age at a time when people of colour everywhere in the world, were saying we have had enough of colonialism, enough of control of our minds and bodies. Enough oppression of our spirits. What a time !

It was a time of wins and losses .. Cuba and the Congo ...Fidel and Lumumba...

But freedom seemed possible, revolution – full transformation – seemed possible! Angela and Kathleen were saying so ! Steve Biko and the Children of Soweto gave us hope. Then there was repression and assassinations. In North America, where Andaiye and I crossed paths but never encountered... Malcolm, Martin, ...and here in the Caribbean where for decades we walked on close paths... Walter, Maurice, Jacqueline Creft.

What do revolutionaries do when there is no revolution.... educate, mobilize, fight every injustice, small and large. You tell no lies...you claim no easy victories, as Amilcar taught us. And Andaiye lived by that.

Everyone knew she would call a spade a spade. This meant not everyone wanted to be too close to the fire. You could not race bait Andaiye. Actually she lived with the conviction that we had to overcome the antagonisms created between Africans and Indians to succeed in building a new and just society.

And there was such deep love for her people....compassion, understanding, insight; and Andaiye's ability *to use the difference between poetry and rhetoric* so that ( to paraphrase Audre Lourde) , *my power too... will (not) run corrupt.*

There was laughter too....Andaiye and I were in Beijing. Caribbean women were working hard to secure positions that we hoped, by opening doors for women and the girl child not only in the Caribbean, but in a world where power structures still excluded both .... somehow it would contribute to an existence with reduced poverty and inequality for all.

I lost my hotel booking and was taken in by another outstanding Sister from Jamaica who has since made her transition, Sonja Harris. On issues of social justice - Sonja and I were simply sisters born of a different mother, but in terms of life's rhythm, and temperament we were as different as mangoes and fish. Yet we found ourselves rooming together in Beijing. I was sheer hell on poor Sonja. I came and went at all hours of the day and night. I was on call 24/7. On the contrary Sonja was orderly... in bed after a hot cup of tea by 7:30pm. Andaiye observed this chaos in motion.... And one morning when nerves were frayed and negotiations were stalled, Andaiye deduced that we needed not to take ourselves so seriously. In the presence of some 12 or so Caribbean (delegates/sisters/women in the movement) ....she took into the two of us, Sonja and I....She said you two are like one person who is manic/depressive....do I have to tell you I was the manic ... her description of our behaviours was filled with such biting and good natured humour, we all laughed until it brought us back to our senses and our place and purpose in the world.

Just as the moth is attracted to the light...women in the women's movement , men and women in the social justice movement; women and men in the human rights movement , in the child's rights movement , in the workers movement; in her beloved Guyana; across the Caribbean; and globally... all found voice with Andaiye. Hers was a mind and spirit to be counted on.

A life lived and guided by integrity. She was willing to use her networks ( of which she had cultivated many over the years ) to shine light on issues of discrimination, brutality, unfairness in our Caribbean waters. Always close to her heart were our brothers and sisters of Haiti and she would not sit still until we were all brought into the chain in the fight for the rights of persons of African/Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic, against the atrocity of mass deportation and rendering tens of thousands stateless.

Angela Davis described the work of the political activist as involving a certain tension between the need to take positions on current issues as they arise, while at the same time being true to one's long term goals of real substantive change. She suggests that achieving this harmony, ensures that one's contributions, may somehow survive the ravages of time.

I would be bold to say that those of us who have walked with Andaiye can give testimony to the notion that in her life's work , she came close to achieving that harmony.

Her contribution will most surely stand the test of time and as we call your name, Andaiye...we will surely keep your memory alive.

Walk good sister, our ancestors are waiting.

Asha Kamboon PhD  
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