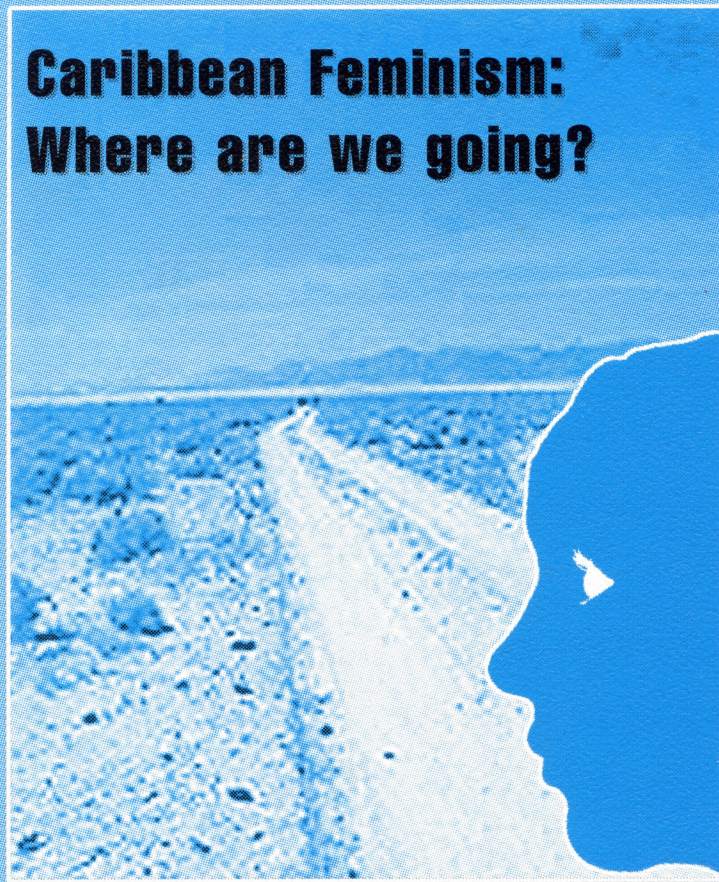




**MAGAZINE OF  
THE CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION  
FOR FEMINIST RESEARCH AND ACTION**

**VOL. 16 NO. 1 (Jan-Jun 2002)**

## **Caribbean Feminism: Where are we going?**



**“We are poised on the  
edge of the millennium—  
ruin behind us, no map  
before us, the taste of fear  
sharp on our tongues.  
Yet we will leap.”**

—From A Woman's Creed,  
the declaration of the  
Women's Global Strategies  
Meeting (Nov 29-Dec 2, 1994)



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# CAFRA News

**CAFRA NEWS is the biannual magazine and primary networking tool of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA).**

*Its main purposes are to:*

- Inform members and other interested people about the association's programmes and activities
- Provide a forum for discussion and debate on key issues of concern to women in the region
- Promote the sharing of experiences and foster links among individual feminists, activists and women's organisations
- Assist in breaking down language barriers in the region
- Stimulate women's creative expression
- Contribute to the development of the women's movement regionally and internationally.

*We welcome letters, articles, poems, reviews, opinions and artwork for editorial consideration. The Newsletter Committee has a final right to edit content and to reject material that is not appropriate for publication, that is, material that does not further the aims of objectives of CAFRA, that does not promote a spirit of sisterhood, and material that is racist, sexist or 'maternalist'. Individual authors and reviewers are solely responsible for views and opinions expressed in published articles.*

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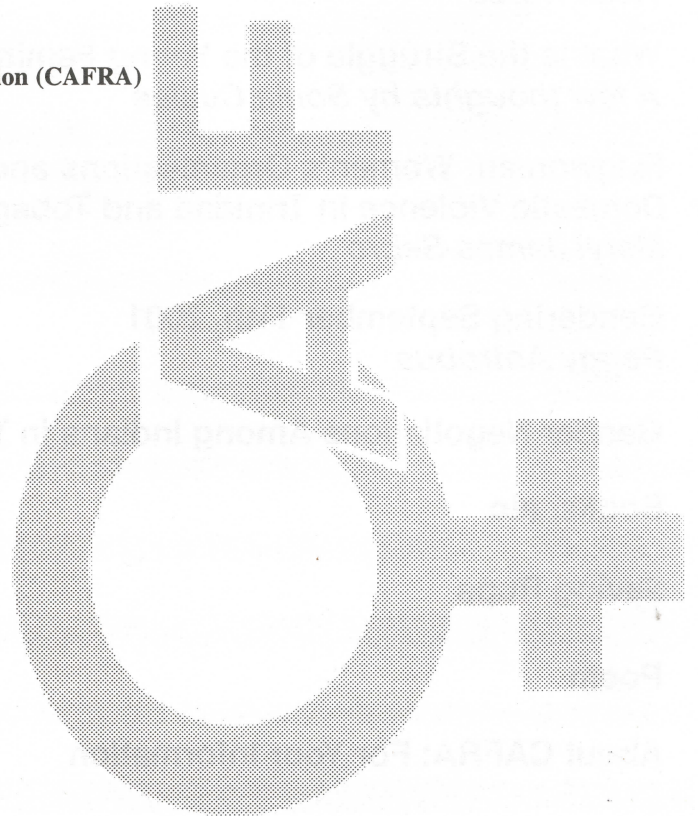
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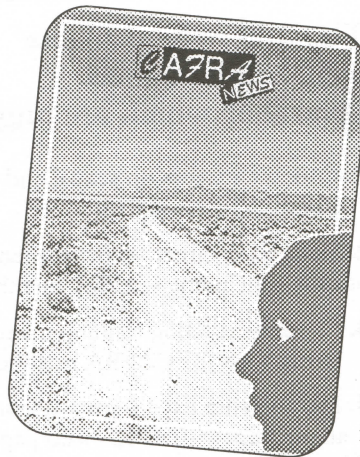
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# Time for reflection

The theme of this issue of *CAFRA News*, "Caribbean Feminism in the 21st Century: Where Are We Going?", provides us with an opportunity for self-reflection. For members of the *CAFRA News* committee, our self-reflection began when the issue, and original suggestions for the issue, were conceptualised. For the benefit of our readers who are not familiar with the initial list of suggestions, we reproduce the list here:

1. We know that feminism has developed, and is developing, differently in the different language areas of the Caribbean, i.e. Dutch, Spanish, French- and English-speaking regions. How have these feminisms developed and are developing?
2. There is a view that we are on the cusp of a change in Caribbean feminist approaches. What are these changes? How do they manifest? Why are feminist approaches changing? What are they changing into?
3. What does feminism mean to young people?
4. Feminist focus on masculinity
5. Caribbean feminism appears to be competing with other ideologies that feminism itself has helped to prioritise, such as the environment and masculinity. In this context, is feminism losing currency and if so how and why?
6. A recurrent issue in Caribbean feminism is the extent to which feminism does not have a grassroots orientation. Is this true? Is this still true? Is this a necessary preoccupation?



For members and friends who responded in various ways, the suggested themes evidently stimulated interest. Among the submissions is Gabrielle Hosein's perspective on "young" feminism presented at the Caribbean Studies Association (CSA) gender panel in May 2001. Carla Bakboord and Maribel Caro, feminists from Suriname and Puerto Rico respectively, also presented papers on the CSA gender panel and they too are preoccupied with the same issue. The first part of this *CAFRA News* provides a space for their various perspectives on 'young' feminism to dialogue with one another.

The articles in the latter part of the newsletter contain more diverse perspectives on another emergent preoccupation—masculinity and feminism's relationship with it. Keith Nurse's article on "Masculinities in Transition", edited and presented here as "Feminism and Masculinity", provides an interesting analysis of the 'men as victims' and the

'men as underachievers' arguments. His perspective on how the decline of patriarchy influences domestic violence is taken up in Meryl James-Sebro's submission on the increase in incidents of domestic abuse in Trinidad and Tobago. Peggy Antrobus links both analyses to the World Trade Center (WTC) bombing in September 2001 and argues that the rise in religious fundamentalism is another key contributor to domestic violence.

Reflections on these two issues—young/old feminism and masculinity—are represented in the first and second parts of the newsletter respectively. They flank Sonia Cuales's thoughts and an interview-styled submission from the Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS), Mona, Jamaica. In these two pieces, both themes emerge prominently. Because these two submissions speak to both of the major issues raised in the newsletter, they are used here to bridge the two sections—conceptually as well as aesthetically.

In an effort to include as many ideas as possible, this issue sacrificed its regional news round-up. However, the *CAFRA* programme update and the list of new and interesting publications have been retained. Indeed, the original vision for *CAFRA News* was that the newsletter serve as a vehicle for information exchange among a membership separated by sea, language and culture. The updates are critical in bridging information gaps and therefore they were considered indispensable in this issue.

*CAFRA News* is a communication instrument of the Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and Action (CAFRA). As CAFRA is the only organisation of its kind in the region, so too *CAFRA News* is the only publication of its kind in the Caribbean. The newsletter is concerned with feminist issues, is published in two languages, and is specifically focussed on the Caribbean.

As we acknowledge the fundamental contributions of past *CAFRA News* committee members and celebrate the success of the magazine, we would also like to remind our readers that if this newsletter is to continue fulfilling its potential as a forum for dialogue, debate and information exchange, then the membership would have to meet its responsibility and respond to the committee's requests for ideas and copy.

We offer this issue of *CAFRA News* as a small contribution to the ongoing discussion about where Caribbean feminism finds itself at this historical moment and how, perhaps even if, we see the continuing relevance of this significant social movement. We encourage your feedback.



**Sheila Rampersad**  
Guest Editor

# Anthology, skills bank directory, documentation centre

The new millennium opened with increasing political upheavals in our region as citizens challenge the systems that are not working for people-centred development. The impact of globalisation and trade liberalisation on the economies of the region has been disastrous, leading to increased poverty and displacement of people. In this context, CAFRA has continued to identify and address the issues affecting women. The organisation has successfully negotiated financial and other resources to sustain its work.



## FUNDING

An analysis of CAFRA projects from 1985-2000 was completed in an attempt to determine CAFRA's comparative advantage. Unsurprisingly, research, training and advocacy emerged as the areas in which CAFRA has made a significant contribution.

Eight proposals for programme and institutional support have been fielded to Heinrich Boll Foundation (HBF), HIVOS, OXFAM, CIDA Gender Equity, UNIFEM and the European Union.

## PROJECTS

### CAFRA Anthology

This anthology of women's experiences was compiled from

submissions by membership. The anthology is edited by Sybil Seaforth. It contains a foreword by Peggy Antrobus and articles from the English, Dutch, Spanish- and French-speaking Caribbean. The anthology will be published and launched in the first half of 2002.

### Domestic Violence Intervention/Prevention Project

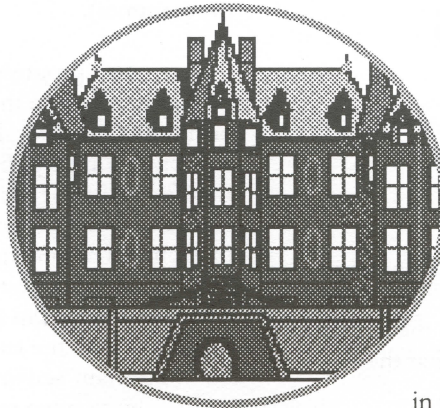
The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) funding was used for the training of police under the Domestic Violence Intervention and Prevention Training Project. Training was conducted in 17 Caribbean countries. The manual has been translated into Spanish and additional funds were accessed to conduct training in Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Curacao and the US Virgin Islands which are not included in the CDB funding package.

### The following projects were implemented, several of which are ongoing

1. Country surveys on sexual and reproductive health—Youth at Risk
2. Skills bank directory of women and women's organisations, including CAFRA membership
3. Capacity-building training manual and workshops for CAFRA membership
4. Membership expansion—translation of annual report, CAFRA web page, CAFRA brochure and capacity-building package into French, Spanish and Dutch
5. Training seminars in self-financing at community level
6. Seed money for income-generating projects
7. Regional workshop in Adult Education methodology
8. Regional advocacy workshop
9. Research on migration and youth at risk
10. Gender and Economic Literacy workshops and training courses
11. Women's leadership training manual
12. Board member training manual
13. Anthology on CAFRA's first 15 years
14. Anthology of stories from Caribbean lesbians
15. The situation of the disabled within families
16. Domestic Violence Intervention/Prevention Programme for Police Officers and Social Workers.

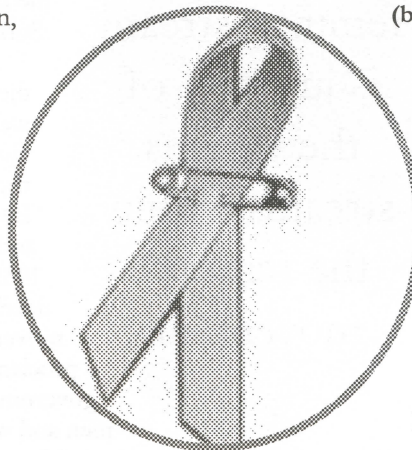
**International Criminal Court (ICC)**

CAFRA was formally installed as the focal point for dissemination of information on the ICC following a regional meeting in Jamaica last May. This advocacy role will support CAFRA's ongoing human rights activities.



**Beijing Follow-up**

Within the framework of the Platform for Action which emerged out of the 1995 Beijing Conference for Women, CAFRA continues to address the critical areas of concern. The question of the increasing burden of poverty on women has provoked CAFRA's involvement in matters around gender and trade, and health (particularly cancer and HIV/AIDS). CAFRA collaborates with other organisations on advocacy on the impact of trade liberalisation on women.



The critical question of women's leadership continues to be broached. This issue of CAFRA News, which examines the challenges to feminism in the 21st century, builds on the women's leadership workshop held in December 1998 and the ongoing UNIFEM Transformational Leadership Project.

**Skills Bank Directory**

The current edition of the Skills Bank Directory of Women and Women's Organisations has been enhanced by the bio-data received from members.



**Documentation Centre**

The computerized system has been installed and the relevant data is being entered. The scope of the Centre will be expanded during this year.

**Capacity Building of CAFRA National Groups**

The following activities, funded by OXFAM, will strengthen CAFRA's position in the respective member countries:

- (a) Training Seminars at community level in self-financing/sustainability
- (b) Seed money for income-generating projects
- (c) Regional workshop in Adult Education Methodology
- (d) Regional Advocacy Workshop
- (e) Research on Migration and Youth at Risk
- (f) Gender and Economic Literacy Workshops and Training Course

In addition, the OXFAM/DFID Project provided resources for:

- Technically and Organisationally-Competent Partner Organisations
- More Responsive, Accountable, Inclusive and Representative Partner Organisations
- Board Member Training (Manual Development)
- Enhanced delivery by partner organisations of advocacy work following from programme work.

**Disability**

A regional project on the situation of the disabled within families has been proposed for Trinidad and Tobago only. This project was sent to BPTT Leader Awards (Trinidad and Tobago) which has issued a call for projects in this area.



# The Women's Movement in Suriname

By Carla Bakboord

I would like to address the development of the Surinamese women's movement. I believe that the movement has become a strong force in Surinamese society. In the period immediately following Independence in 1975, women's organisations emerged which aimed to put women's issues on the political agenda. The Organisation for Surinamese Women led by Margo Parabirsing and the Progressive Women's Union led by Rita Rahman, both established in 1974, were at the forefront. The leaders and members of these organisations came mainly from the progressive movement. The second wave of feminism in Europe and the United States during the 1970s also had its impact on these leading women.

In Suriname this second wave was associated with western radical feminists, who were accused of sexism and hostility against men. Moreover, the general opinion was that this western feminism could not be imported as it was and put into practice in the Surinamese context. Feminism was labelled as anti-nationalist and thus became a negative concept in Suriname. We must not forget that the radical feminist stream is just one of the various streams within the feminist movement. Progressive women's organisations in Suriname practised the emancipation concept through organising women at local level, empowerment of women in their daily struggle to survive, and increasing women's

The radical feminist stream is just one of the various streams within the feminist movement.

awareness through education and information distribution (publications, radio and television programmes).

Also progressive women worked on political demands to relieve the disadvantaged socio-economic position of women. In order to realise this, concentration of political power was necessary. The first federation of women's organisations - the National Women's Council- and later a new federation of women's organisations -the Co-operating Women Organisation- was established. In 1982 The National Women's Movement came into being and Siegmien Staphorst took the lead. One of the movement's most important activities was combating unemployment by creating employment for women through setting up production-oriented projects.

Women increasingly organised themselves at the local or district level to confront the rising economic crisis to which Suriname fell a prey in the 1980's.

Apart from the political and the economic crisis in the country, as well as the feminist waves in western Europe and the United States, it was the proclamation of the UN International Year of women in 1975 and the UN Women's decade (1975-1985) that contributed to the development on the women's movement in Suriname. The UN proclamation stimulated the Surinamese government to proclaim equality between men and women on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1975.

**Now, 26 years later, there is a need for women's organisations to close the ranks in order to strengthen women's political and economic participation. Too long the women's movement in Suriname has been divided along ethnic, political and personal lines. It is of great importance that women's organisations reinforce themselves in an independent women's movement across differences while not denying those differences.**

In another sense an independent women's movement is also needed. Women should not be restricted by involvement in political parties. Within political parties, women who display loyalty to women's issues at the expense of party interest are too often regarded as having betrayed their political parties. This is not surprising since men dominate political parties. **From practice we have learned that political parties, traditional as well as progressive, up till now have not contributed effectively to women's emancipation.**



## Bridging the generation gap

On the contrary, it is obvious that women continue to function in secondary roles within political parties.

In Suriname at the moment there is a growing awareness by women of the need to cooperate although in practice there are still many obstacles to overcome.

Nowadays young women are not interested in the feminist movement. Somehow the movement has no link with young women. I think that women should write their life history and name their achievements. The next generation should know what we have gained from the feminist movement. There is no information flowing to the next generation. They have been poisoned with negativism among feminists but are not aware of the achievements of the movement. They hear that women in the movement are always fighting and this is used against us. When the union, the various religious organisations, or the political parties are fighting no one seems to classify that as a man's issue. For the young generation this is also one of the obstacles to join the feminist movement.

**The women's movement yet has not put the struggle of 'women who also love women' called *mati's* on the agenda.** Even though in Suriname *mati's* are accepted in the Creole ethnic group, the problem of *mati* still exists among other ethnic groups. In 1998 the Forum for Lesbians and Gays in Suriname, FLAGS, was founded with the aim of supporting *mati's* and gay men.

We are seeing that women no longer

participate solely through political parties but also through NGO's, women organisations and pressure groups. This broadens the base of the women's movement. The independent women's movement needs all women: young and old, poor and rich, skilled and unskilled, religious and non-religious from all ethnic, sexual and political groups. This is very complex but we should look at an alliance that binds us together. This way feminism is not a prerogative of an elite vanguard. **The highest objective of feminism—a better world in which men and women have equal say—should be achieved in joint action.** I believe that once we can

make alliances with each other on specific topics we can achieve our goals.

The history of the women's movement of Suriname shows us that women are on the move. Women's organisations founded prior to political independence, were active in the socio-cultural field. Later on from the 1970's the women's movement focused increasingly on women's emancipation, while the nineties were characterised by increasing participation of women on the political front. Since the early 1990's women have been organising themselves also around women's issues and rights. These are put on the political agenda as political demands of the women's movement, independent from government institutions and political parties. Women's awareness about their own capacities is promising as it is growing to be an influential political force.

Nowadays young women are not interested in the feminist movement. Somehow the movement has no link with young women.



Carla Bakboord is CAFRA's national representative in Suriname. She is a social worker specialising in gender issues. Her paper was presented at the roundtable on Feminism in the Caribbean which was part of the Caribbean Studies Association (CSA) 26th Annual Conference held in Puerto Rico in May 2001.



# What does feminism mean to young women?

By Gabrielle Hosein

Generational difference and the 'generation gap' are important considerations when trying to understand and analyse the state of the feminist movement among young women. Where are the young feminists? What are our generational differences? What strategies do we have to build consciousness and activism among young people and at the same time to manage power dynamics that may arise? What do young women bring to the table and where can collaboration across generations happen?

## Growing up with feminism

For some young women, feminism is still a matter of survival and standing up for themselves as women. Young women talked about being "feminist" before knowing that the word had meaning for them, because of their awareness of female discrimination in their lives, because of the gender issues that they encountered in their personal, family and work relationships, and also because they had begun to make their own connections between race, class, sexuality and gender. Other young women were questioning. Academic, activist and professional mothers, aunts and grandmothers had made too much of an impact to leave us unquestioning of the 'facts' taught by religion and school.

I am not sure though that we know that we do not have to reinvent the wheel. I feel as a younger generation we need to know more about the struggles that feminists waged—not just against inequity, exclusion, discrimination and the range of ways that patriarchal power is exercised—but also in getting women's issues to the table in unions, community organisations and universities, the supposedly progressive centres. A great deal of knowledge has been gained through organising marches, rallies and international women's day events, designing legislation and policy, forming regional and global networks, formulating platforms for action, undertaking research and teaching, educating media and governments, strategising for international women's fora and generating critical statements, from a feminist perspective, that need to be heard in debates on public issues. I would greatly like to see that knowledge passed down. **I think that my generation of young women**

know very little about the history of women's and feminist organising in the Caribbean. We don't know how we have reached where we are today.

The other significant outcome of our lack of knowledge as a generation of young women is that we take our opportunities and liberties for granted. **Many young women do not know how many changes have resulted from Caribbean feminism over the last 30-40 years. I think we understand that a generation ago women had less freedom and fewer opportunities but I do not think we know why things have changed or what efforts those changes required. Certainly, the feminist leadership and contribution is generally unrecognised and the gains are taken for granted by those who can now benefit.**

## The impact of feminist activism on a younger generation

I know many young women who believe strongly that women are equal and should have equal rights and will stand up for those beliefs, but do not acknowledge feminism in their beliefs or in the foundation for the struggle for women's rights. **Maybe feminism will always be treated as either peripheral or dangerous, but these statements say to us that this is a starting point that we are still at despite a generation of feminist activism.** It reflects the misperceptions that many young women have about

feminism, the force of the backlash against feminist organising (and the myth of male marginalisation), misunderstanding of the range of issues and approaches with which feminists (around the world) are involved, the way white western feminism dominates popular perception of feminist organising and, ironically, the gains that have been made.

Young women have a very clear understanding of the way that their lives are different from young men's, the double standards and more severe judgements that women face. But how do we take that knowledge and transform it into a consciousness about the need for action? Is there anything that can be done?

I believe that young women of my generation have a very strong sense of equality—that women deserve to be treated equally. But we still have to break that down and make some of the necessary links between 'equality' and partisan politics, sexual and physical violence, educational curricula and the messages that in popular culture. There are few young feminist women at marches, in organisations, at the head of campaigns at this time in Trinidad. There are some, but they are a handful and are working within already defined agendas.



## Young women's non-feminist activism

I have been active in youth organising in Trinidad for about three years now. Youth organising is not just in community groups and youth clubs of, for example, the police service. I also see very powerful youth perspectives in the media. Two of the daily papers—the *Express* and the *Guardian*—produce weekly youth magazines that bring up a range of critical perspectives. **There are definitely youth subcultures and perspectives, but not much is being said by young women about female experiences and perspectives. There is some of that, but mostly in the areas of sexuality and relationships, dress and appearance. Nonetheless, it is a place where many young women are involved and can find a space to write critically.**

Youth perspectives also come out of the music, poetry and 'rapso' sub-cultures that are very expressive and very much alive. There is a strong and growing population of young people performing poetry, singing, rapso-ing and coming out with their own syncretic versions of soca, dub, hip hop and rhythm and blues tunes. Young women definitely represent their perspectives in this arena. Again, this is a very powerful, organised aspect of youth culture where many young women get stage time and respect but we have to think deeper about how to use media and performance spaces in the interest of young women.

Young people are also active in politics. Last year, young people got together to work on the Voice of the Electorate Campaign (VOTE) intended to promote youth participation and leadership in the political arena. Many of these youth were young women. They took to platforms and spoke out and organised youth rallies all over the country which brought popular culture, politics and youth together. But, by and large, the participation of youth was just that. Again, there was much regurgitation of the political leader's and political party's position on issues. On radio and television panels, there was really no youth politics from these groups, but many young politicians who were defending and attacking along party lines. VOTE attempted to be different and to mobilise young people to think with our generational experience and needs as a starting point.

In Trinidad, there is a very strong feminist commitment to a different politics. Critiques of partisan politics and the way that they tribalise different groups have come out of organisations such as Women Working for Social Progress. The Network of NGO's has been working (over the two elections in which I have been eligible to vote) to bring together women from different political parties, to empower women at the local government level, to lobby for 50/50

representation in parliament and to create a women's manifesto as a critique of the limited vision in political party propaganda. These are very empowering processes in which to be involved. **I have found feminist activists to be very open to young women's involvement and representation on their agenda.** In the women's manifesto created for the last election, there was a section addressing some of young women's issues. The Network also prioritised a young women's meeting in the midst of a larger meeting of Caribbean women who were involved in politics.

The youth movement is growing and becoming more active. Young women play very central roles in youth organisations, and youth have begun to identify the issues that are considered highest priority. However, there are problems. The executive of the National Youth Council is very male and there is no gender analysis to speak of behind the activism of the youth movement. Gender issues are not foregrounded, partly because of the inexperience of both young men and young women, but also because youth tends to be understood as a homogenous body. **I think there is an understanding of what 'women's issues' are, but not necessarily 'gender issues'. Although many young men are very open to fighting a range of oppressions, some tend to feel marginalised when gender is on the table and can quickly retreat to very conservative positions. A defensive air suddenly rises and young men and women are suddenly split by sex where before they were united by age.**

Gender training for youth activists can go a long way to both keeping feminist issues alive in youth people's minds and mainstreaming a gender analysis in youth organising. I think that young female activists would benefit greatly from learning what power dynamics to be aware of, how to make links between gender and other issues, how to explain and address concerns that they may have about male leadership and a kind of 'gender-neutral' definition of 'youth issues'.

Finally, educating and further empowering the young women (and also young men) in media, music, political arms and NGOs can go along way to building the capacity of this generation to critically examine and change itself, and to clearly define what kind of critical change can be made in the larger organisations in which youth are active. Among the community of young women, we need to do plenty work to examine how 'difference' affects our ability to come to consensus as a constituency... ♀

**Gabrielle Jamela Hosein is an M.Phil student at the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, UWI, St Augustine. Her research focuses on Indo-Trinidadian girls and their experience of adolescence. This article is an excerpt of a paper she presented at the roundtable on Feminism in the Caribbean which was part of the Caribbean Studies Association (CSA) 26th Annual Conference held in Puerto Rico in May 2001.**



# The feminist movement in Puerto Rico at the dawn of the new millennium: Challenges and Alternatives

By Maribel Caro

I consider myself part of the feminist movement not because I have followed its trajectory and know it fully, but because in my experience as a woman I have recognised how important it is to have policies and action plans which would look critically at the question of oppression, and promote peace, justice and the welfare of women in every sense of the world.

The women's movement has fought tirelessly to achieve equity between the sexes, equal opportunity and non-exploitation of women in the workplace, fair conditions of employment and wages, the recognition of a woman's right to control her body, her life and her sexuality and to live a life free from any kind of violence. We have struggled for our rights as human beings and to maintain and broaden our achievements. We have affirmed the right to participate in the processes that promote economic policies that are committed to the eradication of poverty, guaranteeing adequate housing, health, education and many other needs. All of this valuable work has been carried out from different spaces: work centres, women's organisations and the non-governmental organisations, academia, student movements, political parties and organisations, human rights organisations; through everyday work, political activism, integration in the media, international conferences, public policies, research and educational activities.

This work in which many women and men have invested a lot of energy has been of inestimable value. As a result of efforts in the political, academic, legal and social spheres there have been significant achievements in favour of the welfare of women. **However, it seems that in the process of intellectualising, politicising, legalising and socialising these conditions we have lost something essential.**

What do I mean? What I am trying to say is that it seems fair and necessary to carry out research

on the matters that affect us and to undertake research of a political, legal and social nature to improve our lives, but it seems that occasionally the perception is that women are something abstract and homogenous, when in reality there is great diversity among women with specific needs that are not necessarily represented. And beyond that, we women do not only need to be aware and take action to guarantee our welfare and development, but also that efforts should be taken and space provided where we can undergo the healing process and express our thoughts and feelings about what it has been like to be oppressed. We are ready, so that apart from voices speaking on our behalf, we should shout aloud about what has hurt us and what we need to heal. **In order to change the external conditions of women's lives, it is necessary to begin with a process of transformation from within, from inside our very selves and from within the movement.**

The women's movement in Puerto Rico is at a stage of reflection and self-evaluation. The time has now come to stop and reflect. Day by day we celebrate our achievements and we continue the struggle to protect and broaden them. But we often listen to our colleagues, veterans in the movement, who acknowledge how tired they are, and the need and urgency to do things another way. It is good that some of them recognise this. Tiredness as a result of working for women, sometimes forgetting that we are included among these women and we have our own needs. "



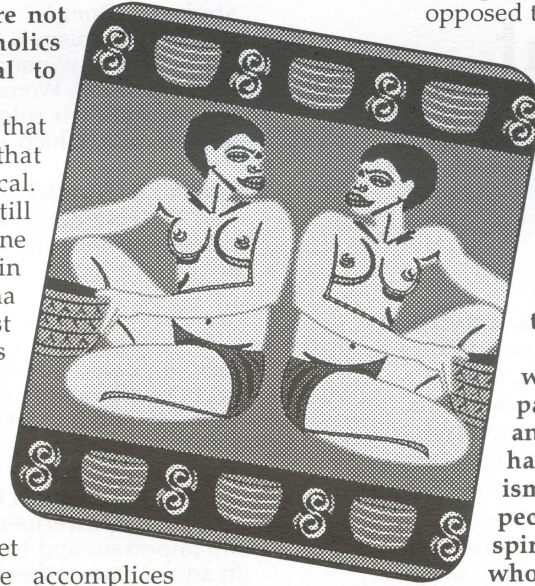
We have become lost in the whirlwind of meetings, lobbying, and international conferences, reports, proposals and presentations. And perhaps part of the reason why it is difficult for us to prepare for the changing of the guard is that we ourselves are not attractive, our style as workaholics does not necessarily appeal to young women."

One of the arguments that inspired the movement is that what is personal is political. "What is personal is still political." This is the title of one of the articles published in December, 2000, by Adriana Santa Cruz, a feminist, activist and director of the Fempress Journal. Santa Cruz says: "I suffer in my own flesh from the syndrome that affected a large number of women who have formed the last wave of the feminist movement in Latin America: we came, we met each other and we became accomplices answering an irresistible call.

We got the strength, imagination and passion to demand changes which are in sight today. In the process we also became institutionalised, professionalised, and bureaucratized. We made laws, political alliances, we created women's offices in the United States, Chairs for women at universities, we organised conferences at regional and world level, and spaces for communication like this one. We became efficient workers for women's causes and without knowing how, an important part of the innards fell by the way side.

**What inspired the movement seems in some way to have been lost. We promote women's health, but we do not take care of our bodies, our minds, our emotions and our spirit; we demand peace and non-violence, but at times we are the first to be violent and boycott our own processes. We demand better working conditions, but it is difficult for us to stop overworking. And above all, we have ignored and we have swallowed the rage, the frustration, the sadness and the pain that all of this has caused.**

Another point that is discussed within the feminist movement in Puerto Rico and other Latin American countries, I think, are the working models, the structures within which we are trying to function. What is happening is that there is an excess of work, distributed among a minimum of persons. The administrative tasks related to requests for funding for our programmes is very



time consuming and requires a lot of energy. The structure of the governing boards demanded by the funding agencies does not always correspond to our needs and expectations. This kind of hierarchical structure is part of a male, patriarchal model that is opposed to our interest in creating structures that are more horizontal and equitable. Educational activities sometimes fail, due to the lack of participation. What we regard as alternatives to this situation is greater involvement in mass communication and the processes of decision making, and encouraging voluntary participation by persons committed to the movement.

Beyond these challenges, I would like to acknowledge and pay tribute to the women, projects and grassroots organisations that have undertaken the work of feminism from a holistic and integral perspective, accepting women as total spiritual, political and social beings who form part of an ancestral history that sustains and motivates them.

As a young woman who is relatively new to the movement, I must say that I value the introspection and self-criticism that we are seeing at the beginning of this millennium. I think that it is part of a renewal process. I feel that the passion is still there and this is precisely what makes us visualise new styles and other forms of change. I firmly believe in the need to maintain the commitment and to work for a life of justice, dignity and peace for women, starting with ourselves. I see the need to integrate our individual experiences into the struggle, instead of excluding them. Everything must start with us and extend to others. In this way the movement will be an integrated whole and not fragmented.

To belong to the feminist movement has been a blessing for me. I feel that I have developed an awareness and a sense of alert, that allow me to see clearly in daily life the evidence of different kinds of oppression. I have grown as a woman, as a worker, as mother, activist, organiser, and there is still a lot of room for growth. That is precisely why I am writing this, to continue growing, and to indicate that the movement in favour of change and peace for women and for the world can count on me.



*Maribel Caro is an activist in the Puerto Rican Reproductive Rights Coalition. Her paper was presented at the roundtable on Feminism in the Caribbean which was part of the Caribbean Studies Association (CSA) 26th Annual Conference in Puerto Rico in May 2001.*

# What our students think about feminism today

Shakira Maxwell and June Castello, lecturers at the Centre for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica surveyed students on what feminism means to them and submitted the responses as their contribution to this issue of CAFRA News. The students are from the classes AR20A (Gender in Caribbean Culture 1: Theoretical Issues, History and Religion) and AR21A (Introduction To Women's Studies). These courses are offered to undergraduate students in years two and three. The students range in age from age 20 to 50, with a female to male ratio about 90 to 10.

The students responded, via questionnaires, to two questions:

1. What does the term feminism mean to you?
2. Do you think there is still the need for a Caribbean feminist movement?

Following is a selection of their responses to question 1:

## QUESTION

### Student 1 (Female)

A feminist is someone who tries to highlight the needs and wishes of women, and tries to examine her role throughout history and how it affects contemporary society. A feminist tries to place women into the limelight.

### Student 2 (Female)

Feminism is the movement that is based on the need and desire to empower women by striving to uplift the way in which women are seen in society and the roles that they (are) placed (in).

### Student 3 (Male)

For me, feminism has always had a somewhat negative connotation, as it almost always seems to be anti-male. Here, we have a group of women who are lobbying for women's rights and equality, while (at the same time, they are) lashing men, possessing an attitude of "I can do without men".

### Student 4 (Female)

(Feminism is the) enlightenment of women. It is the empowerment and recognition of (women's) worth.

### Student 5 (Female)

Feminism is believing in and supporting the success of women, without any form of discrimination. Women are not seen as submissive to men and their rules but have ideas and opinions of their own, which are valuable to society.

### Student 6 (Female)

(Feminism is) a response by women to continuous inequity in society. This is because men are given a higher rank under a patriarchal society.

### Student 7 (Female):

(Feminism is) an ideology that questions the unfair way in which women have been treated traditionally, and it also seeks to advocate for the visibility and importance of women.

### Student 8 (Female)

Feminism is the thought or concept of women empowerment. It is the idea that women are important and have knowledge or can function in any sphere of their society, and also that women can do anything that men can do, and so much more.

### Student 9 (Female)

To me, feminism means women having a voice in the working of society. It's about not being restricted to certain behaviour patterns or values because of sex. It is being free to choose how you will live and not having to face ridicule or insults from other members of society.

### Student 10 (Male)

A group of women who are advocating women's issues and women's rights, sometimes not taking into account the importance of the whole picture.

### Student 11 (Female)

To me, the term feminism signifies a united attempt by women to obtain equality in the social, political and economic spheres of life. In other words, it is the need to be considered and treated equally as men.

### Student 12 (Female)

(Feminism is) the movement consisting of a collection of people, dominated mainly by women, who are working towards the empowerment of women in the society.

### Student 13 (Female)

Feminism implies a movement which focuses on issues of relevance to women which are either not sufficiently addressed or may not even be addressed at all.

Following are the selected responses to question 2:

**QUESTION**

*Student 1 (Female)*

Yes I do. There are particular traditional notions of women that need to be changed. We are now living in a contemporary society, which has evolved over time, so new ideas or needs have been introduced which affect women. For example, in the past, it was the role of the man to work outside the home, while the women stayed in. Today, you find that women are acquiring jobs outside of the home. It simply means that the traditional "housewife" is no longer applicable, so house chores need to be shared.

*Student 2 (Female)*

I do not think there is a need for any radical group in the Caribbean, such as Radical Feminists. However, I do think that in light of some of the social issues that are evident in the Caribbean, a feminist movement is still needed in order to educate the society on the value of its women.

*Student 3 (Male)*

I believe that it is important for women in the Caribbean to be able to express themselves, especially since we live in a region in which our men do and still believe that they are superior to women, and that we (women) ought to be subjugated. However, based on my concept of feminist movement, this is perhaps too radical, and I am not sure if this would be significant to the region.

*Student 4 (Female)*

Yes, there is still a need for a Caribbean feminist movement. Many Caribbean women have a low self-esteem, and need to be motivated. Some are highly abused and need to get assistance in regaining their self worth.

*Student 5 (Female)*

No. I think women in the Caribbean are given equal opportunities especially in some male dominated jobs, such as construction and politics (among others). They are free to voice their opinions and make valuable contributions to the Caribbean society at large. Only in some areas of religion, where women are forced to conform or submit to the men, would a feminist movement be useful, for example, the Rastafarian Movement and other religions that do not allow women to take active role in worship. Otherwise, women seem to be progressing in almost every area, and in many cases, better than men.

*Student 6 (Female)*

Yes, there is still the need for a Caribbean feminist movement, because inequity still exists. Rights need to be earned and social attitudes need to be changed.

*Student 7 (Female)*

Yes, there is still a need for a Caribbean feminist movement, especially since gender roles are continuously being redefined.

*Student 8 (Female)*

Yes, there are still a lot of females that are being oppressed, and do not have the knowledge or skills to move forward, but with this movement, they would/could have a movement to rely on and to help them to move ahead and from their present situation(s).

*Student 9 (Female)*

Absolutely. The work being done by the feminist movement is still significantly reserved to academia, and even there it is still not yet recognised as valid in comparison to other disciplines. In addition, the feminist movement at the grass roots level is still not fully accepted as relevant to all women and men.



**Meeting in the Centre for Gender and Development Studies. At extreme left is Ms Sharira Maxwell and Ms June Castello with students of the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies.**

*Student 10 (Male)*

Yes. But the mission must be established on a sustainable level which results in more harmonious and complementary relationships between men and women.

*Student 11 (Female)*

Yes, I do think that there is still a need for Caribbean feminist movement. Although women have begun to excel within today's society, there is still room for improvement, and so, a Caribbean feminist movement would encompass the problems faced, so as to allow improvement and advancement of women.

*Student 12 (Female)*

There is a need for the feminist movement in the Caribbean. Over the years, men have dominated many of the institutions/organisations. Therefore, a feminist movement will give rise or help to incorporate a stronger presence of the female population in some of the key areas in these institutions, or even give them a stronger voice.

*Student 13 (Female)*

I think there is need for a Caribbean feminist movement based on the fact that in some instances, the voices of women are not heard/aired, and some are still discriminated against usually based on race and social status.



# Feminism and Masculinity

By Keith Nurse

The signs of a transition in the gender order are everywhere and the impact on men and masculinities is very dramatic. In many respects these changes are interpreted through two perspectives: men as victims and men as under-achievers.

The most dramatic shifts in the gender order concerns women. Young professional women are winning many of the new jobs in the services and knowledge industries, earning more money, increasing their share income and strengthening their hold on the professions. In the field of education, female achievement has been outstripping that of young males for at least a decade. An increasing number of young women are exhibiting characteristics previously considered typically male, such as a willingness to take risks, a desire for adventure in sport, foreign travel and a much greater interest in sexuality.

The rise in the participation of women in the workplace and in education as well as women's new social freedoms are often related to the decline of the male breadwinner and male privilege. The conclusion often touted is that of male marginalisation or that "men are at risk."

The problem with this argument is that it constructs men as victims of the women's movement. The men as victims argument is associated with a counter movement to reassert the dominance of men and masculinity. The suggestion is that the problem is that men are unable to fulfil their role because women are too ambitious.

This conclusion is based on the age-old conception of the role of the male 'breadwinner' as being essential to the full realisation of male identity. Having a job and earning a good income are essential mechanisms through which men gain power and prestige as well as attract women. A decline in

## INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY

November 19th

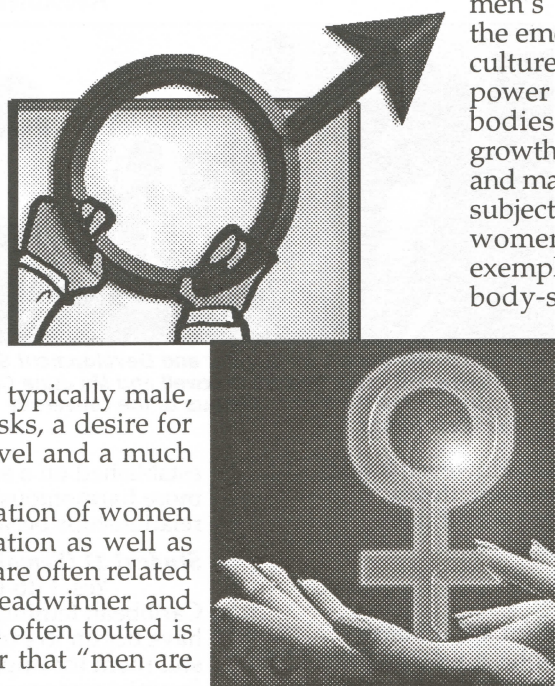
this role, through unemployment for example, has manifested in the loss of self-esteem and problems such as domestic violence and reduced sexual potency.

Men and masculinity are also going through many changes. Men are increasingly required to adjust to the rise of male unemployment and the feminist challenge to patriarchal ideology.

For instance, the objectification of men's bodies is associated with the emergence of a new consumer culture. Men have long held the power of 'the gaze' over women's bodies and still do. With the growth of men's style magazines and male modelling, men are being subjected to 'the look' of both women and men. This is exemplified by the range of new body-sculpting magazines and exercise machines that are being promoted. Men are being encouraged to have "rock hard abs" and a totally toned physique (a hard body).

Also, men are proving to be almost as susceptible as women to a loss of self-esteem and dissatisfaction with their body image. The male image is increasingly being sexualised, eroticised and so feminised. For example, the sale of male toiletries has been increasing recently and it is men who are doing the bulk of the purchasing.

The men as underachievers argument demeans men as underachievers and deviants. It portrays men as a growing social problem because an increasing number of them are uneducated, unemployed, unmarried or gay. The view is that school, work and family are key socialising institutions without which men become unproductive, uncontrollable and dangerous. For example, men behaving badly are responsible for the decline of family values,



## Men are increasingly required to adjust to the rise of male unemployment and the feminist challenge to patriarchal ideology

the growth of single-headed households and the proliferation of homosexuality. According to Ehrenreich (1995) some of the key features are that:

- men no longer depend on women for physical survival;
- masculinity, like femininity, is now being exploited by consumer culture;
- men no longer need women to express their status;
- male wages have declined and so has the breadwinning role;
- women's gender identity is becoming masculinised.

These transitions in masculinities are viewed as indicative of the decline of patriarchy. The traditional meaning of patriarchy (the rule of the father, including the rule of older men over younger men and of fathers over daughters, as well as husbands over wives) is being eroded by fundamental shifts in the sexual division of labour and gender ideology. But Ehrenreich (1995) warns that 'the end of patriarchy is not the same as women's liberation'. For her, patriarchy involves a process of mutual obligation, which meant protectiveness on the part of men, either in terms of comforting or infantilising women. She argues that those days are over. She identifies two parallel trends: male flight from female companionship and the masculinisation of women. **She forecasts an increase in male violence, especially that against women and suggests that 'the battle of the sexes' may stop being a metaphor and become an armed struggle"**.

Pleck (1995) makes the point that in contemporary times men have become more dependent on women for emotional and sex-role

validation because male-male friendships have been declining, while male-female relations have expanded with dating and marriage occurring more universally. As a result, women have gained more expressive power and more masculinity-validating power over men:

- women are used as *symbols of success* in men's competition with each other;
- women play a *mediating* role by smoothing over men's inability to relate to each other non-competitively;
- relationships with women provide men a *refuge* from the dangers and stresses of relating to other males;
- women reduce the stress of competition by serving as an *underclass*.

These scripts not only define what 'true masculinity' is, or, is not, but it also informs what femininity is all about as well. Deviation from these roles is seen as a threat to the natural order of patriarchy. Consequently, the challenges that have arisen through "women's liberation means that the stakes of patriarchal failure for men are higher than they have been before, and that it is even more important for men not to lose" (Pleck 1995: 10).

The ideology of masculinism is able to exploit male insecurities and vulnerabilities about sexuality and work. At the same token it is also used as a basis to perpetuate sexism

thereby reinforcing traditional occupational and reward hierarchies. The myth of male privilege, power and status blinds men to their own gender oppression and therefore limits the possibilities for an emancipatory transition from within the boundaries of masculinism. This suggests that the prospects for a preferred future in gender relations are dependent on the continued unmasking of the core ideas that inform masculinism.



**Keith Nurse lectures at the Institute of International Relations, University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago. He has worked with various women's organisations in Trinidad and Tobago on issues relating to the economy, gender relations between men and women, and masculinities.**



# What is the struggle of the young feminist?



*EDITOR'S NOTE: Sonia Cuales, CAFRA regional committee member, responded to our call for submissions with a few thoughts on feminism today. Two related issues preoccupied her—young people's relationship with feminism and the feminist movement and the relationship between men and women in contemporary Caribbean feminism. Following are her responses to questions she asks of herself as an 'older', experienced feminist as well as questions that she poses to our readers.*

I do not think that feminism has lost its original meaning, that is, the recognition of and resistance to the oppression of women. What has changed is the way that young feminists (even if they do not always identify themselves as feminists) walk into arenas that were formerly male-dominated without recognising that theirs is a feminist act.

The new, young feminists move out of situations where they are likely to be oppressed by men. They seem to have a self-conviction that they are important and worthy of achievements in all sectors of the society, that they do not have to preclude themselves from educational and professional opportunities. They see successful, powerful and independent women all around them and know that they too can be successful, powerful and independent. Without reservation, they claim women's rights, which the world's feminist movement has bequeathed to them. Their self-confident acts and attitudes are the legacy of women who fought male-domination on all terrain, from the bedroom to the political platform and back.

However, I do not think that the nuances that shape individual women's lives, which our generation of feminists politicised in "the personal is political", are credited by the new generation of feminists.

Indeed what is the struggle of the new/modern/young feminist?

Well, the new, young feminist wants to walk next to her male brother/companion/boyfriend/schoolmate. They do not want to walk the struggle alone. It has been my experience that young women do not want to fight young men. They want to understand them and they want the young male to understand them in return. They want the young male to see the disturbances in gender relations that they see. They are asking 'How do we get the boys to understand all this gender equality that we recognise and do not want? How can they see it too?'

Young feminists at the recent Feminist Encounter of Latin America and the Caribbean produced a significant resolution: We do not want a feminist movement without the boys. We want them in the struggle with us! What has been the response to this resolution? Did the 'older' feminists who organised the Encounter respond? How did they do that? Did the young feminists proceed? How? Where?

**Young women do not want to fight young men. They want to understand them and they want the young male to understand them in return.**



# Flag Women



Women's organisations and domestic violence in Trinidad and Tobago  
By Meryl James-Sebro

CAFRA member Meryl James-Sebro has completed her PhD dissertation entitled "FLAGWOMEN: The Struggle Against Domestic Violence in Trinidad and Tobago", which looks at how specific women's groups address domestic violence. Her research was conducted between May 1999 and March 2001.

In a survey of more than 20 women's organisations and other non-governmental organisations (including CAFRA), James-Sebro suggests that the incidents of domestic violence have increased, although NGOs have been successful in publicising, delegitimising and criminalising domestic violence.

Foregrounding women's voices, the study examines the strategies women are employing to cope with domestic violence. James-Sebro suggests that gender relations between men and women have moved from the stage of *mamaguy*—the traditional diplomatic, flattering and 'soft-soaping' approach women use in interacting with men—to *mas*—the more direct, confident, independent, exhibitionist approach evident in masquerading or playing *mas* during Carnival.

The research methodology included in-depth interviews of members of two organisations—Women Working for Social Progress and The Business and Professional Women's Club/South. Copies of the study are being made available to Women Working for Social Progress, The Centre for Gender and Development Studies; The Network of Non-

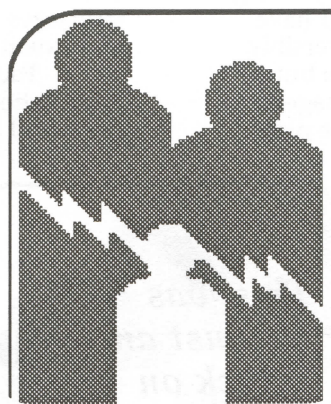
Governmental Organisations of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women, the West Indian Section of the National Library in Port of Spain, and UNIFEM/Caribbean Region in Barbados. The study can also be obtained from the American University Library in Washington, D.C.

CAFRA News is grateful to James-Sebro for allowing us to reproduce the following short extract from her research.

...while I observed an easy integration of grassroots and middle class women, particularly in feminist organisations, there have been several worrying comments by women, inside and outside of the women's movement, of the monopoly of these organisations by middle class women with self-interests that take priority over the interests of their constituencies.

Functioning within the context of Trinidad's gender, ethnic, and class stratification, women's organisations have been successful in attempts to down-play or ignore these divisions. This head-in-the-sand approach has proven unsuccessful and self-defeating for strengthening organisations and broadening and deepening the reach of the women's movement. Challenging gender oppression could well become an opportunity for easing racial tensions and bridging class divisions in the primary interest of constructing a more cohesive whole in order to address the strategic interest of challenging an oppressive and divisive state...

In Trinidad women's issues are in danger of being sidelined for funding assistance as World Bank officials prioritise the needs of boys and perceive the focus on women's issues as emasculating and threatening to young males (World Bank 1998: Interview). While the marginalisation of young males is indeed an increasing concern, it needs to be viewed within the context of the increasing impoverishment and cultural emasculation of the entire country as a result of aggressive globalisation policies that undermine Caribbean economies and pauperise whole nations.



# Gendering September 11th, 2001

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *The terrorist attacks on the United States of America and the consequences of those attacks are already being committed to memory as a date—September 11th, 2001.*

*Six days after the attacks, Peggy Antrobus, one of the early members of CAFRA and a founding member of Development Alternatives for Women in the New Era (DAWN), presented a paper on women's response to globalisation. Following are those excerpts of her paper in which she makes links between gender and the attack on America.*



...One thing is shared everywhere—the horror of what has happened, and the understanding that the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 have changed our world and our lives irreversibly. This was not just an attack on America but a wake up call to all of us. It was a message to a world that has for too long ignored the pleas and claims of millions of people whose realities are very different from those of the people of the US, Canada and Europe—people whose lives and livelihoods have been stunted by a global economic system geared to place the well-being of the powerful and privileged above those of the majority of the world's peoples, and for whom today's integration of global markets ushers in not a golden age of opportunity but an intensification of the pressures that place at risk the livelihoods and security of millions of people and the planet itself.

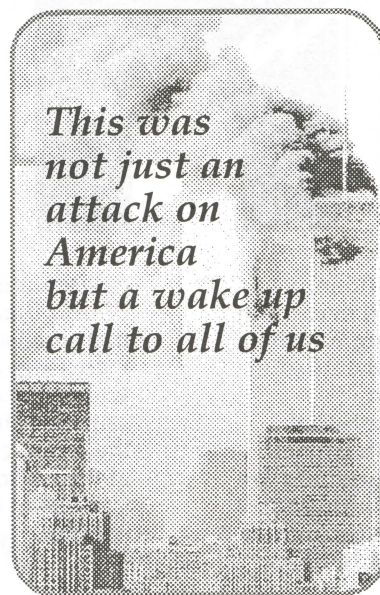
As hard as it is to fathom and justify, there is a kind of inevitability about the use of US technology to destroy the symbols of patriarchal capitalism in the cities that are the centre of the

military-industrial complex in the heart of today's Superpower. There is a frightening logic. For many this kind of shocking terror is perhaps the only logical response to the increasing use of technology to continue the destruction of the lives of millions of people and the planet itself. The destruction of the lives of thousands of innocent people in New York and Washington was criminal, but we need to know that this kind of terror takes place on a daily basis in many parts of our world today. We need to know that there is a link between the structures that produce and perpetuate this kind destructiveness and those that subordinate women. And we need to know that when women's lives are sacrificed for the sake of political and economic power and privilege, the consequences for all humanity are terrible!

Political struggles are always about the control of resources. The division of the world between one group of countries that use their power and privilege to command the resources and productive capacities of another group of countries by exercising control over political, cultural and social structures used to be called colonialism. Today it is called globalisation. The globalisation of the economic, political, social and cultural structures is not new; what is new is the pace and extent of this process of integration.

Facilitated by rapid advances in information technology and biotechnology, the world has become a single market-place where the gains go to those who have the means to take advantage of the opportunities presented for unprecedented wealth and privilege.

This process has been going on for a number of years, resulting in an increasing gap between the rich and the poor, within countries as well as between countries, but in a sense it was accelerated in the Decade of the 1980s, the decade termed by Latin Americans The Lost Decade. This decade saw the reversal of many of the gains made in the 1960s and 1970s as countries adopted the policy framework of Structural Adjustment, the conditions under which they received assistance from the International



Monetary Fund (IMF) as they struggled to repay their international debts...But the political consequences of Structural Adjustment Policies are perhaps the most fundamental: these policies resulted in the restructuring of the role of the state, and the relationships among states, markets and civil society.

Women everywhere bore the brunt of these policies, which often resulted in cuts in social services and loss of jobs for women who predominated in these sectors of the economy. At the same time it was women, especially those in poor households, who had to fill the gaps created by these cuts, when states transferred responsibility for the care of the sick, the disabled and the elderly to the market, by the privatisation of services.

Accompanying the increased burden for women was an increase in the level of violence, including domestic violence. **The increase in violence is related to a number of factors, but one factor that contributes to domestic violence that is related both to the increased sense of insecurity as well as to the struggle for economic resources is the rise in religious fundamentalism.**

Fundamentalism exists in most religions, but one thing they all have in common is the control of women, and especially women's sexuality, and the use of violence to impose this control. Violence is not only physical, but also psychological and even spiritual. Even the threat of violence is sufficient to control women....Insecurity and loss of control drive

many people to the certainties and promises of fundamentalism within their own faiths. Increasing poverty has also strengthened fundamentalist groups in many countries as parents use the educational and health services provided by these groups in the face of reduced access to public services in these fields.

Political power is reinforced when it can be linked to religious beliefs, and religious groups use political connections to protect their interests. The symbiotic

relationship between religion and politics can be lethal to women, as we have seen in many countries, and not only those in the Muslim world.

...These groups used religious fundamentalism in two ways in order to secure and reinforce their political power— by adopting a code of conduct that offered a way of controlling their followers, and by espousing religious teachings that would guarantee control over women. **As the carriers of the culture, the backbone of the family and the people on whom future generations depend, women support is critical for any revolutionary movement.** In many countries women have suffered horribly at the hands of religious fundamentalists. The treatment of women by the Taliban is just the most publicised example. But women in India and Pakistan, Algeria, Sudan and Iraq all suffer from patriarchal interpretations of the Koran.

The policies of structural adjustment that were/are so devastating to women have their parallel in the political struggles waged over resources when religious fundamentalism was used to mobilise and reinforce political forces. **When capitalism is unchecked, the vulnerable suffer and women, more so than any other group, suffer since they have primary responsibility for the care of people. When patriarchy is unrestrained, men lose their humanity, and a rule of terror is launched on the world.**

At this time we need information, reflection, analysis and dialogue to find solutions that will stop the violence, not escalate it. We need a different perspective and women, **speaking as women** (as distinct from women speaking as

politicians or experts of one sort or another)— can take the lead in this, in partnership with men who understand that patriarchy robs men of their humanity as it dehumanises women.

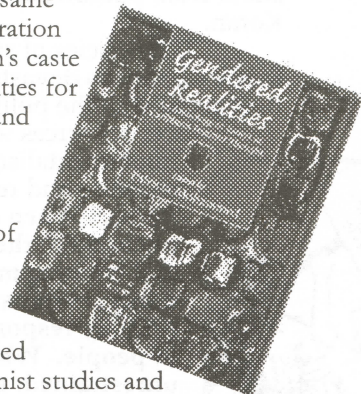


**Peggy Antrobus's paper was presented at St Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, on September 17th, 2001. Her presentation was sponsored by Development Studies, Women's Studies, and The Coady International Institute.**



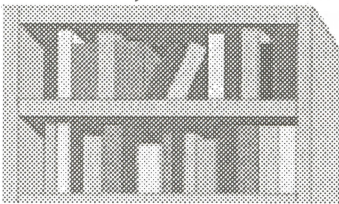
# Gender negotiations among Indians in Trinidad 1917-1947

CAFRA member and social historian, Patricia Mohammed, has completed work on her new book, *Gender Negotiations Among Indians in Trinidad 1917-1947*. The book illustrates how Indian men and women desired to preserve some aspects of the gender system brought with them between 1845 and 1917 where and when these were important to consolidate ethnic identity and the continuity of a culturally distinct Indian community in Trinidad. At the same time, the circumstances of migration allowed challenges to Hinduism's caste system and provided opportunities for both men and women to defy and reinforce aspects of Indian patriarchy which followed their ancestors across the seas. Mohammed is currently Head of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. She has published extensively on gender and feminist studies and is co-editor of *Gender in Caribbean Development* (1988) and *Caribbean Women at the Crossroads* (1999).

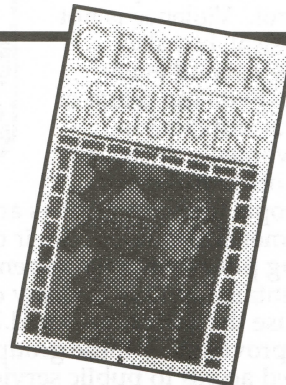
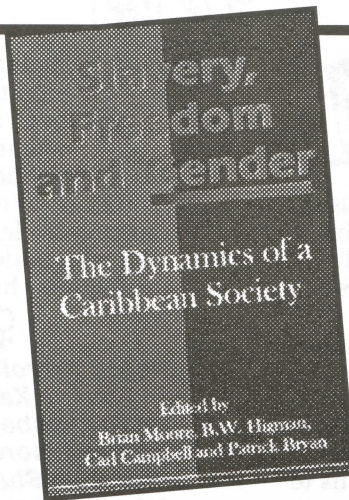


Pat Mohammed's mother and father are pictured here in 1951. The photo was taken at a Princes Town studio soon after the couple married. Theirs was an arranged marriage. The book is dedicated to them.

## Books, etc

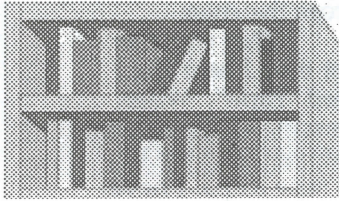


**SLAVERY, FREEDOM AND GENDER: The Dynamics of a Caribbean Society**  
 Brian L. Moore, Patrick Bryan, Carl Campbell, B.W. Higman  
 ISBN 976-640-111-X  
 288pp 6x9  
 J\$1500 US\$34.95



**GENDER IN CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT**  
 Patricia Mohammed, Catherine Shepherd  
 ISBN 976-8125-55-1  
 396pp 6x9  
 J\$1000 US\$25

Books, etc



The following is a list of recent publications and unpublished articles on Caribbean feminist issues. We are grateful to the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, UWI St Augustine, for their help in compiling the list.

**Bailey, Barbara.** 2000. *Issues of Gender and Education in Jamaica: What about the boys?*, UNESCO, Monograph Series, No. 15

**Barriteau, Eudine and Coble, Alan.** 2001. *Stronger, Surer, Bolder.* Ruth Nita Barrow, Mona, University of the West Indies Press

**Lazarus, Mindie Black.** 2001. *Law and the Pragmatics of Inclusion: Governing domestic violence in Trinidad and Tobago*, American Ethnologist 28(2)

**Denis, Ann D.** 2001. *Whither Work? A Comparative Analysis of Women and Work in the Commonwealth Caribbean and Canada in the New Era of Globalisation*, Working Paper Series, Centre for Gender and Development Studies, UWI Cave Hill

**Peake, Linda and Trotz, Alissa.** 1999. *Gender, Ethnicity and Place: Women and Identities in Guyana*, London: Routledge

**Braithwaite, Joan A.** 1999. *Women and the Law*, UWI Press

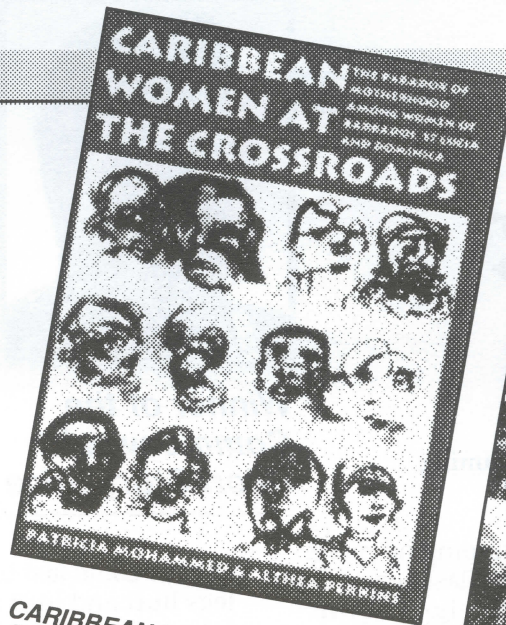
**Hezekiah, Jocelyn.** 2001. *Breaking the Glass Ceiling: The Stories of Three Caribbean Nurses*, UWI Press

**Youssef, Valerie and Carter, Beverly-Anne.** 2001. *Guidelines for the Use of Non-Sexist Language*, Centre for Gender and Development Studies, UWI, St Augustine

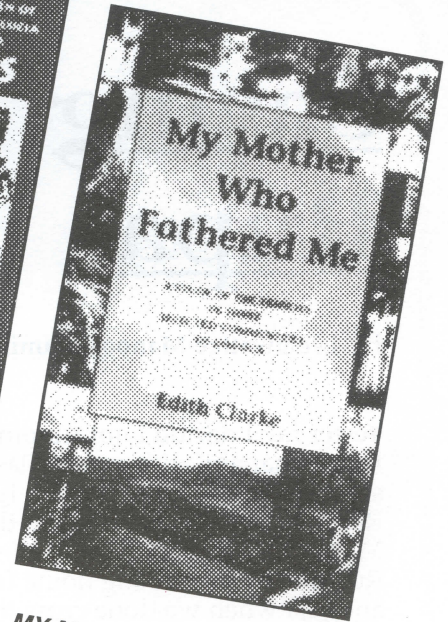
**Parry, Odette.** 2000. *Male Underachievement in High School Education in Jamaica, Barbados and the Grenadines*, Jamaica: Canoe Press

**Martin, Danielle.** 2000. *Rape as a Crime in Trinidad and Tobago 1960-1990* Caribbean Studies.

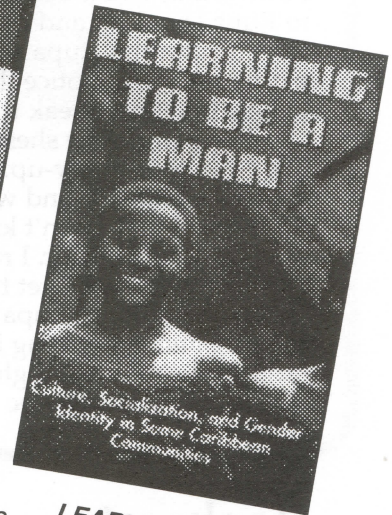
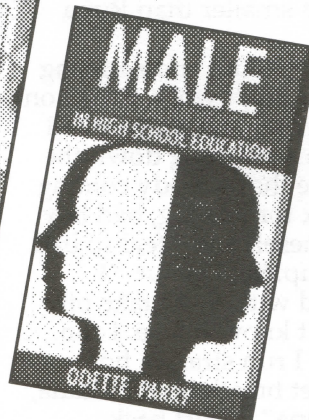
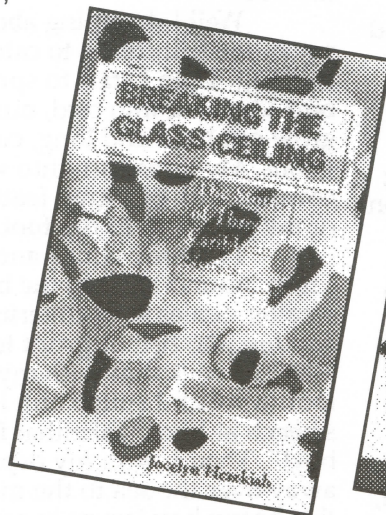
**LEARNING TO BE A MAN: Culture, Socialization, and Gender Identity in Five Caribbean Communities.** Barry Chevannes ISBN 976-640-092-X 240pp 6x9 J\$850 US\$25



**CARIBBEAN WOMEN AT THE CROSSROADS: The Paradox of Motherhood Among Women of Barbados, St Lucia and Dominica.** Patricia Mohammed, Althea Perkins ISBN 976-8125-44-6 UWI Press, 150pp 7x10 J\$750 US\$20



**MY MOTHER WHO FATHERED ME: A Study of the Families in Three Selected Communities of Jamaica.** Edith Clarke ISBN 976-640-040-7 266pp 6x9 J\$900 US\$25



# Saving Rupa

By Leelawattee Manoo-Rahming



**Winner of the Commonwealth Short Story prize**

Rupa go and run away across the river.

That was the first time I hear the word "rape". When Mama tell Miss Radha that we lucky the boy eh rape Rupa. I never know exactly what "rape" mean but it make me feel like I want to throw-up again. And since then I

Yesterday I decide I not running no more. I can't manage with coming last again. Ever since that time when the boy hold down Rupa, it look like I use up all the speed Maha Devi give me for this life. Me and Rupa, we was walking home from school and just when we done cross the river that run beside the school, a big boy come running up the road and bounce we like he didn't have no room to pass because of the bamboo jhamraa on both sides of the road where Mr Ramdial plant bodi and yam. And as he jam up against we, he grab Rupa hand. I figure he never bother with me because I younger and smaller than Rupa who just turn eleven.

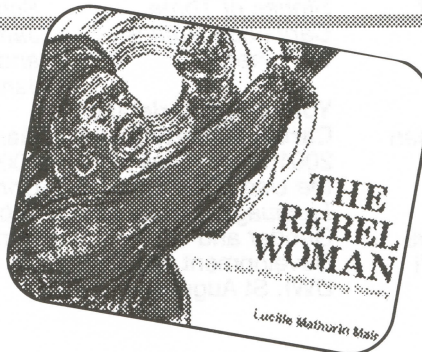
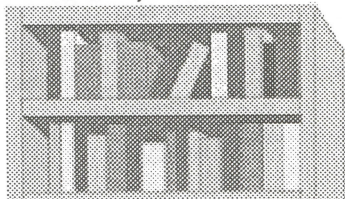
I start fighting, cuffing and scraping he arm, and when that don't work, I hold on to Rupa shoulder and pull and pull and all the time me and Rupa screaming down the place. But then I notice that nobody coming to help and I too weak for this big, bad boy and Rupa can't free sheself and I feel so bad like I going to throw-up. So, I shout, "I going for Mama". And with that I take off with speed that I don't know I have. I run. All I could see is blur. I run straight home. I don't know where I get breath to tell Mama, "A boy hold down Rupa". I start back running and everything is blur again. We reach Rupa who still fighting with the big boy. Is only when he see Mama that he let

always come last in race. I try hard, but my legs hurt and hurt and is like I can't move. Like in them dreams I does have sometimes. The big boy trying to catch me and I running, running, running, but every time I look behind me, he still there. After a while I start screaming and that's when I hear Mama calling me and I wake up and realise is only a dream. But I soaking wet like I run for true.

Well I dreaming about that boy again. He still trying to catch me and I still running. Then I start to sprout feathers. Is bird I turning into bird, oui. My toenails grow out hard and long, curving over like talons. My arms turn into wings and I am covered with big, grey feathers from the top of my greyhead to my foot.

I flap my wings and fly up in the air. I turn around and see the big boy getting smaller. Scales start covering he body. He turning into fish. A grunt to boot. I fly at him and stick him with my claws. When I look is snatch I snatch him in he eye, oui. I screech at him, "Take that for Rupa, you bad boy!". Then I, with my ospreybirdself, fly away over the sea to the mountain top with this heavy boy/grunt in my toenail hook. I well enjoy eating that bad boy with he fishself. Even with my belly full, I feel so light, I soar. I soaring high, high, high. ♀

## Books, etc



**THE REBEL WOMAN in the British West Indies during Slavery.**

Lucille Mathurin Mair  
ISBN 976-8017-24-4  
48pp 8.5x7.5  
J\$250 US\$8

## Now, girl, now

I wrote this poem after the meeting on The Making Of Feminism in recognition of how grateful and inspired I am by the feminists that I have been able to meet and learn from and end here with my thoughts about how to make my own contribution.

—Gaby Hosein

I grew up with their voices in my ear  
 Forget learning to whisper  
 Secret signs and silences  
 These were noisy unfurling words  
 "We were never really quiet,"  
 said my mother,  
 "Now  
 girl  
 now  
 Yours truly, turn  
 Say after me  
 Yes. Go. Do. You. We. Can. Be.  
 Again  
 This time louder  
 Put all the women in history  
 Who wanted to shout or write a new dictionary  
 Feel them in your throat leaping out."

I grew up with their stories in my ear  
 Invented games where little girls  
 Banged pots and marched singing  
 See me scribbling treatises about the nation  
 Playing dress up with the vocabulary of womer  
 Thinking I'd be prime minister, in my mother's

Thank goddess for these women heroes  
 Teaching reading, 'riting, and radical change  
 Because in school and history books  
 Women didn't learn a language to give their feelings name.

I might have grown up a crazy lady  
 Maybe suspicious of myself or shameful  
 Letting diagnoses of hysteria keep me alone  
 But there was this crazy talk unhinging doors in every home

So I grew up grasping a power  
 To understand and to describe  
 Feelings I might not have even known existed otherwise

And I grew up facing a future  
 That my mother never knew  
 Because women all around me struggled, my every option grew

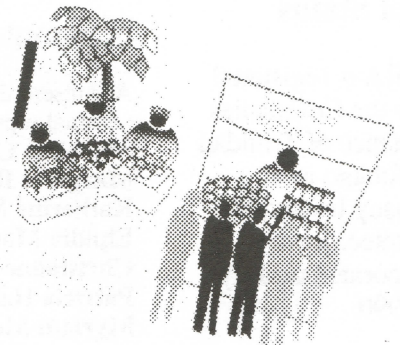
I grew up with their voices and feel great gratitude  
 That my mother fed me their stories, nourishing like food  
 And that she said with each spoonful  
 "Now  
 girl  
 now  
 Yours truly, turn"

# About CAFRA

## CAFRA in History

As the women's movement in the Caribbean developed, it recognised the need for regional co-operation and networking. The work that was being done by women's groups in different geographical areas of the Caribbean bore enough similarities and faced enough common problems to justify co-operation. CAFRA emerged from this scenario as an autonomous umbrella organisation. It was founded officially on April 2, 1985 at an all-day meeting of 40 feminists and women activists in Barbados.

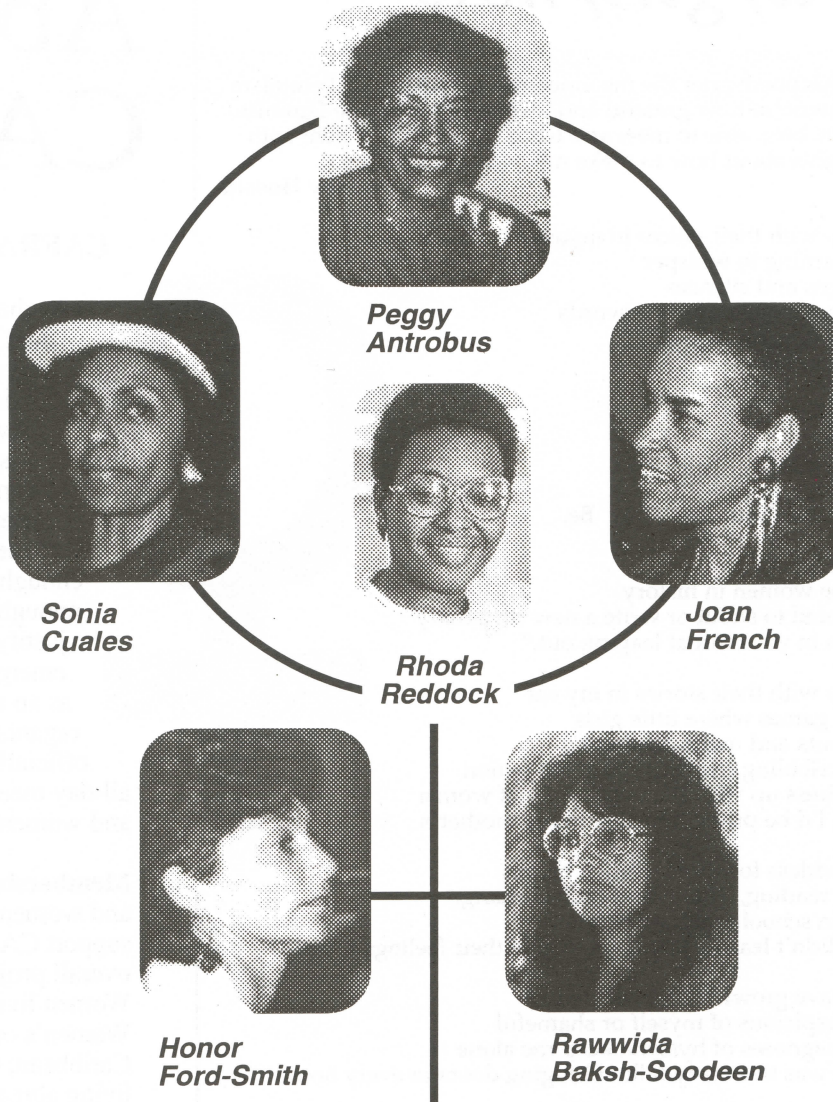
**Membership** is open to women and women's organisations who support CAFRA's mission and overall projects, and who are:  
 Women living in the Caribbean;  
 Women's organisations in the Caribbean; Caribbean women living abroad; Women with 'Caribbean roots' living abroad.



# Women in CAFRA

## Structure

A 22-member regional committee governs CAFRA. The current chair is Margaret Macaulay, an attorney from Jamaica. Jeanne Henriquez of Curacao is the deputy chair. The CAFRA Secretariat is based in Tunapuna, Trinidad and Tobago. Its co-ordinator is Nelcia Robinson from St Vincent and the Grenadines, one of the organisation's foundation members. There is a general meeting once every three years; the Regional Committees and Continuation Committees meet annually. CAFRA works through national representatives in the Dutch, English, French and Spanish speaking Caribbean.



## Legal Status

CAFRA is registered under the Companies Ordinance of Trinidad and Tobago as a company limited by guarantee. It was incorporated on July 16, 1990.

## National Representatives

At present there are 16 CAFRA national representatives:  
**Madeline Carter** (Bahamas)  
**Margaret D. Gill** (Barbados)  
**Katherine Mendez** (Belize) or **Elpidia Moreno** (Cuba)  
**Christaline Merrifield** (Dominica)  
**Patricia Hackett** (Guyana)  
**Myriam Merlet** (Haiti-national contact)

**Michelle Golding** (Jamaica)  
**Jacqueline Martis** (Netherland Antilles)  
**Aida I. Cruz Alicea** (Puerto Rico)  
**Veronica Guerrero** (Dominican Republic)  
**Cherry Flavia** (St Lucia)  
**Ancelma Mogan-Rose** (St Vincent)  
**Carla Bakboord** (Suriname)  
**Stephanie Pile** (Trinidad and Tobago)  
**Nartel Green** (US Virgin Islands)