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## **The Black Power Movement in Trinidad: An Exploration of Gender and Cultural Changes and the Development of a Feminist Consciousness**

By Victoria Pasley

In February 1970 the Black Power movement in Trinidad exploded as thousands of young people took to the streets in massive demonstrations that rocked the island. The government responded by arresting activists and ultimately declaring a state of emergency. At the same time a group of young army officers, sympathetic to the Black Power movement, mutinied. Prime Minister Eric Williams and the People's National Movement (PNM) government emerged from the uprising, severely shaken but still with a firm grip on powers. Women played an active role in the demonstrations and within the activist groups that were a part of the movement, but scholars and observers generally have failed to document their participation.<sup>1</sup>

This article explores the gender ideology of the Black Power movement, the participation of women, the effect of the fight against racism together with an increased level of race consciousness on gender awareness, and the cultural changes inspired by Black Power. It then analyses the emergence of a new and more radical phase of the women's movement in Trinidad in the mid to late 1970s, which led to the beginnings of a feminist discourse. It follows that development by assessing the increased consumerism spawned by the oil boom and how it conflicted with Black Power ideology and affected the gender system. The final section will examine how women and men are portrayed in newspaper advertisements, women's pages, letters, articles and other newspaper items.

Although women's activism throughout Trinidad's history is evidence of emerging feminisms, this paper is particularly concerned with the emergence of radical feminism in which women question not only their oppression in society but also the very nature of the gender hierarchy and the hegemonic gender system. I have found the work of R.W. Connell useful in understanding the construction of hegemonic gender orders with hegemonic versions of masculinity and femininity (the latter Connell calls "emphasized" femininity). Hegemonic gender constructs perpetuate the idea that gender roles are somehow natural and therefore immutable. They are developed in such a way to maintain control of and appeal across class and race by displaying essential ingredients of interest to all groups. Until men and women challenge these hegemonic structures, which are continuously being reinforced by the media and other forces and institutions, gender equality cannot fully evolve.<sup>2</sup> Some women activists in the Black Power movement, while fighting against racism and class discrimination, began to question their own oppression as women and did go on to challenge these structures.

An examination of gender in the Black Power movement in Trinidad and the subsequent development of a feminist movement make a critical contribution to the study of gender in the Caribbean and in Trinidad in particular.<sup>3</sup> The patterns that arose in Trinidad are also pertinent to understanding the experience of women in the Black Power movement in the United States as well as in Black Liberation struggles in Africa and elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> There are important similarities between the experience of women in the Black Power movement in the US and in Trinidad including the construction of black masculinity. These analogies will be drawn on when relevant to the discussion of Trinidad. Unless stated otherwise all references to Black Power in this paper refer to the movement in Trinidad. It is also important to keep in mind that in Trinidad the Black Power movement arose in the post-Colonial period when a Black government was in power. African Trinidadians were not subjected to the extremes of violent and repressive force unleashed on Black Power activists in the U.S. In Trinidad a significant and vibrant activist feminist movement arose leading to the formation in the 1980s of the Caribbean Association for Feminists for Research and Action, (CAFRA) a Caribbean wide feminist organization, which continues to be very active in the region.

## The Black Power Movement

The Black Power Revolution in Trinidad in 1970 presented a serious challenge to the dominant cultural ideology based mainly on a European model, which had, to a large extent, been left intact from the colonial era. African Trinidadians had a long history of struggle mirroring that in the rest of the African Diaspora so that events in the late 1960s and early 1970s were part of a continuum of struggle that reached back to slavery, through the local branches of the early Pan-African movement, the United Negro Improvement Association founded by Marcus Garvey, and numerous other African nationalist organizations and the labor riots of the 1930s. Eric Williams' challenge in the 1950s was of particular significance as for the first time in Trinidad the black middle class gained control of the legislature. Yet, for the most part, by 1970 this challenge had turned out to be largely rhetorical. Despite the government's achievement of providing increased access to education, it had not fulfilled many of the other promises of independence. Institutionalized racism remained. For example, a 1970 study showed that whites represented 53 percent of the business elite in companies employing over 100 persons, while, 'off whites' represented 15 percent, mixed race 15 percent, Chinese 9 percent, Indians 9 percent and Africans only represented 4 percent.<sup>5</sup>

A number of events in the late 1960s led to the articulation of Black Power in Trinidad. The government had passed the Industrial Stabilization Act in 1965 at a time of severe worker unrest. It was the first piece of anti-worker legislation that the government had implemented, exemplifying the split between the PNM government and a significant segment of the organized labor movement.<sup>6</sup> In passing the Act, the government severely restricted workers' rights to protest and settle grievances. At the same time unemployment was growing, especially among young people, many of whom had benefited from increased access to education provided by the PNM, but who by the late 1960s, were leaving school only to find that the limited availability of jobs quashed their aspirations.<sup>7</sup> The transport workers strike in 1969 was also of significance because of the range of support it garnered from crucial elements on the left, including trade unionists, students and members of grass roots organizations. The police severely repressed the strike, which further galvanized opposition to the government, setting the mood for 1970. Finally, many Trinidadians began to feel that the black government of Eric Williams had done little to help the majority of poor people of both African and Indian descent.

Besides internal factors the influence of international events also played an important role in the changes that were taking place in Trinidad. The Cuban revolution of 1959, the African and Asian Independence struggles, and the Civil Rights movement and subsequent growth of more militant groups like the Black Panthers all had substantial influence on Trinidad. Consequently, the 1960s had brought forth a cultural revolution, which reached fruition in the 1970s. Khafra Kambon, an activist and one of the leaders of the Black Power movement, commented on the range of literature that ordinary people, not just intellectuals, were reading. Besides a growing interest in African and Indian history, many young people became interested in black and revolutionary literature, by writers and thinkers such as Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and Regis Debray, Frantz Fanon, Walter Rodney, Stokely Carmichael, Eldridge Cleaver, Malcom X and others who reflected the mood of the changing times.<sup>8</sup>

In response to unrest in Trinidad and to the unfolding events in Canada the Joint National Action Committee, which later become NJAC, had been formed in 1969. The committee, which was to be at the forefront of the Black Power demonstrations, consisted of around 26 groups and organizations, including youth groups, trade unions, students, and sporting and cultural associations. Geddes Granger (now Makandal Daaga) was the chairman and he played a major leadership role in the revolution.<sup>9</sup>

A march in solidarity with the Trinidadian students on trial in Canada was a major catalyst for the demonstrations to begin. This, together with disillusionment with the PNM, (which, ironically, the spread of mass education had fuelled) culminated in February 1970 with the massive demonstrations of the Black Power movement, which came very close to overthrowing the government. Among the many demands behind the slogan of Black Power, perhaps the most urgent were against the racial discrimination in the society as a whole and in employment in particular. For example, commercial banks employed few black people. Other demands included an end to exploitation by foreign capital and the local mostly white business class, and for a change in the dominant cultural ideology, supported by the government, the Christian churches, the media and the education system, which revered aspects of European culture whilst denigrating those aspects, which had origins in India and Africa.<sup>10</sup> The imprisonment of its leaders and the government's imposition of a state of emergency eventually repressed the movement. The events of the demonstrations have been described elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> The literature, however, has seriously neglected the involvement of women in the Black Power movement. Yet women played an active part in both the mass demonstrations and the subsequent guerilla struggle.

### **The Gender Ideology within the Black Power Movement**

Although gender as a category of consciousness was not developed by this period, looking back at the movement with a gendered analysis does give some important insights that may not have been obvious at the time. The Black Power Movement clearly demonstrated the resilience of the gender system. The language of the movement is particularly interesting. Black Power advocates used a very masculine language that focused almost exclusively on the Black Man. Even if Black Power leaders felt the need to focus on recruiting men, it is interesting why they did so in gendered language. They equated the lack of power with the denial of manhood, thus tying masculinity to power. The movement derived its concept of manhood directly from the model of hegemonic masculinity of the ruling class, the same elite whom advocates of Black Power challenged, yet they never seriously questioned the structure of masculinity, nor the oppression of women.<sup>12</sup>

The following examples of male focused language come from pamphlets put out by various groups advocating Black Power. In a pamphlet put out by participants in the movement, *Black Sound Vol. 1, No 2* dated about 14 December 1970, with the headline FREE OUR PEOPLES ARMY - POWER TO THE PEOPLE, the writers saw the struggle against exploitation by capitalists as the "struggle for manhood and Black Power . . ." It went on to say: "But racism is not a passive force. It is an attempt to deny us our MANHOOD [capitalized] . . . In 1971 in an NJAC pamphlet on *Confrontation White Power Structure vs. Workers* about the strikes at the Fedchem and Dunlop plants, the pamphlet stated that workers' demands were. . . "no longer concerned about wage increases. THEIR STRUGGLE IS BASICALLY ONE FOR THEIR MANHOOD - A struggle for the recognition of their humanity, a struggle to assert their pride, to realize justice for Black People." The pamphlet included the following statements: "Black Manhood Trampled" and "Workers forced to suppress manhood to preserve their jobs." In a *Statement on Elections* by the Central Committee of NJAC, circa 1971, while talking about the people's total rejection of conventional politics, the statement mentioned "white vultures who have been preying upon our suppressed manhood for hundreds of years." Even a calypso by the calypsonian Chalkdust, a schoolteacher, in 1971, "An Answer to Black Power" stressed solving the Black Man's problems. Finally, in an undated publication called *Black Sound* with "No More a Slave! Free to Burst the Final Chains" on the cover, it claimed "The Black Liberation Movement calls on all Black People to become a Black Man"! At this stage the movement's leaders paid little attention to the double or triple exploitation of black

woman by their race, sex, and class. In linking racism to an attack on their masculinity Black Power advocates failed to see how the construct of power and masculinity in itself oppressed women.

Because power, sexuality, and manhood were so intrinsically linked it was not surprising that the Black Power movement in both the United States and Trinidad should place a new emphasis on the black male body. At the same time that the 'Black is Beautiful' slogan provided a necessary counter to Western ideals of beauty, this new emphasis on blackness reasserted the power, strength and sexuality of the black body, and of the black male body in particular. This focus tended to assert male sexuality and power, while exploiting black female sexuality. The hyper-masculine sexualized male body of the African man thus played on the white male fears that arose from the mythical construction of black male sexuality--a side effect of British imperialism and the colonizing agenda. Cultural critic bell hooks points out that the black male body has also been "feminized" by white men in order to assuage that fear, so that, like all women, black men were seen as more body than mind and more instinctive than logical. The hyper-masculine image of Black Power served in part to counteract this "feminization."<sup>13</sup> Trinidadian elites, who were often white or near white, like their counterparts in America, perceived a threat in a Black Power movement which fused together the body and intellect of the black man.

Unlike the Black Power movement in the United States that pictured Black Panthers and other radicals with guns--the ultimate phallus--guns did not play a significant part in the imagery of the Trinidadian Black Power movement. Trinidad did not have the same gun culture as America, nor were guns readily available. Neither had black people in Trinidad been attacked with the kind of violence that had symbolized black oppression in the United States. The American Civil Rights movement had made this violence visible, consequently Black Panthers carried guns in self-defense. Certainly the Black Power movement's language in Trinidad demonstrated an emphasized masculinity enveloped in power, which in itself presented a threat to the dominant elite.

Despite the masculine language and its focus on black men, women did join the movement and they participated in the Black Power demonstrations. And there were calls for women to join the movement in some of the pamphlets that Black Power groups circulated. One specifically called for African and Indian women to join the liberation struggle. In *East Dry River Speaks: "The Voice of the Hills," Issue No 5*. (No date) there is a paragraph entitled GET ON UP SISTERS! which used Leila Khalid and Angela Davis as examples. It advocated that women "fight like the brothers, stand side by side with our brothers show them the "fight also belongs to us" and . . . "level the earth according to Eldridge Cleaver in our attempt to gain our manhood". It called on the Sisters to get on up and join the march for freedom. However, it is clear from these pamphlets that the movement saw freedom for the Black Man as the priority.

Nevertheless, women participated in the mass marches and demonstrations as well as in the numerous organizations that spiraled out of the mass movements. Young women also played a leading role in the secondary school movement, which led street demonstrations after the sentencing of the army mutineers in 1971. Both Ayesha Mutope Johnson and Josanne Lennard, secondary school students at the time, were prominent leaders and speakers in the National Organization of Revolutionary Students (NORS). Some of these young women went on to join NJAC.<sup>14</sup> In February and March 1970 women were among the activists who went into poor communities handing out pamphlets encouraging people to join the marches. They also held community level discussions debating the meaning of Black Power and the revolutionary literature in circulation. A former woman activist remembered that women comprised a significant component of the marchers but that when NJAC held community group discussions in depressed areas, women usually did not attend, even though women activists, sent by NJAC, would sometimes lead these discussions. This is perhaps because many women still considered political ideology as a male domain. Women played an important role during the demonstrations, typing, distributing pamphlets and providing food. They also

spoke on platforms during the many demonstrations and meetings. In the early months, however, women did not participate in the decision-making meetings of the leadership elite.<sup>15</sup>

It is important to note that after 1970 the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC), which had provided the leadership during the demonstrations, became a very different organization. It splintered into two trends, the cultural nationalist trend to which NJAC subscribed, and various groups with Marxist-socialist tendencies.

In late 1970 NJAC formed a women's arm, which it officially launched in January 1971. The impetus seems to have come from the men in NJAC, not the women.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, from interviews conducted with former members and the NJAC publication *The Black Woman*, who came out in 1974, it appears that the NJAC leadership did not challenge gender roles. The man was the head of the household and the Black Woman was a sort of earth mother. Her role was to support the black man in the struggle, to make the home comfortable and representative of African/Indian/Caribbean culture, and to inculcate that culture to the children, while the group somewhat glorified the role of women in Africa.<sup>17</sup> NJAC did not accept birth control, perhaps partly due to the Family Planning Association's (FPA) insensitive campaigns that somewhat ignored issues of race and class, stressing population control, rather than arguing for the rights of women to control their bodies etc. NJAC women stressed traditional gender roles along with natural hair, African/Indian dress, and no make-up, mini skirts, or high heels.

Although NJAC women members discussed the long history of exploitation of black woman, they distanced themselves from what they, and the predominantly male leadership, saw as the white women's liberation movement, which they felt had little relevance for black women. Leaders in the Central Committee sometimes accused women in NJAC who deviated from the roles NJAC's decision makers ascribed to them, of being CIA agents, or, as one woman activist noted, as "Eve, the temptress, come to take the brother's mind off the struggle and create confusion within the movement."<sup>18</sup> These accusations made it extremely difficult for NJAC women to challenge the gender ideology within the organization.

Reports in the press, however, suggested that some sections of Trinidad society saw NJAC as a protector of women's rights.<sup>19</sup> The group's leadership stressed respect for women and was against the sexual exploitation of women's bodies, protesting the treatment of women in some calypsos. At a cultural rally in 1972 Daaga publicly attacked Sparrow's derogatory portrayal of black women in his calypsos.<sup>20</sup> There was, however, only one woman member of NJAC's central committee. As the central committee made all major decisions, women found themselves largely excluded from decision-making. One former NJAC member recalled her frustration at being excluded from leadership roles and decision making because she was a woman.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the very fact that women had joined NJAC showed that they already had a level of political awareness and were unlikely to be content to stay at home following prescribed gender roles. Instead, and partly as a consequence of becoming politically active through NJAC, some NJAC women were able to move on to follow successful careers. Former NJAC women include women who went on to earn higher degrees, an attorney, and an administrator in the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>22</sup> Aside from NJAC, some women, such as Beverley and Jennifer Jones, politicized through the Black Power movement, went even further, taking the path of armed struggle.

The formation of the revolutionary National Union of Freedom Fighters (NUFF) signified the trend away from cultural nationalism. Young activists had formed NUFF after the Black Power demonstrations and the army mutiny. Its members took a Marxist-socialist line that saw class not race as the main problem in Trinidad and Tobago, believing that armed struggle was the only way to change the society. This was in part a response to the brutal and repressive tactics of some of the police force in the aftermath of the Black Power revolution. Consequently, a number of NUFF members took up arms launching a raid on what was then Texaco Estate Police Station, located at

Forest Reserve in South Trinidad on May 31, 1972. The group fought a guerilla war until around late 1974/75 when the government and its security forces had either killed or imprisoned most of its members.<sup>23</sup> Women participated in the armed struggle and NUFF fighter Beverley Jones who was killed in action became a popular heroine among the mostly young supporters of the movement. Women fought equally alongside the men in guerilla warfare, camping out in the bush, and tracking. They were not assigned traditional roles of cooking and caring. The fighters shared these activities among themselves. It does not seem that they discussed the "woman problem" at length, but neither did they question the ability of women fighters. NUFF fighter, Clem Haynes stated that:

I used to feel good seeing that women being a part of it. They used to feel good about themselves . . . they could've really prowl, as we'd say, they could really climb those hills and you know they were not a keep back--to say like it's women and we'll have to wait for them, in fact, they could've prowl, as we'd say when we're on the march, longer distances than some of the guys . . .<sup>24</sup>

NUFF ideology considered women an integral part of the struggle and the fact that woman fought on equal terms is a significant indication of equitable gender relations. In addition, the picture on the front page of the *Express* of the young Beverley Jones, gunned down in action in September 1973, most likely impacted on the subconscious of Trinidadians, providing a compelling contrast to the dominant ideals of femininity.<sup>25</sup>

Other socialist-oriented revolutionary groups that came out of the Black Power uprising after 1970, which like NUFF took a class position, such as the United Revolutionary Organization (URO) and the Youth Forces and Working Class Movement, finally took up the issue of gender discrimination. Significantly they did not form separate women's arms and URO supported women's right of access to birth control and abortion and control of their bodies. A URO paper entitled "The Myth of the Equality of Women in Trinidad and Tobago society", around 1973, argued that to be black, working class and female was to be "relegated to an extreme position of inferiority."<sup>26</sup> In accordance with Marxist analysis at the time, they believed that women would only be free when the revolution came.

## **Cultural Change**

The 1970s were a time of widespread cultural change in much of the industrialized world. Conditions in Trinidad were similar to conditions in other post-independent states tied to the capitalist economy, so that the changes that took place were inspired from both within and from outside the island. In particular the Black Power movement inspired significant cultural changes, some of which impacted on gender roles. Articles in the *Express* in February and March 1970 indicated some of the changes that were taking place. *Express* writer Rosemary Stone noted that:

Boys and girls are wearing tiny little vests with flared pants and leather thonged sandals and boleros. Boys and girls are wearing Afros or long hair. Things like homemade jewelry, beaded fringes on skirts and trousers, square fingernails, chunky shoes, alpagats, and heavy thonged sandals and gold peeper glasses.

She went on to discuss the "whole scene." She claimed that it was "in" to "turn on" with grass, speed, tampis etc. and to be a "brotherman." She continued:

The best thing about a brotherman is that he doesn't make a big thing out of being one. He doesn't announce to the world that he takes drugs, lives with a girl, is involved with the Black Power Movement, reads revolutionary books or does work for the union. He is just cool and does his own thing quietly . . . unless he is roused by something disturbing.

She defended the occasional smoking of marijuana as not necessarily addictive. "just like having a drink with friends or taking a tranquilizer when you are all uptight." These extracts clearly show change in the way young people were dressing and living.<sup>27</sup>

Then in March another article gave a glimpse of the changing fashion and accompanying cultural change. "The mood is new," the writer commented on the new fashion mood where clothes had become more useful and comfortable: sandals (for marching), solid colors, military bush jackets worn over skimpy jerseys and either denim trousers or mini skirts instead of see through clothes. Also girls were wearing trouser suits, and using "bags gathered at the top in fabric leather." Boys were wearing ponchos and Cuban shirts as well as Mao jackets and Afro jacks, tank tops, and tie-dye jerseys. The writer continued:

Everybody wears berets and sneakers and headbands tied around their foreheads. Everybody's wearing as much leather as possible and armbands on their wrists. Everyone with an Afro' sticks an Afro comb in their hair so they can touch up their hairstyles as the march goes on. [*It could also be used as a weapon as in Express on Feb 27, 1970 a headline read "Afro' Comb Murder Charge" - 2 brothers charged with stabbing a recording company worker to death with Afro comb.*]

Everyone is wearing African prints. Everyone wears jersey outfits slashed to give a fringing appearance also juju beads, on wrists, necks, and gold-rimmed glasses. Khaki is also popular.

Plaits were also important as well as beards and moustaches for men.<sup>28</sup>

Although the clothes the writers described reflected an international movement of dress, the Black Power movement entrenched this style of dress in Trinidad. To some extent the commodification of dress into "revolutionary chic" neutralized clothing as a symbol of revolution. Yet the way young people chose to dress did show an identification with the movement. The wearing of selected African and Indian clothing showed an identity with Africa and India rather than Europe, while confronting Western ideals of appropriate dress. 'Natural' Afro hairstyles also represented an acceptance of the beauty of African hair, thereby contesting Western standards of beauty. As young people's activities challenged traditional authority, their clothing, such as jeans, sandals and beads, as well as hairstyles, challenged traditional norms of dress.<sup>29</sup> These clothes also had implications for gender relations and construction. Flat sandals provided an alternative to the crippling high heel, thus giving women freedom to walk around, run and generally move more freely. At the same time that many young women and men were taking part in the mass demonstrations that rocked the country, clothes in general became more comfortable, less restrictive. Trinidadians paid much more attention to male clothing, which had undergone considerable change from the business suits or casual shirts and trousers of the 1950s and 1960s to the dashikis and vest tops that exposed the male body. Moreover, a debate arose after the Black Power demonstrations about the relevance of Western style



dress for men in Trinidad, which led to a move towards the wearing of shirt jackets on formal occasions.

A major indication of cultural change was the way in which young people took part in funerals. The trend seems to have started with the funeral of Basil Davis, shot by a policeman on 6 April 1970. His funeral attracted a very large following, estimated by one reporter as between 20,000 to 30,000.<sup>30</sup> At this funeral and at several others that followed, mourners wore red and black, the coffin was draped with red and black flags, or later red, black and green, and there was African drumming and chanting along the way. Young men and women both wore casual dress of jeans, red T-shirts and the like. After NUFF launched its armed struggle, the wanted NUFF guerillas, described by the police and daily newspapers as Trinidad's number one enemy, received funerals attended by thousands when they fell in battle. They were given heroes burials in the style of Black Power funerals, symbolizing a significant split in the country. Young men and women were defying the country's power structure

The cultural change implemented by NJAC has already been discussed-- natural hair and African influenced dress. There was also a change in attitude to color and beauty that focused on the beauty of African women. For instance, Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycee) beauty queens, for a while at least, were black. In 1971 Miss Angel Face, who was incidentally picked by a public poll conducted by the cosmetic company Angel Face and the *Express*, was the second darkest of the 10 contestants, and wore an Afro.<sup>31</sup> In the wider population African type dress and African style weddings became much more common. There was stress on using local foods. (It must be noted however that Eric Williams' PNM had started a buy local campaign in the late 1950s) Also local food that the middle class had previously stigmatized, such as rotis, ground provisions, breadfruit, bake and salt fish began to gain popularity amongst this class.<sup>32</sup>

### **The Rise of A More Radical Women's Movement in Trinidad: The Beginnings of a Feminist Discourse.**

During the 1970s references to Women's Liberation began to enter the newspapers in Trinidad and Tobago. Although the women's movement that developed rapidly in the 1970s had connections with the international movement of North America and Western Europe, Trinidadian women have had a history of struggle, so that similar concerns that refueled the movement in the industrialized countries also existed in Trinidad.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, as in the United States, women in Trinidad had been fighting in support of the Black man, and it was inevitable that they would eventually start to question their own subordination.<sup>34</sup> Groups such as NJAC, while emphasizing respect for women and stressing the importance of their role beside the man, still saw men as the heads of household, thus entrenching rather than challenging traditional gender relations. On the other hand, the experience that women gained from actively participating in the Black Power movement helped them mobilize to articulate their own demands. Although there appears to have been little public discussion of women as fighters, the existence of women guerillas in Trinidad encouraged a subtle challenge to the gender system. Activists had used Angela Davis as a rallying cry to women to join the struggle, consequently they most likely felt the impact of her trial in March 1972, in which she stated that she was a black woman communist, stressing that the sequence of the words reflected her priorities. Her support for the liberation of women further demonstrated its relevance for black women.<sup>35</sup>

Besides Black Power other forces contributed to changes in the gender system. Perhaps most importantly, since Independence in the 1960s women had gained increasing access to education, both secondary and higher, and were moving into areas of work that had been traditionally male dominated.<sup>36</sup>

There were also indications in the press that changes were taking place within the realm of sexual relations. In the 1970s articles appeared in the newspaper that discussed how it was now acceptable that women were as entitled as men to experience sexual pleasure and orgasm. At the same time FPA campaigns and wider use of the birth control pill allowed many women to express their sexuality without fear of pregnancy. One statistic claimed that in February 1970, researchers estimated that 50,000 Trinidadian women were on the pill. An article on dating indicated that changes were taking place in the relationships between young men and women. Under the title "It's a Little Naughtier" the anonymous writer argued that in recent years, dating had changed. It was no longer necessary to have to meet the parents first and was much freer. Going to the cinema was most popular as well as fetes (Trinidadian parties). Couples now held hands in the street, which was not done before, while discos and DJs had become an institution. It was now a necessity for boys to have a car to attract girls (and indication of the class perspective of the article--although change did seem to have cut across class), also motor cycles had increased in popularity. The writer argued that "no doubt [there was a] rise in sexual freedom." Necking was more pronounced than in mother's day-- but the writer argued it might have been more freedom in talk than in action. Nevertheless, relations between young people seem to have become more open and informal.<sup>37</sup> Certainly the women interviewed, some who had been high school students at the time, and who had participated in the Black Power demonstrations, acted with a high degree of autonomy and had had relationships with movement men, with or without parental approval.<sup>38</sup> The cultural changes that took place in the aftermath of Black Power were accompanied by a more liberal attitude to sexual freedom and the expression of sexuality among young people. Their actions were gradually challenging the double standard that allowed men to play the field but not women.

Additionally, in the 1970s the government began to take an interest in women's affairs. In 1971 the Ministry of Labour set up the Division of Women's Affairs, aiming to assist women in the labour market. Then in 1974 the government set up the National Commission on the Status for Women in preparation for the conference to be held in 1975, during the United Nations International Women's Year. The broad aims of the commission were "promoting the extension of full civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights to the women of the country and assisting government in integrating women into the development process." Although the commission received more funding than most women's organizations had ever had access to, the commission had no full time staff and all its members were voluntary, so that its impact on women in Trinidad was very restricted.<sup>39</sup> However, the final report that the commission published is a useful document indicating areas in which discrimination existed. The commission generated various reports from sub-committees on conditions of women in the work force and the like. The National Commission on the Status of Women also organized events for the renewal of International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8, 1975 during the UN International Women's Year.<sup>40</sup> (It had first been celebrated in the early twentieth century). A veteran of the both Black Power and the women's movement in Trinidad confirmed the significance of both the revival of International Women's Day in Trinidad and the attention the media drew to International Women's Year in stimulating women to form groups to discuss women's issues. Women's organizations from trade unions, and socialist groups to the PNM Women's League and more conservative middle-class women's organizations held discussions concerning women. The main issues were education, equal pay, discrimination in legislation, and maternity and national insurance benefits.<sup>41</sup>

In September 1991, middle class women formed a new type of women's organization, the Housewives Association of Trinidad and Tobago (HATT). The group included white, black and Indian Trinidadian women. In retrospect it appears to have been a fairly conservative organization, yet HATT's actions challenged the view of what society saw as acceptable behavior for housewives. Consequently, the press at the time depicted the women involved as militant. In the *Express* in

October 1971, HATT firmly denied they had any political aims, and clearly stated they were housewives with "homes to run, husbands to look after and children to raise, we are either the bread-winners or women who work to augment the household earnings." "We seek involvement in matters affecting the housewife." They wanted to focus on rising prices and operate as a pressure group. Nevertheless that same month the *Express* used front-page headlines such as WIVES LAY WAR PLANS when HATT called for a boycott to get better quality and lower prices. And again in 1973 they ran a front-page headline WOMEN ON WARPATH when HATT members staged a protest by entering the Council Chambers.<sup>42</sup>

It was this kind of protest and the use of placards that earned HATT its reputation for militancy. HATT functioned very actively for about 5 years and then began to decline. Former member, the late Faith Wiltshire, saw HATT as being more of a women's movement than a consumer movement, which had used consumerism as its "drawing card."<sup>43</sup> This was also suggested in a feature in the *Express* in May 1972 on "The New West Indian Woman" which claimed that "shades of women's liberation [were] emanating from HATT." And in 1973 the deputy chairman of the Commission on the revision of the constitution suggested that HATT, because of its interest in the institutionalization of pressure groups and in the elevation of women, should prepare a case to be submitted to the commission of areas where gender inequality existed, so that HATT seems to have moved beyond its earlier aims.<sup>44</sup>

One of the most interesting issues that HATT took up was the relationship between household workers and their female employers and conditions of household workers in general. In 1972 HATT undertook a survey of domestic workers in which they gave a rough estimate that domestic workers earned about \$40-50 a month while the average accountant earned \$1500-2,000. The survey stated that the Black Power upheaval in 1970 caused a lot of tension between employers and domestic workers in affluent areas, so that HATT was trying to create a dialogue between the two groups. This brought to the forefront the importance and complexity of class in addressing issues concerning women--most middle class black women in Trinidad employed a domestic worker, as did their white and Indian counterparts. The issue of the conditions of household workers became very controversial and caused some of the employers to leave HATT. Throughout the late 1970s HATT pushed for a minimum wage for household workers, and in 1975 published a report.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps HATT's greatest achievement, as Faith Wiltshire pointed out, was the feeling of self worth it engendered in its members, some of whom are still active on women's issues in Trinidad.

As a result of the general questioning of society's norms engendered by the Black Power movement, women's better education, access to better jobs, and the awareness generated by International Women's Year, more radical feminist thought, which began to question the nature of the gender order, emerged towards the end of the decade. Following International Women's Year, in mid-1976 some of the women who had been working within the socialist movement and pushing the need to put women's rights on the agenda decided to mobilize separately around issues of particular relevance to women. At least one woman, Thelma Henderson, had been a Black Power activist. The women formed a small group called the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Women and in November 1976 and January 1977 published a magazine *The New Woman*. In 1976 it stated that they wanted to "re-introduce the debate on the Woman Question," including discrimination in employment, salaries and opportunities for promotion. It also raised the issue of the sexual division of labor in the household, and advocated that men be involved in housework and childcare. The group also held protests at beauty pageants. It was in existence for about 18 months and apparently disintegrated because it was unable to sufficiently mobilize members to active participation, thus the weight of the work fell on one or two members.<sup>46</sup> Most of the women involved in this group went on to form or join new women's organizations in the early 1980s. It was precisely this questioning of the gender order and the sexual division of labor that can be determined as the beginnings of a feminist discourse.

## The Oil Boom Years

Inherent in the Black Power philosophy was a concern for the underprivileged masses. The movement had arisen out of a period of increased social consciousness within the labor movement in the Caribbean especially as the gains of the Cuban Revolution became clear. But as money from the oil boom began to flood the economy, the Trinidadian middle class expanded rapidly. In the ensuing decade, in an environment of increasing consumerism, a large proportion of Trinidadians did come close to achieving the American ideal of owning a house, car, TV etc. which further placated the tense climate of 1970 and its aftermath. Looking at Trinidad today the money from the oil boom, however, appears to have had little impact on the poorest groups in depressed areas of Eastern Port-of-Spain such as Laventille. Money did enter these areas during the boom and there was expenditure on consumer durables. Yet, for example, in the midst of boom, the *Express* ran a story in August 1978, in which four young men, members of Unity Youth Group of Mon Repos Road, Morvant (a severely depressed area) talked about their frustration and poverty. One sold marijuana, which he thought better than stealing, while one sold fruit that he stole. They wanted jobs, claiming that there were 350 unemployed members of the group living in dire poverty.<sup>47</sup> Although the government provided works projects, they were to a large extent merely band-aids. The government did little to address the underlying structural and social problems of inequality and poverty in urban Trinidad.

The oil boom and accompanying increased consumerism had somewhat conflicting effects on gender. On the one hand the boom meant that more jobs were available to women and also more access to consumer items like washing machines or even a basic cooker relieved women of some of the labor of domestic work. On the other hand there was an increase in depictions of women as objects of consumption. For example, pretty women were used to sell cars. This was not new, advertisements for cars had used women as decorations since the 1950s--presumably as an enticement to the male buyer--but the boom seems to have increased it.

## Representations of Gender in the Media

In general, the press reported news of the developing women's movement in a frivolous manner. It exaggerated anti-male aspects of women's liberation, as well as bra burning and the like. Consequently, many women distanced themselves from women's liberation, but still advocated women's rights and equal pay. Articles on "women's lib", reviews of books like Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, and news of the women's movement overseas, did creep into the newspapers and began to subvert the dominant discourse of the gender system from within. 'Women's lib' was frequently used in headlines to attract attention, such as "Freedom ...Yes, Women's Lib... No Says the Jaycee Queen" in 1975.<sup>48</sup> A typical article written in December 1970 by *Express* writer Rosemary Stone asked, "What's really gone wrong with our men?" She said that she was not for organized Women's Liberation, instead she wanted to subtly change the order of things without having to burn bras.<sup>49</sup> There were also a number of articles and references to the fear of men (and women too) that women would somehow lose their "femininity" if women achieved any degree of equality. For example as early as March 1970 there appeared in the *Express*, on the page "For Women," a piece entitled "Watch it girls, you're in danger of losing your femininity" and another article on the plight of "hen pecked husbands" which claimed most women preferred a masterful man not a submissive one.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, however, in April 1970, the *Express* ran a new series on how men could captivate women. This is interesting because previous articles in this vein had generally been directed at women. These articles demonstrated an underlying fear that in challenging the hegemonic gender order, by calling for equality, women posed a threat to masculinity in particular.

During International Women's Year in 1975 both the *Guardian* and the *Express* carried a series of advertisements throughout the year showing the United Nations International Women's Year logo with a thought for the month. The National Commission on the Status of Women ran a series of articles in the *Guardian* dedicated to women. This indicates that the press had begun to portray the growing women's movement in a more responsible manner.<sup>51</sup> Yet masculinity was itself challenged by the development of the women's movement and changes in the status of women. For the most part male reaction was to try and strengthen the hegemonic gender order rather than explore how change could be benefit both men and women. Nevertheless, subtle changes to the dominant gender order were very slowly taking place.

An examination of newspaper advertisements during this period is helpful in demonstrating changes taken place within the society. As social scientist Erving Goffman argues, advertisements showing men and women can reflect a society's gender relationships.<sup>52</sup> They also clearly demonstrate changing images of masculinity and femininity. While the advertisements are in some ways a reflection of the events taking place in Trinidad, they also served to dissipate the power of the movement by channeling the symbols of Black Power into revolutionary chic thereby isolating them from the demands of the movement. Increasing depictions of women as sexual objects also severely tempered the growing activism of women in Trinidad society.<sup>53</sup>

## **Masculinity**

During the 1970s striking changes occurred in the way newspaper advertisements depicted masculinity. For the most part, the images of men in newspapers between 1950 and 1980 reflected the hegemonic masculinity. Most men were clean-shaven, depicted in business suits, shirts and ties, and had usually been white. In the 1970s, however, besides an increasing use of black male models, the advertisements began to display an image of masculinity that differed from previous years. The trend began in December 1969 when an advertisement used a bare-chested man to advertise slacks. Then in February 1970, Habib's, a local Lebanese owned store, ran a series of very interesting advertisements--particularly so, as they preceded the mass demonstrations of the Black Power movement in late February. The first one in the *Express*, February 1, featured African Trinidadian men with Afros and Dashikis; this was followed on February 3 with two men with Afros, one in dark glasses, and a Dashiki, both wearing striped pants. The advertisement claimed that fashion for men had arrived. Then an advertisement for the store's Carnival Collection stated "Easy Pickings from Habib's Carnival Collection: The word is Tough!" The men looked tough while their appearance defied convention. But after the Black Power demonstrations began, these images disappeared. On Sunday March 1, 1970, the Habib's advertisement showed hippy fashion, with white men in the illustration. At the end of March they used a full-page advertisement to depict a formally dressed African couple in a European setting--the man wearing a suit, with antiques in the background; and the woman holding an antique gun or trumpet. The demonstrators had at one point targeted Habib's store during the demonstrations. The store's managers had apparently responded to the Black Power uprising by making the images more conservative fearing the movement's strength.<sup>54</sup>

Images of men in these advertisements contrasted sharply with previous depictions of masculinity. They showed a new emphasis on the male body and male beauty, which increased during the decade, so that by 1978 a modeling agency suggested that more men should take up modeling for a career. In October 1978, the *Express* published an interesting article "He's Now On To Powder, Make-Up and Wigs" "Make Way for the Beautiful Male," which stated that the beauty business for men was becoming very profitable not only in traditional areas of colognes etc. but "more and more men were wearing wigs, false mustaches, powder, going for hair transplants and a variety of other "beauty aids," and they were having their hair styled etc..<sup>55</sup> It is important to note that although

advertisements in the 1970s frequently depicted both black and white women scantily dressed, the changing image of masculinity focusing on the male body was confined to black men, which, as discussed above, was in part a continuation of the sexualization of black men begun in the colonizing era. There were no images of exposed white male chests.<sup>56</sup> Images of men in the press thus depicted two trends in the construction of masculinity. On the one hand, the media showed a growing acceptance of men as objects of the beauty business. On the other, it depicted a different masculinity that was emanating from the Black Power movement, which although containing many of the ideals of the hegemonic masculinity, was expressed very differently. Neither of these masculinities challenged patriarchy or questioned the oppression of women, yet they did allow for a broadening of definitions of masculinity, some of which, like the wearing of shirt jackets and use of toiletries, were absorbed into the hegemonic construct.

### **Images of Women in Newspaper Advertisements in the 1970s**

Advertisements showed a distinct increase in the number of black women models during the 1970s. Black women also appeared more frequently as fashion models and beauty queens. These were mostly African women. Indian women seldom appeared, unless they had an ethnically ambiguous look. The trend for using black models in advertising had begun little by little in the 1960s, but was much clearer in the 1970s. Yet the shift toward black models did not result in a change in the gender roles that women depicted. Generally, women in advertisements in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s either appeared as happy housewives, glamorous objects of male desire, or, and this trend seemed to increase in the 1970s, as irrelevant decorative objects to attract attention to consumer goods like cars. If advertisements showed working women, they were generally in traditional women's jobs, such as secretaries advertising office equipment. As part of a new trend stressing youth and beauty beginning in the 1960s, there were also some images of the independent young woman, carefree, and liberated. For example, in 1967 an advertisement for TVs showed a young smiling woman driving a scooter with a portable TV on the back, and an advertisement for clothing from Stephen's store in March 1970 claimed "Stephen's liberates the TOTAL woman." It showed women in mini dresses and other fashions.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, there was an increase in explicitly sexist advertisements like the ones advertising Famous Recipe Chicken, a local product. In January 1976 the copy read "Baby, I've got exactly what you want" . . . "Succulent, savoury, delicious, tempting" which showed a young woman of color with long flowing hair sitting provocatively, wearing short shorts with her knees bent, holding a stick of chicken. This advertisement was followed in February with another one showing the bare back of a black woman her head turned to us with the copy reading "I'm so easy to have around on weekends."

In a similar vein, a somewhat startling advertisement for Jesse Jeans in 1976 showed a bare-chested African man, arms crossed, wearing jeans standing astride a cannon. A woman in bell-bottom jeans sat astride the cannon, bent forward with her rear end toward the camera, while she was holding on to the man's knee. The caption read "We Kept Our Hands off Your Bottom Long Enough." The pictured relationship between the two was blatantly one of a powerful man looking down on an overtly submissive woman. Another offensive advertisement showed seven businessmen, mostly men of color, fully dressed in suits seated around a long table. A scantily dressed woman was lying on her back on the table like a dinner platter. Her bare legs pointed toward the reader, her face hidden. The caption read "We Know Figures: All Types." The International Trust of Washington (Caribbean) Ltd., which had offices in Trinidad, placed the advertisement.<sup>58</sup> These overtly sexist advertisements served as a reminder that even if women were entering the professions, they were still seen by many men as sexual objects in the market place.

Some Trinidadians did protest at the blatantly sexist nature of these advertisements. In October 1977, the *Express* ran a front-page headline "Oh Those Sexy Ads - Save the Children." The Ex-Director of the FPA, Allison Gibson-Lewis, had challenged businessmen and advertisers on the effects of using sex to advertise their products. She questioned the "morality of using female nakedness to advertise fried chicken." But it was not until May 1978 that Famous Recipe Chicken changed its image and used an advertisement depicting a black family enjoying its product. It is not clear what brought about this change.<sup>59</sup>

A survey of newspaper advertisements depicting women in the 1970s thus shows two trends. There was an increase in black images, women with Afros and natural hairstyles, but women also appear to be depicted more and more as sex objects and they were seldom pictured in positions of power. These advertisements depicting women in degrading postures indicated that women in Trinidad, although making progress in many areas, still remained subordinated in gender relations. Few of the advertisements posed a serious challenge to the gender system.

## Conclusion

Exploring issues of gender in major historical movements like the Black Power movement presents a new perspective, which has important implications for the study of Caribbean history in general. Furthermore, post-colonial discourse in the region has failed to significantly challenge the essence of the gender order in the Caribbean, so that this order remains rigid despite social upheavals that bring change in other areas. Even when more opportunities open up to women and they take on work and political activities from which they were formerly excluded; essentialized ideals of gender roles remain.

Events of the 1970s had a profound impact on urban Trinidadian society. Although basic inequalities continued and continue to exist, the Black Power movement did set the stage for a thorough questioning of the elite's position. There were some visible changes such as an increase in the number of black bank tellers and an end, although temporary, to the light skinned winners of beauty competitions. Perhaps more importantly, a small handful of women challenged the holding of beauty competitions and objectification of women. As this paper has shown, the Black Power movement itself failed to challenge the gender order. The participation of women in the movement, however, led some to question their own subordination within a radical movement and their relationship to black men. The following decade, the 1980s, would see this expressed through a deepening of feminist discourse in Trinidad, the roots of which had emerged in the development of the Black Power movement in the 1970s.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper draws on an earlier version published as "Black Power, Gender Ideology, Cultural Change and the Beginnings of a Feminist Discourse in Urban Trinidad in the 1970s" in Working Paper Series, published by the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad. It is also drawn from my doctoral dissertation. Victoria Pasley, "Gender, Race, and Class in Urban Trinidad: Representations in the Construction and Maintenance of the Gender Order 1950-1980." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Houston, May 1999. The 783-page volume, *The Black Power Revolution 1970: A Retrospective*, eds. Selwyn Ryan and Taimoon Stewart ( I.S.E.R., University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad, 1995), barely mentions women

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<sup>2</sup> R.W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987)

<sup>3</sup> Rhoda Reddock's extensive history of women in Trinidad and Tobago stops in the 1960s. Recent collections on Caribbean women such as the excellent one by Christine Barrow do not consider women in the Black Power movements in the region. Rhoda Reddock. *Women, Labour and Politics* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1994). Christine Barrow, ed. *Caribbean Portraits: Essay on Gender Ideologies and Identities* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> Little attention has been paid to the development of feminist thought among women who participated in the 1960s and 70s Black Power and Black Liberation movements in the U.S. The works of scholar/activist Angela Davis and of Elaine Brown reveal their awareness of the importance of race, class, and gender, yet works such as the excellent study by Patricia Hill Collins on Black feminist thought pays scant attention to this important era. See Angela Davis, *Women Race and Class* (New York: Random House, 1981); Elaine Brown. *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1994.) (First published Pantheon Books, 1992); Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990). However, bell hooks and, more recently, Joy James, have both made important contributions critiquing the gender ideology and sexism in the movements, but no full-scale study has yet been undertaken. See, for example, citations for hooks below, which by no means cover all of her extensive works, and Joy James, *Shadow Boxing: Representations of Black Feminist Politics* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Susan Craig, "1970 Confrontation: Trinidad and Tobago" in *Contemporary Caribbean: A Sociological Reader*, Vol. 2, ed. Susan Craig (Trinidad, 1982) 402, from Acton Camejo, "Racial Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago: A Study of the Business Elite and the Social Structure", *Social and Economic Studies* Vol. XX, No 3, (1971).

<sup>6</sup> James Millette, "Towards the Black Power Revolt of 1970," in *The Black Power Revolution 1970: A Retrospective*, eds. Selwyn Ryan and Taimoon Stewart ( I.S.E.R., University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad, 1995), 59-97.

<sup>7</sup> The official unemployment figure in November 1956 was 17,000, by 1969 it was 46,000 according to Jack Harewood, quoted in Susan Craig, *Contemporary Caribbean: A Sociological Reader*, Vol. 2, 398.

<sup>8</sup> Khafra Kamdon, "Black Power in Trinidad and Tobago February 26-April 21, 1970" in *The Black Power Revolution 1970: A Retrospective*, eds. Selwyn Ryan and Taimoon Stewart, 215-243.

<sup>9</sup> Susan Craig, "1970 Confrontation: Trinidad and Tobago" in *Contemporary Caribbean: A Sociological Reader*, Vol. 2, ed. Susan Craig, 410. In Canada Trinidadian students were under arrest following the incident at Sir George Williams University. The affair exposed racism in the university. For a full account see Valerie Belgrave, "The Sir George Williams Affair" in *The Black Power Revolution 1970: A Retrospective*, eds. Selwyn Ryan and Taimoon Stewart, 119-133.

<sup>10</sup> Susan Craig, "1970 Confrontation: Trinidad and Tobago" in *Contemporary Caribbean: A Sociological Reader*, Vol. 2, ed. Susan Craig, 394.

<sup>11</sup> See for example, *The Black Power Revolution 1970: A Retrospective*, Selwyn Ryan and Taimoon Stewart.

<sup>12</sup> The following examples come from the bound collection of Black Power pamphlets in the University of the West Indies Library, St. Augustine, Trinidad. bell hooks also critiques the association of manhood and freedom in black resistance movements in the United States, as well as the sexism in the black power movement. See, for example, bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*, (Boston: South End Press, 1990.) 58-59.

<sup>13</sup> bell hooks "Representing the Black Male Body" in *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*, (New York: The New Press, 1995), 202-204.

<sup>14</sup> Thelma Henderson, "The Role of Women in Politics in Trinidad and Tobago 1925-1972," Caribbean Studies Thesis (St. Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies, 1973), 57-58. The presence of women is evident from photographs of the demonstrations, mentions in press reports, and from interviews conducted with participants--both male and female. Ayesha Mutope Johnson, interview by author, Mount Lambert, Trinidad, 31 March 1995.

<sup>15</sup> Thelma Henderson, interview by author with Rhoda Reddock, University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad, 20 May 1995. Most of the women who participated were of African descent, but there were some Indian women including Josanne Lennard.

<sup>16</sup> Thelma Henderson, "The Contemporary Women's Movement in Trinidad and Tobago" in *Gender in Caribbean Development*, eds. Patricia Mohammed and Cathy Shepherd, (University of the West Indies Women and Development Project, Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, 1988), 363-372.



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<sup>17</sup> See articles by an NJAC woman in the *Express* in August 1975 and in the *Black Woman* in November 1975, in which she stated that "The African Woman was secure, loved and respected . . ." which overlooks the ongoing struggle for women's rights on that continent.

<sup>18</sup> Thelma Henderson, interview, 1995.

<sup>19</sup> *Express*, 12 June 1971.

<sup>20</sup> *Express*, 6 Dec 1972, front page. Sparrow angrily responded that in 400 calypsoes he had never tried to decry the black woman. A brief survey of Sparrow's lyrics shows that Granger was closer to the truth. See, for example, Gordon Rohlehr, *Sparrow and the Language of Calypso*. Mimeograph, (University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, 1968).

<sup>21</sup> Ayesha Mutope Johnson, interview, 1995; Josanne Lennard, interview, by author with Thelma Henderson, Diego Martin, Trinidad, 29 April 1995. During the 1970s NJAC women like Ayesha Mutope Johnson became increasingly frustrated at their supportive role in the organization, and it was her major reason for breaking with NJAC.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Ayesha Mutope Johnson is now a successful attorney in the United States. Ayesha Mutope Johnson, interview, 1995.

<sup>23</sup> David Millette. "Guerilla War in Trinidad: 1970-1974," in Selwyn Ryan and Taimoon Stewart, *The Black Power Revolution, 1970: A Retrospective*, I.S.E.R., 1995, 625-660

<sup>24</sup> Clem Haynes, interview by author with Rhoda Reddock and Thelma Henderson, Woodbrook, Port of Spain, Trinidad, 17 October 1995.

<sup>25</sup> *Express*, 15 September 1973, Front Page.

<sup>26</sup> Thelma Henderson, "The Contemporary Women's Movement in Trinidad and Tobago" in *Gender In Caribbean Development*, Patricia Mohammed and Cathy Shepherd, 366-367.

<sup>27</sup> *Express*, 26 Feb 1970.

<sup>28</sup> *Express*, 15 March 1970.

<sup>29</sup> Many of my informants noted the wearing of African dress.

<sup>30</sup> See Raoul Pantin. *Black Power Day: The 1970 February Revolution, A Reporter's Story*, (Trinidad, Santa Cruz: Hatuey Productions, 1990) and *Express*, April 7, & 13, 1970.

<sup>31</sup> *Express*, 4 July 1971. While it is important that white and light skinned women were no longer seen as the ideal for female beauty, the objectification of women in beauty contests warranted further discussion.

<sup>32</sup> See for example, *Express*, 21 May 1975, 15" 'Doubles' Are No Longer Simply A Grass Roots Thing," Foods like 'bara, coconut, and sno cone " long considered to be items consumed only at "grassroots" level" had taken on "an aura of respectability recently." The vendors had been hit by rising prices so that they may have been pricing themselves out of the "poor man's" reach.

<sup>33</sup> This struggle has been well documented in Rhoda Reddock, *Women Labour and Politics in Trinidad and Tobago: A history* (Kingston Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1994)

<sup>34</sup> For an account of the development of an awareness of gender discrimination in the United States Black Panther movement, see Elaine Brown. *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1994.) (First published Pantheon Books, 1992).

<sup>35</sup> *Express*, 11 June 1972, 28.

<sup>36</sup> Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s the *Express* and *Guardian* mentioned several areas that women were moving into for the first time such as trainee welders, chemical engineers, dock work and in September 1974 there was a first woman pilot. See *Express* 5 May 1972, 2; 15 Sept 1974 24 Feb 1975, 4 30 March 1975 12; 29 July 1975. *Guardian* 5 April 1966;

<sup>37</sup> *Express*, 1 Dec 1972. In 1973 the Family Planning Association began a controversial campaign to give out contraceptives to teenagers. with or without parental consent--another indication of changing attitudes. See *Guardian* May-June 1973; *Express*, June 6, 1973, back page.

<sup>38</sup> Thelma Henderson, interview, 1995; Josanne Lennard, interview, 1995, Ayesha Mutope Johnson, interview 1995.

<sup>39</sup> Thelma Henderson, "The Contemporary Women's Movement in Trinidad and Tobago," 366. See also Rhoda Reddock, "Commentary: The Quality of Life," in *Trinidad and Tobago: The Independence Experience 1962-1987*, ed. Selwyn Ryan, (I.S.E.R. University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad. 1988)

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, *Guardian*, 5 March 1975, 9. The NCSW organized a forum "Men and Women: The Next 25 Years" to be held on 8 March 1975.

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- <sup>41</sup> Thelma Henderson, interview by author, Tacarigua, Trinidad, 16 August 1996.
- <sup>42</sup> *Express*, 3 Oct 1971; 6 Oct.1971, front page; 1 Feb 1973, front page.
- <sup>43</sup> Faith Wiltshire, "Organizing As Consumers: The Experience of the Housewives Association of Trinidad and Tobago," *Woman Speak*, No. 26-27, (1990), 34-37.
- <sup>44</sup> *Express*, 12 May 1972; 1 March 1973.
- <sup>45</sup> HATT, *Report on Employment Status of Household Workers in Trinidad*, March 1975.
- <sup>46</sup> *The New Woman*, vol. 1, no. 1, (1976), see also Thelma Henderson, "The Contemporary Women's Movement in Trinidad and Tobago" in *Gender In Caribbean Development*, 366-367.
- <sup>47</sup> *Express*, 22 August 1978.
- <sup>48</sup> *Express*, 9 February 1975.
- <sup>49</sup> *Express*, 22 Dec.1970, 13
- <sup>50</sup> *Express*, 15 March 1970.
- <sup>51</sup> See, for example, *Guardian* 2 March 1975.
- <sup>52</sup> See Erving Goffman, *Gender Advertisements* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976)
- <sup>53</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the literature concerning the role of the media see the introduction to my doctoral dissertation. Victoria Pasley, "Gender, Race, and Class in Urban Trinidad: Representations in the Construction and Maintenance of the Gender Order 1950-1980." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Houston, May 1999.
- <sup>54</sup> See *Express*, February and March 1970. The advertisements with a Black Power theme did not appear in the *Guardian*, although the one's described above with men in suits did. Habib's store was apparently picketed briefly during one demonstration. See *Guardian*, 27 Feb.1970, Front page.
- <sup>55</sup> *Express*, 6 October 1978, 20-21. Journalist Sunity Maharaj wrote the article.
- <sup>56</sup> The international trend in advertising toward exploiting black male bodies increased in the 1980s and 1990s. See for example, Hazel V. Carby, *Race Men*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1998) 1-6.
- <sup>57</sup> *Express*, 12 Dec. 1967 and 22 March 1970.
- <sup>58</sup> *Express*, 30 January 1976, 11; *Express*, 30 November 1972, 33.
- <sup>59</sup> *Express*, 19 January 1976, 2; 29 February 1976, 16; 14 October 1977, front page; 18 May 1978, 13.

Some of the interviews undertaken for my dissertation are part of a wider project on Women and the Black Power movement with Rhoda Reddock and Thelma Henderson. Sadly Thelma passed away in 1996.