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Guerrilla Ganja Gun Girls: Policing Black Revolutionaries from Notting Hill to Laventille

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In 1973, a secret wing of the Trinidad and Tobago police service went to war against an equally shadowy group of young people called the National United Freedom Fighters (NUFF). From secluded campsites in the mountains of Trinidad's Northern Range, NUFF prowled the island, robbing and bombing banks, petrol stations and remote police outposts. NUFF promised to rid the country of international capitalists and their 'local stooges' by attacking their purse strings and meeting police terror with 'superior violence'. That summer, while searching the hills for guerrilla fighters, a joint army-police, anti-guerrilla task force discovered 'a pleasant surprise: a fluttering of dresses, panties, and female apparel' among parcels of rice and ammunition in a deserted NUFF camp. 'Police now believe

the men in the hills have a long-term supply of food and girls', the Trinidad *Express*, a local newspaper, reported. But instead of concubines, the task force discovered revolutionaries with shotguns.¹

On 13 September 1973, two weeks before her eighteenth birthday, NUFF soldier Beverley Jones was killed in a firefight with the Trinidad and Tobago regiment in the Caura-Lopinot hills. Jennifer Jones, Beverley's twenty-year-old sister, was captured alive. From Port of Spain to London to Washington, DC, black revolutionaries celebrated Beverley Jones's life and condemned the circumstances of her death. Then teaching at Federal City College in Washington, DC, the Trinidad-born polymath C. L. R. James sent a telegram to Prime Minister Eric Williams of Trinidad and Tobago, James's one-time pupil turned adversary. 'West Indians and Americans in Washington deeply deplore the violent death of Beverley Jones', James wrote, 'and demand immediate release of Jennifer Jones'. Outside the Trinidad High Commission in London, anti-racist activists protested the 'torture and murder' of Beverley Jones, and demanded the release of Jennifer Jones. Among the protestors were activists affiliated with the Black Panther Movement. Panther leader Althea Jones-Leconte, however, was conspicuously absent. As the *Express* reported, Jones-Leconte, 'now visiting Trinidad, is actually a sister of the shot girl'.²

This article maps transatlantic connections among black liberation movements in Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom through the political biography of three sisters. Their biography stretches to include two generations of freedom fighters within one transnational family; Althea, Jennifer and Beverley Jones battled patriarchy, poverty and police violence in the decolonising Atlantic World. As the warships of new empires fortified investments of old, youth in Trinidad and Tobago came of age amid stark unemployment, ruthless political repression and overseas control of finance and industry. Educated by anti-colonial nationalist movements, radical youth resuscitated and revised freedom projects abandoned by their parents. Within the Caribbean, or migrating throughout the Caribbean diaspora, these young black radicals confronted circuits of power underwritten by multinational corporations, patriarchy and police terror. Radical women and girls like Althea, Jennifer and Beverley Jones battled racism and gender violence that mobilised both against and within anti-imperialist movements, where black men traditionally 'both set the agenda and stole the show'.³ Theorists and practitioners of intersectional anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-capitalist politics, these generations of revolutionaries battled sexism with a variety of programmes, including knowledge production, grassroots self-help programmes and gun violence. Though 'undermined and overshadowed' by men, revolutionary women and girls abolished the widespread fiction, broadcast by activists around the Atlantic world, that the objective of black revolution was the redemption of patriarchal black manhood.⁴ Outcasts in their own homes, and enemies of the state, revolutionary women were singled out for punishment for deviating from the singular role of motherhood assigned by patriarchs in government and radical movements. In the case of Beverley Jones, opposition to imperialism, sexism and police violence cost her her life.

Black feminist scholars have worked to overturn the enduring hegemony of manhood and nation, and to incorporate intersectional politics into mainstream narratives of black liberation movements. In pioneering studies, historians and theorists such as Ula Y. Taylor, Carole Boyce Davies and Rhoda Reddock catalogued erasures of women and gender politics from the 'black radical tradition', and uncovered histories of women's activism and struggles against sexism in pan-Africanist movements.⁵

Outside feminist circles, silences about radical women and girls – and the centrality of issues like gender equality, domestic violence and reproductive rights to revolutionary projects – still tend to corrode otherwise ferrous historiographies. Emergent studies of black radicalism in Britain, for instance, are attendant to the traffic of people and ideologies between the United States and the United Kingdom. Some of these studies briefly mention women, yet often gloss women's activism, gender politics and the omnidirectional channels of interaction among heterogeneous liberation movements in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and North America.⁶

In the late 1960s and 1970s, counter-revolutionaries in government, the academy and the press refused to accept local movements on their own terms. Dismissing Afro-Asian radical movements as the result of 'American' cultural imperialism and Caribbean mimicry, opponents denied the distinctiveness of individual movements; the distinct structures of inequality that they fought against and the transnational kinship ties that wove autonomous movements together.⁷ 'Black Power Studies' in the United States tends to reproduce the jingoism of these sources, venerating the United States and US nationals as muses for all revolutionaries everywhere all the time. As Jonathan Fenderson and Quito Swan have observed, the 'marketplace history' that dominates US-centred 'Black Power Studies' all too frequently "sanitises" Black Power's more revolutionary, anti-capitalist elements', and anti-sexist politics too. Narratives of masculine heroism, black patriotism and liberal-progressive reform flatten the cacophonous and inconsistent ideologies of migrant revolutionaries who travelled across borders and oceans, negotiated multiple citizenships and waged war against the nations and empires that outlawed, hunted, banned and brutalised them.⁸

Black feminist historians in the United States have contested both masculinist narratives that dominate 'Black Power Studies' and histories of feminism that submerge black women in figurative 'waves'.⁹ Alongside biographies of prominent activists such as twentieth-century civil rights activists Rosa Parks, Ella Baker and Fannie Lou Hamer, synoptic studies of black feminism in the United States demonstrate that black women – both famous and lesser-known – were 'central voices' and 'an intrinsic part' of interconnected social movements, including the women's liberation movement, gay rights, the black left and black power.¹⁰ Since at least the nineteenth century, black feminist historians argue, black radical women have battled racism and sexism and struggled for social equality and justice. Positioning black feminisms as long-standing, enduring and fundamental components of amalgamated social justice movements, these histories have battled assumptions that black feminist thought, praxis and organising emerged only in the late 1960s in reaction to black male sexism and white feminist racism.¹¹

Black feminist scholars have also remixed traditional narratives that compartmentalise black women's praxis in specific niches – black women as 'bridge-leaders', rank-and-file or the 'backbone' of organisations, for example. Supplementing and often supplanting these metaphors, a growing literature uncovers black women's intersectional and 'interstitial politics'; the heterogeneity of their life experiences; their quarrels and schisms and their panoramic work as 'Long-Distance Runners, Strategic Thinkers, Behind-the-Scenes Organizers, and Charismatic Leaders', as well as military strategists and armed sentinels.¹² These interventions widen the aperture of feminist history, exposing the activism of leaders, theorists, organisers, canvassers and soldiers like Althea, Jennifer and Beverley Jones to brighter light, closer inspection and transnational perspectives. Along with their mother Viola, the Jones sisters contributed to interactive, often antagonistic movements in at least two countries. Outside the borders of their own family, the Jones sisters were a part of a global insurgency

of black women who were targeted by police surveillance and subject to arrests and execution. These revolutionaries drew sustenance from the struggles of fugitive ancestors like Elma Francois and Claudia Jones, as well as contemporaries like Angela Davis, Assata Shakur and Leila Khaled.

This essay also engages feminist and black queer theorising that expands and deepens meanings of radicalism, resistance and agency across black diasporas. Theorists such as Audre Lorde, Cathy J. Cohen, M. Jacqui Alexander, Kamala Kempadoo, Jafari S. Allen and the Black/Queer/Diaspora Studies project, reorient the political away from the elite pulpits of exceptional and respectable middle-class leaders, acceptable civil disobedience and state-sanctioned desires. Challenging the 'black politics of respectability' in Caribbean Studies, African American Studies and Black Diaspora Studies scholarship as well, researchers working in and around the Caribbean often find resistance and liberation work in sexual agency, 'erotic autonomy' and 'erotic subjectivity'. They reveal embodied practices of decolonisation and revolt against metropolitan, colonial and postcolonial states that outlaw, bludgeon, deport and murder promiscuous women, queer and other deviant subjects whose 'unruly sexuality' defies heteropatriarchal orders. 'A structuring principle in Caribbean societies', Kamala Kempadoo observes, heteropatriarchy 'privileges heterosexual, promiscuous masculinity and subordinates feminine sexuality'. Though none of the subjects of this article identified as queer, lesbian, gay or prostitute, attention to erotic autonomy and sexual agency helps clarify the weight of Beverley Jones's treason, and the entangled threats she posed to a state that ultimately destroyed her. For Jones was assassinated not just for the bullets she spewed at the police, for the utopia she hungered and shot for, but also for embodied practices that disgusted Trinidad's sexist and moralistic regime.¹³

In Trinidad and Tobago, 'the Black Power Revolution' that erupted out of demonstrations in February 1970 has been a rich and cantankerous site of analysis for scholars, activists, filmmakers and musicians for several decades. The story of NUFF, however, while documented in calypsos and a handful of academic studies, remains a relative mystery among many scholars of the African Diaspora as well as scholars of radical twentieth-century social movements. Police and defence forces killed more than a dozen NUFF fighters: young people in their teens and twenties, children of families throughout the two-island nation. Those who regarded NUFF as a 'criminal organisation', considered their politics 'a depraved ideology', and their deaths a national embarrassment. For many of the families and friends and sympathisers of the young people killed, the memory of 1973 is still too much to bear.¹⁴

A national family

Before Beverley and Jennifer Jones traded their home in the suburbs of Port of Spain for the mountains of the Northern Range, they climbed the hills surrounding their home to campaign for independence. Born in September 1955, two months after Eric Williams founded the People's National Movement (PNM), Beverley Jones's brief life spanned Williams's metamorphosis from anticolonial scholar to Prime Minister to alleged agent of 'yankee imperialism and British neo-colonialism'.¹⁵ An Oxford-trained historian, Williams was Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago from 1962 until his death in 1981. In March 1961, on the eve of independence, Williams declared the end of 'Massa', a metaphor for 'colonialism; any sort of colonialism', and colonialism's assorted brutalities: racism, social inequality, illiteracy, labour exploitation, the subversion of unions and 'the presence of metropolitan

troops and metropolitan battleships'. In Massa's absence, Williams promised education, racial equality, Afro-Asian unity, robust trade unions and economic independence.¹⁶

The Jones family of Belmont, in the suburbs of Port of Spain, belonged to the caste of middle-class Afro-Trinidadians that brought Eric Williams to power. Viola Jones – Althea, Jennifer and Beverley's mother – was a dressmaker and proprietor of Little Marvel Dress Shop in downtown Port of Spain. Dunstan Jones, their father, was principal of a government school. Educated and credentialed members of the professional class, Viola and Dunstan Jones nevertheless struggled to support their family amid a deepening economic crisis. As the self-governing colony transitioned into a sovereign nation, the economy of Trinidad and Tobago buckled under currency devaluation, high taxes and endemic unemployment. In the late 1960s, Viola Jones migrated to New York in search of work. The departure was agonising for a former PNM foot soldier. 'We wanted to be free', Viola Jones reflected on her activism in the national movement, 'free to stay in our own country, and build it without always having to go away, free to have a job without it being regarded as a privilege'.¹⁷

'Poor, gifted and black', the Jones children grew up participating in women's collective struggles against colonialism. Viola Jones and her daughters 'were active members of the PNM', Jones recalled, 'we marched in the rain and in the sun'. The PNM Women's League emerged on the political foundations of middle-class women's organisations that coalesced during the early 1940s and continued earlier manifestations of women's radicalism.¹⁸ 'Trailblazers and change seekers', middle-class women mobilised during the 1940s and 1950s to protest gender discrimination and build public health and child welfare programmes. Spreading the gospel that 'your vote is your precious right', groups like the League of Women Voters crisscrossed the colony, lectured voters on civil rights and responsibilities and distributed primers on candidates and their platforms. This was dangerous work. 'We were jeered at and missiles thrown at us in addition to vile abuse', feminist pioneer Nesta Patrick remembered. Women activists suffered death threats for 'neglecting' their husbands.¹⁹

The People's National Movement seized power through the activism of women at the grassroots. When Eric Williams returned to Trinidad and Tobago in 1948, a stranger after sixteen years studying and teaching abroad, organisations like the League of Women Voters handed him a political constituency. With the support of women's and teachers' organisations, Williams constructed an 'authoritarian patriarchal' model of governance.²⁰ Williams built a nationalist movement that depended on the labour of women in homes, in local communities and within the party. As M. Jacqui Alexander argues, PNM men like Eric Williams 'could not have consolidated their power or secured support for popular nationalism without women's labour'. PNM women advanced the movement through their roles as wives, mothers, cultural arbiters, teachers and party evangelists. The PNM Women's League campaigned 'into the far reaches of the country', raised money, coordinated community service projects, educated voters and even managed poll stations on Election Day.²¹

Popularly known as 'The Father of the Nation', Prime Minister Williams modelled the PNM on the heteropatriarchal nuclear family. Assigning women into subordinate roles, the party seized and sustained power through an unequal division of labour that 'reinforced sexual stereotypes'.²² In addition to gruelling door-to-door canvassing across the country, PNM women laboured as cooks, janitors, servers, secretaries and accountants. The PNM advanced only superficial rights of citizenship for women, however, and thus obstructed women's long struggle for equal rights in Trinidad and Tobago. This anticlimax of independence, a postponement of social, political and economic equality for

women like Viola Jones, set the stage for her daughters' revolt against the PNM, its authoritarian patriarchal order and expected models of political action for Afro-Trinidadian middle-class women.²³

Born in January 1945, nearly a decade before her sisters, Althea Jones-Lecointe transitioned into adulthood on the eve of independence. 'You carry the future of Trinidad and Tobago in your school bags', Williams told a youth rally in August 1962. Indeed, students like Althea Jones-Lecointe carried a political education in their luggage. Soon after she entered sixth form at St George's College in Barataria, Jones-Lecointe caught the attention of chemistry teacher Shirley Richardson. Considering her pupil as 'a vibrant, sparkling girl of exceptional ability', Richardson tutored Jones-Lecointe for the Girl's Island Scholarship, an annual competition for university study abroad. The award went to another student. Twenty-year-old Althea Jones-Lecointe left Trinidad in 1965, clearing her own path to England, 'a hostile white environment', her teacher understood, 'which has to be experienced to be believed'.²⁴

As a biochemistry student at the University of London, Jones-Lecointe bypassed tightening immigration restrictions for black migrants to Britain. After the end of the Second World War, industrialists in Britain mobilised Commonwealth countries to help reconstruct the post-war economy. The 1948 British Nationality Act created a legal status of 'Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies' that upheld the freedom of Commonwealth subjects to migrate to the metropole as British citizens. Since colonial subjects were already British citizens, scholars speculate that the legislation was designed not only to encourage the entry of black labourers, but also to 'curb colonial nationalism' and thus undermine independence movements in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean like the PNM.²⁵ In June 1948, the iconic *Empire Windrush* arrived at Tilbury Docks in Essex carrying hundreds of Jamaican migrants. For more than a decade, thousands more Commonwealth subjects filled industrial and other low-paying jobs. Discrimination in employment, housing and education subordinated African, Asian and Caribbean migrants to a brittle, second-class citizenship. In 1955, the Marquess of Salisbury, Leader of the House of Lords, openly called for immigration restrictions, inciting fears of 'a significant change in the racial character of the English people'. Successive Conservative governments conspired to curtail migration through legal and extralegal manoeuvres.²⁶

Overlapping Cold War immigration policies contributed to a shift in Caribbean migration from the United States to the United Kingdom. The USA instituted formal racial exclusions of black migrants in 1924 and enhanced those restrictions in 1952. Under McCarthyism, an earlier generation of Caribbean migrant radicals – like Trinidad-born intellectuals Claudia Jones and C. L. R. James – were deported to the United Kingdom. The two nations appeared to swap policies once again during the early 1960s. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 mandated employment vouchers for Commonwealth migrants and excluded all non-skilled workers from eligibility for the limited number of vouchers. Part of a bundle of civil rights legislation won by the US black freedom movement, the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 encouraged the second great migration of Caribbeans to the United States. Like the British law, this so-called 'liberalisation' of immigration law maintained preferences for educated and skilled workers like Viola Jones, who found work as an administrative assistant in a New York City hospital.²⁷

By the late 1960s, 'Britain's coloured population' amounted to 'about one million', according to one government report, 'of which roughly one-fifth were born in this country'.²⁸ Vigilante attacks, police harassment and the traumas of segregation – "No Irish", "No Coloureds", "No Children", "No Dogs" – tormented their daily lives.²⁹ In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Oswald Mosley's fascist Union

Movement, the White Defence League, and sundry gangs of white supremacist 'hooligans' terrorised 'coloured' communities throughout Britain: from Middlesbrough to Nottingham to Notting Hill.³⁰ The British press, mob 'Teddy Boys' and victims of the 'white riots' of the 1950s and 1960s appropriated icons of Jim Crow, and compared their experiences to spectacles of bloody repression broadcast from the United States. London, England was like Little Rock, Arkansas.³¹ 'Birmingham, England was like Birmingham, Alabama'.³²

Black women defended Britain's black communities against hate and terrorism. Trinidad-born Communist Claudia Jones, publisher of the *West Indian Gazette*, responded to the violence of August and September 1958 in Nottingham and Notting Hill by reasserting black belonging; in December 1958, Jones founded the first West Indian Carnival in London. Claudia Jones died the year before Althea Jones-Lecointe migrated to the metropole. In Britain, Jones-Lecointe entered a tradition of black women's revolt against racism and sexism that included not only pan-Africanist visionaries like Claudia Jones and Amy Ashwood Garvey, but everyday revolutionaries who provided shelter, education and security for black populations under siege.³³

Embracing blackness as a radical political identity, African and Asian activists in Britain formed a number of radical organisations to combat xenophobia, police brutality, grassroots fascism, the persecution of black children as 'Educationally Subnormal' and state-sanctioned terror. Outside the laboratories of the University of London, Althea Jones-Lecointe worked as a teacher and organiser for the Universal Coloured Peoples Association (UCPA), a rowdy and interracial organisation dominated by African, Asian and Afro-Caribbean migrants. The UCPA, founded in June 1967 following a visit to London by the Trinidad-born freedom fighter Stokely Carmichael, adopted the rhetoric of black power and the symbol of the black panther. Led by Nigerian playwright Obi Egbuna, the UCPA drafted a political programme that included legal aid, self-defence, community-run day-care and freedom schools, economic cooperatives, international outreach and women's liberation: 'all such activities which will promote the emancipation of our sisters all over the world'. The UCPA had splintered into a number of different organisations by the end of 1968, with Egbuna leading a group called the Black Panther Party (BPP). The community of black liberation movements in England at this time was an electric latticework of people and ideas that coursed through homes and neighbourhoods, shattering and fusing organisations, trespassing across cities and national borders. This constant traffic of people resulted in the commingling of ideologies, including sexism. Within radical organisations, patriarchy was robust, cosmopolitan and vigorously opposed.³⁴

'There can be no black liberation without the liberation of black women'³⁵

By July 1968, one year after the founding of the UCPA, women's liberation had disappeared from the organisation's demands. Rebranding themselves as the Black Panther Movement, Egbuna and other UCPA leaders advanced an ideology permeated with heterosexism and homophobia. UCPA/BPP propagandists also characterised the organisation as a brotherhood of heterosexual black patriachs in movement publications. 'If you are a man and not the nigger the white man wants you to be', read a recruitment leaflet, 'join us at the U.C.P.A. now'.³⁶ According to this document and others, blackness

was indivisible from manhood and black revolution aimed to liberate black men alone from 'perpetual subjugation and dehumanization'.³⁷ Egbuna depicted the violence of colonialism, racism and poverty as a 'man-dehumanizing' sexual trauma: 'white teddy boys' roamed the streets of England looking for black boys to castrate while the courts funnelled black men into prisons where 'white fascist warders', directed 'white prisoners to subject them to mass homosexual assaults'.³⁸ The UCPA/BPP reported news of violent civilian and police attacks on black men that the corporate press ignored, but the organisation was silent about the rape, 'subjugation and dehumanization' of black women outside the movement and within it.³⁹

Black women like Althea Jones-Lecointe were invisible in organisational propaganda but they nevertheless joined the UCPA and launched organising and teaching initiatives. As more women enlisted, UCPA propagandists deliberated ways to sustain women's recruitment and define women's roles in the organisation. In the first instalment of *Black Power Speaks*, a short-lived UCPA/BPP newsletter, 'Women's Corner Columnist' Sister Beatrice Williams wrote that every black woman had to choose between black liberation or women's liberation. On moral and pragmatic grounds, Williams chose race over gender. Liberation came not through coalitions with white feminists, Williams maintained, but through submission to the authority of black men. Patriarchy was an indisputable and unchangeable 'fact' to Williams. Resistance to that order was treason against 'our husbands and our race', Williams wrote, 'a virtual confession of our willingness to deliver all our male children stillborn'. According to the UCPA, 'the Role of Black Women in Black Revolution' was reproduction and childcare. By valorising 'black mothers', the UCPA/BPP ostracised single women, lesbians and other black women who struggled for equality and justice in post-war Britain.⁴⁰

The burgeoning white women's liberation movement was silent or ignorant about important issues in black women's lives, including immigration, imperialism, racism and class inequalities. While 'Abortion on Demand' was a rallying cry for white feminists, black women fought against the abuse of a healthcare industry and multinational pharmaceutical companies that eagerly forced abortions, sterilisations and experimental medications on black women's bodies. Ideological conflicts created fissures between black women and some of their closest white allies, like feminist and anti-racist activist Selma James, a veteran of black freedom struggles in the United States, Britain and Trinidad and Tobago, including the PNM.⁴¹

Activists experienced such fissures in the context of heightened surveillance. In 1967, Scotland Yard, MI5, MI6 and various Cabinet Offices opened investigations into black power in Britain and the Americas. Discovering 'no sign of the development of anything approaching a coherent international movement', British intelligence classified black power as a domestic terrorist threat. British police started a campaign to break the movement through intimidation and arrests. In 1968, Obi Egbuna, Nigerian artist Peter Martin and Gideon Dolo – a former soldier, police officer and Mormon priest from Fiji – were arrested in Hyde Park on charges of 'uttering writing threatening to kill police officers'. The arrest of leaders like Egbuna had the unintended effect of creating opportunities for changes in leadership, ideology and the role of black women in revolutionary organisations.⁴²

With Egbuna in prison, Althea Jones-Lecointe came to prominence as 'the brains' of a rebooted Black Panther Movement and 'the heart of the leadership'. A formidable reader, writer, orator and debater, Jones-Lecointe recruited a 'central core' of activists from Asia and the Caribbean into the Black Panther Movement. The Panther central core included activists with diverse backgrounds, geographic

origins and skill sets. The leadership included Eddie Lecointe, originally from Dominica, a former distribution manager of *Black Power Speaks* and Althea Jones-Lecointe's husband; Darcus Howe, former secretary of the East Port of Spain Youth Association in Trinidad and Farrukh Dhondy, a Cambridge-educated schoolteacher from Puma, India.⁴³

Under the leadership of these and other core members, the Black Panther Movement embarked on campaigns for grassroots community development and self-help. At Notting Hill Gate and Brixton Underground Station, the Panthers sold a newspaper, *Black People's News Service*, later *Freedom News*, plump with community bulletins and position papers on sexism, immigration, police brutality and discrimination in employment, housing and education. Jones-Lecointe spoke at local schools, organised a Panther library and taught classes in anti-colonialism. Dub poet Linton Kwesi Johnson joined the Black Panther Youth League after witnessing Althea Jones-Lecointe debate at his school. The Black Panther Youth League depended on Panther teachers like Jones-Lecointe and Farrukh Dhondy for an education that the state refused them.⁴⁴

The Black Panther Youth League was meant to be a sanctuary for vulnerable youth. The Panthers defended black women and girls, not through an isolated 'Women's Corner', but at its central core. Althea Jones-Lecointe built formal structures to protect black women and girls from sexism and violence. Men suspected of abusing or exploiting women were subpoenaed before the central core, interrogated and punished if found guilty. Jones-Lecointe's authority, and her energetic pursuit of justice, unsettled Panthers who did not see anti-sexism as an intrinsic part of revolutionary praxis. Core member Farrukh Dhondy, for instance, dismissed feminism as 'mindless abuse, rubbish'. Distraught over Jones-Lecointe's leadership, which he likened to 'Stalinism', Dhondy quit the Panthers due to the central core's 'puritanical' hearings.⁴⁵

Even among allies, Panthers tangled with white supremacist and heteropatriarchal ideas about gender, race, desire and masculine authority. Defence of a male Panther's right 'to screw who he liked for God's sake' sparked Dhondy's break with Althea Jones-Lecointe, her alleged authoritarianism and her muscular defence of women and girls. Dhondy, a teacher and mentor, confessed racist and sexist prejudices about women of African descent. When interviewed in 2009 by a multiracial group of women researching the life of prominent Panther Olive Morris – his former pupil – Dhondy described Morris as 'an ugly little girl. You've seen a picture of her? Big broad nose, big face, I mean she looked like the Toad of Toad Hall, you know?' Dhondy's 'bias of beauty', as he called it, betrayed the global 'black is beautiful' campaigns, including Panther initiatives in education, art and outreach.⁴⁶

Telescoping outward from the central core, gender equality and self-help animated multiple Panther initiatives. Panther women's groups, a public 'Sisters' Forum' and its newspaper, *Freedom News*, rejected 'decadent ideas of manhood and womanhood'. Alongside reports on political detainees, the labour movement, education and child organising and anti-imperialist struggles around the world, *Freedom News* published stories about sexism in the state, the factory and the home. 'How do we feel to bear children for a man and have him brutalise us or at best ignore us?' an anonymous author asked. Through such provocations, the Panthers repudiated notions that black women's role in freedom movements was limited to motherhood. 'There can be no black liberation without the liberation of black women', the Panthers proclaimed without caveat, 'but there can be no liberation of black women unless we struggle to liberate ourselves – who else will do it for us?'⁴⁷

The Black Panther Movement was just one of several interconnected black revolutionary collectives

that enacted self-help programmes to combat state abuse and neglect, racism and sexism. Alongside the Panthers, the Black Unity and Freedom Party and the Black Liberation Front nourished black communities by teaching children; housing people exploited by landlords; feeding the hungry; organising workers; gathering and publishing news and defending women from violence in the home, workplace and within radical organisations themselves. Though separated by neighbourhood and ideology, British black radicals attended each other's meetings, collaborated on campaigns, broke apart, merged and just generally struggled together.⁴⁸ Connections among black radical organisations, however, were neither solely nor especially national. Dominated by Asian, African and Afro-Caribbean immigrants like Althea Jones-Lecoite, black radicals in Britain interacted with freedom movements elsewhere in the British Commonwealth, the United States and the decolonising world. Knit together by migration, kinship ties and political philosophy, black radicals circulated through unions, university campuses, party headquarters and street blocks in Manchester, Georgetown, Lisbon and Algiers.

As youth rebellions swept the world in the late 1960s and 1970s, police in Britain and Trinidad and Tobago turned to narcotics enforcement to discredit, defuse and criminalise local insurrections. In 1969, 42 per cent of the population of Trinidad and Tobago was under the age of fifteen. Beverley Jones, Althea Jones-Lecoite's sister, turned fourteen that year. Both state and freedom fighters in Trinidad and Tobago searched for stability through the heteropatriarchal nuclear family and control over the black female body. The Afro-Trinidadian middle class condemned the increasing autonomy of young women and girls as the result of North American cultural imperialism and a global drug culture. Attempting to sustain the heteropatriarchal order, Eric Williams's People's National Movement ensnared schoolgirls and black radicals alike in an embryonic drug war.⁴⁹

Ganja and global delinquency

Marijuana smoking among teens, police drug raids and drug arrests were regular news stories in late-1960s Trinidad and Tobago. But there was no consensus on exactly what was criminal or immoral about 'ganja'. Introduced into the country by Indian indentured migrants, cannabis was imported, taxed and sold legally in parcels of four ounces or less until the United States banned imports during the Second World War. After more than a century of the plant's cultivation and use in Trinidad, few medical or civil authorities could speak confidently about its physiological effects or potential dangers.

Marijuana became an object of legal wrangling and social anxiety only after its popularity spread from Indo-Trinidadian men to Afro-Trinidadian middle-class adolescents. Alarmed that their daughters, rather than Indian men, were smoking ganja, the PNM government signed on to the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs in June 1964. Seven months later, the PNM outlawed marijuana possession within the borders of Trinidad and Tobago.⁵⁰

Associated with female outlaws, prostitution, deviant 'sexual pleasure' and the overall corrosion of racial and social class distinctions, ganja smoking garnered notoriety as a moral offence rather than simply a legal misdemeanour. Female sex workers were the engines of the local market, and half of all children in the country were consumers, according to sensational press reports. Middle-class children snuck away at night to consort with prostitutes at working-class 'clubs and snackettes', reported the *Express*, where they purchased marijuana and committed unspeakable perversions. A highly publicised government commission of religious leaders, politicians and physicians reported that ganja

promoted 'erotic fantasies ... a lessening in inhibitions and an increase in sexual drive with an intensification of sexual pleasure'. Media and government blamed women for this growing 'social problem'. While female prostitutes were allegedly 'peddling ganja' to middle-class youth, the mothers had apparently corrupted their children. The commission concluded that ganja smokers were most likely to be males between the ages of fifteen and twenty, middle class and usually reared by single fathers. Mothers, according to the commission, were 'the stabilizing influence in the home', and their absence – due to work outside of the home or otherwise – caused 'anti-social behaviour' in youth like drugs, radicalism and uninhibited eroticism.⁵¹

To the Afro-Trinidadian middle class, ganja use was part of an epidemic of 'anti-social behaviour' among youth worldwide. Alongside drugs and sex, the most dramatic expression of juvenile delinquency was black power radicalism. In February 1969, the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC) mobilised in defence of Caribbean students arrested after a sit-in demonstration against racism at Sir George Williams University in Montreal, which ended in a police raid and the destruction of a university computer laboratory. A confederation of Indians and Africans, student groups, unions and the unemployed, NJAC staged mass demonstrations against Canadian-owned banks in Trinidad and Tobago, and blocked the Canadian Governor General from entering the campus of the University of West Indies (UWI).⁵² By the year's end, Williams launched a programme to recruit two thousand men into the police force.⁵³ The militarisation of the Trinidad and Tobago Police responded to social fears about juvenile delinquency – principally the twin terrors of ganja and radicalism – among the country's sizeable youth population. 'The Father of the Nation' became a disciplinarian.

In December 1969, three schoolgirls demolished popular representations of ganja, sex and juvenile delinquency as masculine vices. Senator Donald Pierre, PNM Minister of Education and Culture, marched to St Francois Girls School in Belmont and personally expelled the three students for smoking ganja in a lavatory. The intervention of a cabinet minister into the disciplinary operations of a school was unprecedented. Opposition to the expulsion was widespread. The PNM seemed to be treating a 'social problem' as a felony offence. NJAC mobilised demonstrations in defence of the girls, and circulated a petition demanding their reinstatement signed by students, educators, civil servants, unemployed people, schoolchildren and residents of Belmont. Marijuana still had 'sexual symbolism' to the state beyond associations with commercial sex work. While taboo, mingling with prostitutes, sex and sexually stimulating substances like ganja were predictable and pardonable offences for adolescent boys. As an embodied, criminal and erotic activity, ganja use among girls destabilised the heteropatriarchal foundations of the nation.⁵⁴

The Belmont community's defence of ganja-smoking schoolgirls was among the first stages of an explosive confrontation between youth, the police and an increasingly punitive PNM government. NJAC condemned drug use and prostitution as 'immoral acts', yet NJAC blamed these crimes on state abuse of vulnerable populations, not women's depravity or children's delinquency. 'Injustice to Black School Children' was one of NJAC's list of indictments against the government, including unemployment, foreign investment, hunger, housing, ecological terrorism and police violence. NJAC's David Murray called the expulsion 'psychological violence against black people'.⁵⁵

Vexed about the proliferation of marijuana, teen sex, drug-pushing prostitutes and drug-addled youth, 'aggressive women', 'sissies and soft men' and black power, the PNM empowered a militarised police force to defend heterosexuality and the authoritarian patriarchal order. Assistant Superintendent of

Police Randolph Burroughs emerged as Williams's preferred weapon. 'Marked by great daring, close brushes with death, and by increasingly great rewards', cinematic chronicles of Burroughs's war on ganja and radicalism reassured a society in moral and gender crisis. Reverberating images and narratives transformed Burroughs into an icon of heroic manhood, public order and punishment. As both national icon and paramilitary officer, Burroughs was central to state battles to maintain power in insecure times.⁵⁶

Nicknamed 'Magic Cop' by admirers, and 'The Scape Fox' by critics, Randolph Burroughs joined the police in 1950, and advanced in command through 'lightning raids' and 'Chicago-style' gun battles with gangs, pickpockets and bandits. Seemingly omnipresent, Burroughs was well connected among 'the lawless'.⁵⁷ An icon of confident, cool, deadly black manhood, Burroughs evoked fictions of international espionage but inverted its tropes. Instead of a white assassin travelling to the Caribbean, the press chronicled the black cop's secret missions to London.⁵⁸ Even Burroughs's sartorial style was famous: eyes perennially obscured by sunglasses, a firearm perpetually at his side (see Figure 2). 'A family man', Burroughs defended heteropatriarchal values of efficiency, respectability and male dominance. Male criminals had a deficiency of 'will power', 'hard work' and 'ambition', Burroughs thought. In women, he prized complete submission. 'He, like his mother, preferred East Indian women because they totally supported their men, not seemingly in competition with them', wrote family friend Maria Pereria, an Indo-Trinidadian woman as was Burroughs's wife, Sheila. 'He frequently claimed that only women like Sheila and I apparently understood that men's driving force, in his case to rise in the ranks and earn his promotion to Inspector, was a good thing for society'. Aside from manly 'driving force', the violent suppression of the ganja trade and radical activity fuelled Burroughs's 'meteoric rise'.⁵⁹ Journalists who incited fears about bandits, black power and ganja also promoted the legend of Burroughs. Burroughs was the source of many rumours about the ganja trade, including marijuana's association with female sex workers.⁶⁰

While ganja was seemingly 'PUBLIC ENEMY number one' to the Afro-Trinidadian middle class, among black radicals Burroughs had that dishonour.⁶¹ In April 1970, revolutionary organisations warned about a secret police 'Death Squad', composed of 'certain policemen who are willing to kill as many Black people as they have bullets in their guns'. They listed five officers in particular, including Burroughs, 'PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1'. Burroughs enlisted recent graduates of Trinidad's most prestigious schools into his clandestine anti-drug and anti-radical brigade, the Flying Squad, including classmates of leaders of the 'Black Power Revolution' erupting in the country.⁶²

'Total liberation'⁶³

On 26 February 1970, hundreds of people marching in solidarity with the Caribbean students on trial in Montreal clashed with police at the Canadian High Commission, the Canadian Royal Bank and the Roman Catholic cathedral. Five university students were arrested, sparking months of protests and a mutiny in the Trinidad and Tobago regiment. 'Black Power Stuns the City', reported *Express* on 5 March, as more than ten thousand people swelled the streets of Port of Spain. Fortified by warships from Britain and the United States, Eric Williams declared martial law. Privately, the Prime Minister feared for his life.⁶⁴

As the PNM held Trinidad and Tobago captive in a State of Emergency, London became a flashpoint of police violence under the pretence of a war on narcotics. From June 1969 to July 1970, police conducted three separate drug raids at the Mangrove restaurant in Notting Hill, an informal Caribbean community centre founded by Trinidadian migrant Frank Crichlow. Police discovered one 'marijuana cigarette' on a Mangrove patron. Residents of Notting Hill complained about police harassment to the Metropolitan Police, the Home Office and the courts. After the third raid, Mangrove patron and anti-racist feminist Selma James asked Crichlow if she could help organise a response. An 'Action Group for the Defence of the Mangrove' planned a picket of three police stations in and around Notting Hill.⁶⁵

On Sunday, 9 August 1970, Althea Jones-Lecointe and Darcus Howe climbed atop a parked Jaguar car outside the Mangrove Restaurant on All Saint's Road and addressed an interracial congregation of about one hundred demonstrators. Jones-Lecointe spoke of state neglect, self-help and the rights of British citizens. More than two hundred uniformed and plain-clothes police constables – both in plain sight and concealed in an unmarked van – monitored the march, carrying truncheons and cameras. Participants reported police jostling the crowd; police claimed marchers brandished rubbish from a builder's skip. Truncheons drawn and bricks raised, chaos ensued. Jones-Lecointe came to the aid of an injured woman whose face was wet with blood. Three police constables seized Jones-Lecointe and carried her to an awaiting van. Eight other people were charged with assaulting the police, and for riot and affray: Barbara Beese, Rupert Boyce, Frank Crichlow, Rhodan Gordon, Darcus Howe, Anthony Inniss, Rothwell Kentish and Godfrey Millett. The press called them the Mangrove Nine.⁶⁶

The trial of the Mangrove Nine lasted ten weeks. The prosecution depicted the Mangrove restaurant as a criminal enterprise fuelled by drugs and sex work. Authorities in London, like those in Port of Spain, framed marijuana and prostitution as entangled transgressions. The Mangrove was a 'den of iniquity', alleged Frank Pulley, a police constable infamous for harassment against the black population in Notting Hill. 'The place is a haunt for criminals, prostitutes, ponces and the like', Pulley testified. 'Anyone going there is likely to be corrupted if not corrupted already'. To constables like Pulley, 'coloured' and 'corrupted' were synonymous. Both the Home Office and police treated London's black citizens as degenerates unworthy of state protection, deserving of state neglect and eligible for state punishment.⁶⁷ Freedom from fear and violence and prejudice was a right for all British subjects, but the Home Office refused to investigate complaints of police harassment in Notting Hill.

Althea Jones-Lecointe represented herself in court. Accused of biting three police constables, she confessed to biting one in self-defence. Trapped inside the van, a police sergeant called her 'savage', elbowed her, and struck her in the face. The demonstration 'should not have been necessary', Jones-Lecointe told the jury. During cross-examinations, Jones-Lecointe exposed the racism of a police constable who was unable to identify a black suspect in a photograph or, by his own admission, tell black people apart. 'What this trial has shown apart from anything else' said Judge Edward Clarke, 'and shown regrettably, is that there is clearly evidence of racial hatred on both sides'. It was the first time that a British official acknowledged state racism.⁶⁸

On 15 December 1971, a jury of nine white people and two black people found the nine defendants not guilty of riot and affray. Boyce, Innis, Gordon and Althea Jones-Lecointe were convicted of assault. Because Jones-Lecointe was pregnant, the jury begged for mercy in sentencing. Even a black woman allegedly 'corrupted' by drugs and sex work in a Notting Hill 'den of iniquity', the jury decided, even a revolutionary was worthy of state leniency in the interests of reproduction. As an early Christmas gift to

the defendants, Judge Clarke suspended the sentences. 'I am not guilty of any offence', Jones-Lecoite told the court one last time, and promised to appeal the verdict.⁶⁹

The radical press, migrations, transnational family networks and other personal ties connected the nine defendants on trial in London to Caribbean students on trial in Montreal, to revolutionaries on trial in Port of Spain, to Angela Davis on trial in California, to Black Panthers exiled in Algiers. Five of the Mangrove Nine had migrated from Trinidad and Tobago. The Black Panther Movement distributed a weekly court report, complete with transcripts, photographs and accounts of the daily protests outside the Old Bailey. A number of groups in Trinidad, including NJAC and the army mutineers, sent 'messages of solidarity' to the Mangrove Nine. Black British communities followed the events in Montreal and Port of Spain in British periodicals like *Race Today* and *Freedom News*. Caribbean migrants in London regularly travelled between England and Port of Spain to collect information, connect with kin and contribute money and labour to movements like NJAC. To London's black community, events in Port of Spain were local news.⁷⁰

Migration was not just a radical adhesive. Transatlantic itineraries also frayed personal connections and kin networks. Viola Jones had migrated to New York City in the late 1960s, leaving daughters Beverley and Jennifer and Phillip, her youngest child, in the care of her mother. Viola Jones kept in touch with her children mostly through letters. During yearly trips back to Trinidad, Viola Jones discovered that Beverley was 'brash' and 'full of life', but 'quick to cry if you talked to her roughly'. Outside her penchant for crying, Beverley excelled at school, especially in English and history courses. Through their correspondence, Viola Jones recognised the germ of her daughters' political awakening. Following the news from Trinidad – States of Emergency, mass arrests, police shootings – she pleaded with her daughters to migrate to New York. 'Mummy', the girls responded, 'why is it that we have a country that is so rich in natural resources and talent and we always have to go away to make a living or develop our abilities as human beings?'⁷¹

Teenagers in 1970, the children who had followed their mother into 'the hills in Gonzales giving out notices for party group meetings' now left their grandmother's home for late-night journeys to NJAC meetings. 'We were caught up my sister and I. The whole romance and the whole novelty and the whole very revolutionary quality of the time', Jennifer Jones recalled. Swaddled in the rhetoric and unity politics of anti-colonial nationalism, the sisters graduated into the transnational discordance of black power. Students of the PNM Women's League, the Black Panther Movement and NJAC, Jennifer and Beverley Jones had committed to revolution long before they ever felt the weight of a gun.⁷²

Like older sister Althea, Beverley and Jennifer Jones created alternatives to heteropatriarchal models of women's activism. NJAC rallied recruited members into a 'fight to retain our manhood'; segregated women into a 'Women's Arm' and encouraged women to serve the revolution by making babies. NJAC women, of course, spoke for themselves. 'We have to be prepared to shed our blood', wrote the NJAC Women's Arm, but the organisation never took arms against the state. Jennifer and Beverley Jones discovered like-minded youth – university students, skilled workers, former soldiers and poor youth in search of work – who felt alienated from NJAC for personal reasons and collective ones. This cohort found NJAC's middle-class orientation, its emphasis on race rather than class struggle, its rapid institutionalisation, its hierarchies – gendered and organisational – and its habit of 'talking' instead of shooting particularly regressive. Students of Marxism and theories of class struggle, the Jones sisters and their allies read *Quotations from Chairman Mao* and the *Peking Review*, Stalin's *Fundamentals*

of *Leninism* and books on socialism and Eastern European economies. Inspired by guerrilla movements in the Caribbean and Latin America, they studied the political theories of Colombian socialist Father Camilo Torres Restrepo and Che Guevara rather than Stokely Carmichael. While NJAC proposed to 'seize our manhood with grace', the group dreamed of 'a new type of individual' created through violence.⁷³

Around 9 a.m. on 22 February 1973, a woman and five men armed with shotguns and revolvers entered Barclays Bank on Tragarete Road in Port of Spain. They robbed a Brinks security guard of his revolver, holster and uniform; an accountant of his car keys and the manager of the bank of more than 100,000 TT dollars. Police traced the bandits to a home in Laventille. Just after 4 p.m., a phalanx of police led by Randolph Burroughs surrounded the house. After an hour-long shootout, the bodies of four men – John Beddoe, Mervyn Belgrave, Ulric Gransuall and Nathaniel Jack – were discovered in the house, surrounded by cash, firearms, a Brinks uniform, typewriters and leaflets bearing the political manifesto of a group calling itself the National United Freedom Fighters (NUFF).⁷⁴

NUFF was the progeny of the PNM. John Beddoe, one of the dead at Laventille, was a graduate of Queen's Royal College, alma mater of C. L. R. James and Eric Williams. Guy Harewood, the reputed NUFF leader, was also an alumnus and the son of a prominent economist. The 'Gun Girl' involved in the bank robbery was identified as Andrea Jacob, a twenty-year-old schoolteacher. A reward of 10,000 TT dollars was offered for the arrest of Jacob, Harewood and three other men suspected to be involved with the bank robbery. 'I grew up in a PNM family', Malcolm 'Jai' Kernahan, a NUFF member uninvolved with the heist, told social scientist Brian Meeks, 'My mother was PNM. My grandmother was PNM'. By declaring war on Eric Williams, NUFF severed these family ties.⁷⁵

In the manifesto found at the house in Laventille, NUFF called for violent overthrow of Williams, foreign investors and 'big local capitalists'. The group planned to bring the fight to the heart of capitalism. NUFF promised 'total liberation from foreign exploitation' through bombings and bank robberies. Exploiting 'the enemy's money weaknesses' was the first stage in building a mass movement. 'We have learnt well from our 1970 experiences', NUFF declared. The police responded to NJAC's peaceful protests with 'ruthless suppression, injury and death'. Williams further empowered officers like Burroughs with a 'specialized anti-people force', the Flying Squad. 'The selflessness and dedication of our fighters point to the existence of a new type of individual', the manifesto declared, willing 'to die in order to achieve true liberation'. Taking the Cuban revolution as inspiration and precedent, NUFF believed that violence was a 'scientific and legitimate program' to change not simply the government in power but 'the economic system'.⁷⁶

The nation the National United Freedom Fighters envisioned was pan-Caribbean, socialist and seemingly anti-sexist. NUFF gendered imperialism as 'The Man', and 'local exploiters' like Williams and Burroughs as 'ropemen' of foreign capital. NUFF's 'new type of individual' was androgynous. In the refrain, 'our people', NUFF referred to oil unions threatened by the CIA; farmers exploited by Tate & Lyle and the PNM's most vulnerable and abused victims – unemployed people and 'housewives and children'. Here, 'housewives' was not a stereotype for all women. Instead, NUFF described an unpaid occupational caste among 'the most oppressed groups of our people'. NUFF called on unions, 'progressive organizations', workers and 'the people' to study the roots of poverty, unemployment and police brutality before enlisting in the movement to eradicate 'international capitalism (imperialism)'. Echoing Frantz Fanon, they pledged to answer state violence with 'superior violence'.⁷⁷

Early in May 1973, Beverley Jones became the face of ganja, juvenile delinquency and sexual disobedience in Trinidad and Tobago. On 2 May 1973, Burroughs led police raids into the suburbs east of Port of Spain on a search for bandits, ganja and stolen guns. At the home of Alan Harewood, brother of the infamous NUFF leader, Guy Harewood, Burroughs discovered seventeen-year-old Beverley Jones and Michael Lewis, a man with a fresh gunshot wound puncturing his thigh. Lewis, a reputed 'weed pusher', had shot himself with a revolver while explaining its use to NUFF members. Beverley Jones had left her grandmother's home some weeks before to live with Alan Harewood. Her presence at the home of a reputed bandit, alone in the company of a bullet-riddled drug dealer, communicated a number of troubling things to Burroughs and the ruling class he served. The daughter of a respected PNM family – a schoolgirl who had recently completed O levels – consorted, cohabited and presumably copulated with violent criminals who had declared war on the nation. Burroughs, the man who required subordination in women, the icon and enforcer of the heteropatriarchal order, arrested Beverley Jones not just for the cannabis in her possession. He punished her for failing to be a chaste and obedient middle-class girl. Like the three Belmont schoolgirls, Jones's eroticism, agency and self-government sabotaged state doctrine.⁷⁸

The following day, Beverley Jones appeared at court on charges of marijuana possession alongside three men – drug dealers, gun slingers and one veteran of the army mutiny. Her father, Dunstan Jones, posted bail. On Friday night, 11 May, Beverley Jones and Lennox Daniel, another reputed 'weed pusher', were walking along the Eastern Main Road in San Juan when they encountered Burroughs. Suspicious about the size of Jones's handbag, Burroughs stopped the pair. Daniel pulled out an automatic pistol. Making 'a rugby-like flying tackle', narrated the *Express*, Burroughs 'brought the man down and disarmed him'. In her handbag, Jones carried 'a quantity of assorted ammunition, toothbrushes and toilet requisites'. Dunstan Jones posted bail for the second time and took Beverley back to Belmont. 'The last time I saw Beverley', he told the *Trinidad Guardian* newspaper, 'she was sitting on the steps at home and I promised to get a good lawyer for her'. Then she disappeared.⁷⁹



Figure 1.

[Open in figure viewer](#)

Photograph of Beverley Jones, *Express*, 15 May 1973, p. 1. Digital image courtesy of The Alma Jordan Library, The University of the West Indies-St. Augustine (cropped by author).



Figure 2.

[Open in figure viewer](#)

Photograph of Randolph Burroughs, *Express*, 15 May 1973, p. 10. Digital image courtesy of The Alma Jordan Library, The University of the West Indies-St. Augustine.

The mainstream press depicted Beverley Jones and Randolph Burroughs as foils. A full-page portrait of Beverley Jones appeared on the front page of the *Express*, 15 May 1973, towering above the headline: '17-YEAR-OLD GIRL, GIVEN BAIL, IS NOW ON AMMO CHARGE' (see Figure 1). In the bottom right-hand corner, the paper invited readers to turn to page ten to 'Meet Randolph Burroughs – top crime buster'. On page ten, *Express* featured another tale of Burroughs's capers, along with a portrait, his head angled in the same defiant stare as the girl on the front page (see Figure 2). The sum of the two images reinforced cultural narratives about state punishment, national belonging and acceptable forms of disobedience. Puffy-cheeked and baby-faced, Jones irradiated the remorse of a guilty child as much as she did state treason – drugs, guns and dissident female sexuality. Jones's childlike visage suggested vulnerability, if not innocence. In contrast, Burroughs was an icon of discipline, omnipotent manhood and state-sanctioned death. Jones was trapped in the cages of a jail cell; Burroughs was outdoors, gripping a pistol in his bejewelled hand. Despite the absolute disorder that Beverley represented – an unwed, ganja-smoking teenaged girl with bullets in her handbag and a gun-slinging 'weed pusher' on her arm – the juxtaposition declared that Jones's embodied chaos was contained by the 'disciplinary frame' of the photograph, by the cage surrounding her and by Burroughs and his pistol. Her portrait was a reminder of the futility of defying Burroughs and the PNM. Indeed, Jones' photograph functioned as 'a mode of arrest and incarceration'.⁸⁰

Throughout the spring and summer of 1973, confrontations between NUFF and the police escalated. Two weeks after Beverley Jones disappeared, 'an 11-man gang of "hungry" guerillas', raided a remote telecommunications station for food, ignited two bombs and blew up a transformer – cutting off communications to and from Guyana. They gave technicians money for the food. 'The youngest in the group – a boy of about 16 years', according to witnesses, carried a revolver. NUFF claimed responsibility for the bombing. Bandits robbed a handful of banks across the north-south corridor of Trinidad, and stormed the police station of the Trinidad-Tesoro Oil Company, making off with cash and weapons. On Tuesday, 7 August, around 8:30 p.m., nine people sacked the Matelot police station on Trinidad's northern shore, stealing thirteen shotguns, ammunition and a pistol. Before setting off explosives in the building, the marauders set the lone attending police officer free.⁸¹

In late August, during a search in the Valencia forest, police found dresses and women's undergarments in a newly deserted NUFF camp. A few days later they happened upon another campground. Two soldiers from Burroughs's special unit were shot. As the guerillas fled, they taunted Burroughs to follow them. On 13 September, two hundred police and army personnel invaded the hills above Caura. Discovering a NUFF camp, they shot a male sentry dead and captured Jennifer Jones alive. Later that day, they came upon another group of NUFF fighters – Terrence Thornhill, Kenneth Tenia and Beverley Jones. They shot Tenia in his head and Beverley Jones in her face and knee. Jones, Thornhill and Alan Harewood hid in the bush as Thornhill applied medication to the Beverley Jones's wounds. Later that night, a group of soldiers reported that they happened upon the girl, 'a 16-gauge shotgun in her hand and a belt with ammunition at her waist'. Jones turned away, they claimed, in order to load the gun. Thornhill claimed that she was injured and unarmed. Beverley Jones was shot again and killed. In her knapsack police found 'a cocoa tin of gelignite; two feet of fuse wire; a bag of sugar, split peas and chewing gum; socks, washrags; shoe polish; condensed milk, plasters, an empty phial with penicillin residue; ointments and toothbrushes'. The shotgun was stolen from the Matelot police station. She wore men's clothes.⁸²

Following her killing, police identified Beverley Jones as the smallest revolver-toting member of the '11-man gang of "hungry" guerillas' that had blown up the Morne Bleu telecommunications outpost and the Matelot police station. 'They call for us to modify an accepted scheme of things', TAPIA's Lennox Grant concluded. Phantoms of the Northern Range, the Jones sisters abandoned the trappings of middle-class life for the wilderness. NUFF's slaughtered symbol was the nation's deviant daughter: a cross-dressing, ganja-smoking guerrilla girl who wanted to destroy capitalism and build a new nation in the hills.⁸³

National mourning

In 'solidarity with the guerillas' generations of revolutionaries came together at funeral services for Beverley Jones. On Monday, 17 September 1973, hundreds of marchers followed a drum procession from Belmont to Lapeyrouse Cemetery. Members of NJAC, dressed in green uniforms and dashikis, supervised the proceedings, ignoring the shouts of police over megaphones. Demonstrators carried portraits of Jones, danced and chanted 'Power'. Both Viola Jones and Althea Jones-Lecoite watched silently, the crowd overwhelming them at the gravesite. The casket descended into the small plot where the body of Lichten Harper, Beverley's grandfather, had been laid to rest years before.⁸⁴

NJAC's Geddes Granger provided a eulogy, and read aloud a statement written by Viola Jones. 'Poor people all over the world are clamouring for a change', Jones wrote, 'The people of Trinidad and Tobago are also part of that call for change. Shooting us, the people, will not bring that change'. The emotional and political weight of the document stretched outside the iron gates of the cemetery. Unsigned and republished in periodicals across the Atlantic Ocean, the statement spoke not only for the mother of Althea, Jennifer and Beverley Jones alone, but the parent of a generation of children born into decolonisation, a nationalist who had struggled for 'freedom and independence', a migrant toiling in the United States, distant from her family and the guns trained against them. 'Save Our Children!!!' Viola Jones concluded. 'Save Our Country!!!'⁸⁵

The killing of Beverley Jones was a national tragedy. But both the borders of that nation and the depth of the loss reached far beyond Port of Spain. Across the Atlantic Ocean, mourners searched for blame. For many middle-class observers, the killing was an embarrassment to the Jones family and Trinidad, the most visible stain of a generation of individualistic and immoral and criminal youth. 'Please don't let Althea have the bullet also', Shirley Richardson, Althea Jones-Lecoite's Sixth Form science teacher, wrote in a letter to *Express*. 'She deserves your kindness and sympathy'. *Race Today*, organ of the London-based Institute of Race Relations, printed Viola Jones's statement below a photograph of demonstrators picketing the High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago to free Jennifer Jones. Present at the picket, Selma James dedicated her landmark 1973 pamphlet, *Sex, Race and Class*, 'To Beverley Jones, born 26 September, 1955, murdered 13 September, 1973, by the bullets of the Trinidad government; sister of Jennifer and Althea and of us all'.⁸⁶

Two weeks after Beverley Jones was killed, Eric Williams announced his decision to retire from politics. For nearly two decades, Williams said in an address to the PNM, he had struggled to build national unity and Caribbean economic integration. But opportunistic politicians, selfish citizens and regional squabbles had sabotaged his work to build a Caribbean Federation strong enough to resist the meddling of metropolitan countries and the expanding sovereignty of multinational conglomerates. The latest symptoms and most destructive example of 'the disease of individualism', Williams said, were the 'so-called "guerillas"'. NUFF was not an offspring of global anti-colonialism, Williams argued, but 'an extension of the international movement of crime and violence, using perhaps guerrilla tactics and techniques – hard drugs included'. Towards the end of the speech, Williams briefly turned to Beverley Jones. Refusing to name the 'young girl' executed in the hills, Williams tried to blunt the public trauma of her killing by erasing her humanity. Instead of an individual with motivation, with politics, with national identity, Jones was banal. 'Anyone who knows anything about international developments', the Prime Minister argued, 'would know that very young girls are in command of freedom fighters in Mozambique'. It was an act of revenge, a second slaying of a girl that had emerged, in death, as an icon of opposition to the nation Williams had struggled to build for seventeen years, a patriarchal order and a national family ruled by him as father.⁸⁷

In life and in death, Beverley Jones was the seeming antithesis of the blood daughter of the 'Father of the Nation', Erica Williams. A stand-in for her deceased mother, the twenty-two-year-old was the de facto first lady of Trinidad and Tobago, an informal ambassador who greeted visiting dignitaries like Fidel Castro. Daughter of a Chinese mother, Eric Williams's second wife, Siulan Soy Moyou, Erica Williams was light-skinned with long, straight black hair. Along boundaries of politics, colour and class, Jones and Williams could not have appeared more different. But Erica Williams was also a warrior, and

not only because she served her father as an armed guard during the events of 1970. The Prime Minister's last line of defence during those dramatic months was daughter Erica, who returned to Trinidad from studies in Europe to guard her father's bedside with a .38 Special revolver.⁸⁸ Three years later, as NUFF haunted the hills and her father flirted with a return to private life, Erica Williams mediated standoffs between her father and the party he had founded and led for nearly two decades. From February 1970, when she guarded her father's bedside, Erica Williams had indeed 'begged', in her words, for her father to retire. As the Prime Minister deliberated on resigning in 1973, PNM patriarchs – loyalists and hungry scions – attacked Erica Williams. Retirement was her idea, they said. They accused her of usurping her father and her father's male political heirs. Within the PNM and in revolt against it, Erica Williams challenged the authoritarian patriarchal order along with Beverley Jones.⁸⁹

Back in London, *Freedom News* published a 'political obituary' for Eric Williams. The former Black Panther Movement, renamed the Black Workers Movement, declared victory in a three-year struggle to overthrow "'Papa Doc" Williams'. The paper compared Williams to the recently deceased Haitian president François Duvalier, a dictator who had been responsible for the murders of tens of thousands of Haitians during his fourteen-year rule. *Freedom News* accused police of having tortured Beverley Jones to death and shooting her in custody. With Williams presumably out of the way, the challenge was avoiding another authoritarian patriarch. 'The slogans of the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC) for black power and Indian cultural integration and "manhood"', *Freedom News* reported, 'will not do'.⁹⁰

The obituary proved premature. When Eric Williams announced his resignation, it appeared that the nation's deviant daughters – Beverley Jones and Erica Williams – had succeeded in overturning the patriarchal order. While male politicians vilified Erica Williams as a clandestine political boss, PNM women's groups quietly tried to woo her into changing her father's mind. They thanked her for her long sacrifices, the neglect and loneliness from sharing her father with the nation all those many years. Since the damage had already been done, PNM women requested more time. 'We ask your dear daughter to look with a sympathetic eye at us', one chapter wrote to the Prime Minister directly, 'and if need be encourage you to reverse your decision'. At the party convention that December, Williams made an 'about face' and withdrew his resignation.⁹¹ Williams reconsolidated power by affirming his patriarchal authority – first through the bloody suppression of Beverley Jones's dissent, and second by publicly rejecting his daughter's wishes. By the end of the year, Erica Williams had left Trinidad for good. But her father did not emerge from this political reincarnation fully healed. 'His best years behind him', writes biographer Colin Palmer, 'he would remain head of the government until his death in 1981'.⁹²

In ways that were allied yet distinct from what Erica Williams experienced, Jennifer and Beverley Jones were part of a transatlantic cohort of black women and girl revolutionaries that anticipated the surge in black feminist organisations in the 1970s. Along with their elder sister, Althea, Beverley and Jennifer were targets as well as opponents of racism, sexism and police violence. On 2 May 1973, the night that Burroughs first arrested Beverley Jones in the suburbs of Port of Spain, Black Liberation Army member Assata Shakur was arrested in New Jersey following a shootout with a state trooper. Althea, Jennifer and Beverley Jones did not call themselves feminists, but like Elma Francois, Claudia Jones, Angela Davis, Leila Khaled, Assata Shakur and legions of other black female fugitives, traitors,

subversives, drifters and deportees, these three sisters inherited, augmented and inspired generations of women's autonomous struggles for equality and justice.⁹³

Notes

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