

Amílcar Sanatan ~ The Little-Known Stories Of two Revolutionary Caribbean Women

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When we think of great leaders, we think of presidents, prime ministers and heads of revolutionary movements. In our collective memory, we sometimes forget the immense sacrifices of left organizers for social, economic and political change. Yet, not all revolutionaries and martyrs are equal.

Working class, non-white, activist, and left women from the Global South suffer from the greatest invisibility. There is a 'lost history' of radical women and women's organizing in the Caribbean for social and economic justice that changed our landscape for more than a century.

In what will forever be remembered as the July 26 Movement, a young Fidel Castro led a failed attack against the Moncada army barracks in Santiago de Cuba in an attempt to inspire a national uprising against dictator Batista. While many of his comrades were slaughtered in the action, the passionate and idealistic Fidel, in 1954 wrote a lengthy critique of capitalism in the Isle of Pines prison, decrying the social and economic ills of Cuba under dictatorial rule instead of making a defense regarding the charges brought against him.

In a speech that has been remembered for one of its precious lines, "History will absolve me," Fidel Castro joined the distinguished tradition of revolutionaries who defended themselves in court by advancing their radical political beliefs. One year before Fidel would be absolved by history, Claudia Jones, made her defense in a U.S. court challenging the imprisonment she faced because of her communist beliefs.

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