

New Campaign For Rap Icon's Godmother

Written by Robert ID1321
Friday, 06 May 2005 02:54 -

Recently Assata Shakur has had the bounty raised on her by the United States Government. A reward of 1 Million dollars is now offered for the godmother of the slain hip-hop rap icon Tupac Shakur.

Assata, now a 57-year-old grandmother; she escaped from Clinton Correctional Facility for Women in New Jersey, where she was serving a life sentence, plus 26 to 33 years. She escaped in 1979 and found asylum in Cuba.

The following information is provided by The Talking Drum Collective of Stone Mountain, Ga.

The Hands Off Assata Campaign is a coming together of organizations and individuals who are outraged by the heightened attempts by the federal government, congress of the united states and the State of New Jersey to illegally force thru kidnapping a return of Assata Shakur from Cuba to the plantation United States.

We know that Assata Shakur is a bona fide political exile living in the island nation of Cuba. She was persecuted for her political beliefs and tortured while in prison. We support the international human rights and Geneva conventions, which enabled her to seek and secure political asylum in Cuba, and we support the right of the Cuban people to grant it to her. We are shocked by the actions of new jersey and the department of justice, who has issued a \$1 million dollar bounty on head of Assata Shakur. Doing such a thing is tantamount to a call to "soldiers of fortune" to kidnap and kill Ms. Shakur and for them to engage in international espionage against the sovereign nation of Cuba.

We are shocked by the activities of the United States House of Representatives, which in September 1998 passed House Resolution 254, calling on the Cuban Government to extradite Assata Shakur. Given that there is no binding extradition treaty between Cuba and the United States, such a request is outside the context of international law.

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In addition, we call on the Congress of the United States to hold public hearings on the past and current impact of FBI's Counter Intelligence Program known as COINTELPRO. Given that Assata Shakur was not the only one politically persecuted for her political beliefs, we demand that a full airing take place on that program. And finally are calling on the United States end its hostility towards the tiny nation of Cuba by normalizing relations with the Island and ending the US economic blockade.

Assata Shakur: Sister, Woman, Exile, Mother, Grandmother

ASSATA SHAKUR is an African woman. She is a social justice activist, a poet, a mother and a grandmother. She has lived in Cuba since the early 1980s. During the heady days of the 1960s and 1970s, she found herself a victim of both racial profiling and political targeting. After being spotted on the New Jersey turnpike on May 2, 1973, (DWB) driving while Black, it was discovered that she and her two companions were known members of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army.

Like Martin Luther King, Jr. Malcolm X, Leonard Peltier and many members of the Civil Rights and American Indian Movements, Assata and her companions had been watched, their phones tapped, their families monitored, their organizations infiltrated, and widespread disinformation campaigns waged against them. They were like many activists of the day targets of the FBI's Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO). In fact, Assata was wanted, not for anything she had actually done, but for a variety of crimes that government and state officials were trying to pin on her.

This was common in the 1970s: discredit the voice of activists by painting them as criminals, trumping up indictments, tying them up in courts and if possible jailing them. In the mid 1970s, The Church Committee of the Senate Select Committee to Study Government Operations and the Domestic Intelligence Subcommittee, headed by Senator Walter Mondale, provided incontrovertible documentation of a government sponsored conspiracy against the civil and human rights of all sorts of political activists.

THUS ON THAT DAY IN MAY, Assata was a marked woman. And after police stopped them, a shoot out occurred. When the smoke cleared one police officer, and one of Assata's companions, Zayd Shakur lay dead. Assata, shot in the back and dragged from the car, lay

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wounded. Only belatedly taken to the hospital, Assata was then chained to her bed, tortured and questioned while injured. In fact, she never received adequate medical attention even though she had a broken clavicle and a paralyzed arm. Nonetheless, she was quickly jailed, prosecuted and incarcerated over the next few years for the series of trumped up cases.

Interestingly, in five separate trials, and with majority white juries, charges were dismissed because of lack of evidence or she was acquitted of all charges ranging from bank robbery to murder. As the manager of one bank said at trial - she is just not the one who robbed my bank. Only in the final trial in 1977, where she was charged with the Turnpike killings, was she found guilty. This even though forensic evidence taken that day showed that she had not fired a weapon. She was sentenced to life + 33 years in prison. In 1979, and after nearly six years behind bars, she escaped from Clinton Correctional Facility for Women in New Jersey and some time later emerged in Cuba where she applied for and received political asylum.

Since being in Cuba, she has continued her college education, published an autobiography, and writes on global issues facing women, youth, and people of color.

DURING THE 1990S, rightist politicians and police bodies - this time in conjunction with conservative members of the Cuban-American community - reinvigorated their attempts to pursue Assata Shakur. They did this even though Assata has not tried to re-enter the United States and is, according to international law, a political exile who should be left alone. Linking "fear of crime" rhetoric with anti-Cuban sentiment, New Jersey governor Christine Todd-Whitman issued a bounty which was \$100,000, on the head of Assata Shakur.

She even went as far as to announce her bounty on Radio Marti, the US government radio station which beams anti- Castro propaganda into the Caribbean. To do such a thing put Assata in danger because it is tantamount to encouraging any opportunists to kidnap and/or kill her for pay. In addition, in 1998, Congressmen Franks and Menendez from New Jersey and Ros-Lehtinen and Diaz-Balart of Florida introduced and got passed - House Resolution 254 - which calls for the Cuban government to extradite Assata Shakur as a condition to normalizing US-Cuba relations.

Interestingly, while Assata and Cuba are portrayed as "criminal", a terrorist bombing campaign - thought to be sponsored by ultra-rightist forces in the United States - has been launched against Cuba, killing and injuring Cuban citizens and foreign tourists alike.

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Sources of Further information –

Special thanks to <http://www.afrocubaweb.com> for cutting this path for us to continue.

Any questions, contact us at <http://www.assatashakur.org> using the contact us form.

View Assata Shakur's Wanted Poster: http://www.state.nj.us/lps/njsp/news/pdf/050205_chesimard_english.pdf

Support & Contribution to FTP Movement: <http://www.ftpmovement.com> or FTP Movement, The Talking Drum Collective, P.O. Box 1720, Stone Mountain, Ga. 30086

The Drum Collective - <http://www.thedrum.org>
FTP Dollar A Month Club - <http://www.ftpmovement.com/dollar.html>
Assata Shakur Forum - <http://www.assatashakur.org/forum>
AAPRP - <http://members.aol.com/aaprp>
InPDUM - <http://www.inpdum.com>
The Talking Drum - <http://www.thetalkingdrum.com>

Download one of these banners and link it to <http://assatashakur.org/extradite2.htm>

<http://assatashakur.org/images/supportassata002-anim.gif>

<http://assatashakur.org/images/supportassata001.gif>