

Tupac Understanding

Written by Staff ID18

Thursday, 23 September 2004 23:02 - Last Updated Tuesday, 13 December 2011 09:09

To truly understand a person, you need to understand where he or she came from, their life experiences and the thought process in which they were raised.

This page is for links that have a connection to some of the things that had a impact on Tupac; either growing up or in life. Tupac was a very complex individual. His political views and his views on social issues did not just "pop" into his head. Thru the links on this page maybe you can get a little insight to the "root" thought process of Tupac.

Read about the Origin of the Shakur Family which Tupac was born into [HERE](#)

If you know of other links or things we are missing here , please e-mail me with a link. These links are provided for the fans of Tupac. There is no charge or any other kind of "okie dokie" involved. This is a information page. Use the information you can learn here to build your own mind set and convictions. Then we can indeed look forward to "Better Dayz" ; if only we can learn to understand.--- Site Admin.

<http://www.blackpanthertours.com/>

<http://blackpanther.org/>

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<http://www.brothermalcolm.net/>

<http://www.daretostruggle.com/>

<http://www.mutulushakur.com/>

<http://www.assatashakur.org/>

<http://www.thetalkingdrum.com/>

<http://www.marcusgarvey.com/>

<http://www.fcnetwork.org/>

<http://endabuse.org/>

<http://www.sfbayview.com/>

<http://www.ibiblio.org/nge/>

Information On The People Mentioned In Tupac's Life.

We hear names like Geronimo Pratt, The New York 21 and so on and some of you might not know who or what these people and events stood for.

I will post up some info on some of the names we hear and if you know of more info that should be here please email me.

Huey Newton - Leader of the Black Panther Party

Youth for Socialist Action is reprinting here an article on Black Panther Party founder and leader, Huey P. Newton. The article, which appeared in the September 1989 issue of Socialist Action newspaper, was written at the time of Huey's death by Michael Schreiber. We are reprinting it to serve as a brief introduction to the mixed legacy of Newton and the Black Panther Party.

I read the news today: "Former Black Panther Huey Newton found dead on West Oakland street," sang the headlines. "Newton's death by violence seemed preordained," the newswriters explained. The reason? "Cocaine and alcohol," they pointed out.

I then went on to read what some people thought about Huey Newton. Law-enforcement officers were especially eager to share their opinions it seemed. They had worked for years to put Newton behind bars; now they felt vindicated.

"He who lives by the sword dies by the sword," Assistant District Attorney Tom Orloff observed. "He was nothing more than a gangster." And Sheriff Charles Plummer heartily agreed. "An intimidator," he said.

Other opinions appeared on the inside pages. "For everyone under 30, it's just another dead guy in Oakland," shrugged San Francisco Examiner columnist Rob Morse. On the other hand, attorney Charles Garry ventured that Newton was a historic figure - right up there with Martin Luther King.

A gangster? Just another dead guy? Or an historic figure? These were pretty damning words coming from such ruling class figures. To get another opinion I approached one of my union brothers, Frank, who works on the streetcars with me. Twenty years ago, Frank came to the Bay Area from his native Louisiana in order to join the Black Panther Party.

"Huey Newton? I loved the man," Frank told me. "In his early years, Huey made a profound contribution. He helped Black people get over our fear. We saw that they'll shoot you down even if you don't fight. So you might as well stand up for your rights."

"Followed Malcolm X"

Like it or not, Huey Newton was a hero to thousands of people like Frank. "Free Huey" was a rallying call for young people - Black and white - all over America.

Newton's role as a leader of the Black Panther Party was an important one in the history of the Black liberation movement; that's why his failures also loom so large, and are worth looking at.

Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense on Oct. 22, 1966. "Peaceful demonstrators all over America are being brutalized," Seale recently explained. "We decided to take the stand Malcolm X told us to and defend ourselves."

Six months later, Newton was one of about 40 Panthers who startled the country when they entered the California state capitol carrying loaded weapons. That incident is still highlighted as evidence of the Panther's "gangsterism."

Actually, the Panther's campaign against police brutality and repression was a far cry from "gangsterism," and rapidly gained support in the Black community.

The Panthers began to build an organization of a new type; it was one that held great promise.

Other militant Black organizations that had come out of the civil rights struggle, like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), saw themselves as small bands of "specialists." The Panthers, on the other hand, set out to build a large membership organization in which masses of people could get involved in the struggle.

During the next two years, hundreds of Black youth around the country - including college and high school students - flocked into Panther chapters in their areas.

Need for alliances

The Panthers published a Ten Point Program that incorporated demands coming out of the struggle of the Black community. But unfortunately they never seriously attempted to build a movement around those demands. They generally refused to make common cause with other groups in united-front-type action coalitions.

Readers of the Panther's newspaper were exhorted to build a "Marxist-Leninist Vanguard." At the same time though the Panthers gave support to Black politicians who were up and coming in the ruling-class Democratic Party. This contradiction, and empty jargon like "Off the Pigs!" did nothing to educate the Panther cadre and only cut them off from movement in the Black community and the campuses.

The pronouncements, fiats, and decrees made by Newton and the other top leaders came forth with little discussion by the membership. Those who disagreed were denounced as "pigs" and "counterrevolutionaries" and purged from the party. Such undemocratic functioning only helped pave the way for disruption by the FBI and the police.

In the early 1970s, soon after Newton was released from jail on his manslaughter conviction (he was later cleared of all charges), the Black Panther Party split in two. One faction of the party, led by Newton, opted for a "Black capitalist" strategy. Another faction, led by Eldredge Cleaver, kept up the old "pick up the gun" rhetoric.

From time to time during the next few years, Black and white supporters of the Panthers continued to haunt the fringes of protest demonstrations, hawking the "Panther Paper" and admonishing the crowd with their slogans. The Panthers though were about to go the way of the saber-toothed tiger - into extinction.

But the Panthers have not been forgotten. A new generation is awakening in the Black communities. These young people will fulfill the promise shown by Huey Newton and his comrades when, for a brief instant, they electrified the nation.

Huey Newton Murdered in Oakland

Huey Newton, Black Panther Party Founder, Murdered in Oakland Shooting

August 22, 1989

by: Dr. Clint Wilson

Huey Newton, who earned a Ph.D. from the University of California, yet lived the life of a charismatic street-level organizer, was gunned down in an Oakland, Calif. alley ending his role as a leader of the Black Power movement.

Newton, who co-founded the Black Panther Party for Self Defense in 1966 with Bobby Seale, was an advocate of Black Americans bearing arms in self-defense against community repression by police. Among the tactics he employed was the institution of ""justice patrols"" by armed Black men whose purpose was to monitor police actions and inform community residents of their rights when confronted by law nforcement.

In 1967 Newton was arrested and charged in the shooting of one policeman and the killing of another. His trial and subsequent conviction focused attention on the issue of police brutality and Newton was considered a political prisoner. A national movement using the catch phrase ""Free Huey"" rallied people across the nation to the cause of civil rights.

The Los Angeles Sentinel carried news of Newton's death in a drug related incident to its readers more than a decade after the Black Panther party's decline in influence.

HUEY NEWTON SHOT AND KILLED IN ALLEY

Huey P. Newton, a co-founder of the Black Panther Party was found early Tuesday morning shot to death on a blood covered Oakland street.

Police said the body of the 47-year-old Newton was found outside a housing project in a west Oakland neighborhood that is known to be infested by drug dealers. They say he was shot three times in the head. Police cornered off an automobile, apparently as evidence, but would not say if the car was Newton's or a suspect's.

The scene of the killing was still described as ""grisly"" with large blood stains covering the street several hours after the shooting. Newton's body was found in a pool of blood said to be ten feet in circumference.

Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party in 1966. The organization achieved notoriety for its avocation of violence and the armed self-defense of Black Americans. The party disbanded in 1982.

Newton's lifestyle brought him into frequent and serious clashes with the law.

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In 1970, he was called to appear before the State Senate Un-American Activities committee to answer charges that the Black Panther Party was a communist-run organization.

In 1974, Newton spent time as a fugitive in Cuba after being accused in the murder of a 14-year-old prostitute and of pistol-whipping his tailor. He returned to Oakland and faced two trials on the charges, both of which ended in hung juries.

Earlier this year Newton was sentenced to six months in jail after pleading no contest to charges of misappropriation of \$15,000 in public funds earmarked for the school system.

Newton earned a Ph.D. from the University of California - Santa Barbara in 1982.

-- Los Angeles Sentinel, Aug. 24, 1989

Panther 21 Press Release From 1996

Date: Tue, 23 Apr 1996 06:50:53 -0500
From: "L-Soft list server at MIZZOU1 (1.8b)"
Subject: File: "DATABASE OUTPUT"
To: Haines Brown

> S * IN ACTIV-L --> Database ACTIV-L, 6941 hits.

> print 06877
>>> Item number 6877, dated 96/04/22 19:41:44 -- ALL
Date: Mon, 22 Apr 1996 19:41:44 CDT
Reply-To: NY Transfer News Collective
Sender: Activists Mailing List
From: NY Transfer News Collective
Subject: 25th Ann. of Panther 21 Acquittal: Program in NYC

From: AliBeyH@aol.com

Date: Thu, 18 Apr 1996 23:07:34 +0200 (MET DST)

25th Ann. of Panther 21 Acquittal: Program in NYC From Shaba On" 22 April 1996

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact; Shaba On"

Telephone: 718/329-2353

May 13, 1996 marks the 25th anniversary of the acquittal of the Panther 21, who in 1971 were the leadership of the eastern region of the Black Panther Party (BPP).

The Panther 21 were arrested in a pre-dawn raid on April 2, 1969 and charged with conspiracy to blow up the New York Botanical Gardens, department stores, etc. On May 13, 1971, after the longest political trial in New York's history, all 21 New York Panthers are acquitted of all charges in just 45 minutes of jury deliberation.

The acquittal of the Panther 21 was a major political setback and embarrassment for the Manhattan District Attorney's office and the New York Police intelligence unit known as BOSSI which extensively infiltrated and disrupted the BPP's community programs.

On May 14, 1996, the Committee to Celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Acquittal of the New York Panther 21 will host a program at the Schornburg Center for Research in Black Culture, located at 515 Malcolm X Boulevard (at 135th Street in Harlem) which will run from 5:30 PM. to 9:30 PM-

Speakers will include former Panther 21 members: Afeni Shakur (mother of Tupac Shakur) Dhoruba Bin Wahad (political prisoner for 19 years until his release in 1990); Jamal Joseph;

Kwando Kinshasha; Shaba Om, Ali Bey Hassan and former BPP Communications Secretary, Rosemary Byrd,

The case of the Panther 21 serves as a classic example of police infiltration and political repression which created a new generation of political prisoners in the United States. For many membership in the Black Panther Party proved to be a serious liability that resulted in assassinations, frame-ups, long-term incarceration. Unlike Mark Rudd, Jerry Rubin and other white "radicals" who were able to re-integrate into the mainstream, the lives of former Black Panther Party leaders were, more often than not, irrevocably shattered. Their lives will bear the scars of the brutal and violent repression they endured forever. Many believe that the indictment of the Panther 21 was a racist and politically motivated frame-up by the government, through its Counter-Intelligence Program, to destroy the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation movement.

The Black Panther Party was a grassroots organization of young Black men and women dedicated to the empowerment of Black people. While the Black Panthers advocated self-defense they never supported unprovoked, random, indiscriminate violence - The right to self defense was but one of the ten points of its political platform. Contrary to the racist image painted by the mainstream media, the BPP was not a bunch of gun-toting thugs, blood-thirsty fanatics.

Leaders of the Black Panther Party were targeted by the COINTELPRO for what the FBI termed "neutralization" (a code word for assassinations, frame-ups, imprisonments and public vilification) in early 1969. Federal and local law enforcement agencies successfully assassinated many Black Panthers (Fred Hampton, Mark Clark, Zayd Shakur) or successfully imprison them for life (Geronimo ji jaga pratt. Mumia Abu-Jamal, Marshall Eddie Conway, etc.) by utilizing extra-legal means (e.g., suborning of perjury, harassing and intimidating witnesses, withholding of exculpatory evidence, etc.)

In the late 1960s, as the US. "civil rights" movement grew and became more militant in its opposition to racist and and-poor domestic and foreign policies, the FBI intensified its domestic surveillance and counter-insurgency programs aimed at the Black community. The BPP became the primary target of the FBI's Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) The 1974 findings of the Church Committee (a Senate Committee on Government Operations) revealed that almost 90% of the FBI's counterintelligence activities that were aimed at the Black community targeted the BPP. The US government's Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) effectively destroyed radical Black political dissent in the US by murdering, framing, incarcerating its leaders or forcing them into exile.

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The United States denies the existence of political prisoners within its borders - Instead, the US law enforcement agencies classifies these former political activists that it targeted as mere criminals. Within the US, the criminal justice system (law enforcement, the courts, jails and prisons) is used to repress political activists- Illegal methods were used to frame political prisoners- A review of these cases reveal gross patterns of prosecutorial misconduct which includes: the fabrication or concealment of evidence by the government during trial. Statistics prove that political prisoners consistently receive longer prison terms than do right-wing fanatics or non-political offenders. They are also forced to endure the harshest conditions of confinement The majority of political prisoners in the US today are Black and former members of the Black Panther Party.

COME CELEBRATE THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ACQUITAL OF THE NY PANTHER 21.

We welcome you support and as that you attend a Celebration of the 25th. Anniversary of the Panther 21 Acquittal on Tuesday May 14, 1996 at The Schomburg Ccuter for Research in Black Culture 515 Malcolm X Blvd- (at 135th Street) New York, NY 10037

Reception at 5:30pm - 6:45pm
Program (From 7:00pm - 915pm)

RSVP by May 3, 1996
For information call 212-410-6593

Tickets: \$500 Patron, \$250 Sponsor, \$100 Suporter, \$50 Friend, \$35 Associate, \$20 General Admission

All proceeds go to benefit Black Political Prisoners in the US.

Afeni And The Panthers

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Tupac Shakur's mother, Afeni Shakur activist, Black Panther, poet, actress, NY 21 political prisoner, addicted to freedom and liberation The Black Panther Party, life addicted to the assessment of Amerikkka's idea of her: helpless Black woman without a clue to what life is/was about. Being born Black in the 1960's-1970's was a struggle for dignity and power. A time to challenge prejudice and edicts, sexism etc. Corporate and institutionalized deaths, her language is fierce and loving hard and soft her words are lullabies and martial songs. Her words, so untold full of secrets waiting to reveal themselves, [Tupac](#) and Afeni are two miracles! two individuals daring to live and create and love. Both cross color, class and gender. Afeni is indeed the miracle woman wonder. Afeni comes from a very closed world, from Lumberton, North Carolina. She moved to New York when she was in the sixth grade, she was 11 and lived in the Bronx. she went to the Performing Arts High School in Manhattan. She wanted to be an actress. When she was in her late teens she would go to Manny's Bar on 169th St. in the Bronx. This guy use to come in there named Shaheed. At the time I was a greasy short haired little colored girl, skinny, with no breasts and never had no butt, she wasn't the one men would look at but she was smart and had a nice smile. Shaheed introduced her to the lessons given by the Nation of Islam.

As she listened to Brother Shaheed, she began to like herself, because of what she was, this little Black girl with short hair. He introduced her into MalcolmX, At 19 she got a job working at the post office, she met a brother there, and they became lover, she was with him when she first saw the Black Panther Party, they found their Blackness together, She had gone to the Black Power Conference in Philadelphia and that singular event affected her like no other even in her life. She had seen the pictures of the Black Panthers in Sacramento. What a wonderful sight that was to her, A black woman who was unapologetic, told her if she wanted to be a revolutionary she didn't have to do anything but walk through the supermarket with a razor blade and run her hands across the flour and the sugar An act of resistance She saw Elderige Cleaver, you have to have heard him to know how wonderful and beautiful he was and what a motivator he was for those of us who didn't go to college or who were dropouts from college, she explains. His words became like food, hope and dreams in her brain, her name Afeni was given to her by the brother who built the Yoruba village in South Carolina, Afeni means "dear one" or "lover of the people". Harlem Time It was the first time Afeni heard the Ten Point Program of the Black Panther Party and she was truly hooked. She heard Bobby Seale recite the Ten Point Program. He could recruit a town full of Black people just by saying it. Meetings for the Black Panther Party, were held at L.I.U. on Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. Afeni was there every Saturday.

The Panthers got involved in the school strike. She was now part of the Black Panthers Party and Lumumba Shakur's wife. Lumumba later got arrested and one other member was beaten up, two were killed in L.A. And

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the trigger was allegedly pulled by members of the Ron Karenga Led, United Slaves (US) Organization. There was a party rally the next morning, At 5:00a.m. there was banging at Afeni's apartment door, Lumumba ran to the door and looked out the peak hole, there was a fire and a whole bunch of people yelling. He opened the door and police came in with shotguns at his head, one at his stomach and one on my stomach. Brother Lumumba was a polygamist. Sister Sayeeda was his first wife, Afeni at first disrespected her, She thought Sayeeda wasn't bad enough to be the wife of this revolutionary brother. Afeni now feels it was cruel and insensitive, but she didn't understand that then. But she accepted Afeni into her home, All I did was make her life miserable and i was with her husband, which we were sharing. Earlier the police took Lumumba and Afeni in a caravan, to the D.A.'s office, there she saw everybody in the party. Her sister and her sisters husband scraped together all the money they could to bail me out of jail. They raised 1000 dollars. But when they go into the courtroom the first name they call is Lumumba Abdul Shakur. They announce his bail at 100,000 dollars, they got to my name and said the same. She thought they were mistaken. They didn't misspell her new name. So she went to jail and there she sat for eleven months while George Jackson, Jonathan Jackson and Fred Hampton were killed. While in jail She was about organizing the jail, anybody and anything she could. Finally woman from the church raised her bail The Dickersons (Charlotte and Angela) and their friends. Black and White women raised 64,000 dollars in cash and then the church put up 36,000 dollars in church property. They weren't even party members! Young and older woman, Black and White Leftist lawyers Church going mommas. She was amazed by that. Bail revoked, she was imprisoned in the Women's House of Detention in Greenwich Village. In her cell she patted her belly and said, "This is my prince. He is going to save the black nation. "By the time Tupac was born on June 16, 1971, Afeni had already defended herself in court and been acquitted on 156 counts. Living in the Bronx, she found steady work as a paralegal and tried to raise her son to respect the value of an education. From childhood, everyone called him the "Black Prince". I named him Tupac Amaru Shakur (Shining, Serpent, Blessed One). I wanted him to have the name of revolutionary, indigenous people in the world. I wanted him to know he was part of a world culture and not just from a neighborhood...When he was two years old and did something wrong, I would say to him, an independent Black man wouldn't do that. He was always an independent Black man! I wasn't by myself when my son Tupac died: a lot of mommas have lost their sons to this country's violence. I AM NOT ALONE. So don't try to isolate me, If you do, it will relieve ordinary people of assuming their important roles. We all have important roles to assume before we leave this planet."

The Geronimo Pratt Affair

Following the FBI-engineered assassinations of BPP leaders Jon Huggins and Alprentice Carter (see earlier), Geronimo Pratt took over the leadership of the Los Angeles BPP. At this point he also became the target of covert FBI operations. Designated a "Key Black Extremist", Pratt was made the subject of a series of COINTELPRO cartoons designed to make him a target for the

attentions of the United Slaves organization.

Nonetheless, Pratt attempted to steer the LA BPP away from any overemphasis on armed struggle; he worked very hard to maintain community education and health care efforts, and the Free Breakfast for Children Programme, and even undertook the extraordinary (for a Panther leader) step of instructing his cadres to cooperate in the police investigation of the Huggins/Carter assassinations, testifying against other black people (from the United Slaves) in open court. The Bureau's response was to explicitly single Pratt out for neutralisation by the head of the Los Angeles COINTELPRO section, Richard W. Held.

The FBI placed an infiltrator very highly within the LA Panthers - Melvin Smith, the number three man in the LA BPP - who provided detailed floor plans to the Bureau, including sleeping arrangements of the Panthers. In December 8th 1969, four days after the Hampton raid in Chicago, 40 men of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) squad, armed with AR-15 automatic rifles, an armoured personnel carrier, helicopters, tear gas and dynamite, and with over 100 regular police as backup, raided the LA BPP headquarters at 5.30 in the morning.

The Panthers, however, had fortified their offices in the wake of the Hampton murder and chose to defend themselves, refusing to surrender until the press and public were on the scene. Six of them were wounded in the gunfire. As in the Hampton assassination, bullets were fired directly into Pratt's bed. Unlike Hampton however, Pratt was sleeping on the floor due to spinal injuries sustained in Vietnam. The surviving Panthers were immediately arrested for their "assault upon the police".

Pratt spent two months in jail until some \$125,000 in bail was raised to secure his release. The FBI then launched a COINTELPRO to bad-jacket him as a police informer; this led to Pratt's expulsion from the BPP in August 1970. He was then re-arrested over fictitious armed robbery and murder charges, but was acquitted on all counts.

On November 11th 1971, while still incarcerated, Pratt was informed that his wife Sandra, eight months pregnant, had been murdered, her bullet-ridden body stuffed in a sleeping bag and dumped alongside an LA freeway. Pratt was not allowed to view the body, or to attend the funeral. No serious police investigation of her murder occurred.

Pratt was then charged with the murder of a white couple on a Santa Monica tennis court, despite being in Oakland, some 400 miles away at the time. The FBI prevented witnesses testifying to Pratt's whereabouts from attending court and used BPP infiltrator Julius Butler to testify to having heard Pratt "bragging" of the crime.

The FBI refused to release its logs from its electronic taps on the BPP offices in Oakland (which would have revealed Pratt's whereabouts at the time of the murders) until forced to do so by a lawsuit brought by three attorneys. They then delivered the transcripts minus precisely the records of the time, which would have established Pratt's innocence (the Bureau stated that these records had been "lost or destroyed"). Pratt was convicted of first-degree murder on July 28th 1972 and sentenced to life in San Quentin Prison.

Pratt spent the first eight years of his sentence in solitary confinement. After 26 years imprisonment, 14 denied requests for parole, four unsuccessful appeals to higher courts, and three years" waiting while the Los Angeles District Attorney "studied" a report indicating his innocence, Pratt was finally freed in June 1997. A day earlier, a California appeals court agreed with a judge who said he had been denied a fair trial.

In April 2000 Geronimo Pratt won an estimated \$4.5 million in an out-court settlement from the FBI and the Los Angeles authorities for prosecutorial misconduct.

Fred Hampton And The Chicago Panthers

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CHICAGO PANTHERS

J. Edgar Hoover issued repeated demands that his personnel "destroy what the BPP stands for", to eradicate the Panthers" Serve the People programmes" and to destroy their acclaimed Free Breakfast for Children programme in the city. O'Neal and other infiltrators were ordered to steal BPP financial records, books, literature, tapes, films and other materials at every opportunity.

In October 1969, FBI Special Agent Roy Mitchell had O'Neal draw up a detailed floor plan of Hampton's apartment, including furniture placement and the location of the bed shared by

Hampton and his fiancée Debra Johnson (who was pregnant with their child) as well as the location of their bedroom windows.

Mitchell then organised a 14-man "hit squad" composed of FBI agents and members of the Chicago Police Special Prosecution Unit (SPU). On the evening of December 3rd, O'Neal prepared a late dinner for a group of Panthers, including Hampton, at the apartment. He had drugged the Kool-aid so that the Panthers would remain unconscious throughout the night. As the Panthers slept, O'Neal slipped out, and at around 1.30 a.m. the FBI hit squad, heavily armed with automatic weapons, launched their assault.

Panther Mark Clark was shot pointblank in the chest with a .30 calibre M-1 carbine fired by FBI agent Gloves Davis. Davis then pumped a bullet into 18-year-old Brenda Harris, who was lying unarmed in a front room bed. Agent Daniel Groth hit her with a second round. Joseph Gorman, joined by Davis, then sprayed automatic fire from a .45 Thompson sub-machine gun through a wall into the bedrooms. All 42 shots fired by the pair converged on the head of Hampton's bed, which had been pinpointed in O'Neal's floor plan.

Hampton's body was then dragged by the wrist from the bed to the bedroom doorway and left lying in a spreading pool of blood. At that point, the raiders sprayed sub-machine gunfire at the remaining Panthers in the other bedroom. Ronald Satchell was hit four times, Blair Anderson twice and Verlina Brewer twice. The victims were then beaten and dragged bodily to the street, where they were arrested on charges of attempting to murder the raiders and aggravated assault.

Following a meeting with the FBI, State Attorney Hanrahan convened a press conference at which he announced that his raiders had been "attacked" by the "violent and extremely vicious" Panthers and had "defended themselves accordingly". Hanrahan lauded the raiders for their "remarkable restraint, bravery and professional discipline" in not killing all the Panthers present.

Later, however, reporters uncovered the fact that the FBI's "photographic evidence" purporting to show bullet holes made by shots fired at their men by the Panthers, were fabricated. Despite an elaborate law-enforcement cover up, the incident was finally found in the federal courts in 1983 to have been the result of illegal FBI "search and destroy" tactics. Presiding Judge John F. Grady ruled that there had been an active governmental conspiracy to murder Hampton and the other Panthers.

Sanctions were imposed on the FBI over the affair and an award of \$1.85 million went to the survivors and families of the deceased. However, by then the political purposes of the COINTELPRO had long been achieved. The raid had broken the back of the BPP and the party in Chicago passed into oblivion. None of the perpetrators of the FBI's crimes served so much as a day in jail for their offences.

Assata Shakur Speaks from Exile

This is a interview with Assata Shakur, Tupac's aunt in exile in Cuba. It is from Oct. 24, 2000. Even though it is an older interview, it gives alot of insight to what took her to Cuba. It speaks on Alfeni and of course Tupac.

I found it to be a good informative piece and thought I'd drop it here for you to check out. One thing that struck me is she says "If you don't believe that the FBI has extensive files on every popular Rap artist, you probably believe in the Easter bunny or the tooth fairy. It's a known fact that more than a few Rappers are under constant police surveillance".

Assata Shakur Speaks from Exile Post-modern maroon in the ultimate palenque An interview by Christian Parenti 24oct00

Christian Parenti teaches sociology at the New College of California in San Francisco.

What happens to old Black Panthers? Some wind up dead, like Huey P. Newton. Some join the Moonies and the Republican Party, like Eldridge Cleaver. Some, like Mumia Abu Jamal, languish in prison. But a few, like Assata Shakur, have taken the path of the "maroon," the runaway slave of old who slipped off the plantation to the free jungle communities known as "palenques."

Two decades ago Shakur was described as "the soul of the Black Liberation Army (BLA)," an underground, paramilitary group that emerged from the rubble of east coast chapters of the Black Panther Party. Among her closest political comrades was Ahfeni Shakur, Tupac Shakur's mother. Forced underground in 1971, by charges that were later proved false, Assata was accused of being the "bandit queen" of the BLA; the "mother hen who kept them together, kept

them moving, kept them shooting." The BLA's alleged actions included: assassinating almost ten police officers, kidnapping drug dealers (one of whom turned out to be an FBI agent), and robbing banks from coast to coast.

Throughout 1971 and 1972 "Assata sightings" and wild speculation about her deeds were a headline mainstay for New York tabloids. Then, in 1973, Shakur and two friends were pulled over by state troopers on the New Jersey Turnpike. During the stop, shooting erupted. A trooper and one alleged BLA member were killed, another trooper was slightly hurt and Assata—or Miss Joanne Chesimard, as authorities preferred to call her—was severely wounded by a blast of police gunfire. Left to die in a paddy wagon, she survived only to be charged for the trooper's death and sentenced to life in prison.

During the next six years (much of it spent in solitary confinement), Shakur beat a half dozen other indictments. In 1979—after giving birth in prison, only to have her daughter taken away in less than a week—Assata Shakur managed one of the most impressive jailbreaks of the era. After almost a year in a West Virginia federal prison for women, surrounded by white supremacists from the Aryan Sisterhood prison gang, Shakur was transferred to the maximum security wing of the Clinton Correctional Center in New Jersey. There she was one of only eight maximum security prisoners held in a small, well-fenced cellblock of their own. The rest of Clinton—including its visiting area—was medium security and not fenced in.

According to news reports at the time, Shakur's November 2 escape proceeded as follows: Three men—two black, one white—using bogus drivers licenses and Social Security cards, requested visits with Assata four weeks in advance, as was prison policy. But prison officials never did the requisite background checks. On the day of the escape, the team of three met in the waiting room at the prison entrance, where they were processed through registration and shuttled in a van to the visiting room in South Hall. One member of the team went ahead of the rest. Although there was a sign stating that all visitors would be searched with a hand held metal detector—he made it through registration without even a pat-down.

Meanwhile, the other two men were processed without a search. As these two were being let through the chain-link fences and locked metal doors at the visiting center one of them drew a gun and took the guard hostage. Simultaneously, the man visiting Shakur rushed the control booth, put two pistols to the glass wall, and ordered the officer to open the room's metal door. She obliged.

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From there Shakur and "the raiders"—as some press reports dubbed them—took a third guard hostage and made it to the parked van. Because only the maximum security section of the prison was fully fenced-in the escape team was able to speed across a grassy meadow to the parking lot of the Hunterdon State School, where they meet two more female accomplices, and split up into a "two-tone blue sedan" and a Ford Maverick. All the guards were released unharmed and the FBI immediately launched a massive hunt. But Shakur disappeared without a trace.

For the next five years authorities hunted in vain. Shakur had vanished. Numerous other alleged BLA cadre were busted during those years, including Tupac's uncle, Mutula Shakur. In 1984 word came from 90 miles off the coast of Florida. The FBI's most wanted female fugitive was living in Cuba, working on a masters degree in political science, writing her autobiography, and raising her daughter.

Cut to 1997. It's a stunningly hot summer afternoon in Havana, Cuba—the ultimate palenque—and I am having strong, black coffee with Assata Shakur who just turned 50, but looks more like 36. She keeps a low profile, security is still a big concern. She's finishing her second book. Given how much the Fed's want this woman locked up, I feel strange being in her house, as if my presence is a breach of security.

PARENTI: How did you arrive in Cuba?

SHAKUR: Well, I couldn't, you know, just write a letter and say "Dear Fidel, I'd like to come to your country." So I had to hoof it—come and wait for the Cubans to respond. Luckily, they had some idea who I was, they'd seen some of the briefs and UN petitions from when I was a political prisoner. So they were somewhat familiar with my case and they gave me the status of being a political refugee. That means I am here in exile as a political person.

How did you feel when you got here?

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I was really overwhelmed. Even though I considered myself a socialist, I had these insane, silly notions about Cuba. I mean, I grew up in the 1950s when little kids were hiding under their desks, because "the communists were coming." So even though I was very supportive of the revolution, I expected everyone to go around in green fatigues looking like Fidel, speaking in a very stereotypical way, "the revolution must continue, Companero. Let us, triumph, Comrade." When I got here people were just people, doing what they had where I came from. It's a country with a strong sense of community. Unlike the U.S., folks aren't as isolated. People are really into other people.

Also, I didn't know there were all these black people here and that there was this whole Afro-Cuban culture. My image of Cuba was Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, I hadn't heard of Antonio Maceo [a hero of the Cuban war of independence] and other Africans who had played a role in Cuban history.

The lack of brand names and consumerism also really hit me. You go into a store and there would be a bag of "rice." It undermined what I had taken for granted in the absurd zone where people are like, "Hey, I only eat uncle so and so's brand of rice."

So, how were you greeted by the Cuban state?

They've treated me very well. It was different from what I expected, I thought they might be pushy. But they were more interested in what I wanted to do, in my projects. I told them that the most important things were to unite with my daughter and to write a book. They said, "What do you need to do that?" They were also interested in my vision of the struggle of African people in the United States. I was so impressed by that. Because I grew up—so to speak—in the movement dealing with white leftists who were very bossy and wanted to tell us what to do and thought they knew everything. The Cuban attitude was one of solidarity with respect. It was a profound lesson in cooperation.

Did they introduce you to people or guide you around for a while?

They gave me a dictionary, an apartment, took me to some historical places, and then I was pretty much on my own. My daughter came down, after prolonged harassment and being denied a passport, and she became my number one priority. We discovered Cuban schools

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together, we did the sixth grade together, explored parks, and the beach.

She was taken from you at birth, right?

Yeah. It's not like Cuba where you get to breast feed in prison and where they work closely with the family. Some mothers in the U.S. never get to see their newborns. I was with my daughter for a week before they sent me back to the prison. That was one of the most difficult periods of my life, that separation. It's only been recently that I've been able to talk about it. I had to just block it out, otherwise I think I might have gone insane. In 1979, when I escaped, she was only five years old.

You came to Cuba how soon after?

Five years later, in 1984.

I know it's probably out of bounds, but where were you during the intervening years?

I was underground. But I don't talk about that period. To do so would put a lot of people who helped me in jeopardy.

Right, I hear you. You've talked about adjusting to Cuba, but could you talk a bit about adjusting to exile.

Well, for me exile means separation from people I love. I didn't, and don't miss the U.S., per se. But black culture, black life in the U.S., that African American flavor, I definitely miss. The language, the movements, the style, I get nostalgic about that.

Adjusting to exile is coming to grips with the fact that you may never go back to where you come from. The way I dealt with that, psychologically, was thinking about slavery. You know, a slave had to come to grips with the fact that "I may never see Africa again." Then a maroon, a runaway slave, has to—even in the act of freedom—adjust to the fact that being free or struggling for freedom means, "I'll be separated from people I love." So I drew on that and people like Harriet Tubman and all those people who got away from slavery. Because, that's what prison looked like. It looked like slavery. It felt like slavery. It was black people and people of color in chains. And the way I got there was slavery. If you stand up and say, "I don't go for the status quo." Then "we got something for you, it's a whip, a chain, a cell."

Even in being free it was like, "I am free but now what?" There was a lot to get used to. Living in a society committed to social justice, a third world country with a lot of problems. It took a while to understand all that Cubans are up against and fully appreciate all they are trying to do.

Did the Africanness of Cuba help, did that provide solace?

The first thing that was comforting was the politics. It was such a relief. You know, in the States you feel overwhelmed by the negative messages that you get and you just feel weird, like you're the only one seeing all this pain and inequality. People are saying, "Forget about that, just try to get rich, dog eat dog, get your own, buy, spend, consume." So living here was an affirmation of myself, it was like "Okay, there are lots of people who get outraged at injustice."

The African culture I discovered later. At first I was learning the politics, about socialism—what it feels like to live in a country where everything is owned by the people, where health care and medicine are free. Then I started to learn about the Afro-Cuban religions, the Santaria, Palo Monte, the Abakua. I wanted to understand the ceremonies and the philosophy. I really came to grips with how much we—Black people in the U.S.—were robbed of. Whether it's the tambours, the drums, or the dances. Here, they still know rituals preserved from slavery times. It was like finding another piece of myself. I had to find an African name. I'm still looking for pieces of that Africa I was torn from. I've found it here in all aspects of the culture. There is a tendency to reduce the Africanness of Cuba to the Santaria. But it's in the literature, the language, the politics.

When the USSR collapsed, did you worry about a counter revolution in Cuba and, by extension,

your own safety?

Of course. I would have to have been nuts not to worry. People would come down here from the States and say, "How long do you think the revolution has—two months, three months? Do you think the revolution will survive? You better get out of here." It was rough.

Cubans were complaining every day, which is totally sane. I mean, who wouldn't? The food situation was really bad, much worse than now, no transportation, eight-hour blackouts. We would sit in the dark and wonder, "How much can people take?" I've been to prison and lived in the States, so I can take damn near anything. I felt I could survive whatever—anything except U.S. imperialism coming in and taking control. That's the one thing I couldn't survive.

Luckily, a lot of Cubans felt the same way. It took a lot for people to pull through, waiting hours for the bus before work. It wasn't easy. But this isn't a superficial, imposed revolution. This is one of those gut revolutions. One of those blood, sweat and tears revolutions. This is one of those revolutions where people are like, "We ain't going back on the plantation, period. We don't care if you're Uncle Sam, we don't care about your guided missiles, about your filthy, dirty CIA maneuvers. We're this island of 11 million people and we're gonna live the way we want and if you don't like it, go take a ride." And we could get stronger with the language. Of course, not everyone feels like that, but enough do.

What about race and racism in Cuba?

That's a big question. The revolution has only been around 30-something years. It would be fantasy to believe that the Cubans could have completely gotten rid of racism in that short a time. Socialism is not a magic wand: wave it and everything changes.

Can you be more specific about the successes and failures along these lines?

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I can't think of any area of the country that is segregated. Another example, the third congress of the Cuban Communist Party was focused on making party leadership reflect the actual number of people of color and women in the country. Unfortunately by the time the Fourth Congress rolled around the whole focus had to be on the survival of the revolution. When the Soviet Union and the socialist camp collapsed Cuba lost something like 85 percent of its income. It's a process but I honestly think that there's room for a lot of changes throughout the culture. Some people still talk about "good hair" and "bad hair."

Some people think light skin is good, that if you marry a light person you're advancing the race. There are a lot of contradictions in peoples' consciousness. There still needs to be de-eurocentrizing of the schools, though Cuba is further along with that than most places in the world. In fairness, I think that race relations in Cuba are 20 times better than they are in the States and I believe the revolution is committed to eliminating racism completely.

I also feel that the special period has changed conditions in Cuba. It's brought in lots of white tourists, many of whom are racists and expect to be waited on subserviently.

Another thing is the joint venture corporations which bring their racist ideas and racist corporate practices, for example not hiring enough blacks. All of that means the revolution has to be more vigilant than ever in identifying and dealing with racism.

A charge one hears, even on the left, is that institutional racism still exists in Cuba. Is that true? Does one find racist patterns in allocation of housing, work, or the functions of criminal justice?

No. I don't think institutional racism, as such, exists in Cuba. But at the same time, people have their personal prejudices. Obviously these people, with these personal prejudices, must work somewhere, and must have some influence on the institutions they work in. But I think it's superficial to say racism is institutionalized in Cuba.

I believe that there needs to be a constant campaign to educate people, sensitize people, and analyze racism. The fight against racism always has two levels; the level of politics and policy but also the level of individual consciousness. One of the things that influences ideas about race in Cuba is that the revolution happened in 1959, when the world had a very limited understanding of what racism was. During the 1960s, the world saw the black power movement,

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which I, for one, very much benefited from. You know "black is beautiful," exploring African art, literature, and culture. That process didn't really happen in Cuba. Over the years, the revolution accomplished so much that most people thought that meant the end of racism. For example, I'd say that more than 90 percent of black people with college degrees were able to do so because of the revolution. They were in a different historical place. The emphasis, for very good reasons, was on black-white unity and the survival of the revolution. So it's only now that people in the universities are looking into the politics of identity.

What do you think of the various situations of your former comrades? For example, the recent releases of Geronimo Pratt, Johnny Spain, and Dhoruba Bin Wahad; the continued work of Angela Davis and Bobby Seale; and, on a downside, the political trajectory of Eldridge Cleaver and the death of Huey Newton?

There have been some victories. And those victories have come about from a lot of hard work. But it took a long time. It took Geronimo 27 years and Dhoruba 19 years to prove that they were innocent and victimized by COINTELPRO. The government has admitted that it operated COINTELPRO but it hasn't admitted to victimizing anyone. How can that be? I think that people in the States should be struggling for the immediate freedom of Mumia Abu Jamal and amnesty for all political prisoners. I think that the reason these tasks are largely neglected reflects not only the weakness of the left, but its racism.

On the positive side, I think a lot of people are growing and healing. Many of us are for the first time analyzing the way we were wounded. Not just as Africans, but as people in the movement who were, and still are, subjected to terror and surveillance. We're finally able to come together and acknowledge that the repression was real and say, "We need to heal." I have hope for a lot of those people who were burnt out or addicted to drugs or alcohol, the casualties of our struggle. Given all that we were and are up against I think we did pretty well.

What effect do you think Rap music has on the movement for social justice today?

Hip Hop can be a very powerful weapon to help expand young people's political and social consciousness. But just as with any weapon, if you don't know how to use it, if you don't know where to point it, or what you're using it for, you can end up shooting yourself in the foot or killing your sisters or brothers. The government recognized immediately that Rap music has enormous revolutionary potential. Certain politicians got on the bandwagon to attack Rappers like Sister Soldier and NWA. You've got various police organizations across the country who

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have openly expressed their hostility towards Rap artists. For them, most Rappers fall in the category of potential criminals, cop killers, or subversives.

If you don't believe that the FBI has extensive files on every popular Rap artist, you probably believe in the Easter bunny or the tooth fairy. It's a known fact that more than a few Rappers are under constant police surveillance.

There's been speculation that Tupac Shakur was set up on those rape charges. He makes reference to it in one of his songs. Do you think there is a COINTELPRO program against Rappers?

It's a definite possibility. Divide and conquer is what the FBI does best. Just look at the history. The FBI engineered the split in the Black Panther party. The police and the government have pitted organizations against each other, gangs against each other, leaders against each other. Now you've got this East coast versus West coast thing.

Look, we came over on the same boats, we slaved on the same plantations together, and we're all being oppressed, brutalized, and incarcerated together in mega numbers, what sense does it make for us to be fighting each other? So yes, I believe the government encouraged this in-fighting, and I wouldn't be surprised to find out that they set Tupac up more than once.

What did you think of Tupac's music?

I think Tupac was a genius. He had so much talent. I love his music, even when I don't agree with what he's saying or the premises he's operating on. He was able to touch so much gut stuff, that most people don't even recognize, much less have the ability to express.

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What are your thoughts on his contradictory role as child of the movement and, on the other hand, a gangster Rapper?

That contradictory consciousness you're talking about is all over the place. Unfortunately it's nothing new. In the 1960s and the 1970s people like Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver, clearly exhibited aspects of that confusion, and mixed up revolutionary politics with gangsterism. The mind destroying machine works overtime, getting us to crave power and money instead of justice. We've all been a bit brainwashed and confused.

I don't care who you are, Hollywood has crept into your head. The act of being free has a lot to do with becoming unbrainwashed. I hear all these Rappers talking about keeping it real and, at the same time, they're selling big-time fantasies. These Rap videos made in fancy clubs, casinos, rented mansions, around rented swimming pools, rented yachts, rented private planes, rented helicopters. Most of the people in the Rap business are barely making it.

Tupac was an exception. He was only 25 when he died, and one of the things that makes me sad is that there was no strong community of African revolutionaries to protect him and help educate him. Those who loved him did all they could, but they were competing with some very forceful, seductive, negative influences.

As a movement, I think we have to become much more involved in educating and supporting our young people. Black people, African people are just as discriminated against and brutalized as we were in the 1960s, and racism is very much on the agenda of both the Republican and Democratic parties. We need to rebuild a movement capable of liberating our people. There's nothing we can do to bring Tupac back, but we can learn from his death. You can hear a lot of love in Tupac's work. We need to work to create a world where the Tupacs of the world can grow and love and not be afraid that some fool with a Glock is going to blow their brains out.

As far as I'm concerned Rappers need to be spending a lot more time studying and struggling. As for the myth of Tupac being alive, the last thing we need is more nonsense. I don't care who you are or what you do, when they put that microphone in front of you, try to make sure you have something worthwhile to say.

Are you still a revolutionary?

I am still a revolutionary, because I believe that in the United States there needs to be a complete and profound change in the system of so called democracy. It's really a "dollarocracy." Which millionaire is going to get elected? Can you imagine if you went to a restaurant and the only thing on the menu was dried turd or dead fungus. That's not appetizing. I feel the same way about the political spectrum in the U.S. What exists now has got to go. All of it: how wealth is distributed, how the environment is treated. If you let these crazy politicians keep ruling, the planet will be destroyed.

In the 1960s, organizations you worked with advocated armed self-defense, how do you think social change can best be achieved in the States today?

I still believe in self-defense and self-determination for Africans and other oppressed people in America. I believe in peace, but I think it's totally immoral to brutalize and oppress people, to commit genocide against people and then tell them they don't have the right to free themselves in whatever way they deem necessary. But right now the most important thing is consciousness raising. Making social change and social justice means people have to be more conscious across the board, inside and outside the movement, not only around race, but around class, sexism, the ecology, whatever. The methods of 1917, standing on a corner with leaflets, standing next to someone saying, "Workers of the world unite," won't work. We need to use alternative means of communication. The old ways of attaining consciousness aren't going to work. The little Leninist study groups won't do it. We need to use video, audio, the Internet.

We also need to work on the basics of rebuilding community. How are you going to organize or liberate your community if you don't have one? I live in Cuba, right? We get U.S. movies here and I am sick of the monsters; it's the tyranny of the monsters. Every other movie is fear and monsters. They've even got monster babies. People are expected to live in this world of alienation and fear. I hear that in the States people are even afraid to make eye contact on the streets. No social change can happen if people are that isolated. So we need to rebuild a sense of community and that means knocking on doors and reconnecting.

Black Political Prisoners in American

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TOWARDS A BLACK

POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE U.S.

FACTSHEET

A PARTIAL LIST OF SOME OF OUR FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Marshall Eddie Conway

Russell Shoats

Veronza Bowers

Sundiata Acoli

Sekou Odinga

Mutulu Shakur

Basheer Hameed

Abdul Majeed

Jalil Muntaqim

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Herman Bell

Robert 'Seth' Hayes

Mondo Wa Langa

The Move 9

Sekou Cinque Kambui

Kojo Bomani Sababu

SOME OF THE LONGEST HELD BLACK POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE U.S.

Mondo Wa Langa—31 years

David Poindexter—31 years

Veronza Bowers—31 years
Marshall Eddie Conway—31 years

Jalil Muntaqim—30 years

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Herman Bell—30 years

Robert 'Seth' Hayes—28 years

Sundiata Acoli—28 years

BLACK POLITICAL PRISONERS IN EXILE

Assata Shakur

Nehanda Abiodun

Arthur Harris

Donald Cox

BLACK POLITICAL PRISONERS WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY OR EXECUTED

Kwasi Balagoon—Died In Captivity

Ajamu Nasser—Executed

Ziyon Yisrayael—Executed

Merle Africa—Died in Captivity

Albert 'Nuh' Washington—Died In Captivity

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Teddy 'Jah' Heath—Died In Captivity

BLACK POLITICAL PRISONERS FACING THE DEATH PENALTY

Mumia Abu-Jamal

Imam Jamil Al-Amin (H. Rap Brown)

FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!

FREE THE LAND!

For more information, contact The Jericho Movement P.O. Box 650 New York, NY 10009,

[jerichomovement.com](http://www.jerichomovement.com)

Good websites on Black political prisoners:

www.jerichomovement.com

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www.prisonactivist.org

For Assata Shakur on the web:

<http://afrocubaweb.com>

www.nubiannews.com

For Sundiata Acoli on the web:

<http://afrikan.i-identity.com/sundiata>