

THE FORGOTTEN VETERANS

By Brother Salim K. T. Adofo

With the recent "alleged" assassination of Osama Bin Laden, there is no doubt that the majority America will be honoring and supporting its military members, past and present this coming Memorial Day. While mainstream society honors its heroes, it is imperative that Africans in America recognize their freedom fighters. Many African people known and unknown have taken a position of self defense and protection of its elders, children and the institutions of their community. Sisters and brothers such as Assata Shakur, Dr. Imari Obedele, Nehanda Abiodun, Sonny Carson, the Deacons for Defense, Carl Hampton and Dr. Khallid Abdul Muhammad have protected and defended the Black community against the Ku Klux Klan, lynching's, the bombings of Black churches, and against police brutality. As a result of African people exercising their human right to self defense the United States government, organized a strategic attack on African Freedom Fighters.

In the late 1960's the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), under the direction of J. Edgar Hoover initiated a program entitled the Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO). Targeted towards Black community organizations and activists, COINTELPRO tried to prevent the mobilization and organization of Black People, especially amongst Black youth. The FBI was instructed to infiltrate many organizations such as the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, Republic of New Afrika (RNA), Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), and the Nation of Islam (NOI) and to disrupt, discredit and misdirect the organizations. In some instances the FBI, just out right murdered people. Mark Clark, Carl Hampton, Martin Luther King, & Bobby Hutton are

examples of this. The FBI worked with local police departments to create false charges and evidence to convict members of these organizations for crimes they did not commit.

These sisters and brothers are now known as "Political Prisoners of War."

A short list of political prisoners includes: Janet Holloway Africa, Sundiata Acoli, Marshall Eddie Conway and Dr. Mutulu Shakur, the step-father of Tupac Shakur. There is also Imam Jamil Al-Amin, Jalil Muntaqim, Robert Seth Hayes and many more. Even



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a victim of COINTELPRO and held as a political prisoner. Actions and programs they have participated in were food, clothing and voter registration drives. Other programs have

included free breakfast for children, free medical clinics for people with sickle cell anemia and fair housing for the poor. They have also built independent schools and have helped Black people to overcome drug addictions. Though still incarcerated, they still continue to organize.

Dr. Mutulu Shakur has worked to bring about gang truces in the prison system and has addressed issues regarding the "Hip Hop" community. Robert Seth Hayes has helped to educate prisoners about HIV. Currently, many political prisoners are writing

books to help teach and prepare a future generation of Black youth for community development. Now it is time to help them.

Political prisoners are the frontline soldiers of the Black community. They have fought and continue to fight in the longest war America has known, the war for Black Liberation. Many of them are abused, denied proper medical care and are locked in cells for 23 hours a day. They have sacrificed their family, friends, goals and careers to literally fight for the human and civil rights of Black, Latino and oppressed people. As a result, they have lived a very large portion of their lives behind bars. Not only have they suffered, but so have their families, friends and the entire Black community. How can they be helped? One can write a letter to a political prisoner. One can also write letters to President Obama, Attorney General Eric Holder, the governor and parole board of the state the political prisoner is being held in, requesting that particular prisoners unconditional pardon and/or release. Financial contributions can be made to the commissary of a political prisoner as well.

The release of Black Political Prisoners of War is an unconditional demand of FULL AND COMPLETE REPARATIONS for African People in America. The fact is Europeans waged a war on African people when they kidnapped the first African and brought her or him to America to fulfill their political and economic aspirations of building a new country. This makes all Black People being held in prisons, political and economic prisoners of war, because they would never be in prison, if they weren't taken hostage and brought to America in the first place. For more information on political prisoners one can contact the National Black United Front (NBUF) at (773) 493 – 0900 or at blackunitedfront@gmail.com.

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