

PRISON BREAK

Prison escapes and self-liberation acts of our prisoners expose the vulnerabilities of so-called impenetrable security regimes and speak to the sheer will and determination of the prisoners. With liberation at the forefront, revolutionaries who break free ask themselves not what can be done but what needs to be done. There are no limits to their demands for freedom, as what they demand first and foremost is of themselves—courage, commitment, strategic organizing, and steadfastness.

Technological advancements and the proliferation of prisons throughout the U.S. and the world has made prison escapes much harder to achieve. However, Palestine shows us what it means to overcome these obstacles through the pure collective will of the oppressed. Prisons are the monuments of Zionism and Imperialism, a legacy of detention, torture, and murder. Our people’s legacies are written in the skies and the earth—in the uprisings, escapes, sacrifices, resilience, and humanity of our prisoners against all odds. History shows us that no colonial entity is invincible, and neither are its prisons.

FLOOD OF THE FREE



The engineers of October’s great flood were prisoners. Among them, martyr Saleh al-Arouri, one of the founders of Hamas’ al-Qassam Brigades, who had been imprisoned for more than eighteen years; and martyr Yahya Sinwar, the leader of Hamas in Gaza, who had been imprisoned for twenty-two years.

The heroic Al Aqsa Flood was not only a prison break out of besieged Gaza, but also an act to liberate Palestinian prisoners from the clutches of Zionism through a prisoner exchange. After decades of bombing of refugee camps, forced starvation, and destruction of daily life, it is the ingenuity and deep dedication of the resistance, its leaders and fighters from the depths of the tunnels of Gaza to the paragliders soaring over the colonial fences, that continues to spark not only hope but certainty of victory and empower a growing global uprising.



“OUR FREEDOM WAS PAID FOR BY THE BLOOD OF THE
MARTYRS OF GAZA; WE OWE THEM A DEBT THAT CAN
NEVER BE REPAYED.”

AMERIKKKA
IS AN EVIL
AND RACIST
EMPIRE!

Sekou Odinga

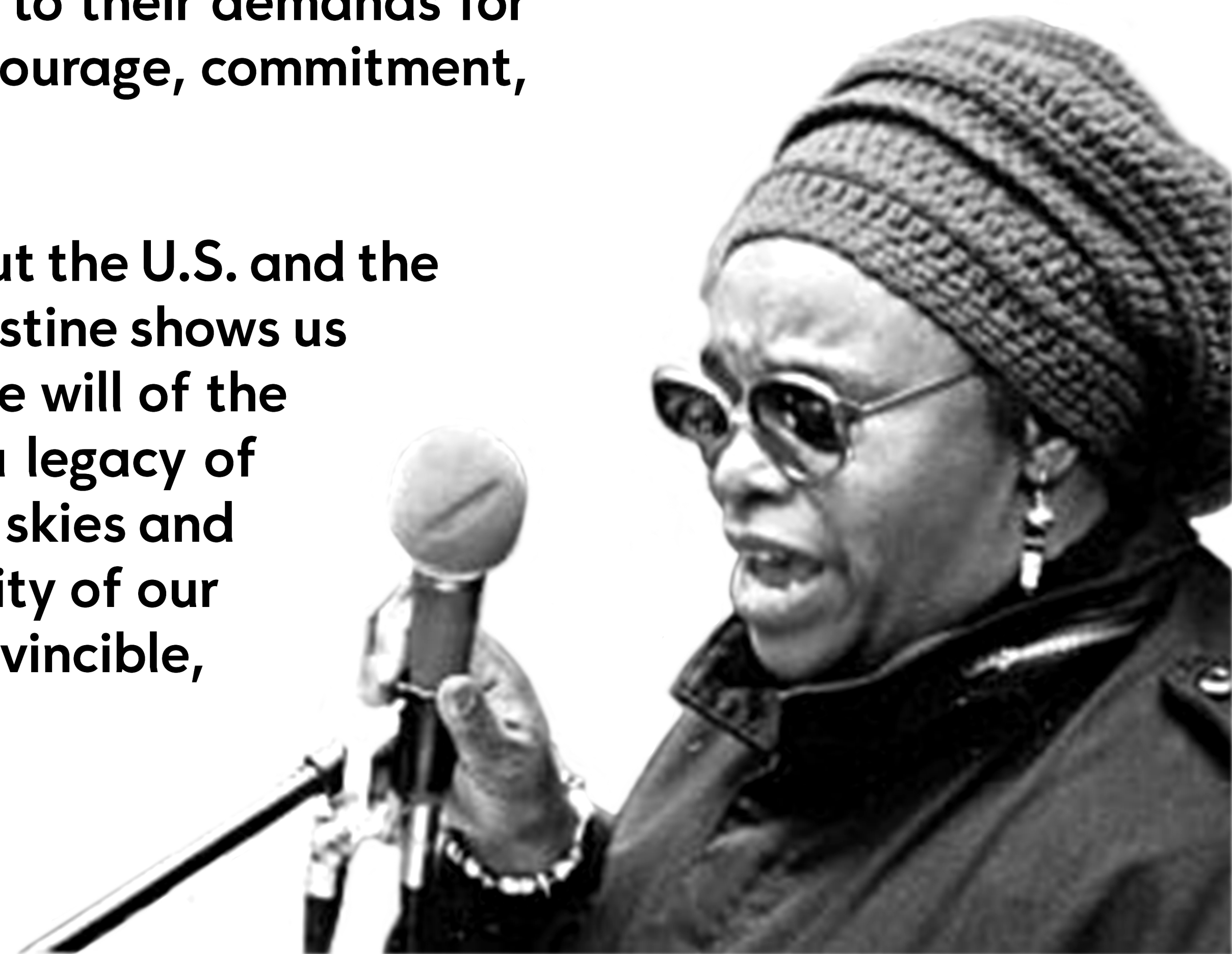
was a member of Malcolm X’s Organization of Afro-American Unity, a founding member of the New York chapter of the Black Panther Party as well as the Black Panther International Section, and one of the Panther 21. A Muslim, citizen of the Republic of New Afrika, and combatant of the BLA, Sekou was captured in October 1981, tortured, and spent the following 33 years behind bars. The Sekou Odinga Defense Committee, partially led by his comrade and wife **dequi kiona-sadiki**, waged a successful campaign for his November 2014 release. Sekou’s courtroom statement during the preliminary hearings exemplifies his unbreakable spirit:

“As a Muslim I am subject to the laws of the Qur’an which clearly tells me to fight oppression. As a Freedom Fighter, fighting for the freedom, liberation and self-determination of my people... it is important to understand who I am and who my people are. I am the descendant of Afrikan slaves, brought to this country in chains as captives of a brutal slave war waged against the Afrikan people. My people have been fighting for [...] self determination since the first Afrikan was illegally kidnapped and enslaved. So I do not recognize any legitimate right of this Court to try me. My only participation in these proceedings will be to push for my legitimate political rights as a Freedom Fighter and Prisoner of War and to denounce these illegal proceedings in particular and the colonial government of the United States of America in general.”

The mighty Afrikan revolutionary joined the ancestors January 12, 2024. His legacy remains a stalwart fighter for justice and the release of all political prisoners.



Photo from The Jericho Movement



One of the most hard-working members of the BPP, **Safiya Bukhari** was imprisoned for nine years due to her consistent work supporting political prisoners and prisoners of war targeted and captured through the FBI’s COINTELPRO program. On New Year’s Eve 1976, after two years of severe medical neglect, Bukhari managed to escape prison to get treatment with the help of a well-organized, secure BLA communication network. She was eventually re-captured, and endured over three and a half years of solitary confinement. Finally freed in 1983, she went on to co-found the New York Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition, The Jericho Movement, and other organizations fighting for the release of political prisoners to this day.



One time-honored tactic of the Palestinian resistance to break their people out of prison is through prisoner exchanges. Many leaders of the resistance have been liberated in this way. In November of 1983, six Zionist soldiers were exchanged for 4,765 Palestinian and Lebanese captives in one of the great victories of the Palestinian resistance.

These exchanges display the strategic vision of an armed resistance motivated by careful study and organization. Since October 7, Hamas secured what no one else could through armed struggle - emptying the colonial prisons of almost every woman and child.

Dr. Mutulu Shakur’s first confrontation with the state began while helping his blind mother navigate an unjust social service system. One of the most courageous and compassionate members of the struggle, he fought for community health and treated hundreds of Black people struggling with addiction. He organized against state repression, exposing COINTELPRO tactics against New Afrikans and other revolutionary forces. In 1986, he was captured and imprisoned as part of a violent crack down on the Black Liberation Movement. Spending **37 years** as a political prisoner, Dr. Shakur organized and provided political education and health care to his fellow prisoners all while continuing to be a target of political repression. While vigorous campaigning freed him in December of 2022, **Dr. Shakur spent just seven months free before his martyrdom.**



THE FREEDOM TUNNEL...

Mahmoud al-Ardah, Mohammed al-Ardah, Yousef Qadri, Ayham Kamamji, Munadil Nafa’at and Zakaria Zubeidi



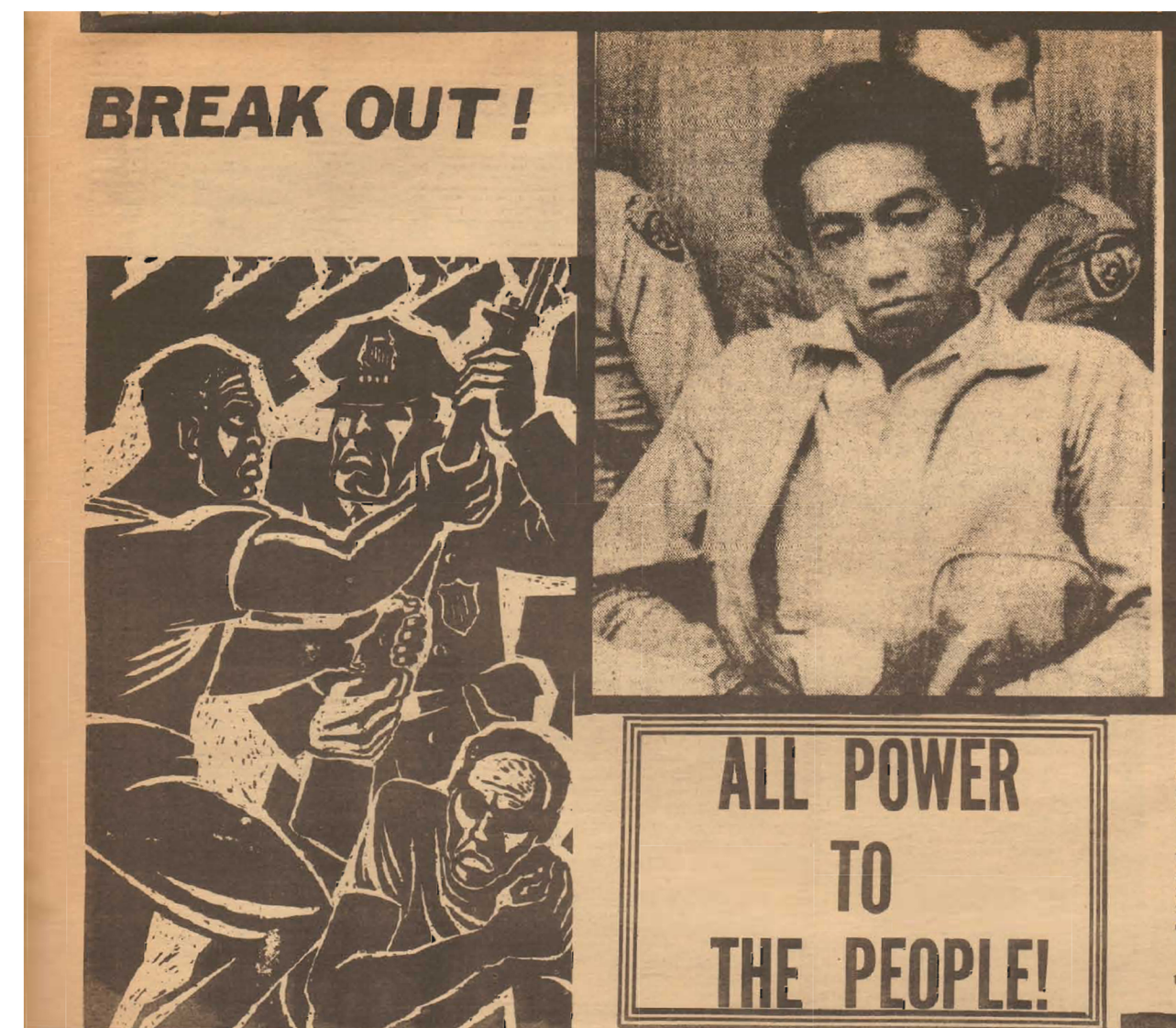
In September 2021, six Palestinian prisoners liberated themselves from the “high-security” Gilboa prison of the occupation, in what came to be known as the Freedom Tunnel Operation. Armed with a rusty spoon, these prisoners dug their way through the cracks, not only liberating themselves but exposing the fragility of a system based on genocide and occupation. Their escape proved that all the technology in the world cannot protect these systems against the human element of the drive for freedom.



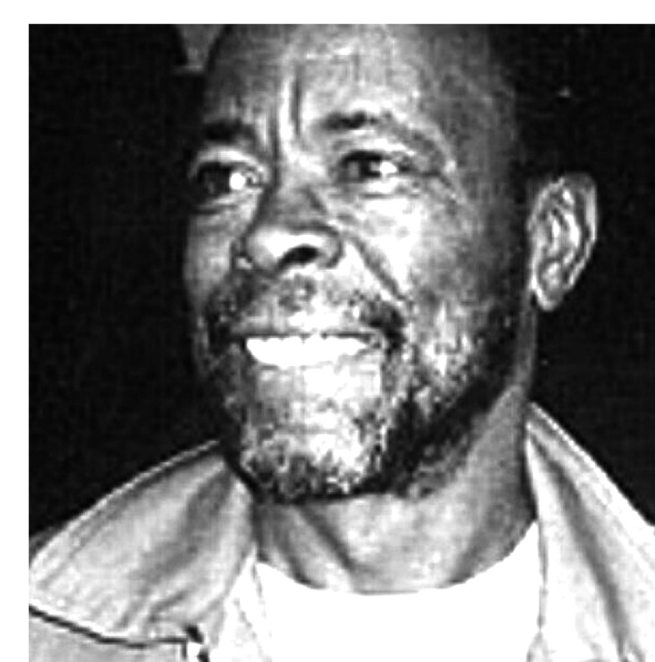
The freedom operation captured the imagination of Palestinians, Arabs and people around the world, in an era in which such actions had come to seem nearly impossible. Despite decades spent behind bars, the occupation was unable to break the will of the Palestinian prisoners or their leadership in resistance, and the six heroes of the Freedom Tunnel demonstrated this clearly to the world.

THE SOLEDAD BROTHERS

On August 7, 1970, 17-year-old Jonathan Jackson entered a courtroom in San Rafael, California, attempting to free political prisoners from the Marin County courthouse. He armed inmates and took hostages, including Judge Harold Haley. As Jackson and his group tried to escape, police opened fire on their van, killing Jackson, Haley, and two others. The action aimed to secure the release of the Soledad Brothers—three Black prisoners, including Jackson’s older brother George Jackson, who were accused of killing a prison guard. “You can take our pictures. We are the revolutionaries,” Jackson declared, asserting to the world that he was not a criminal, but a liberator. Among those involved in the takeover was Ruchell Cinqué Magee, the sole survivor, who was imprisoned for over 60 years. Politicized behind bars, he later took the name “Cinqué,” inspired by the leader of the 1839 Amistad rebellion. Despite becoming parole-eligible in 1981, he was repeatedly denied release until 2023, making him the longest-held political prisoner in the U.S. Magee died on October 17, 2023—just 81 days after his release.



Sundiata Acoli



Sundiata Acoli, a New Afrikan political prisoner of war, mathematician, and computer analyst, joined the Harlem Black Panther Party in 1968, organizing around schools, housing, jobs, child care, drugs, and police brutality.

“There is something about Sundiata that exudes calm. From every part of his being, you can sense the presence of revolutionary spirit and fervor. And his love for Black people is so intense that you can almost touch it and hold it in your hand.”

- Assata Shakur

“In 1979, fearing that I would be murdered in prison and knowing that I would never receive any justice, I was liberated from prison, aided by committed comrades who understood the depths of the injustices in my case and who were also extremely fearful for my life.” - Assata Shakur

Although the FBI never uncovered how they did it, Assata’s brave comrades successfully liberated her from captivity and secured her political asylum in Cuba. Humiliated, the state retaliated by targeting some of the most dedicated members of the liberation movement—notably the late Sekou Odinga, Marilyn Buck, and Mutulu Shakur. While Assata was liberated, her co-defendant and beloved comrade, Sundiata Acoli, remained in prison until his release in 2022.

