

Sisters in the Struggle

Written by Brother Salim Adofo ID2476
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SISTERS IN THE STRUGGLE - By Brother Salim Adofo

The month of March is set aside to recognize the contributions of women to the betterment of the world. As usual, the contributions of people of African heritage have been overlooked by the mainstream media of America. Therefore it is necessary to acknowledge some of the bold beautiful and courageous women of African descent that have struggled to make the world a better place.

Women of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense:

Sisters such as Erika Huggins, Afeni Shakur, Assata Shakur and Akua Njeri were all instrumental in helping to change and shape the Civil Rights, Black Power and Black Consciousness movements throughout the world. These sisters helped in organizing, facilitating and maintaining food and clothing drives for children. They helped to establish health clinics and liberation schools. What must be mentioned is that they also defended many brothers in the community against police brutality with their own lives. All of this was done with many of them only being 19 and 20 years old and still trying to take care of their own household.

Nancy Prosser - Sometimes referred to as "Nanny", she was the wife of Gabriel Prosser. Along with her husband and his 2 brothers they recruited and organized over 1,000 women and men to revolt against slavery. Armed with machetes, guns and other weapons their orders were to kill anyone white on their path to freedom.

Marian Wright Edelman - As a student at Spellman College she participated in "sit-ins" for which she became a political prisoner of war. Eventually she went on to attend Yale Law School and became the first woman of African heritage to pass the Mississippi bar. She worked for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and Education Fund from 1964 through 1968. She also counseled Martin Luther King during the planning of the Poor People's March. In 1992 she wrote the best selling book, *Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours*.

Henrietta Vinton Davis - According to Marcus Garvey she was the greatest woman of the Black Race. In 1878 she was the first African woman to work at the Office of Recorder Deeds in

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Washington D.C., as an assistant to Frederick Douglass. She joined the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1916 and served as its international organizer. She organized mass meetings at Carnegie Hall, Liberty Hall and Madison Square Garden. She became Secretary General of the UNIA in 1929 and also served as Director of the Black Star Line.

Mary Fair Burks - She is referred to as the "Mother" of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. She was head of the English Department of Alabama State University when she formed the Women's Political Council (WPC). In March of 1955 the WPC began to organize boycotts, after 15 year old Claudette Colvin was arrested for sitting in the white only section of the bus. This took place nine months before Rosa Parks did the same. Eventually, the Montgomery Improvement Association took over and continued the struggle.

The Single Black Mother - She is the one that may work 2 or 3 jobs at one time to support a family when the father is either in prison, without a job or has just simply walked out. She is the one that has sacrificed her dreams just so her children can have one. She is the one that has turned peanut butter & jelly and / or fried bologna sandwiches into gourmet meals when there wasn't any food around to eat at all. She is the sister that wears clothes from the Salvation Army so here children can have new school clothes. She is the women that is pregnant at age 17, abused, a high school drop out and still goes on to achieve her masters degree.

There are definitely many more sisters that have done many great acts, however neither time nor space will allow all of them to be recognized in this article. Therefore it is important that one set aside to time to study the contributions of not only African women, but women of other nationalities. As one of the internal aspects of Reparations, the manner in which African women are viewed by African people must be changed. The African woman is not a ho, chicken head or a female dog! She is a warrior, a survivor and the mother of civilization. She must be respected and protected as such. This can only take place if the contributions and worth of Black women are recognized. In the words of the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammed, "A nation can rise no higher than its woman."

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