

Queen Mother Moore: First Lady of African Reparations



Ever since 1950, I've been on the trail for reparations. They owe us more than they could ever pay. They stole our language, they stole our culture. They stole us from our mothers and fathers and took our names away from us. They worked us free of charge eighteen hours a day, seven days a week, under the lash, for centuries. We lost over 1000 million lives in the traffic of slavery.

---- Queen Mother Audley Moore (1898-1997), from *I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changes America* by Brian Lanker (New York, NY: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1999, p.107).

This special edition on reparations is dedicated to the life and times of "Queen Mother" Audley Moore (1898-1997): an advocate of reparations for people of African heritage, a founder of the Republic of New Africa (one of the first signers of the Republic of New Africa's Independence Charter, which called for the creation of five independently governed states in the U.S.), she was present when Nelson Mandela came to New York in the summer of 1990, she was one of only five invited female speakers to address the Million-Man March in October 1995, she was a supporter of Marcus Garvey, leader-life member of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, founder and president of the Universal Association of Ethiopian Women, one of the founders of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church of North and South America, founder of the Committee for Reparations for Descendants of U.S. Slaves, president-general of the World Federation of African People, the bishop of the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Judea, a founding member of the Commission to Eliminate Racism (Council of Churches of Greater New York), a founder of the African American Cultural Foundation, 1957 and 1959 U.N. petitioner arguing for self-determination, land and reparations wherein she asked for 200 billion dollars to monetarily compensate for 400 years of enslavement (compensations for African Americans who wish to return to Africa and those who wish to remain in America), in 1966 she was among parents and civil rights workers who staged a sit-in in the Board of Education's meeting hall in Brooklyn, where the protesters accused board members of neglecting the needs of schools in poor neighborhoods, in 1972 she was given the title of "Queen Mother" in Ghana in the tradition of the Ashanti (she was there to attend the funeral of former President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah), she campaigned for medical aid and funds for Ethiopia after the Italy attacked and invaded (she organized 500 nurses to sterilize sheets which were collected from laundries for bandages for the wounded Ethiopian soldiers), in 1930 she organized the first rent strike on Sugar Hill and restored tenants to their apartments after having been evicted, she supported the Mau Mau rebellion (1952-1960) in Kenya and took a delegation to the British Embassy to protest the ultimatum given to the Mau Mau to surrender or be annihilated, she organized a soup kitchen in Harlem for African students after learning two students had died from malnutrition after they received their Ph.D., she helped to organize Africa House in New York City with Mrs. Mattie Hunter for African students, she participated in the North American Regional Planning Conference (held at Kent State University in 1973) leading up to the Sixth Pan-African Congress which she attended in 1974 in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, at the request of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune she became a life member of the National Council of Negro Women, she was the founder and president of the Harriet Tubman Association, she helped to found the Eloise Moore College of African Studies, Vocational, and Industrial School in Parksville, New York in memory of her sister who had died in 1978, she was largely self-educated and thus inspired by the writings of Frederick Douglass and by Marcus Garvey's oratory, which she first heard in New Orleans, Louisiana (she was born in New Iberia, Louisiana, a town west of New Orleans), in 1989 she and more than 40 other prominent Black women were honored at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, in Washington, D.C. where "I Dream a World," an exhibition of photographs of them by Brian Lanker was displayed, and in 1994 she addressed a conference in Detroit, Michigan of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America.