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Argument in favor of making Rita Silk Nauni an official political prisoner of Freedom Now.

First, let me introduce myself as a member of the Westcoast Freedom Now body, the acting Women's Commission and a representative of the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War.

We have been told that Rita Silk Nauni may not be considered as an official political prisoner by Freedom Now. I am wondering if we are considering the significance of Rita Silk Nauni's actions. She shot and killed a police officer who was trying to take her son away from her. Considering that 1/4 of all Native American children are put up for adoption or placed in foster homes, these acts are institutionalized genocide of Native Americans carried out by the United States government. Destroying the family system of indigenous people has been a long time strategy to so call civilize and Anglocize the American Indian. Rita's act was not only a woman protecting her child, it was also an act to preserve her people. The stealing of Indian children by government authorities is an age old practice.

I have known about Rita Silk Nauni being a recognized political prisoner for about ten years now. She is considered a long standing political prisoner in the Native American community. She is in fact the only American Indian Woman that I know of who is recognized as a political prisoner. As a Puerto Rican woman and as an identified Tiana I feel very strongly that Rita be on the list of political prisoners of "Freedom Now". We, indigenous women who have been colonized are now forced into a patriarchal and now nuclear family system which is totally foreign to our people. To say that Rita's acts are not political is an insult to Native Americans and to colonized women. The Freedom Now Campaign must be free from internalized racism and internalized sexism..Perhaps those opposed to Rita's political act that it was not planned out in advanced under some recognized

## 2. Rita Silk Nauni

political group. Isn't this the same condescending attitude that we get when we are told that "our people" are not prisoners of war or political prisoners. Consider Rosa Parks who supposedly sparked off the Civil Rights Movement by refusing to sit on the back of the bus. Or even Lolita Lebron who I've heard many leftists say that her acts were merely "acts of desperation". I hope that we don't fall into the trap of saying that personal acts are not political acts. That only well planned acts done with the guidance of political organizations are the only legitimate political acts. Under the guise of being politically correct I detect the smell of misogyny and racism. I personally feel that it would be a slap in the face if Rita is not considered a political prisoner of Freedom Now. I for one feel a tremendous loss of my indigenous culture. Rita is a role model to all indigenous people fighting against the extermination of her people. And to all who fight against oppression.

In Struggle,

Sheila Medina

Women's Commission/Westcoast Freedom Now

Distributed for the National Coordinating Body of Freedom Now