

Join the Partisan Defense Committee Contingent

**There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!
For Class-Struggle
Defense to
Free Mumia Now!**



Jennifer Beach

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

The fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal has reached a crucial juncture. A former Black Panther Party spokesman and later MOVE supporter, Mumia has been on death row for over 24 years, falsely convicted of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. Mumia's innocence has been attested to by mountains of evidence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, killed Faulkner. Mumia is the victim of the forces of racist capitalist "law and order" who have framed him up for a crime he did not commit, who see in him a voice of defiant opposition to the oppression of black people that is a cornerstone of American capitalism. Their determination to carry out his execution is a warning to all who challenge cop repression, to workers who stand up for their rights on picket lines, to those who protest U.S. imperialist depredations in Iraq and elsewhere around the world.

Mumia's case lays bare the workings of the capitalist state. His frame-up conviction was not the act of one "rogue" cop or prosecutor or judge, but that of an entire system that cannot be reformed. With the execution in December 2005 of Stanley Tookie Williams, over substantial popular opposition, the ruling class sent a signal that they are deadly serious that Mumia will soon be another victim of the barbaric death penalty. There should be no doubt: the racist capitalist rulers are determined to see Mumia dead. *The multiracial working class has every interest in fighting against that outcome and must be mobilized independently of the very forces of the capitalist state that framed up this innocent man! Free Mumia—he should not spend another moment in prison hell!*

The Partisan Defense Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization whose purpose is

Rally!

**Friday, September 15, 4-6:30 p.m.
Alameda County Courthouse
12th & Fallon, south side, Oakland**

*Rally initiated by the
Labor Action Committee To Free Mumia Abu-Jamal under the slogans:*

- **Mumia Abu-Jamal Is Innocent!**
- **For Labor Action To Free Mumia!**
- **End the Racist Death Penalty!**

in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League. We call on all those committed to the fight to free Mumia to join our contingent under the slogans: “There is no justice in the capitalist courts! For class-struggle defense to free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!” at the September 15 Oakland rally initiated by the Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal (LAC). The PDC has endorsed this rally based on the slogans put forward by the LAC, for which we have historically struggled —“Mumia Abu-Jamal Is Innocent! For Labor Action to Free Mumia! End the Racist Death Penalty!” We were given a written commitment by the LAC that the rally will be organized as a genuine united-front action. That entails both unity in action in the fight for Mumia’s freedom and “freedom of criticism”—the sharp and clear contention of the different political programs and strategies advanced by the participating organizations.

The PDC and Spartacist League took up Mumia’s case in 1987. We have fought for class-struggle defense to free Mumia—based on the social power of the working class and the understanding that the capitalist state serves the interests of the racist ruling class—and for the abolition of the racist death penalty. We have advocated pursuing all possible legal proceedings in the case, while placing no faith whatsoever in the justice of the courts. Rather, we place our confidence in the power of the masses, particularly the organized workers movement, which is the only pressure that can force the courts to respond.

This strategy was and is counterposed to those who have centered their protest actions around the call for a “new trial” for Mumia. That call represents a program of reliance on the racist capitalist courts that at every level have declared that Mumia has no rights they are bound to respect. The call for a new trial is an appeal to mainstream bourgeois liberals who see Mumia’s case as an isolated “miscarriage of justice.” Such an approach demobilized and demoralized the millions who earlier rallied to Mumia’s defense.

Indeed, the LAC itself was launched in January 1999 in explicit “solidarity with the Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal,” which was initiated by Socialist Action (SA). Along with the Workers World Party (WWP), SA was among the most persistent and prominent proponents of the call for a “new trial.” The LAC issued an international appeal to build rallies on 24 April 1999 around two central demands: “Stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal” and “A new and fair trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal.” The LAC sought to provide a “labor” face to the political program of seeking “justice” from the capitalist class enemy. Among the signatories to the appeal was Jack Heyman, an LAC supporter and at the time an Executive Board member of International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10. Heyman was a central initiator of the ILWU port shutdown on the West Coast in solidarity with Mumia that took place in conjunction with the April 24 protests. The port shutdown was a powerful example of the kind of social power that must be mobilized in a class-struggle fight to free Mumia. But Heyman himself undermined this action by tying it to appeals for a “new trial.” A central speaker at the 24 April 1999 rally, he uttered not a word against either the “new trial” demand or the “Democratic” Party of American imperialism.

A year later, an LAC-organized “Labor Conference for Mumia” held on 12 May 2000 passed a motion appealing to none other than Clinton’s Justice Department to “launch an official investigation into Mumia’s case.” At the same conference, one of the LAC’s own supporters, Bob Mandel, put forward a

motion condemning the appointment of Ed Rendell, Philadelphia district attorney at the time of Mumia’s 1982 trial, as chairman of the Democratic National Committee. The motion also called for Democratic Party delegates from the unions to raise motions demanding a “new trial for Mumia.” This groveling appeal to the Democratic Party, the other capitalist party of war and racism, to be a vehicle for mobilizing workers could not be a clearer example of the irreconcilable gulf between the strategy of mobilizing the independent power of the working class and that of reliance on the agencies of the class enemy.

That there is more than a little political hustle and fraud involved in the LAC is given added dimension by the fact that one of the groups behind it is the dubious “Bolshevik Tendency” (BT). The BT published *not one* article in its press in defense of Mumia until after the massive worldwide protests in 1995 that stayed the executioner’s hand. The BT, however, did make a press splash at the height of these protests—in the pages of the *Wall Street Journal*. In a 16 June 1995 article, this mouthpiece for U.S. finance capital retailed the BT’s slanders of the Spartacist League as a deranged “cult” in order to smear the PDC’s efforts on behalf of Mumia, including our work to make his case a cause of the international workers movement. The intent of the *Wall Street Journal* in smearing Mumia’s supporters was transparent enough. How and why the minuscule BT was so readily wielded as a tool for the *WSJ* is not.

We do know that a defining feature of the BT since its inception in the 1980s, when it was formed by embittered ex-members of the Spartacist League, has been its sneering contempt for the fight for black liberation. When the SL and PDC mobilized mass labor/black protests to stop fascist terror, the BT denounced this as a retreat from the “working class” in favor of the “ghetto unemployed.” The BT’s response to the government’s racist massacre of the Philadelphia MOVE commune on 13 May 1985—in which eleven men, women and children were killed and an entire black neighborhood burned to the ground—simply went outside the bounds of proletarian morality. While much of the reformist left cringed from the elementary duty to defend MOVE, we sought to sear this atrocity into the memory of the working class and to that end held a rally in solidarity with the MOVE victims. At the time, the BT did not protest the bombing of the MOVE commune but did sneer at our solidarity with MOVE. It is notable that, even today, the LAC materials building for the September 15 rally disappear the fact that Mumia is a MOVE supporter.

The PDC seeks to revive the worldwide movement for Mumia’s freedom, to appeal to the millions who were demobilized by the fraudulent political program and strategy advanced by a host of liberals and reformist organizations—WWP, SA, the International Socialist Organization, the Revolutionary Communist Party and the LAC. The fact that these millions have not been mobilized in class-struggle action to free Mumia is centrally the responsibility of the pro-capitalist union misleaders, aided and abetted by their fake-left tails. What is required is an uncompromising political struggle to unchain labor’s power in the fight to free Mumia. This struggle is integrally linked to the fight to forge a Leninist vanguard party to lead the working class in socialist revolution. Such a party must act as the champion of all the exploited and oppressed, recognizing that the fight for black liberation is key to the struggle for workers revolution. Free Mumia now!

—Partisan Defense Committee
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