

# Eddie & Mumia

The April Protests for Marshall "Eddie" Conway and Mumia Abu-Jamal

**O**n October 11, 1997, a small but committed group of activists and concerned citizens gathered at Morgan State University for the Political Prisoners' Conference, a day of discussion and education about the situation faced by those in this country who we call Political Prisoners. These are individuals who are essentially entombed on trumped-up capital

charges in correctional institutions across the United States because of their political beliefs. In

order to effectively convince the masses of the people of the legality and righteousness of their continued imprisonment, these

individuals were sought and captured by State, local and federal police, often through illegal and brutal means, and

tried and convicted in the U.S. courts, usually in proceedings presided over by hostile judges and decided by juries who

were easily convinced of the defendant's guilt through the use of propaganda and veiled prosecutorial misconduct.

Prominent Political Prisoners who were captured, tried and imprisoned in this manner include

**Leonard Peltier, Mutulu Shakur, Sundiata Acoli**, a whole host of **Puerto Rican** Political Prisoners, and the **MOVE Nine** in Philadelphia. This issue

focuses on efforts to secure the exoneration and release of two of the most prominent Political Prisoners, Maryland's Veteran Black Panther **Marshall "Eddie" Conway**, approaching 29 years in prison as of April 1999 (see **KUUMBAReport #6**), and award-winning journalist **Mumia Abu-Jamal**, currently on death row in Pennsylvania (see **KUUMBAReport #5**).

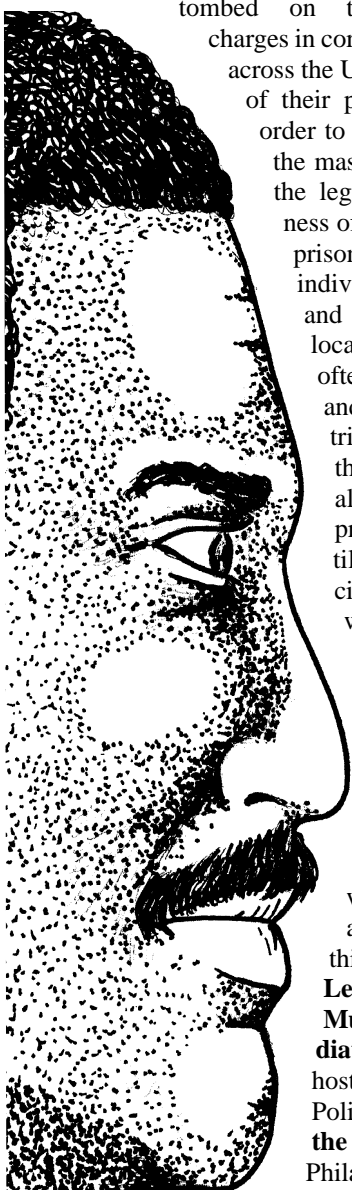
March 27, 1998 represented a benchmark of sorts in the Political Prisoners' struggle. **Jericho 98** brought thousands of activists

to Washington, D.C. to protest this country's treatment of its Political Prisoners. Though President Bill Clinton was conveniently in Afrika at the time, the march helped to galvanize a number of Political Prisoners' support committees across the country.

This struggle took on a local character in April of 1999 with the announcement of two events: the **April 3<sup>rd</sup> Rally and March in Baltimore** in support of Marshall "Eddie" Conway, and the **Millions for Mumia March on April 24<sup>th</sup> in Philadelphia**.

## MARSHALL "EDDIE" CONWAY: RECENT NEWS

The current state of Eddie's case is essentially the same as it has been for the last year or two. Convicted in 1970 (in the absence of physical evidence) of the murder of a Baltimore City police officer, he is currently eligi-



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ble for parole but his petition has been denied due to an Executive Order from **Governor Parris Glendening** forbidding parole for inmates serving life sentences, or "lifers". This was brought about by a 1993 case in which a paroled lifer committed a murder after being released from prison. As a result, the Governor held his "life means life" press conference outside the Maryland House of Correction in Jessup, Maryland, effectively ending all petitions for parole from lifers from that moment on.

In the meantime, Eddie has been a model prisoner, his record infraction-free for at least twenty years. He has earned several college degrees and established literacy and computer literacy programs for inmates. Perhaps the only logical reason for his continued presence behind prison walls is the fact that he has singlehandedly done more for many of the inmates at the House of Correction than the official "rehabilitation" programs could have hoped to accomplish.

His lawyers have filed federal habeas corpus briefs to the federal courts, essentially pointing out that, without physical evidence to link him to the crime and only the use of a peculiar "stacked-deck" procedure (A police officer looked at two stacks of photographs with pictures of Eddie in both stacks to elicit a positive identification) and the testimony of a "jailhouse informer" who claims Eddie confessed to the murder of a Baltimore City police officer in 1969 to connect him to the crime, the state had failed to prove Eddie's guilt. For his part, Eddie has proclaimed his innocence from the start and insists upon proving his innocence to the world.

As a continuing testimony to his positive and righteous actions while "on the inside", the State of Maryland Division of Correction has recently been rocked by scandal--news of drug and sex rings operating in the House of Correction and other Jessup-area prisons has resulted in the firing of a number of low- and high-level officials at the prison as well as the transfer of a number of inmates. As of this writing, none of this scandal has even touched Eddie, with prison officials apparently either unwilling or unable to even *attempt* to connect him to the events that transpired.

In the meantime, two meetings have been held, both in January 1999, between advocates for Eddie and the State leadership. One meeting was held between **Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy-Townsend**, **Bro. Yaqub McAteer** of the NAACP's Prisoner Support Committee, and **Mr. G. I. Johnson**, president of the local NAACP branch. The other meeting was held between Governor Glendening, Lt. Governor **Kathleen Kennedy-Townsend** and **State**

**Senator Clarence Mitchell IV**. Between these meetings, among other topics discussed, the NAACP's request for a pardon for Eddie was presented.

Since that time, a letter-writing campaign had been organized to put more pressure on the Governor and Lieutenant Governor to act on Eddie's behalf. As of April 1999, the **NAACP Prisoner's Support Committee** met on the second Monday of each month.

## PROTESTS FOR EDDIE CONTINUE

### The June 8, 1996 Rally

The Marshall E. Conway and Friends of Marshall E. Conway Support Committees assembled at City Hall on June 8, 1996 to protest of Eddie's then-26 years of unjust incarceration and Governor Glendening's position against releasing prisoners with paroleable life sentences. The marchers followed a parade route which included passing the Post Office where Eddie was employed at the time of his arrest.

Upon arrival at the Post Office, the children in the march carried out a twenty penny postcard protest whereby they purchased postcards with pennies to be later addressed to the Governor expressing their support for Eddie and their disagreement with the Governor's position regarding lifers. This protest slowed down the post office for about one hour (until they were told by police to leave).

Back at City Hall, several speakers and performers addressed the crowd. **Bro. Jasaga** (veteran Black Panther of the DC chapter): "It's aggravating to know that the organization that Eddie was organizing has gotten so much revisionist history said about it and there are very few Panthers around now to tell their story.

... Eddie Conway also is one of those people who has always had a raised consciousness about people and he's always known that there is virtue in serving people. Its not something he had to be prodded into doing. He's done this from the time he was a very, very young man. I measure this whole situation by what we have lost by having someone like Eddie Conway behind bars. Here's a great role model for people in the community. Here's a person who knows, understands, and strives to continue to learn how to make cooperative economics work--how to get people to understand the need to express yourself in a world that is hell-bent on killing you even before you get a chance to do so. He understands these things. The children growing up in certain communities all around this country, and especially here in Baltimore, need him. We need him. We need him here."

**Brother Dhoruba bin Wahad** (veteran leader of the New York chapter): "One of the things

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**OUR PURPOSE** is to educate the public and share ideas about community news, events, health and history. **OUR VISION** is an educated, organized and mobilized populace committed to the principles of **Ma'at** (truth, justice, righteousness, harmony, reciprocity, balance, compassion, order and propriety) and the preservation of Afrikan, Indigenous and other world cultures promoting peace, unity, respect, and true freedom.

people must understand about the issue of political repression in the United States is that the United States has internationalized its municipal police policies. The police agencies in other nations in Europe and around the world are increasingly dancing to the tune of U.S. municipal policies when it comes to issues on drugs, political repression, and so-called anti-terrorism. So people need to be very much concerned with how political repression manifests itself in so-called American democracy. This is the reason why it's very important that people contact web sites such as this that deal with issues like political repression and political prisoners in the United States."

**Baba Charlie Dugger**, well known community activist: "You see, these political prisoners' threat has been that they are conscientious. It hasn't been because they've done anything bad. And for speaking up against that which is bad, they've become a problem. But we have to say that there are too many problems in our community among our people and we need their solutions. We need their solutions."

**Veteran Baltimore Panther Dessalines Kambon (Warren Nelson)**: "Eddie Conway has been locked up for 26 years for a crime he was never *legally* convicted of. He went through a bogus trial. And this was during a very strong climate when Black people were up in arms and were struggling. Eddie was a leader of the Black Panther Party at that time. Eddie exposed agents of the Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) during the early seventies and they made sure that he would not be able to continue to do that. They set him up. They charged him with killing a police officer and the attempted killing of another. The man has been locked up for 26 [now 29--Ed.] years. He's got an exemplary record since he's been locked up and Parris Glendening doesn't want to sign the parole papers even though the parole commission has recommended him for parole. ... There are people who are afraid to come out and support Eddie Conway and other political prisoners for the simple reason that they are afraid of the police. But the governor knows about Eddie Conway's issue and we're going to make him more aware. We're going to make Kurt Schmoke [mayor of Baltimore] more aware of it. We're going to keep struggling to get Eddie Conway out."

**Nana Njinga Conway** (wife of Marshall "Eddie" Conway) closed the program with a very strong message to the governor: "Governor Parris Glendening is in office largely due to the Black vote. During his [first] campaign, the governor promised that he would look at the disparity in sentencing for all Blacks in the state of Maryland. ... Blacks are more prone to be sentenced for longer periods of time and put on death row in the state of Maryland and around this country because of the conditions of racism that have been allowed to permeate this country for some time. ... We need to make it clear to Glendening that we intend for him to keep his campaign pledge to us by looking into the disparity in sentencing and not taking our vote for granted. We will hold him accountable, as we are supposed to hold all of our officials that we put in office accountable when they take our vote. ...

"Eddie has ... done more time than any other person has done in this state for this type of crime. He's one of the longest held Political Prisoners in the United States and we need for the madness to end. He has met the criteria that was placed upon him by a judge *and* by the criminal justice system. Now that he's done that, the promise of being able to be reinstated into the community has been taken from him because Glendening wants to use him as a political football. We will not have that! We will not

tolerate that!

"Eddie was in this community over 26 years ago working on the freedom and liberation of all Afrikan people, and all people in general, who are under oppression. Eddie came to see about us and now we've got to go see about Eddie. We must demand his freedom!"

### THE APRIL 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1999 RALLY IN BALTIMORE FOR EDDIE

Pennsylvania Avenue and Lafayette Street was the site for a Rally and March for Eddie and Mumia Abu-Jamal on Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 12:00 noon. The event was originally proposed by Unity for Action and its President, local activist **Bro. Bill Goodin**, who served as moderator of the event. The themes of the Rally and March were (1) *Free Eddie Conway, Mumia and all Political Prisoners*; (2) *Jobs for Youth, Not Jails*; and (3) *Stop Police Killings and Abuse*.

Held in commemoration of the April 4, 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Rally and March was co-sponsored by *Unity for Action*, *Concerned Citizens for Police Accountability and Review*, the *All Peoples Congress*, the *Marshall E. Conway Support Committee*, the *Organization of All-Afrikan Unity*, the *Baltimore Emergency Response Network*, the *Friends of Marshall Eddie Conway*, the *National Peoples Democratic Uhuru Movement*, the *Baltimore Local Organizing Committee of the Million Man March*, and a number of individual activists and concerned citizens.

The march began at the intersection of Pennsylvania and Lafayette Avenues, then continued up Pennsylvania Avenue before moving eastward toward Druid Hill Avenue. From there the marchers, who drew the attention of local police as well as the general public, continued down Druid Hill Avenue to the Union Baptist Church at Dolphin Street for an indoor rally.

Among those who spoke were **Walter Black** of the All Peoples Congress, who told the gathered crowd about Political Prisoner Leonard Peltier; **Eric Easton**, who represented Unity for Action in support of Eddie and Mumia Abu-Jamal; local community activist **Charlie Dugger**; prisoners' rights activist **Beverly Nur** of WEAA-FM; **Andre Powell** of the Workers World Party; **Dr. Kwame SabakhuRa** of the Organization of All-Afrikan Unity (OAAU); **Sister Nzinga** of WEAA-FM; **Bro. Nnamdi Lumumba** of the International Peoples Democratic Uhuru Movement (InPDUM); **Jeff Bigelow** of AFSCME Local 1072; **Yacub H. McAteer** of the NAACP Prisoners Support Committee; **Eartha Harris** of the Baltimore Local Organizing Committee, Million Man March; **Sister Maggie**, community activist; **Hakim Muhammad** of Umoja Nyumba Shule and OAAU; **Sister Nditu** of NPDUM; **Sister Ameerjill Whitlock**, who gave details of the upcoming Student Walkout at Morgan State University scheduled for 12 noon on April 23<sup>rd</sup> in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal; **Edythe ("Mama E.J.") Jones**, Eddie's attorney at that time; and **Njinga Conway**, Eddie's wife. **Pam Africa** was not able to attend due to a commitment in Washington, DC, but she sent her greetings on behalf of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal and MOVE.

Each of the speakers gave eloquent testimony to the injustice that is Eddie's continuing imprisonment. The degree to which the struggle of political prisoners, the struggle of Afrikan people against oppression, and the struggle of all oppressed

people are "one fight" was also stressed. The assembled spectators, who filled the basement hall of the church, were all urged to either join an organization "or start one." They were likewise implored to carry the spirit evident that afternoon to the next steps--organizing letter-writing campaigns for Eddie and galvanizing support for the April 24<sup>th</sup> *Millions for Mumia March* in Philadelphia (See below).

The sponsoring organizations also thanked Rev. Dobson for making the Union Baptist Church available for this event.

### IN HIS OWN WORDS

Eddie has rarely been afforded the opportunity to speak out from behind prison walls. Unlike Philadelphia death row Political Prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal (See below), Eddie has not had access to a large, committed organization such as MOVE or the Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Since he

is not threatened with execution, the effort to exonerate him and win his freedom, or at least a new trial, has not been as widespread or as desperate as that in support of Mumia. As a result, there are no videotapes about his case available for public view. There are no regular reports on his case on such important alternative radio shows as Pacifica Radio's *Democracy Now*. Foreign dignitaries are not regularly passing resolutions to pressure the United States Government to spare his life. And his web site is not nearly as extensive, nor does it give us the opportunity to read his commentaries on a regular basis (By contrast, Mumia's web site features his commentaries regularly, as well as Prison Radio, [www.prisonradio.org](http://www.prisonradio.org)). However, several of his commentaries have been made available by a number of web sites supporting Political Prisoners, and we reprint one of them below to allow the reader to hear some of Eddie's views, stated in his own words.

### *Thoughts From Within: Commentary by Marshall "Eddie" Conway*

*Marshall "Eddie" Conway has been a political prisoner for 28 years, unjustly convicted of a crime he didn't commit. A former member of the Black Panther Party, Brother Eddie continues to be an outspoken activist and leader.*

## The Need For A Class Action Suit: A Call for Unitary Action

The opening sentence of Ward Churchill's book *Cages of Steel* states, "The government of the United States maintains that there are no political prisoners incarcerated in the country's penal facilities." Well, who are we? Where are we? There is little doubt in over one hundred minds that we are political prisoners and prisoners of war here in America's concentration camps. Perhaps, it is time for us to challenge the false claims of the US government in the federal courts.

This is a call to all political prisoners and prisoners of war to join together and work on a single project. The time and conditions seem to be right for a collective legal action -- a class action suit on behalf of all political prisoners and prisoners of war against the United States government. Such an action would bring our plight into national focus.

There are many local, regional and national campaigns being organized to free prisoners across America. Some of these campaigns are organized in support of political prisoners, others in support of prisoners of war, while still others are organized in support of fighting clear cut abuses and injustices. All of these campaigns have supporters. Over the years many of these supporters have loosely networked with each other. Together they can form the base to develop a National Support Network for coordinated protest activities. Activities designed to raise the level of consciousness among the general population about political prisoners and prisoners of war.

A class action suit by political prisoners and prisoners of war is an ideal tool to

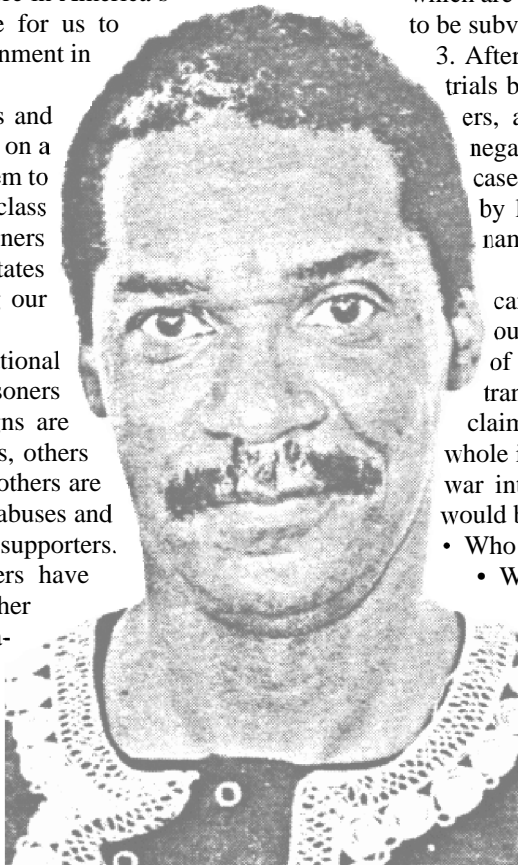
organize national awareness of our plight. We have a number of common issues that we can raise in our defense:

1. We are all imprisoned because we were involved in working to end oppression in our communities.
2. We all belong to or are connected with political organizations which are or had been targeted by the US government to be subverted or destroyed.
3. After our imprisonment, we did not receive fair trials because of the government's use of informers, agents, misinformation or the creation of negative climates towards us. In all of our cases there is still information being withheld by local, state, and federal agencies in the name of security.

Through the use of a class action suit, we can show the relationship of all these issues to our status as political prisoners and prisoners of war. The records exist (our files and trial transcripts collectively) and will support our claim. Also, such a legal action would force the whole issue of political prisoners and prisoners of war into the public arena for debate. Questions would be asked such as:

- Who are political prisoners?
- Who are prisoners of war?
- What are the reasons for their existence?
- What led them to the struggle?
- What is and has been the relationship of the government to the struggle of poor and oppressed people over the last 30 years?

Most political activists are aware of the Church Committee findings in 1976. We understand from real life experiences





that the United States government used many illegal and extra-legal local and national secret units to undermine, disrupt, and destroy opposition organizations. However, the general public is not aware of the level or degree of official government involvement in the training, directing and funding of secret units and operations which illegally spied on, harassed and imprisoned activists and community members. The public is not aware that these units and operations used agents provocateurs and other criminal elements to mislead, misdirect and imprison or destroy political activists over the last thirty years.

There is a new and growing interest in the Black/New Afrikan Liberation and the New Left Movements of the 60's and 70's by today's youth. A class action suit will give us the opportunity to educate the masses about these governmental abuses. Now is the time to raise the collective consciousness about political prisoners and prisoners of war.

I worked on the 1977 campaign for UN recognition of political prisoners here in the United States. We will have to continue

working towards building international support and recognition. I know that we can work together to make a successful national campaign for our recognition. We will have to set aside political debates among ourselves so that we will be able to collectively and effectively reach our goal. We will need to open communication between the various campaigns across the nation. We need to convene a small group of representatives from as many campaigns as are willing to come together to discuss this idea of filing a class action suit--in a collective manner. We will need to pool our resources together and seek to gather new ones in the legal arena.

Yours in Truth and Justice,

**Marshall "Eddie" Conway**

To respond to Eddie's messages, write:

**Marshall E. Conway #116469,**

**P.O. Box 534,**

**Jessup, MD 20794.**

## THE CONTINUING STRUGGLE OF MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

**W**ith the October 29, 1998 Pennsylvania State Supreme Court rejection of Mumia Abu-Jamal's appeal, the fight to save him from the death penalty has reached a critical stage. Mumia has been on Pennsylvania's death row since 1982, having been convicted and sentenced to death for the December 8, 1980 slaying of Philadelphia police officer **Daniel Faulkner**.

The **Fraternal Order of Police**, the **Philadelphia Police Department** and **Maureen Faulkner**, widow of the slain officer, have increased their pressure to defeat the campaign to save Mumia's life by resorting to the use of the major media to convince the public of Mumia's guilt. A full-page advertisement in *The New York Times* painted a picture of a cold-blooded cop-killer who exploited his chance to exercise his hatred of the police. A feature on ABC's "20/20" television "newsmagazine" featured Sam Donaldson explaining his staff's "four-month investigation" which led them to believe that Mumia's supporters were a group of uninformed, misled zealots who were being duped by the **International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (ICFFMAJ)** as well as by **MOVE**, the fiercely back-to-nature Afrikan-centered organization which Mumia has defended so heroically from the mid-seventies until now. A January 28<sup>th</sup> concert at the Meadowlands in northern New Jersey to raise funds for Mumia's legal defense and inform the public about the case, featuring **Rage Against The Machine** and other rock and hip-hop groups, was condemned by police organizations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York, who refused to provide security for the event and urged any police responding to emergencies at the concert to observe the traffic light laws and not hurry to render assistance.

All of this venom directed at Mumia and his supporters evidently seeks to avoid the main point the defense committees are trying to make: The evidence suggests that Mumia Abu-Jamal **did not receive a fair trial**. Check out the following:

**(1) Physical evidence has been challenged:** the caliber of the bullet taken from Faulkner's head was at first reported to be

different from the caliber of Mumia's gun, Mumia's gun was not tested for recent use according to Mumia's attorney Leonard Weinglass, and Mumia's hands were never tested for residue that would have indicated that he had even fired a gun, according to Weinglass.

**(2) Mumia himself was shot:** the downward trajectory of the bullet (reportedly entering his chest and exiting his lower back) was inconsistent with one police explanation of the bullet wound (Faulkner, mortally wounded, shot Mumia while crumpling to the ground).

**(3) The prosecution produced four witnesses who testified that Mumia was the shooter:** one has since recanted her testimony, saying that she was threatened and intimidated by police (She was subsequently arrested), while another had recently been convicted of throwing a Molotov cocktail onto a school playground for pay--during recess.

**(4) The prosecution claims that Mumia "confessed":** in the report filed immediately after the incident, a security guard who accompanied Mumia to the hospital and stayed with him throughout his admission reported that "the Negro male made no statements." Two months later, two other police officers suddenly came forward, at the same time, to claim that they heard Mumia exclaim, while being rushed into intensive care, "I shot the ----, and I hope the ---- dies." They could not adequately explain, even during the 20/20 feature, why they did not present this testimony sooner. Meanwhile, the other security guard who had filed the written report was sent "on vacation" at the time his testimony was to be heard in court on Mumia's behalf.

**(5) The police paint Mumia as a "cop killer":** in reality he is a journalist, president of the Philadelphia chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists at the time of the incident, and a staunch supporter of MOVE during the years of abuse they suffered at the hands of the Philadelphia Police Department.

**(6) The police claim he was duly tried, convicted and sentenced:** Mumia's public defender was so incompetent, according to witnesses, that he has since been disbarred; the judge (**Albert**



*Sabo*), known as “a hanging judge in a hanging town (Philadelphia) of a hanging state” due to his record of death penalty verdicts, overruled almost every defense motion while allowing every prosecutorial motion; the prosecutor argued that Mumia’s onetime membership in the Black Panther Party was evidence of his predisposition to kill and thus he should be executed.

(7) *The arguments against Mumia’s effort to have his case reviewed lack any semblance of a “search for the truth”*: his supporters are labeled as “friends of cop killers” and the arguments against a new trial are that he was convicted and thus should be punished, discounting the many inconsistencies in the evidence, ignoring the indications of prosecutorial and judicial misconduct, disregarding the history of police persecution of the Panthers, MOVE and activists of almost every description, and turning a blind eye to the history of wrongful convictions (Geronimo jiJaga, released in 1997 after 27 years of imprisonment for a murder which *the FBI had proof he did not commit*) and overturned death penalty verdicts (a recent reunion of over 70 exonerated death row defendants in Chicago would have had more attendees had not one of the defendants been executed beforehand, and a recent case in which a Northwestern University law class found evidence exonerating a developmentally-disabled man of murder was brought to light days before the defendant was to be executed).

### THE MEDIA vs. MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

As stated above, the Fraternal Order of Police and officer Faulkner’s widow have been very aggressive with their campaign to hasten Mumia’s execution. A full-page advertisement ran in The New York Times last year which defended the FOP’s commitment to see this “cop killer” executed. Maureen Faulkner’s claim of a smiling Mumia practically leering at her as the prosecutor was showing her husband’s bloody uniform during the original trial was refuted as untrue by Mumia’s lawyer at the time, *Leonard Weinglass*, due to the fact that, according to court records, Mumia had been taken from the courtroom when he insisted on defending himself in the case.

The most recent and, perhaps most damaging, piece of media manipulation occurred earlier this year when ABC’s *20/20* program featured an “investigative article” by correspondent *Sam Donaldson* about the case. Among the irregularities evident in the piece were:

(1) The portrayal, from the beginning, of Maureen Faulkner as a lone crusader for justice for her husband. Nowhere in the entire feature is the role of the FOP mentioned, despite their influence over the Philadelphia Police Department, the Pennsylvania court system, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and a number of state and local politicians.

(2) The presentation of the evidence, in which the bullet, which is now considered to have been the same caliber as Mumia’s licensed weapon, is still not conclusively linked to Mumia since no mention is made of a test of Mumia’s hands for residue from the use of a gun.

(3) The attempt to impugn the testimony of *Veronica Jones*, who recanted earlier testimony that she had seen Mumia shoot Faulkner. Donaldson is shown where she was at the time of the incident and is asked, “How could she see what happened from two blocks away to be able to come forward (in Mumia’s defense) with this new testimony?” Indeed, how could she have seen the

incident well enough from two blocks away to have identified Mumia as the shooter in the first place??

(4) The interview with Leonard Weinglass. The actual interview was apparently over an hour long, but was cut and edited in such a way as to make “this very competent lawyer (who has never lost a capital case) appear inept,” according to a letter to Donaldson from broadcast journalist *Kiilu Nyasha* of San Francisco.

(5) Nowhere in the article was the conduct of Judge Albert Sabo discussed, nor were the FOP connections of several other major players in the original case and subsequent appeals.

(6) *Mama Pam Africa* of MOVE was shown making a reference to the fact that Jesus Christ was a “revolutionary” who was executed by the state, footage which no doubt created the notion in the mind of the average viewer that she equates Mumia with Jesus. While the similarities in their cases are obvious (both were activists for the powerless and the despised; both were sentenced to death for their beliefs), this footage, in the absence of any further explanation, no doubt gave her the image, to some, of a blasphemer.

(7) Two White actors, *Mike Farrell* and *Edward Asner*, both strong supporters of Mumia’s quest for a new trial, were questioned during the piece and made to appear like a pair of “duped White liberals” whose real reason for involvement is their opposition to the death penalty and not any belief in Mumia’s innocence.

The *20/20* article did have one positive effect, however: it made clear the lengths to which Mumia’s enemies will go to see him dead, and it galvanized Mumia’s supporters to carry on the fight for a new trial with greater vigor.

### IN HIS OWN WORDS

From his place on death row, Mumia has continued to give us all his perspective on the repression of the (police) state. We offer below some of his recent commentaries, courtesy of [Mumia@aol.com](mailto:Mumia@aol.com):

*Mumia’s Statement About the Supreme Court’s Rejection of His Appeal, Nov. 7, 1998:*

“Once again, Pennsylvania’s highest court has shown us the best justice that FOP money can buy. Ignoring right reason, their own precedent, and fundamental justice, they have returned to the stranglehold of death. In their echoes of the tortured logic of Judge Albert Sabo, they have reflected a striking fidelity to the DA’s office. If it is fair to have a tribunal who are in part admittedly paid by the FOP—and at least one justice who can double as DA one day and a judge the next in the same case—then fairness is just as empty a word as ‘justice.’ To paraphrase Judge Sabo, it is ‘just an emotional feeling.’

“In recent months the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has upheld death sentences in cases where an impartial reading of transcripts or pleadings would make an honest affirmation all but impossible. They have ignored all evidence of innocence, overlooked clear instances of jury taint, and cast a dead eye on defense attorneys’ ineffectiveness. What they have done in my case is par for the course. This is a political decision, paid for by the FOP on the eve of the election. It is a Mischief Night gift from a court that has a talent for the macabre.

“I am sorry that this court did not rule on the right side of history. But I am not surprised. Every time our nation has come to a fork in the road with regard to race, it has chosen to take the

path of compromise and betrayal. On October 29th, 1998, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court committed a collective crime: it damned due process, strangled the fair trial, and raped justice.

"Even after this legal legerdemain [sleight of hand] I remain

innocent. A court cannot make an innocent man guilty. Any ruling founded on injustice is not justice. The righteous fight for life, liberty, and for justice can only continue."

# SELECTIVE OUTRAGE

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*"Black people have begged, prayed, petitioned and demonstrated, among other things, to get the racist power structure of America to right the wrongs which have been historically perpetrated against Black people. All of these efforts have been answered by more repression, deceit, and hypocrisy.... City Hall turns a deaf ear to the pleas of Black people for relief from this increasing terror."*

--Dr. Huey P. Newton, Ph. D., Minister of Defense, Black Panther Party, *To Die for the People* (1973)

The much-ballyhooed recent concert held in the Meadowlands, New Jersey has become the food for many a newspaper or radio station, hungry for the stuff of spectacle. The musicians were assaulted by a litany of complaints, and were vilified by police and their political agents, on the basis that for such musicians to dare speak out in the interest of fairness and justice for a man encaged on Death Row, was some kind of violation.

Politicians raged and sputtered, and lamented that the First Amendment to the Constitution would not allow them to stop the proposed concert. Why did that so-very-hallowed constitutional principle hold when the players wanted to play, but ignored when the young people and organizers wanted to pass out or sell information? How special is the First Amendment? It isn't.

To the brave and principled groups which dared to play in the bared fangs of the state's hostility, we must all send our salutes and our kudos. They have done something that was truly remarkable.

To the state, we must send our hisses, and wonder at their strange sense of Selective Outrage.

When a group of young college students were en route to Central State University, and were shot by a cabal of state troopers after being stopped on the New Jersey Turnpike, where was the outrage?

When young men are shot by cops in the streets of Newark, Camden, Asbury Park or any other city where Black people live, where was the outrage?

The monstrous disparity between the state's funding for students of poor people in Camden, and the children of wealth and means in Princeton at primary and secondary levels--where is the outrage?

The recent street murder of Guinean immigrant, Amadou Diallo while standing in his Bronx doorway, where cops fired over 40 shots at an **unarmed man**, at which time the state's propaganda forces of the White supremacist press called for

"calm", a "wait-and-see" attitude--where is the outrage?

Given the recent attacks on poor and Black folks around the nation, who are the unarmed victims of paramilitary police power, who are blown into oblivion by the police with utter impunity--where is the outrage?

If one examines these and other instances, one finds that there is no outrage, for it is not outrageous for the political and economic elite when Black and poor people are summarily executed by the state. This is exactly what is to be expected. It is nothing exceptional. It is their warped *status quo*.

When this occurs, there is no outrage. It is expectation. It is simply the accepted way of how things are.

When people stand up to this system, when they unite against the morbid forces of death, while the press bays "outrage" they really reflect concern and anxiety at the unity of people, who they think should be divided against each other.

The unity of the people is the greatest weapon against the system's works.

Therefore, our unity is so important. Therefore, our unity is attacked.

What makes this event so truly remarkable still, is that it exists in the face of vicious, unprincipled, and naked attacks on all of those on Death Row, not just one man. Several years ago, the state and federal government cut all funding to all post-conviction legal services to all men and women on Pennsylvania's Death Row. They are now completely undefended, and at the "tender mercies" of the state that wishes to kill them. That so many good people would assemble to assist the defense of just one of that number, is an act of resistance to the system that would deny any meaningful defense to them **all**.

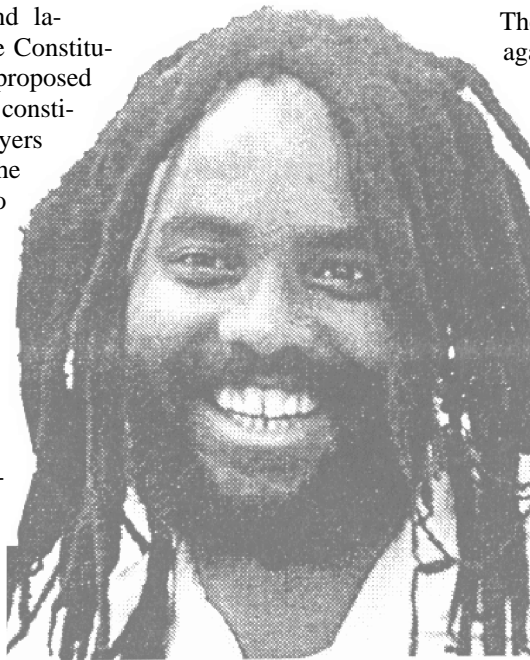
There should be outrage, against a system that dares to call such a perverted system a fair one. There should be outrage, against those who sit in silence when the rights of any are denied. There should be a swelling sense of outrage, at the system that cries alligator tears when one man is defended, and 209 men and women remain undefended.

The death penalty is an outrage, one kept in operation by a conspiracy of state terror, a bare shadow of defense; and the vicious political will of base prosecutors who care more for their career than what is truly just.

It is an outrage. Isn't it?

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For more information on the System vs. Mumia Abu-Jamal, visit his web site at <http://www.mumia.org>



## MUMIA'S SUPPORTERS SPEAK OUT

While the Fraternal Order of Police, the Philadelphia Police Department, the Pennsylvania courts, Mayor Ed Rendell and Governor Thomas Ridge (as of April 1999) have all pursued Mumia's execution, his supporters have been quite busy as well. Protests across the country and around the world have highlighted his case. The European Parliament, the South African government, and a whole host of foreign dignitaries have spoken out in support of a new trial for Mumia. The December 6, 1997 Tribunal in Philadelphia was heard by 26 international human rights and legal activists, who returned a verdict that the Philadelphia Police Department, the United States Government (including Attorney General Janet Reno), Governor Thomas Ridge and the Pennsylvania court system are guilty of violating Mumia's Constitutional and human rights, demanding a new trial and/or Mumia's immediate release from prison. Lawyers, activists and concerned citizens have spoken out in defense of Mumia. We present below a commentary by Linn Washington, Jr., a lawyer and presenter at that December 1997 Tribunal, about the State of Pennsylvania's campaign against Mumia Abu-Jamal.

## Mumia Abu-Jamal

*Commentary By Linn Washington Jr.*

*first appeared in the NY DAILY CHALLENGE - 11/20/98, [www.challengegroup.com](http://www.challengegroup.com)*

**T**he recent Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling denying a new trial to internationally celebrated, death row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal is far from an unassailable endorsement of guilt.

In reality, this ruling is further evidence of the politicized perversion of justice characterizing Abu-Jamal's case since his Dec. 9, 1981 arrest, where eyewitnesses say police brutally beat him with batons and kicked him in his testicles.

One major flaw in this unanimous ruling is easily evident to non-lawyers. It is the actions of Albert Sabo, the notoriously controversial Philadelphia judge who presided over Abu-Jamal's original 1982 trial and his 1995 appeal hearing.

Despite ugly and obvious examples of Sabo's lack of judicial impartiality, in either proceeding, the Supreme Court's recent ruling anointed him as "honorable, fair and competent."

Abu-Jamal's defense team asked Sabo to remove himself from presiding over the 1995 hearing. The legal team saw bias in Sabo because of his behavior during the original trial and his previous membership in Philadelphia's police union.

Judges should remove themselves from cases where their "continued involvement creates an appearance of impropriety," the Court ruling reminded. Nevertheless, this ruling declared that Sabo "did not show bias" in 1995 despite acknowledging his "intemperate" actions which included jailing and fining Abu-Jamal's lawyers.

The Court hid behind legalisms to accept all of Sabo's findings. His findings are the basis for the Court's rejection of all 22 issues raised in Abu-Jamal's appeal.

Sabo summarily rejected all the issues Abu-Jamal's defense team presented in 1995, including compelling new eyewitness testimony indicating his innocence, plus disturbing new evidence of misconduct by police and prosecutors that they claim sabotaged any semblance of a fair trial in 1982.

Sabo, for example, refused defense requests in 1995 to issue subpoenas for six police officers who were in the hospital emergency room when Abu-Jamal allegedly made his confession hours after the murder. These officers never reported hearing this admission of guilt.

The defense felt these six officers could help disprove the testimony of two other policemen about the confession. This duo claimed they heard the confession despite the fact that neither revealed this crucial piece of evidence until two months after the murder.

Sabo's 1995 ruling eagerly embraced this duo's ludicrous claim that being "emotionally" distraught about their colleague's murder caused them to forget Abu-Jamal's confession for 64 days.

They proclaimed it was purely coincidental that each suddenly remembered the confession on the same day they were questioned by a prosecutor in 1982 about a police brutality complaint filed against them by Abu-Jamal.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said racist America chops off the legs of Black people and then blames them for being crippled.

Sabo's rulings in 1995 chopped off the legs of Abu-Jamal's lawyers and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's recent ruling blames Abu-Jamal's lawyers for presenting a crippled defense.

The ruling exclaimed that "Many of the adverse rulings complained of were necessitated by the defense's repeated attempts to secure evidence which was only 'believed' to exist ... we cannot conclude that any of [Sabo's] rulings were legally improper."

It is a maxim of American law that a fair trial is one with an impartial judge.

But, this latest Abu-Jamal ruling proves once again that legal maxims mean nothing when judges manufacture justifications to mask injustices.

## MILLIONS FOR MUMIA Kicks Off Saturday, April 24th

**S**an Francisco will be jumping. Philadelphia will be abuzz. Activities surrounding the Millions For Mumia Marches are being organized for Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1999 in both cities and across the country. With the setting of an execution date for Mumia looming and his appeal options running out, the campaign to save his life grows more desperate.

On college campuses across the country, an *April 23<sup>rd</sup> Walk-out* will be conducted. Students will rise from their seats at 12:00 noon and leave their classes to assemble at designated meeting points on their campuses for rallies and discussions about

Mumia's case. In some situations, highly-organized programs will be held. In the Baltimore area, Morgan State University is one of several participating campuses.

Buses will carry groups of protesters to Philadelphia from just about every major US city. Organizations in New York City have arranged dozens of buses and vehicles for a "convoy" to descend upon the so-called City of Brotherly Love. Supporters will be coming from Canada, Afrika, Europe and Asia. The assembled crowd will represent a wide range of cultural, ethnic and political groups, all with one aim--Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal.



# Creating an Afrikan-Centered Business Coalition:

## The March 30<sup>th</sup> KUUMBA Roundtable

**T**uesday, March 30<sup>th</sup> saw the return of the KUUMBA *Roundtable Dinner* to *Teranga African Restaurant*. The theme of the dinner was "Operating a Business in an Afrikan-Centered Way" and was designed to pave the way for the establishment of the **Afrikan-Centered Business Coalition** in Baltimore.

The attendees included supporters of the **October 6<sup>th</sup> Black Business Roundtable** as well as a few new faces.

**Bro. Lasana Bill Harvey**, WEAA-FM radio personality (*The Magicbird Show*• on Thursday evenings) as well as the owner of **Penalternate Sounds**, was present to offer his positive perspective, as he had on October 6<sup>th</sup>. Besides his Thursday evening radio show, Penalternate Sounds provides music for parties and other special events, and Bro. Lasana has moderated several *Jazz Interviews*•in the Baltimore area, including an interview with area saxophonist Carl Grubbs (See last issue). **Sister Karen Nelson**, poet and artist, accompanied him.

**Bro. Mustafa Shabazz** of **Shabazz Imports** was once again in attendance, this time accompanied by his wife and co-owner of the business, **Sister Sakina Shabazz**. Based in Laurel Centre Mall, they are also beginning larger-scale distribution of Afrikan shea butter lotion, black soap, incense and essential oils which are among their more successful products.

**Sis. Maat Taas** (Lauren Thompson) and **Bro. Sshem Saa** (Lewis Andrews) of **Sindisani, Inc.** Sindisani•is a Zulu word which means "We All Heal". They provide wellness consultation, empowerment seminars and workshops using the *male energy*• and the "female energy" to pursue wellness based on Afrikan principles.

**Sis. Mae Aim** represented Team One, a multi-faceted company promoting internet access, prepaid phone cards and a number of other products. An energetic speaker and salesperson, Sis. Mae has succeeded in positioning herself among many of Baltimore's growing business interests.

**Sis. Ife Njeri-Kenyatta** serves as the Business Manager of the **Afrikan Spiritual Love Ministry**, which holds services every Sunday at 2230 Garrison Avenue in West Baltimore (also the location of *Umoja Nyumba Shule*, the offices of the *Organization of All-Afrikan Unity* and the Saturday meeting place of *Alkebu-lan Rites of Passage*). The Ministry stresses, as Sis. Ife stated, Afrikan spirituality as opposed to religion *per se*, being a non-denominational, or rather multi-denominational, organization that stresses living, thinking and worshiping in a manner more in keeping with Afrikan principles. The Ministry can be contacted through Umoja Nyumba Shule at (410) 233-3074.

The purpose of this meeting was to pick up where the October 6<sup>th</sup> Roundtable Dinner had left off by discussing plans to organize an **Afrikan-Centered Business Coalition**. The organization would have several aims, based on literature developed after the October 6<sup>th</sup> Roundtable. These objectives would be determined and implemented to attempt to solve some of the most glaring hurdles that seem to face Black-owned businesses in general, and Afrikan-centered businesses in particular, such as:

- Lack of respect and trust between the masses of Afrikan people and Afrikan-owned businesses, due to either stereotyping of such businesses or a lack of customer-service training;
- Lack of honest communication and constructive criticism between businesses to help improve customer-service, record-



- keeping, and overall organization;
- Lack of access to funds or resources with which to begin and grow a business;
- Lack of knowledge of techniques and available resources which sometimes leads to poor decision-making;
- Lack of a large-scale Afrikan-centered media vehicle to assist our businesses with community outreach and publicity;
- Lack of a Code of Conduct to insure against our businesses using **Black Skin** to bring in those who wish to support Afrikan-owned businesses only to behave in a decidedly non-Afrikan-centered way (selfish opportunism, showing no respect for Afrikan-centered principles of sharing, unity, and respect for history) upon securing our business--the difference between a "Black business" and an "Afrikan-centered business";
- The complete absence of a lobbying organization to fight for Afrikan-centered businesses against individuals, companies or governmental organizations who attempt to prevent our formulation and growth;
- and Inertia and a lack of commitment to action, whether real or perceived, on the part of our businesses, organizations and prominent individuals to actually follow up on campaign, business or organizational promises or objectives.

Among the preliminary aims of the Coalition:

- (1) Networking to increase the awareness among Afrikan-centered businesses of other similar businesses or organizations;
- (2) Fact-finding to obtain and share information about issues common to our businesses, such as financing, regulatory developments, legal situations or technological advancements;
- (3) Infusion of a sense of history and relevance to our business endeavors to the lives and aspirations of the masses of Afrikan people, and to regenerate and continue a cycle of mutual respect;
- (4) Establish or improve mass-media outreach efforts on behalf of Afrikan-centered businesses;
- (5) Arrange lectures, presentations, films, etc., to bring experts in certain fields to our meetings to aid in the fact-finding and sharing dimension;
- (6) Create a powerful lobbying group to defend the rights of Afrikan-owned and Afrikan-centered businesses to start and grow their businesses, within the law, without interference or harassment;
- (7) Establish a Code of Conduct for Afrikan-centered businesses

and organizations to insure that we interact with each other, with the masses of Afrikan people, and with the larger community in a positive, righteous, truthful and Afrikan-Centered Way with the uplift of Afrikan people as the ultimate goal;

(8) and, as a result, Provide a positive, vivid example to the masses of Afrikan people that Afrikan-centered businesses are organizing as a positive, powerful force that truly values Afrikan people and culture as something other than commodities to be exploited.

The early discussion centered more around the entire philosophy that such a Coalition would espouse. Bro. Lasana stressed the degree to which some of us who have become prominent have not trained our staff to effectively serve their own people, as some fast-food establishments might demonstrate; Mr. Kande pointed out the mindset of Afrikan-Americans toward their own businesses in comparison to others ("Japanese people go to Silver Spring to buy from Japanese businesses. It takes them two hours. They don't care. Afrikan-Americans live across the street and won't come [to Afrikan-owned businesses] to buy food.") and the degree to which we will endure insults to be accepted by European-owned businesses ("They say to you, 'You're smart, you're not like [the other Afrikan-Americans].' This is the first insult you get."). Bro. Mustafa expressed his appreciation of the attendees' desire to organize, but cautioned that, while our general goals are the same, the ideas for achieving those goals will differ from one person to another. The challenge will be to find a way to achieve those goals while keeping everyone involved in the process.

All the participants, while certainly espousing differing viewpoints with regard to methods, have clearly committed to the next phase of organizing: developing the Code of Conduct and the Platform or Agenda of the Coalition. This will be done over the latter part of April, in preparation for the next Roundtable Dinner, scheduled for **Tuesday, May 4<sup>th</sup>**. There, the Agenda and Code of Conduct will be unveiled for the businesses that join us at Teranga African Restaurant that night.

It is our hope that a new voice on the business landscape is being born--one which will more effectively work for the interests of the Afrikan-centered Business Community. We invite all business owners and supporters to help the ***Afrikan-Centered Business Coalition*** to become that voice.