

WE EDUCATORS DEMAND A NEW TRIAL FOR MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

Jennifer Beach

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL is an African-American writer and journalist who has spent the last 18 years on Pennsylvania's death row. His demand for justice and a new trial is supported by heads of state from France to South Africa, by Nobel Laureates, the European Parliament, city governments from Detroit to San Francisco, scholars, religious leaders, artists, scientists, the Congressional Black Caucus and other members of U.S. Congress, and by countless thousands who cherish democratic and human rights the world over.

Working people have expressed their support for Jamal through their leading regional, national and international trade union bodies. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union closed down West coast ports for the day of April 24, 1999 to support Mumia's bid for a new trial.

Jamal's three books and over 400 published columns have been adopted as resource material for the teaching and inspiration of a growing number of students, youth, and educators who have come to see *their* futures as intimately tied to the outcome of this case. The 1982 trial that convicted Jamal of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner has been challenged by leading legal analysts and scholars, from Stuart Taylor writing in the prestigious *American Lawyer* to Per Walsøe of the Supreme Court of Denmark, to Amnesty International which issued a special report in February 2000, claiming that "justice would best be served by the granting of a new trial..." to Jamal.

Jamal's attorneys have presented compelling evidence that key witnesses were intimidated or coerced to provide false testimony, that a purported "confession" was likely fabricated by police, and that vital evidence pointing to his innocence was withheld from the defense. A key eyewitness has now recanted critical court testimony used against Jamal.

Jamal was forced to appeal his conviction before the same judge that sentenced him to death in 1982. That judge, Albert Sabo, is notorious for presiding over capital cases resulting in 33 people being sentenced to death (all but two, people of color), more than twice the number of any sitting judge in the United States.

WE EDUCATORS UNITE IN SAYING NO TO JAMAL'S EXECUTION. In a matter of days Mumia goes into Federal court facing his last chance to have considered the new evidence in his favor. We invite you to Philadelphia to join Mumia and thousands more at his first court date (TBA: Call (215-476-8812).

■ Jamal has long been a POLITICAL TARGET as a prominent journalist critic of police brutality and racism in Philadelphia since the days of Mayor Frank Rizzo.

■ Jamal is made more vulnerable by TODAY'S FREQUENT USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY. The American Bar Association has opposed the death penalty as immensely discriminatory with respect to class and race. Teacher and student actions—from Illinois, California, Washington, to Pennsylvania itself—have played key roles in freeing some of those among the 3,600 on death row.

■ The risk to Jamal's life is magnified in today's climate of GROWING POLICE REPRESSION. Brutality and "racial profiling" are epidemic in the United States, alive on our school campuses, neighborhoods and highways. The nation's largest police organization has shocked civil liberties advocates by publishing a list of the names of educators and other Jamal supporters (reminiscent of the McCarthy witch-hunt era) on its police-maintained website.

■ Jamal, often referred to as the "voice of the voiceless," has challenged the present political priorities of SPENDING MORE FOR PRISONS AND PUNISHMENT THAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION. The youth who increasingly rally to Mumia's cause in the name of justice and fair play know that we build jailhouse cell blocks more rapidly than schoolhouse classrooms.

AS EDUCATORS, IN PENNSYLVANIA, ACROSS THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD, WE STRONGLY OPPOSE THE EXECUTION OF MUMIA ABU-JAMAL. While there are those who believe Mumia is innocent and should be freed now, and others who have no opinion about his innocence, we are all united in viewing Mumia's 1982 trial as a travesty of justice, and affirm that he MUST have a new trial!

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Phone: (609) 497-7918

Web site: www.j4mumia.org

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