

# Free the Class-War Prisoners!

*This year's Holiday Appeal marks the 27th year of the Partisan Defense Committee's program of sending monthly stipends as an expression of solidarity to those imprisoned for standing up to racist capitalist repression and imperialist depredation. This program revived a tradition initiated by the International Labor Defense under James P. Cannon, its founder and first secretary (1925-1928). The PDC sends stipends to 16 class-war prisoners.*

**Mumia Abu-Jamal** is a former Black Panther Party spokesman, a well-known supporter of the MOVE organization and an award-winning journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless." Last December the Philadelphia district attorney's office announced it was dropping its long-standing efforts to execute America's foremost class-war prisoner. While this brings to an end the legal lynching campaign, Mumia remains condemned to spend the rest of his life in prison with no chance of parole, despite overwhelming evidence of his innocence.

Mumia was framed up for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner and was initially sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. Mountains of documentation proving his innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner, have been submitted to the courts. But from top to bottom, the courts have repeatedly refused to hear the exculpatory evidence.

The state authorities hope that with the transfer of Mumia from death row his cause will be forgotten and that he will rot in prison until he dies. This must not be Mumia's fate. Fighters for Mumia's freedom must link his cause to the class struggles of the multiracial proletariat. Trade unionists, opponents of the racist death penalty and fighters for black rights must continue the fight to free Mumia from "slow death" row in the racist dungeons of Pennsylvania.

**Leonard Peltier** is an internationally renowned class-war prisoner. Peltier's incarceration for his activism in the American Indian Movement has come to symbolize this country's racist repression of its native peoples, the survivors of centuries of genocidal oppression. Peltier's frame-up for the 1975 deaths of two marauding FBI agents in what had become a war zone on the South Dakota Pine Ridge Reservation,

shows what capitalist "justice" is all about. Although the lead government attorney has admitted, "We can't prove who shot those agents," and the courts have acknowledged blatant prosecutorial misconduct, the 68-year-old Peltier is still locked away. Peltier suffers from multiple serious medical conditions and is incarcerated far from his people and family. He is not scheduled to be reconsidered for parole for another 12 years!

Eight MOVE members—**Chuck Africa, Michael Africa, Debbie Africa, Janet Africa, Janine Africa, Delbert Africa, Eddie Africa** and **Phil Africa**—are in their 35th year of prison. They were sentenced to 30-100 years after the 8 August 1978 siege of their Philadelphia home by over 600 heavily armed cops, having been falsely convicted of killing a police officer who died in the cops' own cross fire. In 1985, eleven of their MOVE family members, including five children, were massacred by Philly cops when a bomb was dropped on their living quarters. After more than three decades of unjust incarceration, these innocent prisoners are routinely turned down at parole hearings. None have been released.

**Lynne Stewart** is a radical lawyer sentenced to 10 years for defending her client, a blind Egyptian cleric imprisoned for an alleged plot to blow up New York City landmarks in the early 1990s. For this advocate known for defense of Black Panthers, radical leftists and others reviled by the capitalist state, her sentence may well amount to a death sentence as she is over 73 years old and suffers from breast cancer. Originally sentenced to 28 months, her resentencing more than quadrupled her prison time in a loud affirmation by the Obama administration that there will be no letup in the massive attack on democratic rights under the "war on terror." This year her appeal of the onerous sentence was turned down.

**Jan Laaman** and **Thomas Manning** are the two remaining anti-imperialist activists known as the Ohio 7 still in prison, convicted for their roles in a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings of symbols of U.S. imperialism, such as military and corporate offices, in the late 1970s and '80s. Before their arrests in 1984 and 1985, the Ohio 7 were targets of massive manhunts. Their children were kidnapped at gunpoint by the Feds.

The Ohio 7's politics were once shared

by thousands of radicals during the Vietnam antiwar movement and by New Leftists who wrote off the possibility of winning the working class to a revolutionary program and saw themselves as an auxiliary of Third World liberation movements. But, like the Weathermen before them, the Ohio 7 were spurned by the "respectable" left. From a proletarian standpoint, the actions of these leftist activists against imperialism and racist injustice are not a crime. They should not have served a day in prison.

**Ed Poindexter** and **Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa** are former Black Panther supporters and leaders of the Omaha, Nebraska, National Committee to Combat Fascism. They were victims of the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO operation under which 38 Black Panther Party members were killed and hundreds more imprisoned on frame-up charges. Poindexter and Mondo were railroaded to prison and sentenced to life for a 1970 explosion that killed a cop, and they have now spent more than 40 years behind bars. Nebraska courts have repeatedly denied Poindexter and Mondo new trials despite the fact that a crucial piece of evidence excluded from the original trial, a 911 audio tape long-suppressed by the FBI, proved that testimony of the state's key witness was perjured.

**Hugo Pinell**, the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison, has been in solitary isolation for more than four decades. He was a militant anti-racist leader of prison rights organizing along with George Jackson, his comrade and mentor, who was gunned down by prison guards in 1971. Despite numerous letters of support and no disciplinary write-ups for over 28 years, Pinell was again denied parole in 2009. Now in his 60s, Pinell continues to serve a life sentence at the notorious torture chamber, Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit in California, a focal point for hunger strikes against grotesquely inhuman conditions.

*Contribute now! All proceeds from the Holiday Appeals will go to the Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund. This is not charity but an elementary act of solidarity with those imprisoned for their opposition to racist capitalism and imperialist depredations. Send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013; (212) 406-4252.*

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