

Free the Class-War Prisoners!

This year's Holiday Appeal marks the 31st 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). This year's events will pay tribute to a former stipend recipient, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, who, after decades of fighting to prove his innocence, died of respiratory failure on March 11 in the maximum-security Nebraska State Penitentiary. We will also hail the long, long overdue release on February 19 of Albert Woodfox, who spent nearly 44 years in solitary confinement—the longest such stint of any U.S. prisoner. We honor them by keeping up the fight for the freedom of all class-war prisoners. The PDC currently sends stipends to 12 class-war prisoners.

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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.” Framed up for the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia police officer, Mumia was sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. Federal and state courts have repeatedly refused to consider evidence proving Mumia's innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed the policeman. In 2011 the Philadelphia district attorney's office dropped its long-standing effort to legally lynch America's foremost class-war prisoner. In a significant development in the decades-long battle for his freedom, on August 7, attorneys for Mumia Abu-Jamal filed a new petition under Pennsylvania's Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA). Mumia's application seeks to overturn the denial of his three prior PCRA claims by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. If successful, he would be granted a new hearing before that court to argue for reversal of his frame-up conviction. In the meantime he remains condemned to life in prison with no chance of parole.

Mumia also faces a life-threatening health crisis related to an active case of hepatitis C which brought him close to death in March 2015. On August 31, eight months after oral argument in Mumia's lawsuit to obtain crucial life-saving medication, a federal judge rejected his claim on the pretext that the lawsuit should have been directed against the members of the state's hepatitis committee—a secretive body which Mumia's attorneys had no way of knowing even existed at the time the suit was initiated! The Pennsylvania prison authorities have adamantly refused to treat his dangerous but curable condition.

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 was framed up for the 1975 deaths of two FBI agents marauding in what had become a war zone on the South Dakota Pine Ridge Reservation. Although the lead government attorney has admitted, “We can't prove who shot those agents,” and the courts have acknowledged blatant prosecutorial misconduct, the 72-year-old Peltier is not scheduled to be reconsidered for parole for another eight years. Peltier suffers from multiple serious medical conditions and has received a confirmed diagnosis of an abdominal aortic aneurysm—a life-threatening condition which the federal officials have refused to treat. He is incarcerated far from his people and family and is currently seeking executive clemency from Barack Obama.

Seven MOVE members—**Chuck Africa, Michael Africa, Debbie Africa, Janet Africa, Janine Africa, Delbert Africa** and **Eddie Africa**—are in their 39th year of prison. After the 8 August 1978 siege of their Philadelphia home by over 600 heavily armed cops, they were sentenced to 30-100 years, 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 liv-

ing quarters. After nearly four decades of unjust incarceration, these innocent prisoners are routinely turned down at parole hearings. This year Eddie, Debbie, Janet and Janine were all denied parole. None have been released.

Jaun 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. The Ohio 7's politics were once shared by thousands of radicals 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 crimes. They should not have served a day in prison.

Ed Poindexter is a former Black Panther supporter and leader of the Omaha, Nebraska, National Committee to Combat Fascism. He and his former co-defendant, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, 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 was railroaded to prison and sentenced to life for a 1970 explosion that killed a cop, and he has now spent more than 45 years behind bars. Nebraska courts have repeatedly denied Poindexter a new trial 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.

Contribute now! All proceeds from the Holiday Appeal events 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 depredation. Send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013; (212) 406-4252.

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