

Political Prisoner Update

Fifth Estate Collective

1996

“They’re in there for us; we’re out here for them.”

—IWW slogan

Geronimo ji jaga

On May 15th the California State Supreme Court returned Geronimo’s request for a new trial to a lower court. This is good news because at this level his lawyers will be able to present new evidence showing Geronimo’s innocence and the FBI cover-up. A former Black Panther Party member, Geronimo has spent 24 years in prison, making him one of the longest held political prisoners in the world. For more information, contact the Geronimo support committee: PO Box 781328, Los Angeles CA 90016; (213) 294-8320.

—from *Slingshot*, 3124 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley CA 94705; (510) 540-0751

Leonard Peltier

On April 7th, in an expression of international solidarity, Subcomandante Marcos of the EZLN and over 200 others sent a letter from the Lacandon jungle in Mexico to President Clinton demanding Leonard’s immediate and unconditional freedom. On May 3rd, Leonard again went into surgery for jaw work. He experienced some complications during surgery and as a result lost a lot of blood. Fortunately, Leonard seems to be recovering fine. Send cards of support and postal money orders to: Leonard Peltier, #89637-132, Box 1000, Leavenworth KS 66048.

—from *Slingshot*

Mumia Abu-Jamal

New evidence has emerged to further prove Mumia is the victim of a police frame-up. His defense attorneys announced at a May 22 press conference that an eyewitness to the shooting death of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner was coerced into giving false testimony at Mumia’s 1982 trial implicating him in the shooting.

The witness, Veronica Jones, who identified Mumia as the shooter at his trial, was facing felony charges on an unrelated matter at the time of the killing. She was present at the incident which began when Mumia intervened to stop his brother from being beaten by Faulkner. After a murky and disputed interlude, the officer was dead and Mumia lay wounded in the street by a shot from the cop’s gun.

Jones originally told police she saw two men flee the scene, but changed her story after receiving threats and promises from two Philadelphia detectives. She said the cops told her if she refused, they would make sure she

served her full sentence. After testifying to the police version of the shooting and denying seeing the fleeing men, her felony charges were dropped.

Jones' statement confirms those of several other witnesses who have come forward since the trial to tell of a shooter who fled the scene. Withholding and fabrication of evidence and the coercion and intimidation of witnesses are part of a pattern by the Philadelphia police. Recently, numerous convictions have been overturned following the arrest of several cops on corruption, brutality and perjury charges.

Mumia's appeal is still pending before the state high court which may not render a decision until early 1997.

Also, Mumia recently filed a \$2 million law suit against National Public Radio for refusing to air his commentaries about life on death row. His attorney said NPR censored him because of political pressure following complaints from conservative forces led by then-Senator Bob Dole and the Philadelphia police association.

Contact: Equal Justice USA, POB 5206, Hyattsville MD; (301) 699-0042.

Ray Luc Levasseur

In 1995, Ray was sent from the control unit at Marion prison in Illinois, formerly the most severe cellblock within the federal system, to the brand new Administrative Maximum Facility (ADX) at Florence, Colorado. At the ADX's opening ceremony, Attorney General Janet Reno repeated the State's justification for these dungeons as a final sanction against recalcitrant convicts in prison (to contain "the worst of the worst," she claimed). However, it was the "politicals" who quickly found themselves buried inside a Colorado mountain, not violent prison offenders; the inmates blamed for killing two Marion guards in 1982 were not sent west.

The ADX offers a step-by-step program to gain release from the control unit to less restrictive cellblocks in the Florence complex. The final "privilege" is working at the UNICOR factory, a prison company contracting with the Department of Defense. Most political prisoners refuse to do such work, therefore never qualifying to leave the ADX.

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