

# Tales from the planet

Fifth Estate Collective

1998

## Mumia Judge Out

Mumia Abu-Jamal's appeal that his conviction and death sentence be overturned for the 1981 death of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner is still pending before Pennsylvania's Supreme Court. The recent election of an extreme conservative justice to a court that has never granted a new trial, much less dismissed charges for a death-row inmate, does not bode well.

If the court upholds the death sentence, Penn. Governor Thomas Ridge promises to sign an immediate warrant setting a new date for execution. In event of this, Mumia's attorneys will go to the federal courts including the Supreme Court if necessary for an emergency stay.

The only good news is that hanging judge Albert Sabo, who sentenced 31 men to death during his judicial tenure and presided over Mumia's original trial and subsequent appeal hearings, has been removed from his position following numerous complaints. Sabo's outrageously biased handling of Mumia's case is central to his appeal.

Support continues to grow for Mumia including his recent election as a vice-president of the National Lawyers Guild.

Contact the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal to be in immediate touch with developments in this case. The vindictive and corrupt apparatus of the Philadelphia police and their handmaidens on the court are anxious to dispatch Mumia quickly. Contact his committee at 163 Amsterdam Ave., #1 15, New York NY 10023; 212580-1022; e-mail: fhostmann@msn.com.

## Mutilator Honored

Damned By Faint Praise Dept.: A dispute in Espanola, New Mexico is raging between Hispanic and Native people over a statue honoring a 16<sup>th</sup> century conquistador, Don Juan de Onate. The Spanish adventurer suppressed the Acoma pueblo in 1599 and had the right foot of 24 warriors cut off as punishment for their rebellion against his rule.

During recent celebrations of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Spanish settlement in the American West, an Indian commando group sawed off the metal foot of the town's Onate statue igniting a controversy as to whether the bloody conqueror is worthy of a memorial.

Into the fray leapt Marc Simmons, a biographer of Onate, who defended the conqueror, saying that the foot chopping incident shouldn't overshadow his other "accomplishments." Simmons noted that Onate was a "founder of the livestock industry, the mining industry, and he opened the first major road, the Camino Real." The writer added, "He brought Christianity and Western culture."

Bring on the commandos for the other leg.

## **Of Whales & Wages**

The fact that casino gambling is a sure sucker's bet doesn't keep the rubes from flocking to the tables hoping they'll be the ones to beat the odds. In Las Vegas, competition is hot to reel in what the industry designates as "whales," those high rollers who bet in the millions each visit and have credit lines of up to \$20 million.

There is such intense competition among the casinos to land the whales that premium gamblers are offered lavish 12,000 square-foot Italian marble suites featuring ceiling murals, Jacuzzis, swimming pools, and walls adorned with Picassos, Monets, and Renoirs—all gratis. Everything they want is free upon request including such amenities as vintage wine worth thousands of dollars a bottle.

While this wretched excess proceeds, one casino resisted unionization efforts for over six years, arguing they couldn't remain competitive if they had to pay astronomical wages like \$7 an hour for custodians.

## **Rain Forest Defense**

The Samhain *Earth First! Journal* reports that a group of ex-Sandinistas and their former rivals, the Contras, are cooperating to defend Nicaragua's North Atlantic region rainforest. On September 12, 60 armed members of El Frontero Ecologico Armado confronted loggers felling trees and building roads. The guerrilla group confiscated 25 chainsaws and publicly burned them in Puerto Viejo's central plaza.

Another group, El Movimiento Ambiental Nicaraguense, announced their intention to block main highways in Jinotega and Matagalpa to defend the forest. Also, indigenous people are mobilizing to defend their homes.

Contact Native Forest Network for more information at 802863-0571; e-mail: nfnena@igc.apc.org.

## **Redwood Summer Suit Victory**

A California judge has ruled that FBI agents and Oakland, California Police officers can be prosecuted for conspiracy and other charges relating to the 1990 car bombing of Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney. The two Earth First! activists began a law suit charging the agencies attempted to frame them for the incident in which the late Judi Bari suffered crippling injuries.

The FBI and northern California police departments were collaborating with logging corporations to thwart the Redwood Summer project defending the state's old growth forests. Earlier court proceedings showed Bari and Cherney were under surveillance because of their work organizing protest activities, but the FBI claims they "lost" some of the most damning documents.

The Redwood Summer Justice Project has been working for seven years to find the bombers, but tremendous legal efforts are still needed to pursue their historic civil rights lawsuit. The recent ruling raises hopes that at least some of the perpetrators and planners of the vile attack on Judi and Darryl will be exposed.

Send tax-deductible donations to Redwood Justice Fund PO Box 14720 Santa Rosa CA 95402.

## **www.Supilse!**

Investors seeking information about Mexican government finances on the Internet got a surprise Feb. 6 after Zapatista rebels hacked into the world wide web home page of the Mexican Treasury Department. Instead of financial statistics on how to further exploit workers and campesinos, they found a message from Subcomandante Marcos portrayed against a background of Emiliano Zapata. The embarrassed government quickly restored the page.

## **Jericho '98 March**

WASHINGTON DC — 5,000 people from across North America assembled here March 27 for Jericho '98, a day of protest in support of U.S. political prisoners. The demonstration marched to the White House, led by large puppets and included an anarchist contingent of 500. It was a colorful parade, with black and black and red flags flying along side the African tri-color. The event was totally ignored by the media even though it was larger than a similar march held here in February to oppose U.S. aggression in Iraq.-

—Chuck o

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