

Mumia Appeal at Critical Phase

Fifth Estate Collective

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There is so much going on in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the death row ex-Black Panther framed by a conspiracy of cops, prosecutors, judges, and politicians, that it would take pages to report it all.

We hope supporters of Mumia will avail themselves of the great amount of information necessary for an understanding of the case and the forces aligned against him who are intent on strapping an innocent man to the execution gurney.

Jamal was convicted of the fatal 1981 shooting of a Philadelphia police officer, a charge he denies.

On the legal front, Mumia's fate may rest with one man—Judge William H. Yohn of the 3rd Circuit Federal District Court in Philadelphia, who will soon decide whether or not Mumia receives an “evidentiary hearing,” the first crucial step in overturning the perjury- and racist-tainted original trial.

If the court denies the motion, all appeals will be based on the trial record of Philadelphia hanging judge Albert Sabo, an ex-sheriff intent on adding Mumia to his string of executed defendants.

Ominously, Judge Yohn has refused to accept four so-called amicus briefs—ones entered by interested parties and often a part of important cases. They were submitted by several civil rights and civil liberties groups, associations of lawyers, and 22 members of the British Parliament. Although all of the briefs contend Mumia was railroaded, Yohn declared them “unnecessary and unhelpful.”

Hmm, “unhelpful,” eh? Only if you're knotting the rope for the lynching. The Chicana/Chicano Studies Foundation brief presented evidence, previously unknown to Abu-Jamal and his supporters of a conspiracy between Mumia's court-appointed defense attorney Anthony Jackson, presiding Judge Albert Sabo, and Philadelphia prosecutor Joseph McGill. The brief detailed the transcript of discussions between the three in the judge's chambers concerning how to get a conviction that would be protected from appeal. Mumia's attorney also discussed the accused's defense strategy with the prosecutor and the judge, in flagrant violation of what passes for the rules of the justice system when the poor or minorities are involved. This breach of conduct alone should be enough to overturn Mumia's conviction. Like the three monkeys, no wonder Yohn doesn't want to see it.

The brief from the British lawmakers is not unusual. Mumia's case is well known throughout the world. There are numerous international organizations, including trade union federations, specifically devoted to the efforts to free him and many others.

Raymond Forni, president of the French National Assembly recently visited Mumia at SCI Greene in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania where he is held, joining numerous other prominent figures who have made similar visits.

The movement to free Mumia grows larger and louder with the call for his freedom figuring prominently at both the Republican and Democratic convention protests. Also, demonstrations occur regularly across the world echoing a demand for justice. In May, Mumia supporters filled New York City's Madison Square Garden to hear demands for a new trial from speakers which included a former mayor of the city.

However, the racist and right-wing drum beat for stopping Mumia's heart by a poisonous drug injection grows louder. The Philadelphia cops and dead officer's widow appear frequently in the corporate media demanding the sentence be carried out. The governor of Pennsylvania sits with poised pen waiting to sign the execution order.

The populace is being prepared for its eventuality through pro-cop propaganda articles such as a July 2000 *Time* magazine essay and editorials and columns “proving” Mumia is guilty. These appear with disturbing frequency along with a profusion of anti-Mumia web sites dotting the Internet financed by the police and right-wing millionaires.

It couldn’t be any clearer. The deck is stacked against Mumia as it has been from the first day he was shot and beaten by the Philadelphia cops: the ruling powers want him dead. Our task is to take on the reigning political and media racket to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The hour is late. The end of Mumia’s appeals are looming. The lawyers will take care of the necessary legalities. We need to accelerate the direct action that has been the motor force in the Free Mumia movement. Participate in local activities. In Detroit, call (313) 869–8363. Contact the International Friends and Family of Mumia, POB 19709, Philadelphia PA 19709, or at www.mumia.org.

Contact Prison Radio, P.O. Box 41174, San Francisco, CA 94141 for the book and CD, *All Things Censored*, with an introduction by Alice Walker.



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