

NYC welcomes Janet Africa and Janine Africa

written by Struggle - La Lucha
July 25, 2019



Janine Africa, Janet Africa and Eddie Africa. SLL photo: Greg Butterfield

More than 200 people packed The People's Forum in Manhattan on July 19 to welcome Janet Africa and Janine Africa to New York City. The two members of the MOVE family had been jailed for 40 years before being released on May 25, African Liberation Day.

They and the other members of the MOVE 9 spent decades in prison after being framed by a corrupt and racist court system. Two of the MOVE 9 — Charles Africa and Delbert Africa — are still in prison. (Eddie Africa was freed on June 21.) Merle Africa and Phil Africa died in prison under suspicious circumstances.

Fascist Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo — who told his supporters to “vote white” — ordered police to attack the MOVE house in the Powelton Village neighborhood on Aug. 8, 1978. The cops shot so furiously at the adults and children there that they killed one of their own, Officer James Ramp.

It was impossible for any of the MOVE members — who were barricaded in the basement — to have fired the downward shot that killed Ramp. Even Judge Edward Malmed admitted that he didn’t have “the faintest idea” who killed the cop.

That didn’t prevent Malmed from sentencing nine members of the MOVE families to 30 to 100 years in jail. What sort of justice is that?

Forty years in hell

A special highlight of the meeting was Mumia Abu-Jamal calling in from prison. This was the first time that Mumia was able to talk to Janine Africa and Janet Africa since he himself was framed and unjustly incarcerated in 1981.

Janet and Janine described the hell they went through in Pennsylvania prisons. They and the other MOVE 9 members were beaten by guards.

Upon arriving in prison, Janet and Janine were immediately put in “the hole” — solitary confinement. The warden told them they would stay there and they did stay there for a long time.

In 1985, the women were told that their children had been killed while they were still in solitary confinement. The guards told them their children were dead without

further explanation.

They had to rely on overheard conversation among other prisoners in the prison yard to glean that the Philadelphia police and FBI had bombed the MOVE house on Osage Avenue on May 13, 1985, killing six adults and five children.

Janine Africa and Janet Africa have not been crushed by the horrendous ordeals they have suffered. They say it is the unbroken solidarity of the MOVE family and support of many others that gave them the strength to survive.

When the MOVE women spoke in the meeting, remarkably strong and vibrant, they said they plan to dedicate themselves to fighting for the rights and freedom of other prisoners, especially Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Carlos Africa told about how he and other MOVE members locked up in the now-closed Holmesburg Prison in Northeast Philly demanded justice for the MOVE 9. They were viciously attacked by guards and riot police who tried to kill the MOVE members.

Suzanne Ross chaired the meeting, which also featured Pam Africa. Orie Lumumba spoke on the next steps to free Delbert Africa. Kaila Paulino performed a beautiful song. Ralph Poynter energized the audience by dramatically raising funds to further the struggle.

It was the power of the people that freed Janet Africa and Janine Africa after almost 41 years of hell. We have to organize more of that power to free the remaining MOVE 9 members in jail — Charles Africa and Delbert Africa — and to free Mumia Abu-Jamal.



Eddie Africa: Free!

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**Eddie Africa (front row right) at MOVE news conference after his release.
SLL photos: Berta Joubert-Ceci**

June 23 — The news came through like a beam in the night: “Eddie Africa has been released today.”

Eddie Africa, MOVE member and survivor of the Aug. 8, 1978, MOVE confrontation in Philadelphia, was free.

Eddie Africa, after over 40 years in Pennsylvania state and U.S. federal prisons, was home.

The news radiated like heat from a noonday summer sun and men smiled as if seeing their grandchildren for the first time.

Forty years is far more than 40 years if your name is Eddie Africa. That’s because MOVE people face the fury of county and state officials, and that meant a kind of

cruelty that most prisoners have never seen nor imagined.

He has survived beatings while handcuffed and at least one attempt to castrate him.

He has been struck by weapons that have ruptured his abdominal wall.

And lest we forget, he has been held in prison for over 40 years, despite evidence of his and other MOVE members' innocence of any crime in connection with the MOVE confrontation of Aug. 8, 1978.

That said, Eddie Africa is beloved among prisoners for his positive spirit and his eccentric sense of humor.

Now, Eddie Africa is with his loving family, at home.

From Imprisoned Nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

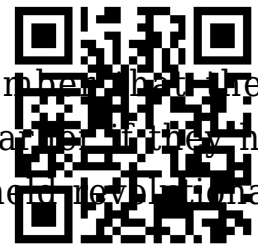
[Listen to Mumia's commentary here.](#) Recorded by Noelle Hanrahan of Prison Radio. Transcribed by Fatirah Aziz.

MOVE 9 members Janine and Janet released at last

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After 41 years, all the MOVE 9 women are liberated, no longer incarcerated, finally released! Janet Holloway Africa and Janine Phillips Africa, the longest-held women political prisoners in the U.S., were freed on May 25, 2019.

As the news spreads throughout the world, we must remember that these courageous political prisoners might have been freed years earlier if they had agreed to renounce the [MOVE Organization](#) and their deeply held revolutionary political and religious beliefs. But they held fast.



On the morning of Aug. 8, 1978, hundreds of Philadelphia cops and officials staged an attack on the MOVE Organization. Nine MOVE members — five men and four women — were arrested, convicted of murder and sentenced to 30 to 100 years in prison over the death of a cop who actually died as a result of “friendly fire.”

Judge Edwin Malmed stated for the record that he had sentenced each of them to the same amount of time in prison because the MOVE members, all of them Black revolutionaries, had declared “we are a family” and remained loyal to their beliefs.

For years, the Pennsylvania Parole Board denied the MOVE 9 parole, but refused to admit that the actual condition of parole was that these committed members denounce and leave the MOVE Organization.

Two members of the MOVE 9 — Merle Africa and Phil Africa — died while incarcerated, both under suspicious circumstances. Debbie Simms Africa was released on June 16, 2018, followed by Mike Africa on October 23, 2018.

At a “Welcome Home” news conference for Janet and Janine on May 30, Ramona Africa, the only adult survivor of the 1985 police bombing of the MOVE house, stated: “We’re a strong family that this system has worked hard to break up. Every one of them could have been out in half the time if we had compromised with this system, but nothing will make us compromise our commitment to John Africa and his teachings.”

‘We are fighting for everybody’

Pam Africa, MOVE member and coordinator of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, said at the news conference: “A lot of people say they are so glad that our sisters are free. Our sisters went in there free with the teaching of John Africa. Teaching in there for 41 years. ... All my sisters needed was to be released.”

MOVE members were not afraid to speak the truth on the inside and they continue to speak truth on the outside. Their number one priority is to work for the release of their three remaining incarcerated members: Chuck Africa, Delbert Africa and Eddie Africa.

Janine Africa declared: “For 41 years, they have tried to beat us down. They have tried to take our health. They have tried everything to stop us because they couldn’t stop us no other way.

“We have a family that is so strong and supportive. They had our backs and we rode on their strength and that made us strong. ... We can’t stop talking about it because we know how important that is.

“We are out here fighting for everybody, whether you are white, Black, Chinese. ... We know this system is on pins and needles because we are coming out!”

The U.S. locks up more people than any other country in the world. Over 2.2 million people are in prisons, close to 3,000 on death row, and thousands upon thousands are in local jails because of the failed, racist criminal justice system.

How significant it is that these courageous women were released and reunited with their family on African Liberation Day in 2019, the year that marks 400 years since the first enslaved Africans arrived in Jamestown, Va.

Welcome home MOVE 9 sisters! We will continue to fight with you until the remaining MOVE 9 members are released. Free all political prisoners, prisoners of conscience and prisoners of war.

Listen to Mumia Abu-Jamal’s commentary, [“MOVE Women: Janet and Janine Africa Free at Last”](#) at Prison Radio.

Free the MOVIE 9





Community, activists demand ‘Free Mumia!’

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Two hundred people took to the streets of Philadelphia’s Germantown neighborhood on April 27 to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners. Every year, supporters march to honor his birthday on April 24. This year Mumia turned 65.

Abu-Jamal is a world-famous revolutionary, writer and radio commentator who was framed for killing a Philadelphia police officer in 1981. His real crimes were to help found the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther Party in 1969 and exposing police corruption in the city.

Mumia spent almost 30 years on death row before his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. Two death warrants to execute Abu-Jamal were signed by former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge.

Only the power of the people — through mobilizations inside Philadelphia and around the world — saved Mumia's life.

But Mumia Abu-Jamal is still in jail. Authorities refused to treat his hepatitis C condition, and that of thousands of other Pennsylvania prisoners, until protests compelled the state to do so.

On April 17, Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner finally dropped his objection to Judge Leon Tucker's ruling giving Mumia Abu-Jamal the right to appeal his unjust conviction.

Mumia's previous appeals to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court were turned down even though its chief justice — former Philadelphia DA Ronald Castille — insisted on hearing the case. A former prosecutor like Castille, whose office tried to have Jamal executed, isn't supposed to do that.

The day after Krasner's announcement, the International Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal held an important news conference to discuss this forward step.

Murder Incorporated

People came to Germantown's Vernon Park to celebrate Tucker's important ruling, which was denounced by the racist Fraternal Order of Police. Gabe Africa of the MOVE organization chaired the rally there.

People marched down Cheltenham Avenue and other Germantown streets carrying colorful banners, including those from Struggle-La Lucha newspaper and the Peoples Power Assembly in Baltimore. Drivers honked their horns and raised fists in support. On one corner, several people stood and held up their fists as the march passed.

Signs were carried for the MOVE 9; American Indian Movement leader Leonard

Peltier; and two Puerto Rican political prisoners, Ana Belén Montes and Nina Droz Franco.

This is the peak of the capitalist economic cycle. Yet half of the stores were shuttered in this Black neighborhood.

People proceeded to a neighborhood church, where the publication of Jamal's latest book, "Murder Incorporated, Volume 2," was celebrated. Activists took turns reading passages where Mumia detailed the crimes of Wall Street's bloody empire.

Among the readers were Mumia's nephew Wayne Cook and Mike Africa Jr., the son of Debbie Africa and Michael Africa. Mike said he was "honored and humbled" to be there.

Mike Jr. was born in a jail cell after his parents were locked up following the 1978 Philadelphia police assault on the MOVE house in Powelton Village. Police fired so many shots that they ended up killing one of their own cops, James Ramp.

The MOVE 9 were framed for this death even though the judge said that he didn't know who had killed Ramp. MOVE 9 members Debbie and Michael Africa spent 40 years in jail before being freed last year.

Other members of the MOVE 9 remain incarcerated.

Whenever you hear the Trump administration accusing Venezuela, Cuba or Nicaragua of human rights violations, remember Debbie Africa, Michael Africa and Mike Africa Jr.

Free Mumia, the MOVE 9 and all political prisoners!

Photos: Youth Against War & Racism, Bill Does, Stephen Millies



Angola 3's Albert Woodfox welcomed in Brooklyn

written by Struggle - La Lucha

July 25, 2019

Brooklyn, N.Y. — Nearly 200 people packed the auditorium of the Brooklyn Public Library at Grand Army Plaza on March 27 to hear Albert Woodfox of the Angola Three speak about his new book, “Solitary: Unbroken by 4 Decades in Solitary Confinement.”

A Black Panther prison organizer in Louisiana’s infamous Angola, a slave plantation turned prison, Woodfox, along with Robert King Wilkerson and Herman Wallace, was framed for the 1972 killing of a prison guard. Woodfox spent the next 44 years in solitary confinement until winning his freedom in 2016.

Woodfox was interviewed by professor and journalist Jelani Cobb. He spoke of the harsh conditions of abuse, poverty and racism that he endured growing up in the Deep South, and how that led him into a life of petty crime. He talked about discovering the Black Panther Party and how this changed his life.

Woodfox expressed the pain of losing Herman Wallace to cancer — he died just two days after being released in 2013 — after he had been denied proper care inside the walls. And he spoke with pride about how he and Robert King Wilkerson, who was released in 2001, travel around the country speaking against mass incarceration and in solidarity with political prisoners.

The event was attended by several Panther veterans and organizers in solidarity with Black liberation political prisoners who remain behind prison walls, including members of the Jericho Movement and the New York Coalition to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Photo by Anne Pruden



Do workers have a right to know the truth? Free Chelsea Manning now!

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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U.S. District Judge Claude Hilton in Alexandria, Va., expressed the government's

contempt for every woman, every trans person and every worker when he sent heroic military whistleblower Chelsea Manning [back to jail](#) on International Women's Day.

Manning spent seven years in a military prison under the Obama administration for sharing evidence of U.S. war crimes in Iraq with the news site Wikileaks. She defied a grand jury subpoena meant to force her to testify in a case that U.S. prosecutors are building against Wikileaks founder and editor Julian Assange.

In a prepared statement given at the grand jury hearing on March 8, [Manning said](#): "I will not comply with this, or any other grand jury. Imprisoning me for my refusal to answer questions only subjects me to additional punishment for my repeatedly stated ethical objections to the grand-jury system.

"The grand jury's questions pertained to disclosures from nine years ago, and took place six years after an in-depth computer forensics case, in which I testified for almost a full day about these events. I stand by my previous public testimony.

"I will not participate in a secret process that I morally object to, particularly one that has been historically used to entrap and persecute activists for protected political speech."

Judge Hilton, a Reagan appointee, immediately found Manning in contempt and ordered her imprisoned "until she purges" — i.e., agrees to testify — or for the life of the grand jury, which could be up to 18 months.

The judge and prosecutors brushed aside serious concerns for Manning's health and safety raised by her defense attorneys. They asked that Manning, who recently underwent surgery, be confined to her home, where she could receive appropriate, trans-affirmative medical care. Judge Hilton claimed U.S. marshals can handle her medical care in the Alexandria jail.

Democratic President Barack Obama forced Manning to serve seven years of a 35-year military prison sentence before finally bowing to protests and granting her clemency at the end of his second term. Incoming Republican [President Donald Trump tweeted](#) that she was an “Ungrateful TRAITOR” who “should never have been released from prison.”

During her long imprisonment, Manning was tortured with solitary confinement and other forms of extreme isolation. She was also denied appropriate health care.

Manning’s attorney, Moira Meltzer-Cohen, said they will appeal the judge’s ruling.

No right to the truth?

The punitive imprisonment of Chelsea Manning is not only an attack on her as a whistleblower, an anti-war veteran and a trans woman. It is an attack on all working-class people in this country, including prisoners.

The message sent by Judge Hilton, federal prosecutors and the whole bipartisan capitalist political establishment is: Workers have no right to know the truth about the crimes the government is committing in their name against their fellow workers and oppressed people around the globe.

Manning is being punished for rejecting this long agreed-upon strategy of keeping workers and their communities in the dark as a means of tamping down any protest against the very profitable war machine or any expression of solidarity with our class siblings abroad.

Fortunately, expressions of support for political prisoner Chelsea Manning were quick in coming.

Roger Waters, the songwriter and musician who has recently distinguished himself with his outspoken support for Bolivarian Venezuela, [took to social media](#) on behalf

of “great heroic whistleblower Chelsea Manning.” “We support you completely and we’ll work unreservedly to get you released from this insane incarceration that the US government is imposed on you and I’m for you.”

National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden, who was forced to flee the country after exposing government cyber-spying practices, [saluted Manning’s courage](#) and said, “She must be released.”

Code Pink founder [Medea Benjamin declared](#) that Manning is once again being penalized for her work as a whistleblower in 2010, when she was trying to inform people “about the abuses of our government in the invasion of Iraq.”

Pentagon Papers whistleblower [Daniel Ellsberg](#), who helped expose U.S. war crimes in Vietnam, said: “Chelsea Manning is again acting heroically in the name of press freedom, and it’s a travesty that she has been sent back to jail for refusing to testify to a grand jury. An investigation into WikiLeaks for publishing is a grave threat to all journalists’ rights, and Chelsea is doing us all a service for fighting it.

“She has already been tortured, spent years in jail and has suffered more than enough. She should be released immediately.”

Break the isolation!

On March 9, the day after Manning was again imprisoned, [anti-war activists rallied](#) outside the jail. When supporters asked to visit her, they were turned away by the Alexandria sheriff’s deputies, raising concerns that Manning will again be subject to punishment by isolation.

Protester David Barrows said he was worried about the impact of the judge’s order on Manning’s health. “Chelsea Manning has been a longtime victim of torture,” he said. “Victims of torture have a lot of trauma to deal with. It never fully goes away.”

For updates and information on upcoming actions in support of Manning, follow [Chelsea Resists](#) on Twitter. You can also donate to her [legal defense fund](#).

Supporters can help break the isolation campaign by writing to her:

Chelsea Elizabeth Manning
William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center
2001 Mill Road
Alexandria, VA 22314

The jail has many restrictions on mail for prisoners. You can write letters with pen or colored pencils on paper, and send newspapers. Money orders or cashier's checks may also be sent for canteen purposes. Be sure to put the person's name and your name and address on the money order or cashier's check.

And get involved with the [Prisoners Solidarity Committee!](#)

How to Write to Chelsea

Address

Chelsea Elizabeth Manning
A0181426
William G. Truesdale Adult Detention Center
2001 Mill Road, Alexandria, VA 22314

Prisons impose repressive, arbitrary regulations on what prisoners may receive from the outside world and Truesdale Detention Center is no different. Follow the guide below when sending mail:

Do

- ✓ Address your letter exactly as shown above
- ✓ Send letters on white paper
- ✓ Use the mail service to send letters
- ✓ Include color drawings in your letters
- ✓ Sparingly send 4x6 photos, as she may only keep 10 at a time

Do Not

- ✗ Send cards, packages, postcards, photocopies or cash
- ✗ Decorate the outside of the envelope
- ✗ Send books or magazines

Chelsea
resists



Kevin Cooper, an appeal for freedom and prison abolition

written by Struggle - La Lucha

July 25, 2019

To very little fanfare, in December 2018, new DNA testing was ordered for California death row inmate Kevin Cooper, a Black man accused of killing four white people.

For over 30 years, Cooper has been on California's death row for the gruesome Chino Hills murders in 1983. Chino Hills is a semi-rural town east of Los Angeles in the San Gabriel Valley. Cooper has maintained his innocence in the crime, investigative journalists and legal experts have insisted Cooper is the victim of a framing by law enforcement and deadly crime partners, and radical anti-prison activists have been the only ones to mobilize in defense of Cooper.

Cooper's case is of crucial importance to the fight against mass incarceration. Cooper's case highlights the racism in prosecution, not only in law enforcement.

The forensic lab and San Bernardino County sheriff's department, which in subsequent years to the Cooper case had been proven to lie and plant evidence at the scene of crimes, settled upon Cooper as their main suspect in the crime. Evidence and personal accounts suggest that at least three white-presenting men were responsible for the killings. With what the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Nicholas Kristof has described as a clear cover-up, why hasn't Cooper's case been the cause célèbre it deserves to be?

Liberal prison reform versus radical prison abolition

In recent years, prison reform activities have gained increased celebrity within liberal and moderate conservative aspects of U.S. society. With rivaling superstar couples of Kim Kardashian and Kanye West and Jay-Z and Beyoncé in opposite corners, some cases that radical activists have been advocating for quite some time have gained much notoriety.

Jay-Z produced a six-part series on the late Kalief Browder and has been a part of a popular campaign to bail out people awaiting trial. Jay-Z and Beyoncé quietly spent millions of dollars to help the defense of the formerly incarcerated rapper Meek Mills — and they have now united with Meek Mills and New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft to push for further prison reform legislation. As well, Kardashian and West have appealed to Donald Trump and social media for prison reform and clemency.

In the summer of 2018, Alice Marie Johnson was released from federal custody following appeals from Kardashian and West. In late December 2018, President Trump signed the First Step Act, passed by the Senate by a margin of 87 to 12. Van Jones described the bill as a “Christmas Miracle.” On Jan. 7 of this year, incarcerated former sex worker Cyntoia Brown had her sentence of 51 years to life commuted to 15 years. For over a decade, Cyntoia's case had been relegated to the ranks of anti-prison activists and former sex workers. Yet, again, her commutation

has been attributed to the work of Kim Kardashian and others.

It must be made explicitly clear that all of the people released do not only deserve to be released, they should have never been incarcerated in the first place. Radicals are critical of liberal prison reformism, especially these partnerships of elected officials and entertainers, because of their frequent use of what might be called “the question of innocence.”

As Mills College professor Priya Kandaswamy has noted: “From the vantage point of people who have historically been perceived as guilty, innocence is not a viable ground on which to build political claims. These experiences highlight the often deadly consequences of making rights contingent on innocence and expose the fact that innocence and guilt are socially constructed categories that hinge upon one’s relationship to the state, not on one’s own character or actions.”

Popular concern over mass incarceration has too often focused its gaze on the innocence and even value of the incarcerated person. Liberal prison reformers forego criticism of the racial capitalist incarceration regime which, in fact, makes the question of innocence or guilt quite irrelevant.

In short, to suggest that the only reason someone deserves to be released is because they are innocent or “don’t belong there” reasons to suggest that there are, in fact, people who do belong in prison. This contradiction explains the lenient sentences from the “Affluenza” case to Brock Peters, even in the face of public outcry. It also explains why Kevin Cooper was charged with these murders and why popular concern has overlooked Cooper and countless other incarcerated people.

Free ‘em all!

Amongst radical anti-prison activists, the terms “Free ‘em all” and “All prisoners are political prisoners” are popular sayings. In San Diego, this is why members of the

Committee Against Police Brutality and the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee simultaneously struggle for the release of prominent political prisoners like Leonard Peltier and Mumia Abu-Jamal as well as advocating for the release of gang members and addicts rounded up in unjust federal drug indictments.

For radical activists, mass incarceration has been proven to not be about right or wrong. It is about the warehousing of surplus populations of people of color and the poor that society has valued disposable. As Kristoff notes, Cooper had recently escaped from the minimum security yard at the California Institute for Men in Chino [“and deputies who examined his file and mugshot saw a black man with a huge Afro who fit their narrative of an incorrigible criminal. He had a long arrest record dating back to when he was 7 years old.”](#) Cooper was arrested because he fit the dominant notion of a criminal and not because he committed the crime. Investigators singled in on Cooper and then made the evidence fit.

Prosecutors alleged that Cooper killed Douglas and Peggy Ryen, their 10-year-old daughter Jessica and a family friend, 11-year-old Christopher Hughes, because he wanted to steal their station wagon. Meanwhile, the companion of the man that many other people assume to be one of the actual killers, all white presenting, came forward with evidence that it was likely her partner — whose name this article has chosen to withhold.

The man’s companion identified a bloody t-shirt and missing hatchet as likely to be his property. She also presented bloody coveralls as evidence. Blonde and brown hairs were even found in the hands of the victims. The investigators discarded the coveralls and, advocates suggest, began to falsify evidence to imply that Cooper committed the murders. Former FBI agent and deputy head of the bureau’s Los Angeles office has frankly admitted that: [“The evidence was planted, he was framed, the cops lied on the stand.”](#)

New testing ordered

Previously, California Gov. Jerry Brown and Kamala Harris, in her role as state attorney general, refused to allow new DNA testing in the case. Yet, following Kristof's exposé in the New York Times, the now-Sen. Kamala Harris and Sen. Dianne Feinstein reversed their positions and advocated for the advanced DNA testing that Brown ordered, as previously noted.

Radical activists who have consistently demanded the release of Cooper anxiously await the results of the new testing. Prison abolitionists and anti-police terror organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area continue to hold rallies outside the San Quentin State Prison, where Cooper is held captive.

For activists, this account of injustice evinces the need for a complete overturning of the U.S. incarceration industry, including an end to the death penalty. Cooper's freedom does not hinge on the exceptional nature of his case.

There is strong evidence that at least 15 of the nearly 1,500 prisoners executed since the reinstitution of the death penalty in 1976 have been innocent, and many others put to death before 1976 have been posthumously pardoned. In fact, the 2011 execution of Troy Davis was a crucial catalyst of the contemporary Movement for Black Lives. Still, activists understand that this heavy lifting towards prison abolition must be led first and foremost by the people — not entertainers and not politicians.



Vaughn prisoners sue over Delaware abuse

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Inmates at the Vaughn Correctional Facility, the largest prison in Delaware, have filed a lawsuit against state corrections officials for “physically, mentally and emotionally” abusing prisoners. The lawsuit was filed in January.

“The higher ranking officers and administration knew about the abuses and torment permeating throughout the environment,” the handwritten complaint states. “They chose to either support or encourage these behaviors or turn a blind eye to them.” ([Delaware News Journal, Feb. 4](#))

Many people know that Vaughn was the site of a prisoner uprising in February 2017. What many do not know is the level of physical, emotional and psychological abuse that prisoners at Vaughn have faced in the years before and since. The corrupt Delaware corrections system and state government do everything in their power to sweep these conditions under the rug.

Several plaintiffs in the lawsuit helped organize the courageous uprising at Vaughn in 2017. Among them are [prisoners currently on trial for murder](#) in the death of a correctional officer during the uprising.

The 2017 prison rebellion was not a random act. It was a political response to years of systemic abuse. The correctional officer who died in the uprising, Steven Floyd, was considered one of the most brutal and abusive staffers in the entire prison.

The prisoners' lawsuit details the severe beatings prisoners have experienced at the hands of correctional officers, and the consistent denial of medical care, which in many cases has proved fatal.

These accounts corroborate what organizers from the national Prisoners Solidarity Committee (PSC) have heard firsthand from Vaughn prisoners. These individuals describe seeing inmates as young as 18 die after becoming sick and being denied treatment.

High ranking officials at Vaughn knew of these conditions and did nothing. If anything, these officials encouraged these policies of torture and neglect.

It's crucial that we stand in solidarity with the plaintiffs of this lawsuit, as we must with the Vaughn prisoners that PSC organizers know personally: Anthony White and Fenel Baine. These two men have asked that we share their names. They are committed to the struggle against the violent prison-industrial system. In particular, they hope to expose the corruption of the Delaware Department of Corrections.

The 2017 uprising was nothing less than a struggle for prisoners' humanity inside an utterly inhumane system. We stand unequivocally behind the prisoners' efforts towards accountability and justice, including this lawsuit.

For updates and to get involved with the Prisoners Solidarity Committee, [visit and "like" our page on Facebook](#).



Prisoner writes on inspiration from Mumia

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Comrades,

My political voyage inside these prison walls is inspired by many revolutionaries, one of whom is Mumia Abu-Jamal. All of the trials Mumia has been through, from the time he was on the street to the 30-plus years he has been falsely incarcerated, touches me deeply.

For one thing, Mumia's saga teaches that the system will go above and beyond to destroy any person(s) or organization(s) who have a revolutionary agenda ... period. Secondly, Mumia teaches that no matter what hardships you go through, you never give up the fight ... especially if it's for the "cause."

Mumia Abu-Jamal is one of the strongest people I have ever known of. He has witnessed a number of threats on his life and has overcome those threats one at a time. Mumia's survival was most certainly partially made possible by the help of comrades. Do you know why this is? Assistance of the masses does not go unheard, particularly when it comes along with the sacrifices that Mumia has made himself on behalf of all oppressed people.

I've read all of Mumia's essays contained in "Live from Death Row." Each time I pick up that book, it ignites a revolutionary flame within me. Certain things Mumia has experienced in prison, I have also experienced. Mumia has inspired me to want to become a voice for my community and my city. In this way, we can all contribute to the struggle for liberation.

Solidarity always,
James F. Young III

Young is currently incarcerated in Cumberland, Md., at North Branch Correctional Facility.



Mumia Abu-Jamal's fight for freedom

written by Struggle - La Lucha
July 25, 2019

Rooted in Black liberation struggle

"Philadelphia is the city that imprisons the majority of Black and Brown youth. It is the city that has also imprisoned and attempted to silence the most important political prisoner in the history of the United States, essentially the Nelson Mandela of our time ... a man who has been demonized for essentially illuminating the truth about Black oppression, about the predations of capitalism and imperialism, a man who is mild mannered but is unwilling to compromise with justice." — Johanna Fernandez (Democracy Now!, Dec. 28, 2018)

The international movement to Free Mumia has been working hard to make Mumia Abu-Jamal's name as well known as Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, Nelson Mandela, Marcus Garvey and a host of others who have fought for

justice and equality. Freeing Mumia will open the door to freedom for all political prisoners and intensify our efforts to dismantle the prison-industrial complex, end the racist death penalty and illuminate police brutality by redefining the whole purpose of the police — if there is any at all.

Mumia was sentenced to death in 1982 and remained on death row until 2011, when the prosecution agreed to a sentence of life imprisonment without parole. Mumia has been in what he describes as a hellhole for 37 years. While in prison, his mother, sister, daughter and many of his supporters, including Safiya Bukhari and Veronica Jones, have died. Jones was one of the witnesses who came forward to reveal that their testimonies were coerced during the 1982 trial.

Mumia Abu-Jamal, born Wesley Cook to William and Edith Cook, grew up in the housing projects (PJs) of Philadelphia. His mother had come to Philly from North Carolina, part of the continuing migration of Blacks to the North seeking a better life and future for their children.

Mumia's mother taught her children those good old-fashioned manners. His father spent a lot of time with the children, teaching and encouraging them to read. Both wanted the best for the children and thought that education would be the key to their futures. One of the goals set for all the children was that they finish school.

William died while Wesley and Wayne, Mumia's twin brother, were still in grade school, leaving Edith to raise six children.

Lessons learned early

The PJ's were public housing and a lot of the families were getting public assistance. Caseworkers made regular visits to the projects. When they came to Edith's house, she would tell the children to help hide everything that was worth anything. These visits were the welfare system's way to keep you down, to humiliate you. The police

also came into the neighborhood, taking people away and using any excuse for an invasion to cause fear.

Wesley was extremely inquisitive. He was often seen telling stories to the neighborhood kids. He had many nicknames. One was “Scout” because he was always venturing out. He knew there was more to the world than what was in the PJs. Another was “UN” for United Nations, because when he read or heard about other countries and places he would talk about them.

Wesley was fortunate to have some very strong African teachers. One of them, born in Kenya, gave students their Kikuyu names. Wesley’s Kenyan name was Mumia. Wesley liked this name and insisted that he be called Mumia. Abu-Jamal was added later, when he fathered his first child. Abu means father and Jamal was his first son’s name.

Another teacher had pictures of W.E.B. DuBois and Malcolm X on the classroom wall to show the students that Black people are leaders. He told the students that Black people are great builders, mathematicians and scientists, and that Africa is the cradle of civilization.

Mumia grew up at a time when Black people were fighting on all fronts for civil rights, equality, justice, the right to sit anywhere on the bus, to use public facilities and just plain basic human rights. Martin Luther King was struggling in the South and racist Gov. George Wallace was running for president. At 14, Mumia convinced a couple of his friends to participate in a protest against Wallace.

At the protest, Mumia and his friends were punched, kicked and beaten by resentful, angry white people. When they called out for help, police came and joined in kicking and beating them with nightsticks. They were handcuffed, arrested and charged with assault. Fortunately, the case against them was dismissed by a sympathetic judge.

Mumia tried to work within the school system by getting some of the students together to rally for a curriculum that included African Studies. Good try, but it didn't work out. It just caused him problems at school.

Meeting the Panthers

Mumia was also introduced to the Black Panther Party when he was 14 years old, by someone who handed him a copy of the Black Panther newspaper. He read about people like Patrice Lumumba, Che Guevara and Mao Zedong. He read about South Africa, Cuba, Vietnam and people fighting for justice all over the world. He learned about Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver and other Panthers recognized as world-class revolutionaries.

At the time, the Philadelphia police were instigating a program called "The Cops are Your Friends." They called Mumia's house and told Edith Cook to watch her son. Keep him in line and if she needs help, they are around.

How do you explain to Mom, who wants only the best for you, that the police are not your friends?

Mumia began spending a lot of his time organizing with the BPP, passing out flyers and distributing papers. He became the Philly chapter's lieutenant of information and started writing articles for the Black Panther newspaper. At that time — in 1969 — the paper was selling 100,000 copies a week.

At 15, Mumia was already known nationwide for his journalism. The local police, FBI and CIA added this information to their existing file on him. Some of what he wrote in the paper and said at various rallies was used against him at his trial years later.

BPP organizers in New York took notice of Mumia. He was sent to New York and then to Oakland, the Party's national headquarters. He reported on the police assassination of 21-year-old Fred Hampton, chairman of the Illinois BPP chapter,

and many other actions by the capitalist state against the BPP.

Edith worried about her son running off with some militant organization with no interest in school. Mumia told her his education was coming from the Party and he was following the program of the Party.

Mumia organized with the BPP for close to two years. When the Philly branch broke with the BPP, he attempted to return to high school and became active with a new organization called the Black United Liberation Front.

Mumia led a campaign to change the name of his high school to Malcolm X and got elected president of the student body. This effort was unsuccessful; he ended up getting kicked out of school instead. He went to New York to try to hook back up with the Panthers there, but things had changed — the Party was in decline thanks to the intense repression of the FBI's Cointelpro program.

Revolutionary journalist

Mumia, at 17, was a young father trying to figure out what to do with his life. Some of his teachers, knowing his intelligence and talents, suggested he get a GED and go to college. He earned his GED, applied to Goddard College in Vermont and was accepted. At Goddard, he was able to study, concentrate and develop his natural communication skills, though the FBI was still tracking him.

After a few semesters, he put college on the back burner and went back to Philly. Combining his writing and vocal skills, he started working for a local radio station.

Mumia evolved into an award-winning journalist: the voice for the voiceless. His voice was and still is amazing, not only in content, but in presentation. When he speaks, people listen.

He had many opportunities to work for some of the big radio stations, but when he

revealed his dreadlocks and insisted on keeping his name, it was always too ethnic, too Black.

Nevertheless, he interviewed many famous people: Angela Davis, Alex Haley, Bob Marley and even President Jimmy Carter. He used the skills learned with the BPP and perfected at Goddard to enhance his writing and speaking. He was a journalist in high demand, living up to his childhood nicknames of Scout and UN.

The revolutionary MOVE organization, demonized by the government and corporate media in Philadelphia, allowed Mumia to cover them because he was direct and honest. He attended all the MOVE trials. He took off his hat, revealing his dreads, expressed his outrage on the radio show and was then fired because he was not a “team player.”

He continued to report on MOVE activities, turning stories in to the Mutual Black Network and National Public Radio, doing interviews and attending press conferences. At one press conference, notorious racist Mayor Frank Rizzo — formerly the chief of police — exploded and warned Mumia about his reporting. Rizzo told him that he would be held responsible for what he said.

Mumia also worked part time as a cab driver. That’s what he was doing on the early morning of Dec. 8, 1981, when he went to the aid of his younger brother, who was involved in a physical confrontation with a Philadelphia police officer.

In that confrontation, Mumia was shot and beaten into unconsciousness. He awoke shackled to a hospital bed, charged with the first degree murder of Daniel Faulkner, the cop who had confronted his brother.

Mumia had predicted his fate 10 years earlier, when he was 16. He told his girlfriend at that time that he would be a political prisoner one day. His death warrant was signed twice, on June 1, 1995, and October 13, 1999, by Gov. Tom

Ridge. Both times, a militant people's movement stopped the execution and eventually won his removal from death row.

After nearly four decades of struggle demanding that Mumia get a new trial, he may finally get his day in court — which means he could eventually be physically free.

When Mumia's freedom is broadcast around the world, but especially in the United States, the people who are the product of this country's worst housing, worst education, worst medical facilities and worst environment will stand up and say: "We have the power to change this system. This is our world."

"We say: No to war! No to racism! Money for health care, education, jobs and housing! No to war and imperialist world domination!"

Mumia Abu-Jamal is the author of several books and hundreds of written and recorded commentaries. Go to PrisonRadio.org for more info. More biographical information is available in the book "OnaMove: The Story of Mumia Abu-Jamal" by Terry Bisson.

Mumia is one of many political prisoners, prisoners of conscience, prisoners of war and exiled freedom fighters — they all are important: Leonard Peltier, Sundiata Acoli, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, Russell Maroon Shoatz, Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald, Jalil Muntaqim, Imam Jamil Al-Amin, Ed Poindexter, Joseph Bowen, Ruchell Cinque Magee, members of the MOVE 9 (Chuck Africa, Delbert Africa, Edward Africa, Janet Africa, Janine Africa), Ana Belén Montes, Nina Droz Franco, Rev. Joy Powell, Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, Siddique Abdullah Hasan and Assata Shakur, to name a few.

Gloria Verdieu is a longtime leader of the San Diego Coalition to Free Mumia.

