

Sirhan Sirhan was convicted of the murder of a Kennedy. He could spend less time in prison than this California man

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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**Ruchell Cinque Magee #A92051
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FREE RUCHELL MAGEE

[Sirhan Sirhan was convicted of the murder](#) of Democratic presidential candidate Robert Kennedy, brother of former president John F. Kennedy, just after midnight, at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles on June 5, 1968.

On March 30, 1981, John Hinckley Jr. walked up to then-President Ronald Reagan outside of a Washington, D.C., hotel with gun in hand. He fired multiple shots, striking Reagan in the chest, Secret Service agent Timothy McCarthy in the side, District of Columbia police Officer Thomas Delahanty in the neck and White House Press Secretary James Brady in the head, leaving him partially paralyzed.

Hinckley spent 35 years in a mental hospital before being granted conditional release. On Sept. 27, he was [freed from court supervision entirely](#) at the age of 66. Sirhan, meanwhile, was deemed eligible for parole on Aug. 27, after 53 years of imprisonment.

In light of the prospect of two convicted presidential shooters walking the Earth as free men, it's worth inquiring why similar consideration isn't being given to Ruchell Magee, a Black man who has been imprisoned in California for more than 50 years.

Magee has neither committed nor been convicted of murder. He was first eligible for parole in 1981, but has been denied release ever since. He is 82 and housed at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville. At his most recent parole hearing in July, Magee was denied parole for another three years. He will be 85 at his next scheduled hearing.

Magee is no threat to society. He has housing, financial and emotional support networks in place to help him readjust to life on the outside, and yet he remains behind bars.

Why?

Magee came to California in late 1962, a refugee from the Jim Crow justice system

of Louisiana. Within six months he would be sentenced to life in prison for a \$10 robbery where no bodily harm occurred. Magee maintained his innocence, arguing that he was illegally imprisoned over a disagreement gone wrong.

Although Magee never went past seventh grade in school, he studied law in prison and learned to file legal documents, eventually securing a reversal of his conviction — but was then retried and convicted a second time.

Magee spent the next few years attempting to legally free himself from what he believed to be a corrupt justice system. His knowledge of the law and his behavior in court (he frequently disrupted proceedings to level charges of racism) made him a thorn in the side of the court.

Those same qualities, however, endeared him to other prisoners who could not afford legal counsel.

This is how Magee wound up on the witness stand of a Marin County courthouse on Aug. 7, 1970. He was testifying in support of a fellow San Quentin Prison inmate when 17-year-old Jonathan Jackson entered the courtroom with a satchel full of guns. Jackson took several hostages, including the judge and prosecutor. His goal was to free his brother George and two other inmates — collectively known as the “Soledad Brothers” — who were charged with killing a prison guard.

Magee, meanwhile, after eight years of legally trying to overturn his unjust conviction, seized on the moment to free himself. He joined with Jackson in the armed escape and fled the courthouse. Prison guards on the scene opened fire at Jackson’s getaway vehicle. The sole survivors of this volley were the prosecutor, who was left paralyzed, three jurors and Magee.

Magee was charged along with activist Angela Davis with conspiracy, kidnapping and murder. Worldwide support aided Davis’ acquittal on all charges. Murder

charges were eventually dropped against Magee, but he was convicted of kidnapping and sentenced to life in prison.

And he's still there.

The longer a person lives, the more medical care they need. This is as true for prisoners as anyone else. In Magee's case, his care will come from an overburdened and understaffed prison medical system. According to the Public Policy Institute, older prisoners may be a contributing reason for California's astounding prison health care costs, currently the highest in the nation, at more than [three times the national average](#).

The recidivism rate for prisoners in the U.S. decreases as prisoners get older. It is estimated to be at 5% for persons 50 to 64 and less than 1% by the age of 65, according to Prison Legal News.

Sirhan Sirhan isn't the only older murderer to be recently granted parole in California. Just weeks ago, David Weidert, who served 40 years for burying a developmentally disabled man alive, was [approved for parole](#).

If these men are considered safe for release, what threat does Magee's continued incarceration protect us from?

Years ago, Magee took the name Cinque, after the captured African leader of the 1839 rebellion on the slave ship Amistad that killed the ship's captain. U.S. courts ruled that Cinque and his fellow captives had a right to rebel and fight for their freedom — and the group was freed to return to Africa. Former U.S. President John Quincy Adams supported this result.

Two of Robert Kennedy's sons, meanwhile, support Sirhan Sirhan's bid for freedom.

Magee does not have the support of former presidents or their families. His only

chance at freedom lies with the common sense of California Gov. Gavin Newsom, who can release Magee whenever he chooses.

Magee poses no threat to the citizens of California. And his freedom should be given no less consideration than that of the perpetrators of two of America's most infamous acts of violence.

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50 years since Attica Rebellion: We salute 'prisoners' Paris Commune'

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Including a special [Prisoners Solidarity Committee](#) *observer.* interview with Tom Soto, [Prisoners Solidarity Committee](#) observer.

On Sept. 9, 1971, approximately 1,500 prisoners in Cell Block D seized the Attica Correctional Facility in upstate New York, after submitting a 27-point manifesto to the prison administration in an attempt to address the torturous conditions inside the prison.

At the time of the uprising, 2,300 prisoners were sandwiched into a prison built for barely 1,600 people. White supremacy behind the walls was evident everywhere, from how prisoners were housed to brutal work assignments.

Prisoners were allowed one shower per week and one roll of toilet paper a month. They labored for five hours a day and were paid between 20 cents and \$1 for the entire day. For 14 to 16 hours, they were locked in tiny 6-foot by 9-foot cells.

A revolutionary mood

It is critical to understand the broader historical context in which this rebellion took place. How could people who were so beaten down, whose lives hung in the balance at the whim of a guard, take such heroic action?

Outside of the jails and also inside many prisons, a battle was raging for the national liberation of Black, Puerto Rican, Indigenous and Chicax people. A new revolutionary mood was sweeping the country to end all kinds of oppression.

Millions of people were protesting the Vietnam War. The women's liberation movement was beginning to blossom. The Stonewall Rebellion had sparked a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and Two Spirit (LGBTQ2S) liberation movement. Just two years later, the occupation of Wounded Knee by the American Indian Movement (AIM) took place.

The McKay Commission (New York State Special Commission on Attica) later commented: "With the exception of Indian massacres in the late 19th century, the State Police assault which ended the four-day prison uprising was the bloodiest one-day encounter between Americans since the Civil War."

Organizing behind the walls

Serious organizing was going on inside Attica prior to the rebellion. Many of the groups outside the prison were reflected inside, including the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords, the Nation of Islam and the Five Percenters. Many had study groups. The Attica Liberation Faction developed in this period.

In July 1971, the Attica Liberation Faction presented a list of 27 demands to Commissioner of Corrections Russell Oswald and Gov. Nelson Rockefeller. This list of demands was based on the Folsom Prisoners' Manifesto crafted by Chicane prisoner Martin Sousa in support of a November 1970 prisoner strike in California. (For more background, see [Project NIA](#).)

Then, on Aug. 21, 1971, Black Panther leader George Jackson was gunned down by racist guards in California's San Quentin prison. Prisoners all across the country, including several hundred in Attica, went on hunger strikes. The assassination of George Jackson became the glue that allowed the Attica prisoners to unite across religions, nationalities and political factions.

The prisoners' Paris Commune

On Sept. 9, Attica prisoners seized the facility. They took corrections officers hostage to ensure that their protest would be heard, since they had received no response to their manifesto from the corrections commissioner or governor.

While the events that took place on Sept. 9 were spontaneous and began as a clash between guards and prisoners, the level of organizing and what became a full-scale uprising were the result of the revolutionary leadership and consciousness that had grown during this period.

What's remarkable is the high degree of organization and discipline of the thousands of prisoners who took part. They elected a central committee, which rotated chairpeople; they organized a 33-person observers' committee, which included not only attorney William Kunstler, Black Panther Bobby Seale, New York State Assemblymember Arthur O. Eve, and representatives of the Young Lords, but also Tom Soto of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee.

Demands were continually being developed. A major one was amnesty for all prisoners.

Countless photos show the rows of tents, preparatory ditches and many of the other measures the prisoners organized. They voted on demands and rationed food and water for survival. During the entire occupation, the 40 hostages were treated humanely.

The concrete demands that developed during the insurrection included all aspects of survival in the prison, including health, food, ending solitary confinement, the right to visitation and a list of labor rights, including the right to a union and an end to exploitation.

The first time the working class took power into its own hands was the insurrection known as the Paris Commune of 1871. The communards canceled rents, recognized

women's rights, abolished child labor, took over workplaces and set up their own form of government. The commune served as a historical example to many revolutionary socialists of the potential for a workers' state. It was ultimately put down in blood, but the lessons remain.

A century later, on Sept. 13, 1971, Gov. Rockefeller ordered the storming of Attica prison. With helicopters flying overhead, close to 1,000 state troopers, national guard troops and prison guards fired into the yard, killing 39 people and wounding 85 in what can only be described as a massacre. This took place in just 15 minutes.

Many of those wounded received no medical care. The prisoners had no guns or bullets to defend themselves.

The press screamed that the 10 captive guards who died had their throats slit. But autopsies showed that all 10 had been shot to death by Rockefeller's storm troopers.

What happened in the immediate aftermath of the slaughter is too painful to fully describe. Prisoners were stripped naked, beaten, made to run through gauntlets of guards and brutally tortured. Guards stormed into the yard chanting "white power."

A battle cry for liberation

Nevertheless, the Attica uprising and the massacre stirred prisoners everywhere. It's estimated that 200,000 prisoners protested and held strikes in its aftermath. The number of prison rebellions doubled.

It continues to serve as a beacon today for those fighting against racism and mass incarceration and for workers' rights everywhere.

Video: Tom Soto, Prisoners Solidarity Committee observer, speaks

<https://youtu.be/0hLxjSVh7Y4>



Long Live Revolutionary George Jackson!

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"If I leave here alive, I'll leave nothing behind. They'll never count me among the broken men, but I can't say that I'm normal either. I've been hungry too long, I've gone angry too often, I've been lied to and insulted too many times. They've pushed me over the line from which there can be no retreat. I know that they will not be satisfied until they've pushed me out of existence altogether. I've been the victim of so many racist attacks that I could never relax again. ... I can still smile now, after ten years of blocking knife thrusts, and the pick handles of faceless sadistic pigs, of anticipating and reacting for ten years, seven of them in Solitary.

I can still smile sometimes, but by the time this thing is over I may not be a nice person. And I just lit my seventy-seventh cigarette of this 21-hour day. I'm going to lay down for two or three hours, perhaps I'll sleep."

George Jackson - "Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters" April 1970

August 21, 2021, marks the 50th anniversary of the assassination of revolutionary George Jackson.

In 1960, 18-year-old Jackson was accused of stealing \$70 from a gas station in Los Angeles. His court-appointed lawyer advised him to plead guilty in exchange for a light sentence in the county jail. Jackson accepted the deal and agreed to confess and was thrown into the penitentiary, sentenced to one year to life. He would spend eleven years in jail; ten at Soledad Prison, seven in solitary confinement, aka Max Row.

Jackson writes about his prison experience in "Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters." In a letter to the editor he wrote, "I met Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Engels, and Mao when I entered prison and they redeemed me."

The introduction to "Soledad Brother" states: "Instead of succumbing to the dehumanization of prison existence, he transformed himself into the leading theoretician of the prison movement and a brilliant writer."

Jackson was murdered by a tower guard inside San Quentin Prison during an alleged escape attempt. "No Black person will ever believe that George Jackson died the way they tell us he did," wrote James Baldwin.

Jackson was a legendary figure throughout the prison system. He was a member of the Black Panther Party-People's Revolutionary Army, in charge of prison recruiting. And he was doing the most important thing that one can ever do, that is, "live life as

a revolutionary example,” because that cannot be killed.

Huey P. Newton said, “George Jackson was my hero. He set a standard for prisoners, political prisoners, for people. He was a strong man, without fear, determined, full of love, strength, and dedication to the people’s cause. He lived a life that we must praise.”

The first Black August event

A large and passionate following had grown around Jackson’s prison writings. On the day of his Revolutionary Memorial Service, 200 Black Panthers in full uniform were inside St. Augustine’s Church in West Oakland, Calif., while 8,000 people listened outside. They were perched on rooftops, hanging from telephone poles and filling the streets. When George Jackson’s body was brought out, the people raised their fists in the air, chanting, “Long Live George Jackson.” This was the first Black August event.

Mumia Abu-Jamal wrote in August 2010: “The real deal is that the name George Jackson is not known to millions of young people in this country. His thoughts, his passions, his brilliance, his insights, his martyrdom in the struggle for Black people. All of this is largely unknown. This in spite of the fact that his books ‘Blood In My Eye’ and ‘Soledad Brother’ have sold more than half a million copies.

“The French writer and playwright Jean Genet called Jackson’s books ‘weapons in combat in the Black Freedom Struggle’ and that they remain. For why else, after 40 years after their publication are they banned from joints from coast to coast because it speaks to their continuing power to awaken, to inspire, to educate and to light a fire. So young people, my message is read George Jackson learn and pass it on. Don’t let his life, light, and sacrifice be forgotten.”

Black August 2021

Today, August 2021, young people are organizing Black August readings, learning about our fallen Heroes and Sheroes and studying history from an African perspective. They are embracing socialism, and other alternatives to capitalism while facing much resistance from the State. They are well aware of the consequences of following the path of truth and justice, but they are determined to move forward.

Huey P. Newton, George and Jonathan Jackson, James Baldwin and a host of Black Revolutionaries will be proud to learn of the resurgence in the fight to free all prisoners, Political Prisoners, and Prisoners of Conscience; to abolish the prison-industrial complex; to abolish the police. This movement goes beyond August, February, or June. This is a continuing struggle to educate ourselves throughout the year to better understand what we are fighting for.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, organizers are using virtual platforms to discuss where we are and what strategies we can use to win our freedom. These recorded discussions address the issues that are relevant to oppressed people around the world and are set up to reach millions.

“Soledad Brother” was released in the fall of 1970, and was dedicated to George Jackson’s younger brother, Jonathan Peter Jackson. “Blood in My Eye” was completed in August 1971, about a week before Jackson was murdered by San Quentin prison guards. The most recent edition of “Soledad Brother” came out in 1994, with a forward by Jonathan Jackson, Jr., who is George Jackson’s nephew and Jonathan Jackson’s son.



Julian Assange and the U.S. war on truth-tellers

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Pentagon generals and killer cops can't tolerate truth-tellers. That's the reason Ramsey Orta was locked up for four years.

Orta filmed his friend Eric Garner being choked to death by Officer Daniel Pantaleo in Staten Island, N.Y. The world saw and heard the Black man scream "I can't breathe" 11 times as he was being strangled on July 17, 2014.

No charges were brought against the cop who killed Eric Garner, a loving father of six children. But Ramsey Orta was railroaded to jail, where he spent time in solitary confinement and had rat poison put in his food.

It's the same spirit of revenge that has motivated the persecution of Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange.

While in the U.S. Army, Manning discovered evidence of the massive killings of

civilians in both Iraq and Afghanistan. These war crimes included U.S. helicopter gunships shooting up a Baghdad neighborhood in 2007, killing 18 civilians.

In 2009, the U.S. bombed the Afghanistan village of Granai, killing over 100 children. For revealing these atrocities to the world via Wikileaks, Manning spent seven years in jail, most of which were spent in solitary confinement.

After being pardoned, Manning was ordered to appear before a grand jury. She refused to be a snitch and spent another year in jail.

The transwoman was forced to spend 22 hours a day in isolation, which amounts to torture according to the United Nations. Only after she was driven to attempt suicide was Chelsea Manning released.

Even then, the court demanded \$256,000 in fines, which were raised through crowdfunding.

Journalism isn't spying

For the same reasons Chelsea Manning was jailed, the U.S. government is seeking to extradite Julian Assange from Britain.

Assange was a co-founder of Wikileaks that published Chelsea Manning's evidence of U.S. war crimes.

For these acts of journalism, the White House wants Britain to send Julian Assange to the U.S. on charges of violating the Espionage Act. Assange could be sentenced to life imprisonment.

Even establishment organs like the New York Times condemned the use of the Espionage Act. This thought-control law was passed in 1917 after the U.S. entered World War I to crush any anti-war movement.

Fifty years ago, President Richard Nixon went to court to try to stop the New York Times from publishing the Pentagon Papers. These documents revealed the lies that successive presidents told to justify the Vietnam War.

Daniel Ellsberg — who copied the Pentagon Papers and brought them to the media — was charged with violating the Espionage Act. Only because of the massive anti-war movement and exposure of illegal wiretapping were the charges dropped.

Julian Assange has spent two years in a British jail after being forced to seek asylum in Ecuador's London embassy. He is no more guilty than Daniel Ellsberg.

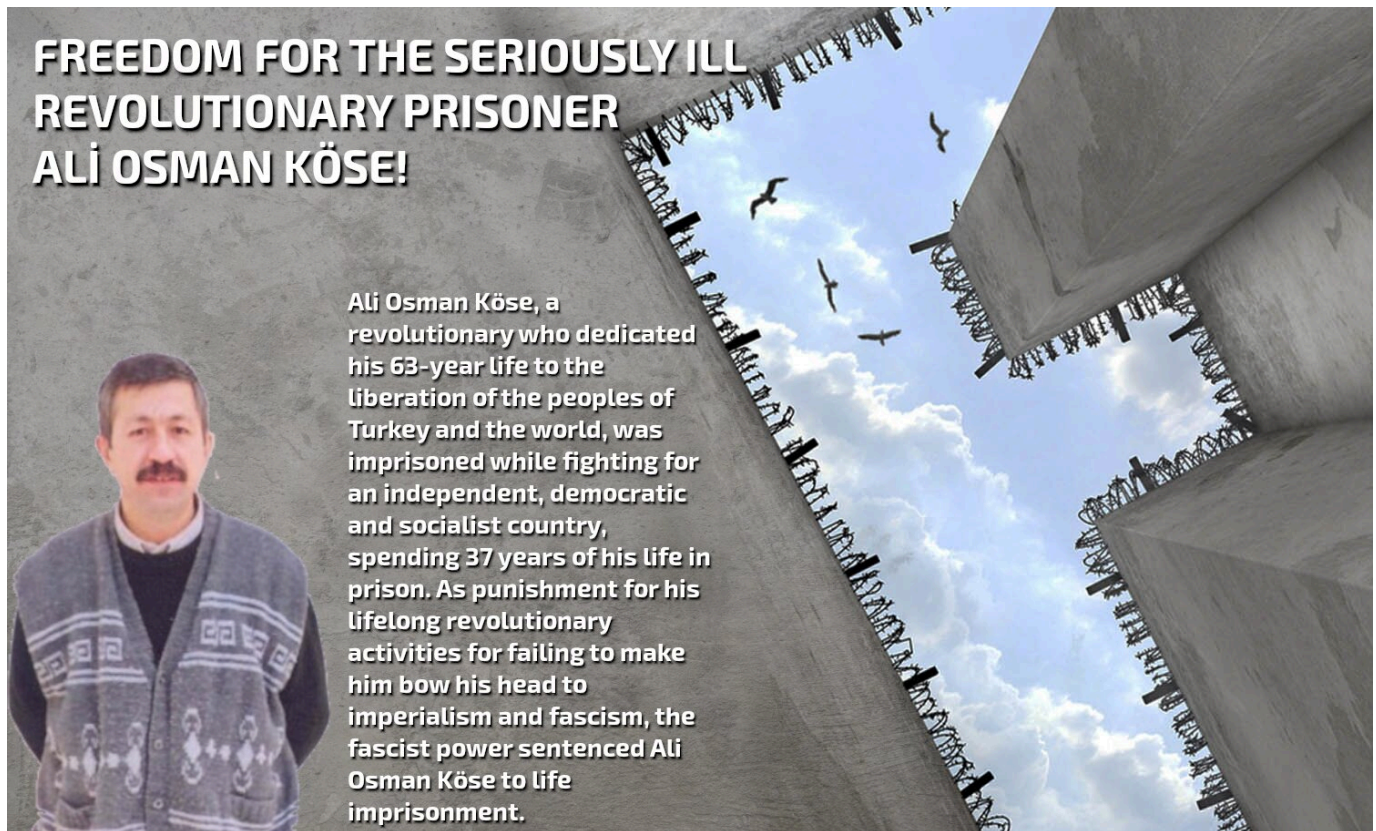
If Assange can be put on trial, so can ProPublica journalists. They [revealed secret IRS information](#) that billionaires like Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos paid almost no federal income taxes.

Truth-telling is not a crime. Hands off Ramsey Orta, Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange!



Turkey: Revolutionary prisoner undergoes surgery after months of protests

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On May 26, the seriously ill political prisoner Ali Osman Köse was taken to the Thracian University Hospital in Edirne, near the border with Bulgaria and Greece. This came after months of protest actions in Turkey and Western European countries, which are part of a campaign launched by the People's Front-Turkey to demand the revolutionary's release.

The revolutionary, who has been in the prisons of Turkey's fascist oligarchy for 37 years, suffers from multiple health problems, the most serious one being kidney cancer, which poses a threat to his life. In addition to the kidney, his tumor has affected the adrenal gland, the spleen, and part of the pancreas.

On the morning of May 31, Ali Osman Köse underwent surgery to remove the tumor in his kidney. At 19:30 on the same day, it was reported that the operation was successful, and there was no danger to the revolutionary's life. One of his kidneys had been completely removed and samples of his spleen and pancreas were taken for examination for pathology. After the operation, he was transferred to the intensive care unit of the hospital.

On June 2, Ali Osman Köse was taken out of intensive care and transferred to a room in the political prisoners' ward of the hospital. Although he had undergone an extremely serious operation, the fascist oligarchy had him handcuffed to his bed and guards kept on duty in his room around the clock.

In the afternoon of June 7 it was reported that Ali Osman Köse was taken out of the hospital to be transported to Tekirdag F-type isolation prison, even though his treatment is continuing.

According to the doctors, it took between 2 and 4 years for the tumor to spread to such an extent in Ali Osman Köse's body. In recent months, the revolutionary was taken successively to the State Provincial Hospital in the city of Tekirdağ, the Tekirdağ City Hospital, the Namık Kemal University Hospital in the city of Tekirdağ, and the Institute of Forensic Medicine in the city of Istanbul. In none of these hospitals was it found that he suffered from cancer. If Ali Osman Köse had indeed been examined in even just one of all these hospitals, this tumor, which can be detected even just by touching the body with the hand, would have been found, and his treatment could have begun much earlier.

The medical reports according to which Ali Osman Köse may remain in prison are not based on any scientific data gathered during the examinations carried out. These reports are entirely politically motivated.

During the examination at the 3rd Specialized Department of the Forensic Medicine Institute, Ali Osman Köse stated to the doctor that he had been experiencing pain in his kidneys for many years, dating back to 1994 when he was subjected to severe torture by the political police. The doctor replied, "If you had something in your kidneys, your color would not be like this." This doctor, as well as the doctors who signed the medical reports without even examining Ali Osman Köse, are responsible for allowing his illness to progress to this extent.

The applications filed by the lawyers of the Peoples' Law Bureau to have Ali Osman Köse examined by independent expert doctors, to be released to undergo treatment, and to be released due to coronavirus infection, were not upheld and all were given a negative response.

The application submitted to the Constitutional Court of Turkey for Ali Osman Köse to be released to undergo treatment has not yet been answered.

The fascist state with all its institutions is responsible for allowing his illness to progress to this extent. Ali Osman Köse must be released immediately and undergo adequate treatment.

Source: [New Solution](#)



Mumia Abu-Jamal remembers Black Panther Chip Fitzgerald

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May 28 — The name Romaine “Chip” Fitzgerald is perhaps not widely known except for his supporters. In his wild youth decades ago, he was a teenage member of the LA chapter of the Black Panther Party, which he joined after a brief stint in jail. He was a wild boy at a wild time in history, the 1960s, when it seemed like the very world was on fire.

Chip once fell in with a crew of wild boys who were full of mischief, which landed him in reform school, known as Juvenile Hall, run by the California Youth Authority. Chip’s youthful rebelliousness led to stints in solitary where, now surrounded by silence, he read about and became captivated by the Black freedom movement.

These articles awakened him to the existence of the Black Panther Party, the boldest of Black freedom movements in the 1960s era. Upon his release, Romaine “Chip” Fitzgerald formally joined the militant revolutionary organization. Chip took to the

party like a fish takes to water by helping its free breakfast programs, selling Panther newspapers, and assisting in other party programs.

According to others who joined at the same time, Chip was an enthusiastic member, and more importantly, his mother proudly supported his new commitment to community work.

But good times sometimes don't remain good, for 1969 marked Chip's involvement in two shootings, leaving one victim dead. It also marked his return to prison as an adult. These charges, and California's antipathy towards Black Panthers, led to Chip's incarceration for 52 years despite his eligibility for parole in 1976.

On March 28, 2021, Chip, who suffered from a massive stroke, passed away in a California hospital while lying in shackles. Chip was the longest held ex-Black Panther in America. Romaine Chip Fitzgerald, after over a half century in chains, returns to his ancestors.

From imprisoned nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Source: [*Prison Radio*](#)



A celebration of Mumia in South Central LA

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On April 24, in celebration of Mumia Abu-Jamal's birthday and in solidarity with the national call to save his life from the murderous attempt to kill him through medical neglect, the Los Angeles Branch of the Socialist Unity Party set up a table and did petitioning for his immediate release from prison at the historic Leimert Park Village in South Central LA.

After an hour of talking to folks and collecting signatures, a musician came by, signed the petition, then stood next to a large canvas picture of Mumia that was being held up and began playing the song "Happy Birthday" to honor Mumia. It didn't take long for children playing jump rope to come by and start dancing — creating a beautiful and fitting tribute to Mumia's lifelong dedication to build a future for them to thrive in.

<https://www.facebook.com/100005678580251/videos/pcb.1762711717261431/17627>

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San Diego solidarity with Mumia Abu-Jamal

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San Diego joined the national call to action from the International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal on April 24 — the imprisoned freedom fighter’s 67th birthday. Supporters gathered in front of the Malcolm X Library and Performing Arts Center and at the World Beat Cultural Center in Balboa Park.

At both gatherings, supporters held up “Free Mumia” banners, chanted revolutionary birthday greetings to Mumia, and took photos to post and share on social media showing support for the demand to release Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners immediately.

At the Malcolm X Library gathering, supporters signed a birthday card with messages of gratitude to Mumia. Dawn from the Association of Raza Educators wrote: "Mumia, sending so much revolutionary love and good energy. May you heal soon and BE FREE soon. Much love and respect."

Sylvia of Friends of the Malcolm X Library wrote: "Mumia, know we are with you in spirit and we will keep fighting. Stay strong!" Adriana of American Friends Service Committee wrote: "Dear brother, my love and honor goes your way. Your love and struggle lives on!"

The Socialist Unity Party and Struggle-La Lucha newspaper, All of Us Or None, African People's Socialist Party, International People's Democratic Uhuru Movement (InPDUM), Party for Socialism and Liberation and the Coalition to Free Mumia and All Political Prisoners were some of the groups that showed up for Mumia and all prisoners.

As activists coast-to-coast chanted on April 24: "Brick by brick, wall by wall, free Mumia, free them all!"



Coverage of Navalny vs. Mumia Abu-Jamal highlights corporate media hypocrisy

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In recent weeks, U.S. corporate media has been flooded with coverage of imprisoned Russian opposition figure [Alexey Navalny's hunger strike](#) and stories of his failing health. After three weeks on hunger strike, Navalny's personal doctors called his symptoms "life threatening."

On April 19, a panel of doctors recommended that Navalny be transferred to a hospital for treatment, which he was.

The Biden administration warned of serious "consequences" if Navalny, a pro-Western politician, should die.

Navalny's imprisonment and alleged health problems have been front-page news in

major media outlets like the New York Times and Washington Post. Amidst the public anticipation of the Derek Chauvin verdict last weekend, NBC Nightly News devoted several minutes to Navalny.

We say “alleged health problems” because, before returning to Russia earlier this year, Navalny had [claimed to have been poisoned](#) by the Russian government with the deadly Novichok nerve agent while traveling to Germany in 2020. The problem is, Novichok is so deadly that, had his story been true, not only Navalny but his entire entourage would likely be dead.

Navalny subsequently spent several months “recovering” in Germany, under the protection of the Berlin government. The alleged poisoning was used to make Navalny a cause célèbre in the Western media and pump up his reputation here as the main opponent of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

It’s worth drawing attention to the fact that Navalny chose the week of Joe Biden’s presidential inauguration to return to Moscow, where he was arrested for violating the terms of his probation in a 2014 money-laundering case. In early February, he was [sentenced to 3½ years in prison](#).

That Navalny’s case is filling the airwaves and websites right now should come as no surprise. Not only is it a convenient distraction from the rash of racist police murders and right-wing violence in the United States; it’s also propaganda for the growing war drive against Russia by Washington and its NATO allies.

Other evidence of this dangerous course includes the recent escalation of [Ukraine’s war on the Donbass republics](#) bordering Russia, [more sanctions](#) being imposed on Moscow, and the massive [U.S.-NATO war games](#) called Defender-Europe 2021 that are currently underway.

What about Mumia?

What makes the U.S. media's hypocrisy glaring is the near-complete lack of coverage by these esteemed media goliaths of the well-documented, truly life-threatening condition of the most famous imprisoned U.S. political dissident — the internationally lauded journalist and former Black Panther, Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Abu-Jamal — who has been unjustly imprisoned for 40 years! — [underwent emergency open-heart surgery](#) on April 19, the same day Navalny was transferred to the hospital. But you would be hard-pressed to find a word about it in the mainstream U.S. media.

For months, supporters have been shouting at the top of their voices to alert anyone who will listen about Abu-Jamal's deteriorating health. "Before this week's health emergency," says Dr. Ricardo Alvarez, his personal physician, "Mumia Abu-Jamal was already suffering from COVID-19, congestive heart failure, hypertension, diabetes, liver cirrhosis, and a worsening of a severe and debilitating chronic skin condition."

It took years of battle with Pennsylvania prison officials to win treatment for Abu-Jamal's hepatitis C — a struggle that opened the door for other prisoners to also finally receive treatment.

Hundreds of political prisoners are held in U.S. jails. Many of them are now seniors, veterans of the militant Black, Latin and Indigenous liberation struggles of the 1960s-70s, and have been imprisoned for decades. Activists have spent the past year of the COVID-19 pandemic demanding "Free Them All."

Where are the declarations warning of serious consequences to Pennsylvania officials from President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris? Where are the front page articles in the Times and the Post? Where are the high-profile televised interviews with Abu-Jamal's physician, Dr. Alvarez, who has said "the only treatment is freedom"?

The answer is blatantly simple. The for-profit media, the bought-and-paid for politicians of both parties in Washington, are only interested in those deemed political prisoners when those politics suit their ends and benefit their system of divide-and-rule.

Stop U.S. drive to war

Capitalism's global economic crisis, which the pandemic served to sharpen and expose, drives Washington toward war. The [U.S. spends more on the military](#) than the next 10 countries combined, year in and year out. President Biden has proposed [raising the Pentagon budget](#) even higher, by at least \$12.3 billion.

That money isn't being spent for nothing. It's being used to prepare for new, bigger wars. And Russia, like China, is one of the main targets.

Within the Russian left and workers' movement, there are different views on the efficacy of Navalny's imprisonment. As a collaborator with Western imperialism, as an advocate of privatization and exploitation of workers, and as a figure with a [history of racism](#) and association with neo-Nazis, some are happy to see the Russian government lock him up.

Others point out that Russia's capitalist government has used Navalny as an excuse to ban protests, and this measure is primarily directed against left movements that are fighting for workers' rights and which oppose Western imperialism. Imprisoning Navalny also risks giving him greater credibility with young people angry about cutbacks and repression.

This is an important conversation within the Russian movement. But progressives and revolutionaries in the U.S. and Europe must recognize why the West is promoting Navalny's case — as a pretext for war.

Let's fight for the release of Mumia Abu-Jamal and all the political prisoners and

prisoners of war held by U.S. imperialism. And let's fight to end the U.S. war drive, dismantle NATO and bring all the troops and weapons home.

A century ago, the peoples of what was then the Russian czarist empire carried out one of the most profound revolutions in human history. If we do our duty and remove the U.S.-NATO boot heel from their necks, the peoples of Russia will undoubtedly make any political and social changes they feel are necessary — without Western interference.



Pam Africa: As Mumia awaits heart surgery, I am issuing a challenge to CNN's Michael Smerconish and DA Larry Krasner

written by Struggle - La Lucha
October 17, 2021
Ona Move!

On Saturday April 17, Mumia called his wife Wadiya and told her that he is scheduled to have heart surgery on Monday April 19. Your support with [calling and emailing prison authorities today and in the coming weeks](#) is absolutely critical to ensure that Mumia gets the best possible medical care before, during, and after the surgery on Monday. Please go to www.jamaljournal.com to get the latest updates, which we will be posting as soon as we get new information.

Mumia and I are both deeply grateful for all the support during this week's health emergency, and also in the weeks since he called me on February 27 [to say that he had COVID](#). There was the flood of phone calls and emails to prison authorities, as well as the folks who took to the streets, including our many demonstrations outside of DA Krasner's office. Labor unions from around the world, including [the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa \(NUMSA\)](#), released powerful statements and sent urgent letters to PA Governor Tom Wolf and DA Larry Krasner.

People power forced the prison to provide hospitalization for Mumia last month when he was diagnosed with both COVID and congestive heart failure. Our forcing the prison authorities to provide Mumia with the emergency hospitalization that he needed was a powerful victory for the movement!

Today we are demanding that Mumia be able to speak with his chosen physician Dr. Ricardo Alvarez., who has written [a powerful new article](#) and co-written [a new petition by Medical Professionals for Mumia](#), that I urge everyone to read.


We are also demanding that Mumia not be painfully shackled at the hospital. Before his hospitalization last month, Mumia was already suffering from a horrible skin condition that causes extreme itching and burning. When shackled for four straight days at the hospital, the shackles created open wounds, as shown in the photo we displayed outside DA Krasner's office in March.

The barbaric act of shackling prisoners onto the hospital bed must stop immediately!

Mumia's 67th Birthday Celebration

Before this week's medical emergency, we were already organizing an April 24 weekend event in Philadelphia to celebrate Mumia's 67th birthday. As Mumia recovers from Monday's heart surgery, we need to increase our organizing efforts for Mumia's release from prison. We need your help to bring him home to his family, where he can receive medical treatments that are not available in prison.

I have always worked with anyone supporting a new trial and I will continue to do that. But now with all of Mumia's serious health problems, it is evident that Mumia could die in prison before actually having a new trial. That is why [our Color of Change petition to DA Krasner](#) is demanding Mumia's outright release.

Even if the Court makes future rulings in favor of Mumia's appeals, it will likely take several years or more before Mumia actually has the opportunity to prove his innocence at a new trial. The Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and Maureen Faulkner are doing everything they can to delay the process even further. This is what happened with [last year's King's Bench Appeal](#) and then [last month's new legal motion](#)  from Faulkner and the FOP to have DA Krasner removed from the case.

Faulkner and the FOP are purposefully making frivolous legal motions meant to delay the inevitable overturning of Mumia's conviction. Even though the Court rejected the King's Bench Appeal, Faulkner and the FOP's strategy was very successful because they put Mumia's case on hold for almost one year.

Maureen Faulkner and the FOP want Mumia to die in prison. We will not let this happen. We will not allow Mumia to die in prison!

Our Challenge to Michael Smerconish and DA Larry Krasner

The long history of corporate media bias against Mumia has been very well-

documented by the group [Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting \(FAIR\)](#). With Mumia's life now on the line we must directly confront this bias.

On behalf of the uncompromising International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, I am now issuing a formal challenge to both Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner and CNN's Michael Smerconish.

As the two most prominent and passionate advocates for the legitimacy of Mumia's 1982 conviction, I challenge them to make a public response to [the 2010 ballistics test conducted by investigative journalists Linn Washington Jr. and Dave Lindorff](#), who concluded from their results that "the whole prosecution story of an execution-style slaying of the officer by Abu-Jamal would appear to be a prosecution fabrication, complete with coached, perjured witnesses, undermining the integrity and fairness of the entire trial."

Lindorff and Washington's 2010 ballistics test is a centerpiece of [our Color of Change petition demanding that DA Larry Krasner stop defending Mumia's unjust conviction](#). In our petition, we cite the 2010 test as evidence of misconduct committed by police investigators and the DA's office. This is the same type of misconduct that led DA Krasner to exonerate the victims of over 18 wrongful convictions.

There is other evidence of police, prosecutorial, and judicial misconduct presented in our petition. However, for the sake of this specific challenge, we want Krasner and Smerconish to look solely at the 2010 test because I am confident that it physically disproves the trial testimony of the prosecution's two most important eyewitnesses. With the 2010 test, there is no longer be any doubt that Robert Chobert and Cynthia White both lied at the 1982 trial when they testified about seeing Mumia shoot Police Officer Daniel Faulkner.

I challenge both DA Krasner and CNN's Smerconish to personally watch the high-

quality online video of the 2010 ballistics test, and to read Lindorff and Washington's written article. In 2010, before the release of their ballistics test article, Lindorff and Washington shared their findings with the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office and asked several specific questions. They wanted to get a formal response from the DA, to present them with an opportunity to tell their side of the story so that it could be included in their article.

The DA's office outright refused to answer Lindorff and Washington's questions. DA Krasner needs to respond to the 2010 ballistics test and explain exactly why he is defending Mumia's conviction. What better place to do that than on Michael Smerconish's CNN television show?

Confronting Krasner and Smerconish

In the Jamal Journal issue #1, I already confronted DA Krasner's Feb. 3 brief, specifically where he made a joke out of the attempted police lynching of Mumia by writing that Mumia "refused to walk" into the hospital after being savagely beaten by a mob of police officers. I directly asked Krasner: Do you oppose lynchings?

Krasner has still not responded to this question. In fact, since he took office, DA Krasner has consistently refused to meet with myself and other Mumia supporters, even once when we brought a delegation that had traveled all the way from France to meet with him. DA Krasner must be accountable to the people, so we are presenting both DA Krasner and Smerconish with an opportunity to disprove Lindorff and Washington's findings.

I am challenging CNN's Michael Smerconish because [he recently criticized blacklisted football player Colin Kaepernick](#) for Kaepernick's November 16, 2020 [statement in support of Mumia](#). Smerconish boasted that he was an authority, an expert on Mumia's case because he is the author of the 2007 book "Murdered By Mumia." Smerconish issued a challenge to Kaepernick, inviting him onto his show to

discuss Mumia's case.

Conclusion

The uncompromising International Concerned Family and Friends is not afraid of the truth. If Michael Smerconish and Larry Krasner are so confident about the integrity of Mumia's conviction, they should welcome the opportunity to publicly disprove evidence that we cite in our Color of Change petition.

I want both Michael Smerconish and Larry Krasner to carefully read through our petition to DA Krasner. I am presenting them with an opportunity to publicly challenge the arguments we make, and the evidence that we presented in the first issue of our newspaper in support of the petition. Along with the 2010 ballistics test, we present the Batson issue, Robert Chobert's credibility as a witness, Judge Albert Sabo's extreme bias, and the Pedro Polakoff crime scene photos that were concealed by the DA's office. The petition also cites J. Patrick O'Connor, author of "The Framing of Mumia Abu-Jamal" and Michael Schiffmann, author of the German book "Race Against Death."

It is fine for Smerconish to have future shows focusing on these other topics and authors, but Smerconish and Krasner first need to deal with Dave Lindorff and Linn Washington's 2010 ballistics test. This test proves by the absence of any bullet impact marks in the concrete around the spot where Faulkner lay on the sidewalk, that the testimony of the two key eyewitnesses to the alleged murder — both of whom claimed to have seen Mumia firing down "execution style" at the prone Faulkner multiple time — couldn't have happened. These were prosecution manufactured lies.

I challenge Smerconish to present the 2010 ballistics video on his show to CNN's global audience, and to then invite DA Krasner to give his opinion about the legitimacy of Lindorff and Washington's conclusion. That is our challenge.

Pam Africa is coordinator of the uncompromising International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal

Source: [The Jamal Journal](#)

