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## **For International Workers Action— Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and Anti-Imperialist Freedom Fighters!**

Register Now for International Webinar February 1, 2022  
<https://bit.ly/iwa-2022>

UNITE, the largest union in Britain, has added the support of its 1.4 million members to that of labor organizations, political and social justice activists and prominent individuals from around the world who will assemble on February 1, 2022, for an online, global forum under the Call-to-Action:

### **For International Workers Action— Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and All Anti-Racist and Anti-Imperialist Freedom Fighters!**

The forum was inspired by the call from the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), the largest union in the country, for a campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. The February 1, 2022 event will kick off Black History Month with a call for action by the multi-racial, international, labor movement standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the champions of all imprisoned anti-racist and anti-imperialist freedom fighters. We seek to build on the support of NUMSA, UNITE and the years of solidarity actions organized by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and the Oakland Education Association.

Today is Martin Luther King Jr. Day. On April 4, 1968, the day he was assassinated, King was in Memphis, Tennessee to support striking sanitation workers. Just months before his murder, he was unanimously elected an honorary member of ILWU Local 10. King was a target of surveillance and dirty tricks by the Kennedys and J. Edgar Hoover's FBI including its secret COINTELPRO operation. The threats only increased when King spoke out against the Vietnam war and stated that racist oppression was rooted in the economic system. The assassinations of King and Malcolm X are bloody proof that in racist, capitalist America, it's deadly dangerous to link the struggle of the working class to the struggle against black oppression. For declared revolutionaries, like Black Panther Party (BPP) members Fred Hampton, Mark Clark and Mumia Abu-Jamal, Hoover left no doubt about his intentions: The Panthers, Hoover warned, were "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country," and "the Negro youth and moderates must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teaching, they will be dead revolutionaries." On December 4, 1969, Hampton and Clark were executed in a murderous hit by the FBI and the Chicago police.

Racial oppression in the U.S. today is the legacy of slavery--it is promoted and integral to the U.S. capitalist system itself. From 1619 until the defeat of the slavocracy in the Civil War, the vast majority of Blacks in the U.S. were the chattel property of slave masters and all the wealth created by their labor was stolen/expropriated by the "masters." All working-class people, Black, White, Latino, Asian, Native American are oppressed and wage-slavery steals/expropriates the vast bulk of the wealth we create. The capitalist legacy of slavery is the keeping of Black communities disproportionately impoverished, imprisoned, discriminated against, subjected to

the structural racism that permeates the legal system, health and educational systems and what other social services exist for the working people as a whole. Divide and rule works -- these institutions provide lower quality to all U.S. working-class people than in other industrial countries that have powerful workers movements -- An Injury to One is Truly an Injury to All!

U.S. capitalism is built on dividing the working class. Capitalism's gravedigger is the multi-racial working class. NUMSA's March 10, 2021 call for the immediate release of Mumia Abu-Jamal recalls the same treatment of political prisoners "during the dark days of apartheid." "Labor in white skin cannot emancipate itself where the black skin is branded." (Karl Marx, Capital). True in 1867. True today.

Solidarity between the labor movement and the victims of state repression is crucial. In endorsing the call for the February 1 forum, the Black Panther Party Commemoration Committee stated:

"We of the Black Panther Party Commemoration Committee (BPPCC) accept the challenge issued by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) for an international campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. We also join the call of the Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal (LAC) of San Francisco/Bay Area to extend the campaign to call For International Workers' Actions to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and all Black Panther prisoners and other anti-racist and anti-imperialist freedom fighters (Sundiata Acoli, Ruchell Magee, Jamil Al-Amin, Leonard Peltier, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, Julian Assange, Rev. Joy Powell and many others) — victims of the FBI's COINTELPRO program and/or local police/district attorneys' judicial lynching."

Mumia Abu-Jamal is the personification of the necessarily intertwined struggles of labor and the victims of racist state repression. The former Black Panther is also the former president of the Philadelphia chapter of The Association of Black Journalists. In 1998, Mumia supported community activists and unionists being sued by West Coast shipping conglomerates for their part in successfully picketing the ship *Neptune Jade* in defense of locked-out British dockers. The picket line was honored by ILWU Local 10. That same year, while still on death row, and despite the importance of publicity in his defense campaign, Mumia honored a virtual picket line by refusing to be interviewed for a nationwide ABC television "20/20" documentary during a lockout of unionized technicians and camera operators. "Would I cross a picket line if I were living in quasi-freedom and walking to the studio?" The answer was an irrevocable, "no."

The moderator of the February 1 forum will be Cleo Silvers, of the BPPCC and former member of the Black Panthers, the Young Lords, and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. Discussing the Panthers in a recent interview, Silvers stated:

They were targeted by government agencies such as the FBI's COINTELPRO so they could be used as examples to instill fear into the masses of people who might pick up the mantle and get involved with the struggle for equality and justice.

I want young people to know that any activist struggle against the ills of the system of capitalism, like the murder of Black men on the street as George Floyd or any union or labor struggles, are under the same kind of scrutiny and will definitely be attacked and

possibly have its leadership killed or jailed so the struggle for the freedom of political prisoners will need you to fight for their freedom as well.

In an attempt to unite the struggle of labor with the fight for Black liberation, it is important to say that Huey Newton's mother and father both worked and his grandparents labored as sharecroppers. If we look into the lives of revolutionary Black Panthers and Black Liberation Movement activists, for the most part, we come from workers who struggled to raise us. In order to achieve Black liberation, we must unite labor against our common oppressors and inspire to action the very same working-class who raised and nourished us. The struggle for Black equality and justice is, and has always been part and parcel of the struggle of labor, slave and free, organized and unorganized, urban and rural, employed and unemployed, Black and white, Native-American, Latin American, of Asian background, and immigrants. The United States working class, in essence, represents the worldwide working class. Our work to achieve complete liberation through workers unity against our capitalist oppressors is the living embodiment in practice of "Workers of the World Unite; We have nothing to lose but our chains!"

Let's come together to free all anti-racist and anti-imperialist political prisoners. Palante, Siempre, Palante! Let us go forward!

Endorsers of the Call for International Workers Action to Free Anti-Racist Political Prisoners include Jihad Abdulmumit, Chair, National Jericho Movement; Ashaki Binta, National Black Liberation Movement; Jalil Muntaqim, Spirit of Mandela, former political prisoner; Cyril "Bullwhip" Innis, Jr., National Alumni Association of the BPP; Oakland Education Association; *San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper*; Alice Walker, Pulitzer Prize-Winning Author; Alameda Labor Council.

*There is no justice in the racist capitalist courts!* Mumia Abu-Jamal is the embodiment of that cruel fact. For 40 years—30 of them on death row—Mumia was locked in the dungeons of Pennsylvania, framed by the cops and judicial system, for a crime he didn't commit. The current Philadelphia DA, "progressive" Larry Krasner, repeats the lies of the cops and blocked Mumia's recent legal appeal for a new trial, which had been granted by the first African-American judge to hear his case. Other anti-racist and anti-imperialist political prisoners have spent decades imprisoned, are also aging, ill, and serving life without parole—on slow death row.

Who has the power and will to free this legion of political prisoners? The answer is not in the mis-named "justice system" nor in the halls of Congress with its statues of racist Confederates. The answer is in union halls, at the point of production and in the streets. It is the task of the multiracial, multi-ethnic, millions-strong international workers movement to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and all Anti-Racist and Anti-Imperialist Freedom Fighters! A fantasy? No!

In January of 1999, in the face of month-long media frenzy in opposition, the Oakland Education Association held a day of teach-ins on Mumia Abu-Jamal and against the racist death penalty. On April 24, 1999, the ILWU led an exemplary action shutting down all West Coast ports leading a march of 25,000 in San Francisco chanting: "An injury to one is an injury to all—Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!" In conjunction with that action, the teachers' union in Rio de Janeiro, initiated a statewide work stoppage. On Juneteenth 2020, in the wake of the police killing of George Floyd, the ILWU shut down all 29 U.S. and 7 Canadian ports protesting systemic racism and police brutality. On May Day, 2021 some 4000 trade unionists, community groups and leftists, including honorary Local 10 member Angela Davis, marched for the right to organize

and for racial justice. Commemorating the 1934 Maritime and General strike provoked by the police murder of two strikers, a street-spanning banner proclaimed, “Stop the Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal—International Longshoremen and Warehouse Union.”

As Jack Heyman, an organizer of those ILWU protests put it:

“Under this racist, capitalist “justice” system, the only way to free Mumia Abu Jamal and other anti-racist political prisoners, is for the multi-racial working class to flex its muscle at the point of production. Longshore workers have the power to shut down international trade to win their freedom.

On November 30, 2021, Clarence Thomas, retired Secretary-Treasurer, ILWU Local 10\*, Co-founder of the Million Worker March wrote:

There are Black Panther Party members who were a part of the Black Liberation movement that have been languishing in prison for more than half a century. Native American political prisoner Leonard Peltier has been imprisoned since 1977. The horrific imprisonment and the abuse of these political prisoners represent the long legacy of slavery, Jim Crow, apartheid, and racial violence perpetrated against African-Americans. The labor movement can and must play a vital role in the release of all political prisoners. The ILWU recognizes that the prosecution of radical labor leaders such as Tom Mooney and Harry Bridges is directly connected to efforts by the US government to use lies and frame-ups to put away these fighters for freedom and justice that was promised yet denied to African Americans and people of color in the US.

On December 7, Angela Davis announced:

Now is the time for us to rekindle international support for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal and the other political prisoners, as he has. I am pleased to announce that I will be participating with Irvin Jim, General Secretary of NUMSA and others in an international “call to action” forum on the first of February, Black History Month, titled “For International Workers Action—Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and All Anti-Racist and Anti-Imperialist Freedom Fighters!” Please join us.

\* Organization listed for identification purposes only

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