COMMITTEE TO SAVE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

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Dear Friends,

Since our last letter, the Fraternal Order of Police's (F.O.P.) campaign to execute Mumia Abu-Jamal has moved into higher gear, aided by an all-sided media campaign. We have seen a government attack against the Black United Fund in Philadelphia for fundraising for Mumia, the promotion of a new phony Mumia "confession" claim, and attempts to intimidate those who have rallied to Mumia's defense.

The evening before the April 24 "Millions for Mumia" rallies in Philadelphia and San Francisco--where tens of thousands showed their support--800 members of the Philadelphia political establishment paid $100 each at a benefit for "Justice for Police Officer Daniel Faulkner, Inc." While claiming to have received only $41,000 in donations in 1998, the sponsors have run full-page ads in major daily papers like the *New York Times* screaming for Mumia's execution. The "Faulkner, Inc." Web site absurdly says that not one of the thousands of people executed in the U.S. this century was innocent (let alone a victim of racist murder)!

Many have stood up to the F.O.P. and their friends in government and the media. On the day after the "Millions for Mumia" rallies, the Philadelphia city government moved against the Black United Fund (BUF) for its assistance in Mumia's fundraising. City officials led by Mayor Rendell and a series of articles and editorials in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Daily News* demanded that the major black charity of Philadelphia drop its role as a fiscal sponsor for the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The BUF was both threatened with being dropped from Philadelphia's employee payroll deduction plan for charities and with an IRS attack on their not-for-profit charity status. The BUF did not knuckle under to these intimidation efforts despite its subsequent removal in May from the Philadelphia city workers United Way "donor choice" program, which could seriously damage contribution income.

After fighting their school administration for two years, Evergreen College students in Olympia, Washington won a battle this spring to include Mumia as a graduation ceremony speaker. The prospect of this speech had put the "Kill Mumia" machine into a frenzy. Pennsylvania's attorney general wrote to the Evergreen president demanding the speech be canceled. Newspapers across the country published editorials and commentaries vilifying the students. Texas Congressman Tom DeLay pushed through a "minute of silence" in the House to protest the speech. Outside the graduation ceremony, the F.O.P. staged a menacing "protest" featuring Maureen Faulkner. In the end, courageous Evergreen students successfully defied the sinister campaign of the F.O.P. and had a 13-minute taped address by Mumia at their June 11 graduation ceremony.

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The August issue of *Vanity Fair* magazine featured a smear by Buzz Bissinger, longtime publicist for Mayor Rendell, who was the district attorney at the time of Mumia's 1982 trial. Complete with every prosecution "fact" previously refuted by Mumia's attorneys and supporters, it contained a "new" scurrilous confession supposedly given by Mumia to a Pennsylvania substitute school teacher named Philip Bloch. Like all the other fabricated confession claims, this one comes long after it supposedly occurred, because the accuser just happened to suddenly realize its importance! Bloch claims that during a 1992 interview Mumia answered "yes" after Bloch asked, "Do you have any regrets about killing the officer?" Nothing more was said.

For years Bloch breathed not a word of the supposed "confession." Bloch's explanation for his years of silence is that he was recently inspired to come forward after chancing upon the Faulkner, Inc. Web site and deciding that he wanted to counter "the level of hatred that's being aroused in people towards the police." Bloch also portrays himself as a