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the greater the salary. The reality is quite different.

"It is difficult to calculate an hourly rate because salary is determined by each piece that is done," said Ng. "Employers and subcontractors employ a number of strategies to keep wages low. Contractors are not clear on the piece rate. It is a varied industry and it is hard to generalize, but the conditions applied to all the workers are substandard."

Ng tells me that although many of the women know they are in a bad situation, they feel

that they have few options.

"These women know very well that they are being exploited," she said. "But the major reason why these women work at home is because there is no affordable childcare facility."

"If they work, most likely it will be a minimum wage job, and childcare will cost more than their salary. But if they do file a charge against their contractors they lose their jobs at home."

Lack of legal protection is one of the many hurdles that Canadian homeworkers face.

"These women have no protec-

tion," said Ng. "We don't have a good system in which the Ministry of Labour can inspect and monitor the working conditions of factory and home workers. If these workers will unionize then the union will play a part in this role of enforcing the labour laws."

Unionizing homeworkers is one of the many goals of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE).

UNITE was formed in 1995 through the merger of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and the International Ladies

Garment Workers Union. UNITE represents 30,000 workers in Canada and over 250,000 workers internationally.

Barb Anderson, a co-ordinator of UNITE, describes a number of strategies the organization is using to act against sweatshops at home and abroad.

"We need to raise the public awareness of sweatshop conditions in Canada and globally, and ask ourselves what are we importing into Canada and what are we selling?" she said. "Are we condoning abuses in garment and footwear industries



in Canada and offshore production?"

Last May, the federal government convened a task force and appointed former Liberal MP John English to bring together civil society groups along with retailers and manufacturers to try to develop a Canadian code of conduct.

Since then, the Task Force has been engaged in drafting a code that sets out basic working standards

as well as a way to monitor compliance.

"Both the government and the retailers have a responsibility in ensuring that seamstresses in the factory and in the home work under decent conditions," declared Anderson.

Alex Dagg, manager of UNITE, explains how homeworkers' rights are routinely being violated.

"We are

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Jamal happened on an altercation between his brother and a police officer. Shots were fired and officer Daniel Faulkner was killed. Jamal was also shot. The rest of the details of the case are hazy, depending on the interpretation.

Over the last 17 years witnesses have changed their testimony and inconsistencies in the evidence have

been challenged and debated.

Jamal's supporters argue that his conviction had political intentions. They point to the fact that the FBI began amassing a 600-page file on him when he was a 15-year-old high school student and a founding member of the Black Panther Party. They say his political affiliations and criticism of the police force turned the state authorities against him.

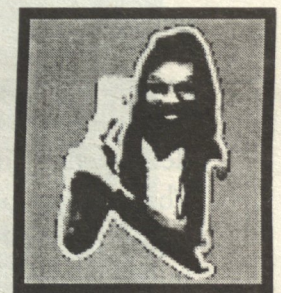
Maureen Faulkner, the slain officer's wife, believes Jamal is guilty and wants to see him die. Disturbed by the Free Mumia Movement, she has been actively campaigning against Jamal. The Fraternal Order of Police in Philadelphia rallied support around Faulkner, launching a media campaign to assert Jamal's guilt.

"[Jamal's lawyer] has duped the world into believing that this man is a politi-

cal prisoner and is innocent of the crime charged when that is not the case," said Faulkner in a recent television interview.

Still, there is no mistaking Jamal's celebrity status. A trained broadcaster with a silky smooth voice, he produced a series of radio commentaries from his cell, bringing international attention to his case and mobilizing the American movement against the death penalty.

Among his many honours, Jamal was awarded an honorary law degree from the New School of Law in San Francisco, California, voted honorary vice-president of the 5,000 member National Lawyer's Guild and named an honorary citizen of Copenhagen, Denmark, and Palermo, Italy. Jamal has such celebrity backers as Whoopi Goldberg, Harry Belafonte, Ed Asner,



Alec Baldwin, Noam Chomsky, Bell hooks, Spike Lee and Michael Moore. Pierre Sane, secretary general of Amnesty International, visited Jamal in 1997.

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