



FREE JENA 6: Anti-racists tell fascist gang 'No nooses'

by Tyneisha Bowens, NYC FIST

One hundred and fifty anti-racist activists continued the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. on Jan. 21 as they confronted members of the white supremacist organization, the Nationalist Movement, in Jena, La. The event took place on Martin Luther King Day in this small Louisiana town that has been the stage for what is being called the new civil rights movement.

The Nationalist Movement was in Jena for what they called "Jena Justice Day," which was in opposition to the September 2007 mobilization of tens of thousands people in support of the Jena 6 and the overall message of equality that Martin Luther King Jr. preached. The white supremacists recently won a suit with Jena giving them the right to march there without a permit, carrying nooses and white cross flags and even firearms. Various anti-racist organizations, groups, and individuals drove into the city to say "No to nooses!"

The diversity of the anti-racist group, which included Black, Latin@, Arab, Asian, Native and white folks, showed the unity that is being forged between oppressed

nationalities in the United States. People came out from Los Angeles; Chicago; New York; New Orleans; Atlanta; Jersey City, N.J.; Durham, N.C.; and Jena.

At 9 a.m. the anti-racist activists met at two checkpoints outside of Jena and caravanned in for safety. "We have been harassed by the police, pulled over and ticketed almost every day," explained one of the organizers from the January 21 in Jena Committee. After caravaning into the town, the anti-racists held a rally in Jena's park where the crowd listened to speakers including police brutality activist Juanita Young, Rev. Raymond Brown of Louisiana's National Action Network, a representative of the youth group FIST-Fight Imperialism, Stand Together, Carl Dix of the Revolutionary Communist Party, a member of the Common Ground Collective and activists from cities across the country.

After the rally the group of about 150 marched from the park to the courthouse where 15-30 white supremacists were holding their rally. En route to the courthouse, the march received acknowledgment, support and adversity from the residents of Jena. However, the people of Jena did not come out in support of the white supremacist rally.

As they climbed the hill toward the courthouse chanting "No Nazis, No KKK, No Fascist USA!" the anti-racists saw a wall of police. The strong police

presence was an attempt to force the march into a "free speech zone" in the back of the courthouse. But the march successfully pushed back the police line and asserted its constitutional rights of assembly and free speech.

At the front of the Jena courthouse the protesters confronted the racists, drowning out their message of white supremacy with the message of justice, unity and equality.

Though there were only 15 Nationalist Movement members present, the overwhelmingly racist presence of the state—the police, courts and prisons—was much larger. Agents from the local, state and federal law enforcement agencies protected the armed and threatening white supremacists from the unarmed crowd speaking out against racism and hate.

Peter Gilbert of FIST, who participated in the rally with a delegation of FIST and International Action Center members from Raleigh, N.C., and New York, said: "The collusion of the state was apparent at every level. It (continued on page 11)



FIST members march in Jena on MLK Jr. day.



Anti-racist activists from many parts of the country march in Jena, La., Jan. 21. FIST photo Tyneisha Bowens



Occupation Unraveling: Iraqi Soldier Kills Two US Troops

By David Hoskins

Free Jena 6: Anti-racist march (cont.)

was the state that gave the white supremacists the right to march unpermitted and armed; it was the state that gave them the front of the courthouse; and it was the state that was protecting them."

The anti-racists effectively drowned out the Nationalist Movement's message and showed the white supremacists and the state that this kind of racism will not go unanswered. The march, having achieved its goal, moved back to the park where a rally and caravan into the community ended the event.

The presence of the white supremacist Nationalist Movement, whose leaders are small businesspeople from outside Jena, in a small and economically underdeveloped town like Jena, shows the rising tide of racism as a reaction to the economic crisis. However, the relatively higher numbers of anti-racists shows that a multinational, unified movement is becoming more prepared to counter these attacks.

Bowens spoke at the anti-racist rally representing FIST. ■

Immokalee (continued)

some even came out and joined the demonstrators.

Apparently, the Burger King employees were first told that they were going to be paid before Christmas, but on that Sunday they were told, "No paychecks until after Christmas." So as the protest started to build the employees started to cheer from within the restaurant. When the chant, "No more slaves! Pay a living wage!" started, one worker even came outside to lead the chant.

The CIW is sending a full-time team back to Miami after the first of the year. So there will be a lot more actions coming up both here and around the U.S.

The writer is from the Bolivarian Youth in Miami, a member of FIST, and participated in the CIW actions. ■

The strength of the Iraqi resistance and the level of anti-U.S. anger within the Iraqi army asserted itself in December when at least one Iraqi soldier purposefully shot and killed two U.S. soldiers during a joint patrol in the city of Mosul. Resistance fighters stationed inside nearby buildings had fired on the patrol as soldiers attempted to set up combat outposts. The ambush appeared to be a well planned and coordinated attack and may have involved the cooperation of Iraqi soldiers on duty. An Iraqi soldier in the puppet army shot dead two U.S. soldiers who were beating a pregnant Iraqi woman.

Iraqi army commanders Brig. Gen. Mutaab Habib al-Khazraji and Brig. Gen. Noor al-Din Hussein have claimed that the shooting was deliberate and the Iraqi soldier has ties to the resistance. A second Iraqi soldier is also being held in the incident. The involvement of at least two soldiers suggests that the degree of sympathy and collaboration with the resistance in Iraq's army may be more widespread than the Pentagon has previously acknowledged.

If the official story coming out of Iraq regarding the soldier's ties to the insurgency is not true, U.S. and Iraqi armed forces could be attempting to cover up what they consider an even more alarming detail. It would mean that the length and severity of the occupation has worn the patience of average Iraqis to such an extent that it has spread throughout Iraq's armed forces and U.S. soldiers may at times find themselves battling their counterparts in the Iraqi military.

The December shootings mark the first time since the occupying forces invaded in 2003 that the U.S. media has reported that a soldier in Iraq's current army has intentionally killed U.S. service members. According to the Arab Times, a similar incident occurred in 2004 when Iraqi civil defense officers killed two U.S. soldiers on patrol with them. The Iraqi Civil Defense Corps was a precursor to today's Iraqi army.

Bush ordered an additional 21,500 troops into combat at the beginning of 2006 in an attempt to establish a level of corporate-defined stability in Iraq. The December incident underlines the failure of this "surge" in U.S. forces to provide the necessary conditions for

continued occupation and maximum exploitation of the Iraqi people's oil resources.

Just as importantly, the killing of U.S. soldiers by members of the Iraqi puppet government's army illustrates the fact that the popular resistance in Iraq cannot be defeated regardless of U.S. technical superiority in arms or the number of troops it sends into Iraq.

The U.S. military intentionally recruits among the nationally oppressed and the poorest sections of the working class at home to provide fodder for the ruling class' war games abroad.

Put the blame where it belongs While it is understandable if rank-and-file U.S. soldiers mourn the deaths of their fellow soldiers shot in December, it is important to put the blame where it belongs. The U.S. government sent soldiers into Iraq based on a lie, and ordered them to occupy and bomb its people into submission.

When a U.S. soldier dies in Iraq it is not the fault of Iraqi freedom fighters inside or outside of Iraq's armed forces. The blame for those deaths belongs squarely at the feet of the U.S. government's civilian and military leadership which sent these young men and women off to die in an imperialist war of conquest.

The task of the anti-war movement inside the U.S. is to help U.S. soldiers to join the struggle against the war and to understand the just struggle of the Iraqi resistance. In the process these soldiers can assert their humanity and dignity by refusing to let themselves continue to be pawns for the U.S. military command.

During the U.S. occupation of Vietnam, when there was a strong and active anti-imperialist movement among civilians inside the U.S., U.S. troops in Vietnam expressed their resistance in many ways. Troops deserted while on leave, units refused to go on patrols and in hundreds of cases troops "fraggged" or used fragmentation grenades to kill commissioned and non-commissioned officers who were racist or who were ordering them to patrol.

The existence of anti-occupation forces even among the so-called Iraqi allies—that is, the puppet army—will certainly add to the growing demoralization of U.S. troops forced to remain in Iraq. Whatever opportunities and methods for resistance become available to U.S. troops are legitimate in a situation where they have been sent to oppress a sovereign nation with no justification.