

All Out! Support National Days of Protest To Free the Jena Six

“THIS IS AN OUTRAGE!”
“THIS IS APPALLING IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD.”
“THIS SHOULD NOT BE TOLERATED...ANY LONGER!”
“THIS INJUSTICE, INEQUALITY AND RACISM INFURIATES ME.”
“THESE YOUNG MEN GOTTA BE FREED!”
“WHAT CAN I DO?”

This is what people SAY when they hear about the case of the Jena 6.

AND NOW THIS MASS SENTIMENT MUST BECOME A MATERIAL POLITICAL FORCE TO STOP A GREAT INJUSTICE.

The “Jena 6” are six Black students in Jena, Louisiana, who could go to prison for decades because they stood up against deeply entrenched racism.

This all started on September 1, 2006. Black students at Jena High sat under what had been, in 2006(!), a “WHITE ONLY TREE.”

The next day, racist students hung three NOOSES from the tree.

For all to see, a straight-up racist threat: KKK. Lynching. Black bodies at the bottom of the river.

Dozens of Black students stand together under the tree in a courageous, defiant protest. A school assembly is called where a white district attorney tells the Black students to keep their mouths shut about the nooses. Then he threatens them: “I can take away your lives with a stroke of my pen.” When racist white students jump a Black student walking into a party in Jena, one white student gets probation. Later, when a Jena white threatens a Black student with a gun, and the Black student disarms him, it’s the African-American who is arrested. And then when a fight breaks out that sends a white student to the hospital for an hour, the law comes down on six Black students, charging them with attempted murder.

16-year-old Mychal Bell has already been convicted—by an all-white jury, without a single witness being called on his behalf—of second-degree battery and conspiracy to commit second-degree battery. He faces up to 22 years in prison. And the system continues to threaten to ruin the lives of the other five youth who still face serious charges.

The railroading and persecution of these young Black men doesn’t have anything to do with who did what to whom in a schoolyard fight—they are being punished because they, and the other Black students in Jena, dared to stand up against outrageous discrimination!

Up Against A System

The case of the Jena 6 concentrates the situation that still exists throughout this country—where racism and segregation is the status quo and white supremacy is enforced in unofficial but also OFFICIAL ways this whole system operates. School officials, police, courts, authorities, and government officials have worked together to persecute the Jena 6. And this was approved from the highest authorities in the land when a representative of the US Justice Department came to Jena and said they could find no violation in the way Jena High authorities have handled things and that in fact “all of their procedures were ‘regular’ and not ‘irregular.’”

No real punishment for white students who hang lynch nooses on a schoolyard tree: REGULAR. Threatening Black students who protest this racist threat: REGULAR. Giving a slap on the hand to white students who attack Black students: REGULAR. Black students facing decades of prison time for fighting with white students: REGULAR.

This is the REGULAR workings of a white supremacist system. A system whose very foundations are deeply entwined with the outright slavery and oppression of Black people.

A system which has no future for the masses of Black youth—for millions and millions of Black youth, what they can expect is a future of low-wage jobs at best, along with incarceration, police murder, demonization, and full-out criminalization. And for those who do “make it out,” there is still the continual battle against discrimination and oppression at every turn.

Time to ACT!

It is not enough for many people to just know about the Jena 6. It is not enough for people to just be outraged about this case. It is not enough for people to read about it, or for a few well-known people to “shine a light” on it. It will take a truly mass struggle by the people to FREE THE JENA 6. A struggle that is broad, diverse, and determined. And every person of conscience must ask: **WHAT AM I DOING TO STOP THIS GREAT INJUSTICE?**

Across the country people are beginning to organize protests demanding Free the Jena 6. We are calling for people to support these protests, including two NATIONAL DAYS OF ACTION TO FREE THE JENA 6 ON SEPTEMBER 12 AND 20 — DETERMINED, DEFIANT ACTION THAT SAYS:

NO TO WHITE SUPREMACY. WE DEMAND: FREE THE JENA 6. WE WILL KEEP ON FIGHTING UNTIL ALL THE CHARGES ARE DROPPED. THIS SYSTEM OWES THESE YOUTH AN APOLOGY!

SEPTEMBER 12—Wherever people are: high schools, colleges, workplaces, in parks and on street corners, in cities and suburbs—boldly, defiantly, and creatively demand: **FREE THE JENA 6!!!** Organize speak-outs, demonstrations, and marches. Wear t-shirts. Pass out stickers, armbands, wristbands, bandanas. Make banners, put posters in windows. Mobilize, organize, and make plans to go to Jena on September 20. Find ways to express and manifest that: **WE are NOT going to stop until all the charges are dropped.**

SEPTEMBER 20—The day Mychal Bell is scheduled to be sentenced: Join with and build the broad call that has gone out for people to **COME TO JENA! PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE, OF ALL NATIONALITIES—CHARTER BUSES, CAR POOL, BUY A PLANE TICKET, AND COME TO JENA FOR A MASS PROTEST.** People all over the country and the world: find ways to boldly and in a mass way manifest and stand in solidarity with the struggle in Jena.

FREE THE JENA 6!

DROP ALL THE CHARGES!