

## 2009 Democracy Award



Bertha Antunez Pernet accepted the Democracy Award on behalf of jailed Cuban dissidents.

**O**N JUNE 24, 2009, the National Endowment for Democracy honored the courage and determination of five Cuban dissidents with the presentation of its annual Democracy Award at a ceremony on Capitol Hill. The five democracy activists, three of whom were imprisoned, were honored in absentia by guests including House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman **Howard Berman** and Ranking member **Ileana Ros-Lehtinen**.

Cuban democracy activists **Bertha Antúñez Pernet** and **Orlando Gutiérrez** accepted the award on behalf of **José Daniel Ferrer García**, **Iris Tamara Pérez Aguilera**, **Jorge Luis García Pérez (“Antúñez”)**, **Iván Hernández Carrillo**, and **Librado Linares García**, none of whom was able to leave Cuba for the ceremony. Aguilera, Carrillo, and García are serving prison sentences for their work.

**José Daniel Ferrer García** is a youth activist and member of the

Christian Liberation Movement who was instrumental in gathering hundreds of signatures and mobilizing people in poor, marginal neighborhoods. Ferrer worked with neighbors throughout the eastern provinces to organize gatherings, turning them into informal town hall meetings where grievances were expressed and the desire for change articulated. He received one of the highest prison sentences of the group of dissidents arrested on March 18, 2003. He has been a leader of the resistance of political prisoners against the abuses of the regime from within prison walls.

**Iris Tamara Pérez Aguilera** is founder and President of the Rosa Parks Women’s Movement, which struggles against human rights violations. Born in 1975 in Sancti Spiritus province in central Cuba, she entered the opposition movement in 1999, when her brother, Mario Pérez Aguilera, was imprisoned at Nieves Morejón prison. Ms. Aguilera is married to **Jorge Luis García Pérez**.

The Democracy Award is a small-scale replica of the Goddess of Democracy that was constructed in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China, during the student movement for freedom and democracy in 1989.

**“Antúñez”** is a leader of Cuba’s civic resistance movement who served more than 17 years in prison, having been released in 2007. During that period, his fellow inmates nicknamed him “the black diamond” because of his courage and unbreakable spirit. In “A Word from the Opposition” in the January 2009 issue of the *Journal of Democracy*, Antúñez highlighted the Movement’s adherence to the principles of non-violent resistance as set forth by Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King. He is married to Iris Tamara Pérez Aguilera, another honoree.

**Librado Linares García** is a young intellectual and founder of the Cuban Reflection Movement. He organized independent libraries, soup kitchens for the poor, workshops for dissidents, as well as forums and conferences for citizens living in the central region of Cuba. He developed a comprehensive multi-tiered strategy of non-violent resistance against the regime. Linares, one of the pro-democracy leaders arrested on March 18, 2003, has been suffering a progressive loss of eyesight during his imprisonment.

A moving video tribute about the Cuban democracy movement was shown at the ceremony, and messages of solidarity were received from Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel, Oswaldo Paya, and President Barack Obama. In a dramatic moment, Jorge Luis García Pérez was able to address the Capitol Hill audience by phone.

The award presentation was



The 2009 Democracy Award was presented in absentia to five Cuban democracy activists, three of whom were in jail the night of the ceremony. Pictured left to right: Tom Donahue, Bertha Antunez Pernet, Orlando Gutiérrez-Boronat, NED Chair Richard Gephardt, and NED President Carl Gershman.

preceded by a roundtable discussion moderated by NED Director for Latin America and the Caribbean **Miriam Kornblith**, *Toward a Free Cuba: the Prospect for Democracy after 50 Years of Dictatorship*. The discussion panelists included notable Cuba experts and advocates for basic rights in Cuba, including **José Azel**, Senior Research Associate at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami; **Marifeli Pérez-Stable**, Vice President for democratic governance at the Inter-American Dialogue; **Janisset Rivero Gutierrez**, a noted human rights activist; **José Miguel Vivanco**, Executive Director of the Americas Division of Human Rights Watch; and **Bertha Antúnez Pernet**, a leader of the National Movement of Civic Resistance “Pedro Luis Boitel.”

### Democracy Service Medal

The Endowment’s Board of Directors created its Democracy Service Medal in 1999 to recognize individuals who have demonstrated, through personal commitment, their dedication to the

advancement of freedom, human rights and democracy. In 2009, NED presented its Democracy Service Medal posthumously to the Polish philosopher **Leszek Kolakowski**, who passed away in July 2009.

### Leszek Kolakowski

In October 2009, the Endowment paid tribute to the life and work of Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski, who was described by NED President Carl Gershman as “the thinker who, more profoundly than any intellectual since George Orwell, explained the origins and deformities of communist totalitarianism and the threat it posed to human freedom.” Kolakowski passed away in July 2009 at the age of 81.

In October 2009, Kolakowski’s widow, Tamara Kolakowska, accepted NED’s Democracy Service Medal for her late husband from NED President Carl Gershman. The presentation was part of a well-attended memorial sym-

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posium held at the University of Warsaw and organized by the Stefan Batory Foundation, a long-time NED partner.

Kolakowski published more than 30 books in a career spanning more than five decades. His most influential work, written in exile, was the three-volume *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Rise, Growth and Dissolution*, in which he argued that Stalinism was the natural

outcome of Marxist thought, a philosophy he called “the greatest fantasy” of the twentieth century.

Kolakowski, who supported communism in his youth, had become increasingly critical of the system in the 1960s, which led to his work being banned in Poland, his expulsion from the Polish United Workers’ Party, and the loss, in 1968, of his university position. He left Poland and went into exile that same year.

In exile, Kolakowski dedicated his career to explaining the sources and deficiencies of totalitarian communism and its threat to humanity; he



The Democracy Service Medal



Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski, who died in July 2009, was posthumously honored with the Endowment's Democracy Service Medal.

remained an implacable foe of Marxism and was an influential figure for Polish dissidents and the Solidarity movement. Kolakowski had served from exile as the Western representative of OKNO, the underground organization that brought together the principal cultural institutions through which Polish democrats worked to establish an independent civil society.

The Endowment also honored Kolakowski at a memorial symposium entitled "Democracy, Totalitarianism, and the Culture of Freedom," held at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, D.C., in October. Kolakowski had been a founding member of the *Journal of Democracy's* Editorial Board and had spoken at several major NED conferences. His thinking influenced the Endowment's strategy in Central and Eastern Europe.

Kolakowski's devotion to freedom was such that, even in the spring of 1989 when freedom's advance seemed unstoppable, he warned a NED-sponsored world conference in Washington of the need to remain vigilant, cautioning that "freedom is always vulnerable and its cause is never safe."

### Nathan Glazer Delivers Sixth Annual Lipset Lecture

The Sixth Annual Lipset Lecture was delivered on November 4, 2009, at the Embassy of Canada in Washington,

D.C., by **Dr. Nathan Glazer**, Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Education at Harvard University. Glazer spoke on "Democracy and Diversity: Dealing with Deep Divides," examining the divisions that exist in the United States, Canada and India.

Nathan Glazer is a renowned sociologist and a lifelong friend of the late Martin Lipset, dating back to their days in the 1940s at New York's City College. Glazer is best known for his works related to diversity in America, including *Beyond the Melting Pot* (1963), co-authored with Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Other major works include *American Judaism* (1957), *Affirmative Discrimination* (1976), *The Limits of Social Policy* (1988), and *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* (1998).

Glazer, who taught at Harvard for more than 30 years, earned his undergraduate degree in Sociology from City College of New York, and his PhD from Columbia University. He has served on committees on urban policy



Dr. Nathan Glazer, Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Education at Harvard University, delivered the Sixth Annual Lipset Lecture on November 4, 2009, at the University of Toronto.



The Lipset Lecture series is named after one of the twentieth century's most influential scholars of democracy, Martin Lipset.

and minority issues at the National Academy of Science and has served on Presidential task forces concerning education and urban policy. For several decades he was the coeditor (with Irving Kristol) of the influential policy quarterly *The Public Interest*, and he is also a longtime contributing editor to *The New Republic*.

The Lipset Lecture series, sponsored jointly by NED and the Munk Center for International Affairs at the University of Toronto (where Glazer spoke on September 24), is named after one of the twentieth century's most influential social scientists and scholars of democracy, Seymour Martin Lipset. The Lipset Lecture acts as a vehicle for continued cooperation between the United States and Canada in promoting democracy and democratic ideals around the world and provides an annual opportunity for influential audiences of both the United States and Canada to hear and discuss a declaration on democracy by a prominent intellectual.