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## Issue Editor's Note

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## ISSUE EDITOR'S NOTE

At the NLG Convention in Tucson, Guild members spent a great deal of time discussing the events of September 11, 2001, their aftermath and the impact on our legal and political work. Accordingly, the *Guild Practitioner* editorial board determined that we should devote a portion of the next GP issue to these topics.

In the September 11 section of this issue, we have included two well-received speeches by Abdeen Jabarra and Michael Ratner, presented at a New York City symposium entitled, "September 11, 2001: Causes, Responses, Long-Term Solutions." This Guild-sponsored event drew a standing-room-only crowd of over 250 people with an additional 150 watching via closed circuit TV in an adjacent room.

Abdeen Jabarra's contribution puts the September 11 attacks and the subsequent war in Afghanistan in historical and political context. He provides an overview and some insight into pertinent events in the region — particularly in regard to Osama bin Laden and his native Saudi Arabia — for the historical period starting with the division of the Middle East after World War I through to the present.

Michael Ratner gives us both a personal perspective from the eyes of a New York parent as well as a discussion of the serious implications of the use of military force, the significance of international law, and how, ultimately, war will not make us safer.

Nancy Chang, from the Center for Constitutional Rights, provides our final piece on September 11. She analyzes some of the most frightening aspects of the recently passed USA PATRIOT Act, to give us a sense of what we are facing from this 342-page law. Those who read Nancy's article will

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## ISSUE EDITOR'S NOTE *CONTINUED*

undoubtedly be better informed than the majority of the Legislators who voted for the Act.

The Guild's resolution on the crisis, drafted by the International Committee and approved at the convention plenary, and a related resolution on the death penalty, which extends the Guild's position against capital punishment to the crimes of September 11, follow the substantive articles on September 11.

In the two weeks prior to September 11, the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR), was taking place in Durban, South Africa. David Gespass, a Regional Vice President of the Guild, was a delegate to the conference. Unfortunately, many Americans will remember the conference only because the U.S. Government refused to send a high-level delegation. The mid-level delegation which *did* attend, was recalled to Washington on the stated objection to discussion surrounding the questions of Israel and Palestine. As a

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## ISSUE EDITOR'S NOTE *CONTINUED*

delegate, Gespass gives us a first-person account of the conference. Two days after his return to the U.S., September 11 was upon us. Gespass ties together the fundamental issues of racism and classism addressed at the conference, with the fundamental issues posed by the events of September 11. As addenda, Gespass submits statements of the Guild and the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, bearing on the U.S. walkout and objections to the Final Document of the NGO Forum.

Professor Kenji Urata's article calls for a critical reappraisal of the so-called "humanitarian intervention" by one nation into the affairs of another. From a perspective of pacifism, which is central to the Japanese Constitution, Professor Urata sees "humanitarian intervention," properly defined, as non-violent measures which respond to humanitarian catastrophes. "Humanitarian intervention" is a "problematic concept," he writes, "when it is used to justify colonialist military aggression." Urata specifically disapproves "humanitarian intervention" as justification for NATO's bombing of Kosovo. His call for international law, founded in the promotion of peace, is of continuing importance since the U.S. commencement of bombing in Afghanistan in response to the events of September 11.

We ask you to keep in mind that we are in a volatile period. During the time between the writing of these articles and their being read, there will likely be new concerns, new issues and some changed circumstances. Nevertheless, we believe that the analysis of the history of Afghanistan, the dangers of war, the relationship between racism, classism and war, and the unfortunate upshot of repressive legislation — will continue to be relevant and enlightening.

Stephen J. Perrello, Jr. & Leslie Rose, *Issue co-editors*

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