

The Wars Abroad Meet the War at Home

by Felton Davis of NYC Catholic Worker

Below is the announcement sent out by Isaac at Action Corps NYC, and a couple of the photo sets from Monday's demonstration across from the United Nations.

It was a long twenty hours "in the system," as the process from the precinct through the labyrinth of basement holding cells, to the courtroom at 100 Centre Street is known. My vest photo of Nora Al-Awlaki was taken by the officers of the Strategic Response Group at the US Mission, and put into an envelope with my house keys, belt and shoelaces, then returned to me outside the courtroom. The officers told me that unless someone showed up at court with my real ID, I would not be released or get any property back.



August 20, 2013

The guys in the holding cell, most from a drug sweep in Washington Heights, were among the rowdiest group of arrestees

that I have ever had the privilege of doing time with. Jumping up and down to stay warm, calling out to the correctional officers for toilet paper, smacking each other around, slamming down the pay phone trying to get through to friends and family, and last but not least, going around the cell to figure out who in their circle was going to get charged with what. They assured me that the DA would not ask for bail in my case, whether or not I identified myself, but in fact, when we were all brought upstairs and into the courtroom, the DA did ask for \$1000 bail, given my numerous open cases, and *"extensive interstate contacts."*

A much more thorough discussion of the issues involved in present-day antiwar efforts took place in the holding cell than will ever take place in the courtroom, as I tried to explain the context for our demonstration for the suffering people of Yemen. We've been at war – undeclared, unauthorized, whatever – for so many years, with so many countries, none of whom are a threat to us, that it has become a permanent condition, and takes a special effort to bring into awareness. The guys had no disagreement with that, and as far as war constituting theft from urgent social needs, they cited numerous examples in their personal lives.

"You know how many of my neighbors I have had to rob on the street just so my kid will eat?"

I refrained from attempting to answer that question, instead offering the opinion that on the international scene, this robbery is having a devastating effect all throughout the Middle East, as nation after nation is targeted. *"People are going to hate us..."*

"They already hate us! You don't know that?" They shook their heads in bewilderment.

"Everything we got in this country is because it was stolen, and stolen by force! Where the FUCK have you been?"

Twenty hours was not enough time for me to go through all the demonstrations over the years that have concluded with a trip to Central Booking, but I did explain to the guys that in the 1980's, before some of them were born, there was no toilet in the men's cell, and arrestees would have to pee on the floor in the corner. Then I accidentally compared that little bit of progress with the abolition of slavery, and received another instantaneous verdict from the jury.



"Fuckin bullshit! You think slavery was abolished? You're crazy! Slavery was not abolished, it was just..."

The discussion continued in Spanish as the guys searched for the most accurate word for what happened to the institution of slavery. And slowly (very slowly without caffeine), the day dawned and we were moved along through the labyrinth. I told the legal aid attorney who I was, and the DA already seemed to know – probably from my fingerprints – and so there was no need to inquire whose *"extensive interstate contacts"* were under review, mine or John Does. The judge would not order bail, and so I was released on ROR, and scheduled for trial on Wednesday, January 17th.

#LetYemenLive Emergency Protests Break Out Across US

Monday the NYPD arrested 15 people for blocking entry to the US Mission to the United Nations, while others protested at the Saudi mission, the Saudi office in Los Angeles, and at the Hart Senate Offices in DC, all under the **#LetYemenLive** protest name. Medea Benjamin, co-founder of CODEPINK, reported there was a demonstration in Houston, too. The demonstration in New York included approximately 50 people, while the one in DC included 15, and the one in LA 10. Those in DC sang Christmas

carols with original lyrics to US Senators.

*NYC: 14 arrested at Yemen solidarity protest by Erik McGregor
#YemenSolidarity #HandsOffYemen #LetYemenLive #EndTheWars
pic.twitter.com/jIdS5DljMw*

– Pacific Press Agency (@PPA_NewsPhoto) December 12, 2017

Friday the White House reiterated its call for humanitarian access in Yemen. As the world's worst famine approaches, 19 organizations participated in the emergency protest at the UN Monday. Participants performed civil disobedience against the US-backed Saudi war, visually representing Yemeni children killed and orphaned from the war. They called for an end to humanitarian and commercial blockade against Yemen, and for a cease fire by all sides.

*Yemen is starving. At the UN today to say #LetYemenLive. The Trump regime is fueling& ramping up this humanitarian crisis.
#TrumpPenceMustGo pic.twitter.com/plDFmjaPK9*

– #TrumpPenceMustGo (@RefuseFascism) December 11, 2017

The Catholic Worker organized the NYC demonstration. Speakers included two-time presidential candidate David McReynolds, Kate Alexander from Peace Action New York State, and Carmen Trotta, of the Catholic Worker. Dr. Debbie Almontaser provided a statement that was read by a representative of Action Corps NYC. Supporting organizations include: *Voices for Creative Nonviolence, World Beyond War, Code Pink, Pax Christi Metro NY, Peace Action New York State, NYC Raging Grannies, Kairos Community, KnowDrones.com, Action Corps NYC, Granny Peace Brigade, Uptown Progressive Action, Sander Hicks for Congress, Rise and Resist NY, Veterans For Peace – NYC Chapter 034, NYC War Resisters League, Women in Black Union Square, 15th Street Quakers Peace & Social Justice Committee, and World Can't*

Wait.

Statement from Action Corps NYC:

“Time is running out for the people of Yemen, who are experiencing the world’s worst humanitarian crisis. With seven million people on the brink of starvation, the country will face the largest famine since WWII if Saudi Arabia continues the war and blockade. This blockade cuts access to much-needed medical supplies. Over half of healthcare facilities in the country are nonfunctional, worsening Yemen’s cholera outbreak with total cases possibly reaching one million by the end of this month. The US must use its influence to stop the blockade and must ultimately stop supporting the war.”