

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

Dissent in Albany: Protest Photos by Jeanne Finley PC 42

Collection Summary

Collection Title: Dissent in Albany: Protest Photos by Jeanne Finley

Call Number: PC 42

Creator: Jeanne Finley

Inclusive Dates: August 15, 2008 – August 26, 2020

Abstract: The collection of photographs by Jeanne Finley were taken at thirty-nine rallies, marches, protests, demonstrations, and vigils held in Albany that addressed and supported a variety of progressive social justice and political issues.

Quantity: 224 photographs in color and black and white

Administrative Information

Custodial History: Prints purchased by AIHA with permission of the artist. Non-exclusive license to reproduce photos for the life of their copyright and all reproductions.

Preferred Citation: Dissent in Albany, PC 42, Albany Institute of History & Art Library, New York.

Acquisition Information:

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Processing Information:

Processed by Linda Simkin (library volunteer); completed on July 25, 2024. Reviewed by Rebecca Chartier-Hobson (registrar); completed on November 25, 2024.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access: None

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Index Term

Persons:

Organizations:

Albany March for Science Committee
Albany Social Justice Center
Bethlehem Neighbors for Peace
Black Lives Matter
Capital Area Against Mass Incarceration (CAAMI)
Capital District Coalition Against Islamophobia
Citizen Action
Everytown for Gun Safety
Families Belong Together (Familias Unidas, No Dividas)
First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany
Holding Our Own, Inc.
ICE-Free Capital District
Jewish Voice for Peace
March for Our Lives
MoveOn.org
Muslim Solidarity Committee
National Association of Social Workers, New York State Chapter
Never Again MSD
New York Civil Liberties Union (Capital Region Chapter)
New York State United Teachers (NTSUT)
Occupy Albany
Palestinian Rights Committee
Save the Pine Bush
Solidarity Committee of the Capital District
Tea Party
Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood
Veterans for Peace
Women Against War

Places:

Albany, NY
Guilderland, NY

Document Types:

Photographs
Photograph collections
Photojournalism

Titles

Biography/History of

Jeanne Finley is a writer-turned-photographer. Born in the central Adirondacks, she grew up in western New York, returned to the Adirondacks, then lived in Boston, and has lived and worked in the Capital District since 1971. She has taught creative writing in all genres, worked as the first assistant to the directors at the New York State Writers Institute from its inception in 1983 until 1991, and was assistant editor at *New York Archives Magazine*, published by the New York State Archives, for 13 years. She has exhibited her photographs since 2015 at various venues and galleries in and around the Capital District, including the 2017 *Artists of the Mohawk-Hudson Region* at the Albany Institute of History and Art. Six of her photos are in the collection of the Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region.

Scope and Contents of the Records/Papers/Collection

The following is a description of the collection written by Jeanne Finley, Photographer, November 2022:

“From August 2007 to August 2020, a period of thirteen years, I attended and photographed thirty-nine rallies, marches, protests, demonstrations, and vigils held in Albany that addressed and supported a variety of progressive social justice and political issues. This number by no means represents all the rallies or marches that took place in Albany or the Capital Region over those years, only the ones that I had some stake or interest in attending or that I was able to cover. I began by photographing the annual marches, sponsored by the Muslim Solidarity Committee (of which I was an original member), in support of the defendants in the Aref-Hossain sting case (see “Descriptions of Events,” August 15, 2007). And thus my interest grew, over time, in photographing other marches and rallies centered on often-related social justice causes.

I had to stop attending marches in late 2020 due to a mobility problem; eventually I couldn’t march any distance or move fast enough to keep up with the action. Because of this, I wasn’t able to photograph the numerous local Black Lives Matter marches and rallies that captivated Albany and the rest of the country just before and during the Covid pandemic in 2020 and 2021. But you will find here photos of earlier and smaller rallies centered around Black Lives Matter and the movement’s issues, in 2014 and 2016.

This collection consists of 224 photographs, in both color and black and white, a selection from the thousands I took at all these events. To document them, I give each event’s location; a brief explanation of its purpose; its sponsors, as much as I could remember or research them; and background information about the event. Identifying participants in the photographs was daunting, but I’ve done my best (with a little help from my friends).

I think of these photos as photojournalism, though I didn’t train as such (my background is in writing and editing, though now photography is my main creative practice)—a way to belatedly fill in the “photo-” end of things that the journalist in me always wanted to express. I am also happy to contribute to the documentation of the many outlets for political action that continue to exist in Albany, New York’s capital. Like all capital cities,

Albany is a political town; I hope these photographs give insight into not only the issues of the time but also the variety, beliefs, dedication, passion, and history of so many of Albany's political groups and citizen-activists."

Organization of the Records/Papers/Collection
--

One box with 39 series / folders.

Related Material

None

Separated Materials

None

Other Finding Aids

None

Detailed Description of the Records/Papers/Collection
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The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Series 1: Aref-Hossain Rally & March, August 15, 2007

Sponsor: Muslim Solidarity Committee

Location: Rally beginning at Washington Avenue Armory, corner of Washington Ave. and Lark St., then a march up Central Avenue to the Masjid As-Salam at 276 Central.

Purpose: First annual public event after the men's convictions; solidarity and demand for their freedom.

Background: I was part of the original citizens committee, formed in 2006 and later called the Muslim Solidarity Committee, to support two Albany Muslims, Yassin Aref and Mohammed Hossain, who were unjustly convicted in 2006 of terrorism in a much-publicized FBI sting. One of the resolutions of the committee was to keep the case, and the men and their families, constantly in the public's consciousness, so we planned to sponsor an event of some kind every year on the anniversary of their arrest, August 4, until they were freed. The event turned out to be an annual march, usually down or up Central Avenue and centered at the Masjid As-Salam at 276 Central, where the two men were members (Yassin Aref was the imam at the time of his arrest; Mohammed Hossain was the mosque's co-founder). I began photographing these marches (which I helped organize) from the outset in 2007, with only a few years missing, through the return of Mohammed Hossain to his family in Albany in 2020 after serving his sentence. Yassin Aref was freed in 2019 and was deported—happily—to his native Kurdistan in northern Iraq to join his extended family.

6 photos

1. Boy holding sign is Salah Muhiddin, Yassin Aref's son.
2. Unidentified
3. People holding Aref/Hossain banner: left, Priscilla Fairbank; center, Steve Trimm; right, Abu Horayra Hossain, Mohammed Hossain's son.
4. Woman with pink sign is Maud Easter. Girl is Habiba Hossain, Mohammed Hossain's daughter.
5. Photo of storefront (#3 Central Ave.) is Little Italy, the pizzeria owned by Mohammed Hossain. It is now a liquor store. This photo appeared in black and white in *Rounded Up: Artificial Terrorists and Muslim Entrapment After 9/11* by Dr. Shamshad Ahmad (Troy Book Makers, 2009).
6. People in a line with signs: left, Fred Arthur Childs; center, Steve Wickham; right, Wil Downs.

Series 2: Aref-Hossain Rally & March, August 22, 2008

Sponsor: Muslim Solidarity Committee

Location: Rally beginning at the Washington Avenue Armory, corner of Washington Ave. and Lark St., then a march up Central Avenue to the Masjid As-Salam at 276 Central.

Purpose: Solidarity with Aref and Hossain and their families.

Background: Annual march in solidarity with Aref and Hossain and their families, to commemorate the anniversary of their arrests on August 4, 2004.

5 photos

1. Three women holding banner: left, Mabel Leon; center, Maud Easter.
2. Boy holding sign "Saratoga Peace Alliance": woman holding "Dr. Dhafir..." sign at left is Katherine Hughes. Next to her is Joe Lombardo. Boy at right in green t-shirt is Abu Horayra Hossain, Mohammed Hossain's son.
3. Man holding sign in front of Masjid As-Salam is Steve Trimm
4. Woman with drum is Jun-San Yusada, caretaker of the Grafton Peace Pagoda in Rensselaer County. Behind her is Ellie Bernstein.
5. Unidentified

Series 3: Aref-Hossain Rally & March, with Fort Dix 5 Families, August 4, 2009

Sponsor: Muslim Solidarity Committee

Location: Rally beginning at the Washington Avenue Armory, corner of Washington Ave. and Lark St., then a march up Central Avenue to the Masjid As-Salam at 276 Central.

Purpose: Solidarity with Aref and Hossain and their families; solidarity with and support for the families of the Fort Dix 5 defendants.

Background: The families of defendants in an unjust 2007 New Jersey terrorism case dubbed the "Fort Dix 5" (involving three brothers, a relative, and a friend) reached out to Muslim Solidarity Committee members for support. The committee invited them to come to Albany and march with them for the annual Aref-Hossain march.

4 photos

1. Young people marching and holding posters: girl in center holding camera is Leilja Duka, daughter of one of the Fort Dix 5 defendants, Dritan Duka. Man in red t-shirt is Burim Duka, brother of the three convicted brothers.
2. Kids looking through window at a poster are all unidentified. The photo was taken from inside Little Italy Pizzeria, 3 Central Ave., owned by Mohammed Hossain, which posted the notice of the march that was about to take place.
3. People holding signs. Man at left holding two signs is Ibrahim Shnewer, father of Mohamed Shnewer, one of the Fort Dix 5. Muslim woman holding a sign is Lata Duka, mother of the three brothers convicted in the Fort Dix 5 case. Man facing left holding sign is Ferik Duka, their father. Man at right in red t-shirt holding a sign is Burim Duka, brother of the three convicted brothers. This photo appeared in the September–October 2009 issue of the magazine *Washington Report for Middle East Affairs* to illustrate my article, “Families and Supporters of Muslim Defendants Meet, March in Albany.”
4. People marching with orange banner. Man on right is Daniel Van Riper. The march is passing Little Italy Pizzeria.

Series 4: Occupy Albany, October 15, 2011

Sponsor: Informally: NYSUT (New York State United Teachers), Muslim Solidarity Committee, Veterans for Peace, many individuals

Location: East side of State Capitol.

Purpose: To rally citizens who supported Occupy Wall Street in New York City and its demands for economic justice and equity for working people.

Background: Although Albany’s Occupy protest (and later encampment) didn’t officially begin until a week later, this rally brought together workers from public sector unions and interested citizen/activists as a prelude to see what kind of support an Occupy movement in Albany might have.

8 photos (all unidentified)

Series 5: Occupy Albany, October 21, 2011

Sponsor: Various progressive social justice groups, political parties and organizations, unions (including Solidarity Committee of the Capital District), and private citizens.

Location: A march down Washington Avenue past the Capitol to Academy Park on lower Washington Ave.

Purpose: To formally begin Occupy Albany by establishing an encampment in Academy Park.

Background: Occupy Albany lasted from October 21 to December 22, 2011.

8 photos (all unidentified)

Series 6: Occupy Albany, October 29, 2011

Sponsor: Occupy Albany, which quickly built its own website and listservs and became its own sponsor.

Location: Academy Park, lower Washington Ave.

Purpose: To occupy the park as a “tent city” (dubbed “Cuomoville”) until various demands for economic justice and equity for working people were met.

Background: Participants often spontaneously organized marches on lower Washington Ave., including to the governor’s mansion on Eagle Street, or stood streetside with signs. Each day had a different schedule of actions. Speakers on this day included Congressman Paul Tonko, State Assemblyman Jack McEneny, Dutchess County legislator and congressional candidate Joel Tyner, Albany Common Council members Barbara Smith and Dominick Calsolaro, and several citizens. The day’s activity was called Occupy Your Capital Day.

7 photos (photos 2-7 unidentified)

1. Man holding “Goldman Sucks” sign is Bradley Russell.

Series 7: Occupy Albany, Night, November 19, 2011

Sponsor: Occupy Albany

Location: Academy Park and Lafayette Park, lower Washington Ave.

Purpose: Refusal of Occupy participants to leave Academy Park; temporary occupation of Lafayette Park.

Background: Governor Andrew Cuomo objected to the presence of Occupy participants in Academy Park, controlled partly by the City of Albany and by New York State and home to the offices of the Albany School District. Occupy protestors had descended on the governor’s mansion in a previous week when Cuomo refused to reauthorize an income tax surcharge on New Yorkers making more than \$200,000 a year, thus earning him the title “Governor One Percent.” In response, Cuomo pressured Mayor Jerry Jennings to have Albany police arrest Occupy protestors for staying in Academy Park after an unposted 11 p.m. curfew. But District Attorney David Soares said he would decline to prosecute the protestors, so Cuomo ordered the State Police to start making arrests. Participants then organized a night rally in Lafayette Park, just up Washington Ave., controlled by New York State and named in honor of the Marquis de Lafayette (who had commanded troops at Albany in 1778). They expected the arrests (48 total over the course of a week), which they considered acts of civil disobedience that upheld their First Amendment rights to peacefully assemble and demonstrate, but ultimately did not withdraw the encampment from Academy Park. Trespassing and disorderly conduct charges were later dropped.

7 photos (2, 4-7 unidentified)

1. Woman in National Lawyers Guild hat is Kathy Manley

2. unidentified
3. Man holding flag is Bradley Russell.
4. – 7. Unidentified

Series 8: Rally/Vigil Against NDAA & Indefinite Detention, December 15, 2011

Sponsor: Muslim Solidarity Committee, Occupy Albany, Tea Party, Capital Region chapter of New York Civil Liberties Union

Location: In front of Albany City Hall on Eagle Street, across from Academy Park.

Purpose: To protest passage of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2012, which for the first time formally authorized the indefinite military detention of people the federal government suspected of involvement in terrorism, including U.S. citizens arrested on American soil.

Background: Called the “Obama NDAA,” these detention powers still face legal challenges.

2 photos

1. People in front of banner, from left: Linda LeTendre (in hood), Mark Mishler, third man unidentified. Holding banner at top is Fred Arthur Childs.
2. Man in front of banner is Eyad Alkurabi.

Series 9: Occupy’s End, December 22, 2011

Sponsor: Occupy Albany

Location: A rally in Academy Park; a spontaneous march down State Street to North Pearl Street, then up Lark Street to Washington Avenue and back to Academy Park.

Purpose: Refusal to leave Academy Park despite warnings that the police would physically evict protestors and demolish the Occupy encampment.

Background: Word had come down from Mayor Jerry Jennings that he would direct the Albany Police Department to finally clear the park—although, significantly, not on this date—citing as one of the reasons the presence of homeless people and associated crime. City attorneys claimed that their only concern was the safety of the participants. Jennings was supported in this by Governor Cuomo. Occupy participants said publicly that they would refuse to leave. In late afternoon the Department of General Services suddenly began hauling away protestors’ tents, signs, and other items in garbage trucks. Occupy protestors and interested citizens rallied in the park at sunset and, bearing aloft the huge orange tent that served as the main information center for the encampment, began a large spontaneous march down State Street, through downtown on North Pearl Street, then up Lark Street and down Washington Avenue back to Academy Park. The police provided security on horseback and let the protestors complete the march, which took over an hour, without interference. However, once back in the park, the police seized the tent and began to move participants out of the park, and Officer Richard Gorleski on horseback began pepper-spraying them for no apparent reason. Many protestors were pepper-sprayed, including

some prominent citizens who had joined the march (including Willie White, director of the South End advocacy organization, A Village), and this escalation led to anger and confusion. The police proceeded to tear down the large orange tent and evict most of the protestors, who left in keeping with Occupy's rule of non-violence. The encampment was demolished, but a few protestors remained to sing and place signs.

A note: 2011 was unusually warm for December, which probably allowed greater participation in the encampment and associated actions. The warm weather continued into January.

13 photos (5-13 unidentified)

1. Man holding sign, "Who Would Jesus Evict?" is unidentified. Woman in pink jacket is Alice Brody.
2. Woman in red holding flag is Diana Morales Manley.
3. Man holding book, *The New Jim Crow*, is Willie White.
4. Woman in pink jacket with fist is Alice Brody. Behind her is Joe Lombardo.

Series 10: Occupy Solidarity, January 5, 2012

Sponsor: Occupy Albany, MoveOn.org

Location: Lower Washington Avenue and Academy Park.

Purpose: A rally in solidarity with the spirit of Occupy Albany.

Background: Though the encampment was gone, protestors rallied with signs on Washington Avenue to show the public, the city administration, and the governor that the many issues that Occupy Albany highlighted concerning economic justice and restoring democracy had not been either forgotten or dealt with. A march then progressed uptown to Lark Street and returned to Academy Park for a candlelight vigil.

6 Photos (all unidentified)

Series 11: Occupy May Day, May 1, 2012

Sponsor: Occupy Albany

Location: Academy Park, then marches uptown and downtown.

Purpose: To continue the actions of Occupy Albany on the economic issues it highlighted, on the traditional May Day/workers' day.

Background: A rally began in Academy Park, then protestors broke into different marches, which covered State Street, Pearl Street, and Broadway, stopping at Bank of America, Verizon, the State Education Department building, and the Greyhound bus station.

Later that evening, according to 1199/SEIU (Service Employees International Union): "At 10 p.m., Occupy Albany returned to the spot in [Academy] Park where they first pitched their tents last October. Aware of the 11 p.m. curfew, about 80 people gathered, a drum circle

banged out a backbeat, and state troopers approached. The crowd chanted, 'We are unstoppable; another world is possible.' Then, one by one, twenty protesters were arrested by State Police after 11 p.m."

6 Photos (all unidentified)

Series 12: Aref-Hossain Rally & March, August 4, 2012

Sponsor: Muslim Solidarity Committee

Location: Rally at the Masjid As-Salam, 276 Central Avenue, then a march up Central Avenue and return to the mosque.

Purpose: Solidarity with Aref and Hossain and their families; to remember and support other unjustly prosecuted Muslims and their families in the "War on Terror."

Background: The Muslim Solidarity Committee invited family members of several unjustly prosecuted Muslims from around the country to march with them in the annual Aref-Hossain march. A candlelight vigil was held outside the Masjid As-Salam, and then several family members spoke inside. Participants were urged to write to prisoners so they would not be forgotten.

8 photos (photos 6-8 unidentified)

1. Crowd marching carrying "Free Aref and Hossain" banner: boy at left is Azzam Muhiddin, Yassin Aref's son. Young girl next to him in white hijab is Halima Hossain, Mohammed Hossain's daughter. Man in striped shirt is Fahd Ahmad, founder of DRUM (Desis Rising Up and Moving).
2. People marching, carrying signs: woman in pink shawl is Judy Bello.
3. Woman with sign, "Free Tarik Shah," is Marlene Jenkins, Tarik Shah's mother. Behind her at left are John Amidon and Ellie Bernstein.
4. (Unidentified)
5. Man in striped shirt holding microphone for woman is Fahd Ahmad. The woman is Shahina Parveen, mother of Shahawar Matin Siraj, another prisoner unjustly convicted on phony terrorism charges.

Series 13: 1st Anniversary Occupy Albany, October 21, 2012

Sponsor: Occupy Albany

Location: Academy Park

Purpose: Commemorate the first anniversary of Occupy Albany with spontaneous speeches about the issues it raised; solidarity for protestors who had charges pending.

Background: Four members of Occupy had been arrested by police in June for obstructing traffic during a planned march downtown and were charged with disorderly conduct; this was seen as harassment. One member was also charged with misdemeanor resisting arrest. District Attorney David Soares declined to prosecute (he had been unwilling to prosecute Occupy protestors during the encampment, withstanding pressure from the

mayor, governor, and police), but a city judge threatened to hold the DA's office in contempt if it did not prosecute, despite an earlier decision by another city judge that similar charges against Occupy protestors should be dismissed (and were), precisely because the DA did not prosecute. In this case, the charges were finally dismissed, but only after the dispute between the DA and the judge went to the Court of Appeals and the judge lost.

2 photos

1. Unidentified
2. People standing: second from left is Kathy Manley. Seated to her left is Eyad Alkurabi. Man seated with his hand up is Colin Donnaruma.

Series 14: Free Gaza, July 31, 2014

Sponsor: Palestinian Rights Committee, Jewish Voice for Peace

Location: Dana Park, Delaware, Lark and Dana Aves.

Purpose: Protest Israel's deliberate bombing of the Gaza Strip in the 2014 Gaza War.

Background: Another similar protest was held in the same location a week later.

5 photos (3-5 unidentified)

1. Woman holding sign, "Who Would Jesus Bomb," is Linda LeTendre, shaking hands with Carl Strock.
2. Two young men with signs: on right is Khalifallah Osman.

Series 15: August 4, 2014, Aref-Hossain Rally & March, 10th Anniversary of arrests, with play performance, *To Catch a Muslim*

Sponsor: Muslim Solidarity Committee

Location: Rally beginning at Washington Avenue Armory, corner of Washington Ave. and Lark St., then a march up Central Avenue to the Masjid As-Salam at 276 Central.

Purpose: Commemorate the 10th anniversary of the arrests of Aref and Hossain on August 4, 2004; present an original play about the case.

Background: After the march, in the mosque the Muslim Solidarity Players performed a play written by attorney Steve Downs, *To Catch a Muslim*, about the Aref-Hossain case from arrest to unsuccessful appeals, featuring the main "characters" including Aref, Hossain, the informant, the trial and appeal judges, and the FBI agents. Some dark humor and a lot of irony were voiced. The play was subsequently performed twice at other venues in the Capital District.

4 photos

1. Group of people standing: second from left is Joe Lombardo, then Rezsine Adams, Dominick Calsolaro, Shamsah Ahmad.

2. Man with megaphone is Salah Muhiddin, Yassin Aref's son.
3. Men holding banner: second from left is Fred Arthur Childs, at right is Pete Looker.
4. Players in the original play *To Catch a Muslim* take a bow at the premiere at the Masjid As-Salam. From left: Doug Bullock as Police, Hadiya Wilborn as both Trial and Appeals Judge, Carl Strock as Yassin Aref, Steve Downs as Mohammed Hossain, Mari Matsuo as Malik/Informant, Marwa Elbially as Government/FBI Agent 1, Lynne Jackson as Narrator, Kathy Manley as Government/FBI Agent 2, Mary Finneran as Sign Holder.

Series 16: Rally/Vigil for Michael Brown/Black Lives Matter, November 25, 2014

Sponsor: Capital Area Against Mass Incarceration (CAAMI), Black Lives Matter, Bethlehem Neighbors for Peace, First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, Albany Social Justice Center, Holding Our Own, Inc. and Citizen Action of New York

Location: In front of Albany City Hall, Eagle Street; march to Federal Building.

Purpose: A rally, vigil, and march to protest the murder of Michael Brown by police in Ferguson, Missouri.

Background: On August 9, 2014, 18-year-old Michael Brown, an African American teenager, was shot and killed by a white police officer after an altercation at the police car and subsequent short chase. Witnesses to the shooting claimed Brown had his hands up in surrender or said "Don't shoot," so protesters later used the slogan "[Hands up, don't shoot.](#)" Protests across the country against police brutality toward African Americans continued for more than a week. On November 24, a grand jury concluded that the police officer would not be indicted. The shooting galvanized the Black Lives Matter movement nationally and sparked this protest.

4 photos (2-4 unidentified)

1. Group of people standing with signs: tall man in center with sign is Bradley Russell.

Series 17: Jewish Voice for Peace/Chanukah/Black Lives Matter, December 16, 2014

Sponsor: Jewish Voice for Peace, Black Lives Matter

Location: Dana Park at Delaware, Lark and Dana Aves.

Purpose: To show support for the Black Lives Matter movement within the Jewish community, on the occasion of Chanukah.

Background: In July, Eric Garner, an African American father of six, was killed on Staten Island when he was put in a chokehold by a white police officer. Protestors subsequently used the slogan "I can't breathe" (apparently Garner's last words). Chanukah/Hanukkah is a traditional Jewish celebration often falling close to the Christian Christmas; Jewish Voice for Peace, an international activist organization that supports Palestinian and minority rights, wanted to use the holiday to show solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement (and once word got out, vice-versa).

6 photos (3-6 unidentified)

1. Man holding sign with Palestine flags is Zuhair Al-Atwi.
2. Man with Leviticus/menorah sign is Joe Seeman.

Series 18: Women Against War/Anti-War Rally, March 21, 2015

Sponsor: Women Against War

Location: Corner of Wolf Road and Central Avenue.

Purpose: To rally against war on the first day of spring; "Spring Rising."

Background: March 21 was a national day of protest against U.S. war-making. Goals were to increase opposition to wars and militarism, in particular to U.S. military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, as well as U.S. drone attacks and surveillance worldwide. Many members of Grannies for Peace, an activist division within Women Against War, participated.

6 Photos (2-6 unidentified)

1. Woman seated holding flag is Sue Clark

Series 19: Women Against War/Valentine's Day Vigil, February 16, 2016

Sponsor: Women Against War

Location: Corner of Wolf Road and Central Avenue

Purpose: Annual Grannies for Peace Valentine's Day vigil.

Background: Grannies for Peace, an activist division within Women Against War, organized annual vigils for peace on or around Valentine's Day, with the general theme of Love. Participants wore red. The theme this time was Love Thy Muslim Neighbor and anti-Islamophobia. The day was exceptionally cold, with a bitter wind blowing, and the vigil was shortened to ½ hour.

3 Photos (photos 2-3 unidentified)

1. Woman holding "Muslim..." bumper stickers is Linde LeTendre.

Series 20: Jewish Voice for Peace/Rally Against BDS, June 15, 2016

Sponsor: Jewish Voice for Peace, Black Lives Matter

Location: Dana Park at Delaware, Lark and Dana Aves.

Purpose: To show support for the Black Lives Matter movement within the Jewish community, on the occasion of Chanukah.

Background: In July, Eric Garner, an African American father of six, was killed on Staten Island when he was put in a chokehold by a white police officer. Protestors subsequently used the slogan "I can't breathe" (apparently Garner's last words). Chanukah/Hanukkah is a traditional Jewish celebration often falling close to the Christian Christmas; Jewish Voice for Peace, an international activist organization that supports Palestinian and minority rights,

wanted to use the holiday to show solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement (and once word got out, vice-versa).

6 Photos (5-6 unidentified)

1. Three women with signs and banner: on right is Renee Hariton.
2. Woman holding one end of orange banner is Pearl Strock.
3. Men holding Veterans for Peace banner: in center is Dan Wilcox, looking right.
4. Group photo indoors: man in center with checkered keffiyeh is Eyad Alkurabi.

Series 21: Black Lives Matter, July 8, 2016

Sponsor: Black Lives Matter (Albany)

Location: Dana Park at Delaware, Lark and Dana Aves.

Purpose: Solidarity with the nationwide Black Lives Matter movement.

Background: With continual killings of Black citizens by police, a vigil was called to mourn the loss of lives and to urge both Black and White citizens to take action.

6 photos (all unidentified)

Series 22: Aref-Hossain Rally & March, August 4, 2016

Sponsor: Muslim Solidarity Committee

Location: Rally at the Masjid As-Salam, 276 Central Ave., then march to the Unitarian Universalist Society, 405 Washington Ave. Dinner and speakers followed.

Purpose: Solidarity with Aref and Hossain and their families; solidarity with and advocacy for other Muslim prisoners in the “War on Terror,” especially those in the CMUs, Communications Management Units, where all communication is restricted.

Background: Annual march in support of Aref and Hossain and their families, to commemorate the day of their arrests, August 4, 2004.

7 photos (photos 4-7 unidentified)

1. Woman seated with sign is Alicia McWilliams, aunt of David Williams, one of the Newburgh 4 defendants.
2. Men with red banner: on left is Max Grieshaber, designer and maker of this and other banners; in center is Steve Downs.
3. Group picture: from left: man in shirt and white t-shirt is Ed Landing. Woman kneeling is Priscilla Fairbank. Man standing against white banner is Sam Trumbore, minister of First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany. Man kneeling in front of him with sign is Zuhair Al-Atwi. Standing next to him is Dominick Calsolaro. Next to him is Eyad Alkurabi. Kneeling in front of him is Kathy Manley, and in front of her, kneeling, is Wendy Dwyer. Standing behind her

is Steve Downs, next to him is Shamshad Ahmad. Standing next to him is Mauri' Saalakhan. Woman seated at far right is Naomi Jaffe.

Series 23: Parole Reform Now, Aug 8, 2016

Sponsor: CAAMI (Capital Area Against Mass Incarceration), and endorsed by RAPP (Release Aging People in Prison), the Correctional Association of New York, and Center for Law and Justice

Location: In front of Parole Division office of New York State Parole Board, 97 Central Ave.

Purpose: A vigil and protest to demand revisions to state parole laws.

Background: John MacKenzie, a prisoner and client of one of the participants, committed suicide in prison after being denied parole for the tenth time. The vigil expressed grief and demanded changes to the circumstances under which parole was considered and advocated for elderly prisoners to be paroled immediately. Coordinated with a similar vigil and protest in New York City.

6 photos (photos 3-6 unidentified)

1. Woman holding sign is Pat Beetle.
2. Three women backed by blinds: on left is Barbara Smith, holding microphones is Kathy Manley.

Series 24: November 19, 2016, Rally Against Trump's 100 Days Agenda

Sponsor: Capital District Coalition Against Islamophobia and other immigrant, Black, human rights, Muslim, religious, political, and peace advocacy groups

Location: Rally at Townsend Park between Central and Washington Aves. for speeches, then march up Central Ave. to the Masjid As-Salam at 276 Central for speeches.

Purpose: Oppose the "100 Days" agenda of newly elected President Donald Trump.

Background: In early November, Trump announced his "100 Days" agenda, tasks to be accomplished in his first 100 days in office. These included cleaning up Washington with term limits on Congress; protecting American workers; restoring the rule of law; repealing Obamacare; funding the construction of a wall at the Southern border (with a provision that Mexico would reimburse the U.S.); encouraging infrastructure investment; rebuilding military bases; and promoting school choice. The possibility of a "Muslim registry" was also floated. The focus of the rally was on immigration and opposing Trump's past misogynistic and racist remarks against women, Muslims, and other minorities. Two other rallies also took place in Albany earlier on November 19; participants were then invited to march with this rally.

7 photos (4-7 unidentified)

1. Group photo, woman holding sign, "Interfaith Alliance," is Pat Beetle.
2. Group photo, all looking left: man third from left with kufi is Imam Faisal Ahmad.

3. Three people standing: from left: Joe Lombardo, Medea Benjamin, co-founder of Code Pink, Shamshad Ahmad.

Series 25: No KKK Agenda, December 3, 2016

Sponsor: Capital District Coalition Against Islamophobia and other immigrant, Black, human rights, Muslim, religious, political, and peace. advocacy groups; Albany Common Council and city government official

Location: Rally at Townsend Park between Central and Washington Aves. for speeches, then march down Lark Street to Dana Park (at Delaware, Lark and Madison Aves. intersection) for speeches.

Purpose: Oppose Trump's association with and past support for white supremacy.

Background: The Ku Klux Klan announced a victory rally for Trump in North Carolina for December 3. David Duke, former Grand Dragon of the KKK, was an early endorser of Trump.

7 photos (photos 6-7 unidentified)

1. People holding "Upper Hudson Peace Action" signs: in middle is Elaine Klein, at right is Mark Klein.
2. Woman with guitar is Ruth Pelham.
3. Group of people in park under trees: at far right is Mark Mishler.
4. Woman holding yellow sign is Cheryl Bellus.
5. Group of people standing: behind (to right) of man in center: man in hood and sunglasses is Shamshad Ahmad.

Series 26: Inaugurate Resistance/Women's March January 21, 2017

Sponsor: Citizen Action, Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood

Location: A march beginning at SEIU (Service Employees International Union) on Washington Ave., proceeding to West Capitol Park.

Purpose: Protest the election of Donald Trump as president; reinforce women's rights and freedoms, especially reproductive freedom.

Background: According to area newspapers, this was one of the largest rallies in Albany's history, with upwards of 5,000 participants (a conservative estimate by the Albany Police Department), many more than that from estimates from participants in the crowd. It was one of the biggest crowds I'd ever been in. Speakers from a wide range of organizations. Similar huge marches throughout the country.

10 photos (photos 2-10 unidentified)

1. Three people holding "...Islamophobia" banner, from left: Kathy Manley, Steve Downs, Lynne Jackson.

Series 27: Airport Rally Against Muslim Ban, January 29, 2017

Sponsor: Informally organized by word of mouth

Location: Albany County International Airport

Purpose: Protest President Trump's Executive Order that banned people from seven predominately Muslim countries from entering the U.S. and suspended the U.S. refugee program.

Background: Hundreds of people with signs, singing, and chants.

6 photos (photos 3-6 unidentified)

1. Woman in red hat holding "Embrace Refugees" sign is Mabel Leon.
2. Man holding megaphone is Joe Seeman.

Series 28: Interfaith Rally at Jewish Community Center, February 2, 2017

Sponsor: Ad hoc coalition of peace groups, including Jewish Voice for Peace *Location:* In front of Albany Jewish Community Center, Whitehall Rd.

Purpose: Respond with peaceful community support to bomb threat.

Background: The JCC had received a bomb threat, which had forced the evacuation of the Early Childhood Center. The threat was later determined to be a hoax that originated locally.

7 photos (photos 5-7 unidentified)

1. Woman with "We Are One" sign is Pat Beetle.
2. Group photo: woman with sign, "Love Unity Community," is Mickie Lynn.
3. Man below "No Hate" sign is Michael Rice. Woman to his left is Mabel Leon.
4. Two children holding "We Muslims..." sign, from left: Sanari and Jaazi Saleem-Ismael, daughter and son of activist Fazana Saleem-Ismael.

Series 29: March for Science, April 22, 2017

Sponsor: Albany March for Science Committee

Location: West Capitol Park

Purpose: Promote scientific education, increase communication between scientists and the community, find ways for government and scientists to work together, demonstrate public support for evidence-based policies.

Background: Very large rally, then a march. Worried about the politicization of science by the Trump administration, including climate change, and the lack of public response to that, the organizers' slogan was "Science Not Silence." Similar marches throughout the country, the largest in Washington, DC.

10 photos (photos 2-10 unidentified)

1. Group holding "Science Not Silence" banner: man in front of "Make America Logical" sign is Rep. Paul Tonko (D-20). To his right, fourth man is Albany County

Executive Dan McCoy. To the right of him, second man is State Assemblyman Philip Steck.

Series 30: Sanctuary for Ricky, June 27, 2017

Sponsor: ICE-Free Capital District

Location: State Capitol, War Room

Purpose: Support Ricky, an undocumented immigrant facing deportation.

Background: The rally was intended to call attention to local deportation of undocumented immigrants in the area by ICE, since Albany was informally identified as a “sanctuary city.”

2 photos (photo 2 unidentified)

1. Man standing in center is Rev. Joe Paparone of Labor-Religion Coalition.

Series 31: Aref-Hossain Rally & March, August 4, 2017

Sponsor: Muslim Solidarity Committee

Location: Rally at Masjid As-Salam on Central Ave., march to Unitarian Universalist Society on Washington Ave.

Purpose: Solidarity with Aref and Hossain and their families.

Background: Annual public event to commemorate the arrests on August 4, 2004 of Aref and Hossain. Dinner and speakers at the Unitarian Society.

4 photos (photos 3-4 unidentified)

1. Man with megaphone is Shamshad Ahmad, president of the Masjid As-Salam.
2. Four people seated on stage, from left: Steve Downs, Carl Strock, Kathy Manley, Lynne Jackson.

Series 32: Jewish Voice for Peace/Chanukah/Palestine, December 14, 2017

Sponsor: Jewish Voice for Peace, Palestinian Rights Committee

Location: Townsend Park, intersection of Central and Washington Aves.

Purpose: Support for the Palestinian and Puerto Rican people.

Background: In the spirit of Hanukkah, the Jewish holiday of lights.

2 photos (photo 2 unidentified)

1. Four people with signs: behind man on right is Doug Bullock.

Series 33: March for Our Lives, March 24, 201

Sponsor: March for Our Lives (student-led), Never Again MSD, Everytown for Gun Safety, in coalition with student (all levels), academic, and peace groups

Location: Rally at West Capitol Park, march around the Capitol.

Purpose: Protest gun violence, call for federal gun control legislation.

Background: After the February 2018 murders of 17 people, including students, by a student shooter at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, the extraordinary student organizing that resulted from the tragedy inspired over 880 pro-gun-control marches throughout the country. The *Troy Record* estimated the Albany attendance at over 5,000.

8 photos (photos 2-8 unidentified)

1. Two women holding signs: behind them to far left is Owusu Chief Anane, Albany Common Council member.

Series 34: Keep Families Together Rally #1, June 14, 2018

Sponsor: Families Belong Together (Familias Unidas, No Divididas), Capital Region chapter of New York Civil Liberties Union

Location: Rally near Leo W. O'Brien Federal Building, 1 Clinton Square, then protest with signs at corner of Clinton Ave. and North Pearl St.

Purpose: Oppose the Trump administration's practice of separating children from migrant and asylum-seeking families entering the United States.

Background: "In April 2018, Attorney General Sessions announced a 'zero tolerance' policy under which the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) would refer all migrants who entered the U.S. without authorization to the Department of Justice (DOJ) for criminal prosecution...As a result...the government separated more than 2,000 children from their parents at the border during the period of mid-April to June...On June 20, President Trump signed an Executive Order intended to halt the separation of families. However, the order instructed DHS to detain alien families together throughout the pendency of criminal proceedings and immigration proceedings. The Border Patrol temporarily halted the referral for criminal prosecution of parents arriving with children, but there was no procedure...in place to reunite the thousands of families already separated." [American Bar Association]

6 photos (all unidentified)

Series 35: Keep Families Together Rally #2, June 30, 2018

Sponsor: National Association of Social Workers, New York State chapter

Location: West Capitol Park

Purpose: Oppose the Trump administration's practice of separating children from migrant and asylum-seeking families entering the United States.

Background: There were more than 600 similar marches across country on this day. Intense heat in Albany.

8 Photos (photos 4-8 unidentified)

1. Man with "Pence Trump..." sign is Bradley Russell.

2. Woman speaking to crowd is Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan. Next to her is Kathy Manley, MC.
3. Man with "The Resistance..." sign is Steve Trimm.

Series 36: Aref-Hossain Rally & March, August 4, 2018

Sponsor: Muslim Solidarity Committee

Location: Rally at Masjid As-Salam on Central Ave., march to Unitarian Universalist Society on Washington Ave.

Purpose: Solidarity with Aref and Hossain and their families.

Background: Annual public event to commemorate the arrests on August 4, 2004 of Aref and Hossain. Dinner and speakers at the Unitarian Society. In October, Yassin Aref finished serving his 15-year sentence and was released from federal prison, but he was immediately transferred to immigration detention in Pennsylvania to await deportation.

1 photo

1. From left: woman in straw hat is Mabel Leon. Behind her is Joe Lombardo. Man in front, under "Free Aref..." sign is Shamshad Ahmad. Man in white shirt standing in back is Steve Downs. In front of him, man in red-checked shirt is Dominick Calsolaro. To his right, woman in straw hat is Lynne Jackson. Directly behind her is Gene Damm. Behind her to right is Tom Ellis. Man in purple shirt is Steve Trimm. In front of him, kneeling, is Abu Horayra Hossain, son of Mohammed Hossain. On far right, woman under "United States of All" sign is Ayesha Hoda. To right of her is Hany Masood.

Series 37: Aref-Hossain Rally & March, August 4, 2019

Sponsor: Muslim Solidarity Committee

Location: Rally at Masjid As-Salam on Central Ave., march to Unitarian Universalist Society on Washington Ave.

Purpose: Annual public event to commemorate the arrests on August 4, 2004 of Aref and Hossain; memoriam for Dr. Shamshad Ahmad, president of the Masjid As-Salam.

Background: Yassin Aref was released from immigration detention in June and was deported (joyfully) to his native Kurdistan in northern Iraq to permanently join his wife, daughter, and extended family there. After dinner at the Unitarian Society, the evening began with a video link with Yassin in Kurdistan, during which he spoke about being back in his country after 25 years away, and also spoke live with many audience members. The committee also presented a memoriam for Dr. Shamshad Ahmad, who had died suddenly in early July.

4 Photos (3 and 4 unidentified)

1. Two women, from left: Halima and Khadija Hossain, daughters of Mohammed Hossain.

2. Young boy with sign: behind him to left is Renee Hariton.

Series 38: Mohammed Hossain Homecoming, June 16, 2020

Sponsor: Muslim Solidarity Committee

Location: In front of the Hossain home on Sherman St.

Purpose: Celebration of Mohammed Hossain's release and homecoming.

Background: Over the years, Mohammed's legal team had appealed his sentence without success, but finally applied for compassionate release because his health had significantly deteriorated in federal prison and he was in danger of contracting COVID. This motion was successful and was helped by a petition demanding his early release because of the COVID pandemic, signed by over 500 supporters. On June 8 he was officially released, one month before completing his 15-year sentence. The committee issued a blanket invitation to anyone who wanted to come and celebrate his release; over 50 supporters were present. Mohammed spoke briefly from the steps of his home, and the Muslim Solidarity Committee ended its mission of freeing the two men (though it continues as an informal group to date).

2 photos

1. Alicia McWilliams hugs Mohammed Hossain. This photo appeared in the August–September 2020 issue of the magazine *Washington Report for Middle East Affairs* to illustrate my article, "It Takes a Community To Support Wrongfully Imprisoned Muslims."
2. Mohammed Hossain waves to supporters.

Series 39: Save the Pine Bush Guilderland Rally, August 26, 2020

Sponsor: Save the Pine Bush

Location: In front of Guilderland Town Hall, Western Ave., Guilderland.

Purpose: Urge the Guilderland Planning Board to deny permission to Pyramid Corporation to expand Crossgates Mall and build apartments and commercial/retail/office entities in a location adjacent to the Albany Pine Bush.

Background: Rapp Road Development (a corporate entity of Pyramid, owner of Crossgates Mall) needed approval from the Guilderland Planning Board to go forward with their proposed 72-acre expansion as a mixed-use redevelopment project. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the developer for the Town of Guilderland, which was required before board approval, had (somehow) found that there would be no impact at all on the Pine Bush from the proposal. The protest, titled "Stop the Pyramid Scheme," was intended to make planning board members aware of community opposition to the proposed expansion and support for the Pine Bush ecosystem.

5 photos (4 and 5 unidentified)

1. Man holding "Stop the Pyramid Scheme" sign is Steve Wickham.

2. Man and woman holding "...Not for Sale" sign: to left, woman holding "No More..." sign is Lynne Jackson.
3. Man holding "Pave the World..." sign is Ed Landing.