

Using city buses and bus drivers to transport arrested demonstrators.

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A leader of Local 100 of Transport Workers Union (bus drivers) was on this morning's news at the Occupy Wall Street protest, saying that he and his men would see to it that no bus drivers would be commandeered to carry prisoners taken from the ranks of the demonstrators by the police.

It's the right thing to do. It's also a stirring example of the kind of solidarity that America has not seen too much of for far too long.

But there's another hidden story here. On October 17, 1961, fifty years ago this coming Monday, the French police attacked a huge peaceful demonstration of 30,000 - 40,000 Algerians marching to protest France's war in Algeria. Over two hundred persons were killed, many of them thrown alive and wounded from bridges into the Seine. Corpses washed along the banks for weeks. 11,000 were arrested that day and taken to notorious detention centers, including the infamous Vel d'Hiv bicycle stadium. They were transported by busses and their drivers, ordered to do so by the police.

Nineteen years earlier, on July 16, 1942, many of those same drivers had been commandeered by the police to transport the 13,000 Jews arrested that day in Paris, driven to the to the same Vel d'Hiv, and later on to their deaths in Auschwitz.

New York bus drivers and all New Yorkers need to know this story. It will help fortify their resolve not to be used by the police in the attempt to silence a worthy protest.

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