

Global Justice Activist Detained At Canadian Border!

BY STARHAWK

L'auteur affirme que la fermeture des frontières aux activistes fait partie de la tentative d'étouffer les dissensions légitimes contre les organisations mondiales que l'on connaît. L'auteure présente le cas d'une jeune activiste qui a été retenue aux frontières canadiennes et arrêtée parce qu'elle a refusé de retourner chez elle..

On Monday, November 12th, Lisa Fithian and I were travelling together to Ottawa when I was flagged by Immigration for a more extensive screening. We had both been invited by the Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) to offer training on activism in preparation for upcoming demonstrations against the G20, the IMF, and the World Bank which were meeting in Ottawa November 16-19, 2001. I was also scheduled to give a lecture at St. Lawrence University just across the border in the U.S. Ottawa is the nearest airport. Lisa had cleared Immigration but when I went to tell her I might be delayed they tagged her, too. We spent nearly five hours waiting, being questioned, photographed, fingerprinted, and searched. We were told that I was picked out because I had been arrested in Seattle at the WTO protests in November of 1999, although I was never convicted of any crime there and my charges were, in fact, dropped. At one point, the Immigration Officer said he knew I had been in Seattle, and asked if I were "a member of the WTO." We were treated courteously by the officers and we remained calm and co-operative throughout. Eventually, I was admitted to Canada but my computer was held in order to be examined by Canadian Intelligence. Lisa was allowed to sleep overnight in Canada, but was required to return this morning, Tuesday, November 13th at 11:00am for a further interview to determine if she could remain.

At that interview, she was told that she was ineligible to enter Canada. She was given the choice to leave voluntarily, or be arrested.

Lisa refused to leave and was arrested. She is a courageous woman who made this choice for the following reasons.

Only by being arrested could she be entitled to counsel or legal representation, or have hopes of appealing the decision.

The closing of borders to activists is part of the attempt to stifle legitimate dissent against the institutions of global corporatization. As an act of nonviolent civil disobedience, Lisa refused to cooperate. She chose to stand in the

doorway to prevent the door from closing; to protect our right to dissent by exercising it. Her act is the opposite of terrorism: she risks her own freedom and physical well-being, not that of others; she stands openly for what she believes in, and she exemplifies the nonviolence of the world she strives for.

In jail, Lisa joined hundreds who have been detained since attacks of September 11 because of the colour of their skin or for some minor infringement of visa regulations. She is a forerunner of those who would be jailed for their beliefs and political principles if two Canadian (antiterrorist) bills are passed. C-36 would allow the authorities to detain people for up to 72 hours for virtually no reason. C-35 includes provisions that protect foreign dignitaries who are terrorists, such as Pinochet, from demonstrations.

Open borders are one of the things we are fighting for. Corporate globalization allows corporations to move freely across borders, without ties or responsibilities to local communities, in search of the lowest wages, and the most lax environmental and safety standards. But people are not allowed to cross borders in search of economic opportunities or better lives. Our border difficulties are mild in comparison with the immigrants who die of thirst or freeze to death attempting to come to the U.S. from Mexico. All over the world, displaced people seek refuge at borders. The borders that guard the wealthy countries are increasingly closed to those who seek political asylum or economic relief. Hundreds of thousands mass on the Afghanistan/Pakistan border, seeking to escape from the devastation of U.S. bombs. The possibility of starvation, rampant disease, and their ongoing suffering haunt us.

The issue is much, much broader than what happens to any individual. The corporations have laid claim to the resources of the globe, and (free trade) demands that any borders which interfere with their profits be dissolved. We lay claim to a different freedom. We say that if capital has no borders, then people should not be constrained. The institutions of corporate globalization are inter-

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national, overriding local and national laws, offering no legal way in which citizens can hold them accountable. Because they are international, we must be too. The essence of democracy is the freedom to dissent. No walls should bind our freedom to make our voices heard.

Lisa was held at the Ottawa Carleton Regional Detention Center. We received support from the Global Democracy Coalition and all the other groups organizing the action in Quebec City, from Mothers and Widwives to the Ontario Public Research Interest Research Group who helped us find legal counsel, set up press conferences, and take care of all the practical details. Through our networks, we alerted people around the world who called, wrote, and put political pressure on the Canadian authorities. Without that support, Linda's choice might have been an act of fruitless martyrdom rather than effective political strategy. After two days, Canadian Immigration released Lisa and allowed her to enter the country without conditions.

Starhawk, committed global justice activist and organizer is the author of nine books, including The Spiral Dance, The Fifth Sacred Thing, and the forthcoming Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising. She is a veteran of progressive movements, from anti-war to anti-nukes, is a highly influential voice in the revival of earth-based spirituality and Goddess religion, and has brought many innovative techniques of spirituality and magic to her political work. Her web site is www.starhawk.org.

AJA MCKINNEY

Tomorrow or today
To leave him I'm afraid
Trapped in a love net
Of pure baby blue
Young hearted
Sweet like butter crab
Turned bad.

Aja McKinney is an aspiring poet. She has been writing poetry since age 10. From getting married at the age of 15, and then being diagnosed with Bipolar at the age of 17, she has found a way to pour her heart out on paper. She is currently 21 years old and has written three books of poetry. She lives in Emeryville, California.

M. E. CSAMER

The Ache of a Small Boned Woman

not osteoporosis, but not normal either...

The ache of a small boned woman
is that she has carried too much,
has too much to carry,
the distance of a long life, she cannot
fly though bones grow hollow.

am pissed off and weary...

The ache of a small boned woman
lives in the curve of spine, how the babies
pulled her out and down towards the earth,
towards this cracked drying. The generations
march out of her bones, knocking for luck.

grand day Sunday...

The ache of a small boned woman
is that she is enormous and it can't be seen:
a universe, compact as a black hole
a story in every twist of sinew, every
fissure, marrow dissolving to make room.

baby lettuce in the cold frame...

The ache of a small boned woman
throbs in the garden where she stands
growing forgetful, worrying the knot of
sciatica,
the garden taking her in: bone meal mulch
sift of bone dust, fine human sand.

started eggplants and peppers inside...

M. E. Cramer first collection, Paper Moon, was published by WatershedBooks in 1998. Two new collections are actively seeking publishers. She lives in Kingston and is a member of the League of Canadian Poets.