

September 16, 2007

Canada Border Services Agency

Today I was informed that Alison Bodine, a recent graduate of the University of British Columbia and a well-known social justice advocate and anti-war war activist was unjustly arrested and detained in an immigration detention centre in Vancouver. I am also aware that after effective organizing by democratic forces in Vancouver combined with considerable media coverage, Alison Bodine was released from detention but faces an Admissibility hearing tomorrow, September 17, 2007.

What is happening in Vancouver? And in Canada, that those who take up their responsibility to organize for a world where rights are respected and not endlessly violated end up being arbitrarily arrested and then face Admissibility hearings? From what I have read and heard in the media, Alison had traveled many times between between the U.S. and Canada with no problem. It was not until leaflets, newspapers, posters etc dealing with the most pressing national and international political issues of our times were confiscated from her car that Alison became a target for arbitrary and unjust arrest and possible restrictions on her ability to travel freely between Canada and the U.S.

Every person living in Canada, regardless of their status has the right and responsibility to organize for rights. From what I have seen and heard Alison Bodine is a model and an example of a human being with a social conscience. This is a quality that should be rewarded not stomped on. Alison's treatment is shameful and as far as I am concerned all charges should be dropped against Alison Bodine and all her rights must be restored and respected enabling her to travel freely between the U.S. and Canada. It is intolerable that politically and socially responsible activists are being targeted. This is a clear-cut case of criminalization of dissent and a violation of Alison's right to conscience. It is also outrageous that an environment is being created in this country where immigrants, refugees, workers with temporary work permits and residents and non-residents can be targeted unjustly while defending their rights and defending the rights of all. Stop this trend now. Drop all charges against Alison Bodine.

Sincerely,

Peggy Askin

President of the Calgary and District Labour Council