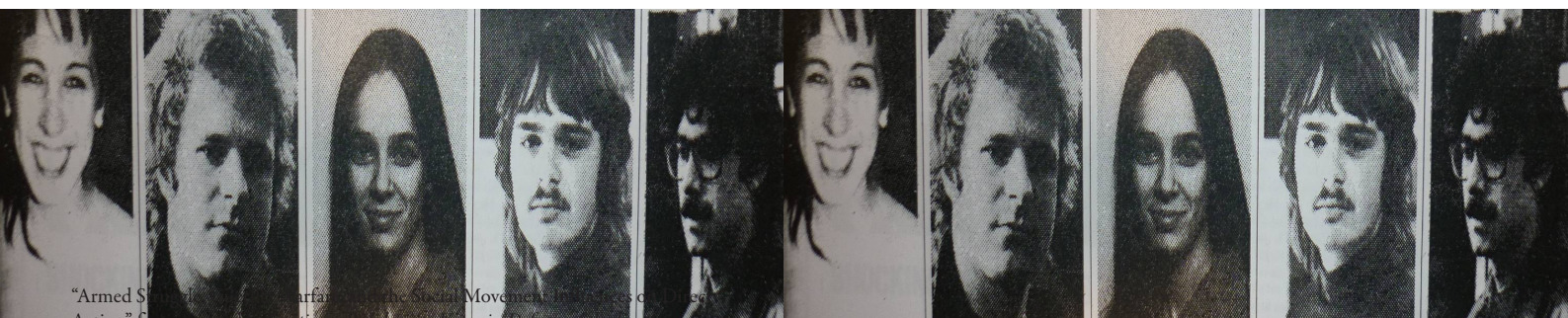




FOR CENTURIES THE AUTHORITIES
HAVE REACTED VIOLENTLY TO
WOMYN WHO RESISTED; THEY USED
TO BRAND US AS “WITCHES” AND
BURNED US, NOW THEY LABEL US
AS “TERRORISTS” AND WILL TRY TO
BURY US IN THEIR CEMENT TOMBS.

WAR ON PATRIARCHY, WAR ON THE DEATH TECHNOLOGY

THE COLLECTED STATEMENTS,
ESSAYS, AND COMMUNIQUÉS
OF DIRECT ACTION AND
THE WIMMIN'S FIRE BRIGADE



“Armed Struggle” first appeared in *Earth First Journal*. “Militant Feminism” first appeared in *Earth First Journal*. “To Our Sisters, We Are Not Terrorists” first appeared in *Kick it Over* No. 7. The four essays in the Essays section all appeared in the publication *Writings of the Vancouver 5*. The communiqués and Ann’s statement to the court are taken from the book *Direct Action* by Ann Hansen.

“Armed Struggle” first appeared in *Earth First Journal*.

“Militant Feminism” first appeared in *Earth First Journal*.

“To Our Sisters, We Are Not Terrorists” first appeared in *Kick it Over* No. 7.

The four essays in the Essays section all appeared in the publication *Writings of the Vancouver 5*.

Published by Untorelli Press
Bloomington, 2014



CP Wirephoto

wing firebombing early Monday morning



UNTORELLI PRESS

UNTORELLI@RISEUP.NET UNTORELLIPRESS.NOBLOGS.ORG

HISTORIES

ARMED STRUGGLE, GUERRILLA WARFARE, AND THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT INFLUENCES ON DIRECT ACTION BY ANN HANSEN.....	3
MILITANT FEMINISM BY JULIET BELMAS.....	11

ESSAYS

THE WORK ETHIC AND THE WESTERN DREAM BY GERRY HANNAH.....	25
LIVING IN REALITY BY DOUG STEWART.....	30
FEMINIST RESISTANCE VS. REFORM BY ANN HANSEN.....	33
PATRIARCHAL CONQUEST AND INDUSTRIAL CIVILIZATION BY BRENT TAYLOR.....	37

STATEMENTS

STATEMENT TO THE COURT BEFORE SENTENCING BY ANN HANSEN.....	41
TO OUR SISTERS, WE ARE NOT TERRORISTS - A STATEMENT FROM PRISON BY ANN HANSEN AND JULIET BELMAS.....	46

COMMUNIQUÉS

CHEEKEYE-DUNSMUIR BOMBING.....	50
LITTON BOMBING.....	51
RED HOT VIDEO FIREBOMBING.....	59

CONCLUSION

WILDFIRE: TOWARD ANONYMOUS WAR ON CIVILIZATION.....	60
---	----



Surrey, B.C. video store lies in ruins follo



Direct Action realized these limits after their two bombings and came partially aboveground. The actions of the Wimmin's Fire Brigade, which more closely related to the mass struggle against Red Hot Video, was not only the most successful action, but was most free of the limits of the guerrilla group. The action was not done to publicize the group, but seen as a one-shot act of destruction against an institution that social struggle alone could not destroy.

Do anarchists need to attach names to their actions? If we see ourselves as part of a general social war against control and exploitation, attaching names to our acts of subversion and attack could contradict our aims. Attacks that could have existed in and contributed to general social violence against cops and managers can become trapped within legible identities. This aids police investigation, and can also sever our projects from all other acts of antagonism to the social order. We do not need an "armed wing" to the social war, as social war knows its weapons well and employs them when necessary, not out of a gun and bomb fetish (or a fetish for "the social war.") We do not need spectacular actions that prop up named organizations as the vanguard of struggle. We need the spreading of chaos through the entirety of society, the subversion of our roles and identities, a total overturning of this world.

As anarchists internationally experiment with new forms of armed struggle, these questions become important. Even as we propose the strategy of anonymity, we would do well to avoid ideological condemnation of those who choose the path of the diffuse anarchist guerrilla. Whether we act anonymously or with a name, what matters is that the attacks multiply.

The tools of our war are everywhere, and we are not the first to experiment with the unknown. Despite (and because of) their limits, Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade offer us new tools for our own struggles. What remains is to absorb these tools and continue on our path: toward the destruction of patriarchy, technology, and colonialism.

Toward the destruction of civilization itself.

into the structures of capital and the state. It cannot be destroyed through wages for housework, female cops, female-centered spirituality, women-owned businesses, or separatist exodus. These half-measures will only strengthen control by facilitating its diffusion through all of social life and its colonization of our very being. The more we expand domination to include new subjects, the stronger we make our chains.

Technology is not a neutral set of tools to be employed by a liberated society in "new," "egalitarian" ways. It is an apparatus which captures, classifies, and distorts our lives, assimilating us to its worldview: the worldview of a machine. When we use technology, we accept the world which created it, with all of its implicit and explicit power relations, and in turn reproduce that society through our activity. We are trapped in a process in which we create new tools for our control and exploitation, never questioning this apparatus which has made us our own captors. There is no possibility of a liberated society without the complete destruction and abandonment of technology and its worldview.

Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade, through attacks on techno-industrial infrastructure and production centers of gender, tore at the very roots of society. Though their actions leave open many spaces for criticism, the intentions and goals of their actions avoided the narrow vision and desire for (technological, patriarchal, and state) authority which characterize most groups who have taken up arms.

A CRITIQUE

The debate in anarchist circles about the named or formal organization has been raging for as long as anarchists have chosen to attack. Lately, with the resurgence of named anarchist armed struggle groups, this discussion has come to the forefront once again. Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade offer us lessons on the limits of spectacular action and named organizations.

Both Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade saw themselves as a sort of "armed wing" of aboveground legal protest movements. The members of the group, prior to going underground, were part of the various movements (anti-development/indigenous resistance to the Cheekye-Dunsmuir line, anti-war and anti-nuclear resistance to Litton, and feminist organizing against Red Hot Video) of which they later acted as the guerrilla wing. This sort of division replicates the forms of most New Left guerrilla groups, and of nationalist groups like the IRA. It fosters a division between social warfare and clandestine attack, a separation that prevents those focused on social struggle from taking up arms and those focused on "building the underground" from actually relating to the struggles they claim to be acting for. It also creates in the guerrilla group a stifling isolation and a myopia of vision, turning all acts into self-referential or increasingly-narrow rituals.

62

thinking, the most important criterion in determining human value is a person's productivity within the economic system, and so "the unemployed" and "welfare cases" are considered a burden.

Our politics were also deeply rooted in the feminist, environmental, and anarchist movements of the 1970s. Many radicals' politics had evolved from these movements during the 1970s, however we decided to introduce a more militant practice by starting an urban guerrilla group modeled after the western European guerrilla groups such as the Red Army Faction (RAF) and the Red Brigades, as well as American guerrilla groups such as the Black Liberation Army (BLA) and the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA). These groups had, in turn, been modeled after the various anti-imperialist armed liberation movements active throughout most of the colonized world. In other words, our political ideology was patterned after the social movements of the Native peoples, the feminists, the environmentalists, and the anarchists, while our political practice drew inspiration from the various urban guerrilla groups active globally. This created an interesting mix of armed struggle without the nationalism, vanguards, Marxism, or materialism, so prevalent in the vast majority of active urban guerrilla movements during the sixties and seventies.

Within the social context of North America, we didn't think that militant actions were *more* important than legal protest, but considering the virtual vacuum in terms of militancy, we decided this was the area in which we would have the most impact. We were not under any illusions that Direct Action on its own would spark a massive revolutionary movement, but we hoped that our actions in concert with the protests of the radical movement would contribute to building a stronger revolutionary movement. Even though the size and development of the revolutionary forces in Canada were minuscule at best, we did not think that controversial militant actions would inhibit them. On the contrary, history has shown that militant actions can be a catalyst for growth in the early phases of a revolutionary movement's development. We could talk and write about militancy until the proverbial cows came home, and it would still just be talk, so after much soul searching, we decided to *be* militants.

Considering once again how tiny the pockets of individual revolutionaries were in Canada during this period, we decided if we wanted to avoid being put under surveillance and then arrested by the police, it would be necessary to develop an underground clandestine organization in order to acquire the funds and identification needed to plan and carry out actions. In other words, the kind of large scale, high-tech actions we were planning would necessitate an illegal, underground lifestyle, otherwise the police would have no problem identifying who we were, and putting an end to our activities. We spent several years developing our analysis, and honing the skills we would need to live clandestinely and carry out high-tech actions.

In our analysis of capitalism, value is only placed on property and money.

4

WARFARF, AND THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT INFLUENCES ON DIRECT ACTION

BY ANN HANSEN

My name is name is Ann Hansen. I am a 51-year-old Canadian woman who is currently on parole until the prison system has personally viewed my dead body. I was sentenced to "life" for conspiracy to rob an armored car guard, the British Columbia Hydro and Litton bombings, firebombing a Red Hot Video porn store, unlawful possession of explosives and weapons, auto theft, and possession of stolen property. I was arrested on January 20th, 1983 along with four others and charged with these "offences" for actions we carried out as members of an urban guerrilla group called Direct Action.

As the name would indicate, our urban guerrilla group identified ideologically with anarchism, and as such, we were struggling to help create a society in which power would rest as much as possible in the hands of the people. We were one of the first guerrilla groups in North America to develop a critique of not only capitalism, but also socialism. Unlike most urban guerrilla groups and social movements during the seventies and eighties, we did not blindly accept the concept that technology, progress, development, science, and material wealth are good in and of themselves. We also did not share the socialist view of the state as a revolutionary vehicle for the people. In our analysis the state is a repressive apparatus that concentrates power and decision-making in the hands of a small number of people who will inevitably become corrupted whether they be peasants, working class, middle class, or ruling class.

In retrospect, if I were to label the political analysis of our guerrilla group, Direct Action, it would share more in common with green anarchism than any other ideology. Our politics evolved from our involvement with traditional native people who showed us how western thinking – in the form of patriarchy, capitalism, and even socialism – tended to objectify life on this planet. The traditional native peoples taught us how the objectification of life inherent in the philosophies of capitalism and socialism reduced all life to mere material value, thus reinforced one of the worst aspects of human nature: greed. Practically speaking this means all life is exploited, reducing the environment to a "natural resource" to be "developed" for profit. Animals, birds, fish, and insects become "product," "livestock," "pets," "game," and "pests." Women become sex objects to be exploited to sell "products," while humans in general become "consumers" and "producers." According to this way of

3

WAR ON PATRIARCHY, WAR ON CIVILIZATION

Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade are not the first, nor the most significant, example of feminist militancy or "women's war." The history of gender is a history of revolt against the impositions of the gender binary, of compulsory heterosexuality, of the gendered order. This goes beyond the simple understanding that, amidst uprisings and riots, there are women, queers, and gender rebels participating. From Harriet Tubman's clandestine guerrilla warfare against slave society, to street queens and hustlers attacking police at Stonewall, to the bombings by the Weather Underground women's brigade, to the diffuse armed struggle of the Italian feminists of the 70s, women and gender rebels have always employed whatever means possible to attack the causes of their misery.

All this is to say, the Wimmin's Fire Brigade's firebombing of three Red Hot Video porn outlets has its context: a continual war against women and gender rebels, and a counter-war against the structures that maintain the gendered order. Still, the Wimmin's Fire Brigade is somewhat of an anomaly within feminism. With the exception of the George Jackson Brigade, a botched attack on homophobic politician John Briggs by a splinter group of the Weather Underground, and the participation of some gays and lesbians in anti-imperialist struggle, the women's and gay liberation movements in North America, unlike its brother and sister movements, did not adopt armed struggle as a strategy. While the reasons for this rejection are complicated, the essentialist critique of violence as a weapon of patriarchy and heterosexism played a major part in stifling struggle. The respectable gays and bourgeois feminists, having a stake in the continuing function of society, employed any means – including cooperation with state investigation of underground groups, in the case of Jane Alpert – to destroy the capacities of those in revolt. The specter of pacifism hung over the feminist movement in particular as it descended further into the mire of essentialism in the 80s. The Wimmin's Fire Brigade, in just one night, broke free of these suffocating restrictions, showing the possibility of women's informal violence against our oppressors.

What sets the attacks by Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade apart from many of the guerrilla groups of the time is their explicit critique of both the state and techno-industrial society as connected to the creation and maintenance of patriarchy. Unlike groups like the Weather Underground, Direct Action opposed the state in all of its forms; no Marxism-Leninism and hierarchical structures, but a hatred for all state structures, communist as well as capitalist. And perhaps because of this total rejection (and their connection to indigenous struggle), the group attacked, with both words and bombs, technological and industrial infrastructure. It was not only capitalism, but civilization itself, that Direct Action sought to destroy. In this, they have more in common with the crossdressing Luddites, faggot heretics, and clandestine witches than with the aspiring Stalins of the New Left.

61

The search for tools with which to make war on society is a central element of struggle. History, theory, analysis, propaganda: all vital to the spread and sharpening of revolt. However, as with all weapons, each of these can be turned against us; each of these we can turn against ourselves. Academia recuperates radical historical research and theorizing, stripping it of its teeth and its relation to practices of attack. As anarchists become more concerned with the aesthetics of revolt (and their own careers as the avant-garde of capitalist cultural production) than with counter-information and generalization of subversive ideas, propaganda becomes indistinguishable from advertising. Artists draw from images of insurgency, captured moments which suffocate and die in the sterility of the gallery. Academia, advertising, the fashion industry, and the art world all operate vampirically, draining revolt of its purpose, its beauty, its joy. Those who engage with the word must be conscious of this, attempting to navigate away from and against recuperation, even as we use the enemy's language.

With this as our context, why design and distribute a publication about Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade? Certainly, when researching and drawing attention to any identifiable tendency or group, we run the risk of creating another historical spectacle to wonder at, or another "radical" commodity to consume, all as we continue to stay our hand in our daily lives. This risk is multiplied if the subject is far enough in the past, or closely enough related to an already recuperated cultural milieu, that its charge can be defused by nostalgia. One need only look at the Weather Underground, with its spectacular actions and relation to hippie youth culture, to see how revolutionary action can be effectively turned into an artifact. Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade certainly fit these parameters: their attacks were spectacular, and most members of the group were tied to the punk scene, a subculture that has been wholly subsumed by commodity culture. Despite this, it would be a victory for the careerist parasites to allow a group which in many ways acts as a forebearer to contemporary anti-civilizational struggle to be reduced to an historical or cultural museum piece.

Rather than simply present these texts as they are, I hope to engage with them critically, with fervor, and always with an eye towards refining the daily practices of attack and subversion.

60

Hydro planned to fund the construction of this line by borrowing taxpayers' money in the form of pension plan funds. It would also involve cutting a huge swath of land along the beautiful coastline and spraying it with defoliants.

Ever since the inception of this plan, a number of different groups in the province had mobilized against it, including citizens living along the route of the line, native groups, unions, the teachers' federation, as well as people living on Vancouver Island who were opposed to the expansion of the pulp and paper industry. They were organized under the umbrella group, the Cheekye-Dunsmuir Alliance, who spearheaded a campaign of letter writing, petitions, demonstrations, eventually culminating in civil disobedience actions during the summer of 1981. Citizens had taken to pulling up surveyor's stakes along the transmission route, and were blocking bulldozers from clearing the land. This was a popular struggle but unfortunately, by the spring of 1982, BC Hydro had begun installing hydro towers and transformers in substations along the route. They were in the final phases of construction with no end in sight.

Direct Action decided to blow up the transformers, only after the movement had failed to stop its construction, but before it was electrified. Our goals were to cause as much damage to the transformers as possible without injuring anyone or causing extreme discomfort to the people whose sympathies we were trying to win. An electrical blackout would have alienated the general public from our cause. After the smoke cleared, Direct Action destroyed the four transformers and an oil pumping station causing more than four million dollars in damage.

During the early 1980s, the anti-nuclear movement had been building a national campaign against Canada's role in the development of the cruise missile. This new weapon in the American nuclear arsenal was in the final phases of manufacture, and was about to be tested on Canadian soil. Nationally, a broad-based group, Operation Dismantle, had been organizing public awareness campaigns and demonstrations, and in Toronto, the Cruise Missile Conversion Project (CMCP) and the Alliance for Non-Violent Action (ANVA) had been leafleting the workers at the Litton Systems plant where the guidance system for the cruise was being manufactured. They organized blockages of the plant and tried to convince the workers to pressure management to convert the plant to the production of peaceful technology. They also organized demonstrations and civil disobedience actions.

A Gallup Poll at the time indicated that 52% of Canadians were opposed to Canada's role in the manufacture and testing of the cruise missile. Even within the reigning Liberal Party, a survey in April 1983 found that of 146 Liberal MPs, six opposed the cruise tests and another 115 refused to state their position. Their silence spoke volumes. Despite public opposition, the Canadian government signed agreements to test the cruise, and gave Litton Systems \$48 million in grants and interest-free loans under "the corporate welfare" program from the Defense Industries Production Department, known as DIP.

6

of monetary value it was considered useless. In the face of terrorist attacks targeting humans, despite the tears and fears displayed by corporate and political leaders in the media, the only time they really seem to respond is when such attacks threaten the loss of revenue, shares, investments, and wealth.

Time and again, we witnessed corporations pulling out of regions where their investments were in jeopardy. Time and again, we witnessed governments that were unable to protect corporate interests in their region topple. Time and again, we saw corporations make decisions based on share prices. And time and again, we saw politicians sing to whatever corporate piper was playing the tune. Based on these observations, we decided to direct our campaign against property.

This decision was based more on efficacy than on ethics. If a person wants to immobilize a car, they wouldn't damage the rear view mirror or the upholstery, they would ruin the engine; the most expensive and most difficult part of the car to repair. Using this analogy, if Canada's principal role within the global economy is a supplier of natural resources, then targeting those industries would be the best way to destabilize the Canadian economy. This is the strategy we decided to pursue.

Although this was our basic strategy, tactically there was a complex set of criteria that also had to be taken into account. For example, in order to gain public sympathy, it would be more effective to target an issue around which a popular struggle had already mobilized so people would understand why we had carried out the action. We could enhance the effectiveness of a popular movement by acting in concert with it, rather than in isolation and potentially hindering its development.

This leads to the next important criterion: timing. Timing would be critical because if we acted prematurely around a certain issue, the popular movement would see us as usurping their struggle rather than enhancing it. Therefore it was important that we acted only after the popular movement had exhausted all the legal avenues at their disposal, and could see that resorting to militant actions was the only avenue left. In some cases, this also meant waiting until a campaign of civil disobedience had also proven ineffective. In general it is important to use illegal, militant actions only as a last resort after all possible peaceful and legal measures have been exhausted, because the repercussions for everyone in the popular movement are always severe. If the popular movement does not see clearly that there is no other option left than militancy, then they may resent and blame the militants for the inevitable repression from the state.

In May 1982, Direct Action began its campaign by bombing four transformers at the Dunsmuir hydro substation. This substation was part of a British Columbia (BC) government mega-project called the Cheekye-Dunsmuir Transmission Line. This was a one billion dollar project to build a hydro line from the BC mainland, under the Georgia Strait to Vancouver Island in order to allow for the expansion of the privately owned pulp and paper industry on the island. BC

5

WIMMIN'S FIRE BRIGADE COMMUNIQUE

We, the Wimmin's Fire Brigade, claim responsibility for the fire-bombing of three Red Hot Video outlets in the Lower Mainland of B.C. on November 22, 1982. This action is another step towards the destruction of a business that promotes and profits from violence against womankind and children.

Red Hot Video sells tapes that show womankind and children being tortured, raped and humiliated. We are not the property of men to be used and abused.

Red Hot Video is part of a multi-billion dollar pornography industry that teaches men to equate sexuality with violence. Although these tapes violate the Criminal Code of Canada and the B.C. guidelines on pornography, all lawful attempts to shut down Red Hot Video have failed because the justice system was created, and is controlled, by rich men to protect their profits and property.

As a result, we are left no viable alternative but to change the situation ourselves through illegal means. This is an act of self-defense against hate propaganda!

59

sabotage the enemy's undertakings complements a movement's strategic long-term efforts to transform the consciousness of the people. We believe that, if undertaken seriously and well-supported throughout the existing movement, widely practised militant resistance and sabotage will become effective in slowing down the clock of death and inspire the people to respond to the threats to our survival with urgency, vitality and clarity.

The global situation of nuclear holocaust and extreme ecological disaster is rapidly becoming reality. The new Western Alliance weapons systems for first-strike nuclear war are to be in place by 1983-86. This destabilizing, ever-encroaching reality should compel us all to move beyond protest and work hard to develop a movement with the collective means and ability to actually do something directly to stop the realization of the enemy's life-threatening madness. In the absence of widespread popular refusal to participate any longer in the war projects of the ruling class, we believe that militant direct action must be used as an attempt to keep uncompleted, or at least slow-down, the programs and technologies which are bringing about our own destruction. For us, this is where the impetus to act lies.

Historically, those in power have always used warfare and repression in order to maintain their control over other people's lives. And today this situation is no different. For the corporate owners and political rulers nuclear weapons are the ultimate tool in the repressive apparatus – the key to maintaining their power. Thus they will never voluntarily disarm or stand aside and watch their power be peacefully taken away. Instead, they will use whatever weapons are necessary to battle those who are threatening their rule. We are certain that only through revolt – not referendums or protest alone – can we stop the powercrazed from launching their W.W. III. It is with an eye towards the generalized development of an actively militant resistance movement that we have undertaken this action.

58

The government and justice system's unwillingness to respond led some women to approach the women of Direct Action to participate with them in a series of arsons aimed at burning down some of the Red Hot Videos. On the night of November 22nd, 1982, three separate groups of three women, each calling themselves the Wimmin's Fire Brigade, simultaneously fire-bombed three Red Hot Video outlets. One store was successfully burnt to the ground, another was partially burned, and a third attempt was aborted because a police car drove by just as they were about to throw some Molotov cocktails.

A few months after the Wimmin's Fire Brigade action, the five members of Direct Action were arrested. On the same day, in a raid whose timing was oddly coincidental, the RCMP charged the Victoria Red Hot Video store with three counts of distributing obscene material. Many activists believed the timing of these raids signified that the police felt compelled to lay charges or risk appearing less effective in dealing with violent pornography than the Wimmin's Fire Brigade.

In the aftermath of Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade's 1982 campaigns, a number of popular myths were dispelled surrounding militant direct action. There is a commonly held view promoted by the mass media and perpetrated by the pacifist factions of the radical movement, that militant direct action has the effect of alienating the public from getting involved in issues, and marginalizes those involved from the mainstream. Consequently this myth supports the widely held belief that militant direct action is ineffective in "winning" a campaign, and will only serve to stimulate state repression that will inevitably result in the withering away of the popular movement.

The bombing of the Dunsmuir substation did very little to stop the completion of the Cheekeye-Dunsmuir transmission line. The line was electrified two months behind schedule, but in reality this is par for the course in terms of any type of mega-project construction. The most obvious contribution the bombing made to the movement against resource mega-projects was in heightening the media coverage and stimulating the debate around militant direct action. Considering the Cheekeye-Dunsmuir project was in its final stages of completion, and the popular movement was waning, the repression in the wake of the bombing had little impact on the Cheekeye-Dunsmuir Alliance.

However, the impact of the Litton bombing was much clearer. Even though this bombing was as controversial as they come due to the injury of innocent civilians, the numbers of people in attendance at demonstrations and protests in the weeks immediately following the bombing dramatically increased. Two weeks after the bombing, in Ottawa on October 30th, 1982, fifteen thousand people showed up at the largest anti-nuclear demonstration in Canadian history. And a month after the bombing, over seven hundred people showed up for a demonstration and civil disobedience action at Litton, despite heavy police propaganda regarding the repression the activists should anticipate.

8

in an attempt to deter any further investment by the American mother plant, and to cause significant financial damage to the plant itself. It appeared as though the popular campaign to stop the manufacture of the guidance system, and the testing of the cruise on Canadian soil had failed.

On October 14th, 1982, Direct Action caused \$4 million in damage to the Litton plant when a van filled with explosives detonated during the night. Unfortunately, when the bomb squad arrived en masse, the electronic frequency from their radio transmissions set off the electronic timing device, causing the bomb to explode twelve minutes prematurely. Despite numerous precautions to avoid injuries – such as driving the van across a flood lit lawn, parking against the most visible building to the security guards, leaving an unarmed stick of dynamite with a warning note and instructions, and phoning in a bomb threat with instructions – seven people were injured in the bombing. Direct Action issued an apology for the injuries and took responsibility in that we should never have put a bomb in a location that relied on authority figures clearing buildings and blocking roads to secure the safety of the public. Although this was a very serious error, mistakes are inevitable and we can't let our fear of making them paralyze the movement. Remaining passive in the face of today's global human and environmental destruction will create deeper scars than those resulting from the mistakes we will inevitably make by taking action.

After returning to BC in the fall of 1982, we encountered women who had been organizing to pressure the government to close down a franchise of violent pornography outlets, known as Red Hot Video, that within a year had expanded from one store to thirteen. This franchise distributed videos that had been pirated across the border from the United States. There was evidence to support the accusation that many of these videos were not dramatizations but, in fact, were real depictions of women in the sex trade who had been kidnapped and filmed being raped, and subjected to forced enemas. The women in these videos were seen clearly objecting to painful, violent acts, leaving no doubt in the viewer's mind that there was nothing consensual about it.

The women's movement in BC had tried every legal means at their disposal to force the government to act. They had invited the police to public screenings of the most violent videos available to demonstrate that their distribution violated the Motion Pictures Act and various hate crime laws. In response, the Attorney-General's office explained that the Motion Pictures Act did not refer to the magnetic storing of film, and that "gender" was not classified as an identifiable group under the hate crime laws. Understandably the women's community interpreted these explanations as the government's excuse to do nothing, and continued organizing demonstrations, petitions, and letter-writing campaigns directed at their members of parliament.

7

under the Production Sharing Arrangements. Through the Defense Industry Productivity Program, the federal government has given Litton \$26.4 million to subsidize production of the guidance system for the Cruise Missile. In addition, the government has given Litton a five-year \$22.5 million interest free loan for the same program.

Giving financial aid for the manufacture of components for the Cruise Missile and the agreements to test the Cruise Missile in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan attests to the complete hypocrisy of Trudeau and the other government officials who proclaim that Canadian policy strives for suffocation of the nuclear arms race. In the grim light of reality, the "peace" pronouncements of Trudeau amount to nothing but enticing lies and illusions designed to con us into believing that the Canadian State is an ally in the struggle for disarmament, and therefore, a workable vehicle in which to direct our energies.

We've got to realize the implications of the government's decisions and actual policy. We must come to see the Canadian State as an active enemy to be fought, and not as misguided humanists open to our enlightenment. Far from listening to the growing protest from the Canadian public to withdraw its involvement in nuclear war, the government has done just the opposite. It has boosted military spending, re-affirmed commitments to NATO and NORAD, publicly defended the U.S./NATO nuclear strategy, given free money to Litton to build part of the Cruise Missile, and agreed to let the Pentagon warmongers use Canadian territory for the testing of the Cruise Missile, as well as other newly developed U.S. weapons systems. Counting on these officials to solve our problems is ridiculous. Any belief in the "democracy" of the system to save us is simply a belief in the democracy of lambs being led to the slaughter. We must stop our futile attempts at trying to transform the consciousness of the capitalist slime who make up the Canadian State and begin transforming ourselves and the strategies by which we operate. We will not survive if, in the final analysis, the success of our undertakings is determined by whether the nuclear enemy can be persuaded to change its sickened mind.

While we have no illusions that direct action, such as this one, can by themselves bring about the end of Canada's role as a resource based economic and military functionary of Western Imperialism, we do believe that militant direct actions are valid and necessary. Militant direct actions can have a constructive function both as a springboard to the kind of consciousness and organization that must be developed if we are to overcome the nuclear masters, and as an effective tool of resistance now. Whether they will or not depends on the integrity of the existing movement to develop the commitment and courage to carry the struggle beyond legality and the personal security and privilege to comfortable lifestyles still aspired to, and attainable, by middle-class dissidents in North America.

We believe that it is critical that the already radical sectors of the movement for liberation and nuclear sanity recognize that direct action and militant resistance

57

capitalism's hegemony globally through the attainment of total nuclear superiority and first-strike capability. The new nuclear weapons systems, such as the Cruise and Pershing II Missiles, the Trident Submarines and the Neutron Bomb, are designed for offensive first-strike use, and are seen by the military strategists and leaders of the Western Alliance as a force to contain or defeat any threats to the security of capitalist interests or strategically important regions around the world – be it from the Soviet Union or liberation struggles in the Third World attempting to establish independent economies.

Canadian economic, foreign and military policy is not committed to peace or global justice, rather it is completely emersed within the genocidal nuclear strategy of the Western Alliance to wage nuclear war, if necessary, to maintain the multinational corporate economy throughout the world. Through membership in the NATO and NORAD nuclear military alliances, the Canadian State is fulfilling an active supporting role in maintaining and developing the nuclear fighting capacity of the Western military forces. Primarily, Canadian support systems for nuclear war involve communications devices which supply targetting information to U.S. nuclear weapons systems or detection of incoming attacks; as well as the deployment of nuclear missiles at Canadian Forces bases at Bagotville, Quebec, at Comox, B.C. and at Chatham, New Brunswick. The ongoing complicity of the Canadian State with nuclear warfare strategies was re-affirmed recently by renewed commitments to both NATO and NORAD, and by the government's support for NATO's nuclear modernization program.

Hand in hand with the government's military involvement in the nuclear operations of NATO and NORAD, Canadian capitalists are making profits from producing components for U.S. nuclear weapons systems. Current government policy places no restrictions on Canadian industrial involvement in the building of U.S. nuclear weapons. Litton is building the Cruise Missile's electronic guidance system, Hawker-Siddeley Canada Ltd. of Toronto is building launchers for the Lance Missiles designed to carry the Neutron Bomb, Vickers of Montreal is building a hull cylinder torpedo tubes for the Polaris, Poseidon and Trident nuclear submarines, Heeds International of Port Moody, B.C. built the cranes to load nuclear warheads into the Trident subs, and a Canadian plant is working on a component for the MX nuclear missile system.

Industries in Canada that produce nuclear weapons components are fully integrated with the military and nuclear policies of the U.S. through the U.S./Canada Defense Production Sharing Arrangements. These arrangements cover the production side of the NORAD agreements for a continental defense policy and set out the division of labour between Canada and the U.S. for weapons production. The federal government directly assists and subsidizes Canadian armament manufacturers through a myriad of Defense Department contracts available

56

while trying to survive in a vast sea of hostile people. On a psychological level, it is a very unhealthy lifestyle leading to mistakes; on a political level, underground militants will feel isolated and find it difficult to communicate with their supporters, making it difficult to make enlightened decisions about future actions.

In the new millennium of the western world, successful groups using militant direct action share some common principles, tactics, and structures that also characterized the Wimmin's Fire Brigade. Some examples of these groups are the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), and the Black Bloc. Rather than attracting individuals to a clandestine underground organization that shares a strict ideology, these groups attract individuals who share a few common principles around which they can organize to carry out actions. As a result, they do not have to acquire false identification, live underground for the rest of their lives, or adhere to a rigid ideology. This puts less pressure on the individuals, allows them to carry on their normal lifestyle after the action, and remain in communication with the rest of the political community.

This is possible because these groups do not use high-tech actions but rather employ arson, property damage, and various monkeywrenching tactics. However, without a strict code of silence to which everyone abides around every aspect of the action, militants will soon end up in prison. Ever since 9/11 the consequences for getting busted for any type of political action can never be underestimated. The stakes may be high for those individuals who decide to engage in militant actions, but without a militant front as part of our revolutionary movement, the stakes for the survival of an inhabitable planet are even higher.

10

tripled in the year following the bombing. Most notably, the president of Litton Systems Canada, Ronald Keating, stated in a *Globe and Mail* article that they had lost the contract to build the guidance system for an advanced version of the cruise missile due to the "protestors and the bombing." It is important to stress that the failure of Litton Systems Canada to win this contract was not due to the bombing alone, but rather to the combination of the massive protests in concert with the militant direct action.

By far the most successful action was the Red Hot Video firebombing by the Wimmin's Fire Brigade. Within a year of the fire-bombings, the franchise had been whittled down from thirteen stores to only one. Success could also be measured in terms of popular support. In the days following the fire-bombings, radio phone-in shows devoted to the fire-bombings were inundated with supportive calls. Letters in the editorial sections of the newspapers also weighed in heavily in support of the action. Even the BC Federation of Women issued a statement articulating support for the motives of the action. The most obvious sign of public support was the large number of women who would show up at demonstrations, wearing red plastic fire hats and claiming to be members of the WFB. After the police raid on the Victoria store on January 20th, 1983, the Red Hot Video stores that hadn't already closed down, or changed their names, or moved out of the province, were crippled in legal fees due to the ongoing series of raids by the RCMP.

The success of the Wimmin's Fire Brigade is indicative of the kind of militant direct action that is most effective in the North American political climate characterized by a relatively tiny revolutionary movement amidst a sea of privileged people who, by and large, identify as free and supportive of western "democracy." The Wimmin's Fire Brigade was successful because it acted around an issue that the vast majority of people supported, and used tactics with which ordinary people could identify.

I would suggest that this is the kind of tactical militant direct action that would be best used in today's climate as well, since little has changed since the early 1980s in terms of North American mass consciousness and the objective conditions of relative wealth and freedom. A militant direct action campaign initiated around issues with which the popular movement can already identify is more likely to be supported. This means the grassroots movement has to do its homework, educate the public, and use all the legal means at its disposal before launching into a militant direct action campaign.

Militant direct action using low-tech forms such as arson and property destruction, with which the average person can identify, is also far more likely to be supported than high-tech actions such as those necessitating explosives, robberies, and false identification. It is hard to attract militants to carry out actions if they have to live clandestinely in miniscule groups completely isolated from the movement,

9

and profit – then the intricate natural world as we know it will cease to exist.

The insanity of nuclear war, and the continuing development of the weapons for nuclear war, stands as a horror for all to see. In the industrialized world more resources, scientists and engineers are engaged in creating the armies and weapons systems for nuclear war than for any other single pursuit. Three to ten new bombs are added daily to the arsenals of global annihilation and over \$300 billion is spent every year increasing and upgrading an overkill stockpile of more than 55,000 nuclear weapons. In the U.S., Reagan has asked for a 31% increase in the Pentagon's present \$1.7 trillion five-year budget and has also announced a new \$1.5 trillion arms program. Who can doubt that the dictators and militarists in the Kremlin are far behind?

The terrorism of relentless nuclear arms buildup, the nightmare of witnessing the Earth being transformed into a giant doomsday bomb, and the realization that things are out-of-control because those in power are greedy and violent madmen has shocked billions with fear and concern. Yet in the industrialized world, many of the same people who profess their abhorrence at the idea of nuclear conflict are nevertheless unthinkingly, and often willingly, participating in the actual processes which are bringing about global nuclear genocide. People of the Western and Eastern empires must wake up to the reality that it is the same governments and militaries that they support, the same ideology and rationalizations that they believe in, the same materialistic, technological and consumeristic lifestyles that they adhere to, and the same corporations or industries that they work for that are directly responsible for the ongoing nuclear insanity that they claim to reject.

We believe that people must actively fight the nuclear war systems in whatever forms they exist and wherever they exist. Although, in total, the nuclear militarization of the world is a vast and seemingly unfathomable and omnipotent network, it can be understood and effectively resisted when we recognize that it is designed, built and operated in thousands of separate facilities and industries spread throughout the world. By analysing the interests and institutions in our own regions that are contributing to the nuclear buildup we find the smaller component pieces of the nuclear network that are realistic targets for direct confrontation and sabotage. Our opposition to the insanity of nuclear war must be transformed into militant resistance and direct action on a local and regional basis. It is not enough to only theoretically oppose the idea of nuclear war. We must take responsibility for what is going on around us!

In Canada we must specifically fight against the production and testing of the Cruise Missile. But more generally, and strategically, we must recognize that the Canadian State is committed to, and actively involved in, the nuclear war preparations of the U.S. and the rest of the capitalist Western Alliance. As one of the seven Western Summit nations and through its military alliances, the Canadian State is directly participating in the desperate and deadly drive by

55

safety in the event of any danger, be it a bombing or otherwise.

The position where the van was parked was chosen for two reasons. One, so that it could be easily and quickly seen from the guard's booth. It would have been much less conspicuous, and therefore far less risky for the driver of the van, if it had been parked in front of the other two Litton buildings, as neither of these are within direct view of the guard's booth. Secondly, the van was parked in a corner of the building in order that the two walls of this corner would prevent debris from being cast in a southerly or south-westerly direction where the two nearby hotels are located. This position was the only such corner at the front of the three Litton buildings. Again it was at the risk of being apprehended on the spot that we chose to park the van in a location which provided the least risk to public safety.

We have written the above not to redeem ourselves, as we did commit inexcusable errors, but simply as an explanation of our motives and intentions for those people who may feel threatened that there are crazed terrorists on the loose against the Canadian people. Again, we repeat, that we took great care in preparing what we seriously assumed were adequate precautions to insure the safety of all people in the area. Understand and remember, the terrorists are those who have set the world on the brink of nuclear war, not those who are fighting this insanity and inhuman madness!

Finally, we wish to state that in no way was this bombing the work of the Cruise Missile Conversion Project, or any other public peace movement organization in Toronto.

DIRECT ACTION

We claim responsibility for the bombing of Litton Systems of Canada Ltd. Industrial plant in Toronto, Ontario where the guidance system for the Cruise Missile nuclear weapons are being built.

There is every reason imaginable to tear down the systems and makers of nuclear war: for the survival of all life on Earth, for people's hopes and visions, for the possibilities of a livable future. We dedicate this action to the spirit of the people, which if awakened, will overcome the threats to our survival.

Nuclear war is beyond question the ultimate expression of the negative characteristics of Western Civilization. Its roots lie deep within centuries of patriarchy, racism, imperialism, class domination and all other forms of violence and oppression that have scarred human history. As well, nuclear war expresses, in the most horrendous way, the general trend of modern technological civilization towards extinction – either by war or ecological destruction. It points out, with terrorizing finality, that unless people can stop the men that dominate societies around the world – the men who use science and technology for war and power

54

JB: It all began with an article carried by the "Leftist Press," entitled "Julie Rats Out," dating back to the mid 1980s. It's not surprising that the article was not signed. Writers with journalistic integrity always sign their articles (except in some countries like Mexico, Colombia or Algeria where their lives could be threatened by what they write!). But I can see why the person who wrote that article didn't sign it; it is full of lies and partiality. They depicted Brent Taylor like some demi-god and steered the reader into concluding that Julie was the Judas who betrayed the group for self-interest; while the others, the true believers, must now suffer a worse fate. They take the fact that I pled guilty and appealed a 20-year sentence and make it seem that, because I did that, I automatically "ratted out"—damn! If you only knew how the whole place was wiretapped and what people said, like the cops would learn anything from me or anybody else for that matter. Weird, seems like whoever wrote that article had to find a scapegoat to elevate the others—I don't know, but what I do know is that I was lucky I wasn't the lone woman in the group, otherwise the optics would be so much worse. History is so unforgiving!

Also, I can't believe they wrote an entire article about Julie Belmas without even talking to Julie Belmas, or her lawyer. Who were their sources? Never once mentioned in the article! It even slid into low-level gossiping, insinuating I was a rat because of a "slide into religion" or because I "left Gerry." Not a single word about the fact that he let the others threaten the life of the woman he said he loved, which was unbelievable!

I believe the reason why the "Leftist Press" singled me out, and labeled me a rat says more about the dogma-laden Left. I didn't know anybody. I came right out of the suburbs with revolutionary zeal like no other. I never took the state's evidence, blamed or "ratted" on any one of my ex-comrades. I was a pawn and couldn't make a move; I watched helplessly as reporters from both the mainstream and the Left began pitting me against the others to sell their stories. Media sucks, and the truth is that the huge sentence I got is proof that I never hid behind anyone's skirt and I even tried to protect some people. I got a heavier sentence because of that, but it was much harder with that "rat" label, especially in prison; so you can see why I'm not on the best terms with the four others and even some of their most ardent supporters. They had a responsibility, especially my boyfriend (at the time), to remove that "bad jacket" and they never did. They would've had to admit they were wrong and obviously they weren't capable of that. They chose to be rigid politically, instead of being human.

CB: What does Militancy and Direct Action mean to you?

JB: Militancy means a constant preparedness for the point of no return. Direct action means big tent action by committee.

12

BY JULIET BELMAS

Juliet Belmas was arrested in January 1983, at the age of 19, and was sentenced to 20 years in prison for her involvement in the militant guerrilla groups *Direct Action (DA)*, and *The Wimmis Fire Brigade*. DA claimed responsibility for the bombings of the Cheekeye-Dunsmuir Hydro substation on Vancouver Island, and the bombing of Litton Systems, an Ontario company that was building guidance systems for the nuclear cruise missile; other smaller actions included paint bombing of AMEX offices, and they had plans to sink an icebreaker being used to push forth plans for offshore drilling, as well as bombing the military base at Cold Lake.

The Wimmis Fire Brigade fire bombed three stores of the pornography chain *Red Hot Video (RVH)*, after a failing long term campaign by mainstream feminist groups to stop the chain from selling films of womyn and children being violently and repeatedly beaten and raped.

Juliet now has a degree from art school and makes independent films, and does work around the issues faced by womyn in prison.

Comrade Black: So now that you are not blowing shit up anymore, what are you doing? Are you still a revolutionary?

Juliet Belmas: I film shit blowing up all the time now, as a camera technician in the film industry, and over the past few years I've been talking—mainly with young people eager to know what it's like being a revolutionary, about how it all began for me and what it was like. I tell them time don't wait for nobody, it goes just like that, so listen up!

As for being a revolutionary—a parrhesiast is what I am. I don't suck-hole to anybody! I tell the truth, despite the risks, and my fidelity to truth is pivotal to my self-examination and maturation as a human being. I choose frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest or moral apathy.

CB: During the trials, a prisoner support group put out some bulletin claiming you had "ratted" out the others. Was there any validity to this? How did that rumor start? How did it affect your time in prison and relationship to your co-defendants?

11

warning that the box contained important instructions and that the dynamite attached to it was harmless in both the written instructions and the telephone warning, we stated that the van would explode in approximately 15-25 minutes. We said this to insure that everyone, including bomb squad members, would clear away from the van well before it exploded.

4. We were mistaken in believing that the Litton guards and police would be on top of things. The image of cops and guards as "super heroes" cause us to believe that they would have security and safety matters underway very quickly. This obviously did not turn out to be what happened. The Litton guards did not observe the van being parked even though it occurred essentially right before their eyes. A Litton guard did not understand the phone warning even though it was given clearly. It seems that the Litton guards did little or nothing to evacuate the workers until after the police arrived. As the workers have said, they were only told to leave the building seconds before the explosion. The police took a very long time to arrive after they were alerted – approximately 10 minutes – and even then they only sent one car at first to investigate. Finally, neither the police, but especially Litton security, even took a close look at the orange box. We did not expect this kind of slow and indecisive response from the authorities.

We are very disturbed and saddened that injuries occurred as a result of this action. We have gone over what went wrong time and time again. Most significantly, the bomb exploded 12 minutes too early. But nevertheless, we feel we must strongly criticise the Litton security guards for the way in which they "handled" this incident. We know that there were at least 3 guards in the security booth where the van was parked and when the phone warning occurred. We feel it is undeniable that all injury to the workers could have been avoided if the guards had promptly evacuated the Litton plant, as they obviously should have. Although we had no knowledge of the previous false bomb threats (in fact, we oppose the use of fake bomb threats precisely because they do cause the authorities to be sceptical of the authenticity of real bomb attacks), we put effort into making sure that the authorities would quickly understand that this threat was real. It is not as if we said that a pipe-bomb was hidden somewhere within the entire Litton complex, so evacuate everything. We informed Litton security of where the van and box were. They were both completely visible to the guards simply by looking straight out through their booth's window, and the fact that they were there at all obviously indicated that something was definitely amiss. We would like to know why a Litton guard went running into the plant to evacuate the workers only seconds before the explosion – instead of at least 10 minutes earlier? And we would like to know why the two other Litton guards were standing around on the front lawn, instead of informing workers in the other plants? As well, it is irresponsible of Litton to have never informed the workers of past bomb threats, and to not have a loudspeaker

53

at 11:45 p.m. If it had exploded at this time, we feel that it was reasonable to have assumed that the Litton plant and the surrounding area would have been safely secured. It is a mystery to us why it exploded early, as we had checked and double-checked the accuracy of the timing system many times.

2. The warning call was not repeated. The van was left on the lawn in front of the Litton building at 11:13 p.m. We telephoned a warning to Litton Security just one minute after the van was parked. This was to ensure a quick reaction by authorities, even though we felt certain that the van would have been seen as it was being driven across the lawn and parked. The van was parked 100 metres directly in front of an exposed glass-walled security guard's booth. In fact, the driver of the van could see 3 guards in the booth at all times during the approach and, as a result, knew that the van had not been noticed. Unfortunately, the Litton guard did not completely understand the instructions of the telephone warning. When he asked that the instructions be repeated, he was only told to go out front and look at the van. We see now that the telephone warning should have been carefully repeated. However, if the warning had been understood, and even if the police have said it was "meticulous," then the authorities would have had approximately 25 minutes to clear the plant, the area, and surrounding roads – if the bomb had detonated on time. This was certainly a reasonable length of time to have left the authorities to evacuate the plant and secure the area. Even though the bomb went off early, it seems obvious that even 13 minutes was enough time for the plant to have been safely emptied had the instructions been understood.

3. We made errors in judgement about the "orange box" which was left in front of the van. This box was meant to be a back-up warning system to the telephone warning – again to help authorities understand the situation and ensure prompt and knowledgeable action on their part. The box was painted fluorescent orange so it could be easily seen and taped to all four sides of it was a sheet of paper with information and instructions. On top of the box was taped a stick of unarmed dynamite. We felt certain that the Litton guards, either by seeing the van being parked or by being alerted to it by the telephone warning, would quickly come upon the box – thus having written information in their possession to guide them. Unfortunately, we wrote "Danger Explosives" on top of the sheets of instructions. As well, it was not a good idea to leave an unarmed stick of dynamite visible on top of the box. Although these two things were done to prove that this was a real bombing, they actually frightened the Litton guards and police away from the box so that the instructions were never read. Because we left evidence of real explosives, and because the instructions contained the information that there were 550 pounds of explosives inside the van, we assumed that the authorities would have undertaken a massive emergency response and evacuation. This is what we were hoping would happen to make sure that no one was hurt. It was specifically stated in the telephone

52

digital timer, it wasn't cycling down to zero properly. We should've aborted the action right there and then, but we didn't. Instead, a decision was made to contact the individual who built the timer back in Vancouver before proceeding. It was all beyond me, to tell you the truth, why we continued.

But moreover, to this day I believe it was a miracle no one was killed, we should never have attacked a civilian target (a place where people worked) with 550 pounds of dynamite; it was wacko crazy.

The way we transported and stored the dynamite and the blasting caps was just as irresponsible; there was little consideration for the public's safety, not to mention mine. The others had previous experience handling dynamite, whereas, I did not. It had been a common misconception that I did the Cheekye Dunsmuir bombing. I never did. Anyway, I was asked to do the telephone bomb warning for the Litton action, because the person originally involved crapped out. As it turned out, the dynamite contaminated my clothing (which was bagged and used as evidence in court), it entered my bloodstream, and it made me real sick.

Get one thing straight, I'm not making excuses or looking for sympathy at this point in the journey; it took me a long time to be able to look back at events with clarity (due to post traumatic stress). But given the facts, it's clear I suffered nitrate poisoning during the days leading up to the bombing. Nitrate poisoning usually occurs when people are in close contact with dynamite for two or three days. I slept beside it for two full weeks (while the blasting caps were with Ann and Brent); I complained of particles flying in my face while packing it from place to place. Mistakes definitely could've been avoided!

CB: So often, when you talk about militancy, it is often perceived as macho, or sexist, and many feminists have even argued that "violence" is an inherently male trait. However, you, a strong feminist, were involved in a militant group. Does this disprove the theory held by some feminists?

JB: I believe violence is a human trait that has nothing to do with gender. I think most feminist theories fail to explore the way most girls actively construct their own gender, and they make big mistakes in focusing on socialization, rather than on girl resistance to socialization. And the big problem with academia is so much gets lost in translation.

CB: So what then is the connection between Militancy and Feminism?

JB: The connection between Militancy and Feminism for me was girl resistance and DIY gun empowerment. In other words, guerrilla irreverence for patriarchal institutions and power.

For my seventeenth birthday, my oldest sister gives me a book called *The*

14

JB: Property damage and sabotage are violence if aimed at the epicenter of an intended target; I define violence as a natural part of being H-U-M-A-N.

It's obvious; politics is violence: politics needs force, politics needs Christ, politics needs money, politics needs ignorance, politics needs fools, politics needs poverty—you get the progression—politics is violence.

CB: What was the goal of using militant direct action? Why did you choose militancy over other tactics? And how did you choose your targets?

JB: The goal was not to anger people but to scare them, to wake them up. Picketing seemed like a waste of time; nothing ever changes. I targeted Red Hot Video because it was doing business near my family home in Port Coquitlam, and I was very disturbed by it. All I wanted to do was destroy it—smash it up and burn it down! Actually, I wanted to blow it to smithereens with the dynamite we stole, but the others wouldn't go along with that. Red Hot Video was the only action I chose and the only action I never regretted—not one bit!

CB: Many people in the mainstream and those who work for the state, such as the pigs, often call you a terrorist. Do you feel what you have done was terrorism? How do you feel about being called a terrorist? What does that word mean to you?

JB: When people label me a terrorist it hits two birds with one stone; first, I get to claw back the representational dynamics of a word that continues to misinform our understanding of history throughout the ages; secondly, it makes me feel special. For instance, when I tell stories highlighting my exploits, people always say to me: "Really? Why were you in prison?" and I always take the opportunity to explain it was for political extremism; if I use the word terrorism, they are always surprised and say, "Ah yeah? And she overcame this?" and somehow I see in their eyes that what I had just said to them kinda gave them hope. I read it in their faces something like: "If a person can have a good life after serving six and a half years in prison for worst acts than those I have done, I sure can have a good life too." You can do something, and you can make a difference by making the best of it. That's the way people think, and if you have an influence on one person's perceptions then you're doing all right.

CB: Mistakes were made at Litton Systems causing serious injuries to some of the security and staff, could these have been avoided?

JB: Days before the Litton bombing, a problem was discovered with the bomb's

13

LITTON BOMBING COMMUNIQUE

[A direct transcript of the original printed Litton communiqué, including the title. It includes spelling and grammatical errors.]

STATEMENT REGARDING THE OCTOBER 14 LITTON BOMBING

We claim responsibility for the bombing of a Litton Systems of Canada Ltd. Industrial plant in Toronto, Ontario where the guidance system for the Cruise Missile nuclear weapons is being produced.

We sincerely regret that any injuries occurred as a result of this action. We never intended any harm to come to anyone – especially the workers at Litton – but instead, we took great care in preparing what we seriously assumed were adequate precautions to insure the safety of all people in the area. Unfortunately, this did not turn out to be the case.

We do not regret, however, our decision to attempt to sabotage the production of the Cruise Missile's guidance "brain." We only claim in all honesty that this action was never meant to be an act of terrorism. We were not trying to threaten or kill the workers or executives of Litton Systems. We were attempting to destroy part of an industrial facility that produces machinery for mass murder. We wanted to blow up as much of that technology of death as possible.

Accidents happen; no systems or people are infallible. For us, however, this fact of life in no way excuses us for the mistakes that we made which contributed to causing injury in this action. We only pose these simple questions to put this tragedy into proper perspective. How many thousands will suffer from cancer-related diseases because of breakdowns at nuclear power plants? How many thousands are maimed and killed every year in industrial accidents? And isn't it a fact that millions of people starve to death annually because so much money and human effort is put into systems of war rather than developing the means to feed the people of the world?

Although we still firmly believe that it is right to attack the technologies of death, we identify our mistakes in this action as the following:

1. The bomb exploded 12 minutes before it was supposed to, assuming

51

DIRECT ACTION – MAY 31, 1982

On May 31, we bombed four 500 kV transformers at the Dunsmuir substation on Vancouver Island. This substation is part of the \$1 billion Cheekye-Dunsmuir transmission line project being built by British Columbia Hydroelectric. This project, if completed, will provide electricity for a wave of industrial development planned for Vancouver Island.

It was in rejection of both the ecological destruction and the human oppression inherent in the industrial societies of the corporate machine in the West and the communist machine in the East. In the last two hundred years industrial civilization has been raping and mutilating the earth and exterminating other species at an ever increasing rate.

Already in this province, half the forest has been logged and many rivers dammed. The valleys are littered with highways and power lines, the estuaries are paved and polluted, the water is poisoned, mills and smelters belch noxious fumes, and nuclear power and acid rain are soon to come.

While being in complete opposition to further ecological destruction, we also oppose the human oppression resulting from the economic and political systems throughout the world that are based on profit and power. In fact, ecological destruction is directly related to the human oppressions of sexism, racism, hierarchy and imperialism. The desire for power, the insensitivity to the suffering of others and the need to feel superior are the sinister bonds that underlie all these oppressive human relations.

Canada's historical role has always been that of supplier of cheap resources to the industrialized world. As this role becomes more critical internationally, the development of energy and resource mega-projects in Canada has become a government priority. As well as serving a strategic function within the international capitalist economy, the Canadian capitalists see these mega-projects as a means of overcoming the ongoing economic crisis nationally.

We must make this an insecure and uninhabitable place for capitalists and their projects. This is the best contribution we can make towards protecting the earth and struggling for a liberated society.

50

be true, and even worse in downtown Vancouver. Punk was really out there back then, not like it is now.

So then, while I was staying at a punk house off Commercial Drive, I got violently attacked in broad daylight by baseball bat-wielding fascists. After that, something in me changed drastically. At first I returned to Port Coquitlam and dropped out of the scene for a while, suffering post-traumatic stress in quiet desperation. Then I started reading newspapers (having never been interested in news), and identifying with media accounts of paramilitary death squads operating with impunity in the Third World, trapping and massacring women and children in churches! The realization that it almost happened to me here hit me like a ton of bricks.

I started my own DIY punkzine, called *Opposition* (I criticized punks for doing nothing but sitting on their asses), I joined a punk band called No Exit and penned "Nothing New," one of the best punk anthems that came out of the Vancouver punk scene. At the same time, I was making anti-war and anti-fascist posters using clippings of images of guerrilla fighters from *Time* magazine. It was a big time of connectivity, channeling my anger into creative energy, and that's what lead up to my slide into militancy.

CB: Some people today feel that feminism "has gone too far," that womyn are now equal to men, and that there is no need for feminism anymore. How do you feel about this, do you see a need for feminism today?

JB: Level playing field, hah! I see a dire need for feminists (both male and female) to unite around truth-telling and self-empowerment, whichever way they choose.

CB: What do you say to all those people that think feminists hate men?

JB: I say, the 80s called and wants its dogma back.

CB: Second wave feminism was very anti-porn, where as third wave feminism adopted a pro-sex stance. Was the fire bombing of the Red Hot Videos based on a anti-porn stance? Would an action like this have been a product of the feminism of the time, or would it have still happened if the entire situation occurred 10 years later when Little Sister's was fighting against censorship, if a store like RHV was selling rape and snuff films in the height of the pro-sex feminist movement?

JB: We were all radical militant second wavers who believed that video porn should be prohibited (censored) because it was dangerously desensitizing to the viewer and correlated with increased levels of violence against women and children. Also, mainstream feminist groups did such a good job picketing the shops and setting up

militant feminist as central character and for me, it ignited new perspectives on female passivity and male domination. When a friend got me a job at a door factory punching holes in aluminum eight hours a day, five days a week, I remember trying to talk to her about the book's ideas during coffee breaks and lunch hours. She was too busy suck-holing and trying to impress floor boss—she was a hard working asshole like him.

Luckily, I was listening to female rock icons at the time like Patti Smith, Polystyrene of the X-Ray Spex, and guitarists like Ellen McIlwaine, who were taking on male traits in their music, and I was attracted to that new rhythm generating. Soon after, I told the floor boss to shove it (under my breathe), and made a b-line directly for the Vancouver punk scene in bondage trousers, combat boots and a ripped shirt. I was not trying to be sexual or indecent, but mocking female sexuality (social norms) through parody. My entry into punk rock moved me from a position of victimization, as an assembly line worker from the suburbs, to one of agency, as a person in control of my self-presentation.

Militant parody in the form of punk rock was girl resistance to subservient, fucked up roles for young women. I was more afraid of doing nothing to combat that than being patted on the head and falling into line as a "good girl."

CB: How does anarchism work into all this? What is the connection between anarchism and feminism, or anarchism and militancy?

JB: Well after that job in the Port Coquitlam piss factory, I didn't much care for work place rules and regulations anymore—or any rules for that matter. I sensed that I would remain subjugated for the rest of my life if I remained complacent and let fucked up people tell me what to do, and on and on it would go. I wanted to seize the time and express my femininity in a way that smashed other people's ideas of how I should behave.

I grew up with a lot of freedom, being the youngest of six. My siblings grew up in the over-controlling 50s, while I was all freedom-loving 60s and wanting to be a "hippie" right off the bat. My parents had seen it all and tolerated me expressing myself through any imagery I desired, not to mention the uncompromising four-four beat of British punk rock.

So I started fashioning my own punk rock, anarcho-feminism style: ripped fishnet stockings, safety pins, skin-tight black leather, spiked hair and wristbands. I drew anarchy symbols on everything I wore. I even wore a Mickey Mouse cap around the house with Nazi symbols for ears that made my Mother laugh. I found refuge in the music of the Sex Pistols and other British bands whose records I was collecting at the time, because just expressing any deviation from the norm in the suburbs (where I grew up) drew staunch repression. I would soon learn the same to

15

criminals – the men that rule the industrial complex. The decision to designate vast areas of the earth as "sacrifice areas" in the name of industrial progress and the decision to sacrifice the El Salvadorean people in the name of "freedom" is made by the same womyn-exploiters in control of the multinational economy. The wealthy fur companies that purchase seal pelts are the same companies that use womyn as sex objects to sell their fur coats.

It is not possible in this society to be a "liberated" womyn without being in a constant state of conflict and struggle. However if our conflict and struggle is not guided by a consciousness of the magnitude of the problem, then our energies will be misdirected and futile.

We do not want equality and equal pay in this patriarchal society. We do not want equal job opportunities to work in their office towers, their lumber companies, their nuclear power plants. We do not want to be aggressive, competitive female replicas of the men that rule this society. We want to develop a feminist resistance movement that allows us to flourish and grow as rich human beings living in harmony with the earth.

The womyn's movement can not be a one-issue oriented struggle, but must understand and embrace the ecological struggle, indigenous peoples' resistance and anti-imperialist liberation movements because the same patriarchal institutions that perpetuate our oppression also oppress the animals, the indigenous peoples, the third world peoples and the earth.

On January 20, 1983 we were forcibly transferred from a security society into a maximum security prison. We are political prisoners. As long as there are injustices happening, there will be politically active people in prison. Although these cement tombs are torture, are we that much less free than those caught up in the "free" business world and supposed democracy of this society? We will survive.

The authorities plan to use the threat of imprisonment to contain the development of any forms of resistance that are not state sanctioned. They believe that prisons will be an effective deterrent to us, yet they do not understand that the true spirit of freedom can not be subdued. We want people to know that our physical freedom may be limited but mentally we remain free. Our group unity is strong and individually we are all politically dedicated to living through this crap.

We feel strong solidarity with feminist womyn who are dedicated to questioning themselves for truth and who have the sensitivity and political consciousness to never create power struggles and oppressive orders again. We are sisters forever.

*In total strength and resistance
Continually spinning through sisterhood*

goodness but are valued and identified through their economic roles, that is, their jobs and consumer status. Our natural environment is perceived as a resource base to be developed. If the land can't be raped in some way through lumbering, mining or some other industry, then it is considered worthless. Animals are perceived as potential sport, food or pets. Outside of their economic value to man, other living creatures are not recognized for their wisdom, skill or ability to survive in harmony with the earth. When indigenous and third world people resist the encroachment of industrialism on their land, they are forced to move or are exterminated through terrorism, forced sterilization, starvation and alcoholism. All beings, if they are unprofitable or an impediment to the expansion of imperialism, are wiped out.

The capitalist economic system has become so pervasive throughout society that its relations and values of consumerism permeate all aspects of our lives. As a result of this, people have become blind and incapable of experiencing the richness and depth of the natural world – forests, mountains, water, animals and other humans.

In the industrialized world, a womyn's value is also defined by the economic relations of the marketplace. She is defined by her profitability to the system as a waitress, doctor, secretary or slave labourer in the home. Any other qualities that she may have, with the exception of her male-defined sexuality, are not valued by the society.

As the industrialized world sinks into a depression with soaring unemployment, womyn are the first to lose their already menial jobs, thus becoming completely worthless to a ruthless economic system where profitability defines everything. The only consistent value that a womyn has in the corporate economy is as a sex object. By perversely associating her sexuality with consumer products, businessmen can sell more products while conversely, the womyn, as consumers, are taught to buy all kinds of junk to try to improve their sexual attractiveness. Think of the sexual womyn with the low-cut gown sitting on the Rolls-Royce; is she any more intelligent, strong or compassionate than the car?

Because womyn throughout their lives are stripped of all value other than their sexuality, they are essentially objectified. In their relationships with men and other womyn, they are not respected for their mental ability, strength and competency. They are regarded with contempt for their female qualities by equating them with stupidity and weakness. Throughout her youth, a girl is brought up to be a sex object and when she is too old to fulfill that role, she becomes an old womyn and is treated like a piece of garbage.

The same institutions and values that teach people to see trees as lumber, mountains as mining resources, old people as pensioners and children as unruly trouble, teach us that womyn are sex objects. The rape of forests by lumbering companies and the rape of womyn can ultimately be attributed to the same

48

men. I knew I was privileged and that it was my responsibility to rebel by seeking truth—the uncompromising truth of injustice, poverty and violence—everything that I was supposed to be swallowing in the media, that is how my white, privileged background played into all this.

How this worked in solidarity with First Nations was awesome! One time, we (me and my DA comrades) were heading to the Stein River Valley for a week of R&R and we had to pass through First Nations territory to get there. There we were moving slow in the stolen four wheel drive—our eyes were on the winding road ahead—when suddenly about twenty First Nations youth appeared out of thin air and blocked the road in front of us with logs and trees so we could not pass. We realized that this was a campaign of non-white direct actions aimed at an aggressive logging company in the area that had marked the last natural watershed for clear cut logging, so we raised our fists in solidarity; we made a peace offering with a cassette tape of John Trudell talking about his life experiences. By respecting Native road blocks, whites can work in solidarity with People of Color to protect the earth. That's how solidarity works!

CB: How did you learn the skills needed, and get the guns, TNT and so on that you used in these actions?

JB: I registered for a Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC) soon after meeting Brent Taylor in 1981. Then, I bought and licensed two mini-14 assault rifles about a year later, because I wanted to learn how to shoot for self-protection. Gerry Hannah didn't want his name on any lists, so I registered his gun for him under my FAC, and that's how Gerry and I got our guns. The rest of the Direct Action (DA) arsenal was expropriated from gun collectors before I officially joined DA on June 30, 1982.

Although I joined in order to get rid of the video porn shop in my suburban neighborhood, the priority of the group at the time was the Litton action and the expropriation of support material to make that action happen, like getting our hands on two-way short-wave radios and dynamite. It was disappointing for me to have to put off target practicing with my new mini-14 .223 caliber Ruger until we succeeded in finding a Department of Highways TNT cache full of dynamite, and then it was, "Wait until after Litton."

Anyways, we were all really tired and on our way home from another day of uneventful searching around for dynamite between Squamish and Whistler when, suddenly, I started pointing at the vehicle directly in front of us and laughing hysterically. It was a Department of Highways service vehicle tagged with an explosives sign in plain view for us to see! Naturally, we followed it to its destination a mile or so up the road and then followed it back to a highways-compound, where it parked overnight. Then, we returned under the cover of the night to steal the keys that were sitting in plain view on the dashboard and unlocked the gate to the service

18

able to spring board into public discourse.

I don't think it would have the same galvanizing effect today, because Third Wave feminists express themselves differently. They are reclaiming their personal journeys out of the ashes of censorship and re-constructing female identity through empowering labels previously defined and censored as "unfeminine" such as prostitution and pornography. Today, feminist third-wavers are choosing to control their means of production rather than smash them. It's so cool, because the forty, fifty year olds like me did our thing, now the twenty, thirty year olds are interested in doing their thing, and on and on it goes.

CB: Why did you choose the spelling you used of Wimmin?

JB: The Brigade as a collective chose "wimmin" as the spelling, because some comrades thought that by using the term we'd build solidarity in other areas of the movement (outside Canada). In other words, we chose the word thinking it would make our Direct Action message more accessible. Today, our target audience wonders "what's up with that word?"

CB: How did your actions affect the overall movement? Did you have any support from the mainstream anti-war and feminist moments?

JB: Our actions caused sorrow, tears, confusion and the regular trademarks of repression. At the time, we did not have widespread support, but the individual people who knew us within those movements supported us passionately, and still do. Conversely, I barely knew anyone in the movement when I was arrested and as a result, I did not get the same sort of support as the others.

CB: What about race? As mainly white, heterosexual activists, and largely from middle class backgrounds, did your privilege play into any of this? How did this work in solidarity with People of Color, especially indigenous people whose land we are fighting on?

JB: I had a hunch that there was more to life than my white bread dysfunctional culture when I started hanging out at the Smiling Buddha and other punk venues in the inner city. I was from the suburbs, right away my family and friends started making a case for violence and homelessness saying that it wasn't safe for me to be downtown. They pointed to local newspaper stories that linked indiscriminate violence with homelessness and Native people in the area. I remember arguing with them and challenging them to read between the lines of stupid media messages I was hearing, like the way women were supposed to dress and be subservient to

17

determined to challenge the power and profit motives of the patriarchal society that insures the rape and mutilation of our mother earth, we refuse to accept their labels of us as terrorists. We know that there are many sisters who share our radical analysis of the issues around the charges laid against us. For centuries the authorities have reacted violently to womyn who resisted; they used to brand us as "witches" and burned us, now they label us as "terrorists" and will try to bury us in their cement tombs.

The state and its media are portraying us as elements of a "lunatic fringe" so that people will be frightened of us instead of relating to us with their rebellious spirits. We must not allow the liberalism of this society to hide the sickness of the rulers and rapers behind their institutions, laws and lies. We are always threatened with their violence, whether it be through nuclear power plants, nuclear weapons, industrialism, prisons or sexual terrorism in our everyday society. We will face their horrors boldly and challenge their corporate interests with the determination and strength of womyn warriors. We will see a resistance movement building in Canada, in an attempt to rid the earth of further corporate destruction so that future generations can survive.

Since our arrests, we have felt a responsibility to the womyn's community to outline why we feel the womyn's movement must transform itself into a womyn's resistance movement that is capable of smashing corporate patriarchy.

For so many centuries and in so many societies the patriarchy has separated the sisters from the brothers. Social institutions have stunted and mutilated our human potential by robbing women of the power to control their own lives, while making our brothers our rulers and rapers. Throughout their lives womyn are prevented from developing so-called "male qualities" of strength, aggression, power, reason and intellect while simultaneously teaching men to have contempt for the so-called "female qualities" of sensitivity, spirituality, sensuousness and emotionalism.

There is no biological reason why the male and female qualities can't live harmoniously inside the same body. But instead, patriarchal socialization has torn apart our rich and complex inner beings, leaving us pathetic shells of womyn and men whose only function is to perform profitably for the capitalist system.

The world has almost always been dominated by patriarchal societies but none so manifests the male qualities on all levels and has so stripped womyn of all value as the modern industrial culture. It is the historical epitome of patriarchy. Office towers, cars, strip mines, and nuclear arms are the physical tribute to MAN. There is no balance in the corporate industrialized world. There is no room for sensitivity and sharing. The balance is tipping over dangerously toward the nuclear precipice and extinction.

The all pervasive patriarchal economic system has created a society where all living things are objectified as consumer products and our relationship to all life

47

WE ARE NOT TERRORISTS: A STATEMENT FROM PRISON

BY ANN HANSEN & JULIET BELMAS

On January 20, 1983 while we were travelling along the Squamish highway, we were stopped by cops posing as highway flag persons. Seconds after the vehicle stopped, at least 30 men in camouflage fatigues, armed to the teeth with automatic rifles, shot-guns, large caliber handguns, in unison attacked the vehicle we were in. They all swarmed from positions in the surrounding hillside and from positions behind a large dump truck that blocked the highway. While stampeding the vehicle, they smashed a window and shot in tear gas. All the cops were screaming hysterically while they ripped us out of the truck and threw us on the ground. They kept shouting not to move or we'd be shot while they stuck their rifles into our backs and pressed their handguns to our heads. Our faces were forced down into the ground so that we couldn't check on one another. We all thought that one of us had been shot when we heard a tear gas shell being fired.

It was horrible having to lay passive to the whims of these crazed military extremists and their guns. We could imagine how other womyn felt in other countries especially being unarmed and having to survive and accept the horror and death of a military attack on their villages and homes. The feeling is too extreme to explain. It suddenly becomes very clear that these men with their guns are ready to kill you. They seemed very hyper and unpredictably insecure. The slightest movement could startle them, causing their fingers to spasmodically jerk and kill.

What is happening in Canada today in reaction to the recent sabotage to the B.C. Hydro Cheekye-Dunsmuir Line and the firebombings of the Red Hot Video porn outlets is not unconnected to the political repression used against people resisting in other parts of the world. In other countries where the liberation movements are strong and active enough to threaten the government and corporate interests, the counter-insurgency forces respond instantly with extreme violence. (The tools of repression are internationally devised and are used explicitly for political purposes. Every power structure in the world is paranoid of the people seeing through their façade and rebelling against their authority.) The ultimate weapon of the people has always been militant resistance and all police-states are constantly developing their violent repressive apparatus to use against the people (to protect their international status-quo).

Being womyn identified, politically conscious, environmentalists and

46

as a punk girl in resistance to mainstream norms was so extreme that it set off a compulsion for guns and militancy that probably attracted other militant cohorts or they attracted me. Whichever way it worked, that's how I became so radical at such a young age, and was it a mistake? As I get older, I think not. I think it was all meant to be.

CB: Did you think you would get caught? Go to prison? What was prison like for you?

JB: Yes and no. It's weird, because I was prepared to do what I had to in order to stand by my word and back up my friends/comrades, but there was no suicide pact—while, at the same time, I am heard on the wiretap several times saying that I'd rather die than go to prison.

CB: Did you receive a fair trial?

JB: No! Immediately, my comrades wanted to censor the wiretap transcripts, and I did not see key pieces of evidence during my prosecution. Two bugs were placed in our underground house: one upstairs in the kitchen and one downstairs in Ann and Brent's room. My comrades, including my boyfriend, didn't think it was good for me to see the downstairs wiretap transcripts and advised against it. This is problematic, because I was convicted of conspiracy with them, and I should have had access to all evidence before and during trial just like everybody else in this country.

Also, when you consider that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms had only been enacted about 30 days before our arrest, I'm sure you can understand that, given the climate we were in, it's unlikely I received a fair trial.

CB: Do you have any advice for activists looking at a long prison term?

JB: My advice is to focus your time on education, because it is the only thing that holds equal value in the semi-free world. Like, a lot of prison activists focus on work programs for prisoners, which I suppose have some merit in the sense that one earns a skilled trade before leaving prison, but who the hell is going to hire someone who got their hairdressing degree from Oakalla or Prison 4 Women? Really, it's a sad joke when you think about it.

It's also important to keep notes and document your experiences as you're doing your time in order to share your ordeal with others. After all, a unique set of experiences put you there.

CB: How can we work to support anarchist and other revolutionary prisoners?

20

CB: One thing very unique about your group was that you were anarchists, not Marxists like most other guerrilla groups such as the Red Army Faction, the Front de Libération du Québec, the Irish Republican Army, the Black Liberation Army and the Weather Underground. How did it work to be an anarchist using a model generally shaped by Marxists?

JB: Those rigid models caused a vanguard mentality even in our group that eventually produced a lot of tension and ultimately divided us in the same way that media uses black and white (didactic) stories to sell newspapers and dummy everything down for purposes of social control. Seriously, as soon as the shit hit the fan when people were injured in the Litton bombing, everyone became more rigid in the group fast! Sure, some political idealism is about envisioning utopia and how to get there, but the nuts and bolts behind revolutionary illegal political activity is a different thing altogether. I have to say that I was attracted to being a real life bad girl devoted to drugs, guns and fucking in the streets! That's what made me want to become an urban guerrilla, not some rigid political ideology. No way! And I challenge anyone who tries to say otherwise, or who tries to say that it makes me any less of a revolutionary in the struggle for freedom. In fact, I believe I was ahead of my time in many ways.

CB: So, you were only 18 years old when you got involved with underground radical action. How does someone that young get involved with something so radical? Was it a mistake to get involved at that young of an age?

JB: 'K, so I'm hanging out with my new punk friends that I met on a film set that we were all extras in called, "All Washed Up," a.k.a. "The Fabulous Stains." I had a car and, as soon as I graduated from grade 12, I told my parents I was going to live in this punk house off Commercial Drive. They weren't too happy, but, like I said, I had a lot of freedom growing up. So, life's one big party at the Punk Manor until one of the punk guys gets drunk and boots a neighbor's car in. The next day was Italian Day 1980, and we were suddenly attacked by a group of masked-men wielding baseball bats. I'll never forget the moment as carnival sounds from the parade from [Commercial] Drive meshed with windows smashing and people screaming from the violence in the foreground and then the desensitizing effects that stayed with me for years!

Anyways, after that incident, I went back home and began challenging my family and friends over newspaper accounts of death squads operating with impunity throughout the third world and pointing out that it could happen here too. That's how I became involved so young—the violent repression I experienced

19

against humanity and the earth, yet they are free to carry on their illegal activities while those who resist and those who are the victims remain in prison. How do we, who have no armies, weapons or money, stop these criminals before they destroy the earth?

I believe if there is any hope for the future, it lies in our struggle.

45

a natural resource base. If some living being is or no economic value in relation to the capitalist system then it is valueless. Consequently, traditional Indian people become victims of genocide and huge areas of the earth are designed as "Natural Sacrifice Areas." So the Litton action, Cheeky-Dunsmuir action and WFB action, at least for me, were not issue-oriented actions but were our resistance politics transformed into action.

Contrary to the Crown's and police's theories, Direct Action and the WFB were two different groups. Of the five of us charged with the Red Hot Video firebombing, only Julie and I did the firebombings. There were no men involved with doing the firebombings. Doug, Brent and Gerry just happened to either live with Julie and me or visit us. The WFB was not an ongoing underground group, it was simply a group of womyn who came together for the purpose of firebombing Red Hot Video because we felt there was no other way for us to stop the proliferation of violent pornography.

Direct Action carried out the Litton and Cheeky-Dunsmuir actions. I do sincerely regret that people were injured in the Litton bombing. All precautions were taken to prevent these injuries and an explanation as to why it happened was released almost immediately after the bombing. But I must also add that I criticize the Litton action itself because it was wrong for Direct Action to place a bomb near a building that people were working in, regardless of the number of precautions taken to ensure that nobody got hurt. In carrying out actions, revolutionaries should never rely on the police or security guards to clear out buildings and save people's lives.

There is no excuse for these mistakes, and I will always live with the pain that I am responsible for, but these mistakes should never overshadow the incredible amount of pain and suffering that Litton contributes to every day and the potential for planetary extinction that the Cruise missile embodies. Every day millions of people are slowly starving to death because so much money and human effort is diverted into the international war industry instead of being used to feed the people of the world. In Canada, essential social services are cut so that the government can pour more money into the war industry and megaprojects. For example, the federal government has given Litton \$26.4 million in subsidies to build the guidance system of the Cruise.

The use of 1984 double-think has become an important part of today's psychological warfare against people developing radical consciousness. We experience it every day, even in this courtroom. I am called a terrorist – one who tries to impose their will through force and intimidation – by the court and press. But I am not a terrorist. I am a person who feels a moral obligation to do all that is humanly possible to prevent the destruction of the earth. Businesses such as Litton, B.C. Hydro and Red Hot Video are the real terrorists. They are guilty of crimes

44

Direct Action: Memoirs of an Urban Guerrilla. What do you think of her book?

JB: It was a shock to read how she depicted me as a romantic rival and both Gerry and I as stupid. And she doesn't talk about her life in prison and her relationships with the rest of us after the trial. In my opinion, the emotional aspects of all of that are important, and that is what I feel was lacking from Ann's book.

CB: So, you grew up near Robert Pickton, right? And I believe you told me before that you knew wimmin in prison who disappeared at his hands? Also, do you think the allegations that the pigs were working with Pickton are accurate? How did this dumb fuck get away with raping and killing wimmin for so many years?

JB: Yeah, I grew up a few blocks over. In February 2002, when he and his crew were arrested and their pictures splattered all over the place, I was like, "Hey, wait a minute. That's the guy who stole my dog and harassed me back in '97!" Yeah, I sensed the danger, and, luckily, I was still a fighter and recorded the license plate number and had the good sense to hold onto it. On the day, I tried reporting it to the local police, who weren't interested at all—they were more interested in me being on parole and not bothering people in my neighborhood!

Sure is creepy though the way all of that DNA from bone fragments of missing women dated back to 1982, the same year I picked up the gun and blamed a video porn shop for bothering my neighborhood. Then, after so many years and so many women I knew from prison disappearing from the Downtown Eastside and then the police descending on the century-old farmland and the neighbor charged, damn! If you only knew of the integrity of those women ... They'd never turn their backs on you, no matter what! And one thing they all had in common was that they cared more about others than they cared about themselves. I still have a very hard time reconciling what happened to those women there and don't know if I ever will [get over that].

I would tend to agree with those allegations, considering how the trial played out and then more. How 'bout all of those media bans? That was a huge indication to me that something was going on behind closed doors, at the systemic level. One thing people should realize is that, all of the time, the police and crown collude and omit things that they don't want entered into evidence and made public. Rules of admissibility of evidence are what drive our criminal justice system. Anyways, I attended a few days of Pickton's pre-trial arguments and found it surprisingly similar to our trial in that it all came down to admissibility of evidence and trial by media. And the most troubling aspect of it all was knowing that, deep in our collective consciousness, he didn't realistically act alone. We know that there's a community of people also who [were so] desensitized that they don't notice or want to notice body parts laying around in garbage cans, cops included. It's a moral

22

prisoners, but it's even more important to offer moral and/or financial support to the families, who are often left out in the cold wondering what the hell just happened.

CB: What was your connection to punk, and did the punk scene have any affect on your political actions?

JB: Me? I just wanted to look cool. I wasn't trying to do anything like revolution at first. I know people would like to think that I was always about breaking boundaries of politics and gender, but Gerry and I didn't really have time for that; we were really too busy trying to pull enough money together for records, beer and the rent. But, I have to admit that, during the early '80s, there was way more social-political activity going on all around in Vancouver—much more than any time since, that's for sure: peace marches by the thousands, lots of socialism themes in the various political rallies, Rock Against Prisons every August, the Trade Union movement, general strikes, and so on and so on. Amidst all of that, I identified as a punk, because I wanted a safe place where I could express myself in less "feminine" ways than other girls—to be assertive, aggressive, outspoken—and reject that good-girl shit as soon as it was pushed in my face and made me feel uncomfortable.

It's important to note that it's very common for adolescent males to reject mainstream norms and expectations by identifying with a sub-cultural identity of some sort, and the Vancouver punk rock scene was no different. It was accepted as a right of passage for men, whereas, for women, it was very different. Sure, I was just as disaffected and rebellious as my male peers in rejecting society's norms and expectations, but, moreover, I was actively resisting both the constructs of feminine norms as well as sexist punk attitudes that valorized adolescent masculinity, toughness, coolness, rebelliousness and even aggressive possessiveness of punk girls. Unlike punk guys, I was constructing my identity from two opposing constructs, which does in fact hold broader implications for thinking about DA and violence as an inherently male trait. I have to think about that for a while.

Anyways, looking back, I believe that when me and my punk friends, especially the guys, were attacked with baseball bats for being punks, it sublimely impacted how I viewed the playing field of politics as one of violence.

CB: What were some of the biggest influences on you?

JB: Violence, love, punk rock music, DIY ethics, episodic '70s television ...you get the progression.

CB: Ann Hansen put out a book entailing her version of your collective story,

21

illegal actions to do so.

I didn't just feel that I should; I felt that I had a duty and responsibility to do everything in my power to stop these crimes. At this dangerous point in human history, we have a moral responsibility to stop the arms race, violent pornography and the destruction of the earth. This moral responsibility far overrides any obligation to adhere to man-made laws.

I would prefer to live in peace but, when I looked around me, I couldn't find it anywhere. Everywhere I looked, the land was being destroyed, the Indians were victims of genocide, Third World peoples were oppressed and massacred, people lived in industrial wastelands and womyn were being raped and children molested. I could never live in peace, only quiet – the kind you find in cemeteries.

Even though I knew that a few militant direct actions would not make the revolution or stop these projects, I believe that it was necessary to begin the development of an underground resistance movement that was capable of sabotage and expropriations and could work free from police surveillance. The development of an effective resistance movement is not an overnight affair – it takes decades of evolution. It has to start somewhere in small numbers, and whether or not it grows, becomes effective and successful, will depend upon whether we make it happen.

I believe these direct actions of sabotage complement the legal radical movement and serve a purpose that it can't fulfill. Not that the legal movement is ineffective: although its efforts often fail to stop a project, its work will increase people's consciousness. The important thing is that the above-ground and underground support one another because our strength lies in unity and diversity.

Although I did do these three political actions, they were the result of the culmination of a legal struggle around the respective issues. In fact, the point of an underground resistance movement is to develop a strategic political analysis and actions that are based on an understanding of the economics and politics of the corporate state. Instead of reacting to every issue that pops up, we carried out actions that were based upon an analysis. This way, if an effective resistance movement does develop, we can be subjects who determine history instead of reacting to every singularly obvious symptom of the system's disease.

The politics of Direct Action saw the interconnectedness of militarism, sexism, environmental destruction and imperialism. We saw that all these problems are rooted in the value system and way of thinking called capitalism and patriarchy. These values are passed on from one generation to the next through the institutions of this society – the multinational corporations, schools, mass media, church and commercial culture.

The main value of this society can be boiled down simply into one word – money. All life on this earth is reduced to its profit value by the capitalist economic system. Women, animals, Third World people, and the environment are reduced to a product and thus are objectified. Workers are valued for their productivity,

43

and strengthened my political convictions to see that the legal game is rigged and political prisoners are dealt a marked deck.

From the beginning in January 1983, the police illegally orchestrated press conferences and furnished mass media with evidence, photos and information that became the basis for nationwide news stories convicting us as terrorists. We were portrayed as dangerous, psychotic criminals without politics.

Then our charges were separated into four separate indictments, of which the first was the Brink's conspiracy, so that we would be criminalized. This would make it harder for people to understand us as political people for our future trials.

During the voir dire, it became obvious through police testimony that the different police departments had committed illegal acts during their investigation. The Security Service in all probability watched the WFB (Wimmin's Fire Brigade) do the firebombings since Julie and I had been under intense twenty-four-hour surveillance by the SS for days prior to and during the day of the firebombing.

CLEU (Co-ordinated Law Enforcement Unit) had committed illegal break-ins to plant the bugs in our house and in Doug's apartment among other illegal activities. But despite this, the judge permitted the wire-tap evidence. This taught me that there is one law for the people and none for the police.

But the event during the court proceedings that has had the most politicizing effect on me was Julie's sentencing. The judge ignored the fact that she had plea bargained and slapped her with the maximum prison sentence suggested by the Crown – twenty years. During the sentencing, the judge said that this case is criminal not political, yet the twenty-year sentence contradicts this view and instead reflects the real political nature of these proceedings. The twenty-year sentence was justified by the judge as a necessary social deterrent, which indicates that the court is so threatened by the potential of social upheaval that it takes a twenty-year sentence to deter others. That is political. It seems that the severity of the prison sentence is in direct proportion to the perceived level of discontent in society.

I understand why I have participated in the legal system up to now, but, in retrospect, in order to be honest to my political principles, I should have refused to collaborate in this legal sham and instead simply stated my political reasons for doing what I did.

Since I didn't then, I have the opportunity to do so now. Over the last couple of days we have heard witnesses who are activists around the different issues. They have spoken at great length about their efforts and the efforts of other groups to prevent the testing of the Cruise and the construction of the Cheekye-Dunsmuir line and to stop Red Hot Video. I think it has become fairly obvious through their testimony that in each case they had exhausted all the legitimate channels of social protest in order to stop these projects and businesses. It was because there was no legal way to stop these crimes against humanity and the earth that I felt I had to use

42

within the confines of capitalist norms and institutions. For instance, I've noticed a surge in bank-manager syndrome: It has now become an acceptable and justifiable part of everyday life to say, "Talk to the hand," and dismiss the first intonation of anger in anyone, no matter the circumstances, political activists included.

I don't think the Movement will go very far if it doesn't address this tendency to want to censor out militancy from its collective psyche. Fear of political violence and imprisonment has effectively neutered the movement. People fear to fight for freedom; activists attempt to convince rather than challenge, and the mere suggestion of violence has become the purple elephant in the living room that no one wants to talk about.

CB: In an interview you gave while you were still in prison, they stated that you renounced the use of violence. Is this true? Do you still feel the same years later?

JB: It is interesting, because, in the beginning of all this, I really didn't understand why I became an urban guerrilla and I definitely didn't understand how it would impact my perspective later on in life. I was very spontaneous and of the moment back then. Now, after many years of reflection, I return to my past with a clearer understanding of events and a firmer belief that action speaks louder than words.

CB: Here is the million-dollar question: If you had a chance to do it all over again, would you? Do you have any regrets?

JB: Yes and no; I truly regret that I injured people, but the ship can't be turned around.

24

asshole, and cops and everybody left him alone.

CB: We are gearing up here for the Olympics, and there is a large resistance movement against it. There is also heavy police repression already, with the pigs coming to the homes of activists in both Vancouver and Victoria to harass them and look for informants. They are also training especially for the Olympic security. Do you think the activists have a chance? What are your general opinions on the Olympics and anti-Olympics movement?

JB: I think that the time is now for a convergence of activism to succeed, as odds are that the Olympic movement does not want images of police brutality and repression following it wherever it goes (next stop, Europe) and, although the anti-Olympic movement is smarting from repression, there is a chance of changing the way people view colonial/capitalist spectacle, like the Olympics, for years to come.

CB: What are your general impressions of the feminist, environmentalist and anarchist movements today?

JB: It's reaffirming to see the movements catalyze around protecting the Earth, queer rights and First Nations empowerment.

CB: What do you think of the bombings of the ENCARTA sour-gas pipelines happening in northern British Columbia in the last year?

JB: I think whatever people do to protect their land and local health needs is righteous!

CB: I have a friend in Edmonton who feels that, whenever someone claiming to be an anarchist blows shit up, it harms the movement. What do you think?

JB: I see media buzzwords and images used all of the time to sell stories and hook the viewer into thinking they can actually make a moral judgment or an informed decision about another community's moral conscience and direct action. In the same way, your friend's "keep 'em separated" and "violence is not me" subtext is moralistic in tone and smacks of censorship, because uncompromising anger is the true force behind all social change.

I think the Gandhian, non-violent, direct-action movement is based on a romanticized Hollywood notion that idealizes a time and culture altogether different than what we're experiencing. Today's post-colonial police state has had a lot of time to perfect techniques that keep people in perpetual submission and

23

STATEMENT TO THE COURT BEFORE SENTENCING BY ANN HANSEN

When I look back on the past year and a half, I realize that I have learned a lesson. Not the kind of lesson that some people would hope I had learned, but rather through direct life experience I have re-learned what I once only understood theoretically – that the courts have nothing to do with justice and prison is where they punish the victims of this society. For many years now I have understood that the justice system was actually a system of injustice when seen in the broader social context. I was aware that parliament is where men make laws to protect big business, wealthy individuals and the status quo. Police were employed to enforce laws, courts were created to prosecute those who broke the law, and prisons were built to punish the guilty.

My faith in the justice system began to erode as I grew up and saw the big businesses ripping off people by selling poorly produced products at high prices, resource companies gouging and raping the earth, governments producing nuclear arsenals capable of destroying life on earth many times over, pornographic magazines that normalized and glamorized rape, incest and sexual assault, and Indians being herded into reservations to die. All these crimes against humanity and the earth are legal. They are protected and sanctioned by Parliament, the courts, the law and the police. This was all very wrong.

In Oakalla, where I have spent the past sixteen months, I have found that 70 percent of the prison population are Indian womyn, even though Indian people make up only 1 percent of the total outside population. This disproportionate number of Indian people in prison is reflected in prison populations across the country and reflects the racism of our society.

Everyone I have met in prison is poor. No one owns cars, homes, land or anything. They are there because they were forced to commit crimes to survive in a society that has no place for them. They have never owned forest companies that rape whole mountains of their forests, or handled nuclear murder weapons or stolen oil from Arab lands to be sold at scalper's prices in North America.

In the beginning when I was first arrested, I was intimidated and surrounded by the courts and prison. This fear provided the basis for the belief that if I played the legal game, I would get acquitted or perhaps less time. This fear obscured my vision and fooled me into thinking that I could get a break from the

41

survive and create a better world without warfare and the possibilities of extinction, a complete abandonment of the culture of patriarchal conquest must occur. Such an abandonment must certainly include "industrial civilization" in its entirety.

We must come to recognize the degree to which our understanding and perceptions of life and the external world have been determined by patriarchal conquest, and how we have developed our societies as a result of this. Then we can clearly see how history has been charted, civilizations built, and finally, how industrialization has come to dominate and threaten our existence because of the lifeless images and vision of the patriarchal mentality. We will be far better able to make positive choices about what kind of societies we want to create, and about what we need to do to survive, if we realize the extent to which the "developments" of history, and the technologies of today, are actually the manifested realities of this entirely morbid process of thought.

For us to really become clear about what we need to do in this struggle for survival, we must rid our inner beings of the negative attributes of patriarchal thinking, but as well, we must rediscover our physical connection and dependency upon the Earth, and re-unite ourselves spiritually with nature. Only from a renewed appreciation and knowledge of natural life processes can we once again come to possess a meaningful understanding of the proper ways to live. Through such an understanding we can gain the direction and strength necessary to wage the struggles that are needed, and the vision to fight against the deadly, artificial civilization; not to reform it, but to do away with it completely.

40

self-perpetuating as well, and tends to continually reinforce our reliance on the initiatives and enterprises of others rather than on our own abilities to survive. As we move farther and farther from a direct dependence on and close relationship with the natural world, and steadily immerse ourselves more and more into a way of life based on the production and consumption of humanmade things, our demand for the exploitation of natural "resources" increases dramatically, thereby creating further destruction of the environment. This in turn makes an interdependent relationship with the natural world farther and farther from the realm of possibility. The basic elements for sustaining human life – independent of modern society – will simply not be there, and the knowledge of how to use them will have been forgotten as well. This is a very good situation for those people who stand to make a lot of money from our dependence on their endless stream of consumer goods and products, but a poor and dangerous situation for the rest of us.

In periods of so-called economic crisis, when the fear of unemployment is running high, governments and corporations are able to use jobs to justify a lot of the things that have little to do with the destruction of the environment (directly anyways) but are still equally as negative. For instance a surprising number of people now are asking that prisons be built in their communities hoping that this will provide them with employment. Rather than an attempt to deal with the very basic questions of whether a society as messed up as ours (or any society for that matter) even has the right to keep people in cages, they opt instead for the short-term solution to their problems, at the expense of the many victims of our society's totally corrupt values and outright oppression.

Another example of this job fanaticism are the people that practically beg to have nuclear power plants built in their communities at great potential risk to themselves and their region – just for the sake of a handful of jobs. In fact, lately we even hear people defending the nuclear weapons industry because of the large number of people it employs. Apparently not only the destruction of the environment, but contributing to the mass murder of millions of people is okay as well, as long as it provides a source of stable employment.

We seem to have forgotten that human beings were living long before the concept of "earning a living" was ever heard of. The fact that we are here today is proof that they were. Contrary to popular belief, life for them was often not sheer drudgery at all, but a joy in many cases. In many communities of old, work and play were virtually indistinguishable. Particularly in hunter/gatherer societies where our ancestors usually had the foresight to settle in areas where the basic needs for living were easily obtainable, and there was little need for prolonged stretches of dull or arduous labour.

This scenario is of course excluding the imperialistic slave, and feudal societies, which actually bear a much closer resemblance to our own society, where work is served much like a prison sentence, and play is viewed as an earned privilege

26

WESTERN DREAM BY GERRY HANNAH

A good many people these days seem to realize that mega projects, large scale logging or mining operations, and continued land developments will inevitably lead to a devastated and inhospitable environment. Yet for some reason, despite this realization, most people continue to accept and even endorse these practices, and generally maintain that they are necessary. One might well ask why a species of allegedly intelligent creatures would want to pursue this self-destructive way of thinking. The answer is simple enough: for the sake of jobs.

We are willing to cut down forests and to flood river valleys, displacing hundreds of wild animals (many of which will die later for lack of shelter and grazing grounds) for the sake of jobs. We are willing to transform countless fragile ecological communities into wastelands of concrete, slagheaps and mud; for the sake of jobs. We are willing to poison rivers, lakes and the air, with all sorts of pollution; for the sake of jobs. Basically we are willing to totally violate this earth in any way, shape or form, just as long as those paycheques keep on rolling in.

As a fully industrialized society we believe that in order to survive we must be employed, and as such we have become totally dependent on corporations and other large institutions for our livelihoods. This is an exceedingly vulnerable position to be in because now, out of fear of being unemployed, we are in effect silenced from speaking out against many improper practices carried out by employers through their various enterprises. We see that what we are doing to the earth and to ourselves is wrong, we see that those who are responsible for initiating these actions against the earth are not concerned in the least about the impact they have on it, yet we dare not raise our voices too loudly in protest against them for fear of losing our source of income.

One wonders though just how much we are willing to sacrifice in the name of employment. Where exactly does it end? Are we ready to accept the fact that our children will be left with a devastated and barren world so that we may have jobs today? Jobs that are almost always degrading, monotonous or destructive in some way. Jobs that are unstable at the best of times. Jobs that bring us a mere fraction of the profits that are made as a result of our sweat and toil. Hopefully we are not that shortsighted, foolish, and selfish.

Not only is this position we find ourselves in today vulnerable, it is

25

crisis of extermination, starkly reveal that the longer human beings have adhered to, or been forced under domination of, the various strains of patriarchal thinking, the greater the anti-social centrality of such thought has permeated the character of human societies; and therefore, the greater the degree of violence, destruction and misery that all living beings and the environment of the Earth have experienced. On the path of patriarchal conquest things haven't gotten better, they've gotten worse. All the multitudes of negativity found throughout patriarchal history have compounded, mutated and expanded over time, eventually culminating in the toxic realities of modern times.

With the advent of industrial civilization, a quantitatively new era of destructiveness has come into being. Before industrialization, though there was often unfathomable suffering and brutality, actual threats to the survival of all life on Earth did not exist. Therefore, regardless of the many terrors people faced, in their dreams they could visualize an open-ended future full of possibility. Today this is no longer true: we live in dread of the horrors of industrial civilization, and daily we are confronted with the very real possibility of extinction. Industrialization has not only magnified the basic anti-life dynamic of the patriarchal culture of conquest, it is in fact a Frankenstein created by it.

The existence of industrial civilization cannot be divorced from the historical process which eventually enabled it to be created – that process being patriarchal historical development. Industrial civilization stems totally from within the conceptual framework of the patriarchal mindset; and it is from that mentality that the strivings to pursue it dwell. It would never have come into being without human cultures having first been mutilated by patriarchal conquest, and our identification with the natural living world severed. If we fail to make this connection, then we fail to understand the real "nature" of industrial civilization.

Industrial civilization is the definitive product of patriarchal conquest. Industrial development is not wrong simply because it is recklessly utilized towards the ends of power and profit. Its very essence is wrong: all the premises upon which it was founded, and is maintained, are negative and anti-life. It is inherent within the essential "nature" of industrial civilization for it to be life-threatening. It is entirely consistent, therefore, that its existence has become such a grave threat to the survival of life.

To survive this crisis of extermination, it is simply not enough to isolate nuclear war, large-scale pollution or relentless profiteering as being the offensive realities of industrial civilization, and therefore, as the only parts of it that should be done away with. To do that would mean that we still embraced, on the whole, most of the industrial "way of life" created in the image of the patriarchal mentality. It would mean that we still adhered to the culture of patriarchal conquest. It is essential we come to realize that it has been, and will continue to be, our basic adherence to the patriarchal mentality which is the real threat to life, and the fundamental

39

being that of patriarchal (male-dominated) conquest. I believe that within this mode of thought are ways of perceiving and being, sometimes subtle and sometimes brutally apparent, which must be rejected if we are to survive and recreate lives and cultures of natural freedom and harmony.

At some point in our distant past, when early patriarchal societies began to develop and then become established and powerful, a distancing and disregard, and eventually contempt and conquest, over womyn, other peoples and finally the natural environment came to be the principle underlying premises upon which the ruling males governed. Since those times, the magnitude of patriarchal conquest has steadily expanded, and "human development" has been synonymous with the ever-increasing institutionalization of patriarchal domination. The tragic effects of this domination is not only evident today in the material conditions of human societies, but as well in the inner world of human beings.

Over thousands of years, the patriarchal culture of conquest has virtually destroyed our inner grounding with what can be termed "a natural and holistic appreciation of life." Such a severe spiritual crippling has left us collectively wounded and astray. This is particularly true in advanced industrial societies where an extremely distorted and lifeless view of living exists. Not only has much of the reverence and worship of life itself vanished, but it appears that these societies have become incapable of recognizing the fact that they are creating an execution chamber world by the very manner in which they are functioning and by the very motives which drive them onward.

Patriarchal conquest has become an all-embracing battle of conquest over all life for the ends of greed and power for rulers and empires – to bury variety, spontaneity and vitality in a coffin of artificiality, domination and control. Male rule, womyn hating, racism, warfare, imperialism, materialism, anthropocentrism, speciesism, aggression, competition, believing humanity to be separate and superior to the natural world, psychic and emotional encasement, invulnerability, hierarchialism, objectification, exploitation, techno-rationality, lack of intuition or insight, and spiritual voidness – these are some negative attributes which are consistent with a patriarchal culture. Taken as a whole, they form the cultural archetype now exhibited in the military industrial imperialism of our present times. Throughout patriarchal history, these attributes have more or less determined how we have lived, and how civilizations have developed. Today, much of humanity, most men, and all imperialist economic, scientific, political and military leaders are imbued with many of these life-smothering characteristics. The brutal landscapes and stagnant cesspools of modern industrial civilization are a real life mirror reflecting the extent to which the human spirit has been extinguished by the culture of patriarchal conquest.

The ceaseless dark ages of history, now epitomized in the 20th century

38

recycling methods (which again rely on their own manufactured parts and materials) were implemented in this production process, there is just no way this amount of industry would not have a serious impact upon the natural world. Furthermore, there is no way that a society that willingly embraces this amount of industry can truthfully said to be living in harmony with nature.

In the consumer society we live in today, human relations also tend to break down along with relations with nature. We are frequently abused and insulted both in our workplaces and in the marketplace by employers concerned only with our output as employees, who are generally insensitive to our feelings as human beings, and by entrepreneurs who see us only as consumers from which a profit might be made, who have little regard for our real needs as human beings. This humiliation and abuse we experience daily (which comes in many other forms as well) inevitably leads to feelings of helplessness, frustration and inadequacy, which we tend to vent in various negative ways. These often include escape through drugs or alcohol, and violence both domestic and otherwise. We have so little control over our own lives that we attempt to make up for it by dominating others. We also become bitter and apathetic towards life in general and suspicious and intolerant of other human beings.

At the same time, as all of this is happening, we are repeatedly being encouraged through mainstream media and slick corporate advertising to be highly competitive and totally materialistic, and judge ourselves and one another by what we possess rather than by what we are. By accepting these values and attempting to live up to them, we become little more than machines performing pre-programmed functions at the expense of our own and others' freedom and dignity.

Most of us can sense that there is something very wrong with the way things are today, but we apparently have not yet fully realized the extent of the damage being done. Nor do we yet have a clear idea of what to do about it. Many of us look to political leaders for answers, but they are usually either too busy making business deals with their corporate cohorts, vacationing, or just plain too arrogant to answer, and when they do claim to have some answers, it's always just more of the same. They tell us that these problems are just part of the price of progress, but they never tell us just what exactly it is that we are progressing towards, so how do we know whether the price is worth it or not?

The same is true for business leaders, who, surprisingly enough, some people still perceive to be nice men who actually care about us. Their answer to just about all the world's problems is less control over big business and more financial incentives for free enterprise ventures – which is the same as saying the best way to put out a fire is to add more fuel to it.

They will also argue against a return to a simpler, more independent lifestyle by saying that a highly technological society would be much more beneficial and healthy for us to live in. That it is our only real chance for freedom and equality.

28

spent the bulk of our time and energy labouring to fulfill someone else's greedy ambitions.

Many people would argue that a more basic existence such as our ancestors enjoyed without all the mechanical devices and technological processes we have today, would be too physically demanding, and would leave us with much less leisure time on our hands than we have today. However, we're now finding that in our day to day existence in modern society, we are gradually receiving less and less of an adequate amount of physical exercise which we need in order to stay healthy, and so we now must find other means to keep fit such as jogging, swimming, and cycling to name just a few. So in essence this means that to a large extent rather than making our lives easier, we have merely restructured them, and not only that, but now we are often actually paying for exercise that was at one time merely a part of day to day living, not to mention using up a good deal of our newly gained leisure time with boring fitness programs.

Another argument that some people make against a very basic existence, is that it's not really necessary to go that far. They say that all that's necessary to stop the destruction of the environment and to maintain a healthy relationship with nature is for people to control industry rather than corporations and for industry to stop producing massive quantities of useless consumer products and instead produce only items that are practical and truly useful. Some of these items might include components for maintaining mechanized transportation and advanced medical procedures, as well as electronic communication/information equipment and alternative energy-producing devices.

Though no doubt these goods and the services they enhance could be beneficial to us under the right conditions, this argument has one essential flaw to it. It ignores the vast and complex industrial sub-structure that must exist before such goods and services can be created. For example X-ray machines and wind-powered electrical generators, though seemingly more or less ecologically sound in themselves, they require many exotic, highly-processed parts and materials. These parts and materials don't just spring from thin air. They must first be extracted from the earth, transported to where they are to be processed, processed, then transported to where they are to be manufactured, and finally, manufactured. This is all before these parts and materials even get to the final assembly plant. Each one of these operations basically constitutes an industry in itself, and each one of them also relies on its own group of specialized mechanical devices, which in turn must be manufactured from their own parts and materials as well, and so on and so on. Even if manufacturing were restricted to a mere fraction of the more sophisticated items we produce today, we can see that we would still actually be depending on quite a substantial amount of industrial activity.

Also, even if the most advanced and effective pollution controls and

27

PATRIARCHAL CONQUEST AND INDUSTRIAL CIVILIZATION

BY BRENT TAYLOR

The apocalyptic horrors we face today – the looming nightmares of nuclear war or ecological catastrophe – are a direct consequence of the industrial and technological civilization created by materialistic capitalist and communist male power elites over the past 200 years. These threats to our survival are entirely unique to this modern era, and would have been virtually inconceivable to people of former times. However, the true roots of industrial civilization – the consciousness and attitudes which eventually enabled such a civilization to come into being – first began to fester in the societies of our ancestors long ago. Why we have only so recently come to be faced with the nightmarish reality of a crisis of extermination is because the modern era is the first in which the actual potential for extermination exists. It was only through the actualization of an advanced industrial civilization that the machines, weapons and industrial processes were created which are now threatening the survival of life on Earth.

The present industrial and technological civilization is, in its global scale and its actual physical manifestations, vastly different from all other eras of so-called "civilized history." From the stupefying rate of expansion of the "industrial revolution," and with the colossal productive capacity of massive factories, the immense output from power projects, and the utilization of mega-scale resource extraction, etc., etc., ad nauseum, there is little question that the modern era, in a material sense, literally stands beyond history. It has facilitated the most consumptive and materialistic societies ever – which are surely a science fiction fantasy when compared with even the most developed urban centres of the 18th century. Yet it is not because of a new mode of thinking that human existence has been so rapidly transformed.

Industrial civilization has evolved from the cumulative effects of an unbroken adherence to perceptions, concepts and philosophical values which are negative and essentially anti-life. For example, the capacity of human beings to want to wage wars of total annihilation against their enemies, or the quest to manipulate the natural environment to our anthropocentric ends, or to lust after material wealth with insatiable greed – these machinations which are so prevalent among the ruling classes of today – have also dominated the pursuits of previous eras and civilizations. Clearly, far back into history, well before the beginnings of the Judeo-

37

directly confront the government and corporations. If our work is based on the understanding that the patriarchy must be destroyed, then we can't be conned into believing that a change of law here, and government commission there, will improve the situation for womyn. It will be focused on relentlessly exposing and attacking the protection and cover-ups that the government affords the male rulers and rapers of the people and land.

Once dedicated to a resistance struggle, womyn will begin to take the initiative of social change out of the hands of the patriarchy. In our present situation, the government and multinationals make the decisions that determine the course of events. For example, the federal government continues to sanction mega-projects that pollute the land and we react.

If the initiative of change is to lie in the hands of feminists and radicals, then we must analyse and understand how the Canadian state and multinationals operate. We have to understand the role Canada plays in the imperialist network, the strategic interests of the economy that keep Canada strategically stable and the political weaknesses that we can expose. Once we have this understanding, then we can develop strategies of action that have continuity and that are not rooted in a reaction to the most singularly obvious symptoms of the system. This way we can, over the long-term, undermine the very structure of the system.

Armed with a militant feminist analysis and tactics of resistance, womyn can develop an ongoing offensive against the bastions of the patriarchy – the corporate megaprojects, military and government institutions. As long as these institutions continue to control human society, pornography, rape and the objectification of womyn will continue.

If we look around us, and are shaken to the core by a dread of the deathly future this society presents us, then we must turn to the spirit, emotion, and sensuousness in ourselves that allows us to connect with all life. Through a rejoining with the spirit of life, we will rekindle the spirit of revolt. Revolt at the raped forests, polluted rivers, the death culture of this society, the massacre of third world people and genocide of the Indian people. A deep feeling of revolt at death and a corresponding love of life will give us the power to resist and make sacrifices that are essential to save the earth. Surely there is no greater task than to prevent the destruction of the earth and the misery and meaninglessness of modern-day human life.

36

LIVING IN REALITY

BY DOUG STEWART

In the last few years, tens of thousands of people have died in El Salvador – mostly guerrillas killed by the army and peasants killed by the death squads. What does that mean? Not much, I think, to most of us. We have an intellectual understanding of events in that sorrowful country, but I don't think we really *feel* the reality of the suffering and struggle taking place there. For most political people there is an unconscious emotional distancing, an alienation and separation that prevents us from empathizing, from feeling the tangibility of what is happening. We read a magazine article and are properly outraged, but in a few days we forget. I think we should make an effort to internalize the reality of fascism and guerrilla war in El Salvador. Now, right now, there is someone just like us, with hopes and dreams and fears, being tortured or murdered or raped by Salvadorean soldiers. And right now, there is someone just like us sitting in the jungle with a rifle, watchful and waiting. We are political people. These people are our sisters and brothers and their lives are real. We should grant them realness in our minds.

"The eyes are blind, one must look with the heart." There is a lot of injustice in the world, a lot of oppression and suffering, and I think for most of us our understanding of this reality is very intellectual and abstract. We do not really identify with the existence and the pain and the resistance of the people we sympathize with. For example, even to progressive men, I think that what it feels like to be a womyn in a patriarchal society is largely unintelligible. We can intellectually understand the omnipresent potential for violence, the belittling, cruelty, and scorn, but we do not really empathize and identify with the frustration, wear, and fear that our culture imposes on womyn. The genocide of American Indians is another atrocity we abstractly understand, but one which I think very few white Canadians really grasp the reality of.

A different kind of non-understanding is of the rape of the earth. Most leftists view ecological destruction as unnecessary or inefficient or offensive to human aesthetic values, but we do not really empathize with the foxes and flowers, with the whole indescribably complex, interconnected, and beautiful life of the land; nor do we truly feel the horror and injustice of the slaughter being perpetrated against the earth.

These are all examples of our alienation from reality of the limits on our

30

at all costs, total conformity, and domination over all living things – including the very earth which gives us life, could possibly be healthy, beneficial and fair. We see the beginnings of it now. Is it fair? Is it healthy? Are there any less problems than before? We only need to take a careful look at ourselves and at life around us for the answer to that question.

For those of us who strive to be truly honest with ourselves, and who share a deep concern for the quality of life on our planet, the reality of the situation should be clear by now. Either we refuse to collaborate in the earth's and in our own destruction any longer, or we commit ourselves and our children to a permanent position of subordination, and a totally artificial way of life from which there is no return. If we choose to refuse, then a radical change in our way of thinking is required. We must stop kidding ourselves that industrialism and the environment can co-exist. They can't. We must stop presuming that we need all of our modern devices and processes to survive and be happy. We don't. And we must stop assuming that the people with power, be they elected or otherwise, will make the right decisions for us. They won't.

The total change that must happen in order to guarantee that our lives will have real meaning and independence, and that our planet will survive, seems so hopeless in terms of realization. Yet it must happen. Each one of us individually must attempt to fully understand the plastic society around us and our relationship to it, and to reject it entirely, both in thought and in action. As well, we must in the process join together with others who share this knowledge and concern for the future and bravely push forward, in every way we can, toward a new and better way of life. A way of life based on cooperation, equality, and deep respect for the earth.

The situation is urgent. The time for change is now. The work ethic and the western dream are killing us, both physically and spiritually, but we can live if we want to. It's up to us.

29

and contradictions should be exposed and attacked with a strategic eye towards total liberation.

The contradictions between capitalist/patriarchal ideology and the daily reality of exploitation and the destruction of life cannot be resolved without a total transformation because these realities are integral to the system. To understand why reform won't liberate us, we have to understand the nature of the beast – this international system that we are enslaved by. We must throw off the rose-tinted glasses and throw away the middle class fairy tales that taught us that our society is a nice place and everything always turns out well. In reality, capitalism and patriarchy are rooted in exploitation and objectification of life. Capitalism is an economic system based on profit-making for the rich and patriarchy is a system in which the values of men – that is, competition, power and aggression – dominate and negate all other values.

Liberation can only be attained through the destruction of the patriarchy – our methods must be those of a liberation struggle. Few feminists would argue against the view that the government is a powerful bastion of the patriarchy; that is, government leaders are responsible for creating laws and institutions that maintain male dominance. Yet many of these womyn still believe that, by asking these same powerful male leaders of government to help them, womyn can attain liberation. Womyn cannot expect to achieve liberation through the patriarchal governments' methods of social change. The most that can be expected of these methods is that government and business accommodate a few feminists by changing some laws and redistributing some wealth.

Developing methods of struggle rooted in resistance does not mean we must reject all short-term goals. Liberation is a long-term process built upon gains made little by little; when we fight for abortion on demand, or against pornography, we must do so within a revolutionary context. This means describing the problem from a radical perspective and using tactics that reflect our rejection of the male controlled legal, political and economic system. For example, rather than demanding equal pay for work of equal value – a demand which reflects an acceptance of the existing patriarchal economic system – womyn should develop new means of survival that are non-exploitative and harmonious with the earth, such as expropriations, co-ops and collectives.

A liberated womyn in this society is a womyn in total resistance, constantly pushing against the limits and obstacles restricting her. Liberated womyn must make a total break with the patriarchy: establish their own communities, culture and political action groups. Instead of putting their energy into asking the male protectors, the government, to help them, liberated womyn develop tactics of resistance that cannot be controlled by the government, such as occupations, blockages, information distribution, peoples' inquiries, posterings, spray painting, expropriation, survival gatherings and other direct actions. If unified

35

There will never be a large enough profit margin in the western world to alleviate the poverty of womyn of colour, Indian womyn, Third World womyn – because the definition, essence, very fibre of the patriarchy and capitalism is rooted in making wealth for the few by exploiting the many, and in objectifying womyn and nature to transform them into products sold for a profit. This system of exploitation is maintained and protected by parliament, the legal system, and the police force. It is a contradiction in terms to believe these institutions would contain legitimate channels for the destruction of a system they are designed to protect.

If womyn do not develop revolutionary methods and goals, the very foundation of the patriarchy will remain untouched, leaving governments, institutions and businesses that embody the male value system unscathed. There will still be smoggy sunsets, oil spills, people starving, and computers taking over the mind. The patriarchy will be left intact, with a few token females in the power structure.

Reforms also tend to strengthen the existing system by appearing to resolve contradictions within its ideology of freedom, liberty, and democracy, and its reality of social, political and economic exploitation. Although they can be resolved only through revolution, reforms can diffuse these contradictions for the middle classes. Reforms help give the patriarchy a kinder face. Affirmative action programs place token womyn in traditional male professions; more daycare centres allow more womyn to join the work force and tougher anti-porn and anti-rape laws create the illusion that womyn are protected from the most violent aspects of sexism. These reforms will have given some privileged women more power and freedom within the male world, but the patriarchal structure and values that are rooted in materialism and greed will remain untouched. There will still be millions of sterilized Indians and third world womyn, most womyn will still be treated primarily as sex objects, will be impoverished or starving, and the human society will continue to embody only the worst life-destroying features of the male psyche.

Yet these reforms create a false appearance of equality which can be used as a weapon against the poor womyn who only experience poverty, violence and degradation. The middle class womyn, beneficiaries of reform, can then turn against the poor, claiming that the middle class have jobs, daycare centres and abortions and therefore the problem of the poor lies in their own laziness and incompetence.

Even the benefits of reform to the middle class womyn are an illusion because equality within this patriarchy is, in reality, the transformation of womyn into female replicas of men who have learned to enjoy the evils of greed and power. To work at jobs within the patriarchy, we have to give up our children to institutional daycare centres and take on the values of the male dominated workplace.

We must refuse to be accomplices in the perpetuation of our own oppression by smoothing over the conflicts of the patriarchy. Instead these conflicts

34

means to be an oppressed person, to be a Central American peasant or an American Indian or a Canadian housewife or even a logged valley.

This consciousness will outrage us, not in a way that will fade in a few days, but in a way that will sink deep into our being, that will fuel our anger and our determination to be politically effective. We will be driven from political consciousness into political activism.

This consciousness will also serve to keep our personal position in perspective. We forget sometimes that most of us lead very privileged lives, especially those of us who are white men. If we maintain a tight emotional connection with the less fortunate, then we will be less constrained by fear of endangering the security of our lives and lifestyles, and more willing to risk what we have for the sake of those who have very little.

As we develop an identity with suffering people we will also come into an identity with people in resistance. El Salvadorean guerrillas, rape relief workers and AIM militants are all our sisters and brothers; if we can learn to empathize with the reality of their lives and work, and to carry that consciousness with us, we will have a powerful source of strength and hope to draw on. Beyond ideology and beyond motivation, we need faith, the inner strength that enables us to push on in the face of apparently overwhelming opposition.

In time of depression and crisis we can be sustained by our connection with our friends and comrades around the world.

If we make an effort we can see past the maps and numbers and into people's hearts and lives, and I think that this can have a great impact on our lives. I hope that we come to see the political work we do, not just as an obligation, as what we think we should do, but also as what we want to do, flowing from our connection with people and our desire to struggle alongside them. And mostly what I hope is this: that we look at our lives, at what we do and why, and at what we could do, and that we always live in the real world, seeing clearly and feeling deeply.

In what I say here I am speaking primarily to serious political people and to my own community, feminist anti-authoritarians, and environmentalists. I am speaking as an equal to people I respect and am in solidarity with. I don't propose the consciousness of *Living in Reality* as something that no one has, or as a magical solution to any of our problems, but as a contribution to our ongoing dialogue about the world and our lives in it. I hope that people will read this critically and sympathetically, taking what they find of worth and leaving the rest.

Oakalla Prison
1983

32

think on a rational level. This inability is characteristic of our culture and springs from many sources.

One source is simple and obvious: the life experience of most oppressed people is totally foreign to our own; if I am not a womyn or an Indian or a tree, it will be difficult for me to deeply appreciate what they undergo. And if our lives are relatively sheltered and comfortable, it will be difficult for us to appreciate suffering of any kind, to really understand sudden violence, slow starvation, crippling disease, rape, torture, and unreasoning murder.

More generally speaking, I think there are two major elements of our society that alienate us from reality: the patriarchy and technology. Perhaps the most fundamental root of our behavior and thought is our sexist conditioning, and for those of us who are men this implies deep-seated separation from womyn, illusions of superiority, and emotional isolation. This mental and emotional straight-jacket pervades our lives, acting as a major barrier to our empathizing and identifying with anyone oppressed in any way.

Our technological culture also constrains our understanding. Our environment – the cars, cities, houses, jobs, and especially the TVs – is very artificial, complicated and unintuitive and, over time, conditions us to accept the violent and bizarre as routine and unexciting. I don't understand this point entirely clearly, but I feel strongly that on a subconscious level the machine environment alienates us not only from the natural world but also from ourselves, from those around us, and from events in the world in general.

One final source of our inability to empathize with the world around us is the sheer horror of it. Those who open themselves to reality, who seek to identify themselves with suffering people, will be overwhelmed by cruelty and pain, and deeply hurt. In self-defence we withdraw.

I have tried to give some explanation for what I see as limitations in our understanding. I think that we, a political people, should seek a profound understanding of the world, going beyond remembrance of facts to knowing of reality, to a heartfelt identification with suffering people and struggling resistance fighters. The burden of this consciousness is great, but the benefits are greater still. If we are dedicated and honest and desirous of this understanding, I think that we can achieve it. Further, I think that it can have significant consequences for our lives.

For one, our understanding of the world will become truer and richer, and we will have a stronger sense of being rooted in the material world, of actually living in reality. As well, I think that people of different life experience will seem more concrete, more on the same level of actuality of ourselves.

More specifically, the horror of the world will become clearer; we will start to feel the character and scale of suffering and injustice in the world. We can never completely succeed, but if we try we can come to a closer identification with what it

31

FEMINIST RESISTANCE VS REFORM BY ANN HANSEN

The majority of the white womyn's movement have taken on the cry for equal pay for equal work of equal value, more government daycare centres, tougher anti-porn and anti-rape laws, more government funding for women's groups, and affirmative action programs in business. These demands are called reforms, because in themselves, they do not presuppose that the entire patriarchy must be destroyed for the intent of these reforms to be realized. They are made known to the male rulers through government sanctioned legal channels (i.e. petitions, lobbying MPs and MLAs, and supporting government parties).

Some womyn believe reforms can liberate them, without the destruction of capitalism. For them there is a great hope of reforming the patriarchy, particularly in North America, if the womyn are white and willing to take on the male persona. Some radical feminists see reforms as short term gains that will become the groundwork for a revolutionary movement to destroy the patriarchy. Too often their work towards immediate reform obscures their revolutionary aims and determines the methods that they employ. For example, to change the laws to curb pornography, their methods usually involve dialogue with government representatives, letter campaigns and petitions. If everything an individual womyn does in a day is geared towards reforming the law, then her secret revolutionary aspirations will remain just that.

All that most reforms accomplish, whether they are called for within a radical or capitalist context, is the accommodations of a few more white womyn that are capable and willing to assimilate into the male dominated institutions. This means accepting the values and principles of the corporate world. If a womyn seeks power and money in life and is aggressive, ambitious and competitive, then yes, there could be a place for her in the corporate world. She can obtain "freedom and equality" with her male peers even though in reality these qualities are viewed as greed and power from the perspective of the poor.

There is enough profit margin in Europe and North America to accommodate white middle class womyn in order to diffuse a potentially threatening feminist movement. There is hope for these middle class womyn to attain equal pay for work of equal value, more government subsidized daycare centres, abortion on demand, tougher anti-porn and rape laws and affirmative action programs which

33