



## **The Vancouver 5: Armed Struggle in Canada**

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Linking anarchism to deliberate acts of violence might seem very natural to most people if they think about anarchism at all. But for most younger anarchists, it must be difficult to imagine that in the early 1980s, armed struggle in Canada not only seemed possible, but a small group coming out of the anarchist community in Vancouver actually engaged in it. Moreover there was small but significant support for all three actions.

As Direct Action and the Wimmen's Fire Brigade, they never explicitly claimed to be anarchist. For that matter neither did their supporters. We never denied being anarchists either. Our anarchism developed out of political practice rather than theory and history. In this discussion, the word "We" will be referring to the small milieu that the Vancouver Five came out of. Only those five choose to follow their ideas through to a logical conclusion and go underground. But others were influenced by similar developments elsewhere, and shared a desire to shake up Canada politically.

The political context for Direct Action was international. In the mid to late 1970s and into the 1980s the Red Army Fraction in Germany and the Red Brigades in Italy were only the largest of various guerrilla groupings in Europe. Insurrection in Europe seemed possible in spite of the massive level of repression directed against these militants who assassinated and kidnapped politicians and corporate executives. Canadian anarchist papers such as Open Road, Bulldozer and Resistance brought news of these struggles to North America.

Armed struggle was also very much on the agenda in the U.S. The popular idea is that political struggle ended in the early 1970s after the end of the Vietnam war. But even if the anti war, and other movements had pulled back, remnants of the more militant groups had gone underground to wage war against the system. On the east coast, the Black Liberation Army, formed when Black Panthers went underground after learning the lesson from the intense and deadly repression directed against them, was active until 1981. The United Freedom Front and the Armed Resistance Movement were active into the early 1980s, bombing government buildings to protest American military involvement in Central America and attacking corporate targets to protest their involvement in South Africa.

On the west coast, groups such as the Symbionese Liberation Army and the New World Liberation Front robbed banks, set off bombs and kidnapped Patty

Hearst, a wealthy heiress. These groups were politically suspect and certainly not anti-authoritarian. Many radicals considered them to be heavily police infiltrated. But none the less they contributed to the sense that armed actions could be effective because they did have an impact.

There were also many small autonomous groupings, some of which were explicitly anarchist or anti-authoritarian, that were active up until the end of the decade. Bill Dunne and Larry Giddings, for example, are two anarchists who continue to be imprisoned in the U.S. today for actions that took place at that time. Bill and Larry were arrested in October 1979 after a gun battle through the streets of Seattle when they tried to break a friend out of jail.

The best known of these west coast groups was the George Jackson Brigade which was made up of both anarchists and Marxists. They committed a series of actions in the Seattle area in the late 1970s, often in support of the prisoner movement which was very strong at that time. The GJB was anti-authoritarian, pro-woman, pro-gay and lesbian and advocated collective as opposed to party politics. Even though all of these groups were eventually crushed, they did offer a political alternative to organizing demonstrations and putting out papers.

Open Road in Vancouver, Bulldozer in Toronto, and Resistance, which started in Toronto and then shifted to Vancouver, covered the armed resistance in the U.S. and the subsequent repression. This coverage played an increasingly important role as their above ground supporters in the U.S. were broken up, and as the mainstream left tried to distance themselves as much as possible. We published communiqués explaining the actions. We provided supportive coverage of their trials and offered an outlet for the writings of the captured combatants. Revolution, or at least a protracted struggle, seemed to be quite possible. They were very much part of the wave of armed struggle in North America, and were part of a broader anti-NATO, anti-war machine politic. Our perspective was very much internationalist even if we understood that we had to work within our own local and national situations.

In the spring of 1982 a bomb destroyed the nearly completed Cheekeye-Dunsmuir Hydro substation. It's construction had been strongly opposed by local residents on environmental grounds. It was thought that it would lead to the industrialization of Vancouver Island and the construction of nuclear power plants for export sales to the U.S. Several hundred pounds of dynamite stopped that plan in its tracks.

There was a lot of local support for the action. It wasn't clear whether or not Direct Action, which had claimed the action, was an anarchist group, and in a sense it didn't make any difference.

The action had raised the political stakes in Canada. But as the bombing had taken place in the wilderness, it was easy to ignore. The next action wouldn't be.

In the late evening of October 14, 1982, a truck exploded outside the Litton Industries plant in Rexdale, in the northwest corner of Toronto, resulting in

millions of dollars in damages. Seven workers were injured, one permanently. After a few days, Direct Action issued a communiqué claiming responsibility\*. As a political piece, the communiqué is as relevant today as it was in 1982, the only change being that the Cold War is over. Most importantly, they criticized themselves for seeing the cops and security guards as superheros. They weren't. The mistakes made by Direct Action were compounded by the inadequate response of both the guards and the cops.

The bombing was pretty simple: drive a stolen van loaded with dynamite through the front gates of the Litton and park it in front of the building, leave the van, and in 35 minutes, the van explodes. To ensure that the bomb threat would be taken seriously, they drove the van right in front of a glass enclosed security guard booth. But the guards didn't notice the truck even though the van driver could clearly see the guards. Then the phoned-in warning was not understood. But at least it drew the attention of the guards to the van. Unfortunately Direct Action was a bit too clever. They had placed a box painted fluorescent orange outside the truck, easily visible from the security booth. On top of the box they placed a sheet of paper with information and instructions. They expected the guards to come over to the box once they received the phone warning. To emphasize the seriousness of the situation, they placed a stick of unarmed dynamite on top of the box. Another mistake. The security guards of course stayed away from the box, given that they didn't know that the dynamite on the box was unarmed. In spite of the obvious threat, the security guards didn't start to evacuate the plant until 20 minutes after receiving the warning phone call. And then the bomb went off early, probably set off by radio signals from the arriving police cars.

The bombing took place at a time when the cold war between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. was very intense. Ronald Reagan, representing that section of the American ruling class that was out to get the so-called evil empire, had been elected president. Both sides were attempting to achieve first strike nuclear capability through new weapons such as the Cruise and Pershing Missiles, the Trident Submarines, and the Neutron Bomb. The possibility of nuclear war was very real at the time.

In response, a peace movement developed in Europe, North America and elsewhere. Canada's agreement to let the U.S. test the Cruise over northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories was seen as a particular affront to peace activists. Litton had been the focus of extensive protests by peace groups since they were producing the guidance systems for the missile. There had been a series of peaceful protests at Litton resulting in the arrests of scores of protesters for civil disobedience. But as in the case of Cheekeye-Dunsmuir, the protests were going nowhere.

The initial reaction of many radicals and activists was joyful on first seeing the headlines in the paper. But this changed on more sober reflection as the implications were thought through. The bombing wasn't just a threat to the militarized state, but to the peaceful coexistence so many activists have with the system. It is clear that even with the injuries, there was not much reaction to it by the average person. For most people the bombing was just one more

spectacular event in a world gone mad.

Of course it certainly was a major event for the anarchists and the pacifists. The Toronto anarchist-communist paper *Strike!* initially condemned the action because it would discredit the movement. It repeated the usual critique that such actions could not by themselves do anything. Direct Action never claimed that it would. To quote the communiqué, “(w)hile we have no illusions that direct actions, 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 can have a constructive function as a springboard to the kind of consciousness and organization that must be developed if we are to overcome the nuclear masters.”

A more sophisticated critique was issued anonymously by anarchists around *Kick It Over*. They complained that “the bombing at Litton can not be said to have increased the self-activity of either the community or the employees at the plant”. Fair enough, though the same point can be said about putting out newspapers and most other things we do. These anarchists didn’t condemn Direct Action for being violent, rather they put the violence in the context of state violence. Though wrongly labeling the bombing as “Vanguard Terror”, it was valid to say that “clandestine organizations tend to become isolated from the people” and see their continued existence as becoming a goal in itself. Again, this problem is not unique to underground groups.

In early November, less than a month after the bombing, the *Toronto Globe and Mail* ran a major front page article linking the Litton bombing to the Vancouver anarchist community. It quoted unnamed anarchists who drew out the similarities between the politics of Direct Action and the Vancouver anarchist scene. In a later, more sympathetic article, other anarchists provided some background information as to what the purpose of the bombing might be without explicitly claiming that it was an anarchist action. This article was condemned by many anarchists in Toronto but it did help to get the ideas to a wider public.

In mid-December, the offices of the main peace groups in Toronto were raided along with the homes of some of their most prominent members. Activists in Toronto and Peterborough were picked up and harassed and threatened by the police. It has never been clear to what extent the police actually thought that these pacifists were really suspects or whether the raids were simply used to disrupt their work against Litton. Some pacifists tried to put as much distance as possible between themselves and the bombers. But there was enough support from other pacifists to show that there need not be a total split between militants, whatever their position might be on the use of violence. The largest demonstration ever to occur against Litton happened on November 11, 1982 less than a month after the bombing. As we said at the time, armed actions can make other forms of protest more visible, rather than less credible.

Litton lost a major contract shortly after the bombing. As Litton President

Ronald Keating put it, "(t)hey (the protesters) are an irritant, they get a lot of publicity, and the Americans read every damn bit of it. Pressure from these people is making the Americans look twice. " He added rather sadly that, "no one else has been bombed."

In Vancouver, there had been little response to Cheekeye-Dunsmuir. But in early November, things became more intense with the firebombing of three outlets of Red Hot Video, heavily damaging two of the shops. The Wimmens' Fire Brigade had decided to make literal the name of this chain which specialized in violent pornography. The attack came just as the video industry was being introduced. Red Hot Video, an American chain, built up an inventory of video tapes that were pirated from hard-core porn films. According to Open Road, "(m)any of the films depicted not only explicit sex scenes, but women being trussed up, beaten, raped, tortured, forced to undergo enemas by armed intruders and other forms of degradation."

Women's groups had been fighting for six months against Red Hot Video, but there was no response from the state. Within a few weeks, scores of women's groups of all stripes had issued statements of sympathy and understanding for the action, demonstrations had been held in a dozen centres across the province, and six porn shops had closed, moved away or withdrawn much of their stock out of fear they would be the next target. Within two months the first charges were laid for combining explicit sex with violence.

The reason the Wimmens' Fire Brigade action was so successful was not simply the tactic employed, but the fact that it was so well integrated into, and complementary to the public campaign. As B.C. Blackout, a biweekly autonomist newsletter put it, "the action of the WFB could only have the impact it did because of the months of spade work by many groups and individuals educating themselves, doing research, making contacts, pressuring the authorities, documenting their case - in short, building the infrastructure for an effective, grass roots, above-board movement. That's why women's groups were able to move so quickly and coherently to deal with the appeals of the media and the public for facts and commentary after the firebombings."

On January 20, 1983, near Squamish, B.C. the Five were returning to Vancouver from target practice in the mountains. The police, dressed as Department of Highway workers, stopped their van and in a violent attack pulled them out of the van and arrested them at gunpoint. They were charged with 12 to 15 counts, including Red Hot Video, Cheekeye-Dunsmuir, conspiracy to rob a Brink's truck, as well as conspiracy to commit more bombings. Immediately after the arrests, the police had a news conference at which displayed the extensive weaponry which they claimed had been seized from the Five. This was the beginning of what came to be called, "Trial by Media" as the police and prosecution used the media to try to contaminate public opinion not only against the Five, but against the anarchist movement in general. Newspaper headlines screamed about "police netting terrorists" and "national network of anarchist cells." The police raided 4 homes in

Vancouver the morning after the first support group meeting. No arrests were made, but typewriters were seized and people were subjected to verbal abuse.

The official police story was that the break in the case came when a reporter from the Globe and Mail showed anarchist papers to the Toronto police who, noticing the Cheekeye-Dunsmuir communiqué in *Resistance*, sent the Post Office Box address to Vancouver. The cops there supposedly put the box under surveillance and were eventually able to track down the Five through a series of contacts. The story was convincing enough that the reporter was going to apply for the substantial reward before being talked out of it by more conscious and principled friends.

What this story was a cover for was that the police were already very aware of the Five. They had been under police surveillance for one reason or another since well before the first action. Brent Taylor and Ann Hansen in particular were pretty notorious in Vancouver. A cop didn't have to be too bright to consider them as possible suspects. Many activists who didn't even know them suspected that they probably had something to do with Direct Action. They were the only ones who regularly went to demonstrations all masked up, looking much more prepared for protests in Germany than in Vancouver.

It is quite likely that the security police had actually watched them carry out the Red Hot Video actions. This became very relevant at the trials. The Vancouver police obtained warrants to tap their phones and bug their house in order to investigate Red Hot Video. Such warrants are only supposed to be issued as a last resort when all other means of investigation have failed, but in this case were issued shortly after the firebombing. Moreover, they were not needed if the police already knew who had participated in the attacks. The RCMP security service had watched them commit other crimes and had them under observation at the time of Red Hot Video, but there were no surveillance notes covering the period of the actual attack.

It was assumed that the wiretaps were actually needed by the police to connect the Five to Litton, for which it would have been more difficult for the Vancouver police to obtain a legal warrant. The evidence obtained through these bugs provided the bulk of the case against the Five, which is why the first part of the eventual trial dealt with their legality.

On June 13, 1983, the Bulldozer house in Toronto was raided by the local Litton squad. The warrant – which included the charges of Sabotage of Litton, Seditious Libel, and Procuring an abortion – specifically allowed the police to seize anything related to Bulldozer magazine. They took layout flats, letters, articles, magazines, and the mailing list. We finally got all this stuff back after a year of legal fighting.

The seditious libel charge was apparently related to a leaflet entitled *Peace, Paranoia and Politics* which laid out the politics around the Litton bombing, the peace movement and the arrests of the Five. Seditious Libel apparently involves calling for the armed overthrow of the state; the last time the charge had been used was in 1950 against some trade unionists in Quebec. Our

lawyers eagerly anticipated defending us on this charge, but nothing ever came of it.

The Procuring an Abortion charge came about when an alleged menstrual extraction performed by a midwife, Colleen Crosby, on a member of the Bulldozer collective, had come to the attention of the police through phone taps. Crosby was picked up a week later by cops who drove her around for several hours, threatening to charge her with the procuring an abortion charge unless she told them about any links between Bulldozer and the Litton bombing. Crosby would have refused to cooperate anyway, but she had no information to give. It took a couple of years and thousands of dollars in legal fees before the charge was eventually dropped.

Our political weakness - referring to both the Five and their supporters - became apparent during the trial and the support work we did around it. The Five assumed that they would go down in a hail of bullets, but instead of the relative glory of the spectacular death, they had to deal with the much more pedestrian reality of sitting in jail awaiting trial. This lack of political and personal preparation for the almost inevitable consequences of their actions was compounded by a lack of preparation by their supporters. It is easy to reprint communiqués from underground comrades, but far more difficult to handle raids and lawyers, harassing arrests, and watch friends and comrades distance themselves just when support and work is needed the most. One must be able to handle high-stress politics for what could be a period of years, while advancing politics that may not even be supported by one's own friends and political associates, let alone the wider society. Yet competent and principled above ground support is crucial if underground actions are to have any long term impact. The community in Vancouver was able to maintain a presence outside and inside the courtroom during the trial in spite of differences in strategy as to how to support them. In Toronto, we were able to keep the ideas in circulation, but had little public impact.

In the initial confusion, the right to a fair trial became the main demand. Since it seemed possible that the room bugs which provided the main body of evidence might be thrown out, this strictly legal course was hard to resist without prior political clarity as to how trials should be conducted. The right to a fair trial must not be ignored if the battle is going to be fought on the legal terrain at all, but it is the state's battleground, and their first weapon is criminalization. The Crown split the indictments into four trials, the first of which was on the least overtly political charges, weapons offenses and conspiracy to rob a Brink's truck. While it may be obvious to those who have a certain political understanding why guerrillas need weapons and money, television pictures of a desktop full of weapons, and reports of meticulous planning for a raid on a Brink's truck, were calculated to defuse claims that the Five were principled political activists. The fight for a fair trial did draw support from activists, progressive journalists and lawyers and human rights activists. But it can create real problems if the trial is made to appear legally "fair". Or when, as happened, the Five eventually plead guilty. Some people who did support work felt manipulated into supporting guilty people, even

though we tried to be clear that there is a difference between pleading not guilty and being innocent.

The Trial by Media strategy fell apart when the court ruled that the wiretap evidence was admissible. The first trial for the weapons and conspiracy to rob the Brink's truck began in January 1984. The evidence of the first 4 months mainly involved the surveillance prior to their arrests. In March, Julie Belmas and Gerry Hannah entered guilty pleas, including Red Hot Video, and for Julie, the Litton bombing. In April, Doug Stewart was ordered acquitted on the Brink's charge but found guilty of weapon offenses. In June, he pled guilty to Cheekeye-Dunsmuir. The jury found Ann and Brent guilty of all the charges from the first trial. In June, in a surprise move, Ann plead guilty to Cheekeye-Dunsmuir and Litton.

Brent was brought to Toronto for a trial around Litton and eventually plead guilty. Recognizing our own weakness, we told him that little could be gained politically in Toronto if the trial was to go ahead. In our relative isolation it was difficult to imagine taking on what would have to be a major effort to present the politics behind the bombing through a hostile mass media. Yet not doing so meant that there was never a longer-term focus nor sense of direction for those who might have been willing to come forward with more active support. It was not our most glorious moment.

To sum up this section, let me quote from Ann's sentencing statement, "(w)hen I was first arrested, I was intimidated and surrounded by the courts and prisons. This fear provided the basis for the belief that if I played the legal game, I would get acquitted or less time. This fear obscured my vision and fooled me into thinking that I could get a break from the justice system. But this eight months in court has sharpened my perceptions and strengthened my political convictions to see that the legal game is marked and political prisoners are dealt a marked deck."

Doug Stewart was sentenced to 6 years, and served the maximum 4. Gerry Hannah got 10 years, but was out in 5. Julie, only 21 at the time of sentencing, got 20 years. She appealed and got five years off when she turned against Ann and Brent, effectively sabotaging their appeal. Many people were really pissed at this betrayal by Julie, but her testimony was not the reason why Ann and Brent were convicted. If Julie really wanted to make a deal, she could have implicated other people by lying. This she didn't do.

Brent got 22 years, and Ann got life. The sentences, especially Julie's and Ann's, were considered unduly harsh. But the state wanted to stamp out any incipient guerrilla activity. The prison system, though, determined how long people actually served. Ann and Brent were both out before 8 years were up. In comparison to what happens to American guerrillas, this was almost lenient.

Doug Stewart wrote in *Open Road* after their conviction that the size of the bombs was problematic. He suggested that medium-level attacks such as arson and mechanical sabotage are easier to carry out than bombings, noting

that large scale actions virtually demand going underground. Direct Action understood that they had to break off contact with other political people; that to act in one city, they should live in another. But this demands enormous emotional and personal sacrifices. It was the failure to completely cut off ties with friends and lovers that left a trail for the local police. Smaller actions are technically simpler and allow, as Stewart says, “a group to come together easily and quickly around a particular issue.” Medium-level activity also “has a much less intense impact on one’s personal life. If you are not underground, you are less emotionally isolated, and the overall stress level is very much lower. Capture for a medium-level action would be much less devastating in every way. A two or three year sentence is no joke, but it is substantially easier to deal with than a ten or twenty year one.”

To summarize, let me quote from an article in Prison News Service written ten years after Litton:

“Overt political actions such as these bombings, propaganda by deed, as they are known, are not understood in a non-political society. Even though few people will understand the motivations behind the attack, the positive side is that there won’t necessarily be a major reaction against it either. It is an error to think that something like the Litton bombing will be a wake-up call for people to do something about a critical situation facing them. But properly explained it can make a difference to those people who are already concerned about the situation and who have become frustrated with other methods of dealing with the issue.

“Guerrilla actions are not an end in themselves; that is, a single act, or even a coordinated series of actions, has little likelihood of achieving little more than some immediate goal. Such actions are problematic if it is assumed that they can be substituted for above ground work. But if they can be situated within a broader politics, one tactic amongst many, then they can give the above ground movements more room to maneuver, making them both more visible and more credible. At the same time, activists are given a psychological lift, a sense of victory, regardless of how fleeting, so that they go about their own political work with a renewed enthusiasm...

“For most North American activists, armed struggle is reduced to a moral question: ‘Should we, or should we not use violent means to advance the struggle?’ Though this is relevant on a personal level, it only confuses what is really a political question. Most radicals, at this point in time anyway, are not going to become involved directly in armed attacks. But as resistance movements develop in North America - and they had better or we are all lost - it is inevitable that armed actions will be undertaken by some. The question remains if these armed actions will be accepted as part of the spectrum of necessary activity. Much will depend on whether people suffer harm or injuries. Far from being “terroristic”, the history of armed struggle in North America shows that the guerrillas have been quite careful in selecting their targets. There is a major difference between bombing military or corporate targets, or even assassinating police in response to their use of violence, and setting off bombs on crowded city streets. The left in North America has never used random acts of terror against the general population. To denounce any

who would choose to act outside of the narrowly defined limits of 'peaceful protest' in order to appear morally superior, or to supposedly avoid alienating people, is to give the state the right to determine what are the allowable limits of protest."

Repression is most effective when it is able to keep the radical ideas from being transmitted to a new generation of activists. If the ideas can be passed on, then the next wave of activists develop their politics from the base that has already been created. Fortunately, a relatively small, but very active milieu of young activists adopted many of the politics around Direct Action and developed them through such projects as Reality Now, the Anarchist Black Cross and Ecomedia. Their work in the peace, punk and native support movements, helped ensure that such politics did not end when the Five went to prison.

## **Direct Action Communiqué from the 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 weapon is being built.

There is every reason imaginable to tear down the systems and makers of nuclear war: for the of all life on Earth, for all peoples 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 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 this 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 and industries that they work for that are directly responsible for the ongoing nuclear insanity that they claim to reject.

We believe that the 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 an 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 analyzing 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 the Western Alliance (primarily spurred on by the U.S. ruling class) to reassert 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 2 Missiles, the Trident submarines and the Neutron Bomb, are designed for offensive first-strike, 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 immersed 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 targeting 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 the 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 programs designed help these death merchants win U.S. Defense Department contracts available 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 purpose.

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, reaffirmed 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 illusion that direct actions, 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 of 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 can have positive effects now, can weaken the enemy now, and that this possibility to sabotage the enemy's undertakings complements the 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 become a reality. The new Western Alliance weapons systems for first-strike nuclear war are to be in place by 1983-6. 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 actions 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 power-crazed from launching their WW3. It is with an eye towards the generalized development of an actively militant resistance movement that we have undertaken this action.

### **Addendum to the Direct Action communique**

We claim responsibility for the bombing of a Litton Systems of Canada industrial plant in Toronto, Ontario, where the guidance 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 ensure 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 hundreds of times have entire populations been only minutes from annihilation due to nuclear war computer systems' malfunctions? 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 that it did detonate at 11:31 pm as stated in the media. The bomb was set to go off at 11:43 pm. 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 11:17 pm. 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 ...

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 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 ...

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" caused 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 criticize the Litton security guards for the way in which they "handled" this incident. We know that there were at least three guards in the security booth when 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 ...

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 never intended any harm to come to anyone through this action. Instead we took great care in preparing what we seriously assumed were adequate precautions to ensure 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  
October 17, 1982

Publisher's note:

The Communique text was taken from G7 Welcoming Committee website.  
<http://www.g7welcomingcommittee.com/directaction/>

In 1982, Direct Action (aka the Squamish Five or the Vancouver Five) were responsible for the destruction of Cheekeye-Dunsmuir dam substation on Vancouver Island, four million dollars worth of damage to the Litton Industries plant outside Toronto the fire-bombing of a video store specialising in violent pornography in Vancouver. The group were caught, tried and convicted and spent most of the eighties behind bars.

This pamphlet collects a summary of the Direct Action's acts and motives and the effectiveness of their strategies by a member of the groups the Five grew from, and includes the original Communique of the Litton bombing and its addendum by Direct Action themselves.

Jim Campbell is a Canadian activist and writer and has written for anarchist magazines *Open Road* and *Kick it over*, and has been active in the Anarchist Black Cross and published the prison-related *Bulldozer*. His article here was originally published in Canada's *Kick it over* in 2000.

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