

Free Us All!

Free the Five Billion

Some know them as the Vancouver Five, the Squamish Five or, more often, just the Five. They were arrested by a combat-ready SWAT team on a remote stretch of highway near Squamish, British Columbia, Canada on Jan. 20, 1983, and charged with a series of political bombings across Canada during the preceding year. The bombings included a controversial power station in B.C., a factory in Toronto making parts for the Cruise missile and three rape film emporiums in the Vancouver area.

"1984 has been here for a long time already. The thought-police are out to get us, so that words like 'militant,' 'resistance,' 'attack,' 'revolution,' 'feminist,' 'ecology,' 'struggle,' etc. will no longer exist in the human vocabulary."

— Ann Hansen

Since their arrests, the Five have played a central role in one of the most crucial political dramas of the time. They didn't ask for the part; it was foisted on them. The result is that they are in the fight of their lives.

Their fight will affect the entire anti-authoritarian/autonomous movement. The massive, high-technology surveillance, the police destabilization and harassment campaign, the move by authorities to "criminalize" and depoliticize them, the unleashing of the media — all tactics aimed at a community that is decentralized, and therefore resistant to traditional infiltration and co-opting techniques.

If the authorities are successful in railroading the Five, then police, judicial officials and the news media will consider it open season to employ these tactics on a larger and more intrusive scale.

Already, the circle of surveillance and dirty tricks is widening — to the women's community, the anti-war and anti-nuke

movements and beyond. And the federal government has now introduced legislation to establish a Canadian Security Intelligence Service with powers of surveillance even less restricted than those of the FBI and the CIA. The case of the Five was cited in the House of Commons by a cabinet minister as a justification for Big Brother even though legislation was being prepared long before any of the bombings took place.

Julie Belmas, Gerry Hannah, Ann Hansen, Doug Stewart and Brent Taylor are well known to us, and respected by us. They have long been active in grass roots work on environmental, native sovereignty and anti-war and anti-nuke issues.

After pleading not guilty, they are sitting in prison, denied bail, awaiting the first of a series of four political show trials set for Sept. 12 and scheduled to take up to six months. The authorities have no

substantive witnesses against them, but will submit a mountain of roombug tapes and transcripts in an effort to prove the

"As far as we're concerned, this case isn't about anarchy, or civil rights, or methods of struggle. It's just part of the struggle, and the important thing is to maintain the primacy of the struggle to protect the earth and strive for liberation."

— Brent Taylor

Five belonged to an "anarchist-terrorist cell" called variously Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade.

The nature of the "evidence" requires thorough and painstaking preparation for defence, but this is impossible under the isolating conditions in lock-up. Massive legal costs compound the difficulties.

The case of the five has thrown into sharp relief the need for a coherent and unified movement to defend anti-authoritarian activists under attack, no matter what differences might exist over tactical considerations. This "extra" edition of *Open Road* (as well as last spring's Direct Action issue, and the upcoming "1984" issue) are dedicated to helping build that consensus.

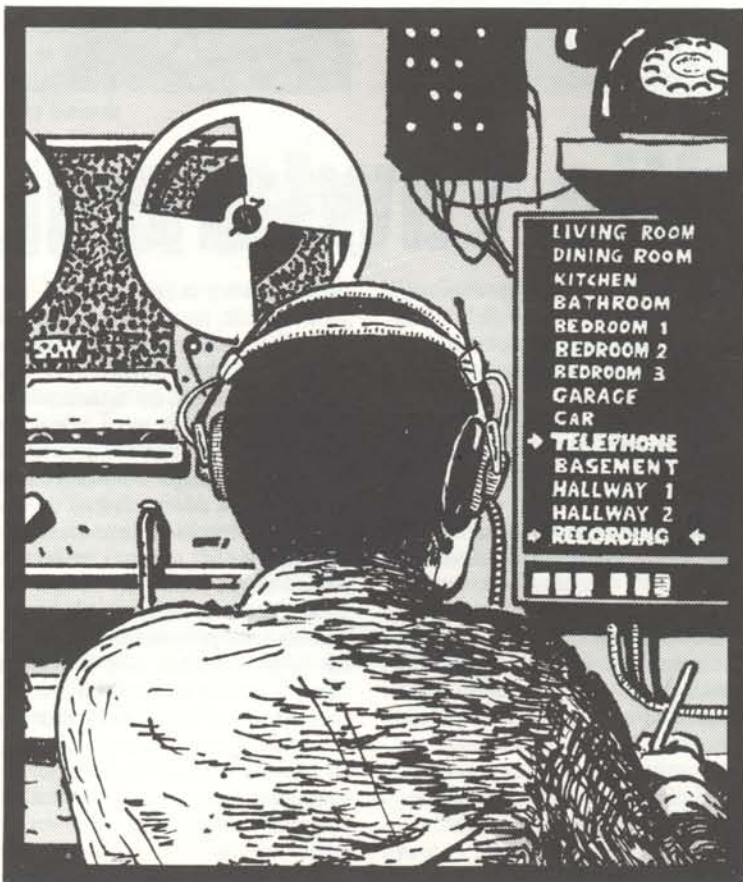
We urge our readers, and all individuals and groups concerned with protecting the right to be politically active in 1984 and beyond, to assist in the defense of the Five, either by donations of money, or with energy and educational work. Not to the exclusion of your own concrete work, but in resonance with it.

"For centuries, the authorities have reacted violently to women who resisted; they used to brand us 'witches' and burned us. Now they label us 'terrorist' and try to bury us in their cement tombs."

— Julie Belmas

Shortly after the arrests, the cry went up to Free the Five! As the connections between the case and the wider struggle started to manifest themselves, friends and support came to realize we are in reality defending ourselves and everyone else when we defend the Five. That's when a new slogan (at first, meant half in jest) started to take root:

FREE THE FIVE BILLION — FREE US ALL!



Fire Power

Bondage, manacles, foam balls that keep the screams down, chains that go around the breasts, pliers that pinch the nipples; rape, oral and anal rape, rape of children, ejaculation in women's faces: violent pornography sold in Vancouver has nothing to do with sexuality or the erotic. It is, first of all, a highly successful capitalist enterprise which has created a lucrative market by exploiting the fears and the repressed sexuality of a class of consumers.

The Nov. 22, 1982 firebombing of three Red Hot Video stores was a successful and unifying action because of the thousands of hours of community work which preceded it. The protest movement in Vancouver had moved beyond the initial arguments about the social effects of pornography, or whether taking a stand against pornography implied a rigid sexuality.

After a great deal of debate and discussion, the community developed a broader and more complex understanding which is able to differentiate between rape films which exploit — for profit — the frustrations of a people robbed of sexual health, and erotica which expresses an open and humane sexuality.

The Red Hot Video protest developed many fronts — education, petitions, pickets — which broadened as frustration grew. As the Wimmin's Fire Brigade communique stated: "All lawful attempts to shut them down failed because the justice system was created, and is controlled, by rich men to protect their profits and their

property."

Direct action was the logical development. By the fall of 1982, Red Hot was being inundated by unordered meals and taxis, spray-painted messages and neon signs disappearing in the night. In mid-October, one store was hit with a molotov that failed to go off. So when the WFB firebombed three of the 13 franchises, the support was loud and strong.

The firebombings resulted in the immediate and permanent closure of one of the stores. Another store closed for fear of getting hit, two others moved to different communities and two more changed their names. The timing of the WFB action was such that the public campaign itself caught fire, forcing the government to bring obscenity charges against Red Hot. A trial ended in conviction, a nominal fine and Red Hot's complaint that it was being crippled by legal fees.

Red Hot attempted to cloak its pandering in the rhetoric of freedom of expression, as if it's in the business of promoting civil liberties. In fact, it's a profit-oriented capitalist enterprise, like those other corporate menaces, Litton and B.C. Hydro. The fact that it markets media materials rather than Cruise missiles or electric power proved irrelevant, and wasn't enough to protect it.

Individual civil liberties — such as the right of the individual to be free of State censorship — were never threatened or challenged during the campaign, on the understanding that changes in individual attitudes are best accomplished through education and consciousness-raising.

Guerrilla Lawfare

Matthew Begbie, B.C.'s notorious hanging judge, has been dead nearly 90 years, but his bulky figure, preserved in stone, still presides over New Westminster courts. Under Begbie's dark glare, starting Sept. 12, the trials of the Five will be heard.

Never before has the statue been a more appropriate symbol, for the authorities have missed few tricks in their efforts to obstruct the defense of the Five.

None of the defendants has a record of serious crime or violent acts, but thejuries they face will have been drawn from a public exposed to months of sensationalist and distorted news coverage which has regularly branded them as terrorists and anarchist bombers. From the day of their arrest, their right to a fair trial has been threatened.

But the most persistent infringement of

the legal rights of the Five has come from within the courtroom. Their right to bail has been flatly and repeatedly refused, despite their having deep roots in the community. Eight houses and tens of thousands of dollars in sureties were offered by friends to ensure their appearance for trial, but to no avail, even though rapists and others charged with offenses against people are routinely granted bail.

Remaining behind bars, the defense effort is severely crippled. All conversations by the Five with potential witnesses, all consultations with their legal aid lawyers, all strategy sessions are subject to eavesdropping by the authorities. With hundreds of hours of wiretap tapes and thousands of pages of transcripts and documents to be presented by the prosecution, there's no way that the painstaking and time-consuming work of interpretation and discussion of the evidence



Direct Hits

Litton. Cheekye-Dunsmuir. To millions of North Americans the words spell Direct Action, the enigmatic signature on communiques that appeared after the explosions that made the places famous. But to activists in the peace and environmental movements, they have long been targets of hard fought campaigns to Protect the Earth.

The Cheekye-Dunsmuir power transmission line on Vancouver Island was to be a key component in the massive expansion of British Columbia's power system, an expansion that independent studies had proved unnecessary and harmful to the environment. Over the opposition of local

residents and environmentalists, B.C. Hydro plowed ahead. The response to public hearings and non-violent protests was stonewalling, physical attacks, arrests and repressive legislation. Until May 31, 1982, when hundreds of pounds of dynamite exploded in the core of the Dunsmuir power station, ripping apart the four reactors that were the heart of the station, and stalling the arrogant, short-sighted plan that would flood precious river valleys and make the island a haven for nuclear reactors.

On the other side of the country, a national controversy had been brewing since the federal government offered the U.S. Pentagon a military base in Alberta to test the Cruise missile. But before October 17, 1982, few outside Toronto knew that the city's Litton Systems plant manufactured, under federal subsidy, the guidance system for the Cruise. Despite a four-year campaign of sit-ins and leafletting, it was only after a van packed with dynamite destroyed part of the plant that Litton's role leapt into national prominence.

Although injuries to seven bystanders sparked remonstrances among the activist community, the civil disobedience campaign escalated, and hundreds of police were called in to drag 1500 protestors away from a Remembrance Day sit-in at the plant. Two weeks later, 15,000 demonstrators rallied in Ottawa under the banner "Refuse the Cruise". In late November, seventy-seven per cent of voters in 131 municipalities voted for prompt disarmament. The campaign found support in the least expected corners, as war veterans and scientists urged the government to scuttle the Cruise agreement. As the 80,000 peace marchers proved in Vancouver last April, the campaign is a people's movement in the best sense of the term.

can be effectively carried out.

On April 20, the prosecution delivered a stunning double attack on the defense: the Five would face a direct indictment, a rarely used tactic that denies the defense a preliminary hearing in which to evaluate the Crown's case; and the prosecution would split the charges into four separate trials to present evidence first on the less political robbery charges in an attempt to prejudice public opinion before the political charges came up.

The Crown has unlimited resources — tax dollars and police and technical expertise — to press their case. The Five's defense is partially subsidized by legal aid, but supporters are faced with the daunting task of raising tens of thousands of dollars for legal and technical assistance (for instance, to bring in experts on jury selection) just so they can get their day in court.

Free These Five!

GERRY HANNAH is described as a "real gentle guy," devoted to environmental issues. He played bass with the Subhumans, a Vancouver punk band that was very political but had a strong sense of humour. The Subhumans played benefits for native struggles support, Rock Against Radiation, and Rock Against Prisons.

JULIE BELMAS is a spirited bass player and artist from the Vancouver high school punk scene. She worked for two years as a health care worker with mentally handicapped children. She was also involved with a magazine calling for radical activism, and with El Salvador solidarity groups.

BRENT TAYLOR — is an activist with a lively sense of humor. With Doug, he helped organize the first Vancouver anti-nuke march four years ago. His work on environmental and prison issues has led him into a strong stand on behalf of native sovereignty, including participation in the Leonard Peltier defense campaign.

ANN HANSEN studied history and political science at university in Ontario and wrote for the *Toronto Clarion* and for *Bulldozer* (a prisoners' mag). She was a member of Women Against Prisons, but was denied prison-visiting rights after her belief that prisons should be abolished became known to authorities. Thoughtful and optimistic, people say it is impossible to be depressed around her.

DOUG STEWART worked with Pacific Life Community, a small pacifist group that began a campaign against the Trident nuclear submarine system. He was part of a co-operative which runs a progressive bookstore in Vancouver. "It's important for me to know that even if the state succeeds in fucking us over, that events will have a positive and strengthening effect on people" — Doug.



Ann Hansen



Doug Stewart



Brent Taylor



Gerry Hannah



Julie Belmas

Taking Liberties

Shades of the McCarthy era ... when Toronto cops raided the home of a group of activists involved in the Free the Five support campaign on June 13, they brought with them a dusted-off copy of a law that was last used in Canada in 1950, at the height of the so-called Red Scare. It's called seditious libel, and it means advocating governmental change by force.

The cops never explained what they thought was seditious, but their search warrant specified a number of items, including the anti-prison journal *Bulldozer* (available for a donation from Box 5052, Stn. A, Toronto, Ont.), the *Trial By Media* videotape about the railroading of the Five and any correspondence from the Five.

The public uproar over the ridiculousness of the allegation may have scared the police off from actually charging anyone with seditious libel for the mo-

ment, but that didn't stop them from arresting a woman occupant of the house on a charge of illegally procuring an abortion (possible sentence: life in prison) and then offering to drop the charge if she fingered any of the Litton bombers. Four other occupants were also charged with the old reliable possession of a couple of joints.

The blatant political use of police powers is becoming the norm in the case of the Five. Earlier in the year, Toronto police, under the guise of investigating the Litton bombing, staged a series of fishing expeditions in the files of pacifist anti-war groups. Police in Vancouver raided the homes of personal friends of the Five with no obvious goal except intimidation.

Despite the police harassment, supporters of the Five have succeeded in maintaining a high level of solidarity:

- Demonstrations in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and San Francisco (at the

Canadian consulate);

- Benefit gigs by D.O.A., Moral Lepers, Dead Kennedys and many other bands in most Canadian cities;

- Support groups in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, Hamilton, Ottawa, Seattle, San Francisco and London, England

- Public forums, using *Trial by Media* videotape, in major Canadian cities and in New York and Seattle.

- Statements of support and protests of police and media behavior from the B.C. Federation of Women, the Vancouver and District Labour Council, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Cheeky-Dunsmuir Alliance and many others.

- Countless posters, spoofs, leaflets, buttons, postcards, T-shirts and graffiti from anti-authoritarian groups across the country.

Media Guide

- **Free The Five Newsletter:** available for a donation, from Box 48296, Bentall Station, Vancouver, B.C. V7X 1A1 Canada.
- **Open Road:** Direct Action issue (#15) and 1984 — Big Brother issue (#16, in preparation for Fall, 1983); \$1 from Box 6135, Station G, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

- **Resistance:** Issues 4 & 5 (Direct Action and Wimmin's Fire Brigade communiques) and Issue 6 (update on the Five); for a donation, from Box 790, Station A, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

- **D.O.A. benefit single, Fuck You** (by Gerry Hannah) b/w *Burn It Down!*; \$3 plus 75 cents handling, from D.O.A., Box 65896, Station F, Vancouver, B.C. (Ask for info on bulk orders).

- **Trial By Media:** one hour videotape, suitable for showing at public forums on the Five; available from B.C. Journalists for Accuracy In Media, 1868 Franklin, Vancouver, B.C.

- **Civil Liberties Action Security Project:** info package on surveillance, police dirty tricks and other 1984 nightmares; for a donation from CLASP, Box 65369, Station F, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

- **Indirect Action:** analysis of issues related to the case and the implications for the peace movement; for a donation from Box 6326, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P7.

- **The Five:** write to them directly at Oakalla Prison, Drawer "O", Burnaby, B.C. V5H 3N4.

- **Bulldozer:** the prisoners' magazine that was seized in a recent raid (see Police story); for a donation from Box 5052, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1W4.



The next issue of *Open Road* is in preparation. The theme is 1984; the national security state, and ways to resist Big Brother. We need your ideas, your articles and your money ... before it's too late.

Open Road, Box 6135, Station G, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V6R 4G5.

Act Now!

The Five face trial soon.



What you can do . . .

Send money. Funds are urgently needed for the defense.

Publicize the case and related issues (see media resources, page 3).

Help organize fund-raising events.

Stand together. Speak out when activists are attacked.

Don't forget to **Smash the State!**

To: Free the Five Defense Group
Box 48296, Bentall Station
Vancouver, B.C. V7X 1A1 Canada

- Here is my donation. Please keep me informed.
 I would like to organize a fund-raising benefit or public information forum. Please send me information on how to do it.

Name

Address Phone

clip and mail

Open Road