

# 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.

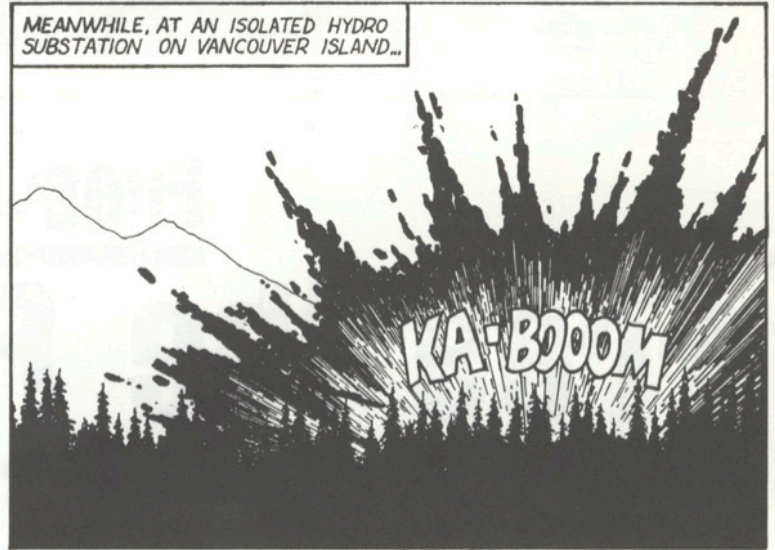
None of the defendants has a record of serious crime or violent acts, but thejuries they face will have been drawn from a public exposed to months of sensationalist and distorted news coverage which has regularly branded them as terrorists and anarchist bombers. From the day of their arrest, their right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

MEANWHILE, AT AN ISOLATED HYDRO SUBSTATION ON VANCOUVER ISLAND...



Graphic by Media Punks

# 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.