

Ann and Brent to Serve Complete Term

SENTENCE APPEAL REJECTED

"She is a political thug; committed to civil disobedience."
—Prosecutor Hill

BACK ON THE COURTROOM AGAIN. YOU can picture the scene, I'm sure. On the one side, the lawyers defending the two jailed activists arguing for feminist ecological principles and people's justice, and on the other side, the two prosecutors upholding the government, law and societal justice. And seated on the elevated throne of judgement, three drones working for the bosses protecting the clones yet all arrogant enough to suppose that their political and moral cushions are the lawful ones, the only ones...the right ones. And yes, they certainly are...right-wing, that is!

The two main characters of this drama are the ones that aren't even actively participating in it because, of course, they're doing their time. The real-life drama behind bars that has nothing to do with actors but everything to do with being silenced and powerless. Two members of **Direct Action**, a guerilla group based in Canada responsible for the only major attacks against state-sanctioned power since the FLQ, were represented in Vancouver court on Feb. 17, 1986 for an appeal of the lengthy sentences they received in the summer of '84.

Ann Hansen is serving a life sentence for conspiracy to rob a Brinks' armoured truck, eco-sabotage of a B.C. Hydro substation, bombing of a Litton cruise missile components factory, participation in the **Wimmings Fire Brigade** arson of a video porn outlet, and several related minor charges. Brent Taylor was given a 22 year term in B.C. for the Brinks' conspiracy, and a run of minor theft and B & E charges. (He later received 9 years for the Litton action, to be served concurrently with the 22.

The reality of waging war with the system is that if they snatch you up, you are forced to spend your time dealing with these very institutions that you gave away your freedom in order to oppose. Yet there is a necessity to try the legal avenues, not because you believe in them but to do a little gambling on the one-armed bandit slot machines. Sometimes you beat them at their own game and at least you have the satisfaction of exposing more of the guts of their hypocrisy. So, after going through a lengthy jury trial and then convictions, and then guilty pleas and sentencing, Hansen and Taylor were left with only one last resort for decreasing the length of their sentences which was to literally 'appeal' to the same justice system that meted them out in the first place. This sentence appeal was not before their peers or even the public, but rather three judges who have done this every day until they are numbed to any outside reality. The same three who heard Julie Belmas' pitiful kiss-ass of an appeal. We can predict the outcome of their appeal and it will not surprize or shock us.

Clayton Ruby, a Toronto lawyer known and respected for his sharp legal perceptions and community cases, was representing Hansen and Taylor at the appeals, having previously acted for Taylor on the Litton charges. The crux of his arguments was that a sentence

allegations of 'leadership roles' for Hansen and Taylor. Ruby argued that with concrete evidence, such as on the wiretap tapes, of Direct Action operating as an anti-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian collective of activists, it was ludicrous to attempt to paint a picture of

Prosecutor Hill made an attempt to impress with his brilliant count of the number of times each perjorative word in the "language of treason" was used in their political statement...i.e., "militancy—26 times"... "guerrilla...18 times"... "revolution...resistance...attack..." etc.! Dully unimpressed, it was more like a joke to have our politics analysed by the politically and historically uneducated! They continued on with much replay of the most condemning extrapolations that could be isolated from Ann's and Brent's previous writings and trial sentencing statements. It was much more of an evangelical diatribe on the criminality of leftist values than it was a legal, factual look at the charges themselves.

"We play into the hand of the guerrilla if we lessen the sentences...we do an injustice to society in general."
—Hill

And at the winding down of the charade, the defense is allowed a brief last-ditch response. Again, Ruby insisted that this was not the place, nor the job of the court, to debate political positions. He continued that the defendants should not be crushed with brutal sentences because they adhere to a set of values "which everyone in their right mind would also adhere to." With a very impassioned plea, he insisted that Hansen's and Taylor's motives were good and their beliefs were humanist and spiritual. Leniency, compassion, and fairness were the fitting response needed now, he concluded.

It is doubtful if the plea of leniency fell on anything other than deaf ears, before a panel of judges from whom you hear: "...it is all people from an intellectual background, middle and upper classes, who are concerned about these things (ecology, pornography, nuclear war, etc.), not from the working class...for example, the Baader-Meinhof gang and the Red Brigades...they tried to say they were led to do such actions from frustrations, which is merely justifying nihilism..." (Judge Nemetz).

At any rate, the quote definitely shows a curious progression of connections and attitudes! The judges have reserved decision on the appeal to allow them time to consider the presentations. The Free the Five Defense Group can be sent correspondence, information or donations at: P.O.B. 48296, Bentall Station, Vancouver, B.C. Canada V7X 1A1.

UPDATE—In a B.C. Court of Appeal decision on March 18th, both Ann Hansen's and Brent Taylor's lengthy prison sentences were upheld, while Julie Belmas, who renounced guerrilla politics and turned on her former comrades, was rewarded with a five-year reduction of her 20 year prison term.

Along with Ann and Brent's refusal to denounce armed politics, the myth of their roles as 'leaders' of the clandestine group Direct Action was a major factor in the court's decision.



POLITICAL PRISONER ANN HANSEN AT KINGSTON PENITENTIARY

reduction was warranted on the grounds that the two had virtually been crucified as 'political' (read 'terrorist' in the state's eyes). This was out of the bounds of universal sentencing principles which demand that the sentence be given based on the charge itself and be comparable. Yet the harsh prison terms received were way out of line even with those given for similar offences or to repeat offenders and murderers. A second defense presentation was to contradict the Crown's

'leaders' issuing orders to 'soldiers', and rather that it was more a situation of different abilities.

In essence, what we've seen was a successful set-up, by the police and the Crown, in creating a climate of fear surrounding particularly Ann and Brent which the trial judge, S.M. Toy, fell for, punishing them for their values and 'Leadership'. At the appeal, the Crown continued in their branding of them as treasonous heretics.

Passports Now Machine Readable

OTTAWA—In a move which was intended to make it harder for 'terrorists' or criminals to use lost, stolen or forged passports, but which will make it much easier for the state to control its own citizens, all passports now issued by the Canadian Department of External Affairs are machine readable and passports issued earlier will be replaced with the new ones when they are renewed. The passports have been redesigned to meet a standard developed by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Canada is one of the few countries that has switched to full production of the machine readable passports. The U.S. adopted the ICAO standard in September 1981 and according to a spokesman for U.S. Customs at Chicago "Most passports that have been issued by the Department of State to U.S. citizens are now machine-readable". Australia, Britain and Singapore have also adopted the ICAO standards and plan to introduce automated passports.

This leads Ronald Sutherland, director-general of External Affairs to optimistically forecast that automated passports could be in worldwide use within the next decade. Because the system is based on a single international standard, it could lead to one vast immigration data base.

Sutherland says that the new passport has been improved in several ways, but its most important feature is the data on the bottom of the first page, which encodes key information about the bearer and allows the passport to be scanned automatically. This information could be altered by officials at border crossings to indicate where and when the passport was presented, thus allowing the state to keep tabs on visitors and to monitor the travel of its own citizens. This information could make travel difficult for activists, for countries may refuse admittance to travelers which have been branded as 'subversives' by their respective intelligence services.

A Canadian company, Advanced Technologies Corp. of Ottawa, is at the forefront of developing the

scanning devices known as special verification readers. It is one of the few companies in the world that has developed the machines and sold them to national authorities in several countries for testing. Although in Canada 30 readers were sold to External Affairs, none have yet been installed for bureaucratic and financial reasons. Another reason is the lack of an automated system at Customs inspection lines, but the Immigration Department and R.C.M.P. are now working at developing such a system. Although a Customs spokesman said the 1984 decision to proceed with the new passports was 'controversial' he said the automated readers will likely be installed and tested in the long term.

[Globe and Mail]

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an indictable offence has been committed and that the perpetrator is there' the judge writes. La Forest says judges have no way of checking police abuse of this power because of the vague standards involved. Police might even distort the seriousness of alleged crimes after forcing entry into private homes, he warned. The U.S. Supreme Court recently struck down as unconstitutional similar warrantless arrests, and British law restricts arrests without warrants to specific crimes.

[Vancouver Sun]