

# Bombs Away!

J.R. Kennedy

1970

“The pump won’t work ‘cause the vandals took the handles.”

—Bob Dylan

When three bombs, planted by revolutionaries, exploded at dawn Thursday, March 12, inside the New York offices of three major U.S. industrial corporations, they were not acts of mindless destruction.

The explosions at IBM, Socony Mobil, and Sylvania Electric were attacks by serious [word missing in original] who understand that it is these corporations that are marketing death, destruction, and social perversion in mass quantities.

This attack was another in a long series of bombings that have been launched against similar corporate giants in New York City during the last year. Most of the targets have ranked among the top 25 U.S. corporations, and include United Fruit, Standard Oil, General Motors, and The Chase Manhattan Bank. The public practices of these companies clearly demonstrates that they are guilty of a wide range of social crimes.

It is these corporations that have perpetuated and endorsed aggressive foreign wars like Viet Nam; wars that, in fact, destroy small nations and verge on genocide. It is these corporations that spend Federal funds to develop technology for impersonal murder. It is these corporations that poison the minds of television viewers with Madison Avenue advertising and attempt to turn us all into crippled, addicted, compulsive consumers.

It is these corporations that invest to suck profits, through imperialism and enslavement, from the nations of the Third World. It is these corporations that, for economic gain, use racism, poverty, and need to manipulate the labor market, and exploit all workers. It is these corporations that have knowingly brought Amerika and the entire world to the brink of disaster and extinction by turning the land into cement monoliths and sprawling polluted oil slicks.

These industries are, in every way, enemies of the people. They are the powers that run Amerika, and daily are shown to be corrupt, irresponsible parasites. When it is understood that they are the real forces of oppression of all people, to move against them with any means that are necessary and effective, becomes an objective revolutionary action.

In a letter received by United Press International (UPI), the group that executed the most recent bombing in New York, Revolutionary Force 9, explained why they took the action that they did. They talked about “slow death at home or genocide abroad.” The letter also characterized life in Amerika as being a kind of death, and that to revolt against it, a way of life.

The letter stated that to willingly bend or yield to this society’s established, programmed, patterns of existence was to be an accomplice to their criminal actions. The letter read, “To know the torments that Amerika inflicts on the Third World, but not to sympathize and identify, is to deny our own humanity. It is to deny our right to love—and to not love is to die. We refuse. In death-directed Amerika there is only one way to a life of love and freedom: to attack and destroy the forces of death and exploitation and to build a just society—revolution.”

Despite attempts by the straight media to distort the incident, the actions of Revolutionary Force 9 were not terrorist actions. Those bombings were acts of sabotage, and the distinction is of high importance. Terrorism does not seek to avoid injury to people, in fact, at times, the terrorist may encourage it.

Sabotage is aimed specifically at the destruction of property. It is carried out in the hope that the event will cause a degree of financial loss, force the suspension of normal activity, and serve as an educational tool or example.

When involved in urban guerrilla warfare, this kind of action can be heavily functional. There it is designed to snarl the machinery of oppression, and force law-enforcement agencies to recognize another alternative that radicals can employ besides street demonstrations. Eldridge Cleaver tells us that we should never give the oppressor a moments peace, nor should we allow him to contain us or be able to anticipate our actions. If we are not predictable or contained, then we are beyond control.

It should be understood however, that sabotage alone, is not enough to make positive revolutionary advances. It serves definite but limited purposes, and is an effective weapon when used correctly.

When the New York bombers detonated the massive explosions that blew out windows, walls, and plumbing inside the downtown skyscrapers, they brought home to middle-class Amerika the message that a correct anti-Viet Nam stance was more than a pacifist-humanist attitude. Their action was an anti-capitalist/anti-imperialist action that moved against corporate industry—the root cause of the war we are waging against the Vietnamese people, and our own people. It drew the connections between all levels and types of social injustice.

Those three explosions March 12, like the previous ones, caused no injuries because of anonymous warnings by telephone. It is clear that the group responsible meant the action to stand as a political statement, as well as to inflict material damage.

The initiative and leadership provided by Revolutionary Force 9 set off a chain reaction response around the country. In Pittsburg, a shopping center was the scene of an explosion that caused extensive property damage. Like New York, the police have made no arrests and have no suspects.

All over the nation officials were forced to place government buildings under heavy security conditions as hundreds of bomb threats poured in by telephone.

The Justice Department in Washington, D.C. was in a state of confusion for three days following a threat. Every major city in the U.S. was plagued by bomb threats, and was having to go through hundreds of checks to chase them down. Because of the threats that did materialize, New York City had to respond to threat calls that came in on an average of one every six minutes.

Earlier in the week, near Cambridge, Maryland, dynamite was planted in a car often used by Rap Brown. It exploded and killed two national SNCC organizers who were in it at the time. A few days later, the County Court House where Rap Brown is scheduled to go on trial was racked by explosions.

Here in Detroit, we too had our share of offensives.

Detroit police were almost the recipients of two bomb attacks that would have made the ones in recent weeks pale in comparison. In each case the bombs failed to explode.

A 34-stick dynamite bomb was found in the women's bathroom at the 13<sup>th</sup> Precinct, Woodward at Hancock on March 6<sup>th</sup> when it was discovered by Inspector Clifton G. Casey's secretary. The bomb contained enough power to level the one story dwelling and police suspect it may have been placed there at shift change when over 200 men were in the building.

The bomb was devised from dynamite, placed in a food freezer box and wired together with a double fusing device to be lit by two burning cigarettes, Both cigarettes went out before they reached the fuse.

Later the same day a 10-stick bomb was found next to the building at 2899 W. Grand Blvd. that houses the Detroit Police Officers Association (DPOA). The police sealed off all Detroit police facilities and began checking the identification of all persons entering the stations including that of high-ranking uniformed officials.

Detectives from the Special Investigation Bureau have been stymied in their efforts to find out who is responsible for the attempts and have called in state and federal investigators to assist in the hunt for the bombers. Why don't they ask Dave Valler? If he doesn't know he can always make someone up.

At Wayne State University, State Hall, a main classroom building, was emptied, searched, and then closed for the day following a bomb threat. Though that search proved fruitless, the next day the basement floor of the main bookstore was gutted by a fire.

A short time later, the bookstore at the University of Detroit was also swept by flames. Police investigators at the scene strongly maintain the cause of the fire to be arson.

Because we are in an age saturated by instant electric media assault, it is difficult to measure the national or local impact of these occurrences. It is becoming increasingly apparent however, that the revolutionary forces within the Mother Country are developing a crucially important retaliatory capacity, and are gaining the ability to take the offensive, inflict injury, and win.

# fifth Estate

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