

Bits of the world in brief

Fifth Estate Collective

1982

The following letter, at the top of which appeared the heading "Direct Action," recently arrived at the FE office. Its view of the ecological crisis and the essential sameness of the capitalist West and the communist East is one with which we are in substantial agreement. And this anonymous attack on property strikes us as acceptable—unlike attacks on people, which, barring self-defense or extraordinary circumstances, we find repugnant—and often a useful means of struggle. However, we have some doubts about what seems to be their assessment of their own role in the struggle against capital (though the problem might be one of unclear writing). Like many others, they apparently feel compelled to formulate a strategy based on their understanding of historical processes in which they make themselves mere instrumentalities of these processes, rather than proceeding from their own desires and experiences. In this case, the authors of the letter see themselves as making it difficult for capitalists to expand their domestic development of energy and resources in the context of world-wide economic crises and the successes of allegedly destabilizing third world movements, presumably, their intention is to heighten the economic crisis by opposing further encroachments by multinational corporations. This formulation resembles the instrumentalism of '60s anti-imperialist students in the U.S. who sought to assist third world struggles by creating resistance in the imperialist centers, a limited and self-sacrificing vision containing the seeds of authoritarianism.

But apart from these criticisms, the thrust of the letter was anti-authoritarian, anti-technology, and pro-wilderness, and whatever the motives of the bombers, we could not help but be heartened by their action. A desperate situation often calls for a desperate response.

On May 31, we bombed four 500 k.v. transformers at the Dunsmuir substation on Vancouver Island. This substation is part of the \$1 billion Cheekye-Dunsmuir transmission line project being built by B.C. Hydro. This project, if completed, will provide electricity for a wave of industrial development planned for Vancouver Island. We are opposed to any further industrial development and to any expansion of the power grid which will facilitate such development.

We reject both the ecological destruction and the human oppression inherent in the industrial societies of the corporate machine in the West and the communist machine in the East. In the last two hundred years industrial civilization has been raping and mutilating the earth and exterminating other species at an ever accelerating rate. We say that this is not right. Jobs, progress, standards of living—nothing is sufficient justification for the horrible damage being done.

Already in this province, half of the forests have been logged and many rivers dammed. The valleys are littered with highways and power lines, the estuaries are paved and polluted, the water is poisoned, mills and smelters belch noxious fumes, and nuclear power and acid rain are soon to come.

While being in complete opposition to further ecological destruction, we also oppose the human oppression resulting from the economic and political systems throughout the world that are based on power and profit. In fact,

ecological destruction is directly related to the human oppressions of sexism, racism, hierarchy and imperialism. The desire for power, the insensitivity to the suffering of others and the need to feel superior are the sinister bonds that underlie all these oppressive human relations.

Centuries of patriarchy and imperialism have created oppressive power relations that now permeate most societies and their institutions. As a result, people today have internalized these characteristics; however, this does not negate the ultimate responsibility of the ruling classes that control and direct these institutions.

The same ruling classes and multinational corporations who relentlessly destroy the environment, also control the repressive dictatorships and governments of democratic facade throughout the capitalist world. The repression and economic exploitation that result are an inevitable consequence of societies that function in order to fulfill the profit and growth demands of a corporate economy.

Within the capitalist world, a growing number of liberation movements have created a situation in which the industrialized societies can no longer depend for their supply of strategic materials on these potentially "unstable" regions of the so-called third world. And so during the late '70s and now into the '80s, the industrialized societies are attempting to become less energy dependent on these regions by exploiting coal, oil, gas and nuclear energy and resources from regions that meet international security objectives. Canada, at this time, meets these objectives.

Canada's historical role has always been that of supplier of cheap resources to the industrialized world. As this role becomes more critical internationally, the development of energy and resource mega-projects in Canada has become a government priority. As well as serving a strategic function within the international economy, the Canadian capitalists see these mega-projects as a means of overcoming the ongoing economic crisis nationally.

We must make this an insecure and uninhabitable place for capitalists and their projects. This is the best contribution we can make towards protecting the earth and struggling for a liberated society.

The following is from Bulletin No. 18 of the "Emergency Response International Network," c/o Akwesasne Notes, Mohawk Nation, via Rooseveltown, N. Y. 13683.

URGENT CALL FROM BRAZIL—Gessellschaft fur Bedrohte Volker (Association for Endangered Peoples), Frankfurt, Germany recently began an international campaign in support of the 600 to 1,000 Waimiri and Atroari Indians of Brazil.

The Waimiri-Atroari are Carib-speaking Indians who inhabit the forests of the northern Amazon region of Brazil. Since the end of the 19th century, the Waimiri-Atroari have suffered periodic massacres and invasions of their lands. When Brazil launched the Amazon development program in the late 1960s, the government declared that the Indians could not stand in the way of "progress." As a result, dozens of Indian tribes were reduced in population because of the highways, military assaults and massacres, epidemic diseases, and invasions by cattle ranchers. FUNAI (Brazil's equivalent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs) failed to protect the Indians and to demarcate any of their lands.

The lands of the Waimiri-Atroari were in the path of the Manaus-Boa Vista Highway. When construction began on this highway in the early '70s, the Brazilian Army tried to drive the Indians southward out of the way of the road. Numerous eyewitness accounts verify that the Brazilian Army conducted machine-gun massacres and bombings of the Waimiri-Atroari. As a result, the Indian population declined from 3,000 to 600 between 1968 and 1975.

The highway has been completed and now the Indians are faced with new threats. Mineral companies are seeking authorizations for mining on Indian lands and a large hydro-electric project may flood the Indian reserve. The government has refused to reveal any information on either of these projects.

These actions have now pushed the Waimiri-Atroari Indians into a highly critical situation. Not only is their survival as a group with their own way of life and own culture now in jeopardy, but their very survival as such may, after 300 years of struggle, become virtually impossible.

It is therefore most important and urgent to oppose the Brazilian government's policy of systematic extermination, which right now is once again willing to sacrifice two more Indian nations (see ERIN Bulletins 2, 3, 12, and 16 for information on the creation of the Yanomami Indian Park) to the altar of supposed economic advantages. This opposition can best be mounted through a program of wide and firm public protests. That is why we're appealing to you to support this action by publicizing this case and asking you to write protest letters and telegrams to the following addresses:

Exmo. Sr. Joao Baptista Figueiredo

Presidente da Republica

Brasilia, D.F. 70054

Brasil

Exmo. Sr. Coronet Paulo Moreira Leal

Presidente da FUNAI

SAS Q—1 Bloco A, 7 andar

Brasilia, D.F. 70054

Brasil

The Brazilian embassy of your own country

It would be of great help if you could send a copy of your letters to:

CIMI

c/o Paulo Sues

caixa postal 984

69000 Manaus/AM

Brasil

* * *

“General Dozier ended his public appearance by surprising his wife with the Christmas present that he had bought but could not deliver. It was a necklace with a shield of NATO’s Southern Europe Command as a pendant, and the presentation ended in an emotional embrace that did not lose its evident depth of tenderness even when it had to be repeated several times for the television and still cameras.”

—*New York Times*, January 30, 1982

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See “Direct Action Bombs Litton,” FE #311, Winter 1983.



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