

Vancouver Five

Ann Hansen Given Life Imprisonment: The State Takes its Vengeance

Fifth Estate Collective

1984

VANCOUVER BC—A tomato thrown at the Judge sentencing her to life in prison clearly articulated Ann Hansen's contempt for the "Justice System" that is sending her and four other members of the Canadian guerrilla group Direct Action—the Vancouver Five—to lengthy terms in prison.

A viciously right-wing judge with a lengthy history of anti-labor and antiradical sentiments, Judge S.M. Toy, gave Hansen the life term for her conviction on a charge of conspiring to rob a Brink's guard in order to obscure the political basis of Hansen's other charges for which lighter sentences were handed down.

She had pled guilty in early June to most of the other outstanding charges leveled at the Vancouver Five and received a range of sentences from two years to 12 to run concurrently with the life sentence.

In her sentencing statement before the court on June 5th, Hansen said that she had changed her plea because she realized that she would find no justice in the courtroom. The experiences of the Five, she stated, since their arrest in January 1983 had only confirmed what previously had only been theory about the nature of the justice system and the prisons.

She told the court that she "felt a moral obligation to do everything possible to stop the nuclear arms race, ban pornography and protect the earth." For her, the bombings were "resistance politics transformed into action."

Also speaking on her behalf were five witnesses who have been active in the struggles which Hansen had sought to advance through the bombings. These speakers outlined clearly how they had pursued all the legal channels in trying to stop the Red Hot Video stores, the Cheekeye-Dunsmuir Power development, the production of the Cruise by Litton Industries and the continued assaults on the native people. But all their efforts had come to nothing.

Ken Hancock, of the Cruise Missile Conversion Project in Toronto, was particularly moving in his presentation of the history of U.S. nuclear weapons policy directed against the Third World. Hancock ended his testimony by telling Judge Toy that he, Toy, could choose to either fulfill his legal obligation to the state and send Hansen away for a lengthy sentence. or to choose to use his legal power to make a statement against the legal death march.

Toy fulfilled his legal role. But as some sort of moral victory (seemingly the only kind we get in cases like this) the judge acknowledged the worthiness of the causes Hansen supported. Toy called her a "menace to society" and the ideological leader of Direct Action and went on and on about her lack of morals in planning the Brink's robbery.

On June 8th, Doug Stewart and Brent Taylor also pled guilty to many of the outstanding charges against the Vancouver Five with several trials still outstanding to be resolved in the months to come.

The state has extracted its pound of flesh from the "menaces" to its society, but other trials and years behind bars face the Vancouver Five, so our support for them at this time should not slacken. A forty-page pamphlet has just been published including political analysis, poetry, and drawings by the five. It may be ordered and donations for the ongoing legal costs may be sent to:

Free the Five Defense Group Box 48296
Bentall Station
Vancouver BC

Canada V7X 1A1

All of the jailed Five would appreciate letters of support at this time and may be written to by name at:

Oakalla Prison, Drawer "O"

Burnaby BC V5H 3N4

FREE THE FIVE! PROTECT THE EARTH!

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