

Against Litton Systems

An Introduction to the Case for Non-Violent Resistance

Paula Rochman

1985

The Cruise Missile Conversion Project was formed in 1980 to resist the production of the guidance system for the U.S. cruise missile produced at Litton Systems Ltd. As the Project developed, so did our understanding of the 'problems' and the 'solutions'. This development has enabled us to understand and encompass in our work a number of related topics. And so, after five years, this handbook is an opportunity to bring together some of our learning, development, and reflections.

Our commitment to the workers at Litton in connection with the broader labour movement, our relation to and relationships within a society dominated by maleness, our need to challenge so-called defense arrangements- arrangements more conducive to military aggression than human protection, and our daily commitment to say NO to perpetuating the senseless and insane arms race are all interrelated topics. Therefore in our work, we have not separated them but rather tried to understand them together.

Crucial to all this, has been our commitment to a campaign of non-violence and resistance. In our struggle to resist the militarism that pervades our society, we look to history and are both inspired and enriched by the movements around Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Dorothy Day. While a handbook, such as this, can only begin to raise and address some of the questions of embarking on a non-violent strategy of resistance, we do hope to show that there is, theoretically and more importantly, practically another way of living in and relating to our violent society. We have chosen to hurl neither insults, nor rocks, nor bombs. Rather...

We have placed leaflets in the hands of the workers and managers at Litton, not to harass them but to show how sincere we believe that what they produce is wrong and we will not just let 'business as usual' happen.

We have gathered at Litton every year on Remembrance Day and Nagasaki Day to show that we are not naive about war and instead we demand the glorification of men being murdered and women being raped end, just as these violent acts must end.

There is nothing "shabby" or "shameful" about cruise missile protesters using Remembrance Day to call attention to our government's shabby and shameful decision to test the newest and most hideous nuclear weapon. — Veteran Richard Lunn

We have done outreach to the community near the Litton plant not to ostricize but to show how a company in their city plays an integral role in fueling the arms race. We have gathered as women at Litton not to show our pretty, smiling faces but rather to challenge with out sisterly strength and anger, the maleness of our society, reflected by companies, such as Litton.

Although men like to fight, war is not inevitable. War is a crime committed by men and therefore, when enough people say it will not be, it cannot be. This will not happen until women are allowed to say what they think. — Nellie McLung

We have emphasized the need for Litton to undertake contracts which are socially useful, rather than continuing in war preparations. Our commitment to a peaceful working environment is reflected in our logo, a dove and wrench.

The money and talent wasted on the tools of war make it more difficult for us to achieve our goals, as the economy and society are turned away from production and directed instead toward destruction. It is vital for us, as a union, to speak out on the most basic issues facing us all. The need for peace is crucial. We must not stand by silently and let others make life and death decisions on our behalf. The voices of the working people must be heard. — Bob White, Canadian Director, UAW

We have placed our bodies in front of the gates leading into Litton to say NO MORE. While, we may need to write letters to our politicians, petition MPs and watch films which show us the horror of war, we also need to resist, to say NO MORE.

Unless we use the weapons of the spirit, denying ourselves, dying and rising with the Spirit of Life, we will go on fighting, and often from the highest motives, believing that we are fighting wars for justice, or self-defense. The situation is not going to be changed just by demonstrations ... It is a question of living one's life in drastically different ways. — Dorothy Day

We hope this handbook will help you to understand some of the work of CMCP and its relation to the broader anti-war movement. We invite you to join us in our struggle to resist the war production going on at Litton and encourage this resistance to spread to every community.

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