

# Conclusion



Historically it was the IWW who broke the stranglehold of the timber barons on the loggers and mill workers in the nineteen teens. The ruling class fought back with brutality, and eventually crushed the IWW (Timber Workers Industrial Union), settling instead for the more cooperative Business Unions. Now the companies are back in total control, only this time they're taking down not only the workers but the earth as well.

This, to me, is what the IWW-Earth First! link is all about.

– Judi Bari



In spite of the bombing, Bari had lived, which was a huge miracle by itself, and it is clear that whomever planted the bomb in her vehicle had not intended for her to have done so. The bomber had also not planned on Cherney's presence in the vehicle (his decision to ride with Bari had been unplanned and made at the last possible moment). The bomb had been meant to kill Bari and her alone, and leave behind a mystery, a discredited leader, and fractured and broken movement. Cherney's having also been there and having gone through the trauma had created the unintended consequence of providing Bari with a witness who could independently verify and corroborate her every word (which, as it turned out, he did) thus further undermining any case that could be made for her guilt. Nevertheless, the bombing was nothing short of a huge tragedy for Judi Bari, due to the physical and emotional trauma and the intense pain and suffering she endured afterwards. While it may be something of a stretch to say that the bombing ultimately led to Bari's death (in March 1997 due to breast cancer) even that is not out of the question, and the loss of her life was a major setback to those who would challenge business as usual.

Bari's and Cherney's legal triumph was a victory, but not the final victory. The question of who bombed them still remains unsolved, but assuming that Bari and Cherney and their supporters (and to be certain the author is one) are correct, and the bombing was indeed a conspiracy involving both Corporate Timber and the FBI, the answer to the question, "Why?" bears little mystery at all.

Clearly *someone* was trying to disrupt, discredit, and misdirect the coalescing radical, grassroots opposition to Corporate Timber on the North Coast, whether they participated in the bombing or not. Certainly, the bombing was itself designed to do that, so it makes sense to conclude that the bombing and the disruption were part of a single, multifaceted effort. If asked, "cui bono?" the most likely answer is a combination of Corporate Timber (namely representatives from all three of the major corporations, Georgia-Pacific, Louisiana-Pacific, and Pacific Lumber) with the help of the FBI with the tacit (or perhaps approval) of the Bush (senior) Administration. The FBI had gone to great lengths to try and discredit Earth First! already in Arizona, and clearly the same telltale signs of a COINTELPRO operation are evident in the Bari and Cherney bombing. If G-P was involved somehow, there is no direct evidence, but evidence of L-P's involvement is quite readily apparent. As for Pacific-Lumber, Bari and Cherney later discovered a

cordial "chummy" letter to FBI Director William Sessions from a Maxxam board member.<sup>1</sup> There is ample indirect evidence and a clear motive linking all three to the bombing.

There are those that continue to insist that the bomber was a lone, independent nut who had inadvertently been whipped into a vigilante mob hysteria by Corporate Timber and took the latter's extreme rhetoric far too seriously. There are substantial holes in this hypothesis, including the Frank Doyle's deliberate obfuscation of the evidence, the FBI's and Oakland Police's attempts to frame Bari and Cherney, the detail provided in the Lord's Avenger letter in spite of the impossibility of the claim by the writer that the bomb had been placed in Bari's vehicle in Willits, the all too numerous parallels with past FBI COINTELPRO operations, the COINTELPRO like attempts to disrupt Earth First! (including the fake memos, phony press releases, and death threats), and the *already proven* COINTELPRO disruption of Earth First! in Arizona and its link to the bombing. A lone "nut" certainly didn't accomplish all of *that*, and there are far too many coincidences and similarities for this to merely be FBI "stupidity".

There are others who have postulated that the FBI's involvement was by rogue elements within the agency, either overzealous "patriots" convinced that radical leftist activists really do represent a threat to life, liberty, and the American Way, who acted without official sanction by the US Government, and therefore, Corporate Timber had no involvement. This is certainly possible, and again, Bari and Cherney have entertained this possibility. However, if this were the case, it doesn't explain the use of L-P land for the bombing school, the timing of the death threats and fake press releases (which followed the renunciation of tree spiking), the collaboration between the FBI, right-wing hate groups (such as the Sahara Club), and wise use front groups, such as WECARE and Mother's Watch. Of course, these could be rogue elements whose express purpose was to enable Corporate Timber, but this is only the barest minimum point to which Corporate Timber could have been involved given the evidence, and no evidence whatsoever (and the widely assumed benevolence of the capitalist class, a highly dubious and mythical notion itself, does *not count* as credible evidence), absolves them of direct involvement. Indeed, one could conceivably argue that there is no credible evidence that the highest au-

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<sup>1</sup> "The Judi Bari Bombing Revisited: Big Timber, Public Relations, and the FBI", by Nicholas Wilson, *Albion Monitor*, May 28, 1999.

thorities within Maxxam, Louisiana-Pacific, and Georgia Pacific did *not* at least have some fore-knowledge or even direct involvement in the planning of the bombing.

Indeed, the theory that best fits the facts is that the bombing of Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney was the result of a collaboration of the FBI, Oakland Police, Maxxam, L-P, and G-P with the aid of key enablers from the Wise Use movement. The specific individuals involved in that collaboration and the level of their authority remains unknown. The *motivation* for such collaboration is obvious, and that's class struggle.

The capitalist class, by nature, engages in class struggle against the working class. Maximization of profit requires that labor be regarded as a commodity and that workers be institutionally coerced—through market discipline, and sometimes state intervention—to work as cheaply as possible and as productively as possible, in spite of the fact that labor produces all wealth. Certainly the experiences of the timber workers described in this story can attest to *that* (provided that they still live to tell the tale) To not do so is to not follow capitalism's dictates. The IWW challenged that world view and as a Wobbly, so did Judi Bari.

Further, capitalism inherently wages war on the environment by privatizing the fruits of its mode of production while at the same time externalizing the costs of that activity, usually to those least able to resist the shifting of such burdens. However, the Earth is a closed system and costs cannot ever completely be externalized. There is only one planet Earth. Other planets similar to Earth, capable of supporting Earth-like life (albeit most likely with incompatible amino-acid—and thus poisonous—structures) may exist, but the capacity of human beings to travel to them, let alone colonize them (assuming such an accomplishment is wise or beneficial) remains far distant in our future, assuming we have a future. Yet, capitalism cannot ultimately survive without ultimately destroying the ability of human civilization (and quite possibly life on Earth itself) to survive. The ideology of capitalism is essentially “growth for growth's sake”, and, as Ed Abbey correctly surmised, *that* is the ideology of a cancer cell. It is well known that even cancer cells have a survival instinct, albeit suicidally so. Earth First! aimed to put a stop to the cancer's growth.

Capitalism preaches competition *within* its context (albeit far less than its promoters would have others believe), but tolerates very little competition *to* its context, and when that competition to its context becomes a challenge, capitalism has historically re-

sorted to repression, violence, or even murder to maintain its supremacy, all under the cloak of law and order. Anyone or any group who challenges that logic effectively is seen as a threat and is to be effectively neutralized. Already the FBI had infiltrated Earth First! in Arizona and Montana, and had entrapped Dave Foreman and Peg Millet. Darryl Cherney had his own theory, that the bombing may have been a direct response to the renunciation of tree spiking by northern California and southern Oregon Earth First! (and IWW) members. In order to continue to paint Earth First!ers as “terrorists” the employing class had to make Earth First! appear even more violent in order to continue to divide and conquer, pitting workers against Redwood Summer organizers.<sup>2</sup> Judi Bari had certainly proven to be a much more effective at bridging the supposed gap between supposedly antagonistic forces. As Beth Bosk recalls:

“Judi Bari, was saying it with great charisma, pushing into the vocabulary the concept of ‘corporate greed’, creating a mass movement that would also involve workers. I’m not so sure how far she was getting with ‘workers’, but if an illusion, it was an illusion that fed the very energies in her we all benefitted from.

“Whom she was attracting into the Earth First! movement with her denunciations of tree spiking, and her fearlessness. and her anti-corporate vocabulary, were more and more reinhabitants, locals willing to stop cuts, literally willing to sit down in a road, burrow holes, occupy trees, actually stop men from bringing trees out or stop men from going into the woods while court orders or politics proceeded. People were becoming full-time activists. It was analogous to what had happened in the south 25 years ago in the Civil Rights Movement, that feeling of now or ever.

“But the numbers were still minuscule in comparison to the power of the corporations, the likes of Maxxam and L-P, so Judi came up with the idea of ‘Redwood Summer’, freedom riders for the forests coming into the northern counties from all over the country to help slow down logging until the voters of California could decide on the *Forest Forever* Initiative, in November.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “Earth First! and COINTELPRO”, by Leslie Hemstreet, *Z Magazine*, July / August 1990.

<sup>3</sup> “The Reinhabitant's Perspective: Naomi Wagner”, interview by Beth Bosk, *New Settler Interview*, #51, August 1990.

The precedents for COINTELPRO's past disruption of leftist organizations and movements are many. There is enough evidence to convincingly show that the bombing was nothing less than a direct attack on Earth First!, the IWW, Judi Bari, Darryl Cherney, Redwood Summer, and anyone else who would disrupt business as usual

Gary Cox had warned that (fighting back in the) class war was not polite and would likely result in repression, and Earth First! and IWW Local #1 had *already* been subjected to violence, but as Bari pointed out, not on the scale of a bombing:

“We were all naïve little kids, never thinking this could happen to us. When we talked about nonviolence training, we were worried about being punched... We know what their tactics have been against black people, against Indians, etc. And because we've grown up with this white, middle-class privilege, it never crossed our minds that they would use the same unspeakable tactics on us.”<sup>4</sup>

Fortunately, following the bombing Earth First!ers intuitively understood that their movement had come of age and there was no turning back. Cox's warnings would be heeded. The *Earth First! Journal*, issued the following statement:

“Let us not kid ourselves about the future of ecologically-based, nonviolent resistance. The violent response (by the powers that be) will increase. We will increasingly be singled out by the hired thugs of the ruling minority for harassment, intimidation, infiltration, and arrest. The US always responds to threatening popular movements with repression, as evidenced by the anti-labor violence of the thirties, McCarthyism of the fifties, National Guard murders in the seventies, and now a return to violent tactics in the nineties. Earth First!, being the most active and visible expression of ecological resistance is the current target, the lesson being offered to the viewing American public of the price of resistance to the powers in control.

“Now we face the challenge of responding to state-sponsored violence directed at our cause and against us individually. The whole world is watching. It is up to us to demonstrate the continuing leadership of EF! In developing

appropriate and effective methods of resistance...

“We must be exceedingly careful, in the coming volatile times, to avoid violent response to the controlling minority, whether they be official state thugs or their hired minions. Any violence on our part will be turned against us, widely publicized, and used to split and disempower our movement...”<sup>5</sup>

Long time peace activist Louis Korn stated that, “the bombing is an escalation, and more is expected... The bomb that crippled Judi Bari and injured Darryl Cherney is part of the violence destroying life on this planet.” He argued that even if one opposed the proposed nonviolent civil disobedience being organized for Redwood Summer, morally they should condemn the bombing, because to not do so was to enable and condone violence and terrorism on the part of the perpetrators, in essence, the employing class. Korn elaborated:

“Our force is not physical coercion. (Our opponent already monopolizes that), but rather obstruction, being constantly in the way. We must respond to his frustration, anger and fear, with understanding, empathy, sympathy, and willingness to help the other toward a mutually acceptable alternative to his destructive livelihood. We are confronting not the ruling classes, inaccessible to us and insulated by their power and wealth from the poverty they have collectively created, but the ruled, the working classes on whom their power and wealth depend, people only a few paychecks away from homelessness.”<sup>6</sup>

He also emphasized that the bombing and arrests would not hold back the rising tide, stating, “Incapacitating our organizers will not stop Redwood Summer. Their charisma brought us together. But we work without leaders, being autonomous people with a common purpose.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> “Response to Violence”, by Mike Lewis, *Earth First! Journal*, Litha / June 21, 1990

<sup>6</sup> “The Bombing: We’re All Involved”, by Louis Korn, *Country Activist*, June 1990 and letter to the editor, *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, June 1, 1990.

<sup>7</sup> Korn, op. cit.

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<sup>4</sup> “Some People Just Don’t Get It”, Judi Bari interviewed by Bruce Anderson, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, June 13, 1990.

Indeed, Redwood Summer happened and was at least partially successful. It drew tremendous attention to the plight of old growth forests and the redwoods. It did slow down logging (though timber harvests were happening at an unheard of pace), and it at least opened the door to challenge what Darryl Cherney called “speciesism”, the notion that humans were superior to all other species. In spite of the bombing and several incidents of violence perpetrated against the Redwood Summer participants, the latter *unflinchingly*, without exception, adhered to the nonviolence code in *every* action throughout the *entire* summer, and by doing so they earned the respect of a lot of skeptics.

However Redwood Summer failed dramatically to bridge the gap between timber workers and environmentalists sowed by Corporate Timber—divisions that were exacerbated by the bombing—and much of this is due to Bari’s absence from the front lines, since she, more than anyone else, possessed the understanding and the skill to bridge those gaps. Further, the *Forests Forever* initiative failed to pass, though not by much. The harshest opposition to the measure came from California’s timber dominated rural counties, but the best results among them, where the measure received the most favorable votes were in fact those with the greatest amount of Redwood Summer activity, namely Humboldt, Mendocino, and Sonoma Counties. Meanwhile, the Corporate Timber-backed countermeasure failed horribly, even in the timber-dominated counties, sometimes by a worse vote than *Forests Forever!*

Judi Bari recovered, though she was maimed and disfigured for the remainder of her life and experienced much shellshock and emotional distress in her remaining years. Under Bari’s leadership, Earth First! – IWW Local #1 organized additional campaigns, including Redwood Summer II in 1991 (though it was far smaller in scope than Redwood Summer I), the Albion Nation uprising from 1992-93, and they continued the campaign to save Headwaters Forest until and after Bari’s death. Some of the momentum towards bridging the Corporate Timber manufactured gap between the timber workers and environmental activists that had been lost by the bombing was regained in the Albion campaign. A logger named Ernie Pardini and his younger brother Tony actually joined in the campaigns. In 1993, Ernie Pardini became the first licensed logger to conduct a tree sit in protest against Maxxam. After Bari’s death, when Maxxam attempted to bust the United Steel Workers Union of America in a lockout of its Kaiser Aluminum plants in

the Pacific Northwest, solidarity from Earth First!ers led to an alliance between the two, including the USWA’s support in the campaigns against Maxxam. That collaboration paved the way for the famous “Teamsters and Turtles” connection during the anti-WTO protests which began in Seattle on November 30, 1999, and the collaboration between Earth First! and the USW would plant the seed for what eventually became the Blue Green Alliance.

Meanwhile, continued activism and circumstance led to the eventual exodus of all three of the principal timber corporations on the North Coast. By the opening years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Georgia Pacific liquidated its holdings northern California and closed the mill in Fort Bragg. G-P no longer retains a significant presence in the region, but internationally they are as much a presence as ever, and—at the time of this writing—they have since been acquired by the infamous and ultra-reactionary Koch Brothers.

Louisiana Pacific increasingly pursued composite wood product lines, such as waferboard, with mixed results at best. At one point a class action lawsuit against L-P resulted from one of these products showing signs of rot (to the point that one home owner noticed *mushrooms* growing out of the L-P composite siding), and ultimately the corporation had to settle for several million dollars. Nevertheless, by the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, L-P had divested itself of all of its timber holdings, logging operations, and conventional lumber milling operations. On the North Coast, a new company, the Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC), created by the Fisher Family, owners of the GAP, assumed ownership of L-P’s former holdings there. The Fishers have promised to adopt the sustainable practices championed by Pacific Lumber in the Murphy days (but thus far the results have been mixed).

In 2008, Pacific Lumber declared bankruptcy. A Texas court approved the sale of P-L to the MRC on July 8, 2008, who created a new subsidiary called the Humboldt Redwood Company (HRC). For the most part, HRC follows the practices outlined by its parent, and has even received the somewhat favorable approval of Darryl Cherney (though he remains ever vigilant in his watchfulness over them and still lives near Garberville). According to Darryl Cherney, due to the efforts of Earth First!, EPIC, the IWW, the USAW, and all of their allies, Maxxam and Hurwitz were unable to continue in their corporate takeovers after the acquisition of Kaiser in 1988.

Meanwhile, Greg King returned to environmental activism, including taking over executive direc-

torship of the NEC in Arcata, for a time. John and Candy Boak *still* regard King and Cheney as “unwashed-out-of-town-jobless-hippies-on-drugs,” and still believe the Earth First!ers will destroy life on the North Coast (if they haven’t done so already), but most others and the body of evidence disagrees with the Boaks.

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The intersectionality of movements (which were much broader and deeper than just “Teamsters and Turtles”) suffered its own share of setbacks, including divisions among the left, followed by the massive, reactionary backlash following the 9/11 attacks, and the George W Bush and Dick Cheney led “War on Terror”, accompanied by the Green Scare, which targeted radical, direct action movements, particularly the Animal Liberation Front and Earth Liberation Front (much of which has been expertly detailed in books of their own by authors other than myself).

However, this brief but significant reaction was itself eventually beaten back by the largest antiwar movement ever organized (to date), and though that didn’t prevent the wars, it led to many other movements, including Arab Spring, Occupy, Idle no More, Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, and others. With all of this, there has also been an explosion of grassroots green unionism.

From 2013-15 some unions, including National Nurses United opposed the Keystone XL (KXL) gas pipeline. Far more union members and unions would go on to oppose the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) a few years later, and some several hundred union members actually traveled to North Dakota and participated in direct action to try and prevent its construction (while also attempting to dialogue with the union Building Trades workers constructing it).

In 2015, After a runaway train carrying crude oil crashed into the Canadian town of Lac-Mégantic destroying much of it, where the workers were blamed for lax safety standards that were management imposed, Railroad Workers United and environmental justice communities (many of whom opposed tar sands mining, fracking, and crude by rail) held several summits and found common ground on issues of workers’ safety which also benefited environmental demands (because the lack of these were designed to enhance rail carriers’ profits);

Following on the heels of that, another national refinery strike at Shell saw solidarity for the striking refinery workers shown by environmental

justice organizations (some of those striking workers attended the railroad workers safety conference);

An environmental justice movement organized campaign against coal exports through a proposed bulk exports terminal in the Port of Oakland included a labor committee that successfully secured endorsements from two dozen unions (including four Bay Area ILWU locals and the local IWW branch) as well as the Alameda County AFL-CIO Central Labor Council.

Building upon the momentum of the No Coal in Oakland campaign, many of the unions that endorsed it formed a climate and labor caucus at the aforementioned CLC. This caucus proposed a climate and just transition resolution which was approved by the Council. A somewhat watered-down version of that resolution, itself, would later be passed by the AFL-CIO at its annual convention. True, its watering down diluted its intent (and resolutions are often little more than words on paper if no actions are taken to actualize them), but the fact that the Federation passed it at all represents a significant shift in the mainstream labor movement. Further, that resolution would inspire a young, radical left current within the Texas AFL-CIO to adopt strong green unionist positions shortly afterwards.

Following the resistance that organized following the surprise election of Republican, Donald Trump (himself a much more boorish and extreme amalgamation of people like Charles Hurwitz and Harry Merlo combined with the Boaks, Sahara Clubbers, and their ilk) in 2016—after the backlash created by that resistance resulted in a Democratic wave in the 2018 midterm elections—a group of youth activists (organized by Youth versus Apocalypse and the Sunrise Movement) conducted a sit in at (San Francisco Democrat and then Speaker of the House) Nancy Pelosi’s Congressional office demanding that she push for Congress to pass a “Green New Deal”. While Pelosi, being a mainstream liberal didn’t, and while the Green New Deal isn’t nearly as revolutionary as anything proposed by Earth First!-IWW Local #1, it nevertheless pushed the political Overton Window significantly leftwards and brought many of the concepts that Judi Bari (and Tony Mazzochi) championed into the mainstream.

When a conservative bloc within the AFL-CIO (comprised mainly of the leadership of unions representing workers primarily employed in the fossil fuel extraction supply chain, whose members make up just under 20% of the overall membership) issued a statement opposing the Green New Deal, the capital-

ist press predictably framed that as indicating opposition to it by the entire union movement. Such framing overlooks the fact that the Green New Deal—which consistently registers between more than 60-67% support among the general public—actually enjoys between 65-70% support among rank-and-file union members overall!

Meanwhile, many union members have participated in the direct action oriented, youth led Climate Strikes and support the Greta Thunberg inspired Fridays for the Future Movement in Europe.

As the climate crisis continues to worsen and the mostly grassroots movements that are organizing to try and address it deepen, there have been increasing instances of workers and unions organizing and sometimes striking over climate change induced environmental factors, such as wildfire smoke, hurricanes, and extreme heat.

And, in 2023, when the United Autoworkers (UAW)—the very union that cofounded Earth Day—finally shook off its half century of malaise and elected a reform slate, led by Shawn Fain, and organized its very successful “Stand Up Strike” against the Big 3 automakers, the fight included strong just transition language over the production of batteries and electric vehicles, and the strike included widespread support among environmental organizations and activists.

Finally, back in that seemingly unlikely crucible of radicalism, union members and environmentalists are working together to make a proposed offshore wind development and a heavy lift marine terminal to service it (located in Samoa at the old log export dock) a reality. While there are many challenges to be overcome (including some skepticism and opposition from some of the indigenous tribes), these constituencies are trying to negotiate and organize to overcome their differences. If they succeed it will unite the hitherto bitterly divided community and

provide a positive alternative to timber (and fossil fuel) extractivist capitalism.

A quarter century after her death, it seems, at long last, green unionism is becoming mainstream. “Just Transition” is now an increasingly popular concept. While the idea is often (justifiably) credited to Tony Mazzochi, Judi Bari was no less ahead of her time in talking the talk and walking the walk. The intersection of movements that the capitalist class has long fought to keep divided and conquered continues to grow, in spite of it.

Within the IWW, that work continues within the context of the Eco Union Caucus (which myself and two other members cofounded in 2013), largely informed by the wisdom of Judi Bari, Tony Mazzochi, and many others. Our website ([ecology.iww.org](http://ecology.iww.org)) offers a comprehensive overview of these struggles.

This is what the person(s) who bombed Judi Bari (and Darryl Cherney) sought to prevent. Unfortunately, the bomber may have succeeded, in a way. Had the bombing not taken place, it’s conceivable that the movements we’re seeing now would have arisen much more quickly, and perhaps would’ve prevented the ill-advised “War on Terror”, the Green Scares, the rise of Trump and Trumpism, and could’ve been much further along in addressing climate change.

On the other hand, the bomber failed to stop this movement altogether, and while they may have slowed its progress, there is every indication that the green union movement will only keep growing and deepening, and that is fortunate, because only such a movement is capable of dismantling the capitalist cancer that threatens life on Earth itself.

It is up to us to make the latter future reality. As we mourn the loss of Judi Bari, we must continue to organize.

