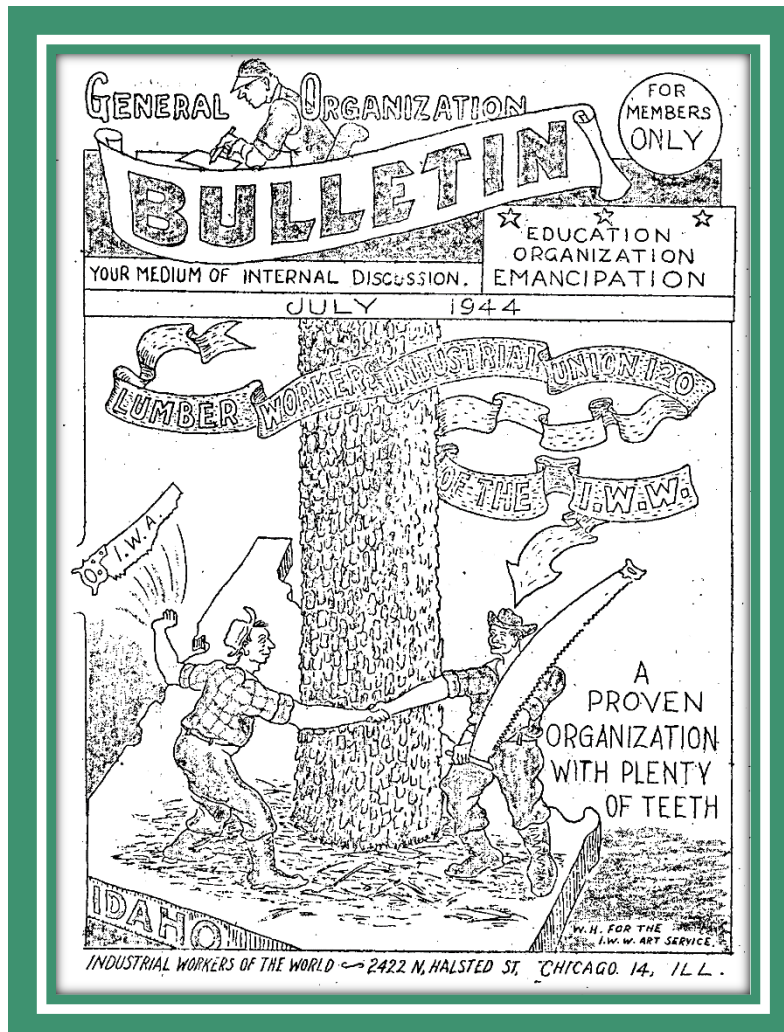


Chapter 2 : Pollution, Love it or Leave it!



“Since when are humans solely a biological product of wilderness? (What is ‘wilderness?’) If you accept an evolutionary development of *Homo sapiens*, as I do, it does not mean that you profess a disbelief in God. Quite the contrary. It was God, the Creator, who created humans, who imbued them with a will, with a soul, with a conscience, with the ability to determine right from wrong. It is inconceivable that the Creator would create such vast resources on earth without expecting them to be utilized.”

—Glenn Simmons, editor of the *Humboldt Beacon and Fortuna Advance*, February 1, 1990.

“Growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell.”

—Edward Abbey

Earth shattering though it may have seemed, the IWW's victory was both transitory and incomplete, and historical currents would never again mesh as perfectly. To begin with, the strike on the job had taken place only in the Pacific Northwest, and had excluded California at that. The Wobblies recognized one strategic weakness in this situation in noting that the employers could have eventually organized a lockout of that region and relied instead on wood production from the southern or eastern United States. They knew—in the abstract at least—that their victory would never be complete until they organized all lumber workers nationally and internationally.¹ The Wobblies inability to make inroads among the highly skilled redwood loggers of California's North Coast was especially troublesome, and it portended their undoing. Two companies, Pacific Lumber (P-L) and Hammond Lumber Company (HLC) had each adopted separate techniques that had kept the IWW out and would soon be duplicated by the Lumber Trust elsewhere. That combined with the much larger shockwaves brought on by the Russian Revolution in 1917 conspired against the One Big Union and led to the eventual decline of the American working class as an adversarial force and the liquidation of the forests of the Pacific Northwest.

Although most corporations comprising the Lumber Trust had refused to budge, lest they embolden the Wobblies, there were those that adopted “welfare capitalism” on their own initiative, in which they would provide amenities and benefits to their workers—union or not—in an attempt to win over their loyalty. It was in the crucible of timber worker unionism, Humboldt County, where this was first attempted with any lasting success, by the Pacific Lumber Company (P-L), based in Scotia, beginning in 1909. P-L had discovered that by creating a wide variety of social programs, employee benefits, and community based events, it was able to secure the loyalty and stability of its workforce. P-L general manager A. E. Blockinger described these efforts in great detail in an article featured in the *Pioneer Western Lumberman*:

“A reading room with facilities for letter writing and any games, except gambling, is easily and cheaply put into any camp. Arrange subscription clubs for papers and periodicals or let the company do it for the men. If you can have a circulating library among your camps and at the mill plant, it will be much appreciated. Let the

daily or weekly papers be of all nationalities as represented in your camp. Lumber trade journals are especially interesting to the men and they can and will readily follow the markets for lumber and appreciate that you have some troubles of your own.

“Organize fire departments among your men. The insurance companies will give you reductions in rates for such additional protection while it offers another opportunity for your men to relax and enjoy themselves.

“Shower baths at the camps or mill are easily and cheaply installed. They will be used and appreciated after a hot, dusty day's work.

“Make your mill town beautiful. Spend some money for paint and fences. Encourage the planting of trees, shrubs, and flowers. Offer prizes for the best kept front yards...

“Get your men loyal and keep them so. *Let this replace loyalty to a union.* The spirit is what you want in your men. Ten good men will accomplish as much as fifteen ordinary laborers if the spirit and good will is there. Treat them right and they will treat you right.”²

The employers' introduction of paternalism achieved its intended goal. The Secretary of the Pacific Logging Congress, an employers' association had declared in his 1912 report, “The best cure for the IWW plague—a people without a country and without a God—is the cultivation of the homing instinct in men.”³ When the IWW campaign for the eight hour day ensued in 1917, P-L simply added more programs. Carleton H. Parker, a onetime U.C. Berkeley economics professor working for the War Department as a mediator during the lumber workers' strike, had previously conducted sociological studies on workers, including agricultural and timber laborers. Parker was familiar with P-L, and had some fairly extensive knowledge of the Wobblies.⁴ Some of the latter had been gained through first-hand studies by two of his assistants, Paul Brissenden⁵ and F. C. Mills⁶

² Article by A. E. Blockinger, *Pioneer Western Lumberman*, #56, July 15, 1911, quoted in Cornford, op. cit.

³ *Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Session, Pacific Logging Conference*, 1912, page 5.

⁴ Parker, Carlton H., *The Casual Laborer and Other Essays*, New York, NY, Harcourt, Brace, and Howe, inc., 1920.

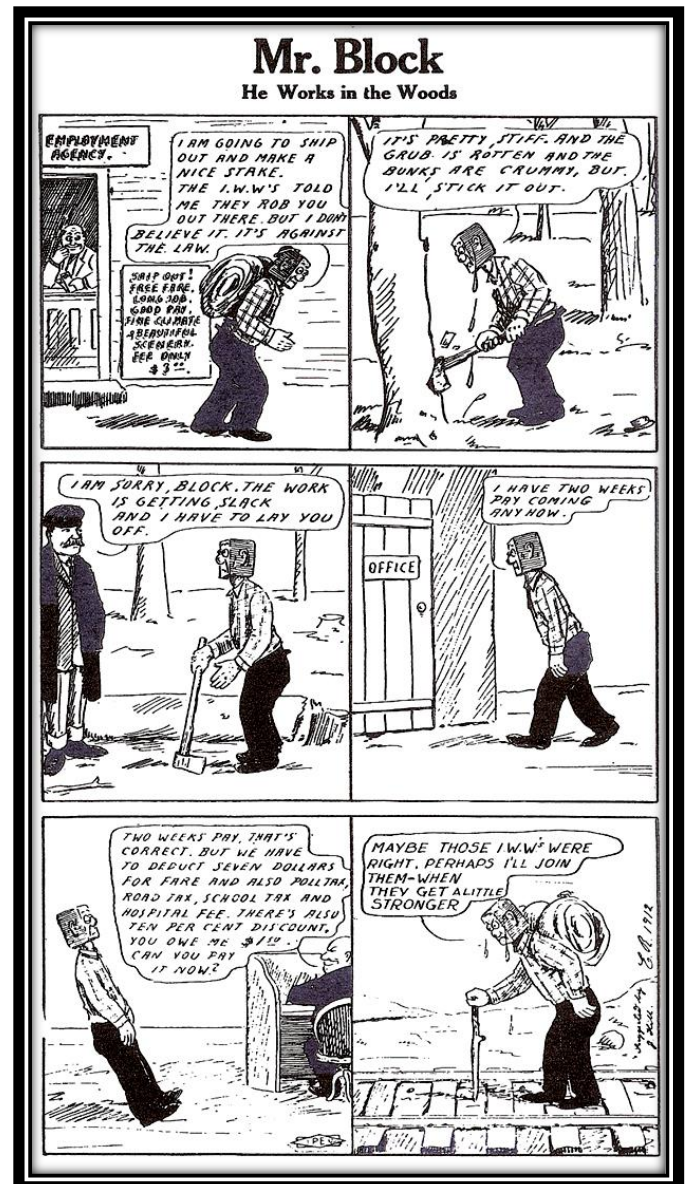
⁵ Brissenden, Paul F., *The IWW: A Study in American Syndicalism*, New York, NY, Columbia University Press, Russell & Russell, Inc., (Second Edition), 1957. Brissenden's study is surprisingly sympathetic to the IWW.

¹ Rowan, James: *The IWW in the Lumber Industry*, Chicago, IL, Industrial Workers of the World, 1922.

who had posed as IWW members and later produced extensive studies on the organization. Using this knowledge, Parker offered many suggestions to Disque which the latter somewhat reluctantly adopted. The LLLL created social halls for its members and replaced the employment sharks with free employment agencies. The IWW quite rightly recognized these amenities as a means to buy the workers' loyalty and likely to be liquidated when the employers drive for profits once again accelerated, but this process would take a long time, and convincing the workers of a threat that could take one or more generations to manifest proved futile.⁷

The Hammond Lumber Company of Eureka offered another, less altruistic, but similarly effective answer to the IWW. HLC began the experiment in 1913 by establishing a production bonus system, whereby workers in various departments within the company would be paid an additional fee, instead of an hourly wage, for meeting or beating a production quota.⁸ The bonus was paid to the entire department and the system had the advantage of both increasing production and undermining class solidarity. Over time, employers expanded and developed the concept to the point where entire logging and milling operations could be contracted out to subcontractors.⁹ Under this model, a contract logging or "gyppo" logging company would competitively bid against other similar firms to take an area of standing timber and deliver saw logs to a mill. Work was paid by the board foot, not by the hour, thus creating an incentive for lumber workers to compete with their fellows in cut-throat competition rather than build class solidarity.¹⁰ The employers made little secret of the fact that they had created the gyppo system specifically to undermine unionism, in particular the IWW.¹¹ By 1919, Weyerhaeuser had a highly developed gyppo system

in place in mills and logging camps in Idaho involving over 4,000 workers.¹² Again, the IWW recognized this as a direct attack on their organization, and was already taking steps to counteract it when unexpected turns of history thwarted their progress still further.¹³



The Russian Revolution of 1917 had brought about the ascendancy of Bolshevism, and though the IWW was neither affiliated with nor completely politically aligned with the Communism of the Third International, the latter nevertheless dictated events which affected the Wobblies. Already IWW members had faced repression from the bosses, been sentenced to prison terms or execution by judges ruling in favor of trumped up charges of "Criminal Syndicalism", or

⁶ Woirol, Gregory, *In the Floating Army: F.C. Mills on Itinerant Life in California, 1914*, Urbana, IL, University of Illinois Press, 1992.

⁷ Tyler, Robert, *Rebels of the Woods: The IWW in the Pacific Northwest*, Eugene, University of Oregon Books, 1967, pages 85-111.

⁸ Cornford, Daniel, *Workers and Dissent in the Redwood Empire*, Philadelphia, PA, Temple University Press, © 1987, pages 193-199.

⁹ Kennedy, James, *The Lumber Industry and its Workers*, Second Edition, Chicago, IL, Industrial Workers of the World, 1922.

¹⁰ "Kenneth O. Smith and Walter Smith: Gyppo Partners, Pacific Coast Timber Harvesting", Interviewed by Beth Bosk, *New Settler Interview*, Issue #21, June 1987. The term "gyppo" unfortunately has its origins in the word "gypsy", including the latter's racist overtones. It no doubt derives from the tendencies of these contract logging firms to move from job to job. In spite of the less than appropriate origins of the term, it was widely used even in Judi Bari's time.

¹¹ "Lumber Workers: You Need Organization", leaflet by the IWW's Lumber Workers Industrial Union 120, ca. 1927.

¹² Todes, Charlotte, *Labor and Lumber*, New York, NY, International Publishers, © 1931, pages 163-64.

¹³ Kennedy, op. cit.

even murder by vigilantes. After World War I, using the pretext of the “threat” of the spread of the Russian Revolution of 1917 to the US, Attorney General A. Mitchel Palmer conducted a reign of terror against domestic radicals known as the “red scare”. Palmer established what was to become the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and carried out much of his work in close cooperation with employers and with the American Legion, which was used as a vigilante force. Palmer chose as the head of this new security agency his young, reactionary protégé, a rabid anti-communist by the name of J. Edgar Hoover. Although the FBI was advertised as a law enforcement agency, it functioned—in practice—as bulwark against anti-capitalism and popular democracy. The red scare began in 1919 and climaxed when over 10,000 American workers, aliens and citizens, most of them trade union organizers, were arrested on January 1, 1920.¹⁴

The IWW was the main target of these raids. The employing class was largely the power behind these waves of repression, and they successfully whipped up vigilante mob hysteria against the IWW and other radicals. One of its most bloody expressions was the Centralia Massacre, which took place on Armistice Day, November 11th, 1919. On that day, a parade of American Legion members and other so-called “patriots” held a march through town. At the parade’s conclusion the crowd stopped in front of the local IWW Hall, which it had deliberately chosen to provoke a confrontation. With their ropes ready for a lynching the mob rushed the hall and started dismantling it. Having been subjected to previous incidents of mob violence already, the IWW members this time chose to defend themselves. A firefight ensued. Several of the assailants were killed by the Wobblies in self defense as evidence later clearly demonstrated. However the mob persisted and lynched several IWW members, including World War I veteran Wesley Everest in cold blood. In what could only be called a mockery of justice, however, it was the IWW members who were convicted of murder, many of whom were given life sentences.¹⁵

Yet, the IWW’s decline was due as much schisms within the left as much as it was from repression from the right. The rise of Bolshevism caused

division within the IWW’s ranks.¹⁶ To some, the Soviet Union represented the “dictatorship of the proletariat” envisioned by Marx and Engels, as well as the ultimate goal of the IWW.¹⁷ To their harshest critics, in stark contrast to the steadfastly and uncompromisingly revolutionary IWW, the Communists by contrast were opportunistic and Machiavellian to the point of making a mockery of that same vision. The debate only deepened when, in 1921, the Soviet affiliated Red Trade Union International (RTUI) invited the Wobblies to join it, but stipulated that in doing so the IWW must not interfere with the jurisdiction of other unions, including the AFL (whether or not the latter engaged collaboration with the employing class).¹⁸

The crux of the debate centered on strategy with ideological differences representing the less obvious underpinnings. The RTUI delegates declared specifically, “If the IWW is to be a real factor in the Labor Movement, it must change its attitude towards other Labor Unions.”¹⁹ The Wobblies officially rejected the overtures responding that the RTUI’s demands essentially meant that “The IWW must cease to *be* the IWW.”²⁰ In spite of this, a great many rank and file members chose to follow the Communists anyway.²¹ Further internal debates over the advantages of largely theatrical tactics, such as soapboxing and free speech fights versus striking on the job had raged since the events in Spokane, culminating in a devastating and complex internal split in 1924, with the splinter faction being lead by LWIU leader James Rowan among

¹⁶ Thompson, Fred, and Jon Bekken, The Industrial Workers of the World: It’s First 100 Years, 1905-2005, Cincinnati, OH, Industrial Workers of the World, © 2006, pages 1-16.

¹⁷ Scribner, Tom, Lumberjack, 1966.

¹⁸ Latchem, E. W., et. al, The IWW Reply to the Red Trade Union International, Chicago, IL, Industrial Workers of the World, November 15, 1922.

¹⁹ “To the I.W.W., A Special Message from the Communist International”, by Guido Baracchi and Percy Laidler, Proletarian Publishing Association, Melbourne, 1920.

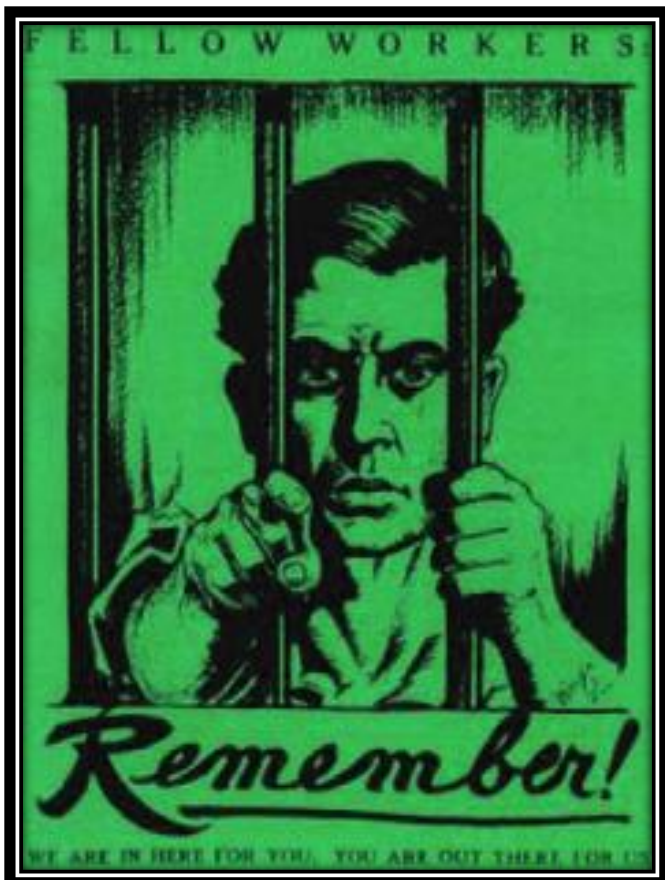
²⁰ Latchem, E. W., et. al, The IWW Reply to the Red Trade Union International, Chicago, IL, Industrial Workers of the World, November 15, 1922.

²¹ See for example, “The IWW”, by James Cannon, Fourth International, Summer 1955; De Caux, Len, The Living Spirit of the Wobblies, New York, NY, International Publishers, 1978; Gurley-Flynn, Elizabeth, The Rebel Girl: An Autobiography, My First Life (1905-1926), New York, NY, International Publishers, 1955; and Scribner, Tom, Lumberjack, unpublished manuscript, 1966, available at <https://ecology.iww.org/node/3666>. These publications are biased from a Stalinist (or Stalinist-turned-Trotskyist) perspective, but they are examples of many personal accounts of IWW members having left the organization for what they thought was a more stable and viable tendency in Communism. Ironically the course of history has proven them wrong, but not in their lifetimes.

¹⁴ “The IWW and the IWA: The Struggle for Radical Unionism in the Northwest”, by Troy Lariad Garner, Ecology Center Newsletter, September 1990.

¹⁵ Chaplin, Ralph, The Centralia Conspiracy, Chicago, IL, Charles H. Kerr & Co, 1919

others.²² While the IWW struggled with its identity, the Communists eclipsed them as the dominant working class political force on the left in the United States and Canada, and the Wobblies presence in the lumber camps declined.



* * * * *

Meanwhile, after over a century of their unchecked liquidation, environmentalists (all of their faults and class biases notwithstanding) finally began to make inroads to the preservation of the California ancient redwoods. By 1917, almost two thirds of them had been clearcut, but since almost all of these exceptionally valuable forestlands were privately held, even the meager protections offered by the USFS didn't apply. That year, conservationists John C. Merriam, Madison Grant, Fairfield Osborn, and Frederick Russell Burnham founded the Save the Redwoods League (STRL), and immediately initiated efforts to preserve the most scenic groves along the route which would become US Highway 101, which would open up the remote North Coast region to automobile traffic and increasingly easy transportation of the valuable trees out of the area. Their efforts were successful, and they even

convinced the Pacific Lumber Company to adopt sustainable logging methods under its sympathetic president, Albert S. Murphy.²³ Over the course of the 1920s, STRL helped preserve the groves that would eventually comprise Redwood National Park north of Arcata and Humboldt Redwoods State Park between Garberville and Scotia.²⁴ Still, such efforts were isolated exceptions. By 1922, the other timber companies began to realize that the supply of easily accessible redwoods was rapidly declining, and so they began attempting to replant them, only to discover that this did not work. For a time, logging companies in the redwood regions switched to selective logging practices.²⁵ Elsewhere, however, clearcut logging on private and public lands intensified.

As they had with Spruce in 1916, the large timber companies limited their competition and kept prices artificially high by holding back timber from the market. By the late 1920s, however, due to a glut of this overstocked timber, the lumber companies faced a crisis.²⁶ The Great Depression hit the logging and lumber industries very hard, especially in northwestern California, where by 1931 only three mills were operating in Humboldt County.²⁷ The Lumber Trust responded to this situation by encouraging the federal government to add billions of additional board feet of "standing timber" to be added to the national forests, including as much as 150 bbf in 1933 alone, to be harvested on a sustained-yield basis. By doing so, the capitalists further limited the timber supply on the market and kept prices high for their own timber.²⁸ Each of these actions increased market pressures to cut more lumber more widely and rapidly. To make matters worse, new technology, specifically gasoline powered chainsaws and tractors were introduced in the early 1930s. Trees that hitherto took as much as a week to cut could now be felled within

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<http://www.savetheredwoods.org/league/mission.php#UKIEOmejXAE>

²⁴ Schrepfer, Susan R., *The Fight to Save the Redwoods: A History of Environmental Reform, 1917-1978*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983, page 130-85.

²⁵ "Redwood Summer, an Issues Primer", by Bill Meyers, *Ideas & Action*, Fall 1990.

²⁶ Foster, John Bellamy, *The Limits of Environmentalism Without Class: Lessons from the Ancient Forest Struggle of the Pacific Northwest*, New York, NY, Monthly Review Press (Capitalism, Nature, Socialism series), 1993, "Part 3 - Monopoly Capital and Environmental Degradation: The Case of the Forest".

²⁷ Howard Brett Melendy, "100 Years of Redwood Lumber Industry", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1952), 208.

²⁸ Foster, op. cit., "Part 3 - Monopoly Capital and Environmental Degradation: The Case of the Forest".

²² Thompspon and Bekken, op. cit., pages 1-16

minutes. This new wave of automation brought about further liquidation of the ancient redwoods as well as a reduction in the workforce and increased exploitation of the timber workers.²⁹

* * * * *

The hardship experienced by all American and European workers during the Great Depression, coupled with the apparent avoidance of such hardships in the Soviet Union sowed the seeds for a revival of rank and file workplace radicalism. The IWW had succeeded, at the very least, in introducing the concepts of industrial unionism, direct action at the point of production, and the general strike into the labor movement, and these tactics were used to great affect by left leaning dissidents within the AFL, many of whom also carried IWW cards or had done so in the past. The 1934 West Coast General Strike among the longshoremens inspired similar attempts at militant unionism among lumber workers the following year.³⁰ In 1935 a general strike among lumber workers took place in California, Oregon, and Washington over the issue of collective bargaining. The Great Strike, as it was called, took place from May to July and involved 22,000 workers at its height.³¹

“The Depression brought a sharp decline to the redwood lumber industry. Layoffs were common and workers suffered a 10 percent wage reduction in 1931. But by 1933 a recovery had begun in the industry, all major mills were running, and the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act brought on a new tide of union organizing, stating that ‘employees shall have the right to organize and bargain collectively’.

“The leadership of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), facing the greatest opportunity since its inception, stood immobilized by their conservative craft union philosophy. For many years, progressive unions had argued that industry-wide organizations were the only means by which the thousands of workers in auto, steel, lumber, and other mass production industries could be organized. But the AFL

leadership rejected these arguments, largely because the craft unions dominating the organization feared and distrusted the semi-skilled and unskilled workers in the major industries. When it became apparent that the progressives would split from the AFL on the issue of industry-wide organization, leadership was compelled to compromise. In the Pacific Northwest, lumber workers who previously had been rebuffed by the AFL were finally granted union charters.

“In early 1935, the local lumber and sawmill workers union formulated demands of 50 cents an hour, a 48-hour work week, and immediate union recognition. The standard work week at that time was 60 hours. A convention of the Northwest Council of Lumber and Sawmill Workers met in Aberdeen, Washington and set its own demands of 75 cents an hour, a 30-hour week, overtime and holiday pay provisions, and union recognition. Furthermore, the Council voted to strike on May 6th if the demands were not met.”³²

One of the most pitched battles in this conflict occurred in Eureka:

“On May 11th in Eureka, the members of LSW Local 2563 voted to strike in four days unless the mill operators met with their negotiating committee. Appointed ‘picket captains’ instructed all strikers to picket peacefully within bounds of the law. The companies, with the exception of the California Barrel Company, made no response to the demands of the union. On Wednesday, May 15th, Humboldt County workers joined the general strike of the west coast lumber industry.

“The *Times* and the *Standard* both carried front page editorials attacking the forthcoming strike. The Eureka Problems Committee of the Chamber of Commerce voted to establish a ‘Committee of One Thousand’ to ‘guarantee the safety of the citizens and property owners during the strike.’ This was the precursor of the Humboldt Nationals, a secret vigilante organization. By this time, the lumber companies had decided to end the strike by any means necessary. The picketing was no more than an annoyance to most of the mills, but the closure of the docks (in solidarity) by the longshoremens

²⁹ Meyers, op. cit.

³⁰ Lembecke, Jerry and William Tattam, One Union in Wood, A Political History of the International Woodworkers of America, New York, NY, International Publishers, 1984.

³¹ The Great Lumber Strike of Humboldt County, 1935 by Frank Onstine, portions of which were reprinted in the *Country Activist*, September 1985.

³² Onstine, op. cit.,

posed a serious economic threat. On June 14, a group of eleven men arrived in town posing as ‘G-men’—i.e., FBI agents and immigration officers, but it was rumored that they were professional thugs. The *Standard* reported that week that, “[T]he Humboldt County lumber strike is in the hands of agitators and nonresident trouble-makers. Eureka Police completed at noon today their first 24 hours of open battle against illegal picketing, intimidation and hoodlum attacks on workers of local mills.’

“On the night of June 20, Local 2563 called an emergency meeting. Albin Gruhn, a young Hammond worker at the time, attended the meeting and later recalled that the decision was made to concentrate peaceful picketing at one of the mills in an effort to shut it down completely. Very early Friday morning, June 21st, the order was given for pickets to assemble at the Holmes-Eureka gate. The stage was set...”³³

What happened next follows the pattern of repression experienced two decades previously by the IWW and foreshadowed the events that were to take place later.³⁴ Onstine continues:

“Pickets began arriving at the main gate shortly after 6:00 a.m. There were approximately 200 strikers gathered around the entrance to the plant, and a small crowd of spectators milled on the flat above. Some of the men pulled up rotten planks from boardwalk in front of the plant and assembled a makeshift barricade across the entrance.

“Special officers’ Forrest Horrell and James Jenson were serving as watchmen at the main gate. Horrell later testified that one of the strikers began taunting him, daring him to start something. Another, whom Horrell later identified as Eugene Miller, a strike leader, denounced him for siding with the lumber companies and said that he, Miller, was sorry that he had ever known Horrell. Horrell ordered Miller to get off Holmes-Eureka property and then facetiously asked the strikers if they couldn’t find anything more to drag across the gate.

“Non-striking workers began to arrive almost as soon as the pickets had gathered. Confronted with the determined picketers, most simply turned around and left.

“The police began arriving soon thereafter. Close behind them came Chief of Police George Littlefield. Several witnesses, watching from the flats above, said that when the pickets stopped Littlefield’s car he climbed out, pistol in hand, and began firing into the ground, shouting, ‘Who’s going to stop me?’

“The principal trouble, however, arose from a Packard sedan. Although the pickets were not menacing the police at this point, someone in the car fired a tear gas canister into the crowd. The shell made a direct hit on a woman picketer, Jerrine Canarri, and knocked her to the ground.”³⁵

The union picket captains had tried to stand down prior to the shelling, but after being attacked, some strikers fought back and a firefight ensued. Onstine describes what happened next:

“When the tear gas finally cleared, the full extent of union casualties became obvious. William Kaarte, a 62-year-old woods cook, died instantly after he was shot in the throat. Paul Lampella, a young guy, was hit in the head. His eye popped out on his face and he was screaming bloody murder. Insane, his facial muscles tightly constricted by paralysis, he lived until August 7th. Harold Edlund, 35, a chopper employed by the Pacific Lumber Co., was mortally wounded in the chest while assisting Lampella. He died on the evening of June 24th. Ole Johnson was wounded in a leg which subsequently required amputation. Many others were wounded as well.

“Five police officers—Littlefield, Rutledge, French, Carroll, and Albee required medical attention for gas exposure, cuts, and concussions. All returned to duty later that morning.

“The Great Strike in Humboldt County ended on June 21st. The longshoremen went back to work on Monday, and the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union shifted its attention to providing legal aid for its members.

“Despite efforts by the police and the press, public opinion swung to the side of the

³³ Onstine, op. cit.

³⁴ “The Public Outlaw Show: Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport”, Dave Chism and Bob Cramer, interviewed by Dan Fortson on KMUD FM, November 27, 1997.

³⁵ Onstine, op. cit.

strikers. Fifteen hundred members of Humboldt County labor unions were reported to have turned out for the funeral of Kaarte, the woods cook, and Assemblyman Burns led a procession in which unionists marched in a solid phalanx five blocks long followed by a hundred car loads of mourners.

“Of the lumber workers arrested, 80 men and three women were brought to preliminary hearings before the Eureka Police Court. Of the 83 strikers who had preliminary hearings, sufficient cause was found to bring 55 to trial in superior court.

“A shortage of jurors who were willing to serve plagued the prosecution from the beginning. Of the 100 jurors called for the first trial, 44 failed to show up, and a special venire of 40 had to be summoned. In light of the difficulty assembling a jury, district attorney Bradford began negotiating with the defense attorneys to drop charges against all but twelve of the defendants in exchange for consolidation of the cases.

“The jury, after deliberating more than 30 hours, was able to reach agreement on only one of the defendants, who was acquitted... The prosecution had undertaken three trials without obtaining a conviction and had seen its key witnesses completely discredited. On September 25, Bradford called it quits...

“The hysteria created by public officials and the press had contributed to the bloodshed. The Humboldt Nationals had held a special meeting at Eureka High School on the eve of the riot, presumably for a pep-talk before the expected confrontation. The situation was ripe for violence, and if the showdown had occurred late in the day when the vigilantes could have been assembled, many more people would have been hurt.

“Immediately following the trials, a curtain of silence descended on these events. The local press had no interest in analyzing the subject.”³⁶

In spite of the bosses' repression, the strike succeeded and brought with it a revival of unionism within the lumber industry, but not directly from the IWW. The Wobblies still existed, but never regained the prominence they once held two decades previously, in large part due to the dominance of Communism as a politi-

cal force on the left.³⁷ The influence of Communism, and the vast wave of rank and file worker militancy that grew during the 1930s was significant enough to convince President Franklin D. Roosevelt to enact various social democratic reforms, known as “The New Deal”, which—ironically enough—had some of their roots in Carleton Parker’s sociological studies of the IWW and the experiments in paternalism begun by Pacific Lumber, (even though most had their origins in the reformist economic ideas proposed by John Maynard Keynes). Additionally, in order to rein in the increasingly militant union organizing by the working class and the growing violent backlash enacted by the employers, Roosevelt signed the Wagner Act (otherwise known as the National Labor Relations Act) in 1935 thus legalizing and formalizing collective bargaining by labor unions.³⁸

The New Deal split the capitalist class into liberal and conservative camps. The liberals welcomed the potential for “labor peace” that the Keynesian New Deal offered, but the conservatives decried what they described as “creeping Communism,” even though in reality the New Deal stole the Communists’ thunder, but the Keynesians ruled the day while the conservatives bided their time. The ever opportunistic Communists nevertheless assumed credit for the reforms and reinforced the idea that socialism could be brought about by incremental reform. Schisms between Communists, Socialists, and Anarchists over the Spanish Revolution of 1936 and the rise of European Fascism further strengthened the Communist’s hold on the American left. The cumulative effect of these political tides and currents was to leave many with the perception—even if debatable—that time had passed the IWW—and, by extension, syndicalism—by, and a great many of its members drifted away, and the organization, though it continued to exist, was but a shadow of its once great self.³⁹

Instead, the revival of militant timber workers’ unionism was led by the International Woodworkers of America (IWA), which formed in 1937, and affiliated with the newly formed Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). The IWA, like the IWW, was a democratic, rank-and-file controlled union. The overwhelming majority of the elected officers in the union were radical militants (many of them former IWW organizers). Unlike the IWW, however, the CIO believed that the union should not only orient

³⁷ Lembecke and Tattam, op. cit., pages 30-42.

³⁸ Thomspson and Bekken, op. cit., pages 1-16

³⁹ Thomspson and Bekken, op. cit., pages 1-16

³⁶ Onstine, op. cit.,

their struggle at the point of production, but that they should engage in the political arena as well—an idea the IWW rejected in 1908. The CIO, like the Communists, believed that their organization was part of a larger movement that would confront the criminal economy of the capitalist system.⁴⁰ While the existence of the Wagner Act and the new union federation's pragmatic approach attracted a lot more members much more quickly than the Wobblies could ever have hoped to have done, it also created its own share of problems as well. The IWW had opposed the conservatism of the AFL, but they had never actively attempted to raid their competitors, choosing instead to allow militant AFL members to hold IWW cards simultaneously; the CIO had no such prohibitions on raiding. The AFL, who still insisted on craft unionism, excluding unskilled workers, and racist policies were suddenly faced with the very real possibility of losing their jurisdiction over their long existing strongholds. For example, many of the IWA's rank and file members defected from the AFL's carpenters' union.⁴¹ Faced with competition from this new union, the competing AFL timber unions were forced to step up their organizing, evolve, and become more like the CIO.

As a result, the unions of the AFL and CIO organized as much against each other as they did the employers, and these internecine squabbles and each federation's lack of solidarity for the other undermined potential victories for the workers as a whole. The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners (UBCJ) made a concerted effort to target timber companies on the Mendocino coast from 1937 to 38, particularly the Union Lumber Company. The UBCJ succeeded in winning enough support for a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election, but the companies campaigned hard against the union, and the efforts were thwarted. Two years later, the International Longshoremen's and Warehouseman's Union (ILWU)'s Fort Bragg Local 77 attempted to secure recognition from the Caspar Lumber Company and Union Lumber—both of whom operated lumber schooners along the coast—only to have their efforts thwarted when the companies simply shut down their schooners permanently, switching to other methods of transport. The Union Lumber Company in particular was still very much hostile to unionization, and it

maintained an active blacklist of union supporters.⁴² These jurisdictional squabbles did coincide with a massive increase in union membership—though it's just as likely the New Deal and Wagner Act are to credit for this—but they primarily allowed the employers to undermine working class solidarity, a fact that the still existing, but substantially diminished IWW tried desperately to point out to little avail.

To make matters worse, the CIO faced as much strife from within its ranks as it did from without. The CIO was created by a fragile alliance of its “red”, left wing (comprised primarily of Communists as well as a handful of Socialists and former Wobblies) and its “white” conservative wing (made up of liberal reformers and social democrats). The former were led by the ILWU's Australian born Harry Bridges and the IWA's Canadian born Harold Pritchett, both based on the west coast, whereas the latter was led largely by the CIO's president and United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) leader John L. Lewis. Lewis's faction believed in the AFL's dictum of “a fair day's wage for a fair day's work”, whereas the reds followed the IWW credo that “the working class and the employing class have nothing in common.”⁴³

Initially, both sides coexisted uneasily. The leftists who had founded the new federation were still very much under the sway of the “United Front” so naïvely championed by many Communists. Meanwhile, Lewis and the conservatives had to tolerate the presence of the left. In the CIO's early days, the Great Depression still weighed heavy on everybody's mind, and industrial workers were still very open to anti-capitalist perspectives. On top of that, Lewis ruefully conceded that the radicals were the best organizers he could hope to find.⁴⁴ World War II brought about an alliance between Western Capital and Soviet Communism against the Axis Powers, and for a time, the CIO was unified, but after the war this changed. During the early days of the post war boom, the truce abated, and the employers, who would ideally have chosen no union at all, still preferred the “white” to the “red” and often assisted in the conservative wing's repeated attempts to undermine the radicals.⁴⁵

Following World War II, however, the employers faced another crisis. The War had given returning US GIs an unprecedented degree of econom-

⁴² “Chronology of California North Coast Timber Industry Activity 1767-1988”, by R. Bartley and S. Yoneda, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, July 25 and August 1, 1990.

⁴³ Garner, op. cit.

⁴⁴ Lembecke and Tattam, op. cit., page 79.

⁴⁵ Garner, op. cit.

⁴⁰ Garner, op. cit.

⁴¹ Lembecke and Tattam, op. cit., pages 54-58.

ic power, the war had been largely won due to the efforts of the Soviet Union's ability to withstand Hitler's eastward push, and many European nations that represented potential markets for the very powerful western capitalists had been liberated Communist led uprisings. The old prewar fears of the American working class organizing a revolution resurfaced with a vengeance and the employers sought to preempt such an occurrence by engaging in intense post war propaganda efforts to vilify Communism as a hostile force.⁴⁶ Such descriptions were not entirely without merit. The Soviet Government's internal repression and the atrocities committed against their own workers, which the IWW had criticized from the *left* before the war had ended, now were fodder for the *right*.⁴⁷ Both sides in the growing cold war engaged in espionage, trickery, and subterfuge to undermine what they considered to be political threats both from outside and within. In the United States, this was manifested in the McCarthy Era which is remembered primarily as a witch hunt against leftist, and sometimes even liberal, intellectuals, many of them based in Hollywood, but this, itself is only the tip of the iceberg. In actual fact, McCarthyism was merely political theater for a much deeper and more systematic destruction of working class radicalism within the United States by the employing class and aided by the state from many directions, the most sinister being organized surveillance, disruption, and repression by the FBI under the direction of the aforementioned J. Edgar Hoover.⁴⁸

These geopolitical struggles exacerbated the split within the CIO, and in particular they greatly weakened the IWA. Even before the war began, the same kind of tactics that were used against the IWW were again used against the IWA. The Portland Police Red Squad, and similar agencies, the American Legion Subversive Activities Committee, and Martin Dies who chaired the House Committee on un-American Activities (HUAC), persecuted the union and its officers and used every sort of slander, libel, and innuendo to link them with the Communist Party. The United States Immigration Service was able, in 1940, to successfully depose IWA President Harold Pritchett of his office on a legal technicality, since he was a

still Canadian citizen. These efforts had been aided and abetted by the white block within the CIO. In the years following the war, the emboldened rightist forces within the CIO and particularly the IWA engaged in countless instances of subterfuge, questionable elections, innuendo, and redbaiting. The employers were determined to prevent the solidifying of a West Coast based "red block" led by ILWU and IWA. While they failed to purge the former of its left wing, they succeeded in doing so in the latter.⁴⁹ These setbacks did not keep the IWA from organizing in the woods or the mills, but they greatly limited their power and ability to establish control by the workers over the job.

Meanwhile, Corporate Timber took advantage of the divisions within the labor movement and on the left and consolidated their control over the forests of the Pacific Northwest. The onset of World War II brought about swift changes to timber market conditions and overall production more than doubled from a low of 17 bbf in 1933 to 36 bbf in 1941. That year there were 24 sawmills in Humboldt County. During the war, the number of sawmills grew rapidly each year, and by war's end they were producing lumber at full capacity.⁵⁰ By 1946 there were 99 mills in Humboldt County⁵¹ and Mendocino had experienced similar growth.⁵² After the war, however, production levels continued to increase to service the pent up demand for housing, due to the flush reserves of the returning GIs and the new VA mortgage programs.⁵³ This led to a strike wave that engulfed California's North Coast in the three years that followed.

As a result, there was a general strike against all North Coast timber companies that took place in 1946. The workers' demands included \$1.05 hourly minimum wage, two weeks paid vacation, an end to the gyppo system, improved safety measures, company provided logging equipment, and a union shop status.⁵⁴ Many of the mills in northern California were unionized, but in many cases, the timber unions had not secured majority bargaining unit status and "un-

⁴⁹ Garner, op. cit.

⁵⁰ Butler, op. cit.

⁵¹ "A Logger Speaks Out – An Interview with Walter Smith", by Bruce Anderson, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, July 4, 1990.

⁵² "Economic Survey of Humboldt County", CA Eureka Chamber of Commerce and Humboldt County Board of Trade, July, 1960, 30.

⁵³ Foster, op. cit., "Part 3 – Monopoly Capital and Environmental Degradation: The Case of the Forest".

⁵⁴ "The Great Redwood Strike of 1946-48, What, Who, and Why", by Russel Bartley and Sylvia Yoneda, *Nojo Hill Notes*, Fall 1996.

⁴⁶ Boyer, Richard O, and Herbert M. Morais, *Labor's Untold Story*, Pittsburgh, PA, United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America, third edition, 1997, pages 329-70.

⁴⁷ "Chicago Replies to Moscow", editorial, *Industrial Worker*, January 27, 1945.

⁴⁸ "Stop FBI Repression!: The Historical Context to Recent Bomb Charges Against California Earth First! Activists, by Michael Robinson and Jim Vander Wall" *Industrial Worker*, July 1990.

ion shop” clauses.⁵⁵ The employers, by contrast, remained insistent at retaining open shop status, in which not all of the workers had to join the union, but still enjoyed the benefits of a union contract without having to pay union dues. In most cases, this amounted to less than one percent of the workforce, but the unions saw it as a foot in the door for the employers to erode what the unions had gained through struggle, and historically, the bosses had always done so in time.⁵⁶ The strike lasted six months and ended in defeat, led by the Union Lumber Company.⁵⁷

Then, in 1947, ostensibly to drive “Communism” out of the labor movement, but in actual fact to limit the unions’ power further, the US Government passed the Taft Hartley Act, prohibiting general strikes and other mass collective action, making another such strike wave legally impossible.⁵⁸ By 1948 many of the mills had shed their union contracts. In a further attempt to kick the unions while they were down, ULC commissioned the publication of an extremely biased and inaccurate history book, Memories of the Mendocino Coast, by D. W. Ryder claiming that the company had been “singularly free of labor trouble over the years,” and described the strike as “ill-advised and unnecessary.”⁵⁹ The timber unions had suffered another crushing defeat.

* * * * *

The result of all of this was that Corporate Timber’s lumber harvesting reached even more unprecedented levels, and concerns about the diminishing ancient forests were scarcely on anyone’s radar at all, except for a handful of environmentalists. The strike of 1946-48 temporarily halted production on the North Coast, and even then, not entirely, as small operators took advantage of the intense demand to fill the niche created by the strike.⁶⁰ The demand for wood was so great that in northwestern California, Douglas fir, which often grows near redwoods, but also grows elsewhere as a dominant species, and was hitherto overlooked as a source of high grade lumber, was

now almost as much desired, and the small companies operating during the strike were able to take advantage of this change as well.⁶¹ The small owners were, for the most part, fly-by-night operations, but at the conclusion of the strike, the large companies bought many of the mills and used them to branch out into Douglas fir production alongside Redwoods.⁶²

Advances in technology made during and after World War II accelerated the liquidation of the forests of the Northwest further. By 1948, gasoline powered chainsaws and gas or diesel tractors had almost universally replaced axes and hand saws and steam driven yarders completing a second wave of automation within the timber industry enabling the rapid expansion of logging operations while at the same time reducing the workforce needed to produce the same amount of lumber.⁶³ By 1951, there were 262 sawmills in Humboldt County⁶⁴ and 300 in Mendocino County, at which point the number of mills began to decline.⁶⁵ Only the post World War II boom prevented a massive round of layoffs of timber workers. The Korean War brought about the peak in timber harvests on private lands in 1952, and that year timber corporations removed enough board feet from private lands in Oregon alone to house Oregon’s entire two million population *and* San Francisco’s 700,000 residents.⁶⁶ Many of the sawmills constructed on the North Coast were shady affairs, lasting no more than ten to twenty years at most, ultimately resulting in the consolidation of timber holdings into the hands of a few corporations, particularly ULC in Mendocino County and Pacific Lumber in Humboldt County.⁶⁷ In Humboldt County in 1956 the number of sawmills in Humboldt County dropped to 214. That number decreased yearly so that by 1960 there were 134.⁶⁸

The workforce’s decline had been brought on largely by automation which began with the widespread deployment of chainsaws and gasoline powered tractors, but was greatly accelerated by far more significant changes in transportation patterns. In the

⁶¹ Butler, op. cit.

⁶² Melendy, Op Cit., 217-18.

⁶³ Foster, op. cit., “Part 3 – Monopoly Capital and Environmental Degradation: The Case of the Forest”.

⁶⁴ “Economic Survey of Humboldt County”, op. cit., 30.

⁶⁵ Anderson, July 4, 1990, op. cit.

⁶⁶ Foster, op. cit., “Part 3 – Monopoly Capital and Environmental Degradation: The Case of the Forest”.

⁶⁷ Anderson, July 4, 1990, op. cit.

⁶⁸ “Economic Survey of Humboldt County”, op. cit., 30.

⁵⁵ “Don Nelson: Candidate for Supervisor, 4th District (Mendocino County)”, Interviewed by Beth Bosk – *New Settler Interview*, issue #31, May 1988.

⁵⁶ Bosk, May 1988, op. cit.

⁵⁷ Bosk, May 1988, op. cit.

⁵⁸ Garner, op. cit.

⁵⁹ Bartley and Yoneda, op. cit.

⁶⁰ “Log Export History: Mill Jobs Exported”, by Edie Butler, *Hard Times*, Vol. 3, #1, February 1983.

1950s, the United States underwent a massive wave of automobilization, facilitated by the systematic gutting of intracity and interstate public transit systems and the creation of the new Interstate Highway system in 1956. This expansion was driven by probable collusion between the government, and the oil, automobile, tire, and rubber corporations who desired a monopoly on transportation. This process affected all sectors of the US economy, bringing about unprecedented capital expansion, including within the lumber and paper industries.⁶⁹ Logs that were once loaded onto train cars were now loaded onto log trucks which could operate on roads which were much easier to construct into deep forest lands.⁷⁰ Local milling operations were geared for larger diameter logs, and smaller diameter logs were considered undesirable. For some hardwoods, such as Madrone, tanoak, pepperwood, there was no domestic market, but foreign markets appeared. In the 1950's the balance of mill ownership along California's North Coast shifted from locally owned to "out of area" firms who bought up mills and timber.⁷¹ At this point, timber harvests on private land began to diminish, but capital's economic imperative to continue their harvests unabated created increasing pressure to log public lands.⁷²

The timber unions' presence on the North Coast was largely inert. The IWA grew throughout the Pacific Northwest, primarily due to the growth of the population there and the post war boom, but they made no advances whatsoever against the increasing use of gyppo logging operations and made few gains in advancing the power of the workers. Through the process of collective bargaining, increasingly conservative, "business" unions, including the IWA, traded workers' rights over any say in production for the sake of better wages and benefits.⁷³ Dissent within the ranks of the labor movement had been effectively marginalized. For the most part, other than occasional pockets of rebellion, it had become a conservative, and in some cases, even reactionary force. With rare exception, the AFL-CIO could be reliably counted upon to support the overall goals of the capitalist class. To resist or question this even mildly was to be

⁶⁹ Wolf, Winfried, *Car Mania: A Critical History of Transport*, Chicago, IL. Pluto Press, ©1996, pp 81-90.

⁷⁰ "Kenneth O. Smith and Walter Smith: Gyppo Partners, Pacific Coast Timber Harvesting", Interviewed by Beth Bosk, *New Settler Interview*, Issue #21, June 1987

⁷¹ Butler, op. cit.

⁷² Foster, op. cit., "Part 4 – Ecological Conflict and the Class Struggle".

⁷³ Garner, op. cit.

automatically branded "un-American" or "Communist", and in those days such was tantamount to political suicide. Indeed, leftist political activity of *any* sort was quickly dismissed by the powers that be and their followers as being controlled from Moscow, and protesters were often greeted with the admonishment from counterdemonstrators—including many gullible rank and file union members—to "Go (back) to Russia!"

By the mid 1950s, both the AFL and CIO were virtually indistinguishable from each other, and on February 9, 1955, they merged into a single union federation, the AFL-CIO.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, the Wobblies experienced their ultimate nadir after losing jurisdiction over its Cleveland metal workers' industrial union after the IWW's General Executive Board refused to honor the Taft-Hartley anti-communist stipulations. The IWW would begin to grow again in the following decades, but by now their membership (which had peaked in the 100,000s in 1936) reached its lowest ebb and numbered in the low hundreds.⁷⁵

* * * * *

Meanwhile environmental movement grew and, in matters of populist efforts to rein in the power of corporate resource extraction of public lands and privately owned wilderness areas, filled the political void left by the lack of an adversarial labor union. Although the Sierra Club had originally attracted mostly wealthy Republicans, the conservation minded aspects of the New Deal had brought a good many Roosevelt Democrats into the organization. Following World War II, four members in particular who helped expand the Sierra Club's horizons from merely protecting a handful of ecological jewels for the enjoyment of the wealthy, white elite, into a populist advocacy group seeking to influence matters of national environmental policy. These were attorneys Richard Leonard and Bester Robinson, photographer Ansel Adams, and a young idealist named David Brower.⁷⁶ By 1950, the organization numbered 7,000 and the vast majority of them were based on the Pacific Coast, but that year a huge influx of members joined from the Atlantic Coast region, and the organization evolved from an ephemeral volunteer organization to one with a board of directors. The membership elect-

⁷⁴ Boyer and Morais, op. cit.

⁷⁵ "95 Years of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism", by Michael Hargis, *Anarcho Syndicalist Review* #28, Spring 2000.

⁷⁶ Fox, Stephen, *John Muir and His Legacy*, Boston, Little Brown, 1981, pages 214 and 275.

ed Brower to serve as its first director, under the organization's new, formalized structure.⁷⁷

Under Brower's leadership, the Sierra Club solidified its reputation as a scrappy fighting national environmental group, taking its place among other already existing, but more conservative organizations such as the National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, and the Wilderness Society. The Sierra Club led the battle against the construction of the Echo Dam in Utah's Dinosaur National Monument, and succeeded in having it deleted from the Colorado River project in 1955. The victory resulted in the growth of the organization's membership from 10,000 that year to 15,000 in 1960. In 1964, thanks to the Club's efforts, the US Congress passed the Wilderness Act in 1964, which created the National Wilderness Preservation System. The initial statutory wilderness areas, designated in the Act, comprised 9.1 million acres (37,000 km²) of national forest wilderness areas in the United States of America previously protected by administrative orders, and for the first time since the days of Gifford Pinchot, theoretically placed limitations on encroachment on public lands by private logging interests.⁷⁸

The Sierra Club also successfully thwarted attempts by the Bureau of Reclamation from building two dams in the Grand Canyon that would have flooded it. The organization ran ads in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* in 1966 against the dams, which drew protests to congress from individuals (influenced by the private interests who stood to profit from the proposed dams) that such actions violated the terms of 501c(3) nonprofit organizations. An IRS crackdown on the Club ultimately resulted in the suspension of its 501c(3) status, but it anticipated such an event by spinning off a 501c(3) Sierra Club Foundation for endowments and fundraising for educational and non-lobbying purposes in 1960. The organization transitioned to a 501c(4) nonprofit which allowed for the activity that 501c(3) did not, but in spite of these precautions, contributions to the Sierra Club began to decline, resulting in increased operating deficits.⁷⁹

The Sierra Club survived the setback and its membership grew in spite of the lesser contributions, but internal schisms began to divide and undermine its ability to challenge private encroachment onto

publicly owned wilderness areas. Financial challenges sowed divisions between Brower and the board of directors in 1967-68. These divisions fed into a further split when the board voted to endorse the Pacific Gas and Electric Company's construction of a nuclear fission power plant at Diablo Canyon in southern California near San Luis Obispo. The board's decision was endorsed by a referendum of the general membership in 1967. The Club had successfully fought against the construction of a similar plant by PG&E proposed for Bodega Bay near Point Reyes in western Marin County in the early 1960s, and the power company's fallback proposal was, at least, seen by most of the members as a partial victory. To Brower, however, this moved the Sierra Club away from the vision of John Muir and instead in the direction of Gifford Pinchot.⁸⁰ Brower publically declared his opposition to the compromise, saying, "...compromise is often necessary but it ought not to originate with the Sierra Club. We are to hold first to what we believe is right, fight for it, and find allies...If we cannot find enough vigor in us or them to win, then let someone else propose the compromise."⁸¹ However in doing so he raised further controversy because—though his action may have been principled on environmental grounds was nevertheless a violation of the Sierra Club's democratic structure. Two successive board elections resulted first in a pro-Brower majority followed by an anti-Brower majority, the latter of which, led by Brower's one time friends Adams and Leonard, charged him with financial recklessness and insubordination. Brower resigned from the Sierra Club in mid 1969.⁸²

Due to such machinations, the Sierra Club was limited in its ability to address the increasing threat to the California Redwoods, though members of the organization were active in supporting the efforts of others to do so. For a time, chief among these was the Save the Redwoods League who had preserved as many as 1000 smaller old growth Redwood Groves in thirty of California's state parks. STRL, the Sierra Club and the National Geographic Society lobbied for the formation of Redwood National Park from the existing smaller groves preserved from STRL's earlier efforts in the state park system in northern Humboldt County for years, but were unable to do so due to the post war boom. After almost

⁷⁷ Fox, op. cit, page 279.

⁷⁸ Fox, op. cit, pages 279-89.

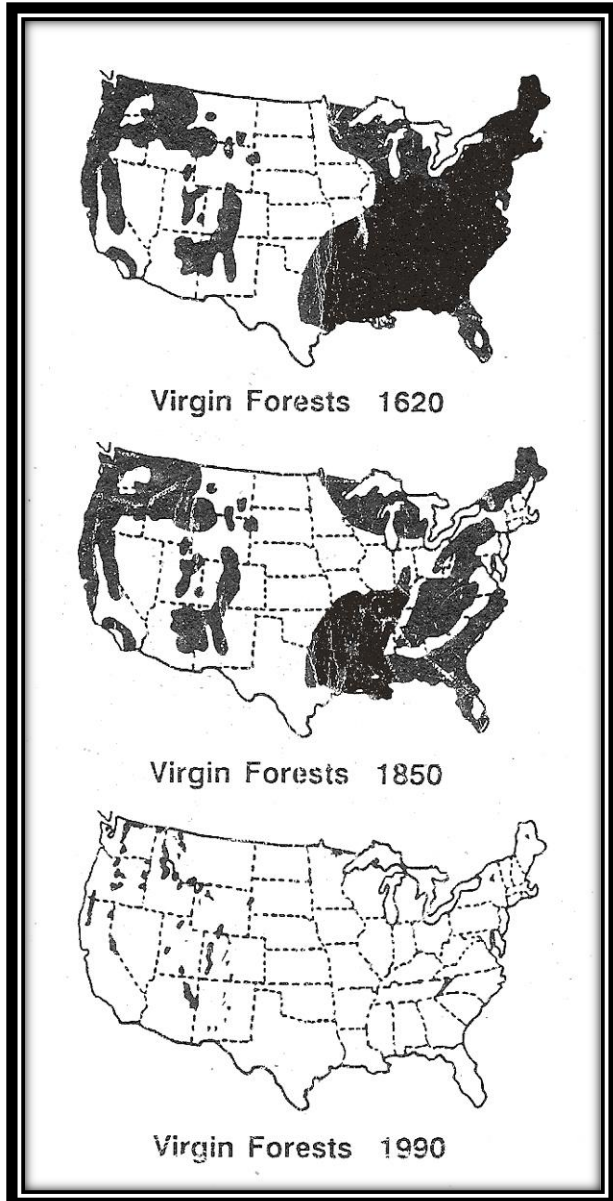
⁷⁹ Cohen, Michael P., *The History of the Sierra Club, 1892-1970*, San Francisco, Sierra Club Books, 1988, pages 357-365.

⁸⁰ Cohen, op. cit., pages 394-434.

⁸¹ "A Lesson for Environmentalists: The Earth First! Split, Part 1", by Russell Norvell, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, November 7, 1990.

⁸² Cohen, op. cit., pages 394-434.

two decades of advocacy by the League and intense lobbying of Congress, President Lyndon Johnson finally signed the bill creating Redwood National Park on October 2, 1968.⁸³ Although this was a significant victory, the fate of the redwoods—indeed the entirety of what remained of the ancient forests of the Pacific Northwest, not to mention the timber workers—hung by a thread.



As the 1960s came to a close, several currents began to coalesce which portended what would be the four decades long conflict over the last remaining ancient

⁸³ Schrepfer, Susan R., *The Fight to Save the Redwoods: A History of Environmental Reform, 1917-1978*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983. pp. 130-185.

redwoods of northwestern California. To begin with, in 1968, the US Forest Service conducted a survey of logging and found that in Humboldt County alone, the rate of cutting exceeded growth by 270 percent. The situation in Mendocino was no less stark.⁸⁴ To make matters worse, with the sale of the Union Lumber Company to Boise-Cascade (B-C) in 1969, all but one of the major timber companies on the North Coast (Pacific Lumber), were owned by outside corporations. The only consolation of that development was that B-C was so egregious in its treatment of the workers that it resulted in the unionization of several of its mills in the area.⁸⁵ Annual harvests of national forest timber had risen from three bbf in 1945 to 13 bbf in 1970. That year a Nixon administration task force, bowing to pressures from industry, had declared that, "A goal of about seven billion board foot annual increase in timber harvest from the national forests by 1978 is believed to be attainable and consistent with other objectives of forest management."⁸⁶ The economic pressures to log the forests elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest would have a residual effect on the North Coast's forests. Under such market conditions, Corporate Timber's bottom line required an average of 40-year rotations on their managed forests. This presented a substantial problem on the North Coast, because redwoods required at bare minimum 50 to 60 years to reach maturity, with 80-year rotations being the most desirable low end.⁸⁷

These stark realities were alarming enough to convince the majority of the California state legislature to pass the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practices Act in 1973, which essentially called for sustained yield forestry, and attempted to reform the regulation of forestlands.⁸⁸ The act established the Forest Practice Rules (FPRs) and a politically-appointed California Board of Forestry (BOF) to oversee their implementation, and placed the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) in charge of enforcing its directives. It further required that before any logging took place, whether on public or private land, a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) retained by the logging concern, must prepare a document which outlined the proposed logging operations, known as a Timber Harvest Plan (THP), and submit this to the state. These documents were certified as the 'func-

⁸⁴ William Boly, "Travels in Humboldt", *California*, February 1982, 69.

⁸⁵ Bartley and Yoneda, op. cit.

⁸⁶ Foster, op. cit., "Part 2 - Ecological Catastrophe and Social Crisis".

⁸⁷ Meyers, op. cit.

⁸⁸ "Timber Outlook", by Bob Martel, *Country Activist*, June 1988.

tional equivalent' of an Environmental Impact Report, and were supposed to evaluate all of the potential direct and cumulative impacts that might occur as a result of the logging plan and to implement any feasible measures which would reduce this impact to a level of insignificance.”⁸⁹ This law was groundbreaking and had the potential to establish public control over the fate of the state's forests, but there was one glaring problem in its implementation. There were no specific provisions in the law preventing the elected governor of California from appointing agents of the timber corporations to populate the board, and upon the law's passage, Ronald Reagan, then-Governor of California and friend to corporate interests, proceeded to do exactly that.⁹⁰

Hitherto, there had been little *direct* conflict between timber workers and environmentalists as the depletion of the forests had not yet reached crisis proportions, and environmentalists invested their energy into legal, legislative, and electoral efforts, but in the 1970s, this began to change. The timber corporations exercised their considerable political clout to manipulate the workers into believing that the environmentalists were their enemies.⁹¹ In 1972, in northwestern California in northern Humboldt County, a drive to expand Redwood National Park, led by Save the Redwoods League (SRL) in 1972, was answered with resistance from loggers, millworkers, and log truck drivers, including some who belonged to various unions. The latter, who had been manipulated by the timber companies into believing that the parks expansion would result in a loss in timber jobs, organized a caravan to Washington DC to oppose the expansion.⁹² That same year, B-C suffered financial difficulties and subsequently their California holdings were purchased by Georgia-Pacific (G-P) in 1973, in a hostile takeover. B-C filed a successful anti-trust suit against G-P, which had to spin off another company (which became Louisiana-Pacific) to comply with the terms.⁹³

⁸⁹ “How a Timber Harvest Plan Works”, featured on the EPIC website at <http://www.wildcalifornia.org/how-a-timber-harvest-plan-works/>. Emphasis added.

⁹⁰ Hrubec, Dr. Robert J., Final Report – Conclusions and Recommendations for Strengthening the Review and Evaluation of Timber Harvest Plans: Prepared for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, LSA Associates, Inc., Point Richmond, California, March 1990.

⁹¹ Foster, op. cit., “Part 2 - Ecological Catastrophe and Social Crisis”.

⁹² Martel, June 1988, op. cit.

⁹³ “Don Nelson: Candidate for Supervisor, 4th District (Mendocino County), interview by Beth Bosk, *New Settler Interview*, issue #31, May 1988.

G-P's logging practices elsewhere had been anything but conservation minded in the eyes of most environmentalists and there was little expectation that their practices on the North Coast would be any different. When it divided the lands it acquired from B-C in the creation of Louisiana-Pacific (L-P), G-P retained the coastal holdings and the new company retained the forestlands that lay inland. One such area acquired by G-P was the remote “Lost Coast” area of northwestern Mendocino and southwestern Humboldt Counties, sometimes referred to as the “Mateel” in reference to the Mattole and Eel River watersheds, which had once been home to the Sinkyone Indian tribe and where a great many first-generation “back-to-the-land” types now made their home. Over the course of the next decade, environmentalists and the rapidly declining timber workers' unions would clash over the ongoing fight to save the Sinkyone Wilderness.⁹⁴

Had the unions retained any of their anti-capitalist militancy they might not have been so easily manipulated by Corporate Timber, but during the 1970s, when environmental and economic interests clashed, which was happening increasingly often, they usually took the side of their employers. For the most part, the class collaborationist business union leadership considered the environment a nonissue. There had been a few exceptions, such as the Green Bans at Kelly's Bush in Australia in 1971, the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers strike at Shell in 1973, or the Lucas Aerospace workers strike in the UK in 1976, and most of these struggles were led by socialist leaning insurgents within the larger union structure, which were quickly quashed.⁹⁵ For the most part, the AFL-CIO's attitude towards such things could best be summarized by a bumper sticker frequently seen on the vehicles of its members that read, “Pollution, Love it or Leave it!”⁹⁶

Corporate Timber pitted North Coast environmentalists and the timber workers' unions against each other once again in 1978. In a further attempt to protect Redwood National Park from the consequences of logging in nearby national forests under increasing pressures from the timber industry, the federal government purchased 10,000 acres of old growth and an additional 38,000 acres of heavily eroded lands from Louisiana-Pacific and Simpson

⁹⁴ “25th Anniversary of EPIC vs. Johnson”, by Richard Gienger, blog entry on www.wildcalifornia.org, July 30, 2010.

⁹⁵ These and other such instances are detailed at ecology.iww.org.

⁹⁶ “Earth Firsters, Meet the IWW”, by x322339, *Industrial Worker*, May 1988.

Timber companies. Save the Redwoods League led the efforts. The companies claimed that jobs—in this case as many as 6,000, the two companies’ entire workforce in the county—would be lost. The unions and environmentalists fought against each other, but in actual fact, the timber corporations were engaging in a smokescreen. One year after the RNP expansion, there was not an appreciable reduction in timber jobs at all. The workforce *did* decline to 5,700 in 1983, and L-P and Simpson blamed this loss directly on the expansion of the park, an explanation many timber workers accepted unquestioningly. A reduction from 6,000 to 5,700 was hardly significant, but the timber companies nevertheless used this as “evidence” to demonstrate that environmentalists posed the principle threat to timber workers’ job security.⁹⁷

The primary motivation for Corporate Timber’s propagandizing was largely due to the fact that it was their *own* practices which represented the biggest threat to job security. In 1977 the U.S. Forest Service predicted a 67 percent decline in timber jobs by 1985 due to the decline of timber resources. Between 1968-78, jobs in Humboldt County in timber fell from over 11,000 in 1968 to 6,175 in 1978 due to primarily to mechanization, log exports, and overcutting.⁹⁸ Likewise, in Mendocino County, timber related jobs declined from a high of 36 percent of the workforce in 1970 to 12 percent by 1988.⁹⁹ Processing one million board feet (1 mmbf) of lumber required 11 timber workers in 1947, but only seven by 1975 and a mere three workers by 1985 due to automation. The Simpson Pulp Mill at Smith River required just 1.6 workers per million board feet in 1977. These numbers don’t reflect the fact that two indirect jobs—such as teachers, food service workers, grocery clerks, office jobs, and the like—were lost for each direct job in the forest products industry in timber dependent communities.¹⁰⁰ Numerous studies, including those carried out by the USFS suggested that by 1990, timber production in northwestern California could decline anywhere from 30 to 50 percent, and remain at this level for at least 10 to 15 more years afterwards.¹⁰¹ These were dire predictions indeed, and they would only get worse.

In addition to overharvesting the forests and subjugating the timber workers, in their ever increasing greed Corporate Timber also quite literally poisoned the water, earth, and air in and around the forests. As the United States military had done in its counterinsurgency campaigns in Vietnam, timber companies used chemical defoliants, including sometimes even Agent Orange, to clear out the underbrush and understory hardwood trees that sometimes grew there. Through these methods, Corporate Timber hoped to facilitate even more rapid clearcutting as well as conversion of diverse forest habitats into monoculture tree plantations. The timber bosses saw no value in the hardwood species they sought to eliminate, though the offending trees could have been a boon to both timber workers and the environment had they been selectively logged—thus providing ample room for the conifers to flourish and be harvested later—and used to make wood flooring or furniture locally.¹⁰² These ideas, however, were inconsistent with the increasingly profit-oriented timber harvesting techniques now in place.

Such practices had already drawn widespread opposition from the burgeoning environmental movements coalescing along California’s North Coast, which included no small number of antiwar activists, disillusioned veterans, back-to-the-landers, and indigenous people, all of whom shuddered at the implications of private industry duplicating the scorched earth policies that had leveled the jungles of Southeast Asia. In the words of one such activist:

“Not only has the North Coast timber industry historically placed tremendous over-cutting pressure on the forests, it is now increasing that pressure with renewed large scale clearcutting forest management. Chemicals severely toxic to forests, fisheries, wildlife and people are being recklessly used to poison nature’s efforts to heal clearcut scars with non-commercial soil-retaining and forest-regenerating plants. By eliminating human care in favor of economic poisons, short-term corporate profits are increased while long-term damage is ensured.”¹⁰³

Resistance on the North Coast to spraying began in Mendocino County in 1973, when Betty Lou Whaley

⁹⁷ Martel, June 1988, op. cit.

⁹⁸ Martel, June 1988, op. cit.

⁹⁹ Bartley and Yoneda, op. cit.

¹⁰⁰ “Jobs, Automation and Exports”, by Eric Swanson, *Mendocino Country Environmentalist*, July 22, 1992.

¹⁰¹ Martel, June 1988, op. cit.

¹⁰² “Ten Earth First! Logging Rules”, speech by Judi Bari, Sacramento, California, January 8, 1992, featured on the album Who Bombed Judi Bari?, edited by Darryl Cherney, 1997.

¹⁰³ “Coastal Waves: An Occasional Column”, by Ron Guenther, *Mendocino Commentary*, April 18, 1985, and *Country Activist*, May 1985.

of Caspar, California raised concerns about blackberries she ate that had been sprayed with the herbicide amino-triazole. Mendocino County officials, the majority of whom were beholden to business interests, told Whaley that the spraying was legal and non-toxic, but these claims were later shown to be lies. This led to a county-wide, mass based revolt against herbicide and pesticide spraying.¹⁰⁴

In Humboldt County, similar citizen opposition led to the formation of the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) in 1976.¹⁰⁵ In 1978 timber companies, including G-P and L-P, began using helicopters to spray toxic herbicides 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T on their holdings.¹⁰⁶ Combined together, the two chemicals make Agent Orange, the infamous defoliant that was used by the US military in Vietnam.¹⁰⁷ The chemicals were known to cause cancer and birth defects, and their use had already been banned on federally owned lands. In 1979, by a 2-1 margin, Mendocino County voters adopt a ban on the aerial application of *all* phenoxy herbicides. The timber companies halted their aerial spraying while they appealed the law.¹⁰⁸

The environmentalist led populist revolt was enough to even get the Mendocino and Humboldt County IWA locals to question the “Pollution, love it or leave it” stance. Local 3-98 representative Tim Skaggs noted that clearcutting—which he opposed—was directly related to the use of herbicides. Both practices were capital intensive—thus harmful to the workers—and environmentally short sighted, but there was little they could do to resist due to the dominance of the gyppos.¹⁰⁹ For example, in 1979, G-P actually sprayed *Agent Orange* in the Usal forest stand in the southern tip of what is now the Sinkyone Wilderness area. The union protested the spray. G-P hook tender Wayne Thorstrom, a vocal opponent of the practice and IWA shop steward, met with company spokesman James Coons and informed the latter that the loggers refused to work in the affected areas. The chemical’s flashpoint was too dangerous, and it persisted for years, saturating the trees or their roots.

¹⁰⁴ Bartley and Yoneda, op cit.

¹⁰⁵ “25th Anniversary of EPIC vs. Johnson”, by Richard Gienger, blog entry on www.wildcalifornia.org, July 30, 2010.

¹⁰⁶ “The Greening of Mendocino”, by Bob Martel, *Country Activist*, May 1985. Children waiting for a school bus on Greenwood Ridge Road in Mendocino County were also sprayed.

¹⁰⁷ “In Our Opinion”, by Barry Vogel, Mills Matheson and David Drell, *Mendocino Commentary*, February 21, 1985.

¹⁰⁸ Martel, May 1985, op. cit.

¹⁰⁹ Skaggs, op. cit.

A freak forest fire could not only result in the exposure of loggers to toxic chemicals, it could claim their lives. G-P ostensibly agreed to halt the aerial application of Agent Orange due to the union’s opposition, but the company was insistent on capital intensive chemical applications, so they proposed as an alternative drilling holes into the offending hardwoods and injecting them with Garlon. The IWA was no more agreeable to this for both reasons of job security and environmental concerns, and Thorstrom relayed this to Coons. The G-P spokesman responded, “Fine; we’ll get someone else to do it.”¹¹⁰

The timber companies, as one might expect, denied that the chemicals 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T had adverse effects, *unless* combined to make Agent Orange. That same year, however, Marla Gillham conducted a study of thirty forestry workers planting an area that had been sprayed with Krenite, 2,4-D, and Silvex almost one year before planting began. She discovered that one worker, after spending only four hours at the site, experienced severe reactions to chemicals. A blood test revealed that the worker had absorbed 5.5 parts per billion (ppb) of Silvex and over 4 ppb of Krenite. Seventeen other workers also experienced nausea, headaches, bloody noses, and nervous system dysfunctions after only a few days at the site.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, Swedish epidemiologists established that workers exposed to 2,4,5-T were 6-8 times more likely to develop sarcomas. It was assumed that this was because of the dioxin TCDD, which is a potent carcinogen and a contaminant of 2,4,5-T. However, further studies showed that workers exposed only to 2,4-D (and other phenoxy herbicides which do not contain the dioxin TCDD) had a 4.2 times normal risk of developing a sarcoma. 2,4-D turned out to be about as dangerous as 2,4,5-T. In 1980 the Hazard Alert System of the State of California Department of Health Services published an evaluation of the human health hazards of 2,4-D. They were apparently not aware of the Swedish study on that chemical, but even without this information they urged strong precautions in *its* usage. Over the course of the next several years, incidents at Times Beach, Massachusetts; Love Canal, New York; Newark, New Jersey; and the settlement of court cases brought by men exposed to 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T in Viet Nam bolstered the cases against both chemicals. In 1983, the EPA banned

¹¹⁰ “Sprayed Loggers”, Tom Fales, Arlene Rial, Frank Fales, Wayne Thorstrom, Rick Rial, and Rod Cudney, Interviewed by Beth Bosk, *New Settler Interview*, Issue #3, April 1985.

¹¹¹ “Worker Health and Safety, Woods Workers Warning”, by Daniel Faulk, *Hard Times*, February 1983.

2,4,5-T outright, and many argued that 2,4-D should be as well.¹¹²

There were plenty of supporting accounts by timber workers exposed to herbicides. In 1980, Rich Overholt who was a USFS employee working in the Six Rivers National Forest of Del Norte, Humboldt, and Trinity Counties, and whose duties included manually applying herbicides, accidentally squirted a few drops of 2,4-D to his face, while working on difficult terrain. When he had taken the job, he had been told that “2,4-D was not dangerous.” His supervisor, he recalled, informed him that “he would have to drink a whole quart or gallon of the stuff” before experiencing any adverse effects. Overholt took his supervisor at his word and, like many of his fellow workers, took few—if any—precautions. He would routinely, inadvertently expose his entire body to the chemicals, and though the effects were not detectable then, after accidentally spraying himself in the face *directly*, he suffered an immediate toxic reaction. The combined consequences of his exposure turned out to be a permanently damaged nervous system.¹¹³

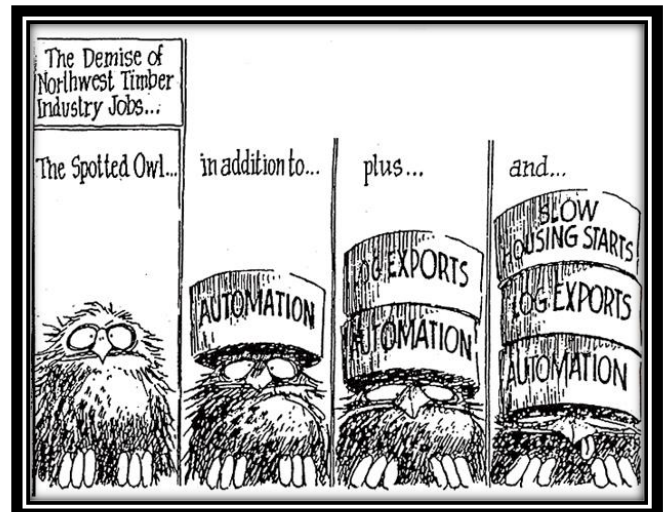
In 1981, 32-old Jack Duncan, who was employed by the BLM as a tree planter and had worked in that capacity for seven years, and his crew were working near Conley Creek in Oregon when a helicopter began spraying herbicides in an adjacent stand. According to Duncan, in a sworn affidavit taken November 11, 1981:

“(spray from the helicopter) drifted over us and upon us...All ten of us were exposed to the herbicide—upon our clothes, skin...and we all inhaled the mist...All of my crew and myself experienced acute symptoms of burning eyes and throat, headache, dizziness, nausea and diarrhea. All have suffered from peripheral neuropathy (loss of feeling in fingers and toes) since the exposure.”¹¹⁴

Two wives of the exposed workers became pregnant after their husbands’ exposure, and both of them miscarried. Tree planters hired in northwestern California and Oregon continued to be subjected to nearby helicopter spraying by the timber corporations. The workers were never given a chemical history nor were they warned if chemical residues still persisted at the site. The lack of information kept labor cheap and

plentiful, and those working in the forests disorganized—at great cost to their health and safety.¹¹⁵ Matters were about to worsen significantly.

The election of Ronald Reagan as President in 1980 signaled the end of New Deal social democratic policies and a return to pre-Depression era laissez-faire capitalism resulting in greatly accelerated harvesting of the forests of the Pacific Northwest. It also heralded the end of the so-called “labor-management partnership” championed by the AFL-CIO as the employing class began to drive wages downward and cut benefits in order to maximize their profits. The AFL-CIO, including the timber workers unions, were powerless to stop this renewed assault on their standard of living. By 1980, the IWA represented 115,000 members, 32,000 of whom lived and worked in the Pacific Northwest in logging, sawmills, plywood mills, and the like.¹¹⁶ But most of the logging was now done by gyppos, which undermined the unions’ ability to mount a counterattack to employers. Even many of the Gyppos recognized this as a glaring problem.¹¹⁷



Meanwhile, the environmental movement expanded dramatically due to the growing concerns over the

¹¹² Faulk, February 1983, op. cit.

¹¹⁶ “IWA Statement before the Senate Committee on Industrial Relations: a Public Hearing on the Plant Closure Situation and the Proposed Senate Bill 1494”, Redding California, October 21, 1980.

¹¹⁷ “Kenneth O. Smith and Walter Smith: Gyppo Partners, Pacific Coast Timber Harvesting”, Interviewed by Beth Bosk, New Settler Interview, Issue #21, June 1987

¹¹² Vogel, et. al., op. cit.

¹¹³ Faulk, February 1983, op. cit.

¹¹⁴ Faulk, February 1983, op. cit.

rapidly disappearing forests, and was reinforced by scientific discoveries concerning old growth. A groundbreaking report, Ecological Characteristics of the Old-Growth Douglas-Fir Forests, authored in 1981 by US Forest Service ecologist Jerry Franklin showed that old growth forests represented, “by far the richest and most ecologically complex stage in the forest’s existence, supporting an as-yet uncataloged diversity of life forms, many of which (were) now endangered as a result of forest fragmentation and destruction of critical habitat.”¹¹⁸ In particular, ancient redwood forests created their own microclimate, combing the Pacific Coast fog with their needles, literally drinking the moisture out of the condensation. Excess moisture dripped to the ground providing an essential source of water for dense understory plant species, such as long living ferns and horsetails (many of which, like the ancient redwoods, had existed for hundreds of millions of years unchanged by evolution of other species during that time), redwood sorrel, bleeding hearty blue iris, yellow violet, and wild ginger, as well as many rare animal species.¹¹⁹ Old growth redwood forests also provided essential habitat for many species of fish by providing a stable environment for costal freshwater streams.¹²⁰ Even forest fires and the decay of ancient trees—those that the timber corporations described as “diseased, dying, or dead” needing to be removed to allow their replacement by younger trees—contributed to the living biomass through the decay of woody debris.¹²¹

The timber industry saw little difference between an old growth forest, second and later growth forests, and tree farms, however, except in the quality of timber available, and to those whose primary—and often only—concern was the bottom line, ancient forests represented the best available source of profitable timber. Most of the forests of the Pacific Northwest were not healthy old growth, however, but instead were either managed plantations, which had a very low survivability rate, or they were second or third growth, which offered substantially lesser quality timber. In Mendocino County, much of the logging being done by the 1980s was akin to scavenging. Loggers were routinely reclogging forest stands that had

previously been logged once or even twice before.¹²² Biologists compared the Northwest forests to a piece of cloth perforated repeatedly, to the point that there were more holes than cloth. According to data compiled by satellite photos comparing the Pacific Northwest to the threatened Amazon rainforests, released in 1992 by NASA scientist Dr. Compton J. Tucker, conditions in the northwest were as bad, if not worse than those in the tropics.¹²³ According estimates made by Peter Morrison of the Wilderness Society in 1989, about 800,000 acres of the remaining intact old-growth forest were protected in parks and wilderness areas. The other 1.6 million acres—more than half of which were highly fragmented—were open to exploitation. In the 1980s, these stands of old-growth forest were disappearing at a rate of as much as 70,000 acres a year. At that rate, the unprotected old-growth forests of Oregon and Washington would be gone before 2020, and California wouldn’t be far behind.¹²⁴

The depletion of these forests had implications beyond the mere loss of biodiversity, runoff, and the viability of riparian environments. The earth’s very climate is biologically regulated. Forests moderated far more than local microclimate and the hydrological cycles of local watersheds. Forests also affect the overall surface temperature of the earth and the thickness of the ozone layer through nitrous oxide production. Through their carbon cycle, healthy forests convert vast amounts of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) into breathable oxygen (O₂). Healthy old growth forests are—quite literally—the lungs of our planet. Managed even-age tree plantations are no substitute for ancient forests in this respect. If anything, the latter cannot survive under conditions created by the loss of the former. Atmospheric CO₂ has increased by at least 22 percent since 1840, and though these days the primary source of it is carbon emissions from combustion engines and electric power generation, until 1960, the majority of it had been emitted due to deforestation and soil degradation. Organic, carbon-bearing compounds decay in clearcut forests, over ploughed farmlands, and freshly cleared fields, releasing CO₂ into the atmosphere removing

¹¹⁸ Foster, op. cit., “Part 2 – Ecological Catastrophe and Social Crisis”.

¹¹⁹ Meyers, op. cit.

¹²⁰ “Enough Already”, by Nat Bingham, *North Coast News*, September 6, 1990.

¹²¹ “Ecological Arguments for Ancient Forest Protection”, Presentation of Eric Beckwitt, Chairman, Forest Issues Task Force, Sierra Nevada Group, Sierra Club at the organizational meeting of the California Ancient Forest Alliance, February 19, 1989, Davis, CA.

¹²² Bosk, June 1987, op. cit.

¹²³ Foster, op. cit., “Part 2 – Ecological Catastrophe and Social Crisis”.

¹²⁴ Peter Morrison, in Joint Hearings, Subcommittee on Forests, Family Farms, and Energy of the Committee on Agriculture, and the Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Congress, 101st Congress, First Session, Management of Old-Growth Forests of the Pacific Northwest, 20 and 22 June 1989, pp. 270-78

precious O₂ from the air we breathe.¹²⁵ Throughout Europe, which has a longer history of industrial forestry, than the United States, managed tree plantations have proven unable to survive beyond three rotations without old growth forests nearby to provide biological diversity and other protecting factors, and even those near ancient forests do not fare well.¹²⁶ 52 percent of the forests of eastern Germany were dead or dying by the 1980s. As of late 1985, 17.5 million acres of forests in 15 European nations had been affected by “Waldsterben” (forest death).¹²⁷

There was every indication that the North Coast timber corporations, primarily G-P, L-P, and Simpson, would deny that they were enabling the forests’ destruction as much as they tried to deny that aerially deployed herbicides were harmful to the workers. As proof they could cite the fact that most THPs reviewed by the CDF under the decade-old Z’berg Nejedly act had been approved. Environmentalists countered that the approval process was little more than a rubber stamp under the lax guidelines established by the pro-Corporate Timber dominated BOF. Then, in 1983, after a battle between the environmentalists and G-P over the Sinkyone that had lasted almost as long as the existence of Z’berg Nejedly, the environmentalists won a landmark legal ruling that at long last reversed years of precedent that had established the right of private logging interests to dictate forest policy and place profit considerations ahead of environmental concerns.

The fight had been led chiefly by Robert Sutherland (known to his associates as “The Man Who Walks in the Woods”, or simply “Woods” for short) and Cecilia Gregori (nee Lanman) of EPIC. Woods had been an environmental activist since 1964 and had worked on many issues, but forestry consumed his efforts more than just about anything else. On this particular subject, he once opined:

“The rush to get the old growth has been the last great buffalo hunt, the last passenger pigeon slaughter. We’ve reached the end of the Western frontier, but the traditions of the frontier die hard. It is time to rein in the passions. Mark my words, our culture us on the

threshold of what is for the most of us a long-lost frontier, the inner one.”¹²⁸

Gregori had previously been a boycott organizer for the United Farmworkers Union before becoming involved in EPIC with whom she fought many legal battles with Corporate Timber. Her quiet yet stern resolve earned her the nickname “The Velvet Hammer,” and she lived up to the moniker. On one occasion in the early part of the 1980s, Georgia Pacific had declared that a specific THP near Dark Gulch within the Sinkyone had been selectively logged, but on an inspection tour hosted by one of their RFPs, Jere Melo, Gregori noticed that not only had the company lied, they had also violated the boundaries of the THP, clearcutting all the way to the coastline. Gregori pointed this out only to be answered by Melo’s derisive and callous laughter, to which, in response, she declared right to his face, “You’re pure slime.”¹²⁹ However EPIC would have the last laugh. In 1983, in a landmark ruling that challenged the CDF’s approval of a G-P THP that threatened to clearcut the Sally Bell Grove, a judge ruled that:

“Cumulative impacts must be considered by the California Department of Forestry (CDF) in their review of timber harvesting plans (THPs). Full compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) procedures is required in agency review of THPs. Also, the Native American Heritage Commission must be consulted if there is evidence of Native American historical sites within the THP.”¹³⁰

The ruling known as, EPIC vs. Johnson, was unprecedented, and it finally gave public an effective legal tool to challenge capitalist timber directly for the first time in history. The timing couldn’t have been more fortuitous, because Corporate Timber was preparing to engage in its most deadly assault on the forests and the workers of the Pacific Northwest ever seen.

¹²⁸ “The Man Who Walks in the Woods”, by Andy Alm, *EcoNews*, May 1988.

¹²⁹ Harris, David, The Last Stand: The War between Wall Street and Main Street over California’s Ancient Redwoods, New York, NY, Random House, 1995, pages 250-51.

¹³⁰ EPIC vs. Johnson I, www.wildcalifornia.org/case-history/case-documentation/1980s/epic-v-johnson-i/

¹²⁵ Sierra Club, op. cit.

¹²⁶ “Logging to Infinity”, By Chris Maser, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, April 12, 1989.

¹²⁷ Sierra Club, op. cit.