

Chapter 26 : 'They Weren't Gonna Have No Wobbly Runnin' Their Logging Show.



*Now Judi Bari is a union organizer,
A 'Mother Jones' at the Georgia-Pacific Mill,
She fought for the sawmill workers,
Hit by that PCB spill;
T. Marshall Hahn's calling GP shots from Atlanta,
Don Nelson sold him the union long ago,
They weren't gonna have no Wobbly,
Running their logging show;
So they spewed out their hatred,
And they laid out their scam,
Jerry Philbrick called for violence,
It was no secret what they planned...*

—lyrics excerpted from *Who Bombed Judi Bari?*, by Darryl Cherney, 1990

Meanwhile, in Fort Bragg, the rank-and-file dissent against the IWA Local #3-469 officialdom grew. Still incensed by Don Nelson's actions over the PCB Spill, and not at all satisfied with a second consecutive concessionary contract, the workers now had yet another reason to protest: a proposed dues increase. Claiming that the local faced a financial crisis, the embattled union leader proposed raising the members' dues from \$22.50 per month to \$29, an increase that amounted to more than a 25 percent rise. Ironically, IWA's Constitution limited the monthly dues rate to 2½ times the wages of the lowest paid worker. The local's financial shortage had resulted from a decrease in the wages and the loss members due to G-P's outsourcing logging jobs to gyppos and automation of jobs in the quad mill.¹ The usual suspects readied themselves to blame "unwashed-out-of-town-jobless-hippies-on-drugs" once again.

Nelson presented his proposal in the form of a leaflet posted on the employee bulletin boards and distributed in the employee break rooms throughout the G-P Mill in Fort Bragg. The leaflet stated, "we are voting to maintain the ability of our union to function." A group of rank and filers, however, led by a mill maintenance janitor, named Julie Wiles and her coworker Cheryl Jones, as well as some of the eleven workers affected by the PCB spill and others who had been most dissatisfied with the recent round of contract negotiations, responded by producing a leaflet of their own opposing the dues increase. Their leaflet stated, "Last year Union officers' wages plus expenses were \$43,622. This year they were \$68,315. That's a whopping 69 percent increase! Considering our lousy 3 percent pay raise, how can the Union ask us for more money?" The rank-and-file dissidents' leaflets were quickly removed from the employee bulletin boards.² This wasn't to be the worst of it, though.

On the afternoon of November three, 1989, Julie Wiles was distributing the anti-dues increase leaflets at the G-P Mill's southernmost gate, while Cheryl Jones did likewise at another entrance. They were attempting to pass out the literature to their fellow workers as they exited the facility at the end of their shift. Wiles elected to place some of the leaflets on the windshields of her fellow workers' parked vehicles while she waited for the morning shift to end. Such activity was routine for the conducting of union busi-

ness and had been done many times in the past, without incident. This day, the results would be different, however. While in the process of distributing the fliers, Wiles observed a plant security guard removing those she had already placed. Wiles decided to confront the guard, and questioned his activities. The guard responded that he was only doing his job, and that the Fort Bragg police had been summoned, in case she had any additional questions.³

SUPPORT NEEDED!

G-P employee and IWA union member Julie Wiles was recently arrested by the Ft. Bragg police for placing leaflets on cars in the G-P parking lot. She was conducting union business, distributing a leaflet asking employees to vote against a dues increase. IWA union reps who were distributing a leaflet in favor of the dues increase were not interfered with by G-P or the police. Although she offered no resistance, Julie Wiles was led away in handcuffs and placed in a holding cell at the Ft. Bragg police department.

Come To The Trial Monday, Nov. 20, 11:00 AM

10-Mile Justice Court, Judge Heab
360 N. Harrison, Ft. Bragg CA

Julie Wiles was by no means a stereotypical rabble rouser. She was introverted and reclusive. She had chosen her particular job, having declined opportunities to bid for what most workers considered to be more desirable positions, because it afforded her a substantial degree of autonomy and personal privacy. However, though she was something of a loner, Wiles was also a staunch union member, and she knew what her rights were, or so she thought. When the police arrived, Wiles informed them that she was conducting union business, following established past practices, and provisions set forth by the National Labor Rela-

¹ "IWA Rank-and-File Union Millworkers Reply", by Ron Atkinson, et. al., *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, December 13, 1989, *Mendocino Commentary*, December 14, 1989, and *Industrial Worker*, January 1990.

² "Damage Control", by Mike Koepf, *Mendocino Commentary*, November 16, 1989.

³ Koepf, November 16, 1989, op. cit.

tions Act, which prevented company interference in internal union affairs.⁴ She also stated that she didn't want to cause any trouble and offered to leave.⁵

According to Wiles, the police were initially "pleasant; even courteous," and initially left her to her own devices. Soon after that, however G-P security chief Lee Gobel drove up, exited his vehicle, and demanded that the police arrest Wiles, "for trespassing and littering", on the orders of plant manager Don Wittman. Wiles responded by demanding that Wittman come to the parking lot and state this himself in person, Gobel refused to convey the message. The police informed him that they had no grounds for arrest, agreeing with Wiles' interpretation of labor law. Unsatisfied, Gobel then demanded that the police make a *citizen's arrest*, which they did, claiming that they were obligated by law to do so. Wiles then was handcuffed, placed in the back of a police car, transported to the Fort Bragg police station, and locked in a holding cell.⁶

The response was hardly warranted, and city officials attempted to save face by denying that it had taken place. Fort Bragg City Manager, Gary Milliman, claimed that Wiles had not been arrested or placed in a holding cell, but instead had been cited for committing an infraction in violation of a city ordinance against littering. Police Chief Thomas E Bickell concurred with Milliman's framing of the events, but also stated that under California law, a peace officer was required to make an arrest, when confronted with a "citizen's arrest", or face the possibility of violating the law themselves. Bickell admitted, however, that he had never before heard of any instance of anyone actually being arrested—citizen's arrest or otherwise—for placing literature on the windshield of a parked car.⁷

The union treated the arrest as a nonissue and didn't even file a grievance against the company, however. Instead Nelson issued a *second* bulletin, officially signed by himself, distributed similarly to his first one, beginning, "Someone has been illegally and anonymously putting handbills on car windows in the parking lots and around the Mill opposing the dues increase."⁸ Mike Koepf again documented the IWA local's internal disputes in the local press, in this instance, in the *Mendocino Commentary*, which again drew

an angry and defensive response from Don Nelson. Nelson claimed that he welcomed and encouraged rank and file dissent, that he had been unaware of Wiles' arrest when he had written the statement, and was convinced that the leaflets had been produced by an outside source, namely, Earth First!. He also claimed that the so-called 69 percent increase in the local officer's wages was compensation for lost work time spent negotiating the recent contract.⁹ Wiles and her fellow workers were disturbed by Nelson's conduct, nonetheless. Why had he not investigated matters before issuing the statement? The whole matter reeked of the company and the collaborationist leadership of the Union local colluding to quell a rank-and-file revolt.¹⁰

In any case, their efforts backfired, because on November 6, 7, 8 and 9 the membership voted 179 to 84, a whopping two-to-one margin, to oppose the dues increase. Although more than half of the 560 members abstained, it was clear that the proposed increase was highly unpopular.¹¹ Wiles attributed these results to the membership's anger at the union and the company for "pushing (us) peasants too far."¹²

Don Nelson and IWA Local 3-469 Trustee Parke Singleton attempted to conduct damage control, even writing letters to and participating in interviews in the local press, calling the campaign to oppose the dues increase, "misinformation", in part because the leaders of it chose to remain anonymous. They claimed that the new contract they had secured, without the aid of a strike, was a victory—though they conceded this was primarily because the rest of the IWA Western Region, which represented timber workers throughout the Pacific Northwest—had given up even greater concessions.¹³ G-P millworkers in Oregon had not had a wage increase since 1986 and they had lost control of their pension plan in 1987, and workers at G-P's mill in Woodland, Maine had

⁹ "Response from Don Nelson", letter to the editor by Don Nelson, *Mendocino Commentary*, December 14, 1989.

¹⁰ Atkinson, et. al., op. cit.

¹¹ "Interview with Don Nelson, Business Agent for IWA Local #3-469", by Roanne Withers, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, December 6, 1989. That Withers conducted this interview at all is incredible, given her anger at Nelson for his actions over Harvest Market. Withers' questions, while fair, were anything if not challenging, and she, too, would offer her support for the dissidents and victims of the PCB spill.

¹² Koepf, November 16, 1989, op. cit.

¹³ "IWA Sets the Record Straight, letter to the editor, by Parke Singleton, various publications, including *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, November 29, 1989, *Mendocino Beacon*, November 30, 1989, *Mendocino Commentary*, November 30, 1989, and *Country Activist*, December, 1989.

⁴ Koepf, November 16, 1989, op. cit.

⁵ Atkinson, et. al., op. cit.

⁶ Koepf, November 16, 1989, op. cit.

⁷ Koepf, November 16, 1989, op. cit.

⁸ Koepf, November 16, 1989, op. cit.

been working without a contract since 1988.¹⁴ Nelson, once again, insisted that the union had taken all of the action it legally could on the PCB spill.

Nelson further argued that Wiles' actions were not protected by the NLRA, because she was not engaged in organizing activity, and because of this, her rights were limited to posting her leaflets on the employee bulletin board, unless she were running for union office (which she wasn't). Distributing leaflets in the GP parking lot was supposedly only allowed by company consent, which hadn't been given. Nelson claimed that he had received this information after speaking with an unnamed source at the Department of Labor (DOL).¹⁵ However, NLRB lawyers, who are distinct from the DOL, are the official authority on matters of labor law, and they informed Wiles that her actions were indeed protected.¹⁶ Nelson reiterated that he believed that the workers were being "stirred up by outside agitators who (didn't) know what they (were) talking about," and that he was "seen by G-P as one of the most active and radical union representatives they have ever had to deal with (but that he didn't) publish his criticisms and dealings with G-P in the press."¹⁷ Apparently the latter was reserved for environmentalists and dissident workers, who questioned his alleged "radicalism". Since Nelson had allied himself with G-P in opposing *Forests Forever*, to serve as a voice of "the workers" against "environmental extremists", it was essential that he quell any hint of actual worker dissent.

* * * * *

There *had* been a grain of truth in Nelson's accusations. The leaflets *had* been produced with the help of an Earth Firster, namely Judi Bari. However, Bari hadn't agitated the workers to revolt; instead, the workers, who had been working with Mike Koepf and Anna Marie Stenberg, had called upon Judi Bari's assistance at the suggestion of Stenberg, who had not met Bari previously, but had seen her debating Don Nelson over L-P's Mexico plans on community access cable TV. Stenberg contacted Bari and learned that not only was the latter an Earth Firster, but that she was an IWW organizer and veteran union activist as well. Stenberg was impressed with Bari's

knowledge and grasp of the issue, and was also pleased to discover that the latter had followed Koepf's reporting on the PCB spill. The workers welcomed Bari's involvement, and were not at all opposed to working with a known Earth Firster, tree sitters or no, though they did have some concerns about tree spiking, which Bari was able to mitigate somewhat by her sensitivity to their plight.¹⁸

As a result, Bari was now assisting the mill workers on the issue of the PCB spill, as the company was appealing the ruling, and the IWA leadership was refusing to fight the company. The workers affected by the spill wanted to continue their fight, but OSHA had denied their request, arguing that they had to be represented by their union in order to do so. Bari, who was experienced at dealing with OSHA, informed the workers, Stenberg, and Koepf, that the law actually allowed the workers to be represented by *any* labor union, not just their official bargaining unit. Since it was highly unlikely any other AFL-CIO union local or international would have dared contradict IWA Local 3-469 for fear of being accused of a jurisdictional battle (which is technically prohibited under the AFL-CIO's international bylaws), Bari suggested that they instead be represented by IWW Local #1.¹⁹

However, since no such local actually existed, despite the presence of IWW members in Mendocino County, Bari, Cherney, Stenberg, Koepf, (the latter two having joined at Bari's urging) and several others quickly established one. Following the guidelines set forth by the IWW Constitution, which at the time required the signatures of a minimum of twenty dues paying IWW members in good standing in order to receive an IWW General Membership Branch Charter, Bari, Cherney, and Stenberg quickly gathered the needed signatures from among the IWW members in Humboldt and Mendocino County, and submitted their application to the IWW's General Executive Board. Demonstrating that this IWW branch to be wasn't merely a paper tiger created for political expediency, one of the charter members was Treva VandenBosch. Another was Pete Kayes. The IWW quickly granted the new branch its charter.²⁰

¹⁸ Interview with Anna Marie Stenberg, held October 18, 2009.

¹⁹ "Earth First! in Northern California: An Interview with Judi Bari" by Douglas Bevington, reprinted in The Struggle for Ecological Democracy: Environmental Justice Movements in the United States, edited by Daniel Faber, New York, NY and London, Guilford Press, 1998, 255-56.

²⁰ "Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of IWW Local #1", recorded by Judi Bari, November 19, 1989. Judi Bari also designed the leaflets for the meeting, which were drawn in her steady and graceful longhand, including the text. The meeting took place at Anna Marie Stenberg's

¹⁴ "Georgia-Pacific Seizes Great Northern", by Jamie Sayen, *Earth First Journal*, Eostar / March 20, 1990.

¹⁵ Withers, op. cit.

¹⁶ Atkinson, et. al., op. cit.

¹⁷ Withers, op. cit.

IWW Branch Meeting Sunday Nov. 19

at ■■■ Wall Street, Ft. Bragg

4:00PM - Meeting

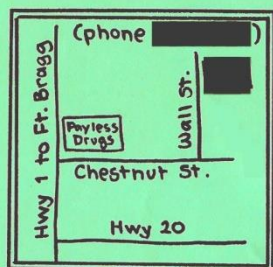
5:30PM - Singing (Bring songs and instruments)

6:30PM - Potluck Dinner

7:30PM - Movie "The Wobblies"
(Showing at the Community Center, Mendocino)

AGENDA

This is the first meeting of the newly formed Mendocino/Humboldt Branch of the IWW. We will elect officers, report on projects, and plan for the future.



PLEASE BRING your Wobbly membership book and Nov. dues money

The business meeting from 4-5:30PM is for members only. The singing, potluck and movie is for everyone. Bring a friend.

struggle was precisely the core element in Bari's overall strategy to counter Corporate Timber. With that in mind, the new IWW branch made it a priority to take up both the defense of Julie Wiles and the fight against G-P's OSHA fines being dismissed.²¹

G-P millworkers affected by the PCB spill, including Ron Atkinson, Joe Valdao, and Treva Vandenbosch, as well as Cheryl Jones and Julie Wiles wrote a press statement responding to Nelson's and Singleton's accusations²², with Judi Bari's assistance, who helped the workers craft their various points into a single unified document.²³ The workers challenged Nelson and Singleton on the PCB spill, stating at one point:

"Throughout this traumatic incident, Don Nelson never once talked sympathetically to the workers who were poisoned. In fact, he accused them of 'making a mountain out of a molehill.' He publicly defended the company, saying they had been 'completely above-board' and he testified in the company's behalf at the OSHA hearing. He said on KMFB radio that PCBs are not proven harmful, and published a statement diminishing the incident, saying that 'there were no known serious injuries because of this spill.' Yet, six months later (Murray) still had a bodily PCB level of 386 parts per million, when the EPA standard is 0.26 parts per billion."²⁴

The workers reinforced the notion that the strike vote was due to dissatisfaction with the 1985 contract, on purely immediate economic concerns, certainly, but also on broader working class and ecological issues. Specifically, the workers denounced the violation of union principles brought about by the profit bonuses, not just because they didn't bring about the promised results, *but because of their effect on the workers' solidarity and the environment.* They also expressed their complete disgust that the current contract eliminated all in house loggers, replacing them completely with gyppos once and for all, and tied this with L-P's moving their mills to Mexico.²⁵

²¹ Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of IWW Local #1, recorded by Judi Bari, November 19, 1989.

²² Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of IWW Local #1, recorded by Judi Bari, November 19, 1989.

²³ Letter to Jess Grant, by Judi Bari, unpublished, San Francisco Bay Area IWW General Membership Branch archives, date unknown, but likely December 1989 based on the context.

²⁴ Atkinson, et. al., op. cit.

²⁵ Atkinson, et. al., op. cit. The dissident workers had distributed a poster at one point which had started with the bold headline, "ATTEN-

The branch was officially the Humboldt County and Mendocino County General Membership Branch—though it was usually referred to as "Earth First! – IWW Local #1", following the course which had only one year previously seemed to be a distant utopian dream. The timing of the branch's formation was fortuitous, because it came as the second issue of *Timberlyn'* was being distributed among the workers at P-L, and some workers at L-P—while not willing to openly declare themselves—were secretly feeding information to Bari, et. al. The G-P workers' concerns fed into this momentum nicely. Uniting these independent workers' struggles into a single, organized

house in Fort Bragg. In 1995, the minimum threshold for establishing an IWW branch has since been reduced to ten members in good standing. Additional charter members of note included Betty and Gary Ball, Alan Graham—better known as "Captain Fathom" who had carried the IWW torch in the county for over three decades at the time of Local #1's establishment, Herb Jager, a somewhat famous beatnik with a long history in the San Francisco counterculture scene who lived in Sonoma County at the time, and Kay Rudin, a local activist, graphic artist, and videographer. Roanne Withers did not sign the charter, but also became a member of the local.

The workers defended their vote against the dues increase, stating that it was, indeed, a vote of no confidence in Don Nelson's leadership (or lack thereof), and suggested that much of what he did was unnecessary anyway:

"The duties of our paid union rep are clearly spelled out in our constitution. They involve keeping the finances straight and enforcing the contract. They do not include running for County Supervisor or sitting on County committees. Nelson has published a list of eleven functions he claims he fulfills. Of these, only two (Contract and Grievances) are necessary. The rest, including Unemployment Appeals, Cal OSHA, Political Contacts and Political action are either duplications of services that are offered free by the agency involved, or they are part of Nelson's Democratic Party-political agenda."²⁶

The workers clearly did not wish to be subsidizing Nelson's political ambitions on the local union's \$145,000 annual dues revenue. Further, they noted that Nelson was, in essence, double dipping anyway:

"(Nelson's) staff, by the way, consists of two full-time employees—Don Nelson and his wife Rosmarie. So we rejected the dues increase and now in spite of our mandate, he's refusing to cut his hours. Instead the union has decided to withhold the portion of our dues money that we're supposed to pay to the National Union. This is a dangerous move, since it can lead to the National Union placing our Local in trusteeship. A trusteeship would not only mean that the National Union would control our money, but they would suspend all our democratic rights, including the right to elect officers and vote on union business, for 18 months. In order to keep his full-time position, Don Nelson is willing to sacrifice this. Of course, he has good reason to fear union democracy. He is unlikely to win again."²⁷

The workers also declared, that contrary to the pessimistic opinions of Crawdad Nelson (whom the workers named) and Rob Anderson (whom they did

not), they were also deeply committed to ecological issues as well as economic ones:

"We are not stupid, and we can see as well as anyone else what the timber companies are doing to the trees. It's our environment as much as yours and we go to the forest to camp, fish, hunt, and find solitude. Some of our families have lived here for five generations, and we know that our children will not be able to enjoy the forests as we have if they continue to be cut the way they are now.

"In fact, our concern for the health of the forest is not less, but greater than that of the general community, because the loss of the forest will also mean the loss of our livelihoods. This is one of the reasons it is so important for us to regain control of our union. We don't have many years left if things keep going the way they are now. Our only hope for continued employment is sustained yield logging. And we will need strong union if we hope to slow the company down enough so that we can have both jobs and forests in the future."²⁸

The dissident workers concluded with a strong rebuttal to Nelson's claim that they were under the influence of "outside agitators", explaining that their reason to seek support from the likes of Stenberg, Koepf, and Bari; Earth First! and the IWW, was out of necessity, due to lack of support from the IWA local's leadership. They finished by explaining that if some of them didn't sign their names, it was out of fear that they would become nonpersons, as had Vandenbosch, and that the union wouldn't defend them. As if to vindicate the dissidents, on December 12, 1989, Judge Robert Heeb of the Ten Mile Justice Court in Ukiah dismissed the case against Julie Wiles.²⁹

Don Nelson attempted to save face by claiming that he had not been informed of the PCB spill, stating that the information had been lost somewhere in the complex chain of command the local had devised under his leadership. He also declared that he had, "Immediately called G-P management and reminded them that they must treat any spill as a hazardous spill until they conclusively knew it was not; that they must contain it and isolate the area of the spill. After some argument they did," and went on to

TION MILL WORKERS: YOU HAVE BEEN ECONOMICALLY KIDNAPPED!"

²⁶ Atkinson, et. al., op. cit.

²⁷ Atkinson, et. al., op. cit.

²⁸ Atkinson, et. al., op. cit.

²⁹ Atkinson, et. al., op. cit.

argue that he had “never defended G-P.”³⁰ However, Nelson did not even once challenge G-P’s appeal of the PCB spill.³¹ Nelson also defended his lack of action on the contracting out of the logging crews, arguing that unions couldn’t legally challenge companies from outsourcing.³²

Nelson also admitted that the wage enhancement did indeed, tie workers interests to those of the company, but in the same instance he defended it, not by citing any realized concrete gains, but by offering another optimistic prediction that it would finally start to pay off over the life of the current, four-year contract, “As long as environmentalists didn’t curtail the supply of wood to the mills.”³³ Nelson’s insistence that IWA international president Bill Hubble had originally supported the “wage enhancement” proposal in 1985 didn’t hold any water, because the latter had seen the light and now was opposed to similar proposals.³⁴

Nelson’s commitment to union democracy was no better, and in January he reintroduced the dues increase proposal. The workers opposed to the dues increase responded by producing yet another leaflet with the headline, “how many times do we have to say no?” Nelson responded with his own leaflet which included a statement at the end that actually read, “A vote against the dues increase is a vote for the IWW,” as if this would somehow scare the workers into voting against their own interests.³⁵ IWW Local #1 responded with its own leaflet titled, “What is the IWW: and What are We Doing in Fort Bragg?” The leaflet assured the workers that the Wobblies didn’t wish to raid the IWA shop or undermine the workers contract—weak as it was—with G-P, because a bad contract was better than none at all. It also suggested that the workers vote their conscience on the proposed dues increase, as the IWW wasn’t in the business of interfering in other union’s internal affairs, unless the workers desired it, and in the current context, the matter was one initiated by the rank and file before the IWW had gotten involved.³⁶ The

rank and file workers once again refused the dues increase by a vote of 60-55 in mid-February, even though Bill Hubble, himself, had journeyed to Fort Bragg to lobby for it.³⁷

Adding insult to injury, IWA Local #3-469 cut a deal with G-P that same month, without even consulting the eleven workers affected by the PCB spill, agreeing to reduce the fine from \$14,000 to \$3,000.³⁸ OSHA dropped the “willful” injury to a worker charge down to “serious”, agreeing with the company’s argument that there were still enough “experts” claiming that the chemicals weren’t toxic, in spite of numerous studies showing otherwise.³⁹ Five of the workers hit by the spill, Ron Atkinson, Frank Murray, Craig Ogram, LeRoy Pearl, and Treva Vandenbosch responded that in the fall they had sent a letter to Local 3-469 stating that they didn’t authorize the union to represent them in the case against OSHA (Docket Number 89-2713).⁴⁰ They then sent a letter to Sidney Goldstein, the judge presiding over the case, demanding that he not agree to the settlement.⁴¹

The judge had informed them that they needed to be represented by an official labor representative, so they sent a second letter to the OSHA, the appeals judge, and IWA Local 3-469 stating that they chose IWW Local #1 (specifically Judi Bari and Anna Marie Stenberg) to be their official representative.⁴² Treva Vandenbosch organized community support for the case by circulating a pre written letter to the judge, encouraging interested supporters to contact the latter in support of the dissident workers and to show up at the hearing scheduled for February 1, 1990.⁴³ Judge Goldstein acquiesced, and held off signing the agreement until the workers could make a

though clearly Judi Bari did design it, as the headlines are written in her longhand.

³⁷ “Here and There in Mendocino County”, by Bruce Anderson, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, February 21, 1990.

³⁸ Bari and Cherney, March 1990, op. cit.

³⁹ “Hot Tubbin at Harry’s: Anna Marie Stenberg”, interview by Lynne Dahl, *New Settler Interview*, issue #54, December 1990.

⁴⁰ Bari and Cherney, March 1990, op. cit., and Letter to IWA Local 3-469, by Ron Atkinson, et. al., August 24, 1989, unpublished. A copy of the latter is on file at the Willits Museum.

⁴¹ Letter to Judge Sidney Goldstein, by Ron Atkinson, et. al., January 1990, unpublished. A copy of the latter is on file at the Willits Museum.

⁴² Bari and Cherney, March 1990, op. cit., and Letter to Judge Sidney Goldstein, January 24, 1990, op. cit.

⁴³ “OSHA Vs. G-P: PCB Spill Hearing”, letter to the editor, by Treva Vandenbosch, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, December 13, 1989 and *Mendocino Commentary*, December 14, 1989.

³⁰ “Response to ‘Rank and File’”, by Don Nelson, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, December 27, 1989 and *Mendocino Commentary*, January 11, 1989.

³¹ “IWW Defends Mill Workers”, by Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney, *Industrial Worker*, March 1990.

³² Don Nelson, December 27, op. cit.

³³ Withers, op. cit.

³⁴ Atkinson, et. al., op. cit.

³⁵ Bari and Cherney, March 1990, op. cit..

³⁶ “What is the IWW: and What are We Doing in Fort Bragg?” leaflet by IWW Local #1, January 1989. The leaflet was written by the branch,

written point-by-point appeal, for which he granted them two weeks' time.⁴⁴

Judi Bari covered that task, and wrote an extensive rebuttal to G-P's claims.⁴⁵ G-P's counsel in the OSHA case, Claudia Brisson, wrote an appeal to the Judge, dated February 22, 1990, arguing that labor law clearly stated that since Local 3-469 was the workers' official representative, the IWW was not legally able to represent the dissident members. Regrettably, the Judge agreed with this interpretation, even though Judi Bari tried, unsuccessfully, to argue that Nelson's interpretation of the law was incorrect, arguing that it mandated that workers before OSHA hearings be represented by *a* labor union, not any *specific* labor union, and that the dissidents had clearly chosen the IWW.⁴⁶

It was clear, to the workers, that G-P's real motivation in challenging the IWW's representation on behalf of IWA Local 3-469 was purely selfish. Bari's letter to the judge explained why:

"Since the time when this settlement was reached, G-P has continued to violate their employees right to a safe work environment, apparently confident that they will receive nothing more than a slap on the wrist from OSHA. On Dec. 20, 1989, they were cited by CalOSHA for failing to provide safe lockout procedures for the computerized green chain. They made changes in response to this citation, but the changes were not enough to protect the safety of workers on this machine. On 3/16/90 G-P was cited once again for three more violations on the same machine, including a serious violation for not reporting an accident in which an employee had three fingers severed. On 2/24/90, yet another complaint was filed on the same machine, this time citing ten safety violations. This complaint was investigated on 3/12/90, and a final settlement has not yet been reached.

"This latest OSHA complaint, listing the ten violations, was only filed because Anna Marie Stenberg was willing to sign it for the workers so that they did not have to use their own names. Because of consistent harassment of employees who file complaints, the workers are

afraid to step forward even though they are concerned about the unsafe equipment. And, since G-P will not allow Anna Marie to enter the mill and inspect the machinery, it is difficult to resolve this complaint until the workers can have some real assurance that they will not suffer reprisals if they identify themselves.

"G-P's harassment of workers who attempt to use the OSHA process has recently resulted in Fed OSHA investigator Chuck Byers being sent to Ft. Bragg to investigate this intimidation. He has been looking into the harassment of at least four different workers in OSHA complaints that took place after the settlement agreement.

"What all this shows is that G-P has continued unslowed in its pattern of violating OSHA rules concerning both safety and harassment. We believe that the leniency of the settlement G-P negotiated with OSHA in the PCB case and their ability to escape the scrutiny of a hearing has encouraged their arrogant attitude towards the workers' safety."

Clearly, the company didn't want the IWW—a potentially effective challenge to their power—replacing a supine union that they could use as cover.⁴⁷

The dissidents' and IWW's efforts were not wasted, however. For one thing, they had exposed the IWA and Don Nelson as collaborationists and undermined the latter's ability to provide cover for corporate timber as he was ever more willing to do as resistance to unquestioned corporate logging practices steadily increased. The victims may have been isolated in the mill, and Murray and Vandenbosch had to retire for their health, but in the community, they were now considered heroes. The Mendocino Grey Panthers honored them at their annual dinner on January 27, 1990.⁴⁸ The workers in turn recognized the work of Mike Koepf, Anna Marie Stenberg, and Judi Bari of the IWW in assisting them.⁴⁹ In May of 1990, the EPA fined G-P \$20,250 for violations of the Toxic Substances Control Act.⁵⁰ In late October, Anna Marie Stenberg received the files of the Cal OSHA and Federal OSHA investigations of the PCB spill, and

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ "Panthers Honor Whistleblowers", Earth News, *Mendocino Commentary*, February 8, 1990.

⁴⁹ "Here and There in Mendocino County", by Bruce Anderson, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, February 7, 1990.

⁵⁰ "Here and There in Mendocino County", by Bruce Anderson, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, May 2, 1990.

⁴⁴ Bari and Cherney, March 1990, op. cit.

⁴⁵ Letter to Judge Sidney Goldstein, by Judi Bari, February 14, 1990, unpublished. This letter is on file in the Willits Museum.

⁴⁶ Letter to Judge Sidney Goldstein, by Judi Bari, March 16, 1990, unpublished. This letter is on file in the Willits Museum.

they confirmed that the company had indeed tried to cover up the event.⁵¹ Eventually OSHA did fine G-P \$114,000 for willful violation of the workers' safety, which was the highest possible fine they could have received.⁵² The IWW agreed to offer the IWA mill-workers, free of charge, any services that the IWA local cut as a result of losing the vote on the proposed dues increase.⁵³

Once again, the supposedly “bumpkin proletariat” had defied the preconceived notions of Dave Foreman, Crowdad Nelson, and Rob Anderson. And, once again, the so-called “unwashed-out-of-town-jobless-hippies-on-drugs” had contradicted the reactionary rhetoric of TEAM and WECARE. Workers and environmentalists were working together on common issues.

⁵¹ “Here and There in Mendocino County”, by Bruce Anderson, *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, October 10, 1990.

⁵² Bevington, op. cit., 255-56.

⁵³ Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of IWW Local #1, recorded by Judi Bari, November 19, 1989.

WHAT IS THE IWW?

And What Are We Doing In Ft. Bragg

The IWW, or Industrial Workers of the World (also known as Wobblies) was the grandparent union of the IWA. It was the IWW who first succeeded in bringing unionism to the timber workers in the early 1900's. They did this by combining loggers and millworkers in the same local, and by taking strong and unified action to win their rights.

What Kind Of Union Is The IWW?

The IWW is not like an AFL union. Rather than relying on "experts" to represent us to management, the IWW stands for people banding together and taking direct action in their own behalf. If the company dumps PCB's on you, an AFL union may file an OSHA complaint. An IWW shop would just refuse to work in it. Then we would file the OSHA complaint.

Who Is In The IWW?

Anyone who is not a boss can be an IWW union member. The Wobblies believe in "One Big Union", and it doesn't matter where you work. When the IWW went on strike to bring unionism to the timber industry, the whole town often went out with them. IWW Local #1 in Mendocino County is still new and small, but growing. It includes workers from all three big timber companies, as well as fishermen, health care workers, and other community members.

Who Controls The IWW?

The members do. We do not believe in "representative democracy", where you elect representatives then let them make decisions for you. We believe in "direct democracy", where decisions are made by the members themselves. If we don't like what the members decide, we don't bring in national officers to try and scare people into voting our way. In fact, the IWW has no executive officers. We have only administrative positions, to make sure books and records are kept up. All Wobblies are equal.

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Is The IWW Trying To Challenge The IWA?

No way! The IWA has a contract with Georgia Pacific, and if you dumped them you would lose that contract. Any union is better than no union. We would like to exist alongside the IWA. We do not consier them our enemies.

What Are We Doing In Ft. Bragg?

The IWW has been helping G-P workers when the IWA has failed to do so. We have provided support on the PCB issue from the beginning. When OSHA and G-P recently announced an out-of-court settlement, we intervened directly with the judge and convinced him to reconsider. As a result, the case is still pending. When a G-P worker was arrested for passing out leaflets in the parking lot and the IWA union lawyer said she could not help, we provided the legal support to get the charges dropped.

The IWW And Earth First!

They used to smear the IWW by calling us communists. This was not true. Now they are saying we are a front group for Earth First! This is not true either. There are two Earth First!ers in IWW Local #1, and they joined in part to separate themselves from the anti-worker stances of Earth First! The IWW does not support tree spiking, and Earth First! has no control on our policies.

The IWW And The Dues Increase

So how does the IWW want you to vote on your IWA dues increase? WE DON'T CARE! It's your union -- do what you want. Our dues are \$5.00 per month, and our local members recently voted down a dues increase, even though it was passed by the National.

Want More Info?

If you want more info, or if you want to join the IWW, please contact Anna Marie at 961-0302. We would also be happy to publicly debate Mr. Hubble, Mr. Nelson, or any other IWA rep on any of these issues. You can be a member of both unions if you want, and IWW membership can be kept confidential.

