

The call has been put out in the internationally distributed *Industrial Worker* for all footloose Wobblies, who traditionally were often hobos, to come to Northern California and help their brothers and sisters use time-honored Wobbly techniques to bring attention to the destruction of the forests.

Today's Wobblies are guerrilla ecologists, anarchists, feminists, political performance artists and other counterculture types who share a common vision of the environment being ravaged by corporate greed. "I didn't come here to run a museum," says Jeff Ditz, general secretary-treasurer at IWW headquarters in Chicago. A former United Auto Workers member, Ditz adds, "This is the new IWW for the '90s."

Most union sympathizers think of the Wobblies as little more than a historical society that carries the faded flame of anarcho-syndicalist ideals. Wobblies believe government should be conducted through economic rather than political or geographic representation. Founded in 1906 by radical unionists, the IWW suffered a major setback during and after World War I, when most of its leaders were jailed for criminal syndicalism or fled the country.

Today the Wobblies number about 1,000, consisting in part of a handful of labor activists who are over 75. There is no one between the ages of 55 and 75—"McCarthyism knocked them out," says Ditz. The rest—a blend of anarchists, ecologists and feminists—range in age from 18 to 55.

Active IWW branches thrive in San Francisco, where bicycle messengers are being organized; at recycling centers in Berkeley, Calif., and Ann Arbor, Mich.; at New York City's Living Theatre; among oil-field laborers in Colorado; and at a housing rehab firm in Seattle.

According to Bari, Earth First!'s

anarchic system parallels the IWW libertarian ideas of a decentralized government and disdain for political leadership. But this disinclination to centralize has left Earth First'ers open to infiltrators like Tom Metzger of Southern California. Metzger is trying to blend Odinism—a form of Germanic pagan nature worship—white supremacy and anti-authority direct action into a local Earth First! group.

The main obstacle to the Earth First'ers acceptance in the IWW is an embarrassing record of sexist and racist episodes, stemming mainly, according to Bari, from the Southern California and Arizona Earth First! membership. At a recent Earth First! conference, redneck Earth First'ers met their hippie counterparts from the north who were aghast at the prominent neo-Nazi-flavored display of American flags. These they promptly burned, coming up with a new motto: "Earth First! Nationalism Last!"

To get the terms straight, Earth First! rednecks are not the same as logger rednecks. According to Bari, the former are refugee redneck wanna-bes from the city, while loggers "often are more attuned to environmental issues than anyone else—after all, it's their lifestyle, their homes, their work." And hippy Earth First'ers are those San Francisco back-to-the-landers whose marijuana farms have been stoking the local economy since the '70s.

Despite the drug war, marijuana is still the coin of the realm in Humboldt and Mendocino counties. According to Bari, there are redneck loggers who have wept while felling ancient redwoods and there are hippie marijuana barons who have clear-cut old growth to make way for their cash crop.

Bari, who came to Mendocino County five years ago as a carpenter and union organizer, says the IWW

fills in gaps in Earth First!'s philosophy, like an overall social analysis and an assessment of the consequences of revolutionary acts. She thinks the Wobblies will have a good influence on the local radical ecologists.

Folklorist Archie Green, whose book *Wobblies and Other Spinners: Laborlore Explorations* will be published this year, says the IWW, conceived as a broad-based labor union, has historically drawn people together across job lines. "Wobblies were more important for techniques they imparted than for their victories over big business," he says. "What's interesting about Earth First!'s involvement with the IWW is that it pits the Wobblies against the two established logging unions in the area—old enemies dating back to 1910: the International Woodsmen of America and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America."

"Some say their ideas are outmoded or unworkable," says Green. "But they have the richest tradition of workers' stories, songs and bravery. From my point of view, they've been good at mixing culture and economics, understanding the cultural dimension of the work experience. People in the labor movement have downplayed or made fun of this aspect because most unions don't involve themselves in workers' cultural identity. But the young people joining Wobblies now are more aware of the complexities that go into modern life. There aren't many members, but they have a subtle and sophisticated understanding of American life."

Not all would agree that Earth First'ers or the Wobblies have a subtle grasp of anything, but the newest IWW branch suggests a new framework for America's amorphous radicalism is in the making.

—Julia Gilden

Whipping up that drug-war spirit

Law and order legislators throughout the country may turn to whipping as a way to raise the stakes in the drug war without significant monetary costs to the public.

The Delaware state Senate is expected to pass a bill in its next session that would bring back the whipping post. The bill's sponsor, Senate Majority Leader Thomas Sharp, a Wilmington Democrat, has so far garnered support from 10 of the Senate's 21 members. He plans to bring the legislation to the floor before he puts his law-and-order reputation up for re-election next year.

Delaware has already instituted some of the harshest anti-drug sentences in the nation in an attempt to drive drug traffickers into neighboring states. Whipping advocates hope that by adding insult and injury to minimum sentences of three years in prison for possession of as little as five grams of cocaine,

heroin or amphetamines, traffickers will find it unprofitable to deal in Delaware. "The whole idea is to have [traffickers] bypass us. Let New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania worry about it," said Senate staffer Jack Russell, who wrote the legislation.

At the turn of the century, prisons were seen as the cure for crime, displacing whipping as the nation's preferred form of punishment. But many states continued to exercise the lash in conjunction with prison sentences.

Graeme Newman, author of *Just and Painful*, writes that controlled whipping can serve as a valuable and economical alternative to incarceration, but it serves no purpose if instituted in conjunction with incarceration.

Although corporal punishment is no longer a part of the U.S. penal system, lack of effective control over prisons permits widespread physical, sexual and psychological violence against prisoners. And many states allow the whipping of children who live in schools and juvenile de-

tention centers.

The U.S. Supreme Court has never ruled that whipping is a violation of Eighth Amendment proscriptions against "cruel and unusual punishment."

In 1963 the Delaware Supreme Court refused to rule on the constitutionality of the state's previous whipping law, which remained on the books until Republican legislators repealed it in 1970. No one has been whipped by the state since the '50s.

If passed by the Democratic state Senate, the bill faces a challenge in the Republican House and the threatened veto by Republican Gov. Michael Castle.

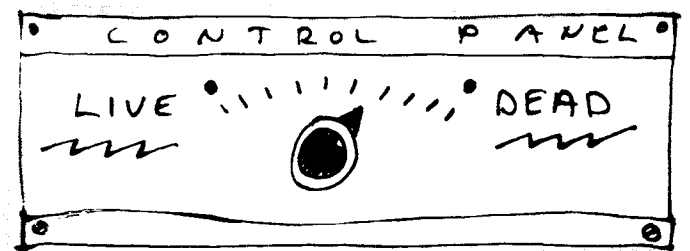
But in the event public flogging returns to Delaware, it would entail "no fewer than five nor more than 40 lashes well laid on ... to be inflicted publicly by strokes on the bare back." Senate staffer Russell says these floggings would take place at a public square in one of the state's larger communities. Such whippings would likely be televised.

—Matthew Reiss

decision says that the reason I was immoral was that I willingly allowed my husband to smoke marijuana. Willingly? No, we argued about it. Allowed? How can you allow an adult? This drug war—it's like a witch hunt. Your whole life is destroyed for something you didn't do. All they have to say is the word 'drug' and your name is ruined. I don't smoke cigarettes. I don't drink. I have never smoked marijuana. I was acquitted completely. Doesn't that mean anything in America? The one good thing now is that after three months, my husband got out of prison and I don't go to bed crying anymore."

Death and deterrence

There is one list on which Louisiana does not rank at the bottom. The Bayou State leads the nation in per-capita executions. Since 1977, when it reinstituted the death penalty, Louisiana has electrocuted 18 people. In fact, during June and July 1987, eight people made the trip to the electric chair in as many weeks. Michael Kroll reports for Pacific News Service that since that summer sizzle, only one jury in Louisiana has handed down a death penalty. Helen Prejean, a nun who ministers to the condemned and their families, says, "When we began dispatching people with such vigor in 1987, juries began to see the effect of their words, and that had a deterrent effect on bringing in death sentences."



Outlets—electric and otherwise

One person who is not ambivalent about the Louisiana death penalty is Sam Jones. As the state's official executioner, Jones (who for his own protection goes by an alias) has juiced each of the 18 people killed by the state. For each flip of the switch he is paid \$400. Jones told an Australian TV reporter, "My feeling is it's too quick, too easy." Jones says he also would be glad to torture the prisoners—for example, pull out their fingernails—if the state so ordered, anything to "exterminate this trash. ... There's nothing to it. To me it's no different executing somebody than going to the refrigerator and getting a beer." After each execution, Jones goes home and paints dark figures silently screaming. "They are not pictures of death," he explains. "They don't represent anything to me. It's just an outlet, the way some people jog."

A colony for the truly criminal

Are you in the market for an Australian mountaintop retreat overlooking the Whitsunday Islands and the Great Barrier Reef? Then check out a real-estate development called Parc Exclusif. The eight available lots are priced from \$500,000 to \$10,000,000. The ZADA Company of Airlie Beach guarantees buyers not only "clean air" but a "safe-refuge home from political troubles, nuclear explosions, earthquakes, etc."—not to mention "safe, secure living without racial problems."

Rhymes and crimes

The following poem was submitted by reader Jack Woltjen of Chicago:

Georgie Porgie, puddin and pie
Crossed the Potomac and started to lie
Lied about the contra thing
His Panama past had a similar ring
Went way down south to throttle a pimp
To scuttle his image of being a wimp
The press and the Congress bowed down to this hawk
And even Mike Royko surrendered his squawk
Now 24 kids like deep in the ground
While the White House is grabbing at short bites of sound
And Georgie opines this was God's given mission
While most of us know it was right-wing ignition.

News clips, memos, press releases, reports, anecdotes, raw gossip—send them all to "In Short," *In These Times*, 2040 N. Milwaukee, Chicago, IL 60647. Include your address and phone number.

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

WHILE CONGRESS WAS IN RECESS AND Bush administration officials were secretly preparing an invasion of Panama, a small scandal erupted at the White House Council of Economic Advisers (CEA). This affair raised important questions not only about government ethics but also about American trade policy toward Japan. It spotlighted the Bush administration's disregard for the country's \$50 billion trade deficit with Japan.

On December 13, House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO) and 11 other House Democrats called on the White House to investigate conflict of interest charges against CEA consultant Gary Saxonhouse. Saxonhouse, the House members charged, was serving on the advisory board of a Japanese government agency while he was employed as the CEA's Japan expert. (Saxonhouse's Japanese connection was reported in the Dec. 6, 1989, issue of *In These Times*.)

The White House dismissed Gephardt's charges as a "cheap political shot." *Washington Post* columnist Hobart Rowen accused Gephardt and the other Democrats of "McCarthyism." And prominent former government officials like Harvard professor Richard Cooper charged that Gephardt was really attacking Saxonhouse for his economic views rather than for his association with a Japanese government agency.

The Japanese viewed Gephardt's call for an investigation of Saxonhouse as an attack on the Bush administration's submissive trade policy. Tokyo's *Asahi Shimbun* editorialized, "It appears that the purpose of [Gephardt's charges] is to restrict the activities of the CEA, which is supporting a relatively stable policy toward Japan. This is an example of the recent congressional mood in which they will take up anything as criticism of Japan."

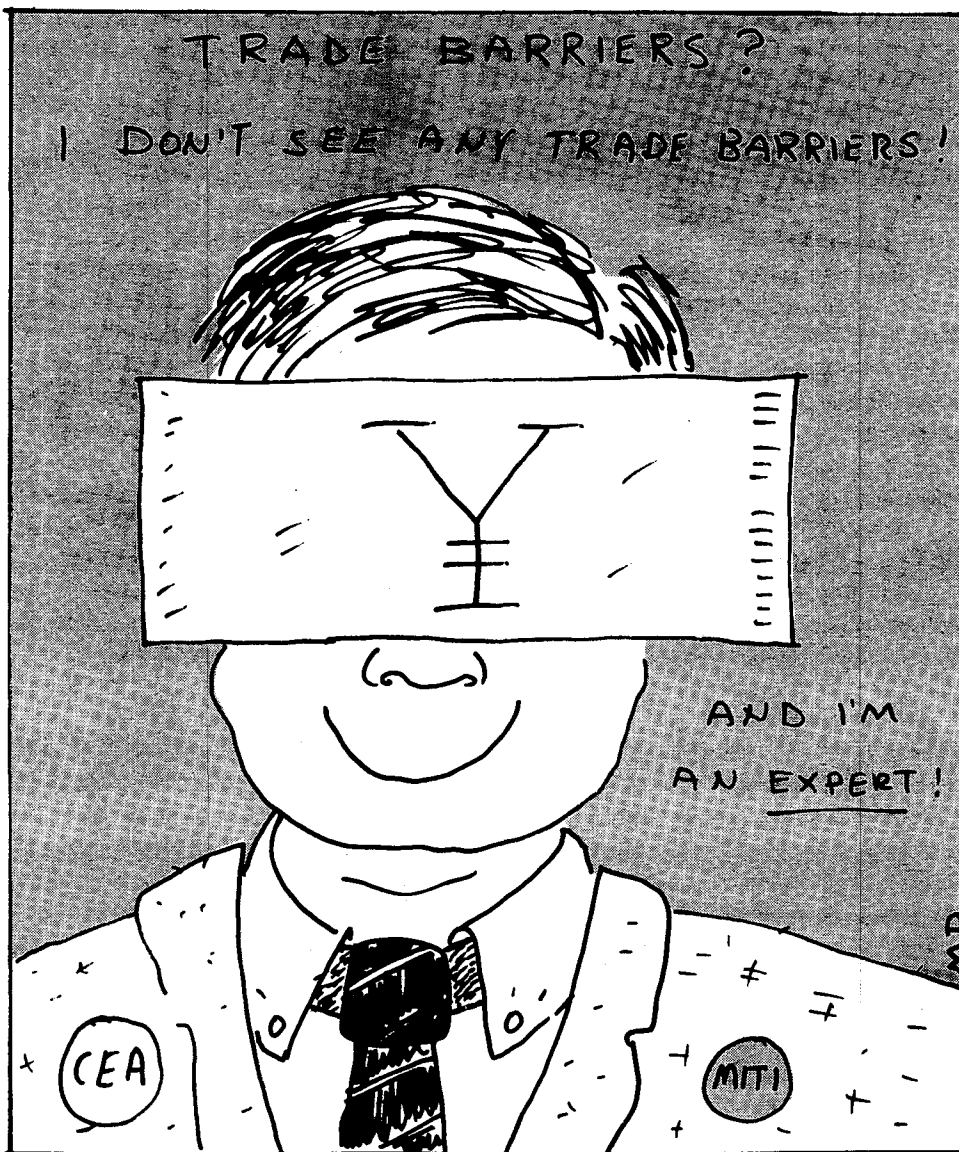
As Gephardt voiced his charges, several House and Senate committees were threatening to hold hearings on the Saxonhouse affair in January. But before the issue could be debated, Saxonhouse resigned from the CEA effective on January 1. The question of whether he was unfairly attacked persists.

A friend in high places: Saxonhouse's defenders claim that he was a minor CEA official and that his association with the Japanese government was unpaid and entirely academic, but the facts don't support this argument. At the CEA Saxonhouse was, indeed, a part-time consultant who retained his position as professor of economics at the University of Michigan, but he was singularly responsible for the CEA's view of Japan—and in the Bush administration the CEA has had significant influence over the government's trade policies with Japan.

Saxonhouse was also an official government participant in the U.S.-Japan negotiations over the Structural Impediment Initiatives (SII). The Bush administration set up these talks last May to respond to Congress' demand that it address the structural impediments that Japan had erected against American imports. The SII talks are currently the principal setting at which the two governments are discussing their economic differences.

Regardless of Saxonhouse's character and views, his Japanese connection posed a significant conflict of interest for an official di-

Conflicting Japan policy and a conflict of interest



rectly concerned with U.S.-Japan policy. In July 1987, Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) established a Research Institute of International Trade and Industry. According to MITI's own statement,

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the institute's purpose was not merely academic but to "aid MITI in its policy-formation process."

Saxonhouse was one of seven American academics, including Harvard's Cooper, appointed to the MITI 22-person advisory board, which was to hold meetings in Tokyo every two years. Board members were not paid for their services, but they were given something of considerable value to American academics: expense-paid trips to Japan. Tokyo is one of the most expensive cities in the world, and a one-week trip, including airfare, can easily cost \$7,500. Robert Angel, a Japan expert and political scientist at the University of South Carolina, said, "You can knock the heels off of academics with an airplane ticket."

Members of the advisory board were also invited to speak for generous honoraria at the research institute's functions. Saxonhouse spoke at an institute conference in January 1988 in Tokyo and at a seminar in Osaka in October 1988, as well as attending the board's first meeting last spring.

A CEA spokesman claimed that Saxonhouse's membership in the group did not pose a conflict of interest because he joined the CEA after appearing at the board meeting

and was scheduled to leave the CEA before another meeting would take place, but this argument proved exactly the opposite. As a temporary employee of the CEA rather than as a permanent civil servant, Saxonhouse would be more tempted to act in such a way as to maintain his connections after leaving government.

Saxonhouse's continuing membership in the MITI organization also allowed the Japanese to believe that they had a friend in high places. At the first SII meeting last September in Tokyo, a MITI representative declared to all present his pleasure at seeing a member of their advisory board in attendance. Former Commerce Department official Clyde Prestowitz said of Saxonhouse's Japanese connection, "What troubles me most is the signal it sends; the Japanese think they have an ally in the U.S. government, and people in the U.S. bureaucracy think there is nothing wrong with maintaining ties with a foreign government that thinks this way."

To his credit, Saxonhouse informed the CEA of his Japanese government ties when he was hired last spring. To CEA Chairman Michael Boskin's discredit, he did not require that Saxonhouse resign from the MITI board. "We saw no ethics problems in his associations," CEA spokesman Steve Landefeld said.

Extreme views: The other question raised by the Saxonhouse affair is why the CEA hired a person of his views as its Japan expert. Rowen describes Saxonhouse as "America's leading expert on the Japanese economy," but this is like calling supply-

sider Arthur Laffer America's leading expert on the American economy. Saxonhouse's views on U.S.-Japan relations are highly controversial and represent an extreme position in the current debate.

The different positions on U.S.-Japan economic relations could be arrayed on a spectrum from west to east. On the west side are people like Prestowitz and TRW Vice President Pat Choate, who believe that Japan has erected significant barriers against American trade and that the trade barriers can only be removed by demanding the Japanese meet specific import quotas. In the center is Brookings Institution Japan expert Robert Lawrence, who believes that such barriers exist but that not much can be done about them. On the far east is Saxonhouse, who believes that there are no barriers at all.

He has argued this view in papers and congressional testimony. Appearing before a House committee on June 9, 1987, Saxonhouse declared that "Japan's trade policies are not an important determinant of either Japan's surplus or America's deficit." He insisted that the American economy had done better in '80s than had Japan's. Incredibly, he asserted that higher American exports of Japanese goods "meant lower Japanese investment" in Japan—a position clearly contradicted by recent trends. He also assured the committee that the 1985 revaluation of the yen would soon reduce the American trade deficit. But this claim has also proven false.

Few economists share Saxonhouse's position that Japan's trade barriers are insignificant. The four economists who testified at a November 7 Senate Finance Committee hearing on the SII talks differed widely on what should be done to remove the barriers, but all agreed that Japan had erected them. Rudiger Dornbusch of MIT described the Japanese market as "closed," and Lawrence called the Japanese market "unusually closed."

These economists pointed to the composition of Japan's imports, which are drastically skewed against imports of manufactured goods. For instance, in West Germany, which also runs a large trade surplus, manufactures account for 37 percent of imports; in Japan, they account for only 4.4 percent. The economists also noted that Japan has run a large trade surplus even though the country's goods sell for 30 to 40 percent higher there than in the rest of the world.

Given the extreme nature of Saxonhouse's views, it is very significant that Boskin selected him as his Japan expert and sent him to represent the CEA at the critical SII talks, where the issue is precisely whether Japan has erected trade barriers. Boskin's choice of Saxonhouse reveals how extreme the positions of Bush's CEA are. Boskin is the most doctrinaire proponent of laissez-faire economics to hold the office since it was established after World War II.

Saxonhouse's presence at the SII talks also shows how blithely the administration is treating these negotiations. As Dornbusch charged at the November hearings, SII "is yet another unfortunate and unproductive way of dealing with our large trade-balance deficit and the continued closeness of the Japanese market."

Saxonhouse's resignation was appropriate. The real problem in the White House, however, was not Saxonhouse but Boskin and the man who appointed him. □

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