

# Government Attack on EF! Continues

Fifth Estate Collective

1990

Since the arrest last May of four Earth First! (EF!) activists on charges of attempting to sabotage a nuke plant (see Summer 1989 FE), the federal government has widened its campaign against the radical environmental movement.

Throughout the summer and fall, the FBI fanned out across the Western states interviewing numerous people associated with EF!, and in several areas, grand jury subpoenas were issued, suggesting that more indictments and arrests could follow. On October 4, seven people associated with Wild Rockies EF! were called before a grand jury in Missoula, Montana investigating a tree spiking incident.

The attacks on EF! are testimony to the threat that direct action and monkey-wrenching pose to the developers, loggers, ranchers and others who are destroying the wilderness. Using the Arizona case as a basis, federal prosecutors are trying to whip up a climate of hysteria in which environmental militancy is seen uniformly as "terrorism."

Three of the Arizona Four (Marc Baker, Mark Davis and Peg Millet) were held in jail for two months after their arrests and only released upon posting exorbitant bonds. (The fourth, EF! founder Dave Foreman, was charged with "conspiracy" and not the act itself and was released on bond shortly after his arrest.)

Government attorneys argued for incarceration of the other three until their trial, scheduled for early 1990, on the grounds that had the three been successful in their plan to sabotage the Palo Verde Nuclear Plant, it would have produced a serious radiation leak. This contention, of course is nothing more than calculated government lying.

What is particularly disturbing about the arrests and subpoenas is that they brought to light the high level of government infiltration and surveillance of EF!.

However, this shouldn't be surprising since the EF! movement's public espousal of monkeywrenching (which is or has become virtually its trademark) has led to numerous people putting into practice what is advocated.

The cops were all over the AZ4 like a blanket for the last two years. One good old boy redneck turned out to be an undercover FBI agent who wormed his way into the confidence of Foreman and the others before finally blowing the whistle on them. Through the AZ4 legal defense efforts, it was discovered that the FBI had logged 500 hours of phone taps, household bugs and "body wire" recordings, plus had other informants planted in the Tucson EF! group.

As could apparently be expected, the paranoia level in EF! is extremely high at this moment. The extent of the government's efforts against them has apparently muted some of the group's boisterous self-confidence. This is exactly the intent of infiltration, arrests and subpoenas: sow suspicion, divert energies, exhaust people and resources and rein in a movement which refuses to play by the rules established for "nice" environmental groups. In this regard, the government campaign against EF! should be recognized as an attack on all expressions of environmental radicalism and defended as such.

Trials for the Arizona Four have been separated with each having their own counsel, creating a staggering, but necessary legal bill, all of which constitutes another government victory even before the trials begin. We urge people to contribute to the Arizona 4 Legal Defense Fund, PO Box 4666, Salem OR 97302, which has already raised \$41,000

of a needed \$250,000, and to acquaint yourself further with the case. The EF! Journal has published a 4-page extra which gives more details; write PO Box 7, Canton, NY 13617.

# fifth Estate

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