

Bush sacrifices timber industry to 'Mother Earth' and 'Mother Russia'

by H. Graham Lowry

In the wake of the Bush administration's "spotted owl" decree, which threatens to destroy the Pacific Northwest's timber industry, conclusive evidence has surfaced showing that the decision was part of a deal with Moscow, finalized at the Bush-Gorbachov summit in early June. The insane terms include U.S. sacrifice of most of its domestic lumber supplies, and payoffs to Gorbachov in cash and finished goods in exchange for inferior Siberian logs.

During the summit, rumors began flying of contracts between the Soviet government and such major U.S. wood-products corporations as Weyerhaeuser and Louisiana-Pacific—in *anticipation* of the Bush administration's June 22 decision to list the spotted owl as a "threatened species." By mid-month, scattered reports were circulating that shipments of Soviet "test logs" would soon be arriving at the ports of Oakland, California, and Seattle, Washington, to be evaluated by Pacific Coast wood products companies as replacements for "shortages" of Northwest timber. The only shortages were the result of the U.S. Forest Service's increasing rejection of harvest plans over the past year, on the grounds that the spotted owl *might* be listed.

Once the decree was issued, the plotters came out of the woodwork. On June 28, a columnist for the London *Guardian* wrote from Northern California, "The timber giants are prepared to move elsewhere if the domestic [political] climate proves too inhospitable. When Mikhail Gorbachov passed through San Francisco after the June summit, one of the businessmen who made his pitch to the Soviet President was Harry Merlo, chairman of the Louisiana-Pacific lumber company. He would like to start cutting the forests of Siberia." On July 5, Louisiana-Pacific's manager for Northern California told the *Journal of Commerce*, "The forests of Siberia are the greatest untapped wood sources left on earth," while claiming that U.S. sawmills designed to run two shifts a day are cutting back to one shift for lack of logs.

Meanwhile, an anonymous executive for a trading company with the initials TTE, based in Santa Maria, Calif., said it had contracts for Soviet logs, to be paid for "both in hard currency and with credits for U.S. machinery and consumer goods it exports to the Soviet Union." Executives at both TTE and Louisiana-Pacific told the *Journal* that "they're hopeful the Soviet timber imports could relieve West Coast

log shortages," resulting from "setting aside extensive tracts of public land wilderness and wildlife protection."

Moscow's little helpers

The summit also coincided with the kickoff of a summer-long campaign of environmentalist disruptions, sabotage, and terrorism against the timber producers of the Pacific Northwest, led by the genocidal cult Earth First! Backed by the Soviet-linked Earth Island Institute and the hardcore Soviet asset Greenpeace, Earth First! declared they would end all timber harvesting in California's redwood forests by the end of August. Their recruiting for "waves of actions" was slowed when their "non-violent" posture blew up with a bomb which exploded May 24 in Oakland, in the back seat of a station wagon driven by two of their leaders. Oakland police arrested them on bomb-making charges, and obtained search warrants on the grounds the two "are members of a violent terrorist group involved in the manufacture and placing of explosive devices."

The FBI stepped in, however, and removed all the physical evidence gathered to Washington, D.C. Oakland authorities repeatedly postponed bringing formal charges against the pair, because the FBI refused to release its lab findings. Earth First! will go ahead with a national membership gathering July 7-15 in Montana's Beaverhead National Forest, with permission from the U.S. Forest Service.

There is a small problem, however, on Moscow's end of the deal. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's quarantine station in San Francisco has impounded the Soviet "test log" shipment, after finding they are infested with nematode worms which can devastate trees by boring from within. The USDA inspector said July 3 that the logs—soft pine and larch from the Lake Baikal region of Siberia—will have to be sent back, because "even destruction of the logs here would be very risky."

Even without the worms, the logs are no substitute for structural lumber. But, neither the Bush regime nor Moscow intends for America to build anything anyway. As for Louisiana-Pacific, as one lumber union official put it, "They're not talking lumber any more. They don't care if the tree is two inches in diameter. They just chip it up and make strand board and press board out of it. You could build a nice shack for the homeless."