

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

JUDI BARI

postal worker, carpenter, and environmental activist

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COURTESY OF JUDI BARI & DAVID CROSS

Background Information

Born November 7, 1949; Died March 2, 1997

Judi Bari was born and raised in Silver Spring, Maryland.ⁱ Her parents advocated for civil rights and opposed the Vietnam War, which greatly influenced Bari's path into activism.ⁱⁱ Bari attended the University of Maryland but dropped out in her fifth year. Afterward, Bari worked various jobs. As a grocery store clerk and postal worker, she participated in union organizing. She successfully organized a strike for

better working conditions.ⁱⁱⁱ She continued her organizing efforts as a carpenter by focusing on related environmental issues. Bari often used music as a medium for organizing.

Bari's Resistance

Bari acted swiftly after learning that the redwood trees she used to create luxury country houses were endangered yet still widely used. She fought to preserve the remaining trees and other tree species by organizing logging blockades. The most notable logging blockade she helped organize included the public lands near Cahto Peak, which later became the Cahto Wilderness area.^{iv} Bari supported the labor rights of sawmill workers who faced workplace injuries after being doused with toxic Polychlorinated biphenyls or artificial chemicals. Music, specifically Bari's fiddle, played an integral role in her resistance by unifying and motivating crowds.^v Her organizing efforts linked labor rights with environmental issues. Bari saw the two issues as connected struggles. Her ultimate goal was to seize the corporate properties of timber company executives.^{vi} Representatives and company executives worked to counter worker claims by discrediting the campaigns of Bari and Earth First.^{vii} However, the companies became increasingly violent toward all activists involved in campaigns. Death threats were common, and Bari was severely injured after a bomb was planted in her car.^{viii}

Achievements

Bari filed a successful lawsuit against the FBI and individual police agents for their role in her assassination attempt. She felt vindicated after the case highlighted how the state tried to weaken her efforts within the environmentalist movement.^{ix} Her skilled speaking and radical efforts in organizing rallies and civil disobedience brought immense national attention to different environmental issues such as toxic chemicals. Demonstrations garnered change at a macro-level and emphasized the importance of mass organizing.

Essential Questions

1. Bari was outraged when she learned that the natural materials she used were endangered. From this experience, she worked alongside other individuals and organizations protesting the environmental injustices of logging companies.
 - a. What do you think motivated Bari when things became difficult?

2. What hardships did Bari experience while advocating for the labor rights of others?

3. ***“A revolutionary ideology in the hands of privileged people can indeed bring about some disruption and change in the system. But a revolutionary ideology in the hands of working people can bring that system to a halt.”***
 - a. How do you think working people can halt the system and achieve revolutionary change?

ⁱ “Judi Bari.” In *Wikipedia*, September 19, 2021. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Judi_Bari&oldid=1045237551.

ⁱⁱ “Judi Bari (1949-1997) | Industrial Workers of the World.” <https://archive.iww.org/history/biography/JudiBari/1/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Judi Bari (1949-1997) | Industrial Workers of the World.”

^{iv} Judi Bari (1949-1997) | Industrial Workers of the World.”

^v Judi Bari (1949-1997) | Industrial Workers of the World.”

^{vi} Judi Bari (1949-1997) | Industrial Workers of the World.”

^{vii} Judi Bari (1949-1997) | Industrial Workers of the World.”

^{viii} Trees Foundation. “30 Years Ago: The Bombing of Earth First! Activists Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney,” May 20, 2020.

<https://treesfoundation.org/2020/05/30-years-ago-in-may-the-bombing-of-earth-first-activists-judi-bari-and-darryl-cherney/>

^{ix} “30 Years Ago: The Bombing of Earth First! Activists Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney,”