

**Do Some Liberal
Groups Benefit
Society?**

Chapter Preface

Some radical animal rights organizations such as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) engage in violent acts of destruction and vandalism in an effort to stop what they perceive to be the cruel exploitation of animals. Other animal rights advocacy groups such as the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) have taken a less violent—though no less radical—approach to securing the rights of animals. The ALDF is working to achieve legal status in court for all animals. By fundamentally changing their legal status, ALDF hopes to put an end to the exploitation of animals, particularly the use of animals as research subjects. Steve Ann Chambers, president of the ALDF insists, “We need to expand legal rights beyond humans.” The ALDF claims that changing the legal status of animals will result in far-reaching moral, ethical, and environmental benefits to society.

The ALDF is not alone in its fight for animal rights. Twenty-five U.S. law schools now offer courses in animal rights (in the mid-1990s, there were only five offering such courses). University of Chicago professor Cass Sunstein argues that although animals are regarded as property, they can still have rights under the law and that there is significant popular support for such changes. Sunstein said, “Our culture is much more interested in protecting animals than our laws are.” Steven Wise, author of *Rattling the Cage: Toward Legal Rights for Animals*, maintains that nonhuman animals, particularly primates, “have a kind of autonomy that judges should easily recognize as sufficient for legal rights.” While some progress is being made, the fight for animal rights is likely to be a long one.

Some radical animal rights activist groups such as the ALDF are working to end the exploitation of animals without resorting to violence but nevertheless using what many would call extreme means. Authors in the following chapter explore the issues raised by radical animal rights activists and other extremist groups.

"The healthiest generation in history is a ripe target for the anti-science nonsense pushed by the animal rights movement."

Radical Animal Rights Groups Harm Society

Frederick K. Goodwin and Adrian R. Morrison

Radical animal rights activists misguidedly harass scientists and disrupt research critical to human and animal welfare, argue Fredrick K. Goodwin and Adrian R. Morrison in the following viewpoint. The authors maintain that even though scientists and research facilities follow the strictest animal care guidelines, they are targets of violent attacks that inspire fear among researchers and stifle scientific creativity. Frederick K. Goodwin is a former director of the National Institute of Mental Health. Adrian R. Morrison is a professor of veterinary medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. According to the authors, what is the difference between the animal rights movement and animal welfare organizations?
2. Name one of the factors that Goodwin and Morrison identify as contributing to the climate of moral confusion surrounding the use of animals in research.
3. In the authors' opinion, what was the disastrous tactical error that scientists made at the outset of their encounter with the animal rights movement?

Frederick K. Goodwin and Adrian R. Morrison, "Science and Self-Doubt," *Reason*, vol. 32, October 2000, p. 22. Copyright © 2000 by the Reason Foundation, 3415 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Suite 400, Los Angeles, CA 90034, www.reason.com. Reproduced with permission.

Twenty years ago, animal research became the target of a new generation of anti-vivisectionists: the radical “animal rights” movement. That movement, which views animals as moral agents on a par with people, has promoted a profoundly confused philosophy that equates animal research with the enslavement of human beings.

Scientists responded to this movement by proposing to strengthen the standards and regulation of animal research and care. But even as the handling of research animals became ever more restricted, the animal rights campaign became ever more demanding and violent. Scientists working with animals, especially those involved in brain and behavioral research, were assaulted in their laboratories, harassed in their homes, and threatened with death.

In Europe, scientists have long been the target of actual terrorism, now identified as such by the United Kingdom. Indeed, the neuroscientist Colin Blakemore at Oxford University, who studies brain activity in cats, literally lives under siege. Police must protect his home, which has been assaulted with his frightened wife and daughters in residence. Why? He spoke out in support of the obvious necessity of using animals to advance medical science—to alleviate the suffering of human beings—and has been in danger ever since that principled act. In 1998, Blakemore and other European scientists were marked for death by animal rights terrorists, and Blakemore lived for months under round-the-clock police protection.

The United States Is the Latest Target

Although for a few years American researchers enjoyed relative peace, animal rights activists struck last spring [2000] at the University of Minnesota, causing thousands of dollars in damage. A scientist studying hearing at the University of California at San Francisco is now suffering what Blakemore has endured for years. But biomedical research is coming under another kind of siege.

There has been a campaign in New Zealand to give the great apes constitutional rights, an outgrowth of the ideas of the animal rights movement and the Great Ape Project, which seeks to award apes the same rights as those possessed

by humans. Last year [1999] in Germany, the ruling Social Democratic and Green parties introduced legislation stating that animals have the right to be “respected as fellow creatures,” and to be protected from “avoidable pain.” Two recent developments in the United States suggest that we may be entering a dangerous era in thinking about animals.

In the first, a U.S. court recognized the legal standing of an individual to sue the federal government in order to force changes in animal-welfare regulations. In that case, the individual claimed “harm” as a result of seeing animals mistreated, in his opinion, at a roadside zoo; the plaintiff held the Department of Agriculture [USDA] responsible. However, in deciding the merits of the case, an appeals court later found that USDA was not responsible for the individual’s alleged harm, and declined to order any change in the current regulations.

In the second, animal rights groups are pushing USDA to include rats and mice under the Animal Welfare Act.

Animal Rights Versus Animal Welfare

The campaign to end the use of animals in biomedical research is based upon a complete misunderstanding of how scientists work, what research requires, and what has made possible our era’s outpouring of lifesaving advances in medicine. Unfortunately, neither their misunderstanding of science nor their misguided philosophy has prevented activists from becoming an increasingly powerful, militant force—one now threatening the discovery of new medical treatments and preventive strategies for serious illnesses.

To understand the animal rights movement, we must distinguish its objectives from those of animal welfare organizations. Typically, such organizations as local societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals will care for strays, teach good animal care, run neutering programs, and build animal shelters. Acting as the stewards of animals, especially those not in a position to care for themselves, these organizations uphold our traditional values of humane, caring treatment of sentient creatures.

Animal rights organizations, on the other hand, invest their energies in campaigning against various uses of ani-

mals, including research. They start with a completely different philosophy, summed up by Peter Singer, the acknowledged founder of the animal rights movement, in his 1975 book, *Animal Liberation*. Singer, now De Camp Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University, argues that sentient creatures—all those capable of feeling pain—must essentially be considered moral equivalents to human beings, certainly as equivalent to the severely brain-damaged and to human infants before the age of reasoning. Anyone who dismisses any sentient creature as merely an animal to be used for human benefit is guilty of “speciesism,” a prejudice morally equivalent to racism and sexism. (Singer, who is Australian, does not base his opposition to animal research on the concept of rights; his American counterpart, University of North Carolina philosophy professor Tom Regan, does.)

PETA

On the political front, Ingrid Newkirk, the national director of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), asserted in 1983 that “animal liberationists do not separate out the human animal, so there is no rational basis for saying that a human being has special rights. A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy. They’re all mammals.” She has also said, “Six million Jews died in concentration camps, but six billion broiler chickens will die this year in slaughterhouses.” Chris DeRose, who heads an organization called In Defense of Animals, said recently that even if the death of one rat would cure all disease, that death still would not be right, because we are all equal.

Despite PETA’s view that broiler chickens are the moral equivalent of murdered Jews, animal rights activists decided early on to target scientific researchers, not farmers, although more than 99 percent of the animals used by people are for food (or clothing, or killed either in pounds or by hunters) and just a fraction of 1 percent for research. Singer has said that the strategic decision to level protests against science was made because farmers are organized and politically powerful (and live in rural areas, which makes them hard to get at). In contrast, scientists are not politically organized, live in urban areas, and can be hard put to explain their work in lay language.

Neuroscientists have been a frequent target. Two key fields of neuroscience, behavioral and addiction research, were highlighted in Singer's book. High-profile laboratory invasions have targeted scientists engaged in brain research. For example, PETA, which adheres to Singer's philosophy, established itself by infiltrating the laboratory of neuroscientist Edward Taub in Silver Spring, Maryland, in 1981, and "exposing" deficient laboratory conditions with photographs that purported to show animal mistreatment. Taub, however, has noted that no one else in the lab observed the conditions in the PETA photographs, and he is supported by the sworn statements of seven people, including a USDA inspector, who testified at Taub's subsequent trial. At the time, Taub was investigating how monkeys perform complex tasks with certain nerve pathways in their arms severed, work that was the basis for the subsequent development of improved methods for stroke rehabilitation.

In 1984, PETA exploited the Animal Liberation Front's invasion of the University of Pennsylvania Head Injury Research Laboratory by cleverly editing videotapes taken in the raid and using the resulting composite as a fund raising tool. In subsequent literature, PETA made it clear that alleged mistreatment of animals was not the real issue. In PETA's view, animals cannot be used to alleviate health problems of people, period. Even after more stringent government controls over animal research were in place (by 1985) Texas Tech sleep researcher John Orem suffered a raid in 1989 that resulted in \$40,000 worth of damage to his laboratory. In this and other cases, however, the critical damage is to the scientist's will to continue research.

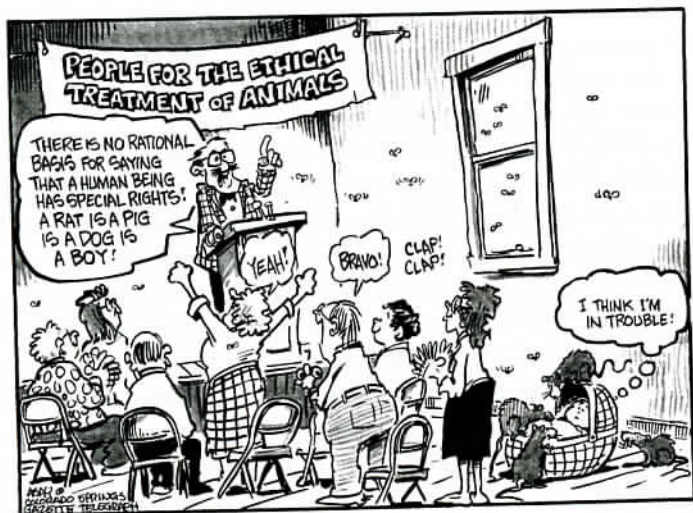
Moral Confusion

Many factors have contributed to the climate of moral confusion surrounding the use of animals in research and to the apparent willingness of many people to credit the bizarre ideas of the animal rights activists.

For one thing, we are victims of our own health care successes. We have enjoyed such a victory over infectious diseases that baby boomers and subsequent generations do not even remember polio and other dreaded infectious diseases,

and have little sense of how amazing it was when antibiotics were first developed. With the eradication of so many deadly infectious diseases, antibiotics have become something that you take for incidental minor infection. The healthiest generation in history is a ripe target for the anti-science nonsense pushed by the animal rights movement.

Second, America has sustained a steady, devastating decline in scientific literacy. Our high school students consistently rank below those of other developed countries. As a result, most people, especially young people, do not understand what the scientific method is really about.



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Additionally, Americans today spend little time around animals other than house pets. It is worth remembering that just before World War II one in four of us lived on a farm; now it is one in 50. What do most urban and suburban kids know about animals, other than what they see in cartoons?

Such factors have helped propel the ever-tightening regulation of research, stifling the creativity that is its essence and posing a threat to the human well-being that is its goal. Many major discoveries in the history of medicine have

come about by serendipity, when a scientist has had his sights trained on an entirely different topic of research. The story behind the initial discovery that lithium, an elemental substance on the periodic table, might have therapeutic benefits illustrates this serendipity and demonstrates how basic research with animals can lead to major medical advances.

In that case, Australian psychiatrist John Cade asked what might be wrong in the brains of patients with manic-depressive illness and wondered whether a substance called urea would have therapeutic value. Testing his hypothesis on guinea pigs, Cade gave them a salt form of urea, which happened to contain lithium. The guinea pigs became unexpectedly calm. Further experimentation revealed that the urea had nothing to do with this result; it was caused by the lithium—a complete surprise to Cade. Having laid his foundation with animal research, Cade extended his findings by giving lithium to manic patients, who experienced an alleviation of their manic excitement without being sedated. This single discovery has revolutionized treatment of manic-depressive illness, easing the lives of millions and saving billions of dollars along the way. At the same time, it has opened whole new productive areas for brain research.

No one could have predicted the outcome of Cade's initial experiment with urea. There was no way to list in advance what the health benefits of using guinea pigs would be. That would have required knowing the answer to a question that had not yet been asked. If one already knows the answer, research is unnecessary.

Few Studies Involve Animals

In 1976, before the animal rights controversy arose, the National Institutes of Health sponsored a study by Julius H. Comroe Jr. and R.D. Dripps to ascertain if government funding of basic biomedical research had been a good investment. The authors asked practicing cardiologists what they regarded as the 10 leading medical advances of their lifetimes; the scientists named such advances as cardiac surgery, drug treatment of hypertension, and medical treatment of cardiac insufficiency. Comroe and Dripps then traced the scientific ancestry of each of these discoveries and

found that 40 percent of the studies leading to the advances originated from work in a different, seemingly unrelated field of research. Animal research was fundamental to many of these studies. Regulations that require justification of animal research in terms of its specific outcomes, rather than the clarity of the hypotheses and strength of the research design, may end much of the creative research now under way.

Less than a quarter of the studies in biomedicine involve animals (and more than 90 percent of those are rats and mice), but anyone working in the field will tell you that such animal studies are indispensable. One cannot develop an understanding of a chemical or a gene, then try to ascertain its role in a complex human organism with billions of cells and dozens of organs, without first knowing how it works in the biological systems of animals. The animal model enables a scientist to understand what is happening at a level of detail that could not be reached in humans.

The great kidney transplant pioneer Dr. Thomas E. Starzl was once asked why he used dogs in his work. He explained that, in his first series of operations, he had transplanted kidneys into a number of subjects, and that the majority of them died. After figuring out what had enabled a few to survive, he revised his techniques and operated on a similar group of subjects; a majority of them survived. In his third group of subjects, only one or two died, and in his fourth group all survived. The important point, said Starzl, was that the first three groups of subjects were dogs; the fourth group consisted of human babies. Had Starzl begun his series of experimental operations on people, he would have killed at least 15 people. Yet there are activists who believe, in the name of animal rights, that that is what Starzl should have done.

At the outset of their encounter with the animal rights movement, scientists made a disastrous tactical error. Accustomed to dealing with others by reason, and eager to meet the activists halfway, the research community adopted "The Three Rs," described as long ago as 1959 by W. Russell and R. Birch in their book, *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique*. Scientists pledged to reduce the number of animals used, to refine their techniques, and to replace animals whenever possible. In truth, scientists are always looking for

ways to reduce, refine, and replace animal use. It makes sense from the point of view of humane treatment, the economics of research and, often, science.

But this response came across as a confession of guilt. Although scientists accept high standards for the use and care of research animals, they are not engaged in some kind of "necessary evil." Appeasement is a losing game. To make concessions on a matter of principle is to concede the principle itself. Then defeat is only a matter of time, as opponents demand complete consistency with their own principle.

Rights Are a Human Concept

"Rights," the idea that the activists are working so hard to enlist in their cause, are a moral concept. Rights stem from the uniquely human capacity to choose values and principles, then act on choices and judgment. Within that context, rights are moral principles stating that, as human beings with the ability to develop and act on moral judgments, we must leave each other free to do so. That is the basis of our claim to political and personal freedom. Rattlesnakes and rats, tigers and sheep, and even our closest animal relatives, chimpanzees, exhibit no ability to comprehend, respect, or act upon rights. The "law of the jungle" is no law at all. Indeed, the concept of rights is profoundly incoherent when applied to animals. It is worse than mistaken; it dangerously subverts the concept of rights itself at a time when human rights worldwide are in need of clear articulation and defense.

Focusing on the Three Rs without exposing and refuting the underlying philosophy of animal rights proved a public relations catastrophe. The research community's basic position should have been that human beings have a right to use animals for human purposes, but also have a responsibility to use animals humanely. The more we emphasized the Three Rs, the stronger the animal rights movement became, and the more money the radical activists raised. This was occurring at the very same time that science was demonstrating noticeable improvements in the handling of laboratory animals.

It is not sufficient for the medical-scientific community to expose the fundamental flaws in the philosophy of animal rights. It must be able to respond to the movement's other,

more utilitarian, arguments against the use of animals in research.

Activists' Arguments Are Weak

Activists assert that animal research is cruel. But their argument misses the point that experimenters usually want to disturb the animal as little as possible, since their goal is to study its natural response to whatever is being tested. An estimated 7 percent of research does employ procedures causing pain in order to understand pain mechanisms in the central nervous system. This kind of experimentation has enabled us to develop effective painkillers.

Activists claim that animal experiments are duplicative. The reality is that today only one out of four grant requests is funded, a highly competitive situation that makes duplicative research scarce. But research does have to be replicated before the results are accepted; and progress usually arises from a series of small discoveries, all elaborating on or overlapping one another. When activists talk about duplication, they betray a fundamental misunderstanding of how science progresses. Nor do they understand scientists. What highly trained, creative individual wants to do exactly what someone has already done?

Activists urge prevention rather than treatment. They say we should urge people to adopt measures such as an altered diet or increased exercise to prevent major illness, so that we would not need so many new treatments. But much of what we have discovered about preventive measures has itself resulted from animal research. You cannot get most cancers to grow in a test tube; you need whole animal studies.

Activists argue that we should use alternatives to animal research. A favorite example is computer simulations. But where do they think the data that are entered into computers come from? To get real answers, one has to feed computers real physiological data. There is an argument that researchers should use PET scans, which can provide an image of how a living human organ is functioning, as a way of avoiding the use of animals. It took Lou Sokoloff at the National Institute of Mental Health eight years of animal research to develop the PET scan methodology. . . .

Moral Self-Doubt

We live in an age of moral self-doubt. Some scientists and other individuals associated with biomedical research in supportive roles have begun to feel guilt over their use of animals. That has spawned a group calling itself the "troubled middle" (a rather presumptuous phrase, suggesting that only they care about the issues raised by animal research). Indeed, a whole industry has grown up around this sense of guilt, with constant, somewhat repetitive conferences focusing on how to oversee research, how to be the perfect member of an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, and how to find alternatives to using animals. These topics are not unworthy, but the conferences give short shrift to the perspectives of working scientists, who rarely appear as major speakers.

Progress toward increased human well-being cannot flourish amid such self-doubt. Scientists and members of the public who support their work must recognize that they are engaged in a struggle for minds. Their own minds therefore must be clear about what justifies animal research when necessary: that human beings are special. Researchers and others must appreciate the value of such work, and must be ready to state unequivocally and publicly that human life comes first. We who work with animals, and those who support the benefits of that work, have made a moral choice, and we must be willing to stand by it.

“By performing illegal actions the Band [of Mercy] was able to directly save the lives of animals by destroying the tool of torture and death.”

Radical Animal Activism Is Justified

Noel Molland

In the following viewpoint Noel Molland maintains that radical animal activism is justified because conventional legal methods do not bring about desired changes in people's thinking or behavior toward animals. He insists that saving animal lives is as important as saving human lives. Molland claims that destroying property and frightening people is often the most effective way to make the public understand the revolutionary nature of the animal rights movement. Noel Molland is a contributor to *No Compromise*, the publication of No Compromise, a direct action animal liberation organization.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. According to Molland, what group did John Prestidge found in 1964?
2. Why was the Band of Mercy formed, in the author's opinion?
3. Why does Molland argue that the Hoechst Pharmaceutical building had to be destroyed?

Noel Molland, "Thirty Years of Direct Action," *No Compromise*, Summer 2002. Copyright © 2002 by *No Compromise*. Reproduced by permission.

It is hard, if not impossible, to say when the Animal/Earth Liberation movement first started. A study of the subject literally takes you back thousands of years to 200 B.C. when people like Pythagoras advocated vegetarianism & animal compassion on spiritual grounds, and to the 1st century A.D. when Plutarch wrote what is widely regarded as the first animal rights literature.

However, the reader will be delighted to know that I am not going to bore you to death with 2000 years of waffle. Instead, I merely intend to look at what occurred 30 years ago this year [2002]. But first, to fully understand the events of 30 years ago, we must look slightly further back than that, to the events of 1964.

During the 19th and 20th centuries Britain saw a wealth of Animal Welfare and Rights groups established. However, these groups by and large relied upon the parliamentary way of legal reform to achieve their aims. This process was incredibly slow and achievements were minor. Even the 1911 Animal Protection Act treated animals as property and offered no protection to wild-born creatures. By the mid-nineteen sixties people started to look around for other ways of campaigning and in 1964 John Prestidge found that new style.

The Hunt Saboteurs Association

In 1964 in Brixham, Devon, England, John Prestidge founded a group that would actively oppose blood sports. Rather than campaigning for parliamentary reforms, John's new group was prepared to directly go out into the fields of Britain and do everything they could, within the law, to prevent the killing of British wildlife: John founded the Hunt Saboteurs Association (H.S.A.).

The popularity of this new form of campaigning was instant. Just a year after the H.S.A. was founded, hunt saboteur groups were active across the English Westcountry in Devon, Somerset and Bristol. Groups also started to emerge outside of the Westcountry in places like Birmingham, Hampshire and Surrey.

Originally a single Devon-based group, the H.S.A. soon became a national network of dedicated activists using lawful methods to disrupt blood-junkies of Britain and to pre-

vent the “green and pleasant lands” from literally becoming the killing fields.

And so it was, in 1971, as part of the ever-expanding H.S.A. network, a new hunt sab [saboteurs] group was formed in Luton. The group was founded by a law student named Ronnie Lee. The Luton hunt sabs, like a lot of other hunt sab groups, soon became very successful in saving the lives of animals. Many a hunt soon found their sadistic day’s entertainment ruined by the Luton Gang.

However, despite the success of the Luton hunt sabs in the field, it soon became apparent to some people within the groups that the strictly legal actions of the H.S.A. could only ever go so far to preventing animal suffering. The problem was that if a hunt is allowed to be active, no matter how good a hunt sab group may be, there is a chance that an animal may be harmed or killed.

Even if the sabs do manage to prevent an animal from being killed, the fear the animal goes through whilst being hunted is tremendous. Contemporary vet reports, gathered at the end of the 20th century, have revealed animals do suffer incredible stress whilst being hunted.

The Hunt Must Never Begin

It was out of this recognition (that strictly legal hunt sabotage couldn’t totally prevent the suffering of an animal) that Ronnie Lee and a few close friends started to look around for other ways to help prevent suffering. They realized that the only real way to prevent any sort of suffering is to assure that the hunt is never allowed to become active in the first place. As soon as an animal is being chased, she is psychologically suffering as she fears for her life. Therefore she has to be assured that ‘the chase’ is never allowed to start in the first place. With this aim in mind, Ronnie Lee, Cliff Goodman and possibly two or three other people, decided to form the Band of Mercy in 1972.

The name the Band of Mercy was chosen because it had been the name of an earlier animal liberation direct action group. During the 19th century, an anti-slavery activist named Catherine Smithies had set up a youth wing to the RSPCA [Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to An-

imals] called the Bands of Mercy. By and large these youth groups were just normal young supporters of the RSPCA who told stories of heroic animal deeds and who took oaths of compassion to the animals. However some of these young Victorian animal rights activists were a little more zealous than others and went around sabotaging hunting rifles. The activities of the Victorian Bands of Mercy became so great that there was even a theatrical play written during which a group of children sabotages a hunting rifle.

For Ronnie Lee and his companions the Victorian Bands of Mercy were a fine example of direct action, so they decided to adopt their not-strictly-legal approach to saving lives.

Initially, the Band of Mercy concentrated on small actions directed against the hunt during the cub-hunting season. Cub hunting is when young hounds are taught to tear young fox cubs apart in order for the hound to get the taste for killing.

The initial actions of the Band of Mercy were very simple and were basically designed around the idea of disabling the hunt vehicles in order to slow down or even stop the hunt from carrying out its murderous activities.

However, the Band of Mercy was very clear from the beginning that it was not merely carrying out acts of wanton vandalism against those whom they opposed but instead their actions were designed around the idea of 'active compassion'. To this aim the Band would always leave a message to the hunters explaining why the Band had carried out their actions, the logic of animal liberation and to show that there was nothing personal against any one individual person.

Illegal Direct Action

The success of the Band of Mercy was soon clear. By carrying out illegal direct action, the Band was able to prevent the hunts. By preventing the hunts from ever becoming active, the Band was safe in the knowledge that not only have they saved the lives of innocent animals, but they had also prevented the psychological suffering of 'the chase'.

Recognizing their true potential for the prevention of animal suffering, the Band then started to think about ways to expand and develop their campaigns. Following on from their early successes the Band soon became much more dar-

ing. Towards the end of 1973, the Band learnt about the construction of a new vivisection laboratory. The research laboratory was being built near Milton Keynes for a company called Hoechst Pharmaceutical.

Breaking the Law Is Not Inappropriate

The overall attempt at creating any type of change, socially or politically, should be looked at as a puzzle, because just like a puzzle we need certain pieces to come together and become whole in order to be successful. Specific to animal liberation, we need those out there spreading the word about animal suffering and clueing the general public in on the vegan lifestyle, to create an overall consciousness. We need those on the legal front enforcing the acknowledgment of animals within the law and looking to ban such inhumane, legal events and practices such as the circus and racing, fur trapping and farming. Amongst the other puzzle pieces that I've neglected to mention as examples of necessary pieces in order for the proper connections to be made that will bring about change and bring this movement to success is directly acting on behalf of the animals or yes, breaking the law. We need those out there breaking the law to bring immediate attention to an extreme situation. We need to present that the extreme situation that the animals are in, does call for extreme measures to be taken on their behalf.

I feel that breaking the law should not be looked at as inappropriate even though it may be seen as such by the vast majority. Those willing to take a stand as the voice for the voiceless, those who value life over property, should look at the concept of breaking the law as secondary to the action itself. What can be accomplished and the necessary aspect of the action itself is what is primary. The fact that a law enacted by the state will be broken posing possible consequences should merely serve as the risk involved when taking such actions.

"Interview with Animal Rights Activist, Peter Schnell," *Liberation Magazine*, April 4, 2003.

Having learnt about its existence, two of the Band's activists visited the vivisection lab building site a few times whilst trying to decide the best course of action to be taken. Together these activists realized that if they could prevent the building from ever being completed, then they could prevent the suffering of animals destined to be tortured within its four walls. The Band had to assure the construction could

never be finished and eventually decided that the best way to destroy the construction was through the use of arson.

By destroying the building, the Band would prevent the vivisectionists from ever being able to start their brand of sadistic 'science'. And even if the damage caused by the fire could be repaired, the restoration work would all cost money that would have to be paid for by Hoechst Pharmaceutical (thus meaning less money to spend on torturing animals).

On November 10th, 1973, the Band of Mercy conducted its first ever action against the vivisection industry. Two activists gained access into the half completed building at Milton Keynes. Once inside the activists set fire to the building. This action was a double watershed for the movement as it was not only the Band's first action against the vivisection industry; it was also the Band's first use of arson.

In that first fire an amazing £26,000 worth of damage was caused. More incredible was six days later, the Band of Mercy returned and started another fire in the same building causing a further £20,000 damage.

To make sure everyone knew why the building was set alight, the Band of Mercy sent a message to the press. The statement read:

"The building was set fire to in an effort to prevent the torture and murder of our animal brothers and sisters by evil experiments. We are a non-violent guerrilla organization dedicated to the liberation of animals from all forms of cruelty and persecution at the hands of mankind. Our actions will continue until our aims are achieved".

After the Milton Keynes arson, the next major action occurred in June 1974 when the Band turned its attention to the bloody seal cull of the Wash along the Norfolk coast.

Stopping the Seal Cull

The seal cull was an annual event and involved hunters going out in two Home Office licensed boats and butchering seals. Seal culling is a bloody attack and the seal has no hope of escape. Knowing how sick the seal cull is the Band obviously wanted to prevent the cull from ever starting. With the goal of preventing the cull from ever starting and regarding the success in the use of arson in the November

1973 action, the Band once again decided to use arson as a campaign tool to destroy the tools of animal murder.

In June 1974 the Band of Mercy set out [on] their second major action. Under the cover of darkness, two activists sought out the Home Office licensed boats. Having found the boats, these transporters of death were then set alight. One of the boats was sadly only slightly damaged by the fire; the other however, was totally destroyed.

After conducting this June 1974 action, the Band of Mercy decided that this time they wouldn't leave a message claiming responsibility. Instead they wanted to leave the sealers wondering what on earth had happened, if those responsible would return and if someone else provided two new boats, if these new vessels would meet with the same fiery fate.

That year there was no seal cull at all due to the actions of the Band of Mercy. Also, besides totally halting the seal cull for that year, there was another knock on effect. Because of the fire, the owner of the two Home Office licensed boats went out of business. And having seen one person's business totally destroyed by the actions of these anonymous arsonists, no one was keen to invest the money into a new business that might very well go the same way. Because of this fear no one has ever attempted to re-start a seal culling business and there has never been a seal cull at the Wash since. Because of the actions of two activists, countless numbers of seals have been saved from the bloody annual seal cull.

Looking back on the June 1974 action it is clear for everyone to see that what happened was an amazing success. Not only were de facto seals saved at the time, but generations of seals to come have also been saved from the seal cullers. Sadly, however, despite the fact the Band of Mercy was saving lives and preventing suffering, not everyone in the animal liberation movement approved of their tactics.

In July 1974 a member of the Hunt Saboteurs Association offered a reward of £250 for information that would inform upon the Band of Mercy. Speaking on behalf of the local sab group the person represented, the spokesperson told the press, "We approve of their ideals, but are opposed to their methods."

How anyone can say they approve of a person's ideals and then side against them by offering a reward for their capture is a total mystery. Fortunately, despite this act of treachery, the Band of Mercy had by now realized its power. By performing illegal actions the Band was able to directly save the lives of animals by destroying the tool of torture and death. Even if the weaker members of the movement rejected the Band's ideas, the Band realized its work had to continue. To stop would be to let the animals down.

The First Animal Rescue

Following the anti-seal action the Band of Mercy then launched its first intensive wave of campaigning against the vivisection industry. In the months leading up to the action at the Wash, the Band of Mercy had been able to gather some inside information about vivisection laboratory animal suppliers. All of this information was gathered and stored, waiting for the day it could be used to its fullest effect. And so it was, that following the action at the Wash, the Band was able to launch straight into a wave of actions against the vivisection industry.

Between June and August 1974 the Band of Mercy launched eight raids against vivisection lab animal suppliers. The main emphasis of the actions was to cause economic sabotage by either damaging buildings or vehicles. But the Band also reached another landmark in their history by carrying out their first-ever animal rescue during this period.

The first Band of Mercy animal rescue happened in Wiltshire in the English Westcountry. A guinea pig farm was targeted and the activists managed to rescue half a dozen of the inmates. Besides being a landmark action for being the first Band of Mercy animal rescue, the action also produced an unexpected but very welcome outcome. The guinea pig farm owner was so shaken by the raid she began to fear that more activists would turn up during the night. With such a fear of the masked strangers breaking into her home, this uncaring capitalist who profited from animal torture took the only course of sensible action: she closed her business.

Besides targeting the vivisection industry, the Band of Mercy also continued to take actions against the hunt. But

not wanting to limit their actions to just two forms of animal abuse, the Band also targeted chicken breeders and the fire-arm lobby. In July 1974, a gun shop in Marlborough was attacked and damaged. The original Victorian Bands of Mercy could surely be proud that their great deeds were being continued in a twentieth-century form.

For a small group of friends, consisting of less than half a dozen activists, the Band of Mercy was able to make a tremendous impact against the animal abusers and their presence was truly felt. Sadly, however, the Band of Mercy's luck ran out in August 1974.

In August 1974 the Band of Mercy targeted Oxford Laboratory Animal Colonies in Bicester. The first action was a success. But then the Band of Mercy made the mistake of returning to O.L.A.C. two days later (I should point out its very easy with hindsight to say it was a mistake to return, but back then it was a perfectly logical action). It was on this second raid the activists, Ronnie Lee and Cliff Goodman, were spotted by a security guard. After being spotted the police were called and Ronnie and Cliff were promptly arrested.

If the police had hoped that the arrests would bring an end to the Band of Mercy, they were very mistaken. The arrest of Ronnie Lee and Cliff Goodman gave a fresh wave of publicity to the Band of Mercy. Rather than being regarded as terrorists, many people viewed the Band as heroes. These two young men were seen as a sort of latter day Robin Hood for the animals. Ronnie and Cliff were soon canonized as the Bicester Two. Throughout the hearing daily demonstrations took place outside the court. Support for the Bicester Two was very strong and came from the most unlikely of quarters. Even Ronnie Lee's local Member of Parliament, the Free Church Minister Ivor Clemitson, joined in the campaign for their release.

Strong Public Support

Despite the strong public support for the Bicester Two, both Ronnie Lee and Cliff Goodman were given three years imprisonment. A letter published in the *Daily Telegraph* shows the anger felt at the outcome of the first animal liberation trial.

“Many would sympathize with their action against the utterly diabolical and largely unnecessary form of cruelty involved in animal experimentation. These young men, while defying the law, showed great courage, and the sentences of three years imprisonment seems unrealistic and harsh.”

Now, it is said you can't keep a good Animal/Earth liberation activist down. This is certainly true in the case of Ronnie Lee. After the sentencing, Ronnie and Cliff split up. Ronnie was moved to Winchester prison and Cliff went back to Oxford prison (whilst on remand [awaiting trial] both Ronnie and Cliff were inmates of Oxford prison).

At Winchester prison Ronnie discovered that provisions for vegans in prison were less than desirable. So once at Winchester, to try and assure a decent meal and proper vegan clothing Ronnie went on a hunger strike. This hunger strike gained a great deal of media attention and once again the issue of animal liberation was being openly discussed. With the spotlight once again being focused on animal liberation Ronnie soon expanded his hunger strike demands to include issues revolving around Porton Down, the Government's chemical and biological warfare research station, where horrific animal experimentation goes on. . . .

Both Cliff Goodman and Ronnie Lee only served a third of their sentence and were both paroled after 12 months in the spring of 1976.

Being in jail had affected both of the Bicester Two, but in totally different ways. Cliff Goodman came out of prison with just one thought: he didn't want to go back inside. He decided he wasn't a revolutionary and wanted to stick to strictly legal campaigning in the future. Sadly, whilst in prison, Cliff decided to turn informer and gave the police a great deal of information about the use of radios by the Band of Mercy. For this act of treachery, Cliff was given the title of the movement's first 'grass' (police informer).

The Birth of the Animal Liberation Front

Ronnie, on the other hand, was given a new sense of determination and realized there was widespread public support for animal liberation illegal direct action. Whilst in prison Ronnie read widely on the subject of the labor movement.

With this knowledge and his pure determination, he started to plan a more revolutionary animal liberation group, a group that could indeed achieve animal liberation. . . .

Upon his release Ronnie gathered together the remains of the Band of Mercy. He was also able to find a couple dozen more new recruits for the illegal direct action animal liberation movement. Under Ronnie's gaze the new gathering (of approximately 30 people) was able to plan its future. With Ronnie as a leading light, the group could develop and expand the work of the Band of Mercy. This was a revolutionary group and everyone knew it.

The only problem for the group was the name the Band of Mercy. The name was no longer appropriate. It didn't fit the new revolutionary feel. A new name was needed. A name that would haunt the animal abusers. A name whose very mention could symbolize a whole ideology of a revolutionary movement. A name that was more than a name. With all this in mind Ronnie selected the name the Animal Liberation Front; the A.L.F.

“Latent violence is behind every law, every rule, and every requirement in any collectivist undertaking.”

Socialists Encourage Violent Extremism

Brian Paterson

Socialism, Brian Paterson argues in the following viewpoint, is a political system based on violence and coercion. According to Paterson, socialism creates no new wealth or property but rather redistributes what already exists. He insists that the forced redistribution of wealth inherent in socialism makes it a poor choice for the twenty-first century. Brian Paterson is a mainframe and PC computer programmer who originated and maintains the www.screwedupworld.com Web site.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. In the author's opinion, why do some people consider capitalism a universal monster?
2. According to Paterson, in a socialist society, what will happen if you ignore a command to redistribute your wealth?
3. What new political ideas did the Enlightenment offer the Western public forum, in Paterson's opinion?

Brian Paterson, "New-Age Socialism," www.screwedupworld.com, 2000. Copyright © 2000 by Brian Paterson. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.

Although in many ways I do not fit the sensitive, New-Age guy profile, I do enjoy reading some authors of a transformational or modern philosophical bent. And over the years, I've noticed that many New-Age type people whom I either read about or talk with seem to accept some form of collectivism as a given in progressive thinking.

This was brought home to me while reading an article in *Yoga Journal* by someone who was emphasizing to readers that their life challenges were their own and not the cause of some external force. In making his point, he put forth a list of things to which people commonly attribute their unhappiness (spouse, job, boss, etc.) and concluded that list with, "no, not even Capitalism is to blame". And it wasn't intended sarcastically.

The columnist's easy use of Capitalism as a universal monster struck me as rather odd. I do know that references to the goodness of collectivism are common in New-Age or "progressive" writings and I would be the first to agree that having less attachment to material things and sharing freely with others is undoubtedly a more evolved outlook.

Nothing New Is Created

But collectivism—Socialism—does neither. First of all, it stresses enormous attachment to (usually others') possessions and emanates from the very un-New-Age outlook of "scarcity" thinking. Socialism rarely creates anything new; rather it looks at what free people have already created and redistributes it, according to what is popular at the time.

Secondly, it is a system based entirely on coercion and violence—forcing other people at gunpoint to do things with their possessions and their livelihoods that they would not have done by choice. Over-the-top hyperbole, you say? Try ignoring a command to redistribute your wealth. If you do so long enough, people will eventually come to your house with guns, take you away and incarcerate you. We call it going to prison for tax evasion.

That latent violence is behind every law, every rule, and every requirement in any collectivist undertaking. And it has been my experience that, just as Mom always said, any matter brought to bear through violence or the threat thereof, is

only a short-term solution at best. No matter how noble the cause—whether you are planning to cure cancer or distribute food—taking people’s money at gunpoint is not a morally sound long-term proposition. And, no, the fact that you get to vote on it doesn’t make it any more so.

Socialism Creates Terror

The left’s vision was man as a selfless slave of the state, and the state as the omniscient manager of the economy. However, instead of prosperity, happiness and freedom, Communism and Socialism produced nothing but poverty, misery and terror (witness Soviet Russia, North Korea and Cuba, among others). Their system had to fail, because it was based on a lie. You cannot create freedom and happiness by destroying individual rights; and you cannot create prosperity by negating the mind and evading the laws of economics.

Edwin A. Locke, *Capitalism Magazine*, May 1, 2002.

If I were to suggest that you should be forced to work unpaid for two days each week but you get to vote on where, you would be outraged. You would correctly call it slavery. Yet when I propose that you can work wherever you like, but I will take the fruits of two (or three) days from each week’s labor, you wouldn’t bat an eye. You would correctly call it taxation. Then, when that money is handed out to a properly anointed cause, those doing the handing can proclaim what a generous people we are, never addressing the awkward fact that the money was in fact “contributed” more out of the wish to avoid federal prison rather than anything resembling authentic generosity.

Individuals Choose What Works

If people voluntarily choose to live and share in a communal situation, I think that’s great. I personally would become highly annoyed living in close quarters with a group and having to vote on everything that happens. But, thanks to the wisdom of our forefathers when they created a Constitutional Republic, you don’t have to live my way either.

As opposed to in a simple majority-rule democracy, you can choose what works for you with the comforting knowledge that it cannot ever be voted on by people you don’t

even know. And that actually sounds pretty progressive to me. For although we may take it as self evident today, it was at that time truly new thought born of the Enlightenment movement in Europe. The importance of that can't be over-emphasized—that rather than a new spin on old ideas, it was thought that had never before happened in the Western public forum.

So, modern pundits notwithstanding maybe the “new” ideas of the 1970's are actually more rooted in weary Marxism of the 1870's than in the authentically new age thinking of the 1770's.

“Without a mass Marxist party offering clear socialist alternatives to capitalism people will turn to all sorts of strange actions and ideas for answers.”

Socialism Would Benefit Society

John Fisher

The reconstruction of society along socialist lines will end the anger and cynicism of youth caused by the violence and destructiveness of capitalism, John Fisher claims in the following viewpoint. Fisher argues that young people who reject American culture by embracing radical religious views are seeking an alternative to the decaying values of capitalism that only socialism can provide. Further, he maintains that the benefits of socialism offer young people a future that capitalism cannot match. John Fisher is an executive member of the Socialist Alliance, a socialist organization in England.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. In Fisher's opinion, why are Marxists not surprised by the actions of John Walker and Charles Bishop?
2. According to the author, why were Walker and Bishop attracted to religious fanaticism?
3. Who will guide the forward movement of humanity as a whole, in Fisher's opinion?

John Fisher, "Domestic Symptoms of Capitalism in Decay," *Youth for International Socialism*, www.newyouth.com, January 7, 2002. Copyright © 2002 by Wellred. Reproduced by permission.

Recently an American by the name of John Walker was found in the ranks of the [Muslim fundamentalist] Taliban. A young boy, Charles Bishop, also recently flew a small plane into a tall Florida office building. In his pocket was found a hand written note expressing support for [Arab terrorist Osama] bin Laden. To many these occurrences are shocking, to Marxists they are no surprise. Global capitalism is in the epoch of its senile decay. Not even suburban America is safe from the cancer of this rotten system.

Unknowingly the two mentioned individuals have expressed discontent not just with American culture, but with capitalism as a whole. They have rejected American society, but have embraced reactionary religious fanaticism. Without a clear alternative to the problems and filth capitalism has created they have turned into the shock troops of reaction. Without a mass Marxist party offering clear socialist alternatives to capitalism people will turn to all sorts of strange actions and ideas for answers.

Angry Youth

Why though is the rottenness of capitalism popping up so close to home? Today's suburban kids have "everything they need, they go to school, they have their TVs, their video games, their music."

Young Americans and Western Europeans are angry. But again, why? The apologists of capital say, "what is wrong with these kids, they have everything they want!" They're angry because the system of capitalism offers them no real future. On the news they see wars raging in ex-colonial nations thanks to the consequences of imperialism. In their own country they see mass violence, such as school shootings (yet another product of the American culture created by a decaying capitalism). In their own homes they see their parents at each other's throats over money, it is no wonder violence and anger is all the "rage" in the West among the youth. Multiply this scenario by millions with thousands of different variations and it is no surprise the cancer of capitalism is popping up in the intestines of the beast itself.

How does this end? How does the anger and cynicism of the youth end? It will end along with the rotten system which

created it—capitalism. The answer is not the injection of hypocritical religious morals into the schools but the conscious revolutionary reconstruction of society along socialist lines.

Socialism Offers a New Social and Economic Order

The Socialist Party strives to establish a radical democracy that places people's lives under their own control—a non-racist, classless, feminist, socialist society in which people cooperate at work, at home, and in the community.

Socialism is not mere government ownership, a welfare state, or a repressive bureaucracy. Socialism is a new social and economic order in which workers and consumers control production and community residents control their neighborhoods, homes, and schools. The production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not for the private profit of a few. Socialism produces a constantly renewed future by not plundering the resources of the earth.

Michigan Socialist Party, www.michigansocialist.net, 2004.

How will this happen though? Not through religious fundamentalism, not through any sort of reforms even. It will end through the building of a mass party of the proletariat. Only through the conscious efforts of the working class guided by an aware Marxist leadership will the socialist reconstruction of society be possible and with that the movement forward of humanity as a whole.

“The FBI now considers . . . ‘ecoterrorism’ . . . to be America’s most serious form of domestic terror.”

Radical Environmentalists Are Terrorists

Brad Knickerbocker

Brad Knickerbocker argues in the following viewpoint that attacks by radical environmentalists such as the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) are now considered serious acts of terrorism. While ELF’s acts of vandalism and arson have not yet physically hurt anyone, Knickerbocker contends that the group has threatened to use guns if necessary to achieve its ends. Moreover, the U.S. government defines terrorism as the “unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property,” which clearly includes ELF acts such as burning down construction projects and blowing up SUVs. Brad Knickerbocker is a staff writer for the *Christian Science Monitor*.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. According to Knickerbocker, until the San Diego fire, what was ELF’s largest attack?
2. Why is it difficult to arrest or prosecute ELF ecoterrorists, in the author’s opinion?
3. In Knickerbocker’s opinion, how do mainstream environmentalists regard ELF’s tactics?

Brad Knickerbocker, “Firebrands of ‘Ecoterrorism’ Set Sights on Urban Sprawl,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 6, 2003. Copyright © 2003 by The Christian Science Publishing Society. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.

Environmental activism's darker side is turning from wild nature to the urban jungle. Among its targets: posh housing developments, car dealerships hawking sport utility vehicles, and military-recruiting stations.

The latest attack came [in early August 2003] when a large condominium project under construction in an upscale San Diego neighborhood burned to the ground. A banner stretched across the charred site read: "If you build it—we will burn it. The E.L.F.s are mad." In e-mails to regional newspapers, the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) claimed responsibility for the conflagration that also damaged nearby homes.

Domestic Terrorism

Property damage in the name of environmental protection dates back to the "monkey wrenching" advocated by groups like Earth First. But trashing logging trucks and driving spikes into old-growth trees pales in comparison to recent events—arson and vandalism of luxury homes, and violent assaults on the symbols of urban sprawl. SUVs have been vandalized or firebombed in Santa Cruz, Calif., Eugene, Ore., and Erie, Pa. At the US Navy recruiting headquarters in Montgomery, Ala., cars were spray painted with antiwar messages and a truck was set on fire. The FBI now considers such attacks—dubbed "ecoterrorism"—to be America's most serious form of domestic terror.

Still, it's not clear why activists targeted the San Diego apartments. Despite the size of the complex—at 1,500 units, it's one of southern California's largest apartment-construction projects—the La Jolla Crossroads was hardly controversial, raising nary an eyebrow when plans came before city officials a few years back.

"It wasn't a big item on our radar," says Richard Miller, chair of the local Sierra Club chapter. The condos did take up open space and will of course contribute to urban growth and traffic, Mr. Miller says. But on the other hand, the project met environmentalists' goals, providing housing for hundreds of people in a fairly small space and setting aside apartments for poor and middle-income residents.

Until the San Diego fire, the largest such attack was the 1998 burning of a new ski resort in Vail, Colo., which critics

Earth Liberation Actions in 2002

The total direct actions for Earth liberation that occurred in 2002 were 53, down from 65 in 2001, an 18% decrease. January was by far the busiest month with 10 actions recorded.

There were 49 actions in the US, in 16 different states, and 4 in Canada, in 2 provinces. Oregon was the most active state with 10 actions recorded, followed by Virginia with 7. California had 6 and Pennsylvania recorded 5. . . .

New developments dominated the issues focused on with 13 actions taken against various new homes and building projects. Forest issues accounted for 10 actions while cars and SUVs took 8. 91 vehicles were targeted.

Monthly Totals	States/Provinces
January10	AZ01
February02	CA06
March02	CO02
April05	IN01
May02	KY01
June05	MA02
July06	ME01
August04	MI01
September06	MN04
October06	MT01
November01	OR10
December04	PA05
	TX01
	UT02
	VA07
	WA04
	BC03
	ONT01

Issues

development13
forest/environment related10
cars & SUVs08
GMO06
police & government06
powerlines05
corporate01
education01
golf01
olympics01
sexism01

North American Animal Liberation Front press office, 2002.

had said would eliminate a vast habitat for the threatened Canada lynx.

The fundamental factor behind the ELF—apparently the main motivator of such attacks—is that “the profit motive caused and reinforced by the capitalist society is destroying all life on this planet,” according to the ELF website. “The only way, at this point in time, to stop that continued destruction of life is to . . . take the profit motive out of killing.”

Violence Is Allowed

ELF “guidelines” include taking “all necessary precautions against harming any animal, human and non-human.” But they also include a call to “inflict economic damage on those profiting from the destruction and exploitation of the natural environment.”

An ELF “communiqué” taking responsibility for last September’s [2002] firebombing of a US Forest Service research station in Pennsylvania declared: “While innocent life will never be harmed in any action we undertake, where it is necessary, we will no longer hesitate to pick up the gun to implement justice, and provide the needed protection for our planet that decades of legal battles, pleading, protest, and economic sabotage have failed . . . to achieve.”

The group’s website includes a 37-page how-to manual titled “Setting Fires With Electrical Timers.”

The ELF is an ideological cousin to the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), a group that began in England about 12 years ago as a more radical alternative to Earth First. The ELF claimed its first “action” in the United States in 1997—releasing wild horses and torching a US Bureau of Land Management corral near Burns, Ore.

Since then, it’s claimed credit for what it says are hundreds of attacks and some \$50 million in damages. The FBI does not dispute those figures.

Few Arrests

Few arrests or prosecutions have followed from the violent actions of environmentalists or animal-rights advocates—and, indeed, most such crimes remain unsolved. One “eco-terrorist” on the FBI’s “wanted” list is Michael James Scar-

pitti, accused of torching concrete mixing trucks and Oregon logging equipment.

The ELF has no central location, leadership, or hierarchy. It's organized into autonomous cells that work independently and anonymously. Its "communiqués" and website are managed by supporters without clear links to ELF crimes.

While mainstream environmentalists generally reject ELF tactics, some activists object to the portrayal of the group's assaults on property as "terrorism": So far, at least, the vandalism, even the violence, has not caused any death or major injury.

But the federal government defines "terrorism" as "the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives"—a definition that would appear to match the aims and activities of the ELF.

“Acts of [environmental sabotage] are entirely justified and are, indeed, both necessary and effective.”

Ecoterrorism Is Justified

Emily Kumpel

Radical environmentalism is justified because less violent tactics have not proven effective in stopping the destruction of the environment, Emily Kumpel argues in the following viewpoint. She insists that many radical environmentalists address the immediate need to protect what is left of the environment at any cost. Although Kumpel is uncomfortable with the destructiveness of ecoterrorist acts, she supports them because they effect necessary change. Emily Kumpel is a student at Johns Hopkins University.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. What is deep ecology, in the author's opinion?
2. What is the central goal behind ecoterror, according to the author?
3. Why have strategies to crack down on ecoterrorism not worked, according to Kumpel?

Emily Kumpel, "In Defense of Radical Environmentalism," www.takingitglobal.org, August 18, 2002. Copyright © 2002 by Taking It Global. Reproduced by permission.

The immediate danger facing the environment and the human cause of this destruction are clear to many activists around the globe. Also acknowledged is that something must be done. However, there are many different types of environmentalists out there with a wide range of tactics and philosophies used to justify their actions and guide them in their defense of the wild. One movement of extreme environmental activism has been dubbed "ecoterrorism" or "ecotage". Ecoterrorism is defined in the dictionary as "terrorism or sabotage committed in the name of environmental causes," while these groups themselves describe it as nonviolent direct action. According to the FBI, ecoterrorism is "the use or threatened use of violence of a criminal nature against innocent victims or property by an environmentally-oriented, subnational group for environmental-political reasons, or aimed at an audience beyond the target, often of a symbolic nature." David Foreman, the founder of a self-described "radical" environmental group Earth First!, asserts that, "We can have big wilderness, and we can reintroduce extirpated species, but unless the fact that there are way too many people on the earth is dealt with, unless the idea that the world is a resource for us to use is dealt with, unless humans can find their way home again, then the problems will continue."

Many ecoterrorists ascribe to what is known as deep ecology, and their actions address the immediate need to protect what is left—preventing, for example, the logging of a particular forest or the death of a single whale—as well as suggesting a change in the fundamental way we think of ourselves and of our place in nature. As Foreman explained, "... we had to offer a fundamental challenge to Western civilization." The group's motto is "No compromise in defense of Mother Earth."

Earth First! uses "confrontation, guerrilla theater, direct action and civil disobedience to fight for wild places and life processes." While they do not actually "condone or condemn monkey wrenching, ecotage, or other forms of property destruction," they do provide a network for activists to discuss creative ways of opposing environmental destruction. According to Bill McKibben, "Earth First! and the few

other groups like it have a purpose, and that purpose is defense of the wild, the natural, the nonhuman." However, there is a line between civil disobedience and nonviolent direct action in that the latter includes monkey wrenching and criminal destruction of property. Other groups, such as the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), which broke off from Earth First! when others wanted to "mainstream" the group, and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) are well known for their acts of ecotage. According to the FBI, the ELF and the ALF are "serious terrorist threats(s)." Tactics include disabling logging machinery, placing activists in front of whaling ships, destroying airstrips, spiking trees, and arson.

Deep Ecology Is a Defense

How do these environmentalists justify destroying human creations for the sake of a single living thing or small forest? This movement finds its defense in deep ecology and eco-centric ethics, major religions and new age philosophy, and, sometimes, conventional wisdom.

In defense of ecoterrorism, I will put forward that these actions are dictated by the Earth Liberation Front Guidelines, which are as follows: "1. To inflict economic damage on those profiting from the destruction and exploitation of the natural environment. 2. To reveal and educate the public on the atrocities committed against the earth and all species that populate it. 3. To take all necessary precautions against harming any animal, human and non-human."

The central goal behind ecoterror beliefs is to shift the focus away from humans and onto the entire ecosystem. McKibben describes Earth First! as "one of the purest examples of putting the rest of creation ahead of exclusively human needs." Changing the anthropocentric view of the environment is the heart of many environmental philosophies. However, these philosophies often dictate only how we think, not our actions. Ecoterrorists take this to heart and use traditionally drastic measures to accomplish their goals.

First, we as humans are not superior and therefore either all living things should be treated the same, or the whole of the community should come before the good of the individual. The first is a biotic view of ecology, incorporating Albert

Schweitzer's notion of a "reverence for life." In resolving conflicts between man and nature, he suggests this order: 1. self-defense 2. proportionality 3. minimum wrong 4. distributive justice 5. restitutive justice. Ecoterrorists protect the life of both living beings and natural systems from human destruction when the human destruction is a function of our wants, not our needs. In Colorado, for example, ecoterrorists committed an incredibly costly act of ecotage, burning five buildings at the Vail Ski Resort in 1998. The ski resort was constructed despite the outcries of the public and environmentalists, as the company clear-cut what was supposed to remain untouched wilderness. While human property was destroyed, no humans or other living things were harmed. "They ask, why is more ski terrain, miles of roads, bathrooms and a warming house more important than the habitat of creatures man has already pushed to the brink of extinction?" This protection by ecotage—while extreme by many standards—is justified by Schweitzer's system. Humans had no claim to self-defense, the proportional gain for our species was not enough, there was no way to do a minimum wrong, and there is so little land left that there is no fair way to make up the destruction in another area. And, if we accept that all life should be respected and cared for, then we should do all we can to protect life from human destruction.

Earth Liberation Front Guidelines

1. To cause as much economic damage as possible to a given entity that is profiting off the destruction of the natural environment and life for selfish greed and profit,
2. To educate the public on the atrocities committed against the environment and life,
3. To take all necessary precautions against harming life.

North American Earth Liberation Front press office, 2001.

In one of the most well known defenses of environmentalism, Aldo Leopold upholds that, "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." We have an obligation to uphold the stability of the system. Ecoterrorism serves to protect the biotic community using

methods that, while destroying human creations, still do not benefit the community. Human creations are not included as a part of this biotic community, and most methods of ecotage in the environmental movement serve to protect wild areas from human expansion. Any infringement by humans into this area would disrupt our ecosystem's integrity, stability, and beauty; therefore, it is wrong. Ecoterrorist acts are consequently right because they protect those values.

The Land Ethic View

The land ethic view of environmental philosophy incorporates both living and nonliving entities, and it puts the stability of the community above individual lives. In this belief, humans have no superiority in nature, and we, as humans, are responsible for righting our wrongs—for example, reintroducing species to an area if we caused their extinction. The strongest criticism of this approach is also the strongest support for ecotage; it “condones sacrificing the good of individuals to the good of the whole,” which is indeed just what the movement is doing. Bill McKibben also suggests that “individual suffering—animal or human—might be less important than the suffering of species, ecosystems, the planet.”

The FBI considers these ecoterrorist organizations to be domestic terrorist groups, and many mainstream environmentalists working to protect the same wilderness areas are opposed to monkey wrenching. Environmentalists, politicians, business leaders, and the public alike have all brought up many arguments against the use of ecotage. Some argue that we as humans are a part of nature and our evolution has led us to superiority over the rest of the environment. Therefore we should be in control of the environment, letting our own natural evolution take its course. By downsizing our lives to preserve the environment we are going against the natural course of things.

Ecoterrorists (and others) reply that we are addicted to consumerism as well as growth and expansion. Just because that is the way it has always been does not mean that it is right; evolution changes things. Perhaps our evolution is not in taking control of the earth, but in learning to stop our growing and settle down. [David] Orr states that economic

growth is the target of our society because growth is “the normal state of things.” However, our natural resources are finite, and can only hold so many people and offer so much, therefore, economic growth has to be finite at some point as well. People, especially workers, do things because that’s just the way it is and how it’s always been “And we don’t want to change,” McKibben suggests. “Jim wants to log as he always has. I want to be able to drive as I always have and go on living in the large house I live in and so on.” As a result we have begun to decline as human beings by staying the same, because material goods are no longer fulfilling and there is no more meaningful work left to be done. The cultural sickness dubbed “influenza” is used to describe our addiction to material goods and the absurdity of it all. Ecotage contributes to reducing our lifestyles and the material goods and lifestyles within. . . .

Extreme Action Is Not Pragmatic

Others, especially more traditional environmentalists, argue that extreme action is simply not pragmatic in the society in which we live. According to this argument, ecoterrorism ignores the culture and the political system we work in, and we cannot just disregard that. They argue that ecoterrorists make it hard for other environmental activists working from within the system because they lose respect for all other environmental causes. In our current political system, there are so many things that are going on in voter’s minds and environmentalism is only one of many. Equating environmentalism with extremism is not going to help gain any votes.

However, according to an ABC reporter who investigated the ecotage movement, ecoterrorists have exhausted all of the traditional options before turning to destruction. “. . . though there are many many environmental groups out there who use traditional approaches like lobbying Congress and protesting timber sales, ELF regards mainstream groups as sell-outs, and corporate puppets . . . they saw these techniques fail time and time again to stop the march of industry on nature.” The Earth First! website asks readers if they are tired of, “namby-pamby environmental groups” and “overpaid corporate environmentalists who suck up to bureau-

crats and industry." Ecoterrorists are not looking to uphold the system and work within it, but are instead looking to change people's attitudes and see extreme actions as the only way to both protect the immediate needs of the environment and drastically inspire a change of attitude. These acts probably do make environmentalists as a whole lose credibility in the political and economic world, though ecoterrorists argue that the political, economic, and moral world we currently live in is what itself needs to be changed and working within the system will not accomplish that.

Ecoterrorism does challenge the way we think about the system and many activists' view of how to work within the system. Yet their methods have proven effective in saving individual wild lands and living beings.

Another argument against ecoterrorism is that even though many activists say that they aren't harming human lives, destruction of property is destroying people's jobs and is therefore destroying livelihoods. A contributor to *Nature* magazine described Earth First!'s methods as showing a "deep insensitivity to human suffering." One of the newer arguments against ecotage in the United States [after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks] is that if foreign terrorism is not acceptable, then domestic terrorism like ecotage is not acceptable either. Some environmentalists are even accused of "environmental fascism."

Environmental Destruction

But many also recognize that the environmental destruction that humans are creating because of our view of the earth as a resource for our own use is threatening our health and that of our children. Richard Falk calls for tougher strategies in order to produce results, suggesting that we, "engage concrete sources of resistance, including human depravity and greed . . . moral concern is serious only if it includes active participation in ongoing struggles against injustice and suffering." McKibben says of deep ecology's reductionist approach, ". . . they are extreme solutions, but we live in an extreme time. . . . If industrial civilization is ending nature, it is not utter silliness to talk about ending—or, at least, transforming—industrial civilization," and that "the thinking is more radical than

the action.” Many actions we collectively take, such as the nuclear arms buildup and our cultural obsession with fast food and Coca-Cola, are all considered irrational, yet we do it. So why not ecoterrorism? Links have been made between slavery and today’s exploitation of natural resources such as fossil fuels and animals. Radical actions ended slavery, and radicalism powered the civil rights movement, native independence, and many other great progressive moves throughout history. So why not ecoterrorism? Nature is dying, according to McKibben, and he urges us to give the end of nature our best fight. “We are different from the rest of the natural order, for the single reason that we possess the possibility of self-restraint, or choosing some other way.”

And the suggestions to crackdown on ecoterrorism post 9-11 have not worked. Richard Berman, the executive director of the Center for Consumer Freedom, asked Congress to cut funding to ecoterrorist groups, much like it did to the Al Qaeda network [responsible for the September 11 attacks]. He asked that their nonprofit status be taken away, or that groups like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine that have supposedly given support to ecoterrorist groups in the past be reprimanded in some way. However, this proposal did not gain much support. So far, the ELF and ALF members have been very effective in avoiding the authorities because they are so decentralized and act within cells of one to several members. Funding does not seem to be a key issue for the group.

While ecoterrorists describe themselves as subscribers to deep ecology, I find that the strongest arguments to justify their actions instead come from a mixture of many environmental philosophies. Indeed, based on any view of the environment that puts the emphasis away from humans, I find it hard not to support the use of ecoterrorism to prevent destruction.

Ecoterrorism Is Justified

Yet I also feel myself so entrenched in this system of the way it has always been that I find it hard to advocate acts of sabotage against the political and economic structure of our world.

I think that acts of ecotage are entirely justified and are, indeed, both necessary and effective, yet I cannot imagine myself being able to actually commit ecoterrorism. Looking at radical animal rights groups like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, I entirely disagree with most of their tactics, and yet, it was their tactics that caused me to become vegan. Like many supporters of "extreme" environmental activists, I may disagree with the destructive and damaging nature of such tactics, yet I cannot argue with their effectiveness.