

North American Animal Liberation Press Office Newsletter

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Welcome to the inaugural newsletter of the North American Animal Liberation Press Office (NAALPO). In the past, the Animal Liberation Movement (ALM) has had various spokespersons, but they have quit. This is partly because of the problematic nature of one person speaking on behalf of the entire movement, and, more importantly, because of intense harassment by police and the FBI. Despite continuous actions taken by the ALM against animal exploiters, there has been no recent spokesperson or press office for media to contact in order to obtain accurate information about ALM actions.

Subsequently, police, federal agents, and animal exploitation industry representatives and front groups have monopolized reporting on the ALM, resulting in skewed, partial, and inaccurate journalism. Given the active nature of the ALM, its ethical, social, and historical importance, and biased and inaccurate reporting on animal liberation actions, we felt it imperative to establish the North American Animal Liberation Press Office.

NAALPO exists to communicate the actions, strategies, and philosophy of the animal liberation movement to the media and the public. Many of these actions are illegal within the existing societal structure that fails to recognize the rights of non-human animals to live free of suffering, but validates and promotes the "right" of industries to do whatever they want to animals for profit or research. Given the clandestine nature of their actions, those in the underground working for animal liberation cannot speak out directly. Nevertheless, their actions and message is urgent and deserve to be heard and understood.

Since animal liberation actions either go unreported in the media or are uncritically vilified as "violent" and as "terrorist" with no attention paid to the suffering that industries and individuals gratuitously inflict on animals, NAALPO seeks to clarify the motivation and nature of actions taken in defense of animals and thereby to offer a more accurate representation. Consequently, the Press Office provides the larger historical, social, and philosophical context necessary to understand illegal direct actions taken on behalf on captive animals.

In addition to our contact information, our website posts anonymous communiqués from underground animal liberation activists as we receive them, our press releases, a record of our interviews and media coverage on specific issues, links to other media coverage, and resources providing important critical information on key animal exploitation industry groups such as the Center for Consumer Freedom.

In time, we hope to greatly expand our network so that reporters from any area of the country can easily access a NAALPO representative for information and interviews. Meanwhile, on a monthly basis, we intend to send to national and local media this newsletter featuring news updates, important recent articles and scientific studies, and suggested books and other information resources. Our website will be continuously revised, improved, enriched, and updated with breaking communiqués and stories on animal liberation actions. We hope you find this information valuable and will use NAALPO staff and resources for your reporting on animal liberation actions.

Steven Best, PhD
Camille Hankins
Angie Metler
Jerry Vlasak, MD

New findings about animal experiments

December 29, 2004 Wednesday 5:31 PM EST

A study says mice, rabbits, rats, beagles and other animals all show more physiological stress to routine laboratory procedures than previously known. Until now, experts had viewed such stress as relatively benign.

The new findings by ethologist Jonathan Balcombe of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine are published in Contemporary Topics in Laboratory Animal Science.

The findings say a mouse which is picked up and briefly held experiences several physiological reactions. As stress-response hormones flood the bloodstream, the mouse exhibits a racing pulse and a spike in blood pressure.

In rats and mice, the growth of tumors is strongly influenced by how much the animals are handled, the study says.

Until now, humane concerns focused mainly on the experiments themselves. The new findings suggest that routine procedures, such as blood draws and use of stomach tubes, are terrifying for animals.

"In essence, there is no such thing as a humane animal experiment," says Balcombe. "Fear or panic ensues when the animal is touched or stuck with a needle."

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Study: Rats have head for language

Three types of mammals shown to have such language skills

Sunday, January 9, 2005 Posted: 8:24 PM EST (0124 GMT) CNN.com

WASHINGTON (Reuters) -- Rats can use the rhythm of human language to tell the difference between Dutch and Japanese, researchers in Spain reported on Sunday.

Their study suggests that animals, especially mammals, evolved some of the skills underlying the use and development of language long before language itself ever evolved, the researchers said.

It is the first time an animal other than a human or monkey has been shown to have this skill.

"These findings have remarkable parallels with data from human adults, human newborns, and cotton-top tamarins," the researchers wrote in their report, published in the "Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes," which is published by the American Psychological Association.

For their study neuroscientists Juan Toro and colleagues at Barcelona's Scientific Park tested 64 adult male rats. They used Dutch and Japanese because these languages were used in earlier, similar tests, and because they are very different from one another in use of words, rhythm and structure.

The rats were trained to respond to either Dutch or Japanese using food as a reward.

Then they were separated into four groups -- one that heard each language spoken by a native, one that heard synthesized speech, one that heard sentences read in either language by different speakers and a fourth that heard the languages played backwards. Rats rewarded for responding to Japanese did not respond to Dutch and rats trained to recognize Dutch did not respond to the spoken Japanese.

The rats could not tell apart Japanese or Dutch played backwards.

"Results showed that rats could discriminate natural sentences when uttered by a single speaker and not when uttered by different ones, nor could they distinguish the languages when spoken by different people," the researchers wrote. Human newborns have the same problem, although tamarins can easily tell languages apart even when spoken by different people, the researchers said.

"It was striking to find that rats can track certain information that seems to be so important in language development in humans," Toro said in a statement.

The study shows "which abilities that humans use for language are shared with other animals, and which are uniquely human. It also suggests what sort of evolutionary precursors language might have," he added.

Powerful New Scientific Evidence against Vivisection

The just-published paper refutes the standard vivisection assumption that that animal "models" are predictive for humans. The paper is damning in its results and once published will represent some of the most valuable scientific evidence against vivisection gathered to date. The paper below demonstrates conclusively that animals subject to routine laboratory procedures such as handling, blood draws, and orogastric gavage in all cases and the wide range of species examined suffer marked physiological stress likely to cause psychological distress and distort experimental results (decreasing their reliability). It also shows that the animals do not readily habituate to these stressors over time

A new report published in Contemporary Topics in Laboratory Animal Science finds that mice, rats, rabbits, beagles, geese, and other animals all show measurable physiological stress responses to routine laboratory procedures that have been up until now viewed as relatively benign. The review focused on three commonly performed procedures: handling, blood collection and force-feeding. Independent of the invasive experiments themselves, these daily routines can cause an animal to experience elevated bloodstream concentrations of corticosterone, prolactin, glucose, and epinephrine, all indicators of stress.

The paper generated considerable controversy in the vivisection community during its peer review. After the editor had accepted it for publication, the AALAS (American Association for Laboratory Animal Science—which publishes the journal) executive committee intervened, resulting in the editor's resignation in protest, and a publication delay of five months. An editorial from the committee published in the same issue insinuates that the paper is biased and that it lacks rigor.

Balcombe JP, Barnard N, Sandusky C. 2004 Laboratory routines cause animal stress. Contemporary Topics in Laboratory Animal Science. 43(6): 42-51.

Reviews: Terrorists or Freedom Fighters: Reflections on the Liberation of Animals

Editors Steven Best, PhD and Anthony J. Nocella II.

Lantern Books, 2004, 406 pages.

Terrorists or Freedom Fighters takes a comprehensive and exhaustive look at the inner workings, tactics, ethics, organization and history of the Animal Liberation Front. In the foreword, Ward Churchill sets the stage for readers to examine the methods and belief system of the ALF, a non-hierarchical organization of autonomous groups and individuals bound together by a simple set of guidelines for the protection and equal rights of all animals. Churchill draws correlations between the significance of the ALF's struggle for an end to the subjugation of animals and the great battles fought against apartheid, Nazi genocide, and Jim Crow laws, while analyzing the effectiveness of direct action resistance as opposed to more passive protest. The numerous writers who have contributed essays, for the most part, seem to view the actions of the ALF as imperative steps to combat the genocidal mentalities that allow humans to exert their believed supremacy over animals. The book is an impressive and extensive primer to those outside and inside animal rights communities for understanding the motivations of actions that many consider extreme—even terrorist. An underlying theme of the book and the ALF on the whole is a re-evaluation of the inherent speciesism that allows humans to justify animal abuses such as livestock factory farming, lab testing and fur farming.

A quote in the ALF primer (reprinted in the book) says, "When you see the pictures of a masked liberator, stop asking who's behind the mask and look in the mirror." Certainly these founders were the ancestors of the anarcho-punks and black block protestors of new millennium direct activism. Dr. Maxwell Schnurer points out in his essay "At the Gates of Hell: The ALF and the Legacy of Holocaust Resistance," that these were pages the ALF took from the books of Jewish activists who fought against Nazis in the Third Reich. And these were tactics of the suffragettes fighting for women's rights in the early twentieth century, notes Dr. Mark Bernstein in his essay "Legitimizing Liberation."

Any successful movement should initiate self-reflection and Dr. Judith Barad looks at anger and its link to the motivations for animal liberation acts in her essay "Aquinas' Account of Anger." Should the activist achieve pleasure from fighting for animal lives? The subtlety between retribution as impersonal, implying fairness versus revenge, being personal, involving bias, is defined by revenge being rooted in feelings of anger and its ability to imbue zeal and righteousness when vindicated. Barad looks at the causes of anger, the quandary of its power and the dangers of its excess.

Read either front to back or independently by essay, Terrorists or Freedom Fighters is a powerful compilation of essays that demands readers to question the important issues of animal exploitation and how each of us plays into this systematic oppression. Best and Nocella have compiled an essential reader for both the animal rights newcomer and the seasoned activist.

Michael Wilcock, Clamor Magazine

The quotation from the German poet Goethe at the beginning of the Introduction could well serve as the epigraph of this thought-provoking and important book: "The world only goes forward because of those who oppose it." This anthology of essays by leading members of the animal rights movement is about the tactics and goals of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and about the animal liberation movement generally. Since the book's authors all support the goal of animal liberation and the legitimacy of nonviolent civil disobedience, the book is in effect a family affair. But like all families, especially one as large and feisty as the animal rights community, there are plenty of disagreements about the best way to achieve the goal of animal liberation. Many, but not all, of the authors support direct action that includes sabotage and reject the characterization of property damage as "terrorism."

The book has a good mix of voices. There are essays by professors from Indiana State University ("Aquinas's Account of Anger Applied to the ALF" by Judith Barad), the University of Texas at San Antonio ("Legitimizing Liberation" by Mark Bernstein), North Carolina State University ("How to Justify Violence" by Tom Regan), Marist College ("At the Gates of Hell: The ALF and the Legacy of Holocaust Resistance" by Maxwell Schnurer), and the University of Texas at El Paso ("It's War! The Escalating Battle Between Activists and the Corporate-State Complex" by co-editor Steven Best).

The voices from the aboveground part of the animal rights movement include those of Ingrid Newkirk and Bruce Friedrich of PETA, Dr. Karen Davis of United Poultry Concerns, Kim Stallwood, the former editor of *Animals' Agenda*, and Kevin Jonas, campaign coordinator for the hard-hitting Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) USA campaign to shut down Huntingdon Life Sciences, the infamous animal-testing lab.

Underground viewpoints include those of veteran activists Ron Coronado, Freeman Wicklund, and Paul Watson, the legendary warrior for animals on the high seas, as well as former ALF member Gary Yourofsky (one of Yourofsky's arrests landed him for 77 days in a maximum security prison for freeing 1542 mink in an ALF raid on a Canadian fur farm). One of the book's authors, Nicole Atwood ("Revolutionary Process and the ALF"), is so far underground that she can't be found! The editors got her article from *No Compromise* magazine but "were unable to establish any contact with her."

The ALF is described as "human activists who risk their own liberty to rescue and aid animals imprisoned in the worst forms of hell warped human minds can devise." They are "a decentralized, anonymous, underground global network" of freedom fighters whose bold actions have earned them a spot high up on the FBI "domestic terrorist" list, right up there with real terrorists. Since members of the ALF are convinced that the time for moderation, delay, and compromise is over, they can no longer "fiddle while the earth burns and animal bodies pile up by the billions; they are compelled to take immediate and decisive action."

While the ALF and animal liberation are the focus of this book, the relation of animal liberation to other liberation movements is also apparent. Those who think animal rights people don't care about human issues should read this book. Before Bruce Friedrich went to work for PETA, for example, he spent more than six years working full-time in a Catholic Worker shelter for homeless families and a soup kitchen in Washington, D.C. Rod Coronado, who spent 57 months in federal prison for ALF raids on research laboratories and fur farms, now lives in Tucson, Arizona, where he works at a high school for indigenous young people. Another of the book's Native American authors, Lawrence Sampson is currently the Southern Regional Spokesperson of the American Indian Movement (AIM), where he works to try to bridge the gulf of misunderstanding between Native and non-Native Americans. Patrice Jones, who cares for chickens at the Eastern Shore Sanctuary and Education Center that she co-founded, is also active in the areas of world hunger, racism, and gay rights.

The editors hope that their book will convince others that members of the ALF are not "violent" people, but rather are "concerned and compassionate citizens who cannot tolerate violence toward animals, and who will go to extraordinary lengths to stop extraordinary wrongs" and that the ALF is supported by a wide

spectrum of thinking and caring people from all walks of life. Indeed, they might be "your respectable neighbor or fellow Parent Teacher Association member who destroys traps set by those who intend to harm animals or steals and trashes free circus passes left on store counters."

The editors think the future challenge for the ALF will be to be "as militant and effective as possible without losing the moral high ground, without alienating public support, and without diluting the values of freedom and compassion." Looking back at the abolitionists in the nineteenth century who "broke every law protecting the ownership of slaves and were condemned by the press as violent criminals," they point out that these once reviled abolitionists are presented to schoolchildren today as heroes ahead of their time. "We hope history will someday view the ALF in the same light, and that the ALF proves worthy of the honor."

Charles Patterson, Ph.D., author of Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust, reviewed in Satya Magazine

As a decentralized underground movement, the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) resists identification and analysis. This collection of two dozen wide-ranging essays uncovers the attitudes, politics, and tactics of animal liberation activists, and provides some history of the movement since its origins in Great Britain, and a bit later, in the US during the 1970's. Nearly all the contributors, including well-know activists Rod Coronado, Ingrid Newkirk, and Paul Watson, are from within the movement. Nevertheless, a range of views emerges. Several contributors, including Tom Regan, argue that destruction of property constitutes violence and the peaceful efforts should be exhausted before resorting to illegal methods. British, Native America, and feminist perspectives are presented. Some of the essays are scholarly and academic, others journalistic; still others are aflame with revolutionary rhetoric. Since 9/11, "terrorism" has taken on a new meaning, and several of the essayists explore the likelihood that all protest movements will be treated by the US government as if they are akin to Al-Qaeda in seeking to disrupt "homeland security." Appendixes and a brief list of contact resources are included. Recommended.

W.P Hogan, Eastern Michigan University.

Choice: Reviews for Academic Libraries

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