

# **Ecoterrorism in the U.S.**

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## Introduction

In early 2005 John Lewis, the Deputy Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, provided testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works concerning the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) stating that these special interest extremist groups were “one of today’s most serious domestic terrorism threats.” (Lewis, 2005) Although the Southern Poverty Law Center offered considerable anecdotal evidence about right-wing group actions and the fact that this threat did not appear in a draft version of an internal document of the Department of Homeland Security. As accurate as the SPLC may be with their assertion the fact remains that the extremist environmental movement has been and is likely to continue to be a considerable threat in the U.S., and throughout the world.

Since the founding of the Sierra Club in 1892 many more organizations have come into existence to affect how the U.S. and the rest of the world use the environment. As the movement grew over time there began a process by which the more radical elements of one group would depart to form another more aggressive organization. This can be seen in the progression from the Sierra Club to Greenpeace, to Earth First!, to the Earth Liberation Front. The same has occurred somewhat in parallel within the animal rights movement. The most recent developments and organizational changes have highlighted a strong correlation between these movements within the United Kingdom and the United States.

## Biocentrism and Speciesism - Foundations for Eco-radicalism

There is a common argument that we are on the brink of environmental destruction in which humans are either the cause or the facilitator. Whether this is true or not is certainly an argument for the scientific communities, but during this academic process there are those that have decided to take a more direct approach to assisting the environment. They justify their actions through a belief in Biocentrism, that all life within the universe is equally valuable, or that humans are not more valuable than other life forms. Biocentrism is a popular term for Deep Ecology, coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess (Deep Ecology, 1999), having the same belief that humans are merely one strand in the web of life. From this has also come the Gaia Theory, stating that the earth is a living organism defined by the interactions of the various organisms in, on, and around the planet. There are, of course, varying degrees of belief with some of the more extreme believers feeling that virus’ and bacteria are not to be tampered with as they are life and therefore valuable. However, there is a consistent belief that humans are one of many valuable forms of life and should not be arbitrarily elevated or permitted to destroy other life on a whim. It is from this that the varied actions of the environmental movement are justified by those involved.

In a similar vein is found the justification for the liberation of animals. These origins may be traced to Darwin’s claim in *The Decent of Man* that “There is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties” (ALEC, 2003). In more recent times the term Speciesism has been used to represent the prejudice and exploitation of animals by humans. In his 1975 book *Animal Liberation*, Peter Singer sets out philosophical discussions on animal equality. One such example

“To avoid Specieism we must allow that beings which are similar in all relevant respects have a similar right to life – and mere membership in our own biological species cannot

be a morally relevant criterion for this right. Within these limits we could still hold that, for instance, it is worse to kill a normal adult human, with a capacity for self-awareness, and the ability to plan for the future and have meaningful relations with others, than it is to kill a mouse, which presumably does not possess all of these characteristics; or we might appeal to the close family and other personal ties which humans have but mice do not have to the same degree; or we might think that it is the consequences for other humans, who will be put in fear of their own lives, that makes the crucial difference; or we might think it is some combination of these factors altogether.” (Singer, 1975)

Although Singer continues in his book to point out that equality of specific animals may vary, as it does with humans, and specifically points out that a normal human may be saved before a mentally disabled person when only one can be saved. From this he offers that to save a human over another animal is not necessarily simply because they are human but because of other characteristics.

“Normally this will mean that if we have to choose between the life of a human being and the life of another animal we should choose to save the life of the human; but there may be special cases in which the reverse holds true; because the human being in question does not have the capacities of a normal human being.” (Singer, 1975)

Another practical example of the application of this belief was given by Dr. Steven Best, a professor of Philosophy at the University of Texas – El Paso, during a speech at the University of Iowa on January 20, 2005. When asked whether he would save a dying baby or a dying dog, Dr. Best answered to the effect that “If a house with his dog and someone he didn’t know was burning, he said he would save his dog” (Zare, 2005).

There is eloquence to the ethos developed by both the animal liberation and the environmental movements to rationalize and justify the lobbying, demonstrations, civil disobedience, monkeywrenching, and terrorism committed in their name. As discussed above, their ideas are based on various statements from many figures in history who argue that animals are individuals with capacity to feel emotion – specifically to suffer – to develop social relationships and therefore are equal to the “human animal.” The environmental movement extends this argument about human abuse to other organisms and resources. Dr. Steven Best, in the Introduction to *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters* makes this comment on the equality of animals:

“Simply stated, animals have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, all of which contradict the property status that is often literally burnt into their flesh.” (Best, 2004).

We should each recognize these rights as the same ones identified in the Constitution of the United States. This concept is further stated on the Animal Liberation Front’s website in an article titled, “Going Underground for the Animal Liberation”:

“Animal rights on the other hand, generally implies that animals should be allowed to live without interference, but suggests by it’s [sic] very title that we should GIVE these ‘rights’ to them, probably by Parliament and ‘acts’ of law!” (Going Underground for Animal Liberation)

The implication in this last quote being that animals already have these “rights” but we humans are oppressing them rather than welcoming them as equals. Since these organisms’ right of existence are equal to that of humans it then follows that humans, through industrial

development, are the wrongdoers by destroying the organisms or the habitats. The humans then become the terrorists that the activists are combating in the name of the animals, or the trees, or any other resource – because they are equal to humans and therefore deserving of the same protections we offer other humans. This then is the explanation that is found repeatedly in the literature to justify “Eco-terrorism” as it is described by society at large. As stated by Paul Watson:

“There are indeed eco-terrorists. Exxon committed eco-terrorism in Alaska. Union Carbide committed acts of eco-terrorism at Bhopal, India. The forest industries commit eco-terrorism each day. These corporations will not be found on any federal list of “terrorist” organizations, because they have money, and money calls the shots in what Mark Twain once described as the “Parliament of Whores” in Washington, DC. The wholesale destruction of our oceans and forests and the incredible assault on biodiversity is terrorism of the highest order – terrorism that is accepted by anthropocentric culture as normal.” (Watson, 2004)

And so as the government and media may call various acts Eco-terrorism, those committing the acts are able to call everyone else Eco-terrorists – or at least consider them complicit.

Followers of this ethos generally adopt either a vegetarian or vegan (Vee Gan) lifestyle. Vegetarians are individuals that do not eat meat and Vegans shun the use of all animal products in their lives. This includes foods, such as meat, cheese, eggs, and butter, leather and other hide shoes and apparel, as well as health and beauty hygiene items that contain animal compounds or are tested on them before delivery to market.

While the Environmental movement and the Animal Liberation movement have common ground there are some areas in which conflicts may arise. The environmental ethic does not preclude the use of animals for food especially if this would have less impact on the environment, as a whole, than producing synthetic products for substitution. Furthermore many environmentalists urge a return to lifestyles similar to those of Native Americans, before their subjugation, arguing for a more harmonious existence with nature, rather than simply living in nature. It should be carefully noted that these lifestyles generally did include the killing of animals for food and goods. These differences do not, however, tend to find their way into the media but instead are reflected in the targets that are chosen by the activists of their respective movements.

## **A Brief History of Notable Organizations**

It would be flawed to try and examine the history of the environmental movement without including discussion and review of the history of the animal rights movement. These two similar movements have often taken different tones concerning the use of the environment and the living organisms within it. Leaders of the various groups in each movement are routinely found as directors or advisors to other groups within either movement. The Sierra Club, founded in 1892, is quite possibly the first organization created expressly for the purpose of affecting public opinion and legislation concerning the environment. Since then many other organizations have been founded or formed to affect societal use of the earth and its environmental resources and to describe the human relationship with them.

In a radio show in February 2003 Professor Mark Somma commented that roughly every ten to twelve years there is a sort of re-radicalization of environmentalism which is caused when

groups that were once considered radical are “mainstreamed” and either become less radical or the actions are not seen as radical enough (KSFR, 2003). While his timeline may not be entirely accurate his concept seems to be. This may also be somewhat attributable to the statement by Oliver Wendell Holmes that, “A mind stretched by a new idea can never go back to its original dimensions.” In the context of the environmental movement it is a matter of perspective over time. As each new generation learns of the previous efforts to protect the environment their ideas then begin at that point. Where John Muir and the Sierra Club may have been concerned with preventing any further destruction, or conversion for human use, of the environment the latest organizations are interested in re-establishing wilderness, including animal and plant species, to their existence before human, and particularly industrial, intervention. Each new generation builds their views, ideas, and objectives from the edges of the previous. The progression from the past to today might look like: protecting current wilderness, to preventing additional destruction, to reintroducing species, and finally to the re-establishing of wilderness areas already in use by humans. Since 2000 there has also been a growing effort to bring the animal rights, environmental and other “social justice” movements together with some stating a belief that single issue activities are unable to produce the widespread societal changes needed. One should be cautioned about the dates represented here for the creation of various organizations because they differ from reference to reference, however it is not necessarily the precise time of announcement that is important but the general timeline of their existence.

#### **Summary Timeline for Notable Organizations**

1892 - Sierra Club  
1954 - Humane Society of the United States  
1960 - Hunt Saboteurs Association  
1971 - Greenpeace  
1972 - Bands of Mercy  
1976 - Animal Liberation Front (ALF)  
1979 - Sea Shepherds  
1980 - Earth First!  
1980 - People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PeTA)  
1992 - Earth Liberation Front (ELF)  
2000 - Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty

### **No Compromise in Defense of Mother Earth (The Environmental Movement)**

As mentioned, the Sierra Club was formed in 1892 and its first action was an effort to prevent the size of Yosemite National Park from being reduced. Since then they have been consistently involved in efforts to preserve the wilderness in the U.S., and as active as they have been they can only be considered radical in the context of the earliest environmental efforts. One statement from their book *ecotactics: The Sierra Club Handbook for Environment Activists* published in 1970 sums up the new, but infantile, direction of the movement:

“A ‘conservation revolution’ may sound like a paradox. Today conservation is ‘in.’ Everyone does it lip service. With the advent of the population scare, it has even replaced motherhood as the safest of all subjects. This has its dangers as well as its

advantages. It can mislead the concerned citizen to think that the values conservationists are fighting for have at last been generally accepted. *It conceals the fact that the conservation movement, though it operates within the law, is in principle revolutionary.*” (Emphasis added) (Sierra Club, 1970)

Much of the modern environmental movement methodology was drawn from the anti-Vietnam War efforts. Rap sessions, teach-ins, and the like were, and still are, tools utilized for educating members and planning actions. Today the Sierra Club is clearly seen as a mainstream conservation group, but it was, however, one group, along with The Wilderness Society and Greenpeace, from which members left to create Earth First! in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Following the Sierra Club by nearly one hundred years was the formation of Greenpeace in 1971. The environmental movement had begun to gain some general acceptance in the 1960's as evidenced the first “Earth Day” in the spring of 1970. Greenpeace's formation occurred in an attempt to stop U.S. nuclear weapons testing in the Aleutian Islands (Scarce, 1990). These actions have set the tone to two fundamental principles of the contemporary movement – direct action and media coverage. The original members included members of the Sierra Club and peace activists and progressed through a series of campaigns from anti-whaling and seal hunt actions to toxic waste concerns. They are one of the largest, if not the largest, environmental action organization in the world. One notable person present at its beginning was Paul Watson and his focus clearly rested on the protection of sea creatures. While leading an action to disrupt a seal hunt near Newfoundland, Watson reportedly threw seal pelts and a hunter's club into the water, and attached himself to a hauling chain used for collecting the pelts; all of which were illegal under local law (Scarce, 1990). The Greenpeace board of directors, of whom Watson was a member, decided that his actions were unacceptable for their organization and voted him out.

After Watson left Greenpeace he obtained funding from Cleveland Amory, President of Friends of the Earth, to purchase a ship, later named Sea Shepherd. In his initial campaign, Watson rammed an illegal whaling vessel and subsequently scuttled his ship to avoid having to surrender it as restitution. Since then The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society has expanded to several vessels and routinely engages in campaigns to prevent and obstruct the use of illegal drift nets and whaling operations. In his chapter “ALF and ELF – Terrorism Is as Terrorism Does” in *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters*, Watson states, “The wholesale destruction of our oceans and forests and the incredible assault on biodiversity is terrorism of the highest order – terrorism that is accepted by anthropocentric culture as normal,” and the Sea Shepherds often defend their own actions by pointing out that they target those who are violating international agreements on whaling and fishing. One grand event occurring in 1986 in Reykjavik, Iceland involved Rod Coronado and another activist David Howett. During this action two whaling ships were sunk in the harbor and considerable damage was done to the meat processing facility. Both activists escaped Iceland before being captured (Scarce, 1990), and Icelandic authorities did not seek charges against either activist. Although the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society grew from the environmental movement it is clearly more appropriately considered an animal liberation group. Watson regularly speaks at animal rights conferences, in particular the annual Animal Rights conference that is now held on the East and West coast in alternating years (FARM, 2004). In addition to legitimizing such direct actions he further discusses the practicality of their use.

“The Sierra Club and the Humane Society of the United States both benefit, like it or not, from the actions of the ELF and the ALF.” (Watson, 2004)

And so, the “extremist” actions lend legitimacy to the more moderate efforts. When the Sea Shepherds sink a ship, Greenpeace appears reasonable when they merely place a zodiac between the harpoon and the whale.

Also growing from members of the Sierra Club and Greenpeace was another entirely different organization, Earth First!, that ensured that a new word would be added to our lexicon, monkeywrenching. This term comes from Edward Abbey’s book, *The Monkeywrench Gang*, about a group of activists committing destructive acts throughout the southwest. Earth First! (the exclamation point is part of their name) was formed by several activist from various other organizations including the Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, and Friends of the Earth on a trip in the Wyoming mountains in 1980. The most notable founder being Dave Foreman, who writes in his 1991 book, *Confessions of an Eco-warrior*, “We set out to be radical in style, positions, philosophy, and organization in order to be effective and to avoid the pitfalls of co-option and moderation that we had already experienced.” Earth First! is described by its followers as a movement and not an organization, and adopted the concept of “leaderless resistance” as was also being used by the Animal Liberation Front. Although there are a number of smaller Earth First! cohorts with individual focus, including The Earth First! Journal, there was no individual that could be pointed to as the leader of Earth First! Instead, a set of guidelines were established and anyone willing to act within those guidelines could be considered to be acting in the name of Earth First!. This concept became a recurring theme in radical environmental groups because of the power that existed in it to evade surveillance, capture and prosecution. Since there are no membership lists it becomes difficult to identify those who may commit acts in the future, particularly those that may carefully practice the concepts of security outlined in *Ecodefense* (Chapter 9) or follow Foreman’s further guidance: “The most effective monkeywrenchers will be those who keep invisible, who seem to mind their own business, who appear to be apathetic and uninvolved in causes” (Foreman, 1991). This EF! journal routinely includes information on the planning and conduct of monkeywrenching and direct actions. Foreman further writes that Earth First! always had three main segments: “Monkeywrenching; biochemistry and ecological wilderness preservation/restoration; and confrontational direct action, both legal (demonstrations) and illegal (civil disobedience)” (Foreman, 1991). However, this definition of direct action differs significantly from what is thought of now in terms of direct actions. Earth First! was responsible for some very interesting events, one of which being the unrolling of a “crack” down Glen Canyon Dam. Earth First! became the radical arm of the environmental movement by engaging in such actions as tree spiking and tree sitting, in addition to others. In 1989 five activists were arrested for attempting to sabotage power lines near Prescott, Arizona. In addition, this investigation is reported to have uncovered evidence of a wider plan to disrupt power from three separate nuclear power plants. However, the information surrounding these arrests is tainted as the FBI used an undercover agent and an informant that had helped in selecting the target and offering to procure explosives. Regardless of any questions surrounding the government’s conduct there can be little doubt that Earth First! was the radical activist arm of the environmental movement. Their belief concerning any negative publicity from monkeywrenching was offset by the increased awareness brought to the issue while at the same time actually disrupting the destructive activities that were targeted. (Scarce, 1990). After the arrests in Arizona there began an argument within Earth First! to eliminate illegal actions and to work more aggressively in legal ways to effect change. And in 1992 members in the United Kingdom separated themselves from Earth First! and declared the beginning of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF).

The ELF is the latest re-radicalization of the movement and has taken the destructiveness of Earth First! monkeywrenching to new heights. Their actions have included large arsons with such upper end damage amounts of 13 and 50 million dollars. The Southern Poverty Law Center ([www.splc.org](http://www.splc.org)) maintains a list of actions within the U.S. and there are other sources for these “diaries of action” as the movement tends to call them and may be found at various websites. One useful gateway, [www.directaction.info](http://www.directaction.info), offers a link to Bite Back Magazine and to an extensive “diary of actions.” Although the ELF is the newcomer to the movement it is filling a niche. A note (number 63 for the Introduction to *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters*) states the following:

In an interview with *E Magazine*, David Brower said: “The Sierra Club made the Nature of Conservancy look reasonable. I founded Friends of the Earth to make the Sierra Club look reasonable. I founded Earth Island Institute to make Friends of the Earth look reasonable. Earth First! now makes us look reasonable. We’re still waiting for someone else to come along and make Earth First! look reasonable” (cited in “The Wetlands Project: The Nature Conservancy,” by Judy Keeler, on OutdoorWire.com). That group would be the Earth Liberation Front. (Best, 2004)

This is certainly unusual for a citation to be directly from the reference notes of another publication, however in this case we can see that before ELF was a known entity there existed a place for it, as pointed out by Dr. Best in his final sentence of the note.

So the ELF is intended to make Earth First! seem reasonable. This may not necessarily be the case since Earth First!ers continue to monkeywrench and claim responsibility for their actions under that moniker rather than the ELF. On the other hand, the ELF has certainly caused people to take notice in a way that Abbey inspired monkeywrenching could not. And this, specifically, comes in the form of two very high profile arsons and numerous other smaller arsons. The larger arsons, of which one was on a ski resort in Colorado and other on a condominium in California, resulted in combined financial losses upwards of \$60 million. This is not to say that the smaller arsons caused insignificant amounts of damage – typically more than \$100,000 per event – but these large arsons caused such near-complete destruction to the facilities that it would have been difficult to ignore them. Many of the more recent and smaller arsons targeted SUV dealerships and the ELF’s website ([www.earthliberationfront.com](http://www.earthliberationfront.com)) maintained an introduction page throughout much of 2004 that proclaimed “Every Night is Earth Night” along with an image of a burned Hummer. This image corresponds to attacks on dealerships in California, which were likely inspired by the publicized amount of fuel these SUV’s consume – creating a hazard to the environment. The ELF, like the ALF, have a guideline, “To take all necessary precautions against harming any animal, human and nonhuman” (Satya, 2004). For several years Craig Rosebraugh was a spokesperson for the ELF during which he was routinely subpoenaed to testify before grand juries as well as having his house raided multiple times. He has since left this position, completed a Master’s degree from Goddard College in Vermont where his thesis was titled, “Rethinking Nonviolence: Arguing for the Legitimacy of Armed Struggle” that is of significance in relation to the convergence of the movements. Rosebraugh’s roommate for some time has reportedly been Leslie Pickering, who took over the role of spokesman. A communiqué posted on the Internet for the arson of the U.S. Forest Service Northeast Research Station in 2002 included this:

“In pursuance of justice, freedom, and equal consideration for all innocent life across the board, segments of this global revolutionary movement are no longer limiting their

revolutionary potential by adhering to a flawed, inconsistent "non-violent" ideology. 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 so drastically to achieve." (Anonymous, 2002)

Of course the significance of this message is the statement that firearms may be used to protect the planet, thus deviating from the principles set forth for the ELF concerning the protection of all life. This could be the re-redicalization mentioned by Somma or it may simply be an empty threat, as is used frequently to cause a reaction based on fear.

Another organization has been established to support the ELF's operations without being an aboveground activist group for communication purposes. Rather than the model of Sinn Fein to the IRA, this relationship is more like the Allied efforts to support the French resistance. The North American Earth Liberation Prisoner Support Network exists to provide assistance to those ELFs that have been imprisoned and require money, food and other supplies, as well as a conduit for seeking legal guidance, appeals and general support. With such a support network, largely facilitated by the Internet, it is possible to funnel funds and supplies to prisoners to prevent them from feeling isolated and to generate countless letters useful for propaganda.

While the ELF represents the current radical threat for environmental issues, it should not be recognized in exclusion of the Earth First!ers still monkeywrenching whenever possible. Rod Coronado, former member of the Sea Shepherds and convicted ALF arsonist, was the editor of the Earth First! Journal for several years and since 2000 has been indicted for tampering with a Mountain Lion trap set in Arizona. Such an act might be more appropriately considered monkeywrenching instead of the more grand ELF actions.

## **For the Animals – Until They Are All Free (Animal Rights and Liberation)**

The Humane Society of the United States was founded in 1954 to help people change their relationships with animals "from exploitation and harm to respect and compassion," (HSUS, 2005). It now prides itself as the largest animal-protection organization in the world. And prior to the 1970's there were few other large groups within the U.S. to help with this cause.

In the early 1960's the Hunt Saboteurs Association within the United Kingdom began attempting to disrupt fox hunts, however it was not until 1972 when the Bands of Mercy was formed as a more militant approach to sabotaging the hunts. Sabotage tactics included laying false scent paths, setting off fireworks to scare the foxes away, and even blowing a hunting horn to misdirect the hunters. These efforts continue today as animal rights activists attempt to prevent what they see as a cruel and unnecessary tradition.

In 1975 two activists, Ronnie Lee and Cliff Goodman, were sentenced in the U.K. to three years for damage to animal research labs over the previous two years. This event is significant because upon his release, Ronnie Lee, a spokesman for the Band of Mercy, renamed it the Animal Liberation Front (Stallwood, 2004) in 1976. The ALF came into existence denouncing violence, against human and non-human animals alike, and arguing a reverence for life but not organized along the same lines as a traditional association. The ALF is the quintessential example of leaderless resistance. Anyone can claim to be an ALF activist so long as they adhere to The ALF Guidelines that are now presented in the ALF Primer available online (ALF,

Unknown). One of these states that all necessary precautions should be taken to avoid harming any life, human or nonhuman. The ALF formalized the process of causing economic damage to the machinery they viewed as exploitative or oppressive to nonhuman animals and in doing so affect the actions of those companies, governments, organizations and citizens. This technique evolved significantly just over twenty years later as seen in today's campaigns against laboratory testing companies.

Ingrid Newkirk, a Maryland law enforcement officer, and Alex Pacheco founded People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals with offices located in Takoma Park, Maryland in 1980. Soon after, they targeted a Doctor in the Silver Spring area just minutes away that was using monkeys for medical research and shortly after that another research center in Pittsburgh. From these actions PeTA became known within the movement. PeTA may be best known for outlandish media stunts and demonstrations, some of which have been quite offensive to specific groups within society including their "Holocaust on Your Plate," and "KFC Cruelty" campaigns. (PeTA, 2003 & 2004). PeTA is a legal tax-exempt corporation in the United States with their headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia. Their numerous campaigns, investigations and research are conducted in an attempt to convince citizens to become vegans, even offering a free "Vegetarian Starter Kit."

PeTA, with several million dollars in annual funds, conducts multiple and simultaneous campaigns each year. They operate several different websites with a wide range of goals, for instance [www.circuses.com](http://www.circuses.com) shows how animals are mistreated and tormented when used in entertainment, and [www.askcarla.com](http://www.askcarla.com) provides a forum for individuals to ask questions about animal exploitation. Some campaigns directly target children, including a program for giving free "vegetarian" trading cards to students at elementary schools. As an organization they have consistently supported the actions of the ALF by arguing the necessity of their direct actions to limit the immediate suffering of animals. Newkirk writes, "Thinkers may prepare revolutions, but bandits must carry them out," and continues later with, "Perhaps the ALF exists because of complacency. After all, if peaceful dialogue worked, there would be nothing for the ALF to do; it would not have a job. So when a hundred years or more of writing polite letters fails to effect vital change, should we condemn those who are compelled to try something stronger or condemn those who refused to change?" (Newkirk, 2004) Here again is another reference to the need for increasingly aggressive actions to affect the change they wish to be made in society. PeTA openly endorsed the actions of ALF when in 1995 they provided over \$45,000 dollars to the legal defense of Rod Coronado's charges for the arsons in Oregon, Washington, and Michigan. (Martosko, 2005) Also, an ad flyer for Newkirk's book *Free the Animals* includes the sentence, "The voice that speaks for the animals speaks for the Animal Liberation Front (ALF)," along with a photo of Newkirk. PeTA's relationship with the ALF might be characterized as being similar to the relationship between Sinn Fein and the IRA, with PeTA providing a radical, but approachable, image for animal rights while the ALF carries out actions to further PeTA's goals.

This is also true of another organization in New Jersey known as Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty ([www.shacamerica.com](http://www.shacamerica.com)), which is only known to be loosely associated with the organization of the same name in the United Kingdom but with a mutual goal of putting Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS), a laboratory service often using animals, out of business. SHAC came into existence when HLS received considerable funding from an American and moved the base of the operations to New Jersey. SHAC, headed by Kevin Jonas (Kjonas), began an intense campaign to cause considerable economic damage against HLS. Their methodology

of “Tertiary Targeting” amounted to a concerted siege. Their specific techniques, however, would make the incidents of the 1980’s monkeywrenching appear polite and the ALF’s various actions as too narrowly focused. SHAC posted the names, and contact information, of all companies doing business with HLS on their website. They further posted personal information for the executives, and other employees, of both SHAC and their affiliates. The design of this campaign was built around the idea that the vendor did not need the contract with HLS, but HLS absolutely needed contracts with various service providers in order to function. As a result of their actions, seven animal liberation activists were arrested and charged under the federal Animal Enterprise Act in 2004. Furthermore, a clear, although somewhat difficult to prove, relationship exists between the ALF and SHAC as is noted in *No Compromise: The Militant, Direct Action Publication of Grassroots Animal Liberationists & their Supporters*, issue 26:

“This fall saw a dramatic increase in direct action in the United States, with over 58% of the year’s actions occurring between August and December, at a rate of more than one action every week. As is usual with these sorts of actions, the vast majority of them were taken in support of above-ground campaigns. And as has been the case since the inception of the campaign against Huntingdon Life Sciences in the U.S., HLS targets accounted for the bulk (almost 40%) of actions.” (*No Compromise*, 2005)

After Jonas departed from his role of leading SHAC it was left under the direction of Pamelyn Ferdin. Ferdin is married to Dr. Jerry Vlasik, who is one of the contacts listed on the ALF Press Office started by Dr. Steven Best. Dr. Vlasik has been quoted as saying at the 2003 Animal Rights Conference in California (AR 2003 - West), “For instance if vivisectors were routinely being killed, I think it would give other vivisectors pause in what they were doing in their work.” The quote continues and there are several others in this vein of reasoning. Other groups have begun advocating violence against animal abusers as well, including the Justice Department, Animal Rights Militia, and the Revolutionary Cells of the Animal Liberation Brigade. These organizations often justify their actions, which include booby trapped letters and bombings, by comparing themselves to the anti-abortion movement and the killings of abortion doctors. As discussed previously, their ethos of all animals being equal supports this reasoning. In their minds, they are acting in self-defense as an agent of the animals.

It is also worthwhile to note Dr. Steven Best’s role as an educator and some of his activities. Until recently, Dr. Best was the Chairman of the Philosophy Department of the University of Texas - El Paso. He teaches several class, as do most professors, however he routinely incorporates this politics of animal liberation into his courses. His 2001 syllabus for a class titled “Problems in Philosophy: Terrorism and the Social Order” naturally requires his book Terrorists or Freedom Fighters as a text. However it also lists Craig Rosebraugh’s book The Logic of Political Violence as an additional recommended book and roughly halfway through the course there was mandatory attendance for two guest speakers: Gary Yourofsky and Kate Timko. Gary Yourofsky has filled many roles including a spokesperson/lecturer for PeTA and a convicted member of the ALF, for which he proudly maintains a tattoo. What is significant here is the recruiting opportunities offered by this arrangement. Mandatory attendance coupled with a required short summary of the presentation provides anyone reviewing the work an opportunity to identify not only those that may be aggressive enough to be introduced to other militants but also those that may simply be more sympathetic than most and willing to assist the “political prisoners,” as eco-terrorists refer to themselves in prison. This certainly appears to be an unfair assumption based on the academic nature of the topic; however Dr. Best has also organized the

Animal Liberation Front Awareness Day event at the University of Texas – El Paso, and in multiple years. These events are done through the Center for Animal Liberation Affairs, which is an organization with a stated purpose of creating opportunities for academic discussions on animal liberation ([www.cala-online.org](http://www.cala-online.org)). In either instance, questions should be asked as to the appropriateness of these events. Would Oxford University have hosted an Irish Republican Army Awareness Day? Not likely, and that is, in essence, what has occurred in El Paso. State funds have been used for promoting an organization identified by the U.S. government as a domestic terrorist organization, and this would be the same state that has had to expend funds for investigating acts of eco-terrorism, monkeywrenching, and direct action depending on the preferred term.

Another instance of what may be seen as somewhat misguided, and possibly even irresponsible, involvement of academia would be the “Revolutionary Environmentalism Conference” held at the University of California at Fresno in 2003 ([www.Fresnostatenews.com](http://www.Fresnostatenews.com)). The event included such speakers as Paul Watson (Sea Shepherds), Gary Yourofsky (PeTA – ALF), Craig Rosebraugh (ELF), Rod Coronado (Sea Shepherds, ALF, Earth First!), and Leslie Pickering (ELF) among others less well known. Portions of this event were closed to the public and the media. In a press release for the event the university stated:

“Environmental conflict has expanded worldwide over the past twenty years. A growing movement toward “direct-action” tactics, such as arson and property destruction, by environmental and animal-rights activists prompts a need for debate, discussion and an academic analysis of these trends.”

Conspicuously absent from this event were individuals charged with or studying the effects of these actions. Needless to say, the event was somewhat one-sided in their approach to the “analysis of these trends.”

To briefly sum up these comments on the animal liberation movement the following was written as the conclusion to the “sentencing memorandum” for Rod Coronado concerning his various crimes for which he was convicted and their effect on the population:

“A terrorist combines violence and threats so that those that disagree with him are silenced, either because they have been victimized or because they fear being victimized. Since the defendant’s indictment and arrest, the firebombings and massive property damage that were a hallmark of “Operation Bite Back” have ceased. However, the intimidation and fear that these crimes were designed to inflict continues to this day. Scientists, business owners and farmers around the United States still live in fear that a bomb will be waiting for them the next time they go to their offices, farms or laboratories. The defendant’s actions on behalf of the ALF may not have ended scientific research, but they have succeeded in making ordinary citizens of this country afraid to respond to the ALF’s claims that there exist no legitimate reasons to use animals in scientific research. Nowhere is this continued intimidation more evident than in the events that have transpired since the defendant’s guilty plea. In several instances, the defendant has appeared in the media to exhort other to take his place as a ‘hero to the animal and environmental movement.’ In contrast, the victims of the defendant’s crimes remain so afraid of the defendant and the others like him that they would not speak to the Court’s own presentence investigator unless he guaranteed their anonymity.” (Dettmer, 1995)

## Convergence of the Movements

Widely reported by many sources that track these activities, including the Center for Consumer Freedom and the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise, is a communiqué in 1997 that announced an alliance between the ELF and the ALF. Whether or not this communiqué truly spoke for all those considering themselves members of these leaderless organizations can be questioned. What cannot be questioned are the various events that have been occurring in the U.S. and around the world in an effort to produce solidarity in the various anti-government, anti-globalization, and single issue post-modern movements. Three examples within the U.S. serve to illustrate this issue.

The National Conference on Organized Resistance (Formerly the National Conference on Civil Disobedience) is held annually at American University in Washington, DC, and has been beginning in 1988. This event routinely brings together speakers from many different movements to discuss their issues, tactics, and successes. Unlike the annual Animal Rights Conference, NCOR is specifically intended to bring resisters together. It is at this event in 2002 that Rod Coronado was recorded, and widely reported ([www.centerforconsumerfreedom.com](http://www.centerforconsumerfreedom.com)) explaining how to construct an incendiary device, much like those that he used, and ranting that he did not like having to encourage others to commit such acts rather than doing them himself.

Another event, although much newer, was held in 2004 and going by the name “Occupied Territory” was held in northern California (<http://sandiego.indymedia.org/en/2004/01/102688.shtml>). This event was reported to bring like-minded anarchists and anti-authoritarians together. Shortly after this event protests held in the area against circuses tended to be larger than usual and likely drew support from groups outside of the animal rights genre in accordance with the effort to unite in their struggle (Metscher, 2004). As organizations seek greater leverage to effect change it may seem likely that similar events will become more common.

In 2003 Craig Rosebraugh with the assistance of Leslie Pickering founded Arissa ([www.arissa.org](http://www.arissa.org)) with the expressed understanding that single issue organizations and movements were short-sighted and unable to address the root cause of the problem, which often is stated to have a great deal to do with corporations and money. Their mission, as stated on their website, is to foster a revolution:

“The primary goal of Arissa is to create a social and political revolution in the United States. We believe that none of the single issue problems - whether in the human or environmental categories - can be resolved until a political structure is put in place to allow for an atmosphere of change. Arissa will have reached its initial goal when that revolution occurs. “

Given Rosebraugh’s background of supporting first the animal right’s movement, anti-war movements and later the environmental movement he would appear to be the ideal candidate for starting such an organization. Rosebraugh also earned a Master’s Degree from Goddard College in Vermont for which his thesis confronted the issue of political violence as a necessity for effecting change. He later published the book *The Logic of Political Violence* which may very well be his thesis in a public format. The following sums up the intent of the book:

“With assistance from historical models, I have demonstrated in this book that 1) reformism has failed, and will continue to fail, to provide justice in the United States, 2) a political and societal revolution is necessary, and 3) the political violence is legitimate and must be included in any U.S.-based revolutionary movement. After digesting these three main points, the most important question is *what do we do now? Do we stop engaging in single issue reformist measures in pursuit of revolution?* [sic] Precisely. Those who seek justice – who want to actually put an end to the massive state-sponsored murder and destruction that occur on a daily basis, and who want to live in society where life is categorically placed ahead of profits – must understand the logic and necessity of revolution.” (Rosebraugh, 2004)

Ariisa may mark the vanguard of a more consolidated resistance in the U.S. and such a resistance that believes in an “any means necessary” concept of revolution. This could represent monkeywrenching and direct action organized on a massive scale, and possible today through the Internet as a free resource.

## **Monkeywrenching, Direct Action and Other Tactics**

The environmental and animal rights movements, as well as many others, have benefited significantly from the expansion of the Internet. It is through the Internet that aboveground activists are able to organize site, letter writing and call-in protests, exchange ideas, and orchestrate and coordinate activities across the country and ultimately around the world quickly and efficiently. The Internet has also provided capabilities to the underground activists as well as two other important tools. First, it may be used to conduct extensive research that was once a little more difficult to conduct, especially over large geographic distances, and second it offers yet more methods for attacking their targets. Although these movements have not made extensive use of network attacks, there have been some notable instances. As such, the following are resources found through the use of the Internet.

Before going any further it is important to establish the different meaning of such terms monkeywrenching, direct actions, protests, and the like. As mentioned previously, Foreman distinguishes monkeywrenching from direct action and divides direct action into legal (demonstrations) and illegal (civil disobedience). However the media today as well as literature within the movements has taken to use the term “direct action” to routinely describe illegal actions far beyond civil disobedience such as the laboratory and mink farm raids conducted by the ALF. With this in mind, legal direct actions will be referred as protests and illegal activities will be called direct actions. However “sexy” the term monkeywrenching may sound, as well as presenting some interesting promotional graphics, it represents the beginning of an era of acceptance for violent and destructive actions intended to create widespread fear.

## **Resources – Training, Manuals, and Online References**

Both of these movements have many resources to turn to for support at each phase of their efforts. From starting a grassroots (locally focused) group, to engaging in actions (both legal and illegal), interacting and coordinating with other groups, and how to work through legal issues from government efforts to disrupt the group’s efforts. Here we will only address what *movement provided* resources are available for developing direct action tactics. There are many other resources available from around the world and we will not attempt to locate even a fraction

of those that are available. Needless to say, if one were so inclined to be destructive for any reason, and they have Internet access, then they will find more than enough material to assist their designs.

As reported in several online sources, *Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching* has been described by Rod Coronado as “the bible” of the radical environmental movement. Whether he actually said this or not is not important once the book is reviewed. It contains careful, although somewhat dated, discussions on how to disrupt nearly every aspect of environmental incursion by industry. According to Foreman, “By 1985, when *Ecodefense* was published, ecotage was widespread. *Ecodefense* was published partly in an attempt to establish guidelines for monkeywrenching that would help it be more effective, strategic, ethical, safe, and secure.” It should be noted that in this book arson is not given a great deal of attention. This is likely due to the “spirit” of monkeywrenching as it was originally intended – a sort of prankishness. Spray-painting, gluing locks, placing “silent agitator” stickers on goods, changing or damaging padlocks, and pouring blocking agents into sewage lines for new developments are all examples presented in this book. Foreman clearly states that nothing draws attention like fire and in *Confessions of an Ecowarrior* makes this further statement, “Monkeywrenching is an outgrowth of guerilla war theory, and the successful guerilla is the one who returns to fight again and again.” And so, in *Ecodefense* there is considerable repetitive discussion on operational security for these actions.

To further illustrate the effect of Foreman’s book on the animal liberation movement we can see that in *The ALF Primer* ([www.animalliberationfront.com](http://www.animalliberationfront.com)) there are chapters devoted to gluing locks, paint, sponges in toilets, as well as planning, security, arson, and dealing with the police. Although the primer is just under 20 pages long it contains useful basics for becoming a miscreant. This publication is further supported by another, also available at the ALF website, *Arson-Around with Auntie ALF: Your guide to putting the heat on animal abuser everywhere*. The authors are listed as “Auntie ALF, Uncle ELF and the Anti-Copyright gang.” This document includes relatively detailed recipes for igniters, and the construction of other incendiary compounds, including a form of napalm. It mostly contains technical construction information, and little operational planning advice.

There are two other specific online publications that should be discussed: *A Declaration of War*; and *Memories of Freedom*. In *A Declaration of War: Killing People To Save Animals And The Environment* the author, Screaming Wolf, outlines, discusses and attempts to justify the use of violence on people in efforts to liberate animals. The author explains that “our family” is not just humans but all creatures and states, “The fact that liberators are at war means that they use whatever force they feel is necessary to save our family members,” and continues shortly afterward with:

“If people engage in the torture and destruction of innocent creatures, their acts make them guilty of crimes against other creatures, and liberators will try to stop them, even if that requires physical intervention. To stop the acts liberators feel they must stop the people. And the way liberators stop people is by using the motivations of pain and fear.”

Screaming Wolf provides a document to support any animal liberationist’s wish to justify violence they may direct against people rather than property.

*Memories of Freedom*, written by the Western Wildlife Unit of the ALF, describes several actions likely committed during the Bite Back Campaign for which Rod Coronado was

convicted. The document is reportedly a description of actual events; however, even if these are to some extent embellished, the accounts provide useful details for operations left out of other references available to movement members.

Other documents provided by various online sources, including No Compromise Magazine ([www.nocompromise.org](http://www.nocompromise.org)), Bite Back Magazine ([www.directaction.info](http://www.directaction.info)), and the ALF ([www.animalliberationfront.com](http://www.animalliberationfront.com)), offer information on going underground, dealing with a grand jury, and issues with an activist lifestyle.

In addition to readily available documentation there are several events and organizations that have carried on the traditions of the anti-war movement during the Vietnam era and the concepts of the “outside agitator” that brings training and guidance to local groups. The National Conference on Organized Resistance is one such event that offers training across the spectrum of resistance movements. Eco and AR activists are able to learn from the experiences of other movement activists, their lawyers and financiers. Another, and more focused, event is the annual Animal Rights Conference that is now held on alternating coasts with 2005 having been in California. During this event speakers expound on the value of such acts as arson, vandalism, and intimidation, as well as discussing more mainstream, and legal, measures. Speakers routinely caution attendees against illegal acts – to which many times the audience will laugh – probably as a means of avoiding culpability for inciting these acts. (Metscher, 2004). There are many local Animal Rights and Environmental conferences and seminars held around the country, typically hosted by university and college student groups. “Liberation Now!” is one such event also held at American University in 2003 as well at other locations annually. The speaker list for the 2003 conference included Bruce Freidrich (PeTA), Karen Dawn (Dawn Watch), Ingrid Newkirk (PeTA), and activists with considerable field protest experience ([www.defendanimals.org](http://www.defendanimals.org)). During the event in 2003 the ALF, and their criminal acts, were discussed openly as a necessary and useful component in efforts to liberate animals. (Metscher, 2004).

The Ruckus Society has developed outside of any specific movement, not as an activist organization, but instead to provide training to other activists and their organizations. From their website:

“The Ruckus Society provides environmental, human rights, and social justice organizers with the tools, training, and support needed to achieve their goals.”

The Ruckus Society is known within the activist community for teaching, among other topics, how to conduct safe high-angle protests, or banner-drops as they are more commonly known. Their techniques have been used around the country at various events and include methods for ensuring that, in order to get the banner down, the climber/activists must also be removed as well. Consequently, this often ensures several hours of additional protests as the authorities work to remove the climber/activists safely (Metscher, 2004).

## **Illegal and Psuedo-legal Tactics**

These movements are intent on ending all animal exploitation but it is being done one individual, one celebrity, and one company at a time. The range of tactics used by activists changes and grows on a regular basis since the human animal is an incredibly creative and ingenious creature. The goal is economic damage either by disrupting operations, forcing the replacement of

property, or the replacement of employees, customers and vendors. Since the goal is, of course, to force an individual, company or venture to cease some course of action, be it logging, animal testing, fur farming or circuses, there are several different ways that this may be pursued. As stated by Paul Watson, the movement benefits from the illegal actions, and as such each entity is typically targeted in at least two ways, legally and illegally. Legal efforts include educating the customer as is often done outside circuses, through the use of televisions and looped video presented in the customer's path to the venue, or through anti-fur advertising. Illegal actions clearly include property damage, threatening communications, fraudulent magazine subscriptions and credit card use. But, pseudo-legal tactics are those that include such actions as home protests and neighborhood canvassing, as perfected by SHAC. In some instances they may be legal and in others they are not, depending on the locality.

The guiding principle for most illegal actions, specifically excluding those now advocating or actually targeting people, is to inflict economic damage to an entity. This may be done by actually damaging or destroying facilities, or it may be done by intimidating individuals to change their actions. This, in part, is the purpose for "tagging" actions with threatening statements, because it portrays the activist group as more menacing and unstoppable to the victim and their peers. As discussed previously, it has been fundamental to SHAC's efforts that companies doing business with HLS be targeted. By doing so SHAC is systematically able to isolate their prey – HLS – because typically the vendor company does not *need* the annoyance that comes with their HLS contract. This was not a significant technique within the environmental movement to date.

It is important to understand that typically employees, physical assets, and organizational relationships with customers or vendors are targeted. And while employees may be targeted the bulk of this effort is expended on managers, the higher the better. Property damage attacks include vandalism, arson, document destruction, and, in the case of animal facilities, will often include the theft of animals. Locks may be glued, windows etched with acid, cars marked with paint stripper, windows smashed and facilities burned. Here the target is most often the actual machinery used to destroy the environment or exploit animals. However, since the creation of SHAC there has been a marked increase in the targeting of individuals homes. Often times paint is thrown on homes and messages left in addition to other property damage. So although property is damaged the intent is the causation of fear and uncertainty with the organization's employees. When new developments are being built in areas considered to be wild it would not be difficult to damage the heavy machinery used for this purpose by putting contaminants in the fuel, gluing locks, loosening random bolts. Other methods would be to remove survey stakes, dig down to cut utility lines and then conceal the damage, or damaging concrete foundations while they are still setting. In the logging industry the resource is attacked and the attack is publicized – tree spiking. When a tree is spiked it may cause significant damage to a saw mill and as is explained in great detail in *Ecodefense*, a metal spike or large nail, is driven into a live tree. The earlier this is done the better as the tree will grow around the spike and make it difficult to detect.

Employees are most easily targeted for simple intimidation by posting their personal information on the Internet. This has routinely been done in the past on SHAC's website with encouragement for prank calls and similarly "harmless" activities. SHAC has also made great use of the home protest in which protestor picket outside an individual's home, and visiting with neighbors to inform them of the "heinous" crimes their neighbor is guilty of, much like what is

done with registered sex offenders. Further actions include the theft of credit card numbers from executives that results in considerable amounts of fraud solely for the inconvenience rather than profit. An extreme example of this sort of targeting may be the attacks by the Unabomber against individuals or the mailing of razorblade booby trapped letters by the Justice Department.

Relationships with vendors are attacked, as we noted previously, much the same way as is the organization itself. The Chiron and Shaklee bombings in California, for which Daniel San Diego is still wanted, represent extreme examples of targeting affiliates of HLS. However, relationships with customers can be affected by illegally collecting video of animal abuse and making threats of contamination to products, in addition to aboveground efforts to educate the customers. This is often where aboveground and underground activities cross. The video images taken illegally are then shown by aboveground activists at later protest events.

Started in Australia, “open rescues” represented a new approach to liberation raids on animal facilities, particularly chicken farms, and have become increasingly popular by activists in the U.S. Discourse among movement leaders as to whether the face of animal liberation should really be one covered by a mask, and therefore appearing much like the terrorists of old, rather than one of the human being that is “showing compassion,” has brought considerable support of these actions. Open rescues have been conducted by several groups within the U.S. but are probably best known through the efforts of Mercy for Animals in Ohio or Compassion Over Killing in Maryland and require that activists trespass, generally at night but unmasked, onto farms to rescue animals, which are most often chickens. The events are video taped to show the conditions the animals live in and the actions of the activists. In some instances, activists have gone so far as to leave new locks behind to replace those that had been cut off to gain access. These actions are much more closely related to civil disobedience because the activists take credit for their actions and do not attempt to hide their identity – contrary to the monkeywrenching principles Foreman set out.

Organizations in the various industries that utilize animals are targeted in somewhat different ways. For instance, a circus is typically targeted by attempting to educate the customer and discourage their attendance. Banner-drops may be used at the venue along with activists chaining themselves to equipment in the venue to disrupt the shows. Since circuses travel and tend to have more exotic, and larger, animals it makes ‘liberating’ them much more difficult. Fur farms are attacked by physically releasing the animals or destroying their lineage information, as well the arson of the facilities. All other fixed facilities like laboratories and farms are also targeted in the same manner. This is, of course, coupled with the ad campaigns and actions of the aboveground activists. The products of fur farms may be destroyed in stores by slashing or painting them while still on the rack, in addition to targeting the fur wearer on the street. The imagination can run wild here as it frequently appears to for the activists.

With the Internet there is also a new method of attack – Denial of Service (DoS). This has only been used sparingly to date but there is little reason to believe the it will not become more common. DoS is similar to flooding a switchboard with phone calls, but instead of phone calls it is requests for information from a webserver. This overwhelming number of requests prevents the legitimate user from gaining access. It each of the known attacks the target happened to be vendors of HLS.

## **Future Expectations**

Given the history of the animal rights and the environmental movements in the United States it is likely, not only that it will continue, but that it will become more radical, at least for a time. Eventually, an individual will be seriously attacked for their role in an animal enterprise. This may happen for a short period of time before the public opinion of the movement begins to affect this choice of action by the activists. These movements are keenly aware of their press and will likely place pressure within their own ranks to avoid those acts that offend the public at-large. When a property crime occurs, regardless of the seriousness, there is only a short-lived period of outrage, if any at all, however when a person is killed the perception changes. This may be a result of the old media adage, "If it bleeds, it leads," but the public does not care for the murder of individuals in the name of a cause. The eco-activists may be using the same reasoning as the anti-abortion movement to justify their right to violence, but the public will likely react to this sort of eco-violence as it has reacted to attacks on abortion doctors.

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