A·L·F· ON TRIAL


THE STAR

BRITAIN'S LIVELIEST DAILY

18p

BOY, WHAT A SWELL PARTY THAT WAS, BILL

The Star's night of stars—See Centre Pages

ANIMAL LIB THUGS CAGED

38 years for reign of terror

FULL STORY—PAGE 2

3-WAY BINGO

CAPITALISM UNDER ATTACK IN THE 1980's

"Many different types of activity (public education, boycotts etc) have an important part to play in the struggle for animal liberation, but there is no doubt that there needs to be a massive increase in direct action if animal persecution is ever to be brought to an end. This means that many more animal rights campaigners need to be prepared to risk imprisonment. Going to prison in order to stop the imprisonment of animals may seem a peculiar concept, but then, their prisons are so much worse than ours..."

Ronnie Lee
Armley Prison
Leeds
England
November 10th 1986

History Is The Gospel According To The Authorities... So Here's A Slice Of:

OUR-STORY

PROLOGUE

Sheffield, February 5th 1987. Deputy High Court Judge Sir Frederic Lawton has just sentenced ten Animal Liberation Front activists to a total of 38 years in prison. The people convicted have been taken from the courtroom to the cells below, and it's all over bar a few minor quibbles and the judge thanking the Prosecution for being so efficient in their handling of an unusually large amount of evidence and thanking the Defence for not being too objectionable.

The minor quibble amounts to Ronnie Lee's barrister requesting of the judge that his client be able to recover certain documents from the police evidence. The judge relents to allow that certain scrapbooks of press cuttings relating to A.L.F. activity may be returned to Lee, but that a documented history of the A.L.F., diaries and details of subscriptions to the A.L.F. supporters group be destroyed along with all the other evidence. The judge, as he calmly wipes the A.L.F.'s side of the story from the history books as it were, says that Lee won't have any use for them where he is going.

February 6th 1987. The papers are full of it, for this is yet another political show trial cooked up by the Authorities to break the back of the A.L.F. once and for all; and if we hadn't looked any further than the day's headlines then we might well have believed that to be the case.


ANIMAL BLITZ FANATICS GET 38 YEARS

A MEMBER of a gang of animal rights extremists was jailed for 10 years yesterday.

Ronald Lee, 33, smiled as the judge described him as a fanatic and a dangerous criminal.

STAR REPORTER

Secrets of the animal rights hooligans

The Star's inside story ... February 1986

SIDEBOARD

Judge Sir Frederic Lawton said the accused had mounted "a campaign of terror", and the prison sentences should act as a deterrent to other fanatics thinking of carrying out criminal acts in the name of animal liberation.

(BBC Radio 4 News, 5.2.87.)

Needful to say, in this the Authorities have failed miserably, but not without a vengeance on the people they have sent to prison.

The Authorities have failed because they made, and always will make, the mistake of thinking that by imprisoning those who they single out as the A.L.F.'s 'leader', 'lieutenants', 'agents', and "common foot soldiers', that the movement will collapse; and that the heavy jail sentences will deter others from persistng with or taking up direct action. We know that the Authorities are wrong because they do not, and cannot, understand that we fight back not because of orders from above or from blind subservience to material gain, but because of a love of life and a desire for freedom which comes from within ourselves. Having written it down in black and white the Authorites will still not be able to comprehend it because their power structures and corrupted minds are devoid of that spark inside.

In an interview with *The Observer* on the eve of jumping bail and absconding, Roger Yates, convicted of conspiracy to incite criminal damage and cause criminal damage, attempted to justify the ALF's terror campaign against department stores such as Selfridges and Debenhams.

'It's a threat but it's not terrorism,' he said. 'The campaign is effective because it strikes at the heart of animal exploitation.

'If people have got no hearts to break then you can always break them through their profits,' continued Yates, who gave no indication of his intention to break his £10,000 bail bond and flee in the closing stages of the trial in Sheffield.

They've Got The Courts, The Cops And

THE MEDIA

We've Got Each Other And Not Much Time

In a court of law the Prosecution always state their case first, which means that in political trials such as this one, the subsequent newspaper headlines come straight from the prosecuting police barrister's mouth.

Animal front attackers used firebombs and acid on stores, says QC

By Ian Nimmo, Northern Correspondent

ALF ran 13-month campaign of economic sabotage, court told

Front 'bombed fur stores'

In this case that mouth belonged to Mr David Bently QC, and his opening remarks were carefully calculated to help destroy the public sympathy which the A.L.F. often attracts.

"In an orgy of destruction", he said, "several butchers' shops, a fishing tackle shop, a university laboratory and even a travel agent shop selling tickets for a circus were attacked by groups of masked men and women carrying hammers, crossbows and acid."

(BBC Radio News, 12.1.87.)

And of course, the "orgy of destruction" bit was re-iterated as part of the small print at the end of the trial, which filled out the headlines emanating this time from the Judge's mouth.

Animal activists gaoled for 'year of terror'

But before, during and after the trial we heard nothing in the press about the case for the defence, and the reason for that is that the evidence of people who happen to care enough about life to get off their knees to take action to protect life, does not sell papers; and besides, it would contravene editorial policy.



The Star's inside story . . . February 1986

'There's only one thing that I'd believe that I read in the British newspapers, and that's the date."

(Margaret Devine, sister of Mickey Devine, Irish prisoner who died on hunger strike).

The Seventy-Six Year Old Bloke Who Dodders In With A Walking Stick And A Wig On, Who Everyone Has To Stand Up For...

. . . THE JUDGE

Deputy High Court Judge Sir Frederic Lawton - a one time member of Oswald Moseley's British Union of Fascists - was brought out of retirement especially to handle this case. Throughout the trial he took great delight in doing the Prosecution's job better than the Prosecution did. For example, when evidence was being heard relating to the liberation of animals (i.e. the activities for which the A.L.F. enjoys most public support) the Judge allowed matters to proceed as normal, yet when evidence was being heard relating to criminal damage, the Judge seemed to suffer from bouts of deafness; which meant that this evidence was repeated two or three times in court. This subtle technique was aimed specifically at the jury, and as we know from the outcome of the trial it had some sucess in driving home to the jury the *"subversive - must be stamped out"* approach of Judge Lawton's bias, which became personified more and more every time he threw in casual remarks about "terrorists" regarding the people in the dock.

In court the judge is The Man. He commands respect. Such is the structure of Authority and such are Authority's rules that he called the

shots throughout the trial, and in the end it was he who decided it's outcome.

He has addresses at: 2, HARCOURT BUILDINGS, TEMPLE, LONDON, EC4Y 9DB (Tel 01 353 3720), and at MORDRYG, STOPTIDE, ROCK, nr WADEBRIDGE, CORNWALL. (Tel TREBETHERICK 3375).

At The Mercy Of Someone Else's:

RULES

The rules were made up a long long time ago, and they only get changed to keep pace with the ingenuity and creativeness of people fighting back; but because the legal system is so deliberately complicated as to make it over the heads of us all, except for the trained authorities on the subject, the defendants were trapped and had little choice but to put their lives - in fact, *large chunks of their lives* as it turned out for some in this case - in the hands of paid experts: That is, the solicitors who communicate between the defendants and the barristers; and the barristers who communicate between the solicitors and the Judge, and who also get to wear their fair share of wigs.

The system works thus: that before, during and after the trial, the Defence barristers (one for each defendant), the Prosecution barrister and the Judge, all get together behind closed doors to talk shop.

For example before the trial they decide when it would be a good idea to hold the trial, and also they discuss ways of making it "easier" for everyone concerned. The Judge pulled his first fast one as early as December 12th 1986 at the commital proceedings by over-ruling the Defence's objections and setting the trial for January 12th 1987. You see the judge is obliged to talk to the Defence and the Prosecution but he is not obliged to listen to them. What this in fact meant was that the Prosecution were ready to prosecute a full three months earlier than had previously been suggested, and thus by moving the date of the trial forward at such short notice, many of the Defence barristers had already got other work booked for January and February; which meant that the defendants had to find themselves new barristers for the trial and had less than a month to prepare their cases with them.

The method of making it "easier for everyone" is called "plea bargaining", and what happens is this: For example, the Prosecution say to the Defence, "if your client pleads guilty to count one, then we'll drop the charges of count two". Alternatively the Defence barristers might say to the Prosecution "my client will plead guilty to one thing if you drop the other"; Meanwhile the Judge says that those defendants pleading guilty at the start of the trial will have up to a third of their sentence knocked off from what they would recieve if they went through the whole rigmarole of the trial only to be found guilty at the end of it. All these machinations make it very difficult for the defendants to have a clear view of what is actually

going on and puts them under considerable pressure to plead guilty. In this case the Authorities were so determined to nail the A.L.F. that from the word go everything was geared to making life for the defendants as difficult as possible; and coupled with the fact that the police had amassed and fabricated "a roomful of evidence", the Defence had very little bargaining power.

THE CHARGES:

Conspiracy To Conspire And Other Changes In The Rules

They took part in a nationwide conspiracy to burn, smash and destroy department stores, butcher's shops and research laboratories.

THE OBSERVER.

Count One: **Conspiracy to commit arson.**

Count Two: **Conspiracy to commit criminal damage.**

Count Three: **Conspiracy to incite others to commit criminal damage.**

Count Four: **Conspiracy to steal a pack of hunting hounds.**

"Conspiracy" means people getting together to talk about and/or actually resist Authority... and Authority being what it is does not take kindly to being attacked, because it exposes the heartless, murdering, lying *criminals* who exercise that authority.

The rules are changed in two ways:

1. By government, who spend their time making up new laws in Parliament to keep us in our places.
2. By Judges setting precedents in court.

And it was with Count Three that the rules were changed by this case, because previous to Ronnie Lee and Roger Yates being found guilty of inciting others to commit criminal damage, the Authorities had never made it stick with anyone else. In his summing-up immediately prior to sentencing Ronnie Lee, Judge Lawton cited A.L.F. Supporter's Group Newsletter No. 15, and specifically the phrase "Go out and burn!", as the damning evidence; that because Lee supposedly wrote that phrase, then he was criminally responsible for the actions of those who had gone out and burned.

The judge told him: "I am satisfied that between the beginning of February 1985 and the middle of March 1986, persons acting under the name of the Animal Liberation Front throughout all parts of the United Kingdom were carrying on a campaign of terror against businesses and activities of which they disapproved.

"I am satisfied that you were responsible for a great deal of that activity. It is clear that you are a fanatic and it may be that some of your ideals are worthwhile ones, but you have no right to use terror to get your own way and persuade the public to accept your points of view."

YORKSHIRE POST

THE OBSERVER.



Lee : 'The General.'

THE STAR.



Ringleader Lee . . . a fanatic, said judge

THE GUARDIAN



Ronald Lee — fanatic behind campaign

Again, this is where Authority falls down because it cannot concieve of the idea of people taking their lives into thier own hands, by taking responsibility for their own actions; and as such it will never extinguish the sparks of resistance in us, as it so desperately tries to do, time and time again. But... BIG BUT, it is both dangerous and worrying for those of us who get singled out and set up, and the fact that they've set the precedent in Sheffield could mean that large sections of the underground press could be liable to prosecution and imprisonment, simply for writing what they normally write. This is yet another example of the ever-increasing police state in which we all live. This is what they tell us only happens in the Soviet Union; but it is happening *here and now*.

You Can't Tell

THE TRUTH

In A Courtroom

Basically what happens in court is that everybody tells lies...

THE PROSECUTION TELL LIES.

With the odds stacked in their favour, they have cardboard box after cardboard box full of them for every ounce of hard evidence they produce. It's all piled up down one side of the court-room, and most of it stays there in it's boxes as a monument for the jury to see throughout the trial of how meticulous the police have been , and of how evil the defendents must be.



A firm that builds factory farm units



totally destroyed. Damage £200,000.

"The Sheffield cell, said to be the most militant, wreaked havoc, breaking windows at department stores like Rackhams in the city centre as a protest against the sale of furs. They are alleged to have planted an incendiary device to start a fire in the furniture department causing more than £200,000 of damage. McDonald's restaurant was another target: a small fire was started by a fire-bomb. A similar device made in a cigarette packet was found in a coat in Debenham's in Sheffield."

(Yorkshire TV News, 12.1.87.)

FIREBOMB FACTORY EXPOSED

THE ALF terror bombing campaign was first revealed by The Star a year ago.

Ronnie Lee, the organisation's disgraced founder and leader, told me last January how they had perfected an incendiary bomb which would wreak havoc in fur stores.

At a secret meeting in a pub near London's Hammersmith Tube station bespectacled Lee told me: "The purpose of the bomb is to start a fire and set off the store's sprinkler system.

"The deluge of water causes far more damage than any fire."

In actual fact, the devices were simple smoke-bombs - though even 'bomb' is an innacurate and emotive word - a combination of match-heads, firelighters and nail varnish inside a cigarette packet: designed to make a lot of smoke rather than start a fire. A timing device made from a watch face and a battery meant that the smoke-bombs would be triggered in the middle of the night, when no people were in the store. The purpose of the device being to set off the water sprinkler systems in the department store, which would irrepairably damage fur coats and other consumer goods - which is why the stores concerned suffered such great financial losses. I mention all this , not to point out that the A.L.F. do not use actual devices designed to cause maximum damage by fire, because they have used such devices in the past and doubtlessly will do in the future, provided there is no danger of endangering the lives of people or animals by such an action. No, I mention all this as proof of how the Prosecution and their P.R. people, the press, have exaggerated, distorted and blatantly lied , to paint the defendants as "terrorists" with their "fire-bomb" sensationalism. We would not expect anything less from the Prosecution.

In a political show-trial, Lee and nine others were accused of carrying out a "reign of terror", and the ALF were portrayed in the media (both 'liberal' and right-wing) as 'Terrorists'. In a climate of increased terrorist actions, the label was clearly meant to destroy the ALF's huge public support here in the UK.

THE DEFENDANTS TELL LIES. For if they had told the truth and expressed their real feelings about the destruction of our everything, by these, the very same authorities who quibbled in court over exactly who was going to get however many years, then the defendents would probably have been sent to prison never to come out again. In view of the power of the state, martyrdom in terms of making political speeches is not a very good idea unless you're about to be hanged. In actual fact, the truth is barred from the court-room. The Defence was not allowed to show a video film exposing the vivisection/pharmaceutical "Cancer is Good for Business" industry, because it might unfairly prejudice the jury. The defendents themselves were bullied, cut short and even advised not to give evidence at all in the face of a conspiracy of right-wing reaction.

THE JUDGE TELLS LIES. From the outset it was obvious that the Judge had made up his mind, and that for him the trial was a matter of juggling around with numbers of years in his mind whilst relishing the opportunity to show off his legal know-how , and his ability to make the barristers creep-creep-creep and quiver in their boots. Of course he played along with the "Innocent until proven Guilty" game of charades, so that "justice" could be seen to be done.

DIVIDE & RULE

The basis of the Prosecution's case was a tape recording made by a police surveillance squad. Following tip-offs in the early months of 1986, the police had gained access to the flat below the flat belonging to Kevin Baldwin in Sheffield, whereupon they had drilled a hole in the ceiling so as to implant a bugging device to monitor and record conversations taking place in Baldwin's flat.

FIVE GET INTO TROUBLE

> 'With any luck we might get it done tonight,' said Gary Cartwright just before the master technician, Ian Oxley, arrived and took over. Baldwin also warned that any 'animal abuser' in Sheffield had better look out. 'If anyone does that in Sheffield we burn him down, we do him, right.'
>
> THE OBSERVER.

by Enid Blyton

This device enabled the police to catch Kevin Baldwin, Ian Oxley, Gary Cartwright, Julie Rogers and Isobel Facer in the act of modifying the smoke-device and discussing action. They were caught red-handed and were promptly taken away for interrogation without a leg to stand on. In the event, all pleaded guilty at the start of the trial except Baldwin who pleaded guilty on the third day. Under the circumstances this was the best thing they could have done as, under interrogation, some of the five had made statements to the police incriminating each other and other people who were to plead not guilty at the trial. By pleading guilty their statements were rendered inadmissable as evidence in court,

but not out of reach of the Judge, who had access to all the statements; and who pulled another fast one in court by blabbing that 'so and so', had said 'such and such a thing' about 'so and so'. Such an "error" on the judge's part was immediately pointed out by the Defence barristers, whereby the Judge - having already planted the subliminal seeds in the heads of the jury - then instructed the jury to disregard what he had just said.

Now there was enough judgement being handed out in Sheffield, so I am not going to pass judgement on who said what, because firstly I do not know who said what , and if I did then I could not know to what pressures each was subjected under police interrogation. Thankfully, after the initial interrogations - with the exception of John Hewson, the 63 year old man charged with conspiring to steal the beagle dogs - the defendants remained together enough not to submit to further police pressure to stand in the witness box for the Prosecution, and give evidence against their fellow defendants.

SUFFICE TO SAY, EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE HEARD IT A THOUSAND TIMES BEFORE, NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES - SAY NOTHING. SAY "NO COMMENT" TO POLICE QUESTIONING, BECAUSE TALKING TO THE POLICE UNDER INTERROGATION - *WITHOUT EXCEPTION* - MAKES IT WORSE WHEN THE CASE COMES TO COURT. REMEMBER, WITHSTANDING THE THREATS, BRIBES AND ACTUAL VIOLENCE INCURRED DURING A STAY IN THE POLICE CELLS (WHICH AFTER ALL CAN ONLY LAST FOR A MATTER OF DAYS AT THE MOST, DESPITE WHAT THE POLICE WILL TELL YOU WHEN YOU ARE IN THEIR CUSTODY), COULD MEAN A DIFFERENCE FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS OF YEARS IN PRISON.

THE BIGGEST LIE OF ALL

During mitigation (brown-nosing the Judge by giving character references of those defendants found guilty, in an attempt to appeal to the good nature of the Judge with regard to the imminent sentencing, and to counter the picture painted of the defendants by the Prosecution), the Judge said in an angry voice, in response to an argument from Vivienne Smith's barrister:

"I HAVE NO PERSONAL OPINIONS ON THIS!"

On this myth rests the whole concept of the British judicial system; that the Judge is impartial, otherwise how could 'justice' be done? The answer to that is that real justice can *never* be done in the court-room of the Authorities, for it is against their vested interests.

When Judge Lawton came out with this classic lie he was showing the visible anger that he was feeling at the time, because despite all his hard work of

the past three months or so, the jury had seen fit to find Vivienne Smith and Brendan McNally not guilty on count three, the "Conspiracy to incite others to commit criminal damage" charge. He went on to say that he felt Smith was just as responsible as Lee and Yates, because she had helped to distribute the A.L.F. Supporters Group Newsletters, and added that in the case of McNally, as well as him "recieving orders from head office", he also was capable of writng articles of incitement. Now if this is not personal opinion - seeing as how the token gesture of anything resembling impartiality, i.e. the prescence of a jury , who as it turned out much to everyone's suprise , were only to be ninety per cent behind the Judge - then I don't know what is. But as I said earlier on, in the end it is the Judge who decides; and he took his vengeance by sentencing Smith and McNally (who were both only found guilty on count two) to four years in prison, as compared with Baldwin, Oxley and Cartwright, (who were found guilty to counts one, two and four, in the case of Baldwin and Oxley, and counts one and two in the case of Cartwright) who each also recieved four years each; and in comparison to Julie Rogers on counts one and two, who recieved two and a half years, and Isobel Facer on counts one, two and four, who recieved nine months in youth custody. John Hewson recieved one year for count four. Jeniffer McNally and Neil McIvar were both acquitted.

Ronnie Lee, as the public face of the A.L.F., was well and truly nailed and shown no mercy; for he had been singled out by the Authorities as the master-mind of the whole affair for which he was given TEN YEARS.

THE longest sentence was given to Ronald Lee, aged 35, of West London, who was said to be a ringleader and spokesman for the Animal Liberation Front. Passing sentence, deputy high court judge, Sir Frederick Lawton, said Lee was a "fanatic" and a "dangerous criminal" who used terror to further his ideals. He was found guilty of conspiracy to commit criminal damage and arson and inciting criminal damage.

Regarding Roger Yates, the judge had kicked up a fuss during mitigation saying that he would most definitely sentence him in his abscence. Yates had jumped bail a week prior to the end of the trial and has not been seen from that day to this (and good luck to him). As it turned out, having sentenced everyone else, the judge had to be reminded by the Prosecution barrister that Yates was still to be sentenced. Flustered and in a moment of what we reckoned can only have been senility, Judge Lawton only gave Yates four years for counts two and three, being as Yates was the only defendant other than Lee who was found guilty on the "Conpiracy to incite others to commit criminal damage" charge; which in Lee's case , according to the Judge, made him responsible for all the A.L.F. actions the length and breadth of the country over the last six years.

● The seven men and three women members of the Animal Liberation Front whooped with joy and gave clenched fist salutes as they left the dock. They had clearly expected heavier sentences.

THE STAR

A JUDGE was criticised yesterday for sentencing an animal rights activist to 10 years for conspiracy. The sentence, the heaviest in an animal rights case, was passed on Ronnie Lee, a spokesman for the Animal Liberation Front, by a Deputy High Court Judge, Sir Frederick Lawton.

Steven Norris, the Conservative MP for Oxford East, said last night: "Sentencing at the moment seems to suggest that a woman's body is less valuable than property or the right of experimenters and mink farmers to live in peace.

"I don't dispute there was a conspiracy and I don't believe anyone is justified in taking the law into his own hands. But the pattern of sentencing reflects a curious set of values."

THE INDEPENDENT

As regards the smiles and "saluting" the public gallery, yes there were smiles, and waves too; and even Brendan McNally shouting for joy at only having recieved four years. This was not due to the 'all terrorists together' slant that the press gave it, but to the fact that most of the defendants were overjoyed by the relative 'leniency' of the sentencing, because as the trial had developed, most of the men had been told to expect up to ten years and Ronnie Lee fifteen years. The reason for this is possibly the public outcry resulting from the four- and five-year sentences given to the rapists in the 'Vicarage' rape trial only a day or so before; or maybe Judge Lawton's battery was packing in by the end. It's still a long time by anyone's standards, which just goes to show how little the Authorities like it when people think and act upon their political thoughts - especially when these thoughts challenge the concept of Authority itself.

EPILOGUE

Are We Any Wiser?

The lessons to learn from this whole episode are firstly that sustained economic sabotage works. We know this much because otherwise the Authorities would not have kicked up such a fuss to try and stop the idea catching on. The second thing is that we have to think harder and more carefully about the actions we take. With the new police laws now coming into force regarding demonstrations, covert direct action is one of the few, and probably the safest, option left

open to us. Of course prison sentences are very much a reality, but if we don't find ways to fight back now then the time will come during our lifetimes when there will be nothing left to defend. Thirdly, if we *do* get caught then we have got to resist police pressure to make us talk. So if you are ever in a position where the cops offer you a deal, where they say you'll get a couple of years less, then it is ultimately up to you,whether you sacrifice your own dignity and your friendship with others, for having life a little easier in the short term.

"Authority makes the rules and has the muscle to enforce them, but unless Authority kills us, then it cannot kill our spark inside; if we're dead then that's the end of the argument, but the point is, WE ARE ALIVE AND KICKING."

Mr Bentley told the jury that the Animal Liberation Front was dedicated to economic sabotage.

"If you are a butcher with butchers' shops the ALF will smash the windows, pour etching fluid on them, and daub them with slogans because they say you are an abuser and exploiter of animals," he said

"If you are a department store selling furs they will damage your store and try to set it on fire. If you are a research worker involved with animals you will be attacked.

"Anyone who abuses or exploits animals in the eyes of the ALF is a legitimate target to have their property burnt and damaged as the ALF sees fit"

GUARDIAN

Scotland Yard is anxious to protect an intelligence system in operation for nearly two years and still in use, particularly since animal rights activists have demonstrated their ability to continue a campaign which has notched up an estimated 10,000 attacks in ten years.

YORKSHIRE POST

But in the past three months, actions ranging from the smashing of butchers' shop windows to an arson attack on Banbury chicken feed company have been averaging three a day nationally, with more than 300 attacks claimed in the three months to January.

Incendiaries did succeed in one attack last October. Six lorries owned by a Banbury chicken feed company were set on fire causing £100,000 damage.

YORKSHIRE POST

A demonstration of ALF effectiveness was carried out last weekend and 11 incendiary devices were left at a Buckinghamshire abattoir. Four activated causing damage to a building and a lorry.

YORKSHIRE POST



From interviews with ALF activists:

How did you become members of the ALF?

We are not members of the ALF; in fact, the ALF has not one single member. We are ALF activists by virtue of the fact that we carry out actions, whether on an occasional or frequent basis. Immediately superglue has been squirted into a fur shop lock, the person/s involved becomes an activist. There is no membership, no hierarchy, no leaders and no centralised policy-making. The ALF varies from person to person, from group to group, and is regulated only by the individual's common-sense, trust, and compassion.

Other campaigning organisations such as Animal Aid, with 11,000 members, have condemned ALF actions as counter-productive. Thousands of animal rights supporters, while sharing similar goals, have sought to dissociate themselves from ALF activities.

Why did you become involved in direct action?

As members of various societies, such as the RSPCA (a national animal welfare group), for many years we began to learn about the many and varied ways that animals are exploited and cruelly treated. When I personally came into contact with the full-time staff of the various animal welfare societies I was sickened by their complacency. They were quite happy to plod along. At that time over 100 years of political campaigning had failed to halt the increase in factory farming, vivisection, and hunting. We saw the way in which Greenpeace mounted successful direct actions. We wondered, could animals afford to wait another hundred years whilst we petitioned MP's and handed out leaflets? It just wasn't enough. It seemed quite obvious. We had had enough of asking those above us to change things - it isn't in their interests, and besides, we'd had enough too of accepting that change comes from above. If we wanted to liberate animals, then we'd have to start taking action ourselves.

How does an animal rights campaigner become involved in activities?

Anyone wishing to take part in direct action does not apply for membership of the ALF, you do not write or telephone the ALF press office...you quite simply take action on your own, with friends you know you can trust. It's as simple as that. The ALF isn't for heroes, egotists, or those who just want to belong to an exclusive club. The ALF is for those of us who no longer have faith in parliament or leaders, those of us who care enough to know when to keep quiet, and when to act. The ALF is for those of us who refuse to be intimidated by these political show trials which are designed to scare us into silence, inaction, and apathy. Of course we can't ignore the possibility of prison sentences; but if we don't find a way of fighting back now, then the time is going to come during our lifetimes when there is nothing left to defend.

The activists jailed in Sheffield were there to be made an example of. They were smugly thrown to the waiting media by a conspiracy of wealth, power and fear. Fear because the ALF have been a real threat to the State's power-base of profits and lies - for, once the authorities are scared, knowing that people are prepared to support and carry out direct action, then some of their power bases begin to crumble. The threat of a good example? The ALF are one of the few 'underground' organisations to win sustained public support for most of their actions...

And let's remember that the best action we can take to help those imprisoned is to let them know that their struggle has not been in vain: and the best way to do that is to INCREASE THE ACTION... NOW.



ALF activists damaging a van during a raid on Life Science labs. in Essex. £75,000 damage caused and many animals rescued.