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SPECIAL!

This is a history of the ALF that Ronnie Lee began writing years ago. It was in police hands for years and I've had it now for some 20 years. Sadly, this is all there is of it. Not sure if it should be public or not but you will at least want to copy it for your own records.

Take care, Robin

On November 10th 1973, the Band of Mercy set the site on fire and extensive damage of £26000 was caused. On the 16th November they returned and started another fire, the total damage was some £46,000.

The 'F' in 'A.L.F.' could well be 'Frustration'. It was through this that the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) evolved.
Through the centuries there are cases of human beings taking direct action to prevent cruelty and many of these events included action to prevent animal cruelty. The main roots from which the ALF grew was the Hunt Saboteurs Association (HSA), an organisation founded and existent to take non violent direct action to prevent animals meeting their deaths through 'the Hunt'.

The HSA itself is an organisation made up of people from all different backgrounds and age groups who feel very strongly about the cruelty in hunting.
It was felt by many that if one wanted to prevent hunting the simple answer was to go out and physically disrupt the Hunt itself by laying false trails for the dogs used and blowing the same type of hunting horn the hunters used to send the dogs off in the wrong direction. HSA members also thought up numerous other methods to ruin the Hunt itself and since the HSA was formed in 1962, a countless number of wild animals have not been torn to shreds (etc) because of the direct action taken by the dedicated HSA members who turn out in all weathers, travel long distances and face violence from the hunters and wrongful arrest by the police who seem to favour the hunters.
But despite this 'new' approach to preventing animal persecution and cruelty, the HSA approach did not go far enough for some. It was through this discontent, the ALF arose.

At a Luton Bedfordshire address in 1971, a new HSA group was formed. This group was particularly active, and successfully wrecked one hunt after another. One of this group was Ronnie Lee who had obtained a knowledge of most forms of animal abuse whilst at a Law college in London. In due course Ronnie Lee became anxious over the HSA's failure to take effective action against cubhunting, the cruel method used by the hunters to train young foxhounds by sending them in after young foxes. He met other HSA members who agreed more militant action was needed and 'The Band of Mercy' was formed - named after the RSPCA group for young people in the nineteenth century. The Band then began a successful campaign against vehicles of various Hunts.

It was in 1973 that the Band of Mercy looked upon the world of animal abuse and saw that direct action of a more militant type was needed for other forms of animal abuse - vivisection being one example. The first target was the Hoechst pharmaceutical research centre being built at Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire. On November 10th 1973, the Band of Mercy set the site on fire and extensive damage of £26000 was caused. On the 16th November they returned and started another fire, the total damage was some £46,000.

No claim of responsibility was made for the first attack - principally because it seemed the fire had extinguished itself, and it was decided a return visit was needed and advising it was a deliberate act of arson might prevent a successful repeat action being carried out. When Ronnie Lee returned, Cliff Goodman this time accompanied him and they took several gallons of petrol. Some petrol was left in the annexe as it was decided to set fire to the main building and when leaving through the annexe, set that part on fire also. They went up to the top floor and set this part on fire and went down to each floor doing the same. In the confusion they went down to the basement and realised they could not get out of the burning building. Going upstairs they saw the ground floor ablaze and impossible to leave through the ground floor exit. Running through fire with their shoes smouldering they reached the first floor and by breaking a window, they made their escape by fire escape.

Because of this, the annexe was not set fire to and the two made their escape looking behind them to see the whole building ablaze and lighting up the skyline. Due to the lack of materials inside the building, the fire was insufficient to cause real structural damage although some doors, items made of wood and inflammable substance were destroyed. The lack of structural damage was regretted by Ronnie Lee and Cliff Goodman and the fire went out before the fire brigade arrived at the site.

Ronnie Lee then, shortly afterwards, wrote a letter to the local press with gloves on and using paper from a pad ensuring it had no indentation from previous writing claiming responsibility using the name 'Band of Mercy'. To prove the writer was not a hoaxer, the letter included details which could only be known to the person involved in starting the fire - e.g. the petrol left in the annexe. The letter being posted in Bedford was quickly obtained by the Police who promptly began an investigation into the fires. The letter also warned that more actions of a similiar type would take place unless animal experimentation ceased.

This type of action was a far cry from the actions carried out by the Band of Mercy when it first began - the immobilising of vehicles belonging to, or associated with hunting - the kennels of the Whaddon Chase, the Vale of Aylesbury and the Puckeridge and Thurlow foxhunts all had vehicles damaged in the early autumn of 1973.

After the Hoechst fire, the Band of Mercy still continued its campaign against Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire hunting kennels. This was the lull before the holocaust that would that would bring about the fear and financial damage that animal abuse establishments had never seen before - or even contemplated even possible.

In June 1974, the Band of Mercy again went into action, this time against the Seal cullers in the Wash. Two boats, both licenced by the Home Office to cull seals were attacked, one being extensively damaged and the other, the 32 foot 'Mizpah' was completely destroyed by fire. Shortly after this, more actions occurred - two vehicles burnt at Carworth(Europe) animal breeding centre near Alconbury with another being immobilised. These vehicles were being used to transport animals to animal experimentation laboratories. This action on July 11th with others now occurring were receiving publicity and drawing attention to the widescale animal abuse existing in the Country. Three days later, the Band of Mercy visited Animal Suppliers Ltd at Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire where £1000 worth of damage was done. A member of the group advised the local Press that the vehicles would have been set on fire or blown up except for the fact they were situated too near the buildings holding the animals. The caller also advised that this type of action would continue until animal exploitation ceased. It was obvious that the animal abuse establishments were taking the Band and its threats very seriously as the Laboratory Animal Breeders Association issued a letter to all members on July 16th 1974 warning its members of the Band and its activities.

On July 29th, Harris Biological Supplies in Weston Super Mare had a vehicle destroyed by fire and the actions began to increase - a Marlborough gunshop damaged, four vehicles belonging to an Elstree animal breeding centre damaged, containers for animals belonging to a Little Kingshill poultry breeder were destroyed and a vehicle belonging to Olac(Western) near Capel Isaac was burnt in just the month following. The Band were now becoming aware that establishments involved in animal abuse were now taking more precautions and they felt and sensed capture was not far off. This was in fact well founded. On 23rd August 1974, two members of the Band, Ronnie Lee and Cliff Goodman were seen by a security guard in the area outside OLAC(Southern) at Bicester, Oxfordshire. This being the English counterpart of OLAC(Western) attacked two days before. The police were there in a few minutes and both Band members were arrested.

Ronnie Lee's account takes the ALF story to 1976, but whilst in prison, actions were taking place against animal abuse establishments.

On the 17th June, Michael Huskisson raided the ICI laboratory at Alderley Park in Cheshire and rescued two dogs. He returned and rescued another but was caught by the police. Michael Huskisson was arrested and charged with theft and John Bryant was arrested and charged with receiving the 'stolen' dogs. At their trial on 17th December 1975, both were found not guilty - this being the verdict the Judge directed the jury to arrive at. The prosecution stated:-

> ",.. We accept that whatever the defendants did in connection with this case, was done out of genuine motive. It is clear they believed the dogs were being treated cruelly and that each of the defendants was justified in his action.
> The prosecution hold no view on whether experiments were cruel or not, but it is right to say that a Government investigation had agreed that although there were better ways of carrying on such experiments, they should continue to their conclusion....."

Both men were bound over to keep the peace for two years at Knutsford Crown Court and Huskisson said:-

> "... We are convinced there are no stains on our characters. My actions have been vindicated. My actions in taking three dogs have been proved not to be a crime. We did not break any law...."

Despite the hostility to the smoking experiments from which the dogs had been rescued, they were made to leave the Animal Defence Society they belonged to. The National Anti Vivisection Society had commissioned an opinion poll which found that 60% of the population were opposed to this type of experimentation.

The next action was against Charles River UK Ltd in June 1976 which was followed in the same month by an action against Pfizers Research Centre also in Kent. On this raid, the ALF members used a boat to get across the River Stour backing onto Pfizers, they then cut through the wire surrounding the establishment and rescued three pregnant beagles. This was a landmark in the ALF as activists were not prepared to let anything get in their way and rescued pregnant animals which prevented experimentation on the animals actually rescued, and the puppies they would soon give birth to.

In August 1976, members of the ALF attacked Hunting property in Essex. At the Essex Hunt's kennels near Potter Street, substancial damage was done to a horsebox. At the nearby home of William Bullman, the Huntmaster, damage was done to a horsebox and car there. The third raid on that night, two vehicles at the home of Derek Gray, a Hunt member, were immobilised. The Press to the delight of ALF announced "damage was so extensive, a cubbing meeting of the Hunt had to be cancelled..."(Herts and Essex Observer. 19/8/76). To no great surprise, the actions were condemned by the League Against Cruel Sports and a member of the Essex HSA.

The actions of the ALF were being directed against hunting and establishments associated with vivisection and 1976 was the year that the ALF dug in its heels and those associated with animal abuse presumably realised they now had a powerful and formidable foe. The ALF realised that part of its Campaign was the publicity of their actions (a)To point the spotlight on an establishment that nearby residents were unaware of, or at least unaware of the cruelty it supported or carried out (b)To constantly remind the general public of the extent and nature of animal abuse, and (c)hopefully, to encourage others to take up the ALF banner and do likewise. After ALF actions, the Press would be contacted and given full details and the Press in most cases were happy to oblige as ALF actions were indeed seen to be sensational.

In July 1976 the Animal Supplies Ltd laboratory animal breeding farm at Rabley Heath was attacked by the ALF and hundreds of pounds worth of damage was caused, principally through the ALF spray-painting vehicles there, slashing vehicle tyres, and pouring sugar into the petrol tanks. On 24th August 1976, the ALF raided the offices of Col. Storie-Pugh at Shepreth, Cambridgeshire who bred animals and sold them to laboratories. Again, hundreds of pounds worth of damage was done and slogans such as "Auschwitz" were painted on the office walls. This was to point out the suffering he was causing to animals, as Storie-Pugh had once been a prisoner of the Nazis and according to him, had been tortured and imprisoned in Colditz. This action received considerable publicity in the Press.

Due to the high number of ALF actions, August 1976 saw the beginning of the "Animal Liberation News Service" newsletter which included details of ALF and HSA activities and was to "provide information to the alternative press on the continuing struggle against human imperialism...". In September 1976, another ALF anti-vivisection action was taken against A.Tuck and Son at Rayleigh where a vehicle was severely damaged. In October 1976, the ALF moved in the direction of fighting intensive farming and at Dalchonzie Mink farm in Comrie,1000 artic blue foxes worth about £40,000 were released and according to the ALF activists who gave them their freedom, they "were last seen heading for the hills....."

In November 1976, the ALF continued its fast-growing action against the use of animals in experimentation. Receiving large scale publicity, ALF members raided DLAC(Western) Ltd at Capel Isaac, Wales.

The year 1977 began with an ALF attack on four shops in Barnard Castle (County Durham) the four shops were involved in clothes made from animals or sold items for animal abuse/killing. On the 4th February fifteen beagles were rescued from L. Foster of Earlsbrook, Warwickshire.The dogs were being bred for experimental 'research' and this successful animal liberation obtained publicity in several National newspapers on February 6th.

In addition to the ALF actions and activities detailed in this record, numerous other establishments felt the anger of the ALF and it had by this time become obvious to the Police and those involved in animal abuse, the ALF were not going "to go away".They were now an ever-present force who were prepared to actually take direct action against what they felt to be animal abuse, persecution and exploitation. The number of ALF actions were now increasing and this was an illustration that many passive Animal Rights supporters were seeing the ALF philosophy as the only way to break the back of animal abuse.

The next ALF 'hit' was against Evans breeding centre at Woodmansterne Lane, Carshalton, Surrey. (This is frequently referred to as 'Evans Laboratory' in the Press etc; but in fact no experiments were carried out there). The owner, Frank Henry Evans made the following statement to the police on 21st February:-

"I am the owner of Evans laboratories. The function of the laboratory is to breed mice for medical research. I sell the mice to hospitals and research laboratories. At any one given time I would estimate that there are approximately ten thousand mice at my laboratory. On Thursday 17th February 1977 at about 4.30pm, I locked up the premises as usual, and everything was secure. Then the following day, Friday 18th February, at about 8am, I arrived at the laboratory to start work. On arriving, I found that my premises had been broken into and damage caused. First of all I saw that slogans had been sprayed on the walls of the laboratory. These slogans were to the effect of 'Stop Cruelty' and 'Stop Experiments'. Then a large window to my office had been smashed. The window measures approximately 5' x 2½' and was made of 3/16" plate glass. Then on going through the laboratory, I found that the petty cash from our tea club was missing. I can't say exactly how much was there but there was definetely at least 75p. I then noticed that my telephone wires had been cut. On checking the laboratory itself, I found that three trays of mice had been taken. Two of these trays contained 50 mice each and the third contained 25. The value of the trays is at least £10 each and 125 mice are worth £25. That makes a total of £55. I have also noticed that a book is missing which I cannot place a value on. This book is a record of various things that I have built up over the years and the loss of the book causes inconvenience....

..... If necessary, I am willing to attend Court and give evidence. On Friday 18th February, at about 12.0pm, I attended Wallington Police Station where I identified my three trays of mice. Obviously I could not positively identify the mice, however, I was able to do so with the trays as I manufacture them myself and so they are peculiar to my laboratory. I had to destroy the mice as I could not take them back into the laboratory for fear of spreading any disease they might have picked up..."
Evans wrongly describes himself in the statement heading as a "Laboratory Director" which of course he was not. His statement shows (a)The deep concern over money and the financial loss (b)His attitude to the animals - they were simply products for sale and their lives were of no value at all. He did not take up Ronnie Lee's offer to buy the mice from him to prevent the unnecessary killing.
Ronnie Lee was arrested on February 18th and the police statement(as witness) gives an interesting picture of the events on that day :-
(D.C. Christopher Docherty)"...On Friday 18th February 1977 at about 4.30pm together with other officers, I went to 61 Munster Avenue, Hounslow, Middlesex.."(The statement details the questioning of Ronnie Lee, the mice being found and the decision to take Ronnie Lee and the mice to Wallington Police Station). "...I interviewed Lee. I cautioned him and said 'What have you got to say about the mice that we found at your premises ?'. Lee replied 'Well, I rescued the mice last night from Evans'. I took them for two reasons. First of all, because they had been kept in atrocious conditions, and secondly because they were due to be supplied at any moment to laboratories for use in criminal experiments'. I said'Whose idea was it to break into Evans' ?'. He said ' It was partly my idea to go in there to rescue the mice'. I said 'Whose was the other part ?'. He said 'I'm not prepared to say anything about anybody else. I don't think that anybody involved in the rescue of the mice has done anything wrong, but I don't want the police to go round there causing them trouble'. I said 'Can you tell us how many others were with you ?' Lee replied 'I'm not prepared to say anything about anyone else'. DC Weston said 'If you feel that they haven't done anything wrong, why won't you tell us so that the matter can be sorted out ?'. Lee replied 'I haven't done anything wrong myself, but the police still came to see me and cause me a great deal of inconvenience when I had better things to do'. I said 'You say you've done nothing wrong, but you admit breaking into the premises to save the mice'. Lee said 'Obviously I had to break into the premises to save the mice". I said'Obviously this is a matter of law that you feel very strongly about, I would have thought that in your interests you would like to tell us all about it' Lee replied 'I will tell you all about it to the extent to which I was involved personally. I drove to the place in my van.

I broke a window to get in and I was involved in the taking of three cages of mice from the rooms where they were kept.' I said 'What about the money from the tea club ?'. Lee said 'There were other people involved in the breaking into of the laboratory. They may have done other things, but my concern was to rescue the mice' DC Weston said 'How many others were there ?' Lee said ' I'm not prepared to say how many others were involved'. DC Weston said 'Did you see anyone putting paint on the walls ? Were you responsible for the slogans ?'. Lee said 'I'm not prepared to say'. I said 'What about the can of spray paint we got from your home ?' Lee said 'I agree that there was a can of spray paint in my house, there are probably others as well, together with paint tins, wallpaper etc;'. I said 'Was that can that we found to make the slogans ?'. Lee said 'I'm not prepared to say anything more about the can'.....

I said 'Did you cut the 'phone wires ?'. Lee replied 'It may have been that the phone wires on the premises were cut. What you must remember is that there were other people, apart from myself, involved in breaking into the laboratory. A number of things may have been done by them which I am not aware of. My main concern was to rescue the mice'.....
I was present when Lee was formally charged and cautioned. After the caution he said 'I don't consider that I have committed any crime. I entered the building to rescue mice from cruelty '.....
PC Brookman's statement for the Police records the call at the house and the finding of the mice and finishes:- "He then cautioned Lee, there was a short pause, and he replied 'O.K. I'll tell you everything you want to know - but can you leave the mice'.....
Ronnie Lee's own statement dated 18th February 1977 gives the picture of his attitude to ALF activities:-
"Early in the morning of Friday 18th February 1977 I drove to the premises of Evans Animal Laboratory, Evans Corner, Woodmansterne Lane, Carshalton, Surrey. The place breeds and supplies mice for use in cruel experiments. The mice there are kept in atrocious conditions - sometimes over fifty in a tiny cage 18" x 12" x 4". I was aware of the bad conditions of mice in lab. animal breeding centres as I have read about it and seen pictures in books on the the subject. When I got to the place I broke a window to get in, with a brick and a piece of piping. My intention was to go in there to rescue mice from cruelty and then to find them good homes where they would be taken care of. Other people were with me at the time. Some helped me to rescue the mice, some may have done other things which I am not aware of. I am not prepared to say who the other people are. I don't feel they have done anything wrong, but then neither have I, but that didn't stop me from being arrested.

After I broke the window, I went to the rooms at the back where the mice were kept. The stench in there was appalling. It seemed that they had not been cleaned out at the correct intervals. The muck in the bottom of some of the cages was over an inch deep. In the rooms were racks and racks of very small cages. There must have been thousands of them. There were so many mice in some of them that they had hardly room to move. There may well have been as many as half a million mice on the premises.

I decided to take only as many mice as I thought I could find homes for. Three cages were taken in all, containing approximately one hundred and fifty mice altogether: I wish I could have taken all the mice out of there and if I had the facilities and homes available, I would have done. I took the mice as they were due to be supplied at any moment to laboratories for cruel experiments. I have studied the subject and was aware of the sort of things that would have been done to the mice. Some of them may have been due to be used in experiments where they would have been fed poisonous substances such as cosmetics, detergents or weed killers until they die in agony. Others may have had poisonous substances rubbed into their skin. Yet others may have been gassed, blinded, deafened or burnt.

After the mice had been rescued they were taken round to where I live. I was going to find good homes for them but before I could do so, the police came round and took them away. I'm not really concerned about being arrested. What really worries me is that the mice will be taken back to that terrible place . When the police came, I told them lies at first as I did not want the mice to be taken away. I'm not ashamed of what I did as I feel it was right. I don't think it was criminal or dishonest as I did not intend to gain for myself;only to rescue animals from suffering. I felt that taking the mice from the place was the only way to save them....."

Ronnie Lee in a last frantic attempt to save the mice asked the police to advise Evans that he was willing to buy them. Whether the police did not pass on this information or Evans refused to take up the offer out of spite is not known. The 125 mice were returned to the breeding centre and gassed..... Ronnie Lee appeared in Wallington Court and was later granted bail after some time. This is perhaps the best time to reflect on the 1976-1978 period through the eyes of Ronnie Lee. .

"In this period ALF activists were certainly becoming more imaginative and dedicated; in July 1976 Pfizers near Sandwich, Kent which bred beagles for the experiments carried out there, was raided. The raid was very successful in that three pregnant beagles were rescued, so not only did the rescued beagles escape painful experiments to be carried out on them but so did the puppies they later gave birth to.

The activists carried out this raid in a very clever way; there were security guards on the premises but the beagles were kept at the rear in buildings fairly near to the perimeter fence and on the other side of this was a river. The activists responsible for this raid borrowed a boat and paddled across the river and, when on the Pfizers side of the river, cut through the fencing and rescued the beagles. The security staff were quite unaware of what was going on as they obviously felt no one could gain access that way. Not only was this a clever raid because of the methods used but it was a very successful one as the three pregnant beagles had thirteen puppies between them so in actual fact sixteen beagles escaped from the experiments Pfizers had planned for them. The most important feature of this ALF action was that it was the first ALF action that involved animal rescue.

Activists in the mid 1970's were still using the documents and details that the Band of Mercy used in its period of existence. Activists were beginning to realise the more raids carried out, the more that could be done as invariably they found documents in places which gave very valuable information on other places, about which little was known generally. ALF activists now saw their activities as information-gathering also.

During this time I was in the background, still involved but keeping clear of taking part in raids myself; during this time the number of activists was very small and I began to feel I should become involved again. As time went on I started to take part in direct action and saw the ALF becoming more involved in animal rescue in addition to damaging property associated with animal abuse. In fact the majority of actions I was involved in were actions to liberate animals.

The action I was arrested and imprisoned for was the raid on Evans breeding centre at Carshalton in Surrey; a group of us raided this establishment, rescuing one hundred and twenty-five mice and damaging the offices there also. I had moved home only a very short time before the raid ; at my previous home in Wood Green, London the police were coming round almost every week and going through the routine of searching the property, taking me away for questioning and even arresting me.

On one occasion they even kicked the front door down when I was out and the other occupants were a little slow in opening it. I was also taken to quite a few

different parts of the country where direct action had taken place and this was the situation whenever an ALF action took place.
From Wood Green I moved to Hounslow and I understood very few people knew my new address and the police were unaware of it. It was through this that I got arrested for the raid on Evans' as I took the rescued mice there believing they would be safe as the police would not come round. However, the police did find out my new address and, when calling round, discovered the mice from the breeding centre. I was arrested and charged with burglary and criminal damage, and was on remand until I was released on bail nearly two months later. I was held in Brixton prison until succeeding in obtaining bail by applying to a Judge as all applications to magistrates were continually turned down.

Whilst on bail I was arrested again because of an ALF action at Charles Rivers at Margate, Kent; the activists responsible for this raid were clever in that they realised that, despite the increased security there, the guard walked around the whole perimeter and, covering such a large area, it took him quite a while to do this. They waited for the guard to pass by and went through the perimeter wire into the Rivers' buildings. Inside the buildings they caused considerable damage and removed documents; they again waited for the guard to pass by and then ran back to the wire and got away. Until the following morning when the staff arrived, the company and security guard knew nothing of this successful raid there.

I did not take part in this particular raid but I met someone who was involved very shortly afterwards; I needed a writing-book and one of the items taken in the raid was a hard-back writing pad and I was therefore given this for my own use. I tore out the pages used by the Rivers' staff and also several ones underneath where a writing impression had been made; some weeks later the police called on me and arrested me in connection with an ALF action in Essex. They searched my home and one of the items they removed was the notebook from Rivers'. It didn't bother me as I knew I had removed the incriminating pages but the police used a scanner and could trace writing indentation many pages down into the book. The police then took me to Ramsgate, Kent police station and I was shown the scanner photographs which proved the notebook had come from Rivers'; The end result was that I was charged with a burglary that I hadn't done.

As I was on bail in connection with the raid on Evans' in Carshalton, I was remanded in custody because of the evidence that the police had; bail was refused as I had supposedly committed this offence whilst on bail for something else. As previously, I started applying to magistrates for bail and then applied to a Judge; unlike the previous occasion, I was refused and was kept in Canterbury prison. I was obviously very anxious about the whole business; indeed I was guilty of handling stolen goods but I was being charged with buglary, a far more serious crime and one that I was not guilty of in this particular case.

The digging up of John Peel's remains arose through a discussion coming back from a hunt sab. in Somerset. Someone mentioned that digging up the remains would be a good idea. I initially treated the suggestion as a joke and I agreed to it because of that, but the next day I was telephoned and told that everything had been planned out with the people who were going to assist and so I went ahead and joined the group doing this particular action. The action took place at night and we firstly turned over the headstone with pickaxes by which it was damaged and after digging, we left a fox's head(which we had taken from a hunting pub who had it as a trophy) with a poem attached. I considered the publicity over the action was a little over-dramatic and I couldn't understand the fuss being made - it was little different from those who went into Egyptian tombs and dug up the remains inside and were congratulated, although our action was obviously for a different reason and done as a symbolic act. The way it was described as a 'desecration' was a nonsense. I certainly had no fears or reservations about doing it.

I was eventually arrested for this about one year later, after the BFSS raid, as the police found photographs taken of the action and after some while, were able to identify me from the photographs taken. The police behaviour at my arrest was very formal and polite and didn't seem to view the action with the same horror as some of the Press did. The police concerned were those of Cumbria as this was where John Peel was buried and we had gone to. The police again at my arrest for the BFSS raid were quite reasonable and they certainly didn't view me as a'dangerous criminal'. The attitude of the Animal Rights movement at the digging-up was mixed, some viewed it as adverse publicity whilst others shared the same view as us, any publicity was good publicity. We took exception to some in the movement who were trying to direct us in the way we should go when in fact we were the only people taking any positive action in the Animal Rights campaign at that time. At our trial for the digging up, those being tried, defended themselves. As the 'offence' was only £70 worth of criminal damage, we expected a fine or even something less, but another charge was brought forward which had a type of religious connection , I believe it was 'Interfering with the remains of a dead person and subjecting them to indignity' and this of course made things a lot more serious. It was no doubt because of this that we were all sentenced to nine months imprisonment - myself, David Hough and Michael Huskisson.

During the BFSS trial, the Judge was very verbally abusive and compared us to football hooligans and at the John Peel trial the Judge did not say much but made up for this at the sentencing when he sentenced us to nine months imprisonment each. We later found out the Judge had hunting connections.

I was firstly on remand in connection with the digging up and then I was arrested for the BFSS raid and I was sent direct to Brixton prison. In Brixton I was on remand for the BFSS action. My case for John Peel then came up and I was sent up to Durham. My case for the BFSS then came up so I was sent down again, this time to Wormwood Scrubs. After being convicted for the BFSS raid, I had in fact spent most of the sentence in closed prisons but I spent the last two months at Springhill open prison.
The attitude of the prison staff in relation to what I had done was mixed; we were treated in a way as celebrities and some of the prison staff expressed a view that we shouldn't have been there. The prison staff certainly weren't as bad as one hears. The other prisoners were quite fascinated by us although they seemed to have difficulty in understanding us doing something that did not involve personal gain. Some may have found us a little eccentric but at no time did I come across anyone challenging what we had done.

It took a little while to realise the predicament I was in and I decided to adapt myself to prison as there seemed little point in not doing so and simply causing trouble for myself. The eight months inside did make a difference to me as whilst inside, a prisoner is on his own with his own thoughts.

As I am not involved in the ALF now, I can view it from a fairly unique position. I do feel it is a little unorganised and a bit of a 'free for all'. I do think also there is less motivation than when I was involved in the ALF and I don't think the ALF is the 'only way' - there are plenty of other organisations that have an important part to play in the campaign. I sometimes wonder if the necessary planning is always done these days and I consider people have a very romantic idea of 'freedom'. I now view damage as the best way to cripple those involved in animal cruelty and the only real action to achieve the goal.
When I first became involved in the ALF, I did realise I would one day be caught and arrested, but I saw this just as the price that would have to be paid eventually. There was some 'hero-worship' but this was nonsense as I would rather go on a BFSS raid than a hunt sab., as there is so much violence on sabs. these days and on a raid at night everything is on your terms. The only rules to be obeyed are the ones you alone make. Whilst in prison we got a few letters but it was demoralising as nothing seemed to be happening on the outside. I do feel we were let down and didn't get the support we needed. When I came out of prison I felt very disillusioned with things and since then I have not taken part in ALF type actions. I moved into a different sphere of Animal welfare/Rights and although totally supportive of direct action, I felt I had done 'my bit' for direct action. I now work full time with wild animals which includes the caring of injured ones. For the future, a better deal for the animals requires a change in attitudes and the work I do now tries to effect this.

I haven't got much faith in human nature and certainly have no utopian ideals. Human nature being what it is, I cannot see a day when animals will not be exploited as long as human beings govern this planet. At the same time I don't believe people should just sit back and do nothing - we all have a part to play and everyone can do something to make things easier for the animals. I certainly do not advocate unnecessary violence but in some situations it is justifiable - say, on a Hunt, I believe one should use force to defend oneself and associates. My feelings run very high sometimes of course and I feel some only understand the message of violence. I certainly have no time for pacifism which clearly shows it doesn't work and never has done. The most effective weapon is a show of strength and a show of force and I definitely believe things will become violent in the not-too-distant future. On Hunts things are certainly more violent and I truly believe that saboteurs must change their attitude towards the Hunt. I always feel disgusted when I see pacifists being knocked about and refusing to defend themselves and their associates. There are plenty of other ways of disrupting and even destroying Hunts and it is time people started looking at the other methods availble.

I have no regrets about being involved in direct militant action, nor the things which occured because of it - for example going to prison. Things will obviously have to change and these changes will only ever occur when people unhappy with the situation get up and do something about it.

After Ronnie Lee was arrested in February 1977, ALF actions continued: on 14th April an attack was made on the property of Billy Smarts circus Windsor because of its inclusion of animals in the 'entertainment programme'.

Shortly before this, a successful ALF raid took place against the kennels belonging to an Edward Crowley in the Malvern Hills. Crowley admitted to the press he bred animals for the Medical Research Council; a total of 26 beagles and 19 cats destined for painful experiments were rescued and promptly placed in good homes arranged by the ALF.

To no great surprise, the National Anti-Vivisection Society wholly condemned the use of direct action in their 1976-1977 Annual Report; how actions that physically saved animals from painful and cruel deaths could be wrong, the Report did not specify. ALF actions continued and in June 1977, 8 cats were rescued by the ALF from a breeding establishment in Colvell, Worcestershire.

Animal rescue had become a fundamental part of ALF policy and the question of damage was being looked into by members of the ALF; some members felt unhappy about arson and a secret meeting was held and all active members of the ALF attended. After presenting the case for and against arson, members voted and it was decided the ALF would not carry out arson attacks any more. Most members who supported the use of arson agreed to abide by the vote, although a number of activists felt the decision was wrong and possibly harmful to the cause of animal liberation. These people formed a splinter group and called it "The Lunatic Fringe" - after being called this by the media - their first attack was on two boats being used for the Norfolk sea cull. Extensive damage was done, the local press reported that one of the boats had been completely submerged and it would cost some £2,000 to replace; Ronnie Lee was arrested in connection with this successful action on the 30th June 1977 with two associates and only released after being kept in police cells for 32 hours.

The next ALF raid was on Charles Rivers breeding complex at Margate, Kent in July 1977 and this was followed by an arson raid on Tuck's Breeding Farm in Rayleigh, Essex. The buildings that did not contain animals were set on fire after the ALF group had made sure no animals nearby could be harmed; the damage was estimated at £20,000. Details of the raid were reported as follows:

> "Mr. Tuck is afraid to be photographed in case the raiders trace his home address; he also refused to appear on television as he said 'I don't want these people to know my face or find out where I live'. Mr. Tuck admitted breeding 10,000 mice, 4,000 rats and 1,000 guinea pigs each week and that he could not start to count the cost of the damage. What was once a building containing a luxurious office, storerooms and garage was turned into a burned and blackened empty shell. Mr. Tuck added 'This really caused me a headache. Our records have been destroyed and we have no idea who owes the farm money. Some firms may tell us that they owe us money whilst others might not, I've just got to hope and trust.'".

ALF actions continued to occur; extensive damage was caused to property belonging to the Blackmore and Sparkford Vale Hunt at Charlton Horethorne, Dorset in August 1977. In the same month Gilbertson and Page, a firm manufacturing animal traps and snares in Colney Heath, Hertfordshire was paid a visit by the ALF. The group responsible stated:

> "Last night members of the Animal Liberation Front carried out a raid on the premises of Gilbertson and Page, which prints a magazine 'Gamekeeper and Countryside', which encourages people to go out and kill wild animals. The firm also produces and sells snares and traps for animals. We got into their offices early in the morning and damaged their printing equipment and typewriters and ransacked the office. We also damaged traps

which were there. We removed £120 cash from the office, which will be used to finance raids on other premises connected with cruelty to animals. We are stepping up our campaign."

Attacks on broiler houses and laboratories continued with either damage being done or animals rescued, or both. In September 1977 direct action against animal exploitation erupted abroad - in Honolulu 2 porpoises being used for research were rescued by a group calling itself "Undersea Railroad". It was stated "The porpoises will never again know the nets of a captor or the relentless probing of scientific research".

News of the ALF's activities reached countries abroad; the National Society for Medical Research bulletin published by the Society's Washington office in October 1977 gave the headlines "Anti-Vivisectionists Escalate Activities". The front page gave details of ALF actions against establishments connected with vivisection in the United Kingdom and brought to the readers' attention that similar activities had begun in the United States of America. The example given was that of a Dr. Lester Aronson, living in Hillside, New Jersey. His neighbours had been leafletted with details of Aronson's experimentation with animals; the leaflets had extensive details about Aronson and gave his address and telephone number also, also asking readers to "voice their opinions". It was seen as an attempt to provoke attacks on Aronson. The periodicals stated that it was very concerned about these "disgusting developments".

Shortly after this, two dolphins kept for experimentation by a Dr. Herman in Hawaii were released into the ocean and Dr. Herman found one morning two rubber toy dolphins with messages thereon stating "Set my people free", "Slaves no more" and "Gone surfin'". The American Society for Animal Rights voiced support for this action and stated "Animals have waited a long time for this". In the United Kingdom, the ALF were opening its doors to the general

public and a large article appeared in the New Musical Express on 12th November 1977; the article was very sympathetic to the ALF and made it possible for the ALF to explain its attitudes, views and ideologies to the public and in this case, to the young public.

Before this, on October 12th, Ronnie Lee was found guilty of burglary and criminal damage in connection with the Evans Breeding Unit, raided by the ALF in February 1977, and was sentenced to one year's imprisonment. At the end of the trial, Ronnie Lee stated "The prosecuting counsel said that the law exists so that the weak shall not be oppressed, it seems that the opposite is the case. It seems that the law exists so that the weak shall be oppressed. It allows animals to be exploited".

Early in 1978, two activists arrested in connection with the British Field Sports Society were sent to prison, Garry Treadwell for 9 months and Aubrey Thomas for 6 months. Christopher Morrisey was remanded in custody for three weeks. At the time of sentencing, Garry Treadwell was already in prison for the "vandalising" of John Peel's grave.

Also in February 1978, a court case involving the rescue of 12 hens was going on; five people arrested and appearing in court were found not guilty. Aubrey Thomas, already imprisoned earlier that month for another animal rights "crime" was one of the five. In May 1978 Ronnie Lee was released from prison after receiving five months' remission. Little occurred in 1978, although demonstrations against animal abuse were many and articles about the ALF in various publications, including those of animal rights organisations, became more frequent.

In March 1979 a raid by the ALF on the New York Medical Center took place; a cat, 2 guinea pigs and 2 dogs, all awaiting experimentation were successfully rescued by a group of four activists who placed them in good homes. This action received a good deal of publicity in the American press. An interview

with the four activists also appeared and they detailed the raid which was fully reported. In the same month 11 beagles being bred for smoking experiments and other tests were rescued from the Harewood End Kennels in Ross-on-Wye. Receiving very wide publicity, a raid occurred in France, near Auxerre, Pourrain and 57 dogs destined for laboratory experiments were successfully rescued.

In May 1978 the ALF rescued 100 battery hens from a factory farm at Middle Wallop, Wiltshire. Newspapers began reporting ALF warnings of more raids to occur and gave good publicity to the ALF and animal rights cause; in August 1979 Shangri-La battery farm in Stevenage, Hertfordshire was raided by members of the ALF; 70 hens were rescued and placed in free-range homes. The owner of the farm denied cruelty existed at the farm and stated the ALF's criticism's were unfounded; unfortunately for him, his comments were reported with a photo of him standing in a unit with the now familiar sight of numerous cages containing hens virtually unable to move. The same month saw several greens belonging to the exclusive Coombe Hill golf club in Kingston, Surrey damaged by the ALF in protest against the use of the club by the Association of Fur Traders. On 1st August the Daily Telegraph reported the ALF had successfully accomplished one million pounds' worth of damage to that time; the ALF felt this figure to be considerably lower than the true one.

Other raids followed and various publications seemed eager to print details about the growing ALF. In September 1979 "Time Out" included a page article about radical animal rights organisations. "Time Out" also reported the lack of sympathy for the animal rights cause by political groups; quotes were included from left wing activists saying they supported the slaughter of animals for food, vegetarianism was "reactionary" and that the mass slaughter of animals to feed the hungry would be the sensible thing to do. Unlike today, the left stated "Issues involving animals is not one of our priorities", and it was only in the early 1980's when the animal rights campaign grew, that some parties saw there was political benefit in supporting the animal rights

campaign and members of the animal rights campaign saw personal benefit in liaising with political groups to further their own political careers. This is why the ALF has always steered well clear of any political school of thought in pursuing the ideal and goal of animal rights.

At the beginning of 1984 Ronnie Lee spoke about the ALF and the position at that time:-

" With regard to the actual direction the ALF is going, there are two aspects. Firstly, the way I would like to see it go. I hope that ALF and other types of direct action increase to such an extent that it poses a real threat to all those who carry out animal exploitation; for example the fur trade finds it impossible to function and operate due to the attacks which cause them so much financial hard--ship. Indeed, it does appear the ALF is going in that direction although not as swiftly as I would like. However, every year more attacks take place and more damage is caused and ALF activists are becoming more daring in their activities so I am certainly optimistic about the future. At the present time, I do feel the ALF could be better organised and there is undoubtably room for improvement. In the early days there was a lack of activists and there was a great deal of resentment and hostility towards the ALF but now there are many many more people prepared to become active but a lot of potential is definitely being wasted. Sometimes there is a lack of initiative - many people genuinely want to become ALF activists but won't take that one step and actual physically take direct action. They seem to need guidance and for someone to lead them into ALF activity and always be around to advise them. The ALF simply doesn't have the time nor the resources to send trained activists to these people and show them what is needed and give them that push they appear to need. In the early ALF days, we had no teacher, we simply had to go out and take the necessary action ourselves and I feel anxious and somewhat annoyed that people at this time cannot do the same thing. The second problem is the shortage of resources. Many ALF activists are young people, often unemployed and short of money because of that. Because of this, they are severely restricted in what they can do. A vehicle is frequently a necessity but being unemployed, there is no possibility of many acquiring a vehicle and they are therefore prevented from doing many important actions they would do if the situation was different. The lack of resources therefore limits many,capable and willing to cause extensive damage to animal abuse establishments and liberate animals due to suffer, to actions that have a very limited impact. The situation admittedly is much better now but falls far short of what is needed.

I firmly believe that if animals are ever going to get rights, then direct action has to be a very large area of the campaign. If direct action does not substantially increase then animal liberation will never be achieved. Because of this, the ALF must not be a 'side issue' or something that can be conveniently used or looked to when the time is suitable, but the major thrust of the struggle. The political campaigners of course do not want this as they want the ALF tidily tucked away in an obscure corner.

Over the years the ALF has successfully obtained widescale publicity of its actions, but now, as ALF actions occur so frequently, there tends to be less publicity, especially in the National Press. I don't believe there is at present a 'reporting clamp-down' . Publicity of ALF actions is vitally important and there is considerable evidence that many people form ALF groups simply by reading about ALF actions elsewhere in the newspapers; this has certainly been the situation abroad.

There is a great deal of misunderstanding about the ALF and what it does; people seem to think joining the ALF is comparable with joining the Army - submitting an application, being interviewed and tested and then put through various trials to ensure suitability. It is obviously not like that ; it is far more loose-knit than that and anyone who agrees with ALF policy can become an ALF activist, the only 'acceptance' required being that the people they work with accept them. People do not 'join' the ALF in the way they would join another organisation, they 'join' simply through the direct action they take as long as their activities comply with ALF policy. There are people who take direct action against animal exploitation who go under another name and do not call themselves the ALF. This doesn't particularly bother me and I am delighted they take direct action under whatever name they choose to call themselves; however I am concerned that they rob themselves of the support they could get, particularly if they are caught, arrested and fined. Admittedly, the ALF does try to help anyone who takes ALF-type action, but the more action taken under the name of the ALF, the more financial support it will receive and therefore the more it can help. In view of this it is more sensible for people taking direct action to be part of the actual ALF.

If there were hundreds of direct action groups there really would be a great deal of confusion and a lack of money and resources for those belonging to the various organisations. It is therefore important that people taking direct action do it under the same banner as long as their actions fall into the ALF policy guidelines.

The ALF really doesn't want people straight 'off the street' ; I feel people genuinely sympathetic to the Animal Liberation Campaign should contact the ordinary Animal Rights organisations and read their literature to find out how the animals are suffering. They must then decide for themselves how they can best serve the Campaign.

The ALF obviously wants more active members and a lot of people make excuses for not being ALF members and a great deal of the time, the excuses are not valid. One of the first things a person must do is to become vegetarian ; one can hardly complain about the cruelty of factory farming, one of the largest areas of animal abuse, if you are eating meat or battery eggs.

Following this, the person must then decide how they can help the animals and if they can involve themselves in direct action. If they can do this, I believe they should become an ALF activist. If their personal circumstances - age, health etc; prevents them from taking direct action, there are many excellent ways they can help the Animal Rights Campaign. Direct action does change a person's viewpoint of animal rights and, in fact, of life itself; through entering a laboratory one sees the total disrespect for animal life . It is not only the animal abusers working there but the population overall that allow it by supporting animal suffering directly or indirectly by ignoring it. Speaking for myself, if I had never become involved in animal rights, I would now be a solicitor presumably with the property and possessions and lifestyle that accompanies such an occupation. I was training to be a solicitor when I first became involved.

The reasons for becoming an ALF activist vary widely; the reason I became involved originated from raging anger. From the moment I first looked at a leaflet that gave details of animal abuse, I decided that real militant action was necessary to fight it and finally overcome it. I recall the first thing I ever read detailed the horrors of factory farming and I thought that the place described should be smashed up; writing a letter to someone didn't even occur to me. Direct action has always been the most logical approach and method as far as I am concerned - if you see a person being beaten up,you go to that person's assistance immediately - you don't write a letter to your MP or suchlike. The animals are suffering in the same way except that their suffering is behind high walls and locked doors but the response must surely still be the same - the immediate reaction to go and stop it.

We cannot presume that at some later date a group might not form which would have violence as part of its policy . The ALF would never seriously injure anyone as this is part of the ALF policy but there is nothing to stop another group evolving that would see violence as a necessary part of their campaign ; if people wish to spend time discussing the morality it is up to them but from my point of view it really all comes down to tactics.
I think violence is used by some guerilla groups because of a lack of imagination - they fail to see alternative ways of achieving their ends without the use of violence which are just as effective. I cannot say that the use of violence would be wrong in all circumstances and all situations, but the ALF is unlikely to ever involve itself in the use of violence.
Violence of course alienates the public and the ALF truly appreciates public sympathy. If the Government ever decided to clamp down on the direct action area of Animal Rights then I believe the public would be against this. We should not forget that members of the ALF are members of the general public; someone not associated with the campaign today may soon be a member of one of the traditional Animal Rights organisation and eventually become a dedicated member of the ALF; we cannot therefore just steam ahead disregarding the value of public opinion and the sympathy it has for us - which seems to be increasing all the time at present.

At the moment the animal abusers and those who support or finance them are extremely worried; but a day will come when the ALF does not only cause worry and financial loss but begins to destroy the system of animal abuse and exploitation. This will come about when there are sufficient numbers of people taking direct action. It will be a day when different spheres of animal abuse can no longer function and continue and if the ALF loses public support then it cannot effect this as the increase in ALF membership which is now needed will come through members of the public becoming ALF activists. If the ALF began a sudden vicious campaign of violent terrorism those who will eventually join the ALF will never do so; the use of violence would slow down or even stop the ALF campaign.
The word 'violence' covers a wide area; I believe that if people started seriously hurting pet stealers there would not be such a public outcry and there might even be a lot of public support for this; most people see pet stealers as 'the lowest of the low' and would not be particularly sorry to see them out of action and perhaps even suffering because of their behaviour and activities. It could perhaps be the same situation with a huntsman. I doubt whether there would be much support for an attack on a vivisector although I would find it difficult to condemn such an action as a vivisector is no different from a person who tortured people to death in the war.

I honestly believe the ALF will not and should not involve itself in violence; not because of any pacifist ideology but for tactical reasons. As time goes on, people may begin to feel differently and that an element of violence is necessary and does have a place in the campaign but I cannot see the ALF changing its viewpoint on the subject.

You can worry about 'public opinion' too much of course; the answer must surely be to change public opinion itself. If the ALF had based its existence at the very beginning on whether the public accepted its activities, then the ALF would not have continued and certainly would not be around today. There was a good deal of hostility to ALF in the mid 1970's and fortunately it has changed during the years as 'opinion polls' taken by local Animal Rights groups with their local general public have shown. One, not long ago, showed some 45% of people in favour of direct action against vivisection laboratories although one interesting feature of the poll was that people under 21 favoured direct action far more than people questioned who were older; those people under age 21 favouring direct action was a marvellous 70%.

Over the years the ALF has changed public opinion and it has only achieved this through being very careful about the actions taken and philosophy expounded; if the ALF "went too far too fast", it would alienate the public from what it is trying to do.

The aim of the ALF and other groups carrying out direct action should be to physically destroy property and industries involved in animal abuse and there has to be a build-up and increase in direct action to effect this; there has to be a constant never-ending siege against places which exploit animals. I do not feel such a build-up is impossible; we are only in the early days of direct action; there has indeed been a very swift increase in direct action recently. I do not see how we can rely on politicians to end animal suffering and the most we can ever really expect is legislation to limit certain areas of animal persecution and even that is being somewhat optimistic. The ALF therefore by-passes Government which ignores the terrible suffering of animals; however, it is not impossible that Government would legislate when it sees so much direct action being carried out. How much direct action would be needed to force Government action against animal abuse is unknown and will be something we will only know at a later date.

The possibility of whether Government wishes to do anything or not is of no concern to me; if they choose to legislate, then I will be delighted. Whatever Government decides, the ALF and direct action will continue the struggle and win. People who become ALF activists are not necessarily anti-political but are people who have given up any hope that the Animal Rights issue will be solve by peaceful legal campaigning and that Government will act because of it. Peaceful legal campaigning is a tremendous waste of resources as the result of it - if there is any result at all - is so minor and that same energy would be better spent on direct action.

Because of the attitude taken by other Animal Rights societies, I would not normally hold out much hope of things changing; however, if their membership put pressure on them, then I believe they would have to take a more sensible supportive and unselfish view of things.

Direct action and carrying out direct action is very hard work, there is so much research to be done initially such as first finding a place suitable to raid, actually travelling there several times to plan the raid, if animals are to be rescued then homes have to be found which will be suitable, and then actually planning out the raid and carrying it out. The right equipment has to be bought and checked over, maps have to be obtained, vehicles kept fully maintained and so on. Compare this with other forms of campaigning and there can be no doubt it is the hardest part of the whole campaign. Those who become activists vary in the time they remain activists; they can sometimes meet someone who they wish to have time with, they get married, they have children, etc; and cease ALF action. I do not feel these are necessarily justified reasons to stop fighting.They can nevertheless still spend time researching or homing animals or finding homes so there is no need for them to drop out completely. Of course some activists get caught and get suspended sentences or are even imprisoned so they feel the need to pursue the more legal methods of campaigning during the suspended sentence or after being released from prison. For this reason the activists who were in the ALF in the mid 1970's no longer involve themselves in direct action as they have fallen foul of the Law.

In the early days the chance of arrest was far greater as firstly there were only a handful of people carrying out direct action and the police found it relatively easy to trace activists. Secondly, they were doing so much, it was virtually certain they would be eventually caught for their activities. Other activists saw a lot of their colleagues being arrested and sent to prison and realised that prison was really quite unavoidable and therefore decided to stop before this happened.

The people who now become active in the ALF normally realise that arrest and imprisonment is very likely; I consider it very important indeed that people who join the ALF do think about this; only a fool would begin direct action and if arrested would claim they didn't know this was a likelihood.

Most of those imprisoned carry on campaigning in a very dedicated way although not necessarily in the form of illegal direct action. It is very rare indeed for someone to be released and lose all interest in Animal Rights which surely proves my point that most ALF activists do realise imprisonment is always very likely. I think it is very stupid for activists to consider they will never be caught as the law of averages demands that if they are taking illegal direct action on a fairly regular basis, they will be caught one day.

I firmly believe that unless massive direct action evolves, there is little hope for the animals. Anyone studying the history of the campaign can see how futile the poltical campaign for obtaining animal rights is. The political campaign is immoral as it takes attention away from direct action and also costs a great deal of money. In 1979 and 1983, a tremendous amount of money was spent on this campaign and the result was a total 'zero'; I then think of how animals could have been saved with that money and needless to say I feel very angry and very sad. I sometimes wonder if the political campaign is simply "a job for the boys" as it has become virtually a career for some people and perhaps it is not purely coincidental that some who get very involved in the political campaign are very interested in getting involved in politics themselves. Because of this I do not waste my time and energy even thinking about political campaigns and which party should be elected; the last hundred odd years have proved this to be ineffective and meaningless. Politicians will only vote for statute outlawing animal abuse and exploitation when they are forced to and not before; they will be forced to through a highly successful and large-scale campaign of direct action. It should not be forgotten that many politicians have great financial interests in animal abuse - intensive farming, vivisection etc; many of them hunt regularly and they will not give these up without a fight. So many people forget that the majority of animal abuse occurs through the desire for money and large profits; pure brutal greed will not be overcome through pleadings and weak compromise, it needs to be annihilated through a massive reaction against it and one of the best ways to do this is endanger and destroy the principal motive - money and profit.

The ALF and its very straightforward policy and ideals is a mature viewpoint on the subject and I often consider those who actively support and encourage other forms of campaigning as either insincere or naïve. Some organisations encourage and even organise civil disobedience; being arrested for stopping traffic or so-called insulting behaviour doesn't help any animals and the end result is just paying a fine back into the system which is paying for animal exploitation a great deal of the time. If I learn of a person being arrested for civil disobedience that is a potential ALF activist, I obviously feel very saddened; if they must get arrested, it may as well be for something worthwhile. From what I have seen, there is less chance of being arrested for direct action than civil disobedience as the chances of being caught are far less. Obviously I have to resent activities that draw people away from direct action as quite simply, they are delaying the day when animal liberation does come and animals do get their rights. The ALF needs more and more activists not only to increase and intensify the campaign but to deal with changes that are happening, for example many laboratories are getting better security and more research is needed before these places can be raided.

Recently many laboratories have brought in sophisticated security measures which is obviously a good thing as the money spent on this type of thing is money no longer available to breed,purchase and torture animals with. However, I do feel that these places must be raided as I fail to see why a laboratory that has the money to do this should not be raided. There is also the factor that if other establishments see extensive security guarantees freedom from a raid they will do likewise and then it will prevent the amount of direct action that could be taken; whatever security exists there;it will not prevent ALF action but it is preferable the place is raided before the extra security measures are taken,rather than afterwards. As time goes on and the ALF faces greater problems, for example greater security, there is the obvious need for firstly, more activists and secondly, more financial help to combat this type of thing. The day is fast approaching when bolt croppers, wire cutters and a crowbar simply will not do the job anymore and people who say they support the ALF must surely face up to that.

Arson is an action that is used a great deal these days and,because of its nature, the activist responsible has to be very careful. The use of arson is left up to the individual but many are finding it a highly efficient way of fighting animal exploitation and damaging the property that allows animal abuse to be carried out. Many activists are concious of the sentence if arrested and found guilty of arson. There is also the problem of checking out the property to be burned to ensure there is no animal life inside or any life, human or animal, at risk nearby. The wind, nearby buildings, inflammable substances nearby and so on all have to be taken into account very carefully by those responsible and the ALF impresses upon activists the high risks involved in taking direct action through arson. If activists are prepared to ensure there is no risk then arson is a very effective and efficient method of fighting animal abuse; as I have stated, it is really up to the individual to decide what he or she wants to do. There are places where internal damage is very difficult to do and the only way to destroy or damage it is by arson so,without doubt, arson has a place in the campaign of direct action.

The ALF is now having to face up to the challenge of returning to a place for a second raid; it doesn't want them to think that after a raid "that's that" and there won't be any more trouble. After the first raid many places install extra security precautions and therefore they are much more difficult to raid on a second or subsequent occasion; there is also a greater chance of being caught as the owners become far more aware and defensive. I am very concerned that animal abuse establishments do not feel they are no longer a target after the first raid but are made to understand that as long as they exploit animals they will always be a target no matter how many raids may have been carried out against them by the ALF."

The first half of 1980 summed up the ALF campaign situation - the first action of the year was a successful raid on the publicity exercise by the Chiddingfold, Leconfield and Cowdray Hunt at Graffham near Petworth which caused serious interruption to the event; the Shooting Times of 17-23 January reported the action describing it as "despicable".

The same month saw an ALF action at Meadow Farm in Shirley, near Birmingham where extensive damage was done to equipment and property belonging to the intensive poultry farm. Five people were arrested in connection with the action and in February they appeared in Court; a suspended jail sentence, compensation orders and fines were handed out. After the trial, one of the raiders told the press who had reported this action quite widely: "It was all worthwhile". Newspapers such as The Times, Sun and Daily Express covered the trial - and so did Poultry World.

In Japan, Dexter Cate an environmentalist from Hawaii, was put on trial accused of releasing 300 dolphins awaiting slaughter so that they could become pig food. Some people believed that he could face imprisonment of up to three years and be heavily fined.

Later in May, ALF members damaged vehicles belonging to meat traders in Brighton, Sussex; shortly after this the good news that dolphin liberator Dexter Cate had been given only a six-month suspended sentence was announced. In June, shops advertising the circus belonging to David Smart were asked to remove advertising material and warned damage would occur if this request was not complied with. Police in Battersea, South London were alerted and watched for ALF actions in view of previous damage carried out due to shops refusing to heed the pleas of animal rights groups to stop advertising animal cruelty and degradation.

Receiving wide publicity, animal rights activists stormed the Government-funded Animal Physiology Institute at Babraham, Cambridge on the 29th June 1980; extensive damage was also done. Film was taken of the interior by the activists

who entered the Institute and this was made available to the press, even the newspapers known to be unsympathetic to animal rights called the Institute "Frankenstein Farm", "Horror Farm", "Lab of Horror" etc. Pictures included sheep with bolts of wire through their bodies which were connected to machinery, pigs in iron maiden-type pens with electrodes attached to their heads, outsized goats with plugs attached to their bodies and a goat which appeared to be half horse. Several arrests were made which simply increased the publicity of the raid which of course included ALF members. Dr. Cross, Director of Babraham Hall, told the press that the treatment of the animals "does not cause any great discomfort - within a week or two they are lively and happy". Despite Dr. Cross' attempt to explain away the suffering which had been seen at first-hand, animal rights groups publicly announced that there would be further actions against Babraham and any establishment using animals for experiments. The Agricultural Research Council also issued a statement saying "the raid had caused the animals, who were used to quiet, sympathetic handling in a peaceful environment, severe distress by breaking windows and using cameras". Not long after this, true to their promise, the ALF damaged Battersea shops in South West London who had been previously warned to remove circus publicity; the local press were telephoned by an ALF member who said: "This is just the beginning, we helped to wipe out Jerry Cottle's circus when we set fire to the booking office in Putney last year". At the end of June 1980, more demonstrations including effigy burning were held near the Babraham Institute which had been raided earlier that month.

To no great surprise the NAVS (National Anti-Vivisection Society) in its June-August "Animal's Defender", condemned illegal direct action saying such activities were counter-productive and did not help the animals. The article added that the NAVS had given £200,000 to alternative research as if this was going to break the back of a multi-billion pound industry such as vivisection. About this time, criticism of the BUAV (British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection) began and some members of the animal rights campaign were seeing a takeover of the BUAV as a necessity; this was to become a continuing story

up to the present time.

In July 1980, F.W. Tuck, a breeding unit of small animals for laboratory experimentation, which had previously been attacked in 1977 by the ALF when if suffered an arson attack, was raided by the ALF again and 500 mice were liberated. Despite a security guard at this Essex firm, no-one was arrested and the mice escaped the fate of being experimented upon in a laboratory. In the same month, the ALF damaged the home of a South London vivisector who was involved with baboon experiments. The subject of the attack told the press: "What these groups are saying is completely unfounded. Slogans suggest I am a pervert, sadist and animal torturer". Presumably he couldn't agree with such things - but a lot of people were beginning to believe this type of criticism. "Persecution" of the Babraham director was being reported in the Cambridge press of August 1980 and non-violent attacks were being seen as a useful part of the campaign and in fact have been used ever since; as labs become increasingly secure, animal abusers own homes have been seen as a target as they only exist through the money which has become available through the suffering of animals. Later in August more good news was heard when the 17 arrested in connection with the Babraham raid had charges against them dropped. Again there was widescale publicity and without doubt it had become obvious to many that direct action was bringing about the publicity which the campaign so desperately needed.

The NAVS presumably seeing that direct action was effecting more animal rights publicity and gaining more supporters, attacked the direct action campaign yet again in their Animal's Defender of September-October 1980. The article claimed that direct action would lose parliamentary support (obvious no doubt by its non-existence?) and public sympathy. The article then started to philosophise about violence for some strange reason - strange in that the ALF has never used violence against any form of life and has condemned violence on many occasions. During 1980 direct action was carried out in slightly different ways by groups such as the Northern Animal Liberation League and

Eastern Animal Liberation League; in October 1980 Sheffield University was raided by the NALL and four dogs due to suffer experimentation were rescued; the press also reported the £1,000 damage accomplished.

Actions continued and yet again another part of the world saw direct action successfully defeating animal abuse. On December 4th the International Animal Liberation Front liberated 60 gerbils and 32 rats from the Psychology Department of the University of South Florida, United States of America. The rats had undergone surgery and it was evident that the gerbils had suffered psychological experiments also. This received widescale publicity in America. The same month saw the ALF damaging shops in South West London again which had continued to advertise circus shows involving animals. During this time the troubles with the BUAV continued with each side - the radicals and the traditionalists - accusing each other of various unpleasant misdemeanours. The beginning of 1981 saw a fierce well-planned attack by the ALF on the homes of scientists who were using or had used animals in cruel experiments. These actions were reported in most of the national newspapers and were featured in radio and TV news articles; scientists had "Murderer", "Torturer", "Animal Killer", "Scum" etc daubed in large letters on their drives and on their houses for everybody to see. Whilst the ultra-moderates in the animal rights campaign condemned this, there was considerable support from members of organisations such as the BUAV and Animal Aid. Again the NAVS loudly condemned this action calling the ALF "an extreme minority".

The New Scientist of 8 January 1981 called the ALF "hooligans" and stated that Parliament would not respond to vandalism. The Observer of 11 January 1981 included a large article which reported that there was a hit list of scientists using animals drawn up by members of the ALF; the article also stated that recent attacks heralded a new intensification of the direct action campaign. Members of the ALF contacted doctors at St. James's Hospital in Leeds to warn them they would have their personal property damaged if animal abuse was carried out by them. Before the storm over the attacks on scientists homes had finished,

more raids occurred - attacks on butchers shops, fur shops, vivisection laboratories etc. The Earl of Halsbury wrote an article on the 24 January 1981 entitled: "Why do alleged animal lovers torment human animals?" which many people said left them more confused than before they started to read it - such is the argument of the pro-vivisectionist.

while still getting in on publicity gained through

Still trying to get publicity through the ALF's ingenuity and logical approach, the NAVS, yet again, published an anti-ALF article in Animal's Defender of January-February 1981; the same old story but using different words, presumably to prevent the boredom which inevitably arises through the anti-direct action campaign argument. The article said that the NAVS would like to meet members of the ALF "to appeal to them"; presumably the NAVS did not realise, at this time anyway, many ALF members and even non-members were appealing to the NAVS and organisations like it to come to a state of reality and unite with the animals who were suffering - partly because of attitudes such as the ones held by the NAVS. As stated by the ALF, if the ALF had existed in the 19th century the animal abuse would not exist today, or at least not exist to the extent it does and criticism of the direct action campaign was literally the last thing the animals needed at that time. Presumably that statement was too complex for the NAVS to think on.

A highly successful direct action raid occurred in France involving the rescue of dogs destined for laboratory experiments in January 1981 and many felt 1981 heralded a new awakening in the animal rights campaign as it has in fact never looked back since that year. Meanwhile, the BUAV troubles had now ended and The Observer of the 1st February 1981 reported the new radicals had now taken over the BUAV and many of those involved in the takeover claimed to be sympathetic and/or supportive of the ALF and the ALF felt many animals would benefit from this radicalisation. This indeed was the case, until the "purge of 1984".

The Laboratory News of the 27th February 1981 reported the attacks on scientists homes with the headlines: "ALF to step up attacks"; the paper reported a conversation with an ALF spokesman who pointed out that vivisection existed due to the idea that humans were more intelligent animals - but no-one would consider it right to experiment with mentally handicapped people. In Canada extensive damage was done by the International ALF to a Vancouver "dog pound" which regularly sent dogs picked up as strays to vivisection laboratories; slogans such as: "Save Monkeys, Kill Researchers" were painted on walls and some scientists connected with experimentation had been threatened with "kneecapping". This action was reported in the February 1981 Canadian press.

Raids on fur shops occurred during this period and on the 1st March 1981 an ALF group raided the Wickham Laboratories near Southampton and rescued 11 beagles worth £1,000 each to the laboratory. The dogs were about to be used in experimentation which the laboratory stated was related to finding a vaccine for parvo virus. The ALF comment on this raid was: "It is just as cruel to experiment on a dog to supposedly help another dog as it is to experiment on animals to supposedly help human beings". The raid was widely covered in national as well as local press and local animal rights groups stated that they sympathised with the successful raid although they were not involved in it personally. Details of the raid were covered in the press as far as Western Australia. The raid effected wide coverage of the work carried out by Wickham Laboratories - no doubt much to the embarrassment and dismay of the labs - and again the ALF had succeeded where everyone else had failed - forcing the issue to be discussed by the media and getting the voice of moderate animal rights groups heard; by this, the ALF proved itself efficient, not only rescuing animals, damaging animal abuse property and causing financial hardship, but getting the issue discussed and getting the all too quiet voice of the moderates heard. What leafletting and letter writing failed in, direct action had succeeded in. Despite support for some actions, the damaging of vivisectors personal property was questioned by some animal rights/welfare organisations -

eg Animal Aid. The Irish Anti-Vivisection Society stated in its 1981 Report: "The Society rejects intimidation and illegal or provocative action of any kind as not only wrong in themselves but as harmful to its cause". Statements such as these appeared in some publications and illustrated how many societies were unaware of the true feelings of their memberships. About this time there was a noticeable increase in ALF actions and the areas these were taking place in - at the beginning of 1981, Selfridges, Furs Renee, Worth Furs and Zwirn Furs in London were damaged by the ALF in protest against their sales of fur. The spokesperson for the group responsible told the press it was: "A warning to all people who make their living from the deaths of animals". Attacks also occurred in Leeds, Liverpool, Wimbledon, Brighton, Bradford, Manchester and Glasgow. The actions were fully detailed in many newspapers and on radio. Shortly after the raid on Wickham Laboratories, a national demonstration against the establishment was held and again brought the labs under the glare of the spotlight that had been initially turned on by the ALF raid three weeks earlier; animal rights supporters were beginning to see that ALF actions had many values and were of great use to the non-direct action campaign also.

In April 1981 another attack was made on an animal experimenter's home; this time Lyndsay Symon of Barnet, Hertfordshire. Slogans against his work with baboons and other primates were painted on his house. This action was reported in the local press and Symon no doubt received publicity which he could have well done without. In mid-April, the ALF raided Harewood Park breeding kennels near Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, and 10 beagle puppies destined for experimentation were rescued. The puppies were between five and ten weeks old and valued at £100 each; the local Animal Aid contact denied involvement in the raid but said she welcomed the action. About the same time, numerous businesses connected with animal abuse were damaged by the ALF over a large area of North London and in early May Faccenda Chickens in Northamptonshire was raided by the ALF who daubed anti-factory farming slogans on the premises and immobilised their 15 lorries. At the same time

a farm belonging to Ellis Fox near Doncaster was raided by the ALF as it was known to be involved in ritually slaughtered animals; many animals were taken during the raid which occurred whilst Fox was in Court being ordered to pay £1,500 in costs and fines and being banned from keeping dogs or running a pet shop for 10 years due to his cruelty to animals previously. On the 23rd May photographs of ALF activists and the rescued beagles from Wickham Laboratories were published along with a newspaper dated 16th May proving that Wickham lab's warning that the dogs would die without drugs was totally false. Later in May, Scotland felt the force of direct action when premises connected with the fur trade were damaged by ALF activists in Glasgow. Wickham Laboratories could not have realised the full affect of the March raid and Animal Aid's May/June Outrage publication reported the raid saying: "Spotlight on Wickham Laboratories. The release of beagle dogs from Wickham Laboratories in Hampshire by the ALF has helped focus a spotlight on that infamous establishment". The ALF group responsible for the raid gave a written report as follows: "The raid was the culmination of many months of patient surveillance and planning. The ALF had received reports that beagles were being used for experimentation at a contract research laboratory known as Wickham Research Laboratories. The laboratory is part of a complex which includes a large veterinary practice founded by William Cartmell; he is a practising Ministry vet licenced to examine shipments of live animals for export. He is also the founder and a director of the laboratory group which includes Torbay Farm situated a few miles away at Lower Upham. The farm produces Specific Pathogen Free chickens, eggs and other SPF products. To the best of the ALF's knowledge, beagles have been used at the Wickham laboratories for at least 10 years. A preliminary look at the premises was not encouraging - Wickham is a busy little country town and the laboratories are sited on the main road and are flanked on two sides by cottages owned by Cartmell for the use of his staff and his own house and on the remaining side there is a new housing estate. The first internal examination brought a real stroke of luck; the street lights in the housing estate were all out, probably due to repair work which also revealed a large gap in the fencing surrounding

the laboratory. A light was on in the office and a briefcase had been left outside the building; presumably its owner was in the office. The ALF members withdrew taking the briefcase with them, the contents of which were to prove invaluable. There were copies of the Business Prospectus with coloured photos of various animals undergoing experimentation and details of the work undertaken by the laboratories - inhalation tests where smoke, dust, gasses and aerosols can be administered by the whole body or head-only exposure. The prospectus also confirmed irritancy tests, skin sensitisation and experimental surgery were carried out by the laboratory on a wide range of animals. There was also a business diary containing many addresses with contact names and a letter detailing business arrangements for the expansion of Wickham Laboratories at Torbay Farm. There was also a very interesting document relating to the purchase of beagle puppies from Allington Farm at Porton Down which were not to weigh more than 3 kilograms - ie the smaller the better. These puppies were to be injected with Fellocel and transported to Beecham Laboratories. There was also evidence of similar transactions with Pfizer and Fisons. Three more visits were made to establish exactly where the dogs were housed and to ascertain methods of entry and exit etc.

The activists who were going to carry out the raid assembled at Winchester station shortly before midnight on Saturday 28th February, where they had arranged to meet Chris Balcombe, a local freelance journalist. Once at Wickham, the cars were parked close to a padlocked but unused gate near the housing estate. The advance party armed with a sledgehammer for the kennel block door and bolt cutters for the gates and padlocks went into the laboratory through the garden of a house bordering the laboratory. Once the padlock on the gate was cut, the remainder of the group entered the compound and positioned themselves with the four lookouts at strategic points. Fourteen beagles make a lot of noise once aroused and speed was of the essence. The door gave way with little trouble, and bolt cutters made short work of the cage door but there were three dogs to a cage which had not been expected and it was at this point that two dogs got loose. However the remaining animals

were picked up and taken to the cars, which left in different directions in order to maximise the chance of some, if not all, of the animals getting safely away. The puppies were quiet, if a little bewildered, but soon settled down for their journey. They stayed at their initial destination whilst tests were made to ensure that they were not suffering or contagious in any way and they were then sent on to their final homes. It is untrue that the dogs were being used to test parvo virus vaccine as stated by Wickham Laboratories. They were due to undergo a variety of different experiments including the notorious LD50 test. Some of the beagles, which are all beagles, were going to be used to breed more dogs for vivisection and others would have been sold to other laboratories".

It was during the early part of 1981 that the Dutch ALF - Dierenbevrijoingsfront - had been successfully completing raids against animal abuse establishments in Holland. In a short period of time they had rescued 12 beagles from a laboratory in Zeist, liberated 200 mink and three foxes from factory fur farms in Holland, freed 400 pheasants which were going to be used for shooting in various European countries and rescued some ponies and sheep which were being ill-treated by a Dutch politician. They had also rescued dozens of hens from factory farms and 21 cats from a laboratory animal supplier. In June 1981 the IALF (International Animal Liberation Front) in Canada successfully carried out a raid on a hospital for sick children in Toronto. The activists rescued 14 guinea pigs, 5 rabbits, a cat and a rat; the raid was featured in many Toronto newspapers, some of which included a photograph of a mutilated cat with no ears - called simply "Cat 425" in the laboratory. Three activists told the press: "It was like walking into Frankenstein's room - there were dogs that had been de-vocalised, a pig covered in burns and 18 cats with their ears cut off. We picked up the maximum number of animals we could carry and walked past the nurses knowing they wouldn't stop us and ask us about these mutilated animals with so many children about. The authorities will call this theft but we are law-abiding people and prefer to think of this as civil disobedience, what we saw in there made us really feel very sick. The animals were checked over by

a veterinerian and then placed in good homes; we will certainly carry out more raids like this when possible and when necessary".

Due to the extensive publicity that this raid received, many people reacted - some animal welfare organisations complained it would destroy their "credibility", scientific organisations condemned it as "mindless", but many people felt it was justifiable and they expressed shock at what was being done at the hospital in the name of scientific research. In the Toronto Star of the 30th June 1981, four letters appeared - three of these supported the action and only one condemning it.

It was now obvious that the scientific community continuing to use animals in experiments were becoming worried - the New Scientist of the 2nd July 1981 advised amongst other things that animals should not be used if alternative techniques were available, pain and stress should be kept to a minimum, as few as possible animals should be used and they should be looked after "properly". The Canadian raid continued to receive publicity in Canada and letters continued to be published in the Canadian press into July; the Toronto Star of the 10th July 1981 published more letters, two thirds of these supporting the raid and expressing disgust at the way the animals were being treated; even a psychology student stated that he was horrified at what he had learned from the raid.

On the 1st August ALF activists released 20 mink into the countryside from the Torview mink farm in Kippen, Scotland and this was followed by more ALF actions on property connected with animal abuse eg the Pig Improvement Company near Abingdon, Tower Hamlets town hall (re the notorious Club Row market where sick animals were being sold every Sunday), butchers premises in London and the Home Counties and laboratories (eg the Royal College of Surgeons at Downe, Kent). During this time 11 people were arrested in connection with a raid on a cat breeding unit at Hill Grove Farm at Curbridge in Oxfordshire and the ALF began to realise that due to the increase in actions and ALF activists, arrests would

indeed arise and appeals for costs would have to be made on a regular basis. At animal rights demonstrations specially designed leaflets explaining the circumstances of the Curbridge raid and appealing for help were distributed. The people, to be known as "the Curbridge 11", were the largest number of people arrested for an animal rights direct action at any time to 1981 and the arrests obtained significant publicity for the ALF and the animal rights campaign. Appearances in Court were now to become commonplace and in early December 1981 Sue Merrikin was in Court but was found not guilty, under the direction of the judge, of robbery; this related to the raid on the home of Ellis Fox earlier in 1981.

Articles about animal rights, animal abuse and direct action appeared on a frequent and regular basis in British newspapers and it appears that 1981 was the year that marked the time when animal rights would be an issue discussed in the open and would not be brushed aside or forgotten as the rantings of eccentric elderly ladies with nothing better to do. The animal rights campaign was now a battle which simply wasn't "going to go away".