IT'S A MAN'S GAME

Hunt sabotage and men



This is written by male sabs. It's about men. About our attitudes to women, and about the power we have as men. Sabbing? It's a man's game...

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At their recent Annual General Meeting the Hunt Saboteurs Association proposed an amendment to their constitution to try to stop women-only meetings and women-only sabs. The amendment was proposed by a Committee member, but it was defeated. The next day the Committee created a post of "*Men's Officer*".

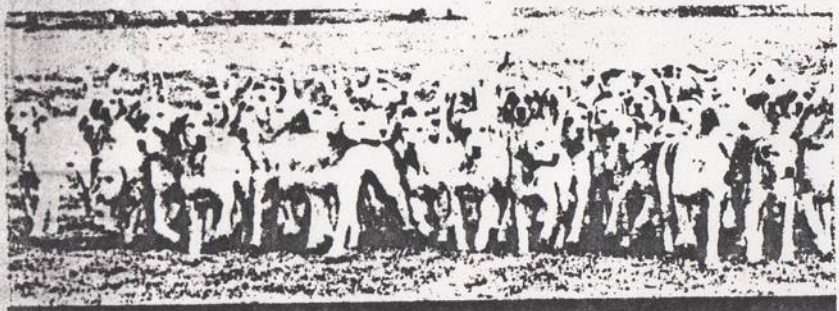
The idea of a separate Men's Officer is ludicrous, considering that the HSA is already dominated by men. The only reason for the creation of this post is to ridicule the Women's Officer. The HSA Committee doesn't accept the need for women-only meetings and women-only sabs. And it refuses to respect the right of women to organise without men.

Men have all the power in society. We dominate women in relationships, at work, in the street and in everyday life. We oppress women by treating them as objects, by not listening to them, by not taking them seriously and by excluding them. The list is endless. And it doesn't just happen "out there". It happens <u>right here</u> among us. As men we <u>all</u> do it on sabs.

At meetings we tend to ignore women or shout them down. We discourage women from taking an active part in organising (deciding where to go, map-reading, horn-blowing etc). We consistently try to keep women in the dark, and put them down at every opportunity.

On sabs, women are faced with a double threat - sexual harassment by the hunt and its supporters, and sexual harassment by male sabs. The nature of sabbing seems to bring out the worst in every man. So often we see *macho* posturing: balaclavas, sticks, big boots and lots of shouting. We are not opposed in principle to violence. Every sab has the right to self-defence. But a lot of the combat-style action we see is totally counter-productive. It exposes smaller and slower sabs to attacks by heavies, and it merely inflates male egos. A lot of men seem to live "right-on" lifestyles six days a week, but use the fox to live out their para-military fantasies on the seventh.

Let's not kid ourselves. We do <u>hate</u> the hunt. They are <u>scum</u>. And we shouldn't be ashamed of our anger. But sabbing should also be about <u>*celebration*</u>. Nothing can compare with the joy of knowing that together we have ruined their "fun". Sabbing <u>is</u> about saving hunted animals. But too often men use this as an excuse. They say we should "follow the leaders", keep quiet and get on with the job. This way they keep their power as men. And sabs are divided into generals and cannon-fodder.



Working like a dog to keep men happy...

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

It matters for the same reason that stopping animal abuse matters. It's pathetic that men who talk about liberation and rights for animals are quite happy to take part in the systematic abuse of women. It's up to us, as men, to change our attitudes. We don't see animal liberation (including sabbing) as a single issue. The oppression of animals is totally bound up with the oppression of women.

In this society, men are responsible for women and animals being:
beaten, raped, hated, enslaved as pets, enslaved as wives, sold for money, used for entertainment, cheap labour, sex, experiments...

In this society, men consider women and animals to be:
inferior, emotional, objects, "cute", evil, uncontrollable, impulsive, childish, property, instinctive, irrational...

In this society, men refer to women and animals as:
chicks, bitches, pussies, foxes, dogs, cows, birds, bunnies, sows, kittens...



Working like a dog to keep men happy...

This leaflet is aimed at men in the belief that we, as men, have got to start taking responsibility for the way we live, and the way we oppress women. This doesn't mean that we think women are "passive" or incapable of changing their lives. Women have always refused to be mere "victims". And this leaflet has been inspired in lots of ways by their struggles and their strength in fighting back.

THINKING POSITIVE

If we want to challenge animal abuse, we've got to challenge male power. *And that means challenging ourselves.* One of the first ways we can do this is to share knowledge and skills within the group. This can be as basic as making sure that every sab has a photocopy of the map, and that everyone knows where the group is going.

Having weekly meetings is also an essential part of building trust, respect and confidence in each other. We need to stop sab meetings being dominated by a few men. One game we can play as a group is the Matchstick Game. Everyone is given the same number of matches at the start of the meeting, and everytime someone speaks, s/he throws a match into the middle of the room. When someone runs out of matches, s/he cannot speak again. It's an enjoyable way to place limits on dominant speakers, and to encourage others to contribute to the discussion. Trust games can also help. A simple one is to divide into pairs. One person is blindfolded and led by the other around a wood, a park, an obstacle course etc. After ten minutes they swap over roles. Games like these can help bring the group closer together. More games can be found in "In Our Own Hands" by Ernst and Goodison (*Women's Press*) and "Resource Manual For A Living Revolution" by Coover, Deacon, Esser and Moore (*New Society Publishers*). They can also help us, as men, to overcome years of conditioning and start to trust and respect women.

UNTIL WE CHALLENGE OUR POWER AS MEN, SABBING WILL STAY A MAN'S GAME.

We feel that one of the first positive steps any sab group can take is to disassociate themselves from the HSA. Sabbing is a form of direct action: Committees, national officers, bureaucrats and the like are all irrelevant. Anything good that the HSA does at the moment can easily be better done by ourselves. And we'd be better off without all the crap things they do...

The oppression of animals is linked with the oppression of women. But all the shit in this society is linked. There are no "single issues". If hunting were abolished tomorrow, the world of power & money would keep on spinning. Women would still be oppressed. And so would black people, gay men and lesbians, the working class, the Irish etc. We've got to change sabbing. But we've also got to change the world...

This leaflet is a result of a discussion men had at an anarchist men's weekend in Bristol last July. For feedback and more information, write to: Men Against Sexist Shit (MASS), Box 25, 52 Call Lane, Leeds, LS1 6DT.