



A Travesty of Fiction Over Fact: Hypocrisy Reigns Supreme

Editorial by Jim Winter

International multi million dollar Animal Rights groups, mostly headquartered in the USA, have for over 40 years carried out a nefarious propaganda campaign aimed at ensuring that Animal Rights-orientated legislation is enacted in Europe, the UK, the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The tactics focus on the photogenic appeal of cute, little white Harp seals and the ugliness of all animal killing. However, ugly does not mean wrong and cute does not justify the sanctification of a species.

The reality is that since the inception of this propaganda campaign the Harp seal herd in Canada has tripled in size to about 5.5 million animals because of sound, scientific management principles backed by stringent rules and regulations and strict enforcement by the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Animal Rights campaigns target well-meaning urbanites whose total disconnect with the realities of the animal killing that provides their food, clothing, furniture and even



Just a Handful of anti-sealing Protesters in U.K.

their car seats makes them susceptible to emotional appeals backed up by pretty pictures, bloody pictures, celebrity spokes-people, distorted facts, non-peer-reviewed science and vile language that, if directed at any other minority, would be considered as “inciting hatred”.

These tactics raise hundreds of millions of dollars annually. When combined with “mail-outs” encouraging urbanites to contact their politicians to condemn sealing, there is a situation wherein a group holding Animal Rights views (not animal conservation or animal welfare) can manipulate politicians to act in their interest. In reality, the activists and the citizens

In This Issue

A Travesty of Fiction over fact: Hypocrisy reigns Supreme Editorial by Jim Winter	Page 1
Seal Time 2008	Page 4
It's human against human	Page 6
Les dangers de l'environnementalisme parrainé par l'Etat	Page 7

they motivate are actually a tiny segment of the population. Seals are merely the tactic not the goal. The goal is an agenda based upon the concept of “Animal Rights”. Using seals as the tactic ensures that the money flows in and that politicians insert the Animal Rights agenda into legislation based upon concepts of “immorality” rather than on conservation or animal welfare. Once these concepts are in place it becomes simple to expand them because they have been legislated. From then on it is a question of modifying or adding to existing laws; a much easier sell. Also, this approach, using “immorality” and such, allows politicians to get around the fact that in most cases their governments have signed a number of international treaties, conventions and agreements expressly forbidding such “ban” actions on their part.

The existing “bans” in the EU and the USA are the result of these political tactics married to Animal Rights groups' ability to “stage” media photo-ops and create media-cool situations. When they mix their scenes with pseudo-facts and use naive celebrities, the result is positive coverage. Basic journalistic principles are abandoned and the press then becomes the defacto PR arm of the Animal Rights movement.

To paraphrase Churchill: never have so many been conned by so few for such a malicious goal detrimental to huge, mostly rural, segments of our societies.

Dutch and Belgian politicians pass “immorality-based” laws against sealing, an activity that utilizes the carcass for clothing/ food / medicine, while stating that they will continue to kill hundreds of thousands muskrats annually and burn the carcasses merely to keep their canals clean.

Spanish and Italian politicians condemn sealing while being leading manufacturers of leather goods, not to mention sport killers of bulls and pigeons. We have to wonder about their duplicity.

British politicians bleat on about the plight of the Harp seal while permitting the killing of Harbor and Grey seals and

the slaughter of one type of squirrel (an immigrant to Britain) to protect the indigenous British member of the same species. We have to wince at the double standard.

When EU member states hunt seals and receive funding from the EU for projects related to that hunt we have to shudder at the hypocrisy of the entire EU.

It is sad that German politicians are still susceptible to “loaded language” and “scapegoat” propaganda while glorifying their own hunting practices and marketing game food throughout their country: “lederhosen and deer meat for us but no sealskin clothing or seal meat for Canadians.”

It is ironic that while pandering to these Animal Rights groups all the politicians are careful to stay “politically correct” by assuring the Inuit that their legislation would specifically exempt seals killed by Inuit. They state and restate this despite the fact that every major Inuit organization, including the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, has rejected the concept of an exemption. The Inuit reject it because they know, based on past experience, that it is meaningless and won't work. As well, many reject it as racist, condescending colonialism, while the racism implicit in such legislation angers non-Inuit sealers in many countries.

Seals are merely the tactic, not the goal, and in reality the Animal Rights movement is a serious threat to farmers, fishers, ranchers, hunters, abattoir workers, clothiers, shoemakers and anyone else who has to deal with the deaths of animals for any reason. The Animal Rights movement is NOT about conservation or humane killing. It is about the abolition of all animal killing. These tactics are rooted in the concept of the “big lie” as developed by the master propagandist Josef Geobbels, who said, “A lie, if repeated often enough, will be believed.”

Most of these groups will deny they are Animal Rightists because of the negative connotations, have multi-million dollar coffers, and more acronyms than post offices have stamps. They are not about to fade away if they succeed in

Continued on page 3

banning sealing. They will simply move to other targets: kangaroos, dingoes and rabbits in Australia? Muskrats in Holland and Belgium? Horses in France? Squirrels in the UK? Moose and elk in Scandinavia? Chicken and cattle in the USA? Boar in Germany? Bulls in Spain? Pigeons in Italy? Lambs in New Zealand? All of the above?

Most likely the next poster species will be polar bears: photogenic, white, uncertain science regarding the populations, and far away from the urban population who will be targeted for fund raising. Tactically ideal from both media and

political perspectives, polar bears offer the same exploitive opportunities as seals.

Where oh where is the little boy who cried The emperor has no clothes.... He must be either a politician or a journalist, and mute to boot. ■

Jim Winter is a Newfoundlander, an ACTRA (Association of Canadian Radio and Television Artists) award winning writer, a former CBC journalist, and founding President of the Canadian Sealers Association. This is his heartfelt perspective on the perennial seal hunt protests and the various reactions to them.



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Seal Time 2008

Many hundreds of thousands of harp seals have once again been born on the ice of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and off the Front, east of Newfoundland and Labrador. Yet, no whitecoat seals shall be harvested, as the law in Canada has precluded this for the past decade. Seals that have matured to the molted *bête de la mer*, or “beater” stage, shall be taken as usual, by fishermen who are anxious to realize some income after a long and ice-locked winter. Over 90% of these animals will be killed with a single, efficiently placed, rifle shot to the head. They will suffer no anticipation, pain, or even discomfort. Their removal shall be a blessing to an ecosystem stressed to the maximum by the presence of nearly 6 million of these increasingly crowded, large and hungry animals.

When the season opens, fishermen will make the difficult decision to either gamble that their sales of seal products could realize more than the costs of fuel and crew to make the trip out to the ice, or they will look at the EU process that is trying for another seal products ban, and stay in port, because of anticipated low prices in the face of another possibly lost market opportunity. The ultimate market in recent years has by-passed Europe, where some pelt processing was traditionally undertaken before the products were shipped on to Russia or the Orient, for further manufacturing, final sale and use. Knowing this, the animal rights protest movement has once again stimulated EU citizens to demand that their officials now ban even this transitory import of seal products, so as to discourage the hunt in Canada. Accordingly, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands and others have announced their intentions to ban the import of any seal products.

Even if the WTO should find such a ban in violation of the rules of this trade convention, there is no significant economic or other penalty anticipated for any EU/WTO member that might take this step. Therefore, although a WTO panel request may have, on surface, seemed to be an answer to this dilemma, the idea may be naively conceived.

On March 15, an anti-sealing, anti-Canadian protest event was planned for Trafalgar Square, in London. Previous such events have attracted both significant public walk-by and media attention, so there was some anticipatory dread that this event would similarly add to the stress for Canada's diplomats and for the nation's future seal management.

Dr. Janice Henke and Jim Winter, Newfoundlander, former

CBC journalist, and sealer, traveled to London to evaluate this promised event, and to possibly add their rational voices to any media coverage of the protest.

The animal rights protest fell on no ears at all - no passers-by paid them any attention. No television cameras, no newspaper photographers, and no reporters of any ilk, covered their lame efforts to garner support or even notoriety. Perhaps this was because all of Trafalgar Square was filled to overflowing with a gigantic anti-war protest of complex, elaborate organization, with thousands of participants milling about with posters and banners, culminating in a mass march to 10 Downing Street at the close of the afternoon.

In contrast, the animal rights protest, manned by only 25 PETA and Sea Shepherd supporters, stood alone across the street at the south entrance to Canada House, where the handful of participants stood, holding very shop-worn posters and a blood red banner, accompanied by a large mastiff dog and a very small child, wearing a SCS black T shirt, as did a man, trying to hand out brochures about the Antarctic anti-whaling campaign. A woman with copper-dyed hair blared away on a battery powered megaphone, with the other 23 participants dutifully and repeatedly chanting her words - “Shame on Canada - Stop the seal hunt - babies born to be skinned alive”- etc and etc. The dog stood over a small group of white seal pup dolls, laid out on the sidewalk.

Passersby did not seem to want the anti-sealing brochures, because they were intent on getting to the Square, where the real action, and the TV cameras, were waiting for them. When the anti-war rally began its mass march out of the Square, the anti-sealing group took down their meager display, packed up and left the scene. Jim Winter interviewed the TV camera crews, and asked them if they were planning to cover the animal rights “event” across the street. They replied that no, they were assigned to the anti-war rally, and would not be doing anything else. Their producers/editors had given them their orders for the day. It is possible, but not confirmed, that a very brief film of the animal rights “event” did air in Newfoundland. It was the only known exception.

This neglected non-event must have been a disappointment to those who put it together, stood there for a few empty hours, and then gave it up. If such a non-reaction should

Continued on page 5

play out in the other EU protest venues, all would be well. We can only hope that the general public everywhere will exhibit similar apathy and disinterest in this ill-advised campaign.

The result would be beneficial to seals, fish, people, whales, and everything else in the marine ecosystems far away from urban Europe. In the real world, millions of seals go hungry. Fishermen's families wait for their men

and boats to come home with fish, to eat and to pay the bills, and to sustain the coastal communities that try to live in harmony with the sea and all its resources. The very best way to save the seals is to cut down on their numbers, and the best way to do that is to make the most of the products they have to offer us, because true conservation of species and their habitats is achieved through scientifically justified, long term sustainable use. ■

photo courtesy of Gail Bergert

**WHEN HIS FAMILY HAS EATEN THE BEAVER ROAST...
...SHOULD HE THROW AWAY THE FUR?**

Most of us eat steak and hamburger.
So it makes sense to use leather that cows also provide.

But there are no cows across much of northern Canada.
Instead, our boreal forests, wetlands and lakes are home to beavers, muskrats and other fur animals.

These animals provide food for trappers and their families.
Any meat not eaten is returned to the land to feed other animals through the cold, hungry winter.

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It's human against human

By Eugene Lapointe



Have you noticed that developed countries are suddenly taking aggressive steps to enforce animal rights? After years of campaigning, vegetarian activists are now succeeding in getting developed nations to champion their causes. But instead of the direct campaigns of the past, they have turned to setting nations against each other.

This has nothing to do with quiet diplomacy. Animal rights groups have created a dangerous new trend in foreign policy that would have been inconceivable only a few years ago.

Canadians are victims of this new tactic and they are rightly upset. Our harp seals are clearly capable of sustaining current harvests and plenty of Europeans want to buy fur coats. Unfortunately, a fringe political movement that says there is never any justification for killing animals is sabotaging this win-win situation. As a result, Europeans are poised to raise our hackles by banning seal product imports on the most spurious of grounds.

When did this mantra become mainstream? The answer is that it isn't. But enough politicians who should know better have been seduced by the political pay-off that comes from exporting environmentalism. That is to say, domestic animal hunting is ok but any carried out by foreigners presents a global problem that has to be forcefully confronted.

And the animal rights groups, most of which originate in the United States, are opening offices in all regions of the globe where they become local lobbyists for activist foreign policies. The seal issue is nominally between Canada and the European Union, but the animal rights group that is orchestrating the battle is based in Washington, DC.

Not only are Europeans now blindly charging down a path set before them by animal rightists, they are setting themselves up for a fall. The activists know that once they have established the principle that hunting animals is wrong for foreigners, they can exert greater influence on domestic animal welfare policies.

And it is not just the Europeans. Take a look at Australia, which has just sent out a coastguard vessel to monitor Japanese ships lawfully carrying out research whaling in

international waters. This "in your face" Greenpeace-style brinkmanship was demanded by the same American group that is orchestrating the seal campaign against Canada.

Other green activists have gone so far as to shun their pacifist ancestry and, without any sense of irony, have actually urged that naval frigates be deployed to stop Japanese whale hunting.

The repercussions are already coming in Australia with the launching of campaigns against the culling of millions of kangaroos and the export of 4 million live cattle to the Middle East. How can we complain about the Japanese, they ask, while allowing such inhumanity to emanate from our own shores?

Others question why a nation would send a government ship to photograph the lawful killing of less than a thousand abundant minke whales while taking no steps against, for example, the genocide in Darfur or other human rights abuses in other countries. Are the lives of abundant whales more valuable to Australians than fellow human beings? Or are there just more votes in bashing whale hunting?

So what will be next for the environmental crusaders? Will United States warships be dispatched into Canadian waters to protect polar bears? Will European storm troopers be sent to close down Australian coal-fired power stations to reduce emissions from the world's biggest per capita emitter? Will American SUV drivers be denied entry into New Zealand?

With a whole series of international treaties and conventions already managing wildlife and development issues, together with extensive domestic laws, there is no justification for extreme measures to be even considered.

Politicians overseas would be wise to take a long hard look at the goals of animal rightists before throwing rocks over here. And they need to think carefully about where their confrontational environmentalism might lead before so readily embracing it. ■

(Source: OpEd by Eugene Lapointe published in the Ottawa Citizen on 28 February 2008)

Les dangers de l'environnementalisme parrainé par l'Etat

Par Eugene Lapointe

Avez-vous remarqué que les pays développés prennent subitement des mesures agressives d'application des droits des animaux? Après des années de campagne, les activistes végétariens parviennent maintenant à faire des pays développés les champions de leur cause. Mais en lieu et place des campagnes directes du passé, ils se mettent à opposer les nations les unes aux autres.

Cela n'a rien de commun avec la diplomatie. Les groupes de défenses des droits des animaux ont créé une voie nouvelle et dangereuse en matière de politique étrangère, laquelle aurait été impensable il n'y a que quelques années.

Nous, les Canadiens, sommes victimes de cette nouvelle tactique et sommes vraiment consternés. Nos phoques du Groënland sont parfaitement capables de supporter les niveaux actuels d'exploitation et de nombreux Européens souhaitent acquérir des manteaux de fourrure. Malheureusement, un mouvement politique marginal, qui affirme que rien ne justifie l'abattage d'un animal, est en train de saboter cette situation favorable aux deux parties. En conséquence, les Européens nous font monter sur nos ergots en interdisant les importations de produits de phoques, en usant d'arguments des plus douteux.

Quand cette tendance est-elle devenue la voie à suivre? En fait elle ne l'est pas devenue. Mais un nombre suffisant de politiciens, qui devraient être mieux avertis que tous, ont été séduits par cette vision des choses émanant de l'environnementalisme d'exportation. Celle-ci revient à dire que la chasse d'un animal n'est pas critiquable, sauf si elle est pratiquée par des étrangers, auquel cas elle présente un problème majeur auquel il faut s'opposer avec force.

Les groupes de défense des droits des animaux, dont la plupart sont originaires des Etats-Unis, ouvrent des bureaux dans toutes les régions du monde, où ils deviennent des groupes de pression locaux promouvant des politiques activistes étrangères. La question des phoques concerne spécialement le Canada et l'Union européenne mais les groupes de défense des droits des animaux qui orchestrent le combat sont basés à Washington, DC.

Aujourd'hui, les Européens non seulement suivent aveuglément une voie tracée par les avocats du droit des animaux, mais ils se préparent eux-mêmes à tomber plus bas encore. Les activistes savent très bien que lorsqu'ils ont établi le principe selon lequel, pour les étrangers, chasser est une erreur, ils peuvent alors exercer une plus grande influence sur les politiques nationales relatives au bien-être des animaux.

Et il ne s'agit pas seulement des Européens. Voyez l'Australie qui vient d'envoyer un navire garde-côte pour surveiller les bateaux japonais qui mènent légalement une chasse scientifique à la baleine dans les eaux internationales. Cette politique du bord du gouffre, de style Greenpeace, a été demandée par le même groupe américain que celui qui orchestre la campagne pour les phoques contre le Canada.

D'autres groupes d'activistes sont allés jusqu'à renier leurs ancêtres pacifistes et, sans aucun sens de l'ironie, ils en sont venus à pousser vigoureusement au déploiement de frégates pour stopper la chasse japonaise à la baleine.

Les répercussions se font déjà sentir en Australie-même, avec le lancement de campagnes contre l'abattage sélectif de millions de kangourous et l'exportation de quatre millions d'animaux domestiques vivants vers le Moyen-Orient. Comment pouvons-nous nous plaindre des Japonais, demandent-ils, alors que nous autorisons qu'une telle cruauté soit de notre propre fait?

Autre question, pourquoi un pays pourrait-il envoyer un navire gouvernemental photographier l'abattage licite d'un millier de petits rorquals qui abondent, alors qu'il n'entreprend rien, par exemple, contre le génocide d'autres êtres humains au Darfour ou les abus contre les droits humains dans d'autres pays? Pour les Australiens, la vie d'abondantes baleines a-t-elle plus de valeur que celle de leurs semblables? Ou dénigrer la chasse à la baleine procure-t-il davantage de votes?

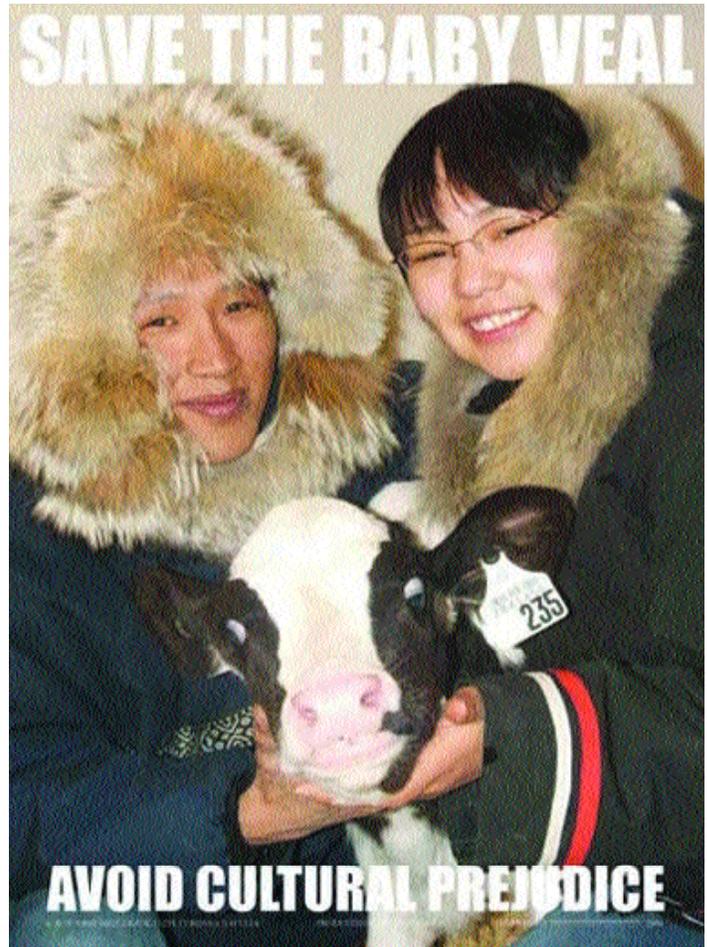
Continued on page 8

Quelle sera la suite pour les croisés de l'environnement? Des navires de guerre des Etats-Unis seront-ils envoyés dans les eaux canadiennes pour protéger les ours blancs ? Une troupe d'attaque européenne sera-t-elle envoyée près des centrales au charbon australiennes pour réduire les émissions de leur plus grand producteur mondial par tête d'habitant? Les pilotes américains d'engins de sport motorisés se verront-ils interdire l'entrée en Nouvelle-Zélande?

Avec toute une série de traités et de conventions internationaux qui réglementent déjà les questions relatives aux espèces sauvages et au développement, auxquels s'ajoutent de nombreuses lois nationales, rien ne justifie que l'on en vienne ne serait-ce qu'à envisager des mesures extrêmes.

Les politiciens d'outre-mer seraient bien avisés d'examiner avec le plus grand soin les objectifs des défenseurs des droits des animaux avant de nous jeter la pierre. Et ils devraient bien réfléchir afin de voir où cet environnementalisme de confrontation pourrait les mener avant qu'ils en fassent leur cause. ■

(Source: OpEd par Eugene Lapointe publié dans le Ottawa Citizen le 28 février 2008)



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