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## **An Unnatural Alliance? Political Radicalism and the Animal Defence Movement in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain\***

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the still understudied relationship between nineteenth-century political radicalism and the animal defence movement by examining, respectively, the relations between the movement and the secularist and socialist strands of political radicalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It points out that although positive secularist and socialist support existed for the animal cause, the relationship between them and the animal defence movement was far from smooth and cordial due to ideological differences. Nonetheless, from the late nineteenth century onward, with the efforts of freethinkers and socialists in the animal defence movement

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to draw on radical political ideas in reaction against the ideologies of the mainstream animal defence movement, sections of the movement underwent radical change in terms of character, ideology and objectives. The article regards the change as a move away from the moral reform tradition and towards political radicalism, and argues that this transformation helped sustain the movement into the twentieth century as it struggled to keep apace with the progressive currents of the new age.

**Key Words:** anti-cruelty movement, anti-vivisection movement, animal rights, secularist movement, socialist movement

## I. Introduction

The article attempts to explore the still understudied relationship between nineteenth-century political radicalism and the animal defence movement.<sup>1</sup> To the generation of the liberating 1970s, political radicalism and animal liberation may seem natural allies; yet for the greater part of the Victorian period, the two could not have been further apart. This perhaps explains why, when looking back, contemporary animal activists often find little sympathy with the conservative character and limited objectives of the Victorian movement. Instead, they honoured as their intellectual fore-bearers people such as Henry Salt of the Humanitarian League (HL; 1891-1919)—a freethinker and socialist who advocated for animal rights and perceived the humanitarian cause to be a part of the democratic movement—portraying him as a prophet crying in the wilderness but failing to elicit a response in the backward Victorian and Edwardian times. Peter Singer, for example, dedicated his 1995 revised edition of *Animal Liberation* to all who had worked for the movement since the 1960s, explaining that:

without them the first edition would have suffered the fate of Henry Salt's book *Animal Rights*, published in 1892 and left to gather dust on the shelves of the British Museum library until, eighty years later, a new generation formulated the arguments afresh, stumbled across a few obscure references, and discovered that it had all been said before, but to no avail. (1995: xvi)

Carol Lansbury, in *The Old Brown Dog*, also writes of Salt's work as having “a very limited appeal” (1985: 170) and ascribed Salt a unique place in his time:

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, I refer to the anti-cruelty movement that emerged in the 1820s and the anti-vivisectionist movement that arose in the 1870s collectively as the animal defence movement, despite these two movements' extensive but not total overlap.

The debate between Singer and Regan over the moral status of animals would have bemused the Victorians, with the exception, perhaps, of Henry Salt. The whole issue of animal rights and the moral implications for our treatment of animals is a major concern of modern philosophy, and that fact alone would have astounded our forebears. (xi)

Was Salt really a lonesome prophet in his time, as the catchy title of his autobiography, *Seventy Years among the Savages* (1921), suggests? Or, to pose a more general and contextualized question, what were the relationships between the various strands of political radicalism and the animal defence movement in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—all of which Salt believed aimed ultimately at the same ideal? Hilda Kean first explored the participation of socialists and feminists in the anti-vivisection controversy and, in consideration of the proper context, displaced the vision of Henry Salt's uniqueness with a greater appreciation of the generally radical climate in which the animal defence movement emerged as it entered the twentieth century (1995). L. Leneman also discussed the ideological links between the suffrage and the vegetarian movements (1997). Seminal enquiries, such as these, open rather than conclude the subject in question. In this article, I would like to further explore the relationship between the secularist and socialist strands of political radicalism and the animal defence movement in its first century of existence. I will point out that long before Salt, radicals from the secularist and socialist movements had approached the animal question from their distinct perspectives. From the late nineteenth century onward, the numerous freethinkers and socialists in the animal defence movement had drawn widely upon radical thought and rhetoric of the time in reaction against the old mode of animal politics, which helped bring about a radical turn in the character, ideology and objectives of the movement.

In contrast to the movement's relatively under-studied relations with the radical political tradition (Kean, 1995; Leneman, 1997), the movement's relations with the moral reform tradition that revived in the late eighteenth century are better known. From Brian Harrison to

M. J. D. Roberts, historians have rightly placed the cause of the prevention of cruelty to animals within the moral reform tradition (Harrison, 1982; Hunt, 2004; Roberts, 2004). Roberts in his *Making English Morals* regarded the prevention of cruelty to animals as one of the most successful of all nineteenth-century moral reform causes and used the congratulatory address delivered by the Queen to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) on the occasion of its annual general meeting in the Jubilee year of 1887, to illustrate the success of the RSPCA in making her moral values a part of the wider morals of the British world (2004: 245-246). However, while most Victorian moral reform movements showed signs of decline in the 1880s with the professionalization of social work and a much changed political culture brought by the broadening of enfranchisement,<sup>2</sup> the animal cause actually entered a more active campaign phase in the late Victorian and Edwardian period. What was it that made the animal cause most resilient as a movement against changing times? The answer, I propose, lies partly in the radical political influences acting on the animal cause in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Due to the active mobilization of radical political traditions at this time, such as secularism and socialism, by the radical section of the movement, the animal defence movement can be said to have gradually broken loose of the moral reform tradition and to have acquired a more modern character that ensured an appeal to successive generations of activists and the sustained development of the movement in the very different context of the twentieth century.

## II. The Moral Reform Tradition and the Animal Cause

Organized efforts to prevent cruelty to animals began in the early nineteenth century, in the context of an evangelical revival and

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<sup>2</sup> See for example the decline of the temperance movement since the 1880s (Dingle, 1980; Greenaway, 2003; Shiman, 1988).

national political tensions.<sup>3</sup> Wars with Napoleonic France between 1793 and 1815 and threats of post-war popular radicalism intensified loyalist sentiment and heightened the sense of urgency in the country concerning the need to preserve Britain's social and political stability, symbolized by the integrity of Church and State. The ideological demands of the political situation, combined with evangelical revival, revived an aggressive moral crusade that remained an influential cultural and social force in Victorian society until the 1880s. From the foremost Society for the Suppression of Vice (SSV, founded 1802), this moral reform tradition grew to encompass a wide range of voluntary associations aiming to regulate Victorian morality in areas from slavery, temperance, prison reform, prostitution, promotion of "social purity," to cruelty to animals and children. Infused with evangelizing and civilizing fervor, the middle-class reformers were particularly concerned with the immorality, irreligiosity and infidelity of the "lower orders." They tended to view social issues in moral and theological terms and framed their discourses accordingly. In their attempts to regulate moral behaviour, both public and private, they sought to make use of state intervention through legislation, and at times engaged in such aggressive measures as employing private inspectors and litigation. As pointed out by Harrison, the moral reform tradition played a crucial role in shaping Victorian moral and cultural values and in establishing an unusually "peaceable kingdom" in which there were no grave conflicts between the classes despite rapid industrialization and urbanization in the nineteenth century (1982).

The movement to prevent cruelty to animals that emerged from this wave of national reformation inherited much of its moralistic,

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<sup>3</sup> For general histories of nineteenth-century animal defence movement, see Turner (1980), Ritvo (1987: 125-166) and Kean (1998). Kean has pointed out the influence of non-conformity and the French Revolution on animal ethics in the late eighteenth century. The more radical ideas such as those expressed by Joseph Ritson, John Oswald and even Wesley's idea on the afterlife of animals, however, were held to be unorthodox by many reformers in the SPCA later in the early nineteenth century.

paternalistic, punitive and religious character. Led chiefly by middle-class evangelicals and those influenced by the evangelical culture of the time, from the start, the movement cast the question of animal cruelty in moral terms. The early reformers were not only concerned with the suffering of animals, but also the demoralizing effect of cruelty on the human character, and other moral evils such as rowdiness, drunkenness and public disturbance, often found to accompany animal baiting and fighting (Ritvo, 1987: 125-166). As with the broader trend of moral reform in the country, its initial object of reform was singularly the “unruly lower orders” such as cabmen, drovers, domestic servants and other workmen who stood in need of the moral guidance and civilizing influence of the “superior classes.” The movement’s agenda in its first half century of reform was thus narrow and aimed mainly at working-class recreations such as bull-baiting, cock-fighting and dog-fighting, cruelties in the Smithfield Cattle Market, the slaughterhouses and the Knackers’ Yard, and the ill-treatment of draught animals. Following leading reform societies such as the SSV, societies from the Animals’ Friend Society (1831-1850s) to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (1824-; after 1840, RSPCA) and the Scottish SPCA (1839-) all devoted a great energy to inspection and prosecution. This “convict and punish” (Anonymous, 1832: 23) policy as called by the Association for Promoting Rational Humanity towards the Animal Creation (APRHAC, merged with the SPCA in 1832), from its start generated much antagonism from the working classes and criticism from radical circles. It was only in the late 1860s that the RSPCA and subsequently other societies started major educational projects as a conscious move to balance the movement’s more punitive work.

Like most other Victorian moral reform movements, the movement was based upon a common Christian moral framework. In its mobilization for the cause, it widely appropriated the Scriptures for useful concepts such as creationism, the dominion of human over animals, and the benevolence of God (Li, 2000). It argued the view that God had made all living creatures on earth and entrusted humans with dominion over them, and thus it was their duty to be kind and

merciful to animal creation just as God was to human beings. It also widely advocated the virtue of Christian charity and appropriated Scriptural texts ubiquitous in the Victorian philanthropic world, such as “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew. v. 7) and “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father in heaven is merciful” (Luke. vi. 36). In time, through active diffusion, “mercy” and “kindness” to animals with a strong religious overtone became the central arguments as well as watchwords of the movement.

The movement’s exclusive reliance on the Christian religion for its ideological foundation inevitably led to dissension within the movement, especially in the 1820s and 1830s when the national political tension was still high. During this time when English Jacobinism and irreligiosity were considered prime dangers facing the nation, all radical and un-Christian ideas were chastised as harmful to the anti-cruelty movement, just as they were harmful to the state. Lewis Gompertz, honorary secretary of the SPCA from 1826 and a vegetarian Jew, was forced to leave the SPCA and found his own Animals’ Friend Society (AFS) in 1831 after members from both the SPCA and the APRHAC protested the “Pythagorean principles” suspected in his *Moral Inquiries* published in 1824 (Anonymous, 1833). In this purifying operation, not only was Gompertz criticized for his adopting the diet propagated by Porphyry, “the unpitying foe of Christianity,” but, in addition, John Oswald, a member of the Jacobin club and author of *The Cry of Nature* (1791) that promoted vegetarianism based on Hinduism, was named and condemned for “promoting the horrors of the French revolution, and arming men, or rather monsters, to destroy their fellow-creatures by thousands” (Anonymous, 1832: 13). Again, in 1844, another dissatisfied group committed to Christian orthodoxy seceded from the non-sectarian AFS, this time making Gompertz’s view of the immortality of animals as part of their complaint (Anonymous, 1844: 1-2, 16). Theological intolerance within the movement did gradually ease. In 1869, the RSPCA declared humanity to be “unsectarian” in the first issue of its *The Animal World* (Anonymous, 1869). However, just as Victorian society was still self-consciously religious, the mainstream movement



remained the same and preserved its Christian identity and religious tone throughout the nineteenth century.

The anti-vivisection movement (French, 1975; Lansbury, 1985; Rupke, 1987) that arose in the 1870s against the rapid development of experimental physiology in Britain retained much of the character and mobilizing discourses of the anti-cruelty movement. Right from the outset of the agitation, it presented itself as a movement fighting for a religious as well as a moral cause. At the many feverently anti-vivisection meetings held throughout the country, belief in the Christian religion and in Christian morality were frequently proclaimed, and painful experimentation on animals fiercely condemned as a serious moral transgression and an “abominable sin”<sup>4</sup> that violated the spirit of Christ. For the anti-vivisectionists, vivisection on animals for putative human benefit was first of all a breach of trust with defenceless animals entrusted to humanity by God. Its selfish nature—sacrifice of the lower animals to the higher mankind—was moreover in stark contrast with the sacrificial spirit of Christ that called on the stronger to sacrifice for the weaker, instead of the other way round (Li, forthcoming). In its criticism of experimental science, the movement was also heavily drawn into controversies between religion and science involving issues such as Darwinism, creationism vs. evolutionism, spiritualism vs. materialism. Though not necessarily anti-science in a crude sense, the movement remained aloof from, if not antagonistic towards the Darwinian theory of evolution, and upheld Christian moral values against atheist and materialistic thinking which they saw as threatening to both Christian morality and the animal cause (Li, 2002: 134-182; Preece, 2003).

As evangelicalism gradually took up the secular garb of respectability later in the nineteenth century and continued to provide crucial ideological motive for Victorian philanthropy, the movement continued to embrace the creed of respectability that affirmed central

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<sup>4</sup> Depiction first used by Lord Shaftesbury and then later became the standard description of the practice of vivisection in the movement.

Victorian values such as Christian morality, individual reformation, the hierarchical social order and the liberal economic system. The RSPCA that had 81 branches in England and Wales by 1889 (RSPCA, 1889: lv-lxx) and prided itself on being “the Parent Society of all Societies for the protection of animals in the world” (RSPCA, 1889: 84) was precisely a success model in this sense. Right from the beginning, it assiduously courted the patronage of the upper echelon of the Victorian social pyramid. By the 1840s, it already acquired a respectable status with Queen Victoria as its head and boasted a long list of aristocratic benefactors as its Vice-Presidents. In its mobilization for the anti-cruelty cause, it drew exclusively upon the Christian tradition and consciously suppressed radical thoughts that could undermine its sound Christian foundation. In terms of ideology, it upheld the virtue of private philanthropy and individualist reformation rather than the efficacy of structural changes; it looked up to the Monarchy for its moral authority and identified with the British imperial project.<sup>5</sup> Being especially attuned to these core Victorian values, the RSPCA ensured its exalted status in the movement both nationally and internationally, and yet at the same time acquired a socially and politically conservative character. After the RSPCA, most animal societies adopted the same ethos and created a culture in the mainstream movement that would cause a radical professing unorthodox thought—be they secularist or socialist ideas—find himself or herself out of place.

### III. The Secularist Movement and the Animal Cause

In an age when questioning the church inevitably meant an attack on the social order and status quo, irreligious thoughts carried political connotations. Among the various strands of religious unbelief

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<sup>5</sup> By 1900, the RSPCA had sister societies spread over Gibraltar, Malta, Burma, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, India, South Africa, America, Newfoundland, South America, Australia, New Zealand, Egypt, China and Japan, see RSPCA (1907: 51-73).

in the nineteenth century, the secularist movement, with its largely working-class base and radical political programme, played a particularly central role in the formation of British political radicalism (Budd, 1977; Royle, 1974, 1980; Tribe, 1967). Building on the radicalism and deism of Thomas Paine, the seditious propaganda of Richard Carlile, the millennial socialism of Robert Owen, and the scattered forces of Chartism in the late 1840s, the secularist movement reached its peak of influence under the leadership of Charles Bradlaugh in the decades of popular Liberal rise between the 1860s and the 1880s, just when the animal defence movement began a smooth expansion of its philanthropic and educational work, and when that the vivisection controversy began to catch the country's attention. With its anti-church, anti-clerical and anti-authoritarian philosophy, the secularist movement concerned itself with a wide range of social and political causes from republicanism, parliamentary reform, and Irish home rule, to conditions of the poor and the working classes. It professed a morality guided by utilitarianism, free from religious influence, fervently believed in science as a cure for social evils, and avidly embraced evolutionary theories. With such an ideology, the secularists inevitably approached animal issues in ways distinct from the mainstream anti-cruelty and anti-vivisection movements.

Of all the ethical issues concerning animals, the question of animal experimentation generated the most discussion in the secularist circles. The secularists' repugnance of religious moralism and strong class identification put them in an awkward relation with the middle- and upper-class dominated anti-vivisection movement with its unabashed religious front. When anti-vivisection agitation first started, *The National Reformer*, the official organ of the National Secularist Society (NSS), compared zealous anti-vivisection societies with the Society for the Suppression of Vice, and regarded both as threatening religious freedom and civil liberty (Anonymous, 1883b; O. D. O., 1878). Several leading secularists, such as Annie Besant and J. M. Robertson, were openly hostile towards the anti-vivisection movement and supported the unhindered development of science. In 1881, when

a bill for the total abolition of vivisection was under discussion in Parliament, Besant strongly criticized the “sentimental cry raised by the wealthy and the idle,” and argued for the utility and freedom of science (1881: 8). Emphasizing the importance of rational and critical enquiry, Robertson dissected the anti-vivisection movement, pointing out many of its fallacies—such as its extremely idealized view of the nature of nonhuman animals, its special pleading for cats and dogs, and its reliance on emotion rather than logical arguments (1885). In 1892, during another wave of heated controversy, generated by the discussion of the Church Congress on the subject, Robertson, who had recently succeeded Charles Bradlaugh as the editor of *The National Reformer*, gave space to a long, heated debate on vivisection. Taking a similar pro-science, utilitarian stance to that of Besant, Robertson’s editorial bias led to protests by angry readers who objected to his “filthy advocacy and patronage of vivisection” and threatened to “part company” with the journal (Robertson, 1892b: 371). The series of debates, however, revealed that, despite the opinions of some of its more prominent figures, the secularists were far from unanimous in their positions and, apart from the more controversial issue of vivisection, there still existed a general sympathy for animals. *Our Corner*, edited by Besant, carried a column devoted to domestic pets and, from time to time, published articles demonstrating the extraordinary intelligence of animals. Bradlaugh once recounted with disgust a bullfight that he had witnessed in Spain (1883) and also published, through his Freethought Publishing Company, a cheap edition of Sir Arthur Helps’ *Animals and Their Masters* (1883), a work which widely explored the non-Christian sources for the humane treatment of animals. Secularism, to some, signified the direct opposite of “Christian cruelty,” as R. H. Dyas described how he witnessed the mistreatment of an overburdened horse in the Catholic country of France, commenting that “I would have taught the brutal driver a little lesson of Secularism if the speed of his horse had not rendered it impossible” (1877b: 86).

It was not until the 1890s that a greater consensus sympathetic to the animal cause emerged within the secularist movement. Both

Besant and Robertson changed their views on the vivisection question at this time, with Besant turning to theosophy and a more ready acceptance of the spiritual and moral implications of the kinship of all life (Besant, 1903, 1910). Robertson retained his utilitarian principles but refuted the vivisectionists' claim to efficacy of the method (1903). J. G. Holyoake, an early founder of the secularist movement and the Chairman of the Rationalist Press Association, affirmed the objectives of "demanding Justice for every living thing, from Ruler to Subject, of either sex, and for the brute creation and advocating the reign of Truth and destruction of Imposture" (Holyoake, 1903: xi). More significant was G. W. Foote's succession of the Presidency of the NSS upon Bradlaugh's death in 1891, which marked a turn in the movement away from direct parliamentary agitation to pressure group politics focusing more exclusively on humanitarian reforms and free-thought issues. Under Foote's leadership, the NSS's immediate practical objects was for the first time added—"An extension of the moral law to animals, so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty" (Foote, 1904: 307). Henceforth there was constant cooperation between the NSS and the emergent radical fringe of the animal defence movement. Foote especially sympathized with the work of the HL. As he wrote in a letter to Salt, Hon. Sec. of the League—already a noted writer within the secularist and socialist circles before devoting himself to humanitarian work:

Dear Mr. Salt, I can hardly imagine myself refusing a request of yours. I respect, admire, and (in no courting sense) love you for the work you are doing. Anything I ever wrote—or ever shall write—is at your disposal for the Humanitarian cause. You are at liberty to use it in any way you please. (Foote, n.d.)

Foote was certainly not the only one being drawn into the work of the HL; other leading figures within the secularist movement, such as Arthur Bonner, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, Herbert Burrows, Holyoake, Robertson and J. H. Levy, all served on one of the general or executive committees of the HL.

The secularists who supported the animal cause based their stand on the utilitarian consideration of pain and pleasure, and a concept of the kinship of all life derived from evolutionism. Critical of the Christian church's disregard for present-worldly social justice and the tendency to regard suffering as providentially directed, the secularists notably professed a morality free of religious influence and based on utilitarian principles. While, previously, many had sided with the pro-vivisection camp by arguing for the utility of animal experiments to human beings, anti-vivisectionist secularists now questioned the efficacy and absolute necessity of vivisection, as did Robertson. Others, such as Foote, took a broader view of the question of utility by focusing on the moral principle instead of the individual act. As Foote explained: "Our stand is utility; not the narrow utility of the passing hour, which is merely policy, but the wide utility of generations, which is principle" (1904: 303). Furthermore, while some believed that morality should be "made by man for man," many were ready to extend this consideration to nonhuman animals who were equally susceptible to pain and pleasure. On this point, the secularists readily drew upon evolutionary theories when the mainstream animal defence movement was hesitant to embrace the same. Science, to the secularists, as proclaimed by Holyoake, was "the Providence of man" (Watts, 1899: 164) and, in their intense ideological contest with religion, they welcomed and imbibed the scientific theories and discoveries of the day with apt enthusiasm. The secularists not only were among the first in the country to openly embrace potentially blasphemous evolutionary theories, but also ardently spread them throughout the Halls of Science, in cheap pamphlets and in newspaper articles by the science popularizers in their ranks (Royle, 1980). Rejecting a Christian foundation for morality, they sought an irrefutable scientific theory on which to build the case for animals. Many secularists held the assumed gap between humans and other animals in Christian theology responsible for the disregard of animal welfare and instead emphasized the common origins, and physical and mental similarities between humans and animals. They believed that "in proportion as the doctrines of Darwin, and other masters of the

‘evolution’ school, gain ground, and man learns that he, too is, but an animal . . . so likewise will his kindness increase towards the defenceless and beautiful creatures” (Dyas, 1877a: 27). The kinship between humans and animals together, with the associated notion of “differences in degree not in kind” used by Darwin, became the key concepts in the freethinkers’ arguments in favor of animals. It was often argued that animals were just as susceptible to pain and pleasure as humans, albeit to different degrees, or that they possessed mental capacities that were different in degree rather than in kind from those of humans. It followed that “the moral law extends to them in their due degrees” (Foote, 1904: 303-304).

Considering the ideological differences between the freethinkers and their Christian comrades, it is unsurprising that, despite a shared support for the animal cause, a sense of rivalry and unease was constantly present between them. The militant secularists never failed to attempt to discredit Christianity and blame cruelty on a legacy of the many harmful elements in the Christian tradition, such as the absolute dominion of humans over animals (Dyas, 1877a, 1877b; Foote, 1899a, 1899b). Not long after the publication of Darwin’s *Origins of Species* (1859), *The National Reformer* tartly refuted the RSPCA’s claim of special affinity between Christianity and kindness to animals:

Believe me, sir. . . . Kindness is not a monopoly of Christians, it is the common heritage of man, and is found where man is; and believe me, that our noble scientific men, such as Darwin, Huxley, and Lancaster, do more to cultivate and develop the kind feelings towards the inferior animals than all the Bibles ever did, or are ever calculated to do. (Ellis, 1865: 35)

Similar claims, such as “Darwin has done more for the kind treatment of animals than Paul or Jesus Christ” (Wheeler, 1894), remained central elements in the secularists’ efforts to advance, as well as to secularize, the animal cause. Nor did the Christian anti-vivisection party help lessen the rivalry with their regular assertion of the

connection between animal cruelty, especially vivisection, and atheism. To this theological odium, the secularists' adroit strategy was to respond by citing passages in the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament, which chronicled the long history of torture, massacres, and heretic-burning in the Christian tradition. For example, the association made by the leading anti-vivisectionist Anna Kingsford in the 1880s between "vivisection and carnivorous tastes" and "the atheistic city of Paris" provoked a combative retort in *The Freethinker*: a similar accusation that God was "the worst of vivisectionists, and the most carnivorous of deities," with further exemplification of two passages in Exodus ix, 1-3 and Leviticus vii, 2-5 that demonstrated the Christian God's vengefulness and carelessness towards animal lives (Anonymous, 1883a; Macrobius, 1892; Robertson, 1892a). In the freethinkers' eyes, nothing was also more ridiculous than the bible-citing habit of animal lovers or vegetarians. "Well, you can cite the Bible for anything," commented *The Freethinker* on a vegetarian journal that carried articles citing the Bible in support of vegetarianism, "even the Devil has been said to cite Scripture for his purpose" (Anonymous, 1894).<sup>6</sup>

In short, the secularists never seemed able to see eye-to-eye with their Christian comrades, and their responses to religiously-flavored propaganda was never devoid of the jesting style characteristic of their iconoclastic and anti-clerical propaganda (Nash, 1995, 1999; Marsh, 1991, 1998). In 1910, when a report reached home of a speech made by Stephen Coleridge, Hon. Sec. of the National Anti-Vivisection Society, that his Christian faith was what had led him to support anti-vivisection, *The Freethinker* immediately jumped on this, protesting:

Nonsense, Mr. Coleridge, nonsense! There are hundreds of millions of Christians who are not anti-vivisectionists. . . . Was it Christianity, too, that made anti-vivisectionists of Voltaire, Bentham, and Schopenhauer? Why not leave

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<sup>6</sup> For more on the arguments over Biblical vegetarianism, see Cabell (1897), Clark (1897), Paper-Knife (1897), Salt (1897a, 1897b).



your religious bigotry outside the moral movement you represent, Mr. Stephen Coleridge? Is it because Christians cannot help being boastful and self-assertive? (Anonymous, 1910)

The movement that had played a significant role in expanding religious tolerance in the larger society surely assumed a similar role within the animal defence movement. With its contesting discourses of utilitarianism and evolutionism, and lively skirmishes with its fellow Christian workers, it challenged the Christian monopoly over the animal question and helped to open up ideological space for other non-Christian workers in the animal defence movement from the late nineteenth century onwards.

#### IV. The Socialist Movement and the Animal Cause

With the political marginalization of the secularist movement in the 1880s, socialism emerged as another banner under which radical reformers gathered amidst the economic depression and social unrest (Wolfe, 1975). As a social critique, socialism exposed the hidden ills of the individualist capitalist system and *laissez-faire* liberalism. It proposed the reorganisation of society on collectivist principles and envisioned the coming of a future society without class exploitation, wherein justice, equality and brotherhood would prevail. With its concern for the underprivileged classes and general ideological thrust against pervasive Liberal creeds such as respectability, self-help and private philanthropy, the moral cause for animals was a delicate issue which the socialists found difficult to embrace wholeheartedly.<sup>7</sup>

As a movement aligned with the oppressed and disadvantaged in society, the socialists had a great aversion to the extravagant love of the rich and idle classes for animals. The pampering of pets and horses, when set against the privileged classes' indifference towards miserable workers, women and children, especially infuriated and disgusted the

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<sup>7</sup> For more on the socialist movement, see Barrow & Bullock (1996), Bevir (1992, 1996a, 2011), Cole (1961), McBriar (1962), Pease (1916), Wolfe (1975).

socialist reformers in times of severe hardship when thousands were out of work. The Social Democratic Federation's newspaper *Justice* for instance carried several exasperated articles with the recurrent theme of well-looked-after animals vs. mistreated humans in the difficult years between 1884 and 1886 that affected many sections of the working classes. These articles pointed out that while there were homes for lost cats and horses, there was not even adequate housing for the poor; while there were hospitals for overworked and injured horses, workers when worn out or mutilated were simply replaced with new substitutes; and while misusing a pony merited imprisonment, murdering a woman by overworking and underfeeding only deserved a fine (Anonymous, 1884a; Anonymous, 1884b; Anonymous, 1885; Anonymous, 1886a; Anonymous, 1886b). This indignation apart, the anti-cruelty movement's noted class bias, religious conservatism, emphasis on individualist values of personal moral reform and private charity, its "drawing-room and dress-coat element" (Salt, 1900-1901; Tanner, 1912), all worked to alienate the more class-conscious socialist workers from comfortably identifying with or joining it.

However, while there were features of the movement that could keep the socialists at a distance, the conspicuous ethical tendency of the socialist movement worked in the other direction. Ethical socialism or, the so-called "religion of socialism," had a strong following especially in some northern towns in the 1880s and 1890s. The "ethical socialists" espoused a broad social vision with strong moral and aesthetic concerns and embraced a much wider reform programme that involved both the public and private spheres. Socialism, to them, signified not only economic and political rearrangements but also a total regeneration of the whole society (Bevir, 1996b; Pierson, 1979; Yeo, 1977). In contrast, the so-called "practical socialists" focused attention more exclusively on political and economic agendas and remained more skeptical of diverting issues such as humanitarian and personal reforms. Inevitably, the cause of oppressed animals appealed more to ethical socialists than to their counterparts.

The Independent Labour Party (ILP, founded 1893), from its early days, had a strong religious and ethical streak, and was sympathetic to the animal cause. Its weekly newspaper *Labour Leader*, with a circulation of 50,000 by mid-1894 (Morgan, 1975: 67), frequently carried sympathetic pieces on issues such as anti-vivisection, pit ponies, blood sports, and also on the more theoretical discussion of the kinship of life and rights of animals. For example, on the hunting question, it stated that: “We are entirely with the Humanitarians in their protest against cruel sport. We cannot socialize our conduct towards man while continuing heedless torture done to our lower fellow creatures. Socialism definitely proclaims that creed for us” (Anonymous, 1905). Its weekly regular column “Chats with the lads and lassies,” written for the little socialist crusaders, regularly discussed the topic of animals. It encouraged the children to be little naturalists and to protect the animals. As “Daddy Time,” the regular author of the column, told the little crusaders on the topic of bird-nesting:

So when you go a-bird-nesting, go to learn about the birds, and their habits, and what their eggs are like; and if you find anyone trying to hurt the birds then remember you are a Crusader and that you are as much bound to protect a bird as you would be to protect your own brother and sister. (Daddy Time, 1895)

“Daddy Time” was written by none other than Keir Hardie, leader of the ILP, to whom socialism was “at bottom a question of ethics or morals” (Hardie, 1907: 35). There was no doubt that Hardie had a soft heart for animals. Once when a lost dog strayed onto the stairs of the *Labour Leader*’s office, Hardie “finding him there, let his heart go out and invited him into the editorial den” (Clayton, 1895). Not only this, but he and others in the office fed the dog with cake and milk and made a comfortable bed for it with a rug and some back numbers of the *Labour Leader*. Other notable figures in the ILP such as James and Katherine Bruce Glasier, S. G. Hobson and Philip Snowdon, who shared the vision of ethical socialism, were also supportive of the

animal cause and openly spoke for it.

The Labour Church and the Clarion movements active in the 1890s were two other major forces within the socialist movement with a strong ethical dimension (Bevir, 1999; Wright, 1990). The organ of the Labour Church movement, *The Labour Prophet*, occasionally carried articles on the humanitarian cause for animals from a radical perspective and its Sunday Schools also encouraged “kindness to animals” as a positive duty of the young socialists (Payne, 1894). Robert Blatchford, the leading figure behind the Clarion movement in the North, was himself a vegetarian and served on the Humane Diet Committee of the HL (Blatchford, 1907). In his *Merrie England*, which sold over 700,000 copies, he declared that “a vegetarian diet is the best” (1976: i, 16). It was not clear how many clarionists or socialists were drawn to a vegetarian diet, but it was one of the often-mentioned personal reforms adopted by socialists committed to the building of a new socialist future.

For the practical socialists, however, issues such as vegetarianism and anti-vivisection were simply diversions from the real socialist missions. H. M. Hyndman (Bevir, 1991, 1992; Tsuzuki, 1961), leader of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) and later of the British Socialist Party, stated plainly that: “the wholly needless sufferings of men interest and sadden me infinitely more than the possible inconveniences of guinea-pigs” (1911: 192). In 1913, *The British Socialist*, the monthly review of the British Socialist Party, attacked the many “outrageous eccentricities” taken on by a “large numbers of our excellent comrades”—among which not a few were related to treatment of animals:

Socialist Number One accepts the programme of course, but the demon of Vegetarianism is gnawing at his heart . . . And so it runs. Anti-vivisection, Votes for Women, Anti-Vaccination, Humanitarianism, Theosophy, Homoeopathy—anything you like—except the minding of our own plain and, Heaven knows, urgent and tremendous business. (Le Bosquet, 1913: 351)

Though the divide between ethical and practical socialism could not be clearly drawn, the tension between the two visions of socialism remained real.

The socialists based their stand on the animal question on an ideological foundation different from that of the mainstream movements. To them, cruelty to animals was unacceptable chiefly because it was a form of oppression and tyranny that reflected an unequal and exploitive relationship between humans and animals. Consistent with their analysis of other social problems, they attributed the roots of the question to structural factors such as capitalism and commercial competition rather than to human immorality or irreligiosity as perceived by the mainstream anti-cruelty movement. Horses or donkeys that were overworked or subjected to constant beatings and thrashings, were now seen as victims of the same ruthless capitalist system that equally degraded the working poor.<sup>8</sup> Critical of the inadequacy of, and even the hypocrisy inherent in, the philanthropic projects of the wealthy classes, “justice” and “equality,” rather than “Christian charity,” were now their guiding principles. “Justice, not charity,” the most powerful slogan of the socialists in their fight for justice and equality for humans, was now equally advanced in their fight for the animal cause. As asked by Jack London, a socialist, American novelist and friend of the British animal defence movement, “Why, in God’s name, should we prate about ‘kindness to animals’? ‘Mercy!’ forsooth! What animals require, and what it is our duty to accord them, is plain elementary ‘Justice’” (1916: xii). As with their ideals concerning human relationships, the socialists aspired to a more egalitarian relationship between humans and animals. Despite the persisting Nonconformist Christian faith of many, they are also inclined to draw upon the concept of kinship between humans and animals derived from the idea of organic evolution than upon the conventional Christian view. The newly-found affinity between humans and animals informed by evolutionism also proved to be

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<sup>8</sup> For an earlier artistic tradition that dwelled upon the same theme, see Donald (1999).

compatible with the core socialist concepts of “brotherhood” and “solidarity” between all classes, sexes and races. Under the more egalitarian and democratic spirit of socialism, animals were no longer viewed as the “dumb,” “brute” or “poor” creation of God, but as the intelligent “friends,” “cousins” or “brothers and sisters” akin to humans (Anonymous, 1906; Reclus, 1906).

Around the turn of the century, the socialist movement was increasingly drawn into the building of a political party that was expected to represent the interests of the working classes. However, despite the continued support of many leading figures in the party such as Hardie, Ramsay Macdonald, J. Clynes, Philip Snowden, George Lansbury and Arthur Henderson, the Labour Party that resulted in 1906 made no official commitment to the animal and anti-vivisection cause, for example, even when it took office in 1929. This has of course since been a major cause of disappointment to radical reformers sympathetic to the animal cause (Salt, 1921: 216; Vyvyan, 1971: 127). However, the influence of political radicalism is not to be assessed solely by the official lines of formal parties or groups. From the late nineteenth century onwards, many socialists, together with secularists and suffragists, aligned themselves with the animal defence movement and further established the links between the radical tradition and the animal cause.

## V. The Radical Turn in the Animal Defence Movement

From within the movement, the radicals continued to broaden the ideological base of the movement and continued to break with the old mode of work for animals at various levels. Due to aforementioned ideological differences, some radical reformers chose to create their own societies rather than joining existing ones. Compared with the well-endowed mainstream animal societies, these societies were often small and limited in funds, due partly to their deliberate distance from aristocratic and royal patronage. The

Independent Anti-Vivisection League founded in the 1890s under the presidency of Mona Caird, socialist, feminist and novelist, drew together a circle of anti-vivisectionists with radical sympathies such as Annie Besant and George Bernard Shaw. The Pioneer Anti-Vivisection Society (PAVS, founded 1894), closely connected with the feminist journal *Shafts* and the Progressive Pioneer Club for women, drew together feminists with radical sympathies and was especially active in the mid-1890s in the campaign against the establishment of the British Institute of Preventive Medicine in Chelsea. The Anti-Vivisection and Animal Defence Society (ADAVS, founded 1909), under the leadership of suffragist and pacifist Louise Lind-af-Hageby<sup>9</sup> and had Charlotte Despard of the radical Women's Freedom League serving on its executive committee since its foundation until 1937 (Animal Defence and Anti-Vivisection Society, 1909-1937), with its strategy of exposure and aggressive propaganda, brought intense publicity for the anti-vivisection cause in the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>10</sup> The most pronouncedly radical among them, the HL headed by Salt, member of the Fellowship of the New Life and the Fabian Society, attracted a large group of freethinkers and socialists from the progressive circles of the time. With its combative style of propaganda, the HL was perhaps the most outspoken against the ideologies inherent in the mainstream animal defence movement as represented by the RSPCA and very quickly established itself as a leading radical force within the movement (Weinbren, 1994).

Critical of animal lovers who generally showed “little sign of *intellect*” and their publications, such as the RSPCA's *The Animal World*, which was “no more than a childish collection of twaddling goody-goody tales” (Salt, 1905: 151-152), the HL, much in the tradition of the rational and critical discussion within the secularist

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<sup>9</sup> For Lind-af-Hageby's broader views on other reform issues, see Lind-af-Hageby (1917).

<sup>10</sup> For the new campaigns, strategies and the new peak of militancy in the early twentieth century with Lind-af-Hageby playing a central role, see Kean (1998: 136-164, 2007).

movement, sought the more systematic treatment of humanitarian issues and took the discussion to a new intellectual height. Resembling more the propagandistic tract-issuing Fabian Society than most animal societies, it published a wide range of pamphlets, leaflets and booklets, and edited two monthly journals—*The Humanitarian* and *The Humane Review*—for in-depth discussions. Salt himself composed two major treatises—*Humanitarianism* (1891) and *Animals' Rights* (1892)—and provided the philosophical foundations on which the radical section of the animal defence movement was based.

Following socialist critiques, the HL reacted strongly against the “old humanitarianism”—consisting principally of “philanthropy to humans” and “kindness to animals”—that was seen as ineffective and heavily implicated in the liberal economic system. Instead of addressing the symptoms through charitable efforts, it urged the tackling of cruelties at their roots. And while in the past cruelties were often viewed in moralistic terms and their causes attributed to human sinfulness or individual character defect, the HL sought causes of cruelties in social, economic and environmental factors, as Salt found them in the “pitiless system of competition and self-seeking” and the “estrangement of class from class” (1889: 90) and many progressives found the alleviation of human suffering from disease in improved sanitation, a clean water supply and a sensible diet instead of a medical science that relied upon animal experimentation (Carpenter, 1893). Seeing the common roots to various social evils and the common humanitarian spirit behind attempts to alleviate the suffering of all sentient creatures, the HL propagated an all-round humanitarianism that deals with cruelties to both humans and animals. It pressed for the oneness of all reforms and in practice brought together reformers of various progressive causes into its ranks (Salt, 1896: 34). At this time, there already existed, vaguely in the progressive circles, a belief in the connectedness of all reforms in human affairs, and on this point, radical groups such as the Pioneer Anti-Vivisection Society and the feminist journal *Shafts* all helped propagated the idea and correct the partiality and segregated nature of previous humanitarian work.



To radicals upholding the more egalitarian concepts of kinship, brotherhood, fellowship and friendship, the old humanitarianism, with its “somewhat conservative, orthodox, and pietistic form of benevolence, which regarded the objects of its compassion, whether ‘the lower orders’ or ‘the lower animals,’ with a merciful and charitable eye” (Salt, 1892b: 552), was but an anachronism in modern democracy. Following the freethinkers, many radicals perceived human-animal relations not through the Christian framework but through the secular kinship idea derived from evolutionary theories. They rejected the hierarchical view inherent in Christian creationism and believed that the physical and mental affinity between humans and animals proclaimed by evolutionism would eventually bring an end to tyranny and oppression in human-animal relations. And in place of Christian “kindness” and “mercy,” that viewed animals as objects of pity awaiting charity, many radicals regarded animals as subjects with rightful entitlement and actively promoted the concept of animal rights as the new guiding principle for the animal cause (Salt, 1892a; Williams, 1895).

However, in putting forward the concept of animal rights, Salt and his co-workers had no intention to enter into abstract academic discussions but were more interested to radicalize the animal cause in practice. As Salt made plain in his “The rights of animals” published in the *International Journal of Ethics*:

Into the interminable field of discussion as to the fitness of this term I do not propose to enter, because my purpose is not an academic but a practical one, and in the redressing of social injustice Action cannot forever wait for the good pleasure of Logic. It may be that, from a strictly logical point of view, there are no such things as “Rights,” in which case it is obvious that we cannot claim for animals what is denied to men; but if, as is usually conceded, there are rights of men, then we assert there are also, in due degree, rights of animals also. (1900: 210)

Although the theory of natural rights was not in vogue in the age developing towards gradual state intervention and collectivist

solutions in politics, the concept was first of all useful in putting forward a much stronger claim for animals than the predominating moderate position of duty of “kindness” or “mercy” to animals. With non-negotiable right, demands for animals became absolute, not as with the conventional position, which was more open to arbitrary interpretation. In perhaps the first academic discussion on the concept of animals’ rights, Salt refuted D. G. Ritchie’s traditional position by adopting the tap and water metaphor: “The kindness is, so to speak, the water, and the duty is the tap; and the convenience of the arrangement is that the man can shut off the kindness whenever it suits him to do so; as, for example, it suited Mr. Ritchie in regard to the question of vivisection” (1895: 37). The radical reformers further believed that the concept of animal rights, if fully asserted and comprehensively applied, would do away with the inconsistencies often found in the movement, for example, “lovers of animals” who pampered their lap-dogs by feeding them mutton chops, ladies who wore their feather-decorated hats to anti-vivisection meetings, or societies that remained indifferent to cruelties in the higher social circles.

Yet to what extent was the movement influenced by the progressive politics of the period and the radicalized ideology and objectives advocated by groups such as the HL? We detect a tendency towards radicalization in terms of ideology, rhetoric and objectives, though generally in a less critical form.

In the heated anti-vivisection campaign especially, activists had long begun to adopt the rhetoric of justice and rights to counter the lukewarm climate of “kindness to animals” prevalent in the movement. Many total abolitionists of animal experimentation such as Kingsford, though still adhering to a religious view of the question, tried to dissociate themselves from the regulatory position and the traditional image of animal lovers—which many pro-vivisectionists equally appropriated for themselves (Kingsford, 1929). Many also refused to be called “a *lover* of animals,” and reacted against the ineffectual talk about “kindness” and “mercy” to animals but justice due to them (Monro, 1915). Most indicative of the changing mood in the

movement is perhaps when clergymen also began to preach the new message of justice, as Rev. Ross spoke from the pulpit: “I am not here to preach to you rose-water wish-wash about gentleness and kindness and *mercy*. It is not a question of mercy, but of the most elementary justice” (1919). And indeed, while many freethinkers and socialists adopted discourses on justice and rights in defiance against the Christian moral reform tradition, those less ideologically charged reformers used them in a loosely defined way to supplement its existing arguments. We thus see the common combination of the stronger rhetoric of justice and rights with the older pietistic pleading of mercy for dumb animals in the mobilizing discourses of activists. For example, at a typically enthusiastic annual meeting of the LAVS in 1893, Rev. W. Adamson, President of the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society, told the responsive audience that:

I want you to see that animals have rights as well as men,—(hear, hear, and applause)—and we must recognize these rights. A man has no right to torture an animal for his pleasure—I go that length (Hear, hear.) . . . I am glad to know that a book was published in London this year with the title of “The Rights of Animals.” (Hear, hear.) It shows that we are advancing, as Dr. Arnold has said, to a right view of the matter. (Anonymous, 1893: 155-156)

Adamson continued however, to preach the conventional theme on the superiority of Christian morality, and the message that the Bible was “full of love to animals.” Undeniably, the rhetoric of rights seemed to have captured the fervent mood of an anti-vivisection crowd, and symbolized here more a resolute determination to fight for animals than adoption of a consistent philosophical principle. And it is worth noting that the new work cheered by all was none other than Salt’s *The Rights of Animals* published in 1892, which had immediately caught the attention of the general movement.

The centrality of the concept of the rights of animals in the anti-vivisection campaign round the turn of the century can perhaps best be illustrated by the engraving of a woman anti-vivisection warrior



THE DEFENCE OF THE HELPLESS.

Designed and Presented to The Animal Defence and Anti-Vivisection Society by WALTER CRANE.

Source: Crane (1911).

designed by Walter Crane for the militant ADAVS (see Illustration). In this picture, a woman warrior held in her right hand a flying banner with the words—"In defence of our dumb friends against the horrors of vivisection"—and in her left hand, a shield circled with the bold letters of "THE RIGHTS OF ANIMALS." A noted socialist painter, Crane had painted for the socialist movement many of its most

famous pictorial manifestos. In this impressive engraving, Crane—himself an anti-vivisectionist and an honorary member of the ADAVS (ADAVS, 1911), also created for the anti-vivisection movement a memorable emblem that captured the spirits of the movement at its high tide in 1911 when the Second Royal Commission on Vivisection (1906-1912) that generated another wave of the anti-vivisection campaign was still under way. This engraving, after its first publication in *The Anti-Vivisection Review*, continued to be used as the front cover of the ADAVS's annual reports from 1912 to 1928.

In terms of objectives, if the animal societies did not declare with the radicals the oneness of all reforms concerning both humans and animals, many of them at least began to show a greater awareness of the question of consistency and pursued a much broader agenda. Following the HL, several leading animal societies pledged themselves against all cruelty to animal and engaged in a wide range of campaigns covering vivisection, blood-sports, steel traps, the fur and feather trades, cattle-traffic and slaughterhouse reform. The ADAVS opposed all forms of cruelty to animals and carried out a comprehensive programme similar to that of the HL. Other societies such as the London Anti-Vivisection Society (LAVS, founded 1876), British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV, founded 1898) and the Animals' Friend Society (AFS, founded 1910), also pledged themselves against all forms of animal cruelty while maintaining their special lines of work. With the broadening of movement agendas came also specialization and societies focusing on single type of cruelty or animal species mushroomed: the (Royal) Society for the Protection of Birds (1889), the National Canine Defence League (1891), Society for the Protection of Cats (1895), National Equine Defence League (1909), Anti-Bearing-Rein Association (1900s), Society for the Suppression of Cruel Steel Traps (1900s), Performing and Captive Animals' Defence League (1914), and the Council of Justice to Animals (1911) for slaughter reform, cropped up one after another in the three decades before the Great War.

Of all emerging new concerns of the movement, the campaign

against blood sports had most symbolically broadened the movement's agenda in its first century of work. Though sports of the masses such as cock-fighting and bear-baiting had been early abolished by the 1835 Cruelty to Animals Act, hunting as a field sport (Griffin, 2007) that was closely associated with the Royalty, the aristocracy and the land-owning class had long evaded equal fate. An attack on the sport would not only potentially undermine the social hierarchy, which the mainstream movement upheld, but practically risked the many figure-heads that adorned its patron lists. And while there had since the mid-nineteenth century existed within the radical political tradition, from Republicanism to socialism to anti-imperialism, strong criticism against the hunting sport (Taylor, 2004), it was not likely to be utilized by the mainstream movement that had remained ideologically distant to the tradition. It was not until the 1890s with the initiatives of the HL that the campaign against hunting mobilized for the first time. From 1894 to 1910, the HL introduced no fewer than ten times the "Sports Regulation Bill," later "Spurious Sports Bill," for the banning of tame-stag-hunting, rabbit-coursing, and pigeon-shooting—a tactical choice that started with the less controversial hunting of captivated animals engaged in by all classes. Alongside this, it conducted campaigns against the symbolic Royal Buckhounds and Eton Beagles. In its arguments against hunting, the HL heavily drew upon existing critiques commonly seen in radical journals such as *Reynolds's Newspaper*, *The Clarion*, *The National Reformer*. The range of radical ideas wielded by the HL in this campaign can be fully illustrated in the collection of essays titled *Killing for Sports* (Salt, 1914). In this collection prefaced by George Bernard Shaw, Maurice Adams perceived hunting as an anachronism which survived only because of land monopoly and called for the abolition of the parasitic classes. Edward Carpenter proposed agricultural reform by the multiplication of small holders and agricultural cooperation, which had its greatest obstacle in the sport of the landed class. W. H. S. Monck examined hunting from the economic perspective and regarded it as a wasteful activity benefiting only the small number of wealthy and idling people. J. Connell

reasserted the rights of Englishmen to common lands and criticized the unfairness inherent in the Game Laws and the brutality by the “predatory” classes to the poachers and poorer classes involved in the upholding of the laws. With an anti-imperialist stance, Salt compared cruel sports with war and condemned the aggressiveness and savagery inherent in both. On top of these radical critiques, several articles argued from the more conventional humanitarian and ecological viewpoints. What could be seen in this collection, as in the HL’s other publications on the issue, was an unusual integration of radical critiques with ethical concerns for the sufferings of animals and the destruction of wildlife, the former of which unseen in the discourses of the animal defence movement and the latter of which not always present in the radical thoughts.

In its campaign against “bloodsports,” the HL had the support of most animal societies who had by now become more aware of the question of consistency. The Central Committee of the RSPCA however, despite the strong anti-hunting line taken by many of its local branches, refused to render its support from 1906; four of its Vice-Presidents in the House of Lords even voted against the bill in 1909.<sup>11</sup> This expectedly sparked off a series of fierce clashes between the HL and the RSPCA in which the former accused the latter of falling into a stupor and living on the memories of its past (Anonymous, 1907). In the end, though the HL did not achieve any parliamentary success, it did for the first time mobilize a large section of public opinion against “bloodsports”—a word it made current, and paved the groundwork for the second wave of the anti-hunting campaign beginning in the 1920s.

## VI. Conclusion

“The years from 1881,” reminisced Edward Carpenter, a HL member and guru figure for all sorts of radicals, reformers and

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<sup>11</sup> Lords Cromer, Kilmorey, Onslow and Middleton, see Anonymous (1909).

visionaries since the late nineteenth century,

It was a fascinating and enthusiastic period. . . . The Socialist and Anarchist propaganda, the Feminist and Suffragist upheaval, the huge Trade-union growth, the Theosophic movement, the new currents in the Theatrical, Musical and Artistic worlds, the torrent even of change in the Religious world—all constituted so many streams and headwaters converging, as it were, to a great river. (1916: 245)<sup>12</sup>

Amidst the exciting atmosphere towards progressive change, it could be argued that the animal defence movement did not remain unaffected but constituted part of the converging streams and was at the same time carried forward by the its many currents towards the great river of the new era. Despite the far from cordial relations the movement enjoyed with the secularist and socialist movements, a considerable number of freethinkers and socialists sympathetic to the animal cause, nonetheless, from both within and without, challenged the old mode of animal politics and helped to radicalize the movement in terms of its ideology, rhetoric and objectives. Consistently argued principles of humanitarianism and animals' rights gradually came to be asserted in reaction against the movement's past sentimentality and inconsistency. The language of justice, rights and kinship with radical connotations was consciously adopted to replace the traditional pious language of "mercy" and "kindness" to animals and as a show of greater militancy. A firm stand against all cruelty to animals, as opposed to the previously limited movement agenda, was emphasized and new campaigns against hunting that challenged the movement's traditional link with the establishment also emerged to the front. In short, during this time, a greater section of the movement gradually shifted from taking a Christian, moralistic, paternalistic and hierarchical view of the animal question, to adopting an increasingly secular, political, and democratic one. In other words, the movement

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<sup>12</sup> For the wide range of causes espoused by Carpenter, including his under-studied views on the animal question, see Rowbotham (2008).



can be seen as having gradually broken loose from the moral reform tradition to which it belonged for the greater part of the nineteenth century and became much closely associated with the secularist and socialist strands of the radical political tradition with which it had had uneasy relation in earlier decades. Due to this radical shift in late Victorian and Edwardian times, the movement can be said to have acquired a more modern outlook, which helped carry its development into the new century and resonated much more with the contemporary animal liberation movement. Perhaps, after all, Salt was not such a lone prophet during his time, and the relationship between political radicalism and the animal cause in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was much more intimate than has been recognized previously.

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天生盟友？  
英國維多利亞與愛德華時期之  
動物捍衛運動與政治激進傳統

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摘 要

十九世紀英國動物保護運動與政治激進傳統間之關聯至今尚乏深入研究；本文藉由檢視維多利亞與愛德華時期之動物保護運動與世俗主義運動以及社會主義運動間之關係發展，對之進行初步探索。本文指出，世俗主義運動以及社會主義運動對於深具道德改革傳統色彩之動保運動儘管存在正面支持，基於意識形態上之差異，早期亦多存有疑慮。然而至十九世紀末，部分動保人士開始積極挪用此二激進運動中之激進思想以及語彙，有意識地挑戰主流動保運動之價值，推動了動保運動在意識型態、論述語彙以及改革目標等層面之激進化現象。此一來自世俗主義以及社會主義之影響，亦讓動保運動在道德改革傳統整體於十九世紀末漸趨衰微時，得以順利轉型為一俱備現代屬性之運動，於二十世紀持續發展。

**關鍵詞：**反殘酷運動、反動物實驗運動、動物權、世俗主義運動、社會主義運動