

A Collection of Interview Correspondences with Incarcerated ALF and Vegan Straight Edge/Hardline Activist Walter Bond

Jonathan Pieslak¹

Introduction

In September of 2013, I began a series of interview correspondences with Walter Bond, an Animal Liberation Front (ALF) activist presently incarcerated at the Communication Management Unit (CMU) of the United States Penitentiary in Marion, Illinois. The CMU is a recent designation unit, commonly housing militant jihadists, for inmates whose communication is severely limited and monitored. Bond is convicted of arsons at The Tandy Leather Factory in Salt Lake City, Utah and the Tiburon Restaurant in Sandy, Utah, and is serving an 87-month sentence. He claims to have committed the arsons in the name of animal-rights defense.

Our communication took place mostly via the prison email system of CorrLink, and lasted almost one year; it was primarily intended to further my understanding of music's role in the eco-animal rights militancy movement. His is a unique case study insofar as there are relatively few known ALF activists to interview, and he strongly self-identifies with the vegan Straight Edge/hardline movement, a music-driven subculture that emerged from the broader Straight Edge musical movement in the early 1990s.

For the ease and clarity of reading, I have arranged our email correspondences in the form of an interview, however the reader should understand that I would typically email Bond questions in numeric order and he would respond accordingly. Thus, non-essential information, like greetings, is omitted. The interview is followed by a series of email blasts Bond frequently sent to his contact list; they offer further insight into his personal rendering of eco-animal rights ideology and his relationship to the musical subculture of vegan Straight Edge and hardline. Finally, sections of this interview have appeared, with major and minor edits of our actual email correspondence appearing below, on the websites of the North American Press Office of the ALF (<https://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/>) and Walter's support site (www.supportwalter.org).

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Interviews

Jonathan Pieslak (JP): I'm curious as to how you first became interested in radical environmentalism and animal liberation. Could you describe what attracted you to the movement and how you became involved? Also, could you describe your musical background? How would you describe the role of music in your life before and during your time as an activist?

Walter Bond (WB): I first became interested in Animal Liberation and Veganism when I was 19 years old starting in the summer of 1995. I began working for a company in the Midwest by the name of 'Dakota Mechanical'. I worked on the construction of two slaughterhouses, one in Perry, Iowa and one in Logansport, Indiana. Both were IBP pork production facilities. The horrors I witnessed there had a profound effect on me. If you would like, I wrote two articles about my experiences working there. They are entitled 'Why I Am Vegan' and 'Slaughterhouse Blues'. You can read them both and many of my other writings at www.supportwalter.org, they are also in my book 'Always Looking Forward'. Along with a few articles about the importance of the Straight Edge music scene and my connection to it. There is also a song and video about my first prison sentence in 1997 of arson for burning down a drug kingpins (sic) meth operation. The song is 'To Ashes' by the band 'Earth Crisis'.

As far as the role of music in my life before activism. Well, I was born in Clear Lake, Iowa. This is where the first major disaster happened in rock 'n' roll history. My home town is where Buddy Holly, Richie Valens and the Big Bopper died in a plane crash. I was born into a musical family. My father began playing rockabilly (that's what they call it these days) back in the 1950's (sic), he has been a life long musician. When I was a child of 5 years old my father played in a band named 'Southern Comfort'. They opened up for Eric Clapton and Joe Cocker. They were on the verge of stardom in the early 80's (sic) but alcohol and egos ruined those prospects.

My father plays lead and rhythm guitar, piano and saxophone. In my household it wasn't about what sport I would play but what instrument. I chose drums. I have been a drummer since age 7. By age 8 I was sitting in with my dad's (sic) band and playing cover tunes like 'Johnny Be Good'. My father still has video of me playing and I was so small all you see is the top of my head and drumsticks! Still, I was able to hold a good back beat even at that age.

As an activist music played, and still plays a vital roll. I am Straight Edge which is a subculture that began in the punk rock scene of the east coast in the early 80's (sic) and quickly became a genre of its own. Shortly after I left the slaughterhouse industry and got into Animal Rights activism I stumbled across the album 'Destroy The Machines' by the Vegan Straight Edge band Earth Crisis. To this day I think (it) has the most amazing Animal and Earth Liberation lyrics I have ever heard before or since! Shortly thereafter I became involved in a lifestyle

that was called Hardline which spawned Vegan bands like Raid, Vegan Reich, and many others.

I was always attracted to how the Vegan Straight Edge message preached abstinence and compassion from an aggressive and absolutist point of view. It was the first time that doing what's compassionate and right was presented to me in a way that appeared, well...dangerous.

After viewing slaughterhouse production first hand, I was not interested in hippie and ultra pacifist answers to the horrors I had witnessed. I became Vegan out of disgust for what Animals suffered not out of sensitivity, per se. So XVX (Vegan Straight Edge) was very appealing because it was the only subculture within Animal rights that I found was approaching the issues morally and with a sense of ferocious empowerment, which is what I believed, and still believe is necessary to combat the profound wickedness of Animal use and abuse.

JP: Did you ever play in bands?

WB: I never did play in any sXe (Straight Edge) bands. Mostly punk rock bands when I was a teen and later a couple garage metal bands in my twenties but nothing that ever got off the ground.

JP: Are the tattooed wrenches on your neck related to the Earth First! emblem?

WB: The wrenches on my neck are similar to the Earth first! (sic) emblem but not quite the same. They use a crossed wrench and tomahawk. My wrenches are from the 'Earth Crisis' emblem, which of course is modeled after the EF! wrenches. For me they are a symbol of Vegan Straightedge resistance. That said, I loved the novel 'The Monkey Wrench Gang' by Abbey and I think that the original Earth First! group was spectacular. Those old activists like Dave Foreman and Howie Wolkie were truly pioneers and super effective in their activism. Unfortunately, the current version of Earth First! has nothing to do with that dynamic and original group. I have never had any affiliation with Earth first! (sic) other than a statement of solidarity I wrote at their request. I will say that the last time I was imprisoned in Iowa in '97 I got a hold of Foreman's' (sic) book 'confessions of an eco warrior and It was really inspiring and influential.

JP: Could you tell me a little about the history of Straight Edge and particularly Vegan Straight Edge?

WB: This is really a complex topic and will probably take us a few more exchanges to talk about definitively (which I just happen to have the time for :) The sXe scene varies so much according to time and place that there really is no way to describe it as one entity. For instance there is (sic) places in Europe where Veganism is integral to sXe, where as (sic),

most of the American scene is no longer concerned with topics of Animal Liberation at the moment. It seems in the American scene of sXe there is (sic) two major issues playing out. First, dogmatic politics: on one side you have a very liberal anarchist contingent that frames Straight Edge according to issues important to their party lines. On the other side you have very right wing and often Christian influences in sXe like all the 'facedown records' bands. And in-between these 2 sides is a bunch of very ambiguous bands that all sound the same and anthemize their lyrics so that they don't appear preachy and they can put on bigger shows because of having a larger appeal.

The scene I grew up in was in Colorado and Iowa in the late 80's (sic), to the late 90's (sic). sXe was really going through a revival. The sound of the music was changing, the production value was improved and the message was incredibly outspoken. Whatever a band was into, be it Veganism, Hare Krishna, politics or the tough guy stuff there was no ambiguity to it. We had all the same political rifts then too. But it was not so solidified. Straightedge (if that's what you were) was by far the primary issue, not 'why' you were edge.

But just as it is now, many of those that professed these hardcore beliefs, supposedly for life, ended up drifting away never to be heard from again. Back then in my youth I remember becoming really disheartened by this. But as I grew it just became a given. Looking back I can see why this happens much more clearly. sXe has a lot of camaraderie that goes along with it, friendship as well as some social tribalism. For most this is the allure. The message is just a rallying point for these people. And you can find camaraderie and rally around lots of different things as you grow in life, if that's what you emotionally need. So most people came and went. For a smaller group of people sXe had a deep effect and then became a stepping stone for activism or musical careers etc. in their adult life. And for a very few of us sXe, and in my case VXX remained the focal point.

On a personal level, sXe for me was not for the camaraderie. At the time that I got into sXe I had a huge social scene that I was apart of mainly the punk rock scene. I got involved in sXe because I was raised in a household of drug and alcohol abuse. I began going down that same road and thought to myself "great, I'm going to turn into my parents" the worst thing a defiant teen could imagine. So Straightedge for me was a way to hold on to my defiance and change my life for the better.

Aesthetically, Straightedge at the shows and in general was hyper masculine. Lots of fights, lots of males shaking their tail feathers trying to attract a mate, while girls lined the walls and stared in awe at unchecked male aggression. I won't lie, it was at times a violent subculture and still can be. But its (sic) incomparable to the violence that goes along with the drug scene. I used to go to shows at this old roller rink in north Denver. It was magical to me. It was dark and lots of dangerous older kids would be there and these musicians were larger than life to me. There was no internet or it was little used back then so these bands that came through were just like mythological creatures from the east coast to many of us in

Denver. I remember going to see the 'Cro Mags' and it was almost a religious experience for me, same with 'Sick Of It All'.

Later, when I got serious about Veganism, shows were more of a strengthening and affirmation of my worldview than a personal revelation.

JP: Do you find that the message of sXe and xVx is critical to the scene now?

WB: Back when I was a kid I'd say a lot more kids were into sXe and XVX for the message than nowadays. This is reflected in the lyrics of the bands. Most of today's sXe bands, if you read their lyric sheets, at best they will say that they don't like drugs, or they might scream 'STRAIGHTEDGE!' in a song. But no one really explains why drugs are detrimental to society or get (sic) specific at all about much of anything. Here's an experiment, look at the old lyrics of bands like Youth of Today, Gorilla Biscuits, Vegan Reich or Raid and compare them to any post 2005 American sXe band. The music has become better produced but has so little to say.

JP: You spoke admiringly about Dave Foreman and the first incarnation of EF!, could you elaborate, if you can, on your opinion of the group now? When Foreman left and Judi Bari became more interested in establishing a communist/socialist ideological consistency within the group, a lot of people left. It seems like you relate much better to the original EF! with its multitude of ideological perspectives. Foreman, I was told, would work with anyone— anarchists, republicans, vegans, carnivores—so long as they were biocentric and direct-action oriented.

WB: Your (sic) correct, I do relate a lot better with Foreman's EF! Mainly because it was so much more effective than this new Anarcho-EF!. There have been a couple times in my activism that I have put myself in league with anarchism or at least paid lip service to it, being as it is so prevalent in what passes as radicalism and militancy in the Animal Rights community. But I have truly come to understand that anarchy is detrimental, divisive and distracting to the movement. The focus of Animal and Earth Liberation should obviously be the Earth and Animals. Not extreme anarchist fringe ideology or agenda. But this is the case especially with the new EF!. It seems that Earth Lib is only important to these people as long as it's a caboose to their primary political issues. In the process a lot of great people become alienated from (sic) these groups. People like most of society and most of the activist community that they profess to speak for.

I have always admired Foreman's' (sic) EF! in part because it was so politically syncretic. Much like Vegan Hardline and early XVX some views were very conservative and others very liberal. I also admired the fact that when EF! first began it was really started by a core group of grassroots Earth activists instead of politicians. There was no ulterior motive or agenda of domino issues. Just the defense of Earth and Wild Nature.

JP: Have you heard the new compilation CD produced by EF!? It came out last month and is 25 hardcore/punk songs—quite a change from their 30th Anniversary CD released a few years ago. This seems like a move to attract people in the sXe and XVX scenes, and like you said, attracts people through the music first with the message coming second. Given the screaming/yelling vocal articulation, it is hard to discern a single song verse. But it also seems to represent the “new” EF! as there is a big focus on gender and queer issues in the band interviews.

WB: I have not heard the new EF! comp CD. I do have an mp3 player and availability to purchase music, Earth Crisis and many hardcore and sXe bands included, but the EF! comp is far to (sic) obscure to be on the Bureau Of Prisons system. Hopefully it inspires some people.

JP: Did any bands ever openly affiliate with direct-action ideology like the ELF and ALF?

WB: Yes. A lot of bands have. ‘Conflict’ had a song entitled ‘This is The ALF’, Earth Crisis’ songs like ‘Wrath of Sanity’, Maroons’ ‘24 HourHate’, Vegan Reich’s’ (sic) ‘Stop Talking, Start Revenging’ Green Rage’ (sic) ‘Declaration of War’ and many, many more.

JP: Would you call the ELF/ALF a “group”? After looking at these activists and thinking about it, I see them as distinct from groups like SHAC and EF!. They seem to operate as what I’m calling a “direct-action ideology” rather than a group where people get together and meet, where they have a “leadership” (EF! has a clear hierarchy and leadership no matter what they say), and where actions can be planned and coordinated.

WB: ALF is a set of tactical principles. Mainly, to sabotage abusers and those that profit from Animals, rescue Animals from places of harm, Be Vegan or vegetarian and never harm a human or Animal in the process. After that the size and scope of various ALF groups varies as much as the individuals that comprise them. The ELF come (sic) along 16 years after the ALF and adopted the same leaderless resistance in defense of the Earth, but were more unabashedly anarchist in their communiques, and much more general in their targeting. Your (sic) correct, (the) ALF/ELF are different than SHAC or EF! In that all ALF actions are illegal and clandestine. You will never find ALF/ELF protesting in the open, or recruiting.

JP: How did XVX start? I’ve been doing some research on the music history of sXe and it seems like a group like Youth of Today was really important for infusing sXe with the vegan ideal. But then, didn’t the vegan ideal split between those who saw it only as a matter of individual lifestyle and those who were more “hardline” about it?

WB: The exact origins of XVX are debatable. For me it began with the band Vegan Reich because although there were others that were talking about Vegetarianism and Animal issues they were the first group of activists to come into the scene with a thought-out and purposeful Vegan ideology and also a more metal sound. You will notice that a lot of XVX bands especially those in Europe lean more towards metal than the punk rock genre. And in

answer to the second part of your question: Yes, there was always a rift between posi edge and the more hardline. Personally, I think it just amounts to a lot of posturing by both sides. If you want to uplift the scene or approach activism as a shiny happy person, good for you! There's not enough positivity in the world and way to (sic) many rascals. On the other hand if you want to kick ass for Animals and against the insanity of inebriation, well, that's needed too. I found that once you enter into grassroots activism no matter what the cause, you begin looking at things more tactically instead of topically. In these music driven scenes imaging is more important. These two worlds really have very little in common. Which is why despite lots of professions of 'true till' death' it doesn't pan out that way for most of the kids that profess it.

JP: What do you think about the connection between ALF activists and PETA? (If you aren't comfortable answering this one, or any of these question, just pass). I don't want to overstep any bounds.

WB: The general public really seems to think that there is no difference, or that PETA are hardcore Animal Rights loonies. But PETA is a fairly tame organization compare to the ALF. There was a time in the late 80's (sic) when PETA was more morally supportive of the ALF. But those days are history. I think it cost them to many legal problems to be seen to close to the ALF. Like I said, tactics.

JP: I'm curious about your alleged involvement with a group called Negotiation Is Over. If this is not ok to talk about, just let me know. However, I was curious that the SPLC ran a piece on the group last year which closely affiliates you with them. What is NIO and how is it different from the ALF? Does NIO break with the ALF credo of not hurting humans?

WB: NIO (Negotiation Is Over) is my friend Camille and her associates. I have been out of contact with her for a couple of years as the screeners and censors that dictate who I am able to communicate with have banned her from my contacts. Therefore, I really can't comment about my affiliation with NIO, post 2011.

That said, I was at one time the Senior Editor of Militant Direct Action for NIO and wrote articles and submitted to interviews in that capacity. NIO and the ALF are different in a few ways. First, NIO is not a clandestine organization and not involved in any illegality in defense of Animals as is the ALF. NIO, when I was writing for them from jail was involved mostly in combating vivisection in aggressive, grassroots and dynamic ways. I suppose that the philosophy of tactics is different between NIO and the ALF but this is really a nominal issue, because in reality neither gorup has ever resorted to physical violence against anybody. For all the sensationalism that NIO has been immersed in it is a far tamer group of individuals than the ALF.

For me the 'philosophy' of non-violence is not a rigorous dogma to be upheld at all times and in all situations. I personally would never use physical violence against people in the name of

any cause. Because I am not a violent person and this world is suffering from so much violence already I do not want to add to that. This is largely why I decided some time ago to stop my own militant rhetoric and just speak to the issues. But that is my own stance, I do not fault anyone for wanting to keep all available tactics up for discussion when the issue is the slaughter of billions of innocent lives and the death of Mother Earth.

JP: Did music ever play a role in the events leading up to any of your criminal activity? I'm not trying to ask a leading question here but given the wealth of examples in which music operated as a motivating factor in the immediate time before, or as a catalyst at the moment of action (even during action), I wanted to ask.

WB: Honestly no. I can't say that music ever directly influenced any of my arsons. It has directly influenced parts of my philosophies and worldviews but what motivated my ALF actions, and before this my arson of a meth dealer and manufacturer were personal experiences, such as working at the slaughterhouses and seeing my family members destroying themselves with addiction.

JP: You commented that NIO is "a far tamer group of individuals than the ALF." I assume that you know other ALF activists. If so, could you comment on the music environment, if any? For instance, what do other ALF activists listen to? (I realize that I'm asking you comment for other people but finding ALF activists is kind of hard as you might imagine.)

WB: I do not know anyone in the ALF. But I do know well the history of the ALF. So how other underground activists have been, or are affected by music scenes is something I have no knowledge of personally. I have noticed however that it's not uncommon to find paraphrased lyrics of songs in ALF communiques. And currently I'm the 7th (that I can think of) incarcerated ALF activist in America that is XVX.

JP: Do you think that the xVx scene is a likely place for people to get introduced to and possibly get involved with ALF activism?

WB: I have been to more sXe and XVX shows than I can count and I have never been approached by anyone that was recruiting for the ALF or any underground movement. Honestly, if anyone ever approached me in that capacity at a show I would have just assumed that they were a federal or undercover agent. When I was older I used to try to recruit kids at shows to come work at Animal Sanctuaries with varying degrees of success. I think the XVX scene of yesteryear was more a networking of activists. I noticed when I was a kid that the message to the music was so important. Kids were feeding the homeless Vegan food, or protesting fur or really serious about living the austerities of sXe. Today though, it's all about the sound of the music, your friends, and the sound of the music and your friends, and the sound of the...

JP: How important do you think that music is to activists in the ALF/ELF and the kind of radical environmentalism and animal rights militancy that endorses arson?

WB: I think that it is probably very important to most. I know it has been to me. I read a book about Rod Coronado called 'Operation Bite back' and in it he explains that a lot of the old Vegan anarcho punk rock bands were a big influence on him. I think that music is a great reinforcement to beliefs. Not just in socio-political movements and activism but for everyone. That's why so many people work or exercise to music because it can have the power to steel your resolve or keep you methodically motivated through rhythms. But only the feeble minded have their (sic) actions dictated by song lyrics. Outside of sXe music I have been listening to extreme metal music like 'Obituary', 'Six Feet Under' and all the Florida death metal bands since I was a kid and it has never appealed to me to execute any of the lyrics. I like those bands now for the same reason I enjoy 1980's (sic) horror movies, I enjoy the nostalgia they offer.

In short most of the people that are willing to take their beliefs to a militant level and possibly sacrifice their freedom or life have far larger personal reasons than a soundtrack, unless of course they are just inherently unstable to begin with.

JP: Comment: My speculation/hypothesis regarding the scene today is that xVx has been assimilated into the larger framework of "PC" sXe or general Marxist/anarchist/anti-industrial capitalist values. As you point out, there aren't too many people talking about animal lib these days in American sXe. The same thing happened to EF!. Once the left-wing generalists—those broadening the scope of purpose to a more left-wing socio-political agenda—gained momentum, EF! lost its biocentric focus. There is an irony here: by trying to broaden the scope of inclusion to embrace a variety of causes (the classic left-wing causes of worker's right, racial equality, social injustice, gender/queer rights, etc.), these movements actually narrowed the scope of their appeal because everyone had to agree on more issues.

WB: Comment: I agree with you 100% on this. The sad thing is it goes the other direction politically as well with bands like xTYRANTx that are ex-Iraqi war vets that sing about beating people up if they break edge, or ultra conservative, violent (in an ultra bully style) lyrics. You also have a lot of sXe bands that are coming out evangelical Christian. I think that the true message of Vegan Straight Edge has been lost in all these politics both left and right wing. sXe is a way of life, a lifestyle of edification, not a school of thought.

JP: It seems to me that the activism that came out of the sXe scene was primarily concerned with animal rights and animal lib. There were bands, like Earth Crisis, who talked about environmental issues but generally speaking, the scene seemed more oriented towards animal-rights issues than environmental ones. Is this accurate to your experience?

WB: I think that is accurate. xVx has always had a plethora of socio-political issues in the liner notes but the primary push was about the Animals.

JP: You commented in our last e-mail that there were 7 incarcerated ALF activists you could think of who came out of xVx. This is quite a lot due to the fact that the government has so much trouble infiltrating the scene—as of 2006, only a dozen or so ELF activists had been arrested and the ALF site only lists 15 prisoners or recent released prisoners. In your opinion, is/was the xVx subculture a major source of ALF activists? I'm not trying to imply that ALF activism is the destiny of a major number of xVx fans, but there seems to be a correlation here. I don't know of any other subculture or music that has produced this number. Do you think that of all the musical genres espousing eco-animal rights militancy that xVx is the most potent as far as its ability to produce ALF/ELF activists?

WB: There is a correlation. If you read a book called 'underground' put out by Peter Young and War Cry publications you will see that the ALF activity in North America was fairly prolific in the 1990's (sic). The places and times that this activity was most frequent coincides perfectly with the rise of influential xVx bands that came out of those areas. I definitely think that xVx has produced the most militant thinking Vegans of any other music genre.

JP: In terms of eco-animal rights militancy, is xVx one of the primary genres articulating and supporting ALF/ELF tactics? If not, what are the other main genres?

WB: As far as a genre goes, yes, absolutely. While there are many other bands from many other genres that support Animal Lib and the ALF, xVx is the only one I know of that these issues specifically are definitive of the genre itself and not the music. There is xVx hip hop now as well as punk and metal. sXe and xVx is by message as much as by music.

JP: Regarding Earth Crisis, a recent book on sXe claims they weren't hardline, and in one of their interviews they distanced themselves from hardline, but some of their song lyrics are pretty absolutist. Where do you stand on the categorization of Earth Crisis?

WB: Earth Crisis is a Vegan Straight Edge not a Hardline band. Vegan Straightedge has been their constant message to the public for decades. When we speak of 'Hardline' we are not speaking about absolutist Veganism or sXe, per se. 'Hardline' was a fairly holistic and codified worldview and lifestyle. It's outlined in what's know (sic) as 'the hardline manifesto' and had quite a few chapters and magazines that were specific to the movement. Hardline had very strict views, was as militantly pro-life as it was Vegan and also was against homosexuality and all sex outside of that between a man and women specifically for procreative purposes. Earth Crisis always took a stance against so called homophobia and never pushed a 'no sex' party line but instead 'no promiscuity'. Also many hardliners were raw Vegan and leaned more towards religion. Earth crisis gets the hardline label a lot because most kids these days just use the word as a synonym for hardcore, not knowing the obscure history of the actual hardline movement with in the scene.

JP: Are there "crews" in the sXe or xVx subcultures? If so, how do they work?

WB: Yes, there are all kinds of crews in xVx and sXe. And there (sic) intricacies and interactions are as varied as the local scenes that produce them. Some crews are little more than sXe gangs while most others are just groups or friends in the scene. Courage Crew is one of the few large nationwide crews that have brothers in several states. When I was a kid I was in a crew called VFL (Vegan For Life). We leaned towards hardline, and were at times very myopic in our worldview. We got into fights with drunks and druggies more than we factually helped Animals or promoted Veganism. But we all grew out of that mentality as we aged.

JP: Did you ever come into contact/trouble with racist skinheads (or skinheads in general, like SHARPs)?

WB: Yes, many times. Racist skinheads plagued the scene in many cities in the late 80's (sic) to early 90's (sic). Being as organized racists and Nazi skinheads are a bunch of unimaginative knuckleheads they would always seek to take over our scene because they were far too (sic) stupid to create their own music scene in any functional way. This led to a lot of battles between Nazi skins and everyone else in the Denver scene. Punks, SHARP skins and sXe kids stood united against the racists, we had to, they outnumbered us and were older and meaner so we had to fight united.

JP: In one of our previous exchanges you said, "Lifestyle we used to call hardline," is it still called "hardline"? If it is no longer called "hardline," what is it called now?

WB: Hardline really does not exist as it once was. In 2009 before my arrest, I was attempting a revival but to no avail.

E-blasts

10 March 2014

When I was a child things were a fucking mess. I won't dishonor my family by exposing all the gory details but believe me when I say that I have seen every kind of debauchery brought on by addiction. I have cried every kind of tear and lived through every kind of poverty and cycle of abuse because of the insane effects of drugs and drink on the people I once loved. Today other than my relationship with my adopted father my biological family is non-existent, broken, gone, over...

I went to prison at the age of 21 for burning down a multi-million dollar meth operation. I have never told the entire story, or even half of the story publically. Mainly because even when I recant it today I am hard pressed to believe that I lived through those events. Besides, the timing is not right, one day it will be, but that's not today. In any case that action was the domino that brought down a four-state drug ring and sent me to prison for arson. To a maximum security penitentiary for 4 years. A placed (sic) where I witnessed

stabbings, horrible beatings, gang violence and more filth and insanity brought on by drugs and alcohol. I got the X's (sic) tattooed on my hands in that hell hole. I came out with a 1000- yard stare and a slight case of PTSD.

To me Straight Edge is not a joke. It's not something you do until your 21 and then throw a kegger and have a party to celebrate breaking. It's not a fad, school of thought, philosophy or sociology experiment. It's who I was back then, who I am today and it's who I will be until the day that I die.

Through the years I have seen so many Straight Edge bands that once had so much love and influence, in the lives of so many kids. And I have seen so many of these bands break Edge and shit all over everything that they once held so true. I've seen them sell out, start drinking, drugging and smoking and make a mockery of everything I, we, have fought so hard against.

Bands like BOLD, STRIFE and JUDGE to name just a few of the larger examples. Now in the 2000's these pieces of shit have come back decades later to do reunion tours and cash in on the past. Playing anthems that were once real and true to groups of kids that are hungry for the history of Straight Edge, or those that are just there for the scene points. But you can't go back. These sellouts are just a shell, not the real thing. They are a caricature of themselves. They are the same ilk as all the others that blabber and shoot off at the mouth about the glory days when they used to be Straight Edge. As far as I am concerned they can all go sell their bullshit stories and band merchandise down the road. They didn't understand it then and they sure as fuck don't get it now!

Now I'm an adult, I've spent many years promoting Veganism and Animal Liberation. With every bit of extra cash, time or labor I could muster, I did the ground work. All of my true friends still do this work and are unsung heroes of this movement. I burned down three businesses of Animal exploitation across two states. I refused to apologize or equivocate to two federal courts of law. I now spend years locked away in a counter-terrorism prison unit, monitored by homeland security and surrounded by religious fanatics.

My only regret is seeing the ethics and purity of the Vegan ideal and way of life stripped of it's concern for Animals and replaced with a bunch of rich white people eating cupcakes, pandering to product manufacturers, pulpit pounding at conventions in swanky hotels, and self congratulating each other. While huge welfarist organizations siphon money off of those that are concerned, into their fat, deep pockets. Just like every parasitic scam charity of the past. They are getting rich off of the pain and suffering of their host and the expense of a lazy and apathetic populace.

Doesn't anybody care about the Animals? Where did those Vegans go? Of course I have met the use-to-be's in this crowd as well. 'I used to be Vegan but'... 'I wasn't getting enough protein', 'I felt dizzy', 'I don't have the right body (or blood) type for it', 'I missed cheese', 'It

got in the way of my relationships', etc. etc. etc. Meanwhile, as a 6' 2" man that weighs 230 pounds I exist on a Vegan prison diet of rice, beans, peanut butter and apples. Miraculously, I have not perished from malnutrition. In fact I take no medication or supplements and am in excellent health.

Most people break Vegan because of apathy, gluttony, and the selfishness of their palate. They were weaned into a taste for flesh and blood and are now creatures of habit. But here's a novel idea, maybe Veganism isn't about you and your awakenings or hankerings. Veganism is about billions of Animals that die torturous deaths because of you! Because of the industries of exploitation and murder that you choose to support with your money, and it's about boycotting all those products in your everyday life as a first and positive step towards Animal and Earth Liberation. It's about giving a fuck about all innocent life more than our consumer privileges!

I know, I know I'm the big bad wolf because I insist on defining problems and solutions. Because I am more concerned with being effective than making everyone feel included. And because I call out the fakes, phonies and frauds. Instead of letting everyone play make-believe-militant or cookie-cutter-'activist'. So be it, I am what I am, and it is what it is.

'Fuck the two faced liars, fuck all who go untried, fuck the evil bastards that still stand by their sides. Fuck all who cheapen what I truly am in others' eyes. Fuck all who bent the [Vegan] Straight Edge, with their fucking lies!'

Regards,
Walter Bond
ALF POW

27 March 2014

This is Why...

-A teener of meth gets melted in glass, well after the mini-butane torch comes off it.
The yellowish white smoke lasts.

The rock melts down into a clear chemical drop and he inhales the poison until lung expansion stops,
and the anhydrous ammonia makes him cough it.

This is why he lost his job, this is why he loses time, this is why his sanity is gone, this is why he turns to crime.

-She needs about a hundred bucks worth of heroin to keep from getting sick, so everyday she's on the block,

looking for a trick.

If she wants to get high it will cost twice as much and the men that she pulls,
Aren't just down to touch.

When she comes up short she drinks to get high. But heroin and liquor shut down her
circulatory system,
and that's how she died.

This is why her parents cried, this is why the paramedics tried, and this is why her child lies,
in the hands of social services.

-When a hog is on the kill floor he's hung up by one of his legs. His throat is cut, he's stabbed
in the gut,
and his insides get put in the trays.

One day a hog made it off his shackle and I watched him get beat to death. I saw the fear in
his eyes, heard the squeals of his cries, until finally he took his last breath.

This is why I could never go back to being a person that closes his eyes. To a person that lies
to himself, while others' die in ways, that no one should have died.

-This is why I took the law into my own hands, this is why I took my last stand, this is why I
could never turn away, for this is what my conscience demands.

And this is why I lay in my cell, the concrete and bars that daily test my pledge. And this is
why I would rather die, than not remain,

Vegan Fucking Straight Edge!

Regards,
Walter Bond
ALF POW

13 May 2014

Vegan Hardline (An Introductory)

-PRISONER OF WAR-

Over the years since my arrest in 2010 for the arson of the Sheepskin Factory in Denver,
Colorado. The Arson of the Tandy Leather Factory in Salt Lake City, Utah. And the arson of
The Tiburon restaurant in Sandy, Utah (on each one of these arson charges I also have an

obscure enhancement directly out of the U.S. Patriot Act). I have had a great deal of time to reflect on a great many issues.

Since January of 2012 I have been imprisoned in the CMU (Communications Management Unit) in the infamous United States Penitentiary of Marion, Illinois. Here I am restricted to a prison within a prison that is monitored by the Counter Terrorism Unit in Virginia and overseen by Homeland Security. I am housed with many Muslim extremists, so-called sovereign citizens, and a sprinkling of the usual prison degenerates (pedophiles, drug dealers, etc.). I am here for an indeterminate amount of time. Possibly even for the duration of my sentence which ends in 2021.

As you might imagine my perspective on movements such as Veganism, Animal/Earth Liberation, Straight Edge and the like is very serious. For me it is more than just a classroom type discussion or hobby that I can just drift in and out of as my time or energy allows. These causes are what I have believed in, and fought for, for half of my life. And that fight has now brought down upon me the retaliation of the most powerful government on Earth. To remain as vocal and defiant as I have over the years despite the scrutiny of not only the mainstream media but also many of those who laughingly refer to themselves as “militant” or “radical” (along with many reformist elements within Veganism), I ultimately have had to look to myself for the inner strength that it takes to continue. Suffice it to say, being me is no walk in the park.

But that’s alright, this is what I signed up for when I chose the path of resistance and I do not begrudge my fate. Unlike billions of Animals that suffer and die annually at the hands of speciesist human oppressors I am not a victim, merely a prisoner for some years.

-RHETORIC AND REFORM-

Unlike many of the large reformist and lukewarm Animals Rights advocacy groups out there I am not concerned with whoring myself to the media or prostrating at the proverbial altar of pacifism. Nor am I entirely impressed with the so-called “total liberation” hodge-podge of single issue causes that anarchist philosophers seem intent on endlessly stringing together into their unified-field-theories of quantum social justice minutia; while in the process cheapening each individual cause and hopelessly complicating the business of freedom fighting. Their theoretical arguments and political postulating have become so ridiculously convex that one may begin to believe that the great problems of our age are to be solved on paper, or by cowardly academics with lots of big words and complicated rhetoric.

More ridiculous still is the idea that an army of overheated brains and crusty political science majors (which are most often the kind of people attracted by this libertarian socialist drivel) are going to do much of anything besides criticize, speculate and point out each others hidden gender biases and hierarchical propensities. No, the only effective criteria for an actual total liberation struggle that views justice holistically and has a hard hitting effect in the real world must do so through a moral and ethical lens; have disciplined adherents to a

codified way of life within it's ranks, and have it's boots firmly on the ground. That Ideology and way of life is here, it is called Vegan Hardline.

-WHAT HARDLINE WAS-

I will here only give a very brief thumbnail sketch of the original Hardline movement. Others have already done a much more comprehensive job of this and it is beyond the scope of this article to center on a historical critique. That said, the original Hardline movement had it's heyday between the late 1980's (sic) to mid 1990's (sic). It's central preamble and creed was called the "Hardline Manifesto". First disseminated by a little known punk rock band named "Vegan Reich". Hardlines' original movement codified much of it's (sic) beliefs through bands in the Straight Edge music scene. It could even be argued that Hardline was the progenitor of what latter would become known as "Vegan Straight Edge". Hardline also had a few underground magazines in which it spread it's (sic) ideology. Most notably the magazines "Vanguard", "Destroy Babylon" and "Voicebox", among others.

Hardliners were much more than simply involved in a music scene. They were also instrumental in starting such hard hitting activist groups as CAFF (Coalition Against Fur Farms) and were instrumental in above-ground support of the Animal Liberation Front, Animal Rights Militia, Justice Department and others involved in the clandestine fight for Animal and Earth Liberation. At Hardlines' height it had chapters in several U.S. states and abroad. The lifestyle and ideology of Hardline embodied raw Veganism, biocentrism, drug-free living, sexual abstinence, pro-life and a serious departure from pacifism.

-THE END OF HARDLINE-

As the leadership of the Hardline Movement turned more and more towards orthodox religions, Hardlines' relevance within activist circles began to wane. Simultaneously Hardline drifted further and further away from the music scene it had helped spawn. The exact dissolution of Hardline as a membership organization is a matter of perspective. I've heard it explained a few different ways by those that were central to it. What is certain is that religion changed the scope and focus of Hardline and it became a different animal from there on out.

-WHAT VEGAN HARDLINE IS-

Vegan Hardline is in effect the rebirth of the Hardline Movement. We use the title "Vegan Hardline" to differentiate from the generic word "hardline" (which simply means "rigid in a belief"). After this any changes are of degree and not of kind. We are not going to innovate or stray from ANY of the tenets of the Hardline Manifesto. It is still our preamble and center piece of the ideology, unchanged and unspoiled. However, outside of the manifesto we shall build things anew. We will not be bound by the Hardline literature of yesteryear, the cults of personality that were rife within the movement, or any dissention into religiosity. "Under the principals of the Hardline Ideology all shall be permitted to do as they please as long as their actions do not harm in anyway the rights of others". As pertains to religion, spirituality or beliefs in the afterlife, this means a Vegan Hardliner may hold any belief (or none at all) as

they see fit. But Vegan Hardline, in and of itself, is not a religious dogma and will forever remain secular.

-DIFFERENCES BETWEEN "HARDLINE" AND "VEGAN HARDLINE"-

It is much more apparent in this post internet era that the techno-industrial complex is the bane of all Innocent Life, personal autonomy and privacy. Technological intrusion into our lives is legendary and growing worse all the time. Behind every industry of exploitation or murder such as pornography, abortion or the slaughterhouse. The perpetuation and amplification of these evils is only made possible by very precise and specialized technologies. Pull the plug on post-industrial society and you will have effectively saved several billion Animals. Vastly more than a few percent of the world's population going Vegan (typically only momentarily Vegan at best). We are going to have a lot more to say about the problems of technology than our predecessors did.

In the Hardline movement there was much debate over what constituted "deviant sexual acts". In Vegan Hardline we are not going to concern ourselves with issues such as masturbation or celibacy. Biologically speaking sex has a purpose, that purpose being procreation (all nature proclaims this). With procreation comes a lifetime of responsibility. Which is why we do not practice promiscuity and we faithfully uphold the sanctity of traditional family values. Sex is meant for a man and woman that are deeply committed to one another and ready to deal with the results, namely childbirth and rearing.

Originally Hardline was a leadership/membership organization with official chapters all reporting to a central committee, not so in Vegan Hardline. Time and experience have taught that membership organizations are easily infiltrated and often attract people that have more of an emotional need to climb a social ladder within a group setting than becoming effective revolutionaries. With membership organizing inevitably comes the "leader guy" (or girl) which when we are talking about a (sic) ideological movement (as opposed to a purely activist initiative or business which does very well under a leadership/membership structure) always gives rise to the cult of personality, and point people (micro-managers). Vegan Hardliners may become active in various and different groups for social justice or the defense of Innocent Life. They may also start or oversee specifically Vegan Hardline groups or projects. However, being a Vegan Hardliner is first and foremost an ideology and way of life and adherence to those is what makes one authentic. No one else can give or take that away.

Lastly, in Hardline there was only cursory mention of "natural state of existence" and "the laws of nature" without much serious discussion of what really constitutes Natural Law. In Vegan Hardline when we speak of nature and her laws we are talking about the true commandments of life! Laws of variation under domestication, laws of variation under nature, the struggle for existence, geographical distribution, sexual selection and the like are essential to our beliefs and way of life!

-LOOKING AHEAD-

So enough with Hardlines' obscure beginnings. From here on out let's look ahead! First things first, I am rolling out a series of essays (brief discussions really) expounding on some of the key points within the Hardline Manifesto. From there I will continue to build upon these key components until Vegan Hardline becomes a far reaching, dynamic and militant creed that can and will be victorious in the struggle! Animal Liberation, Whatever It May Take!

Regards,
Walter Bond
ALF POW

14 May 2014

Hardline Manifesto (Discussion One)

"THE TIME HAS COME FOR AN IDEOLOGY AND A MOVEMENT THAT IS BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MORALLY STRONG ENOUGH TO DO BATTLE AGAINST THE FORCES OF EVIL THAT ARE DESTROYING THE EARTH (AND ALL LIFE UPON IT). ONE THAT CANNOT BE BOUGHT, NOR LED ASTRAY BY TEMPTATION. A MOVEMENT FREE OF THE VICES THAT SEDATE THE MIND AND WEAKEN THE BODY."

-REALITY CHECK-

In Vegan Hardline we are not subjective about the existence of good and evil. It's easy to talk about points of view from an amoral perspective but anybody that has ever personally been violated knows (or should know) that good and evil, right and wrong do exist. We believe that Animals dying by the billions or the Earth being slowly poisoned to death by industrialism, factory farming (or so-called free-range) run off, multi-billion dollar pharmaceutical companies that infect our drinking water and technologically advanced civilization in general, constitutes an actual and profound evil. Stating this as our baseline, we are not going to spend a whole lot of time and energy doing a bunch of wordsmithing with qualifiers after every statement. Because in the end you are either concerned about the Earth, Animals and all Innocent life or you are not; if your (sic) reading this then chances are your concerned on some level.

Vegan Hardline is not a debate society, Vegan Hardline is an ideology. This means that it is an integrated assertion of theories and aims that constitute a program of action, way of life and worldview. To combat the very real evils thus mentioned, those involved in the struggle must become "physically strong and morally straight", as a matter of practicality. When we speak of industries of murder for example the slaughterhouse industry, we are talking about a hardnosed business. A blood trade that nets incredible amounts of money annually off of murdering Animals as quickly and numerous as science and technology can enable it. Any one component of this industry (or any exploitation industry for that matter) that we look

into is going to employ professional people. And it's these peoples' discipline, work ethic and business acumen that keep the death tolls rising and the profit margins up year after bloody year.

It is beyond naive to think that an undisciplined group of idealists, with or without compassion on their side are going to be able to shut down even one slaughterhouse, let alone the industry of slaughterhouses, without plenty of wherewithal and self-sacrifice at the ready.

-THE CHEAPENING OF ABOLITION-

Vegan Hardline is a revolutionary movement and not a reformist one. We do not mean revolutionary in the way that advertisers use it. Nor, do we mean it as just another social justice buzzword. A revolutionary idea is one that cannot co-exist with the present society, because the two are fundamentally incompatible. When we speak of a truly Vegan world, as opposed to just a Vegan diet, we are talking about a human world that does not encroach on any other species life (insofar as is possible). A human society that does not expand or build it's technology into other beings living spaces. A human world that favors a rivers' (sic) right to life over the need for electricity to power it's machines. It's literally impossible for that human society to be formed out of this one.

Currently, human beings are nowhere near treating each others' rights with anything like serious concern. Rape, war, and exploitation of the weak and defenseless is endemic to current human civilizations, bar none. So when we speak about a Vegan world in all seriousness we are talking about the human societies we hope we can build after the decimation or total collapse of the current ones.

Reformers on the other hand are married to the idea of inclusion within the existing order of things. So much so that they often, as a matter of policy, compromise away every single ethic, concern and issue they claim to stand on. They are easily "bought and led astray". They are also the systems first line of defense against any revolutionary movement. So concerned are they with public image that they are often first to denounce any practical and hard-hitting activism before the public or even the industries of exploitation are aware of any direct action or confrontation on the horizon. It's not at all uncommon for the reformist wing of a movement to completely take over and change the radical wing altogether.

For example: "Abolitionist" was a term that the radical Animal Liberation Movement used. It was reminiscent of the abolitionist movement in the days of slavery in the United States. The abolitionists, namely the underground railroad, set up an illegal and clandestine movement to free and transport slaves to freedom. Just as the modern day Animal Liberation Front does for Animals. However, now we have large "Vegan Societies" and university professors that have taken the term "abolitionist" and simply twisted it to mean promotion of Veganism exclusively. Of course we think that the practice of Veganism is not only necessary but must become mandatory if we are ever to live in a safe and sane world. But these same

“abolitionists” fully denounce and decry the ALF for arson and breaking the law! Isn’t it a funny kind of abolition that stands with the system AGAINST it’s own underground railroad?

This is the reason why the time has come for a codified, spelled out and incorruptible name and ideal which we now proclaim in Vegan Hardline. This is necessary because if it be plastic in anyway then the ‘what-I-think-this-means-to-me’ types will take away, water down and word juggle until it’s just as meaningless as the pusillanimous people that will come to stifle it’s ranks.

-ADDICTION AND VICE-

In keeping with true military culture (or militant if you prefer), Vegan Hardline is a way of life that is “free of the vices that sedate the mind and weaken the body”. Here we are talking primarily about addiction in all it’s myriad forms: drugs, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, illicit drug use (illegal or prescribed), laziness, gluttony, promiscuity, etc. It’s high time for the movement to protect all Innocent Life to mature.

This Earth is suffering horribly because of the machinations of consumerism, and addiction is the height of consumerism! Addiction and vice destroys resistance, they always have and they always will. For this reason, part and parcel of the Vegan Hardline way of life is a strict adherence to the Straight Edge lifestyle. Drug-free living and true sobriety keeps us, and our pursuits, optimal and vital. While drug use and abuse of any kind breed apathy, hedonism and moral decay. All of which make it impossible to respect or even recognize right from wrong. As will become clear, Vegan Hardline is not a single-issue cause. We view drug users and producers (legal or illegal) with the same distain and intolerance as we do Animal users and abusers. Unsurprisingly, they are often one in the same.

Regards,
Walter Bond
ALF POW

25 May 2014

Hardline Manifesto (Discussion Two)

“AN IDEOLOGY THAT IS PURE AND RIGHTEOUS, WITHOUT CONTRADICTIONS OR INCONSISTENCIES. ONE THAT JUDGES ALL THINGS BY ONE STANDARD AND EMPHASIZES PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ABOVE ALL ELSE.”

-VEGAN CONSISTENCY AND CONVICTION-

In Vegan Hardline we strive to bring our way of life into accord with our ethical concerns, and ideals to the greatest degree possible. This is very important on a few different levels. For starters, what you do (or refuse to do) speaks more to what you truly believe than any amount of talk. It’s an all to (sic) prevalent symptom of modern day civilization that people

say one thing but then often do quite the other. As a prime example: politicians often boast or make a great show of their personal integrity and then sell out the very people that elected them to power at the most convenient opportunities. In front of cameras and open doors they make a good spectacle of honesty and incorruptibility. But behind closed doors and out of the public eye they are often base scoundrels, cheaters and thieves.

It's become so common-place for people to be two-faced that most of us just accept this as a given. Advertisers have played into our desires for instant gratification for generations now. Using the angle that we are entitled to anything we desire until most people find the idea of edification repugnant. Simultaneously, people want to feel that they are self-controlled, pious or guided by integrity. This is called wanting to "have your cake, and eat it too".

When a person is told that they need to give up Animal flesh, dairy and eggs as a minimal requirement to help the Animals they strive to find the loopholes in Veganism. They will speak of their great love of Animals as being on par with that of any Vegan. They will point out any inconsistency to Veganism they can find no matter how miniscule, while ignoring the enormous hypocrisy of claiming to be an Animal lover while supporting industries of Animal death, slavery and exploitation three times a day.

Instead of taking the noble route and bringing their behavior and consumption into alignment with a compassionate way of life, they would rather circumvent the very simple and easy lifestyle of Veganism. Unfortunately, many Vegans are ready to bend over backwards to applaud these cadaver munchers efforts by suggesting "baby steps" and "meatless Mondays" to those that are seemingly incapable of placing compassion over consumerism.

We don't find this type of pandering in any group or organization (private or civic) that is serious about protecting the rights of others', or enforcing those rights. You don't join the military or police force and get to decide what the training regiment 'means to you'. You don't get to decide if it's necessary to be so rigid in this or that discipline. (That's not to say that because of military or police enforcements high level of conformity or adherence that all their endeavors are benevolent or good. But it does explain, in part, why they are so often successful).

'Screaming Wolf' said in his brilliant manifesto "Declaration Of War" that people fear and resent consistency because it takes to (sic) much work. Vegan Hardliners are not most people, we welcome a high level of consistency. In our Veganism we do not cheat or flip flop, ever. We do not wear leather, suede, fur or any other Animal skins whether they are first or second hand. And the closer we can come to a raw Vegan diet all the better. Human beings are in the higher order (strictly in the Darwinian sense) of primates, as such raw Veganism is our natural diet. Also, being Animal Rights activists in the extreme we view the eating of Animals dead bodies, the drinking of Animal secretions and the consumption of calcified bird menstruations as being as disgusting and sinister as cannibalism! We believe that industries

of Animal use and abuse, along with the people that gnaw their bones and purchase their products are sick freaks that must be stopped. By any means necessary and whatever it may take!

We will have much more to say about consistency throughout these discussions but before we leave the topic here we must say that consistency must be balanced with practicality. Lest we shirk our duty to liberate Animals because to take them out of harms way we may need to utilize transportation, which may potentially injure or kill insects. Along with a host of other such dogmatic Vegan arguments that may become excuses for inactivity.

-INSOFAR AS IS POSSIBLE-

We live our ideals the best we can within the given context of the system in which we live, for we do not yet live in a Vegan world. Chances are, as individuals, we may never see the world we hope, fight and struggle towards. This is not of our making, nor is it our fault. Daily, we are left with decisions that test the parameters of our Veganism or Straight Edge lifestyles. We may have a job that is not in compliance with our way of life, but it is necessary that we maintain it to support ourselves or Animals that depend on us. We may be in severe pain or suffering from an acute ailment and need to seek medical treatment. Few of us would get a root canal on a molar without letting the dentist first numb the area no matter how against drug use we may be. In order to liberate or treat Animals it may be necessary to utilize vehicles, tools, veterinary medicines (which have obviously been tested on Animals) or Militant Intervention.

This is why when we speak of consistency we do not mean perfection but only the greatest degree possible. Not everyone is in the same situation or has the same ability. For instance as an imprisoned ALF activist my Vegan diet consists largely of starches, beans, dead canned veggies and inorganic apples and oranges. While as a free man I was able to work in a Natural Grocer's health food store and eat fresh organic fruits and vegetables. Even then I lived in a city, had I the means and lived in the country I may have been able to grow my own food exclusively. But the reality is I (as anyone else) must do the best I can with what I have.

That said, we must never allow this disclaimer of "insofar as is possible" to become an excuse to live our lives to the lowest common denominator. Though perfection be unattainable, striving towards it is always to our betterment. Neither is "insofar as is possible" EVER an excuse for cowardice or passivity in the fight for Animal Liberation.

-ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY-

In Vegan Hardline we reject the 'victim stance'. Our species is often victimized by it's own, true enough. Racism, sexism, classism and war are all prime examples. But in comparison with what the human race is doing to Mother Earth and her Animal Nations, what we are doing to ourselves is trivial.

All over the mechanized world we have set up slaughterhouses which are in essence enormous death camps that murder and brutalize Animals with precision while at the same time destroying the environment with waste run-off and carcinogens. The number of Animals butchered just for the fast food industry in America is in the billions annually. Death, murder, crushing of bones and dissection of living tissue. These are a serious and profound wickedness that far surpasses a racial epithet or male insensitivity (not that we support racism or sexism). Unfortunately this is but one industry of Animal abuse. We also have Animal skin trades such as fur, the eggs and dairy industries, Animal research, circuses, zoos and blood sports to contend with.

In the face of all this injustice we should be steeling our resolve to take direct action. Instead, the growing trend in so-called radical Animal Liberation circles is to point out our own victimization in solidarity with the oppressed. This of course does nothing to help an Animal in a cage but only redirects the focus back on ourselves and how we feel. Whether you are a rich white person from an affluent community or a poor Puerto Rican from prison (like yours truly) is largely irrelevant. If you're concerned, if you care, then the burden is on you to set things right.

Since this is a difficult truth most reject it and instead seek to educate or peacefully protest the very industries that are murdering our Animal brothers and sisters. As if vivisectionists, slaughterhouse workers, furriers and hunters were unaware of what they are doing. In reality they know far better than most what it is they do. Their problem isn't a lack of understanding, it's a lack of concern.

We will always fail in defense of the Earth, Animals and all Innocent Life as long as we put our efforts into symbolic and futile activities. The subconscious wish of many that seek to educate others to the plight of Animals is that once people 'get it' they will spring into action and stop the slaughter, as individuals or in tandem. We hope they will carry the fight where we dare not, in the process validating our own efforts, albeit vicariously. This is what's called a pipe dream.

Either we look to ourselves and find the heart and resolve that it takes to save the Animals and the Earth or else all will be lost, it's only a matter of time. In Vegan Hardline we are not defeatists, we believe that the tide will turn once we are willing to pay the price that such a change demands. How pathetic is it that your average drug dealer or gangster is so willing to risk life and limb (or take another's away) over a few stinking dollars but those that feign such deep concern for the compassion and rights of others blanch in fear at the idea of Militant Intervention and personal risk or injury in defense of the innocent. It's time we began heeding the alarm instead of endlessly ringing it.

Finally, the victim stance is disempowering. Victims by their very nature are those without power, those who cannot effectively resist their tormentors. This is an accurate definition of those whom we defend. The Forests, the Animals, the Rivers, but this does not accurately

describe us. We can decide to turn the tide, we are members of the most dominant species currently on the planet. we can use this privilege against what is wrong or remain complicit in the slaughter. Animals would be far better off if we held ourselves accountable to act as their liberators and resisters instead of their cohorts or equals in oppression. Accountability, responsibility and consistency, this struggle demands nothing less.

Regards,
Walter Bond
ALF POW