Exclusive:

**Feds Nix 20¢ Nuke Safeguard**

"Be prepared!"
— Boy Scout motto

On May 1, nuclear engineer Roy Woods, Ph.D., a task manager at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), headquartered in Washington, D.C., received a cost/benefit analysis of one of the cheapest, but most highly recommended methods of protecting Americans at a time of disaster:

This proposal is to stockpile and/or "pre-distribute" to American homes packets of potassium iodide tablets. Taken quickly, in the event of a nuclear power plant accident, potassium iodide—which is abbreviated chemically KI—will prevent uptake into the thyroid gland of radioactive iodine (I-131 and related iodic nuclides).

These substances are likely to be vented into the sky in a reactor meltdown or lesser nuclear emergency such as occurred at Chernobyl, in 1986, in what is now the Ukraine, or earlier, at Three Mile Island (TMI), in Pennsylvania. KI's protective value is recognized and endorsed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements, the American Thyroid Association—and indeed by the NRC itself.

Many Americans may believe, therefore, that if the alarm sounds at a nearby nuclear power plant or other facility, KI, which is discussed from time to time in the press, will be readily available. If it is not already in the medicine cabinet, they may trust that it is kept in drug stores or civil defense sites, whence it could be quickly distributed.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

For maximum protection, this thyroid blocker should be started, on a one-tablet (130 mg)/day regimen for adults (65 for babies) as soon as a nuclear emergency is declared. The first dose preferably should be taken before the "plume" of I-131-rich gases and dust reaches one's home or engulfs the car—no doubt mired in traffic—in which one is trying to flee.

Distribution—which would be a problem—is not the limiting factor. Rather, the drug simply is not available. There are no population stockpiles.

Neither is KI kept for emergencies in most homes.

The reason: NRC policy, while recognizing KI's protective value, precludes federal emergency planning to put it close by, or into the hands of all Americans who may need it.

**Policy Limits Distribution**

Instead, the prevailing policy calls for small KI stockpiles—of a few thousand doses—in and around nuclear facilities, for use by nuclear emergency workers and prisoners and hospitalized patients who could not be evacuated, but not for the general public.

Now, however, this policy is under scrutiny. The first step in this review, which might take years, has been for NRC to obtain a cost/benefit estimate for KI stockpiling and/or distribution, which it now has done, using outside consultants.

In a phone interview on May 1, NRC nuclear engineer Roy Woods, Ph.D., who is task manager for this project, declined to reveal specifics of the consultants' report. But he did say:

"The preliminary contractors' result was that it remains not cost beneficial to stockpile KI for general public use."

**Change Still Possible**

This does not mean, Woods added quickly, that this cost/benefit estimate—which weighs the cost in suffering from thyroid nodules, cancers, and deaths due to unavailability of KI against the cost of providing the tablets—is the only policy determinant. He indicated that NRC could disregard this analysis and change its regulatory mind, if the commissioners decided to do so.

An NRC recommendation to buy and distribute KI would be continued on page 3
Public’s Role Growing in Science Policy

Like it or not, a scientist has told colleagues, science now has a new partner at the lab bench: the public.

This rankles some researchers.

A more constructive response, biologist Doris Teichler Zallen, Ph.D., said, would be for researchers to welcome this public participation in science, and, particularly, in science policy decisions, because:

• It already has happened.
• Major new initiatives can’t be launched without it.
• The public, as an ally, may protect researchers against legal challenge — if something goes wrong.

"If there is no public approval of a line of research," biologist Zallen said bluntly, "it is unlikely that that line of research will be able to move forward."

Her perspective produced discernible unease in her audience at a Sigma Xi science organization lecture last month at Hunter College, in New York City. Zallen is a research geneticist who now works in bioethics and science policy at the Center for the Study of Science in Society, at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, in Blacksburg, Va. She has been a participant in the federally-mandated review process for gene splicing (recombinant DNA). This research has developed genetic tests, and is starting to produce genetic treatments for inherited diseases such as muscular dystrophy (which has been Zallen’s research focus).

Approved Research Thrives

Therapies designed to correct genetic diseases in a single individual, by manipulating non-reproductive, or somatic cells in one’s body now are progressing apace. Zallen said this is because a moratorium and review period led to a consensus among researchers, government and the public that gene therapy is a promising way to reduce human suffering. By contrast, she said, efforts to eliminate an inherited disease by inducing permanent corrections in the reproductive, or germ cells (sperm and ovum) have not yet received public endorsement. So this endeavor is not yet advancing, she noted.

Scientist Trusts Scientists

Colleagues at the Sigma Xi talk here countered Zallen by raising the specter of religious and conservative political meddling in research — which she acknowledged. "I trust science," not the public, declared Hunter geneticist Rivka Rudner, Ph.D., a pioneer gene splicing researcher. "I’d like to put more and more trust in science."

Another member of the audience cited the historical conflict between science and religion — and worried that greater public participation in science policy debates could tip the balance against science.

While not denying these risks, Zallen said that the public may be a better ally for science than politicians. Legislators, she said, "are less knowledgeable about science than even the general public."

When public representatives are appointed to institutional review boards and similar bodies, she added, her experience has been that they either educate themselves quickly on the relevant issues — or simply sit silent.

Thus, contrary to the conventional wisdom in science that public participation will strangle scientific freedom, Zallen’s proposal is that "a new social contract" is emerging "for conducting research" that may help science.

Follow-Up . . .

A major conflict has erupted over recommended amounts of vitamins, and rules on the nutritional contents of food products (PROBE, May).

On one side are the FDA, circumspect physicians and nutritionists, and some medical and consumer groups. On the other side are vitamin manufacturers, distributors and retailers, and a number of "educational" front groups they have set up to oppose more stringent new rules that have been proposed by FDA. Tens of thousands of vitamin consumers and advocates have responded to this industry coalition by writing FDA, Congress and public officials, opposing restrictions.

One focus of this developing "vitamin war," as one close observer calls it, is the 1976 Proxmire Amendment to the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. It limits FDA’s ability to regulate vitamins and other food supplements unless they are inherently dangerous. One journalist who follows this closely is psychiatrist Stephen Barrett, M.D., editor and publisher of Nutrition Forum newsletter.

"During the current controversy," Dr. Barrett reports in the March/April issue, "the Proxmire Amendment has been repeatedly mentioned by both sides. Consumer protection advocates want it repealed. The health food industry wants it used (and strengthened if necessary) to oppose greater FDA regulation. It remains to be seen whether Congress can ignore the industry's campaign and do what is needed to protect the public.

PROBE readers can obtain a copy of this informative issue of Nutrition Forum by sending $3 to POB 1747P, Allentown, PA 18105. We recommend this report and Nutrition Forum.

Note To Subscribers

This issue of PROBE was delayed a week in production. We’re sorry! — D.R.Z.
hard for any administration in Washington to resist.

One current estimate is that providing packets of the tablets would cost 15 cents per American annually. This works out to about $38 million per year. This estimate comes from Alan Morris, president of Anbex, Inc., which wants to bid on the project. The nuclear industry, not the taxpayers, could be required to pick up the tab, he said recently by phone from his home in Mission Viejo, Cal.

Given this low cost, why hasn’t the federal government opted for preparedness — and why doesn’t it do so now? The answer, critics say, is politics, and protection of the nuclear industry’s image (See Box, page 1).

This is manifest in a striking “differing professional opinion” on the current policy. It was written three years ago by the NRC’s counsel for special projects, attorney Peter G. Crane.

In this critical memo, which he sent to the chairman and other NRC commissioners, Crane cites an earlier — but he says flawed — cost/benefit analysis, developed before Chernobyl, on which the present policy is based. This estimate, he claims, sets the nuclear accident risk too low, and understimates the pain and suffering of I-131-induced disease.

Crane writes that the current policy (contained in a document called NUREG-CR-1433) “takes the position that when it comes to thyroid abnormalities resulting from a nuclear accident, society should put its resources into cure rather than prevention.”

Analysis Flawed

He goes on to say: “I believe that its analysis does not provide an adequate basis for reasoned decision-making on health and safety issues.”

The memo’s contents have not been previously disclosed, according to Crane and other sources. The present policy at NRC is not to release it — and PROBE did not obtain it from Crane. In it, Crane says:

I believe that the information provided to the Commission ... by the staff was erroneous ... Both the risk of fatality from radiation-caused thyroid cancer and the adverse consequences for individuals of non-fatal thy-
roid abnormalities are vastly greater than [NRC] was led to believe.

Given that a stockpile of KI sufficient for the entire U.S. population could be purchased for less than the Government paid for the office building we work in, I think it is inappropriate for the NRC staff to be advising states and localities that the stockpiling of KI is not cost-effective.

In a phone interview in mid-May, Crane confirmed that he had written the memo, but declined to discuss it. Asked if he had stimulated the present policy review, Crane replied: “Yeah.”

The Chernobyl experience confirmed KI’s value. Ten million doses were distributed in Russia and Poland, using — ironically — national emergency distribution systems that no longer exist. Still, most of the KI was late in getting to people.

Benefit Shown at Chernobyl

Nevertheless, the NRC said, in its report on the accident, “thousands of measurements of I-131 activity in the thyroid of the exposed population suggest that the observed levels were lower than ... would have been expected had this prophylactic measure not been taken .... The use of KI by the Pripyat population [close to the reactor] in particular was credited with permissible iodine content (less than 30 rad) found in 97 percent of 206 evacuees tested at one relocation center .... It is also important to note that no serious side effects of KI use have been reported” (NUREG 1250, Rev. 1, 1987, pp. 7-8 to 7-9).

It was also effective in Poland, according to a more recent oral report delivered this spring at NIH by Polish endocrinologist Janusz Nauman, M.D., of the University of Warsaw Medical School. An FDA health physicist, Donald Thompson, Ph.D., who heard Nauman’s talk, said last month in a phone interview that Poles who took the KI had a five-to-six fold lower uptake of I-131 than did others who did not take the thyroid blocker. This is statistically a “very significant benefit,” Thompson said.

How To Get KI — Maybe

Legally, potassium iodide (KI) is a nonprescription drug, provided that the label states: For thyroid blocking in a radiation emergency only.

This means you should be able to buy KI at the drug store simply by asking. But, in fact, you may not. One big company is licensed to produce it (Thyro-Block, Wallace). But a standard drug guide lists it as a prescription item, “available only to state and federal agencies.”

Pharmacists, however, are able to get it. They legally can — and probably should — dispense KI without a prescription. It is widely used in tablet form or in liquid as an expectorant and for other purposes. The approved dosage for nuclear emergency is 130 mg once daily for children and adults; 65 mg for babies.

An alternative mail order source is Anbex, a small company set up to sell KI and lobby for its wide availability in case of nuclear emergency. Send $6 for each treatment packet of IOSAT to Anbex, POB 863, Radio City Sta., NYC 10019.
‘Torture’ Charged, Devil Invoked In Animal Rights Protest March  

Norwalk, CT.

On April 24, during what animal rights activists call “World Week for Animals in Laboratories,” a group named Friends of Animals (FoA) held a demonstration in front of the U.S. Surgical Corporation (USSC) headquarters here. About 200 to 250 demonstrators, chanting slogans like “Stop the torture, Close the labs,” marched in a picket line.

Demonstrators carried placards with messages that said “Norwalk’s Dachau,” “Animal Experimentation is Scientific Fraud,” “Auschwitz Animal Laboratories,” “Leon Hirsch — U.S. Surgical’s Dr. Mengele.”

Death Masks Worn

The demonstrators were a wide range of ages; some wore dog-face masks or death heads. Most participants were female; almost all were white.

One of the more elaborate signs showed a drawing of Leon Hirsch, who is CEO of USSC. It read: “Welcome to Hell [—] Your Host Leon Hirsch.” Three-dimensional red devil’s horns sprout from Hirsch’s temples on the signboard.

Another marcher carried a wooden crucifix, on which the figure appeared to be an animal, perhaps a dog.

“We’re ringing the death knell on vivisection around the world,” Priscilla Feral, FoA president, told participants in what she said was the 21st such demonstration against USSC in the last decade. FoA has its national headquarters here.

“We will no longer tolerate animals being closed up and killed in places like this,” Feral said.

The FoA’s newly appointed educational director, Lawrence Carter, added, in a brief interview, that science and medicine are not conquering any diseases. They all “are still with us,” he said. The real issue, Carter added, is that “Leon [Hirsch] wanted to make a few more bucks.”

USSC manufactures stapling devices used in surgery. One is a disposable stapler that grips and repositions cut ends of the large or small bowel, after a segment that contains a cancer or other disease lesion has been surgically cut out. One squeeze on the device’s handle sets several dozen staples that reattach the two ends of wet, slippery gut; the traditional, slower method, using surgical sutures, is not needed.

Torture Denied

This and similar staplers were developed, and are demonstrated to sales representatives — who in turn demonstrate their use to surgeons — using anesthetized dogs. USSC says these animals always are purchased from licensed animal dealers. After the demonstration, and before they come to, the dogs are killed, by injection, without pain, the company says.

The surgical supply company has denied that the dogs suffer pain, or are tortured. The FoA and the demonstrators do not accept this view, and they demand an end to “torture” of the dogs.

 Asked what documentation FoA had for “torture” in the USSC facility, Sarah Seymour, who identified herself as an FoA staff person, said that there was “a lot of abuse in transportation” of the dogs, and a lot of “unnecessary cutting and killing.” Asked for specific evidence of “torture,” she said all she knew was what was heard from some USSC former employees — that some anesthetized dogs had been heard to make pained sounds. She declined to be more specific.

Another demonstrator added that the allegation of torture was a “subjective” one.

Efforts to reach Feral by phone for comment were unsuccessful. She did not return calls to FoA offices in Norwalk or New York City.

A receptionist in FoA’s Norwalk office, who identified herself as Denning, asked if this reporter favored animal experiments.

“I have to ask these questions before I can let you speak to my president” she said.

The next day, Denning said Feral was on another line, but said: “I don’t think she can talk to you. Don’t call back. Thank you very much.”

Then she hung up.

Activist Hate Letters

These are among the letters that have been sent to Leon Hirsch, CEO of United States Surgical Corp., in recent years:

“You money loving Jew Bastard. Your days are numbered. You will die a slow death.”

This typewritten letter is anonymous. Another says: “Hello Leon, are you still killing all those nice dogs. I have your name down to volunteer for a test run in a 12-person microwave oven. Too bad Adolph didn’t have microwave ovens in the 40s.”

The handwritten letter, mailed in New Haven, Conn., is signed “Love, Jack.”

Another, typewritten anonymous letter, headed “house of Scapegoats’ Scapegoat?”

A few days after the demonstration in front of USSC, in Norwalk, CT., Leon Hirsch, the company’s CEO, received a signed letter from a “humiliated Jew” who claimed to have been a participant in it. This writer invoked the history of Jewish suffering at the Nazis’ hands to rebuke Hirsch for doing “the things that you do in order to ‘earn a living.’”

The writer blamed people like Hirsch for causing “the ugly face of anti-semitism to continue in this country” — and disparaged him as “a disgrace” to the Jews and to humanity.
Diabolic Images
Rekindle Ancient Hates

Some facets of the conflict between animal rights activists and U.S. Soil Conservation Services were not thoroughly elucidated at the FoA demonstration outside the company on April 24.

One that is not mentioned at all in the FoA press kit is that FoA has sued U.S. Soil Conservation Services for emotional distress and other alleged wrongs. This suit now is in the discovery stage, U.S. Soil Conservation Services spokeswoman Anneliz Hannan said early in May, in an interview in her office. She said that U.S. Soil Conservation Services has counter-sued for defamation and other alleged wrongs.

This is the eleventh such suit brought by animal rights groups against Hirsch and/or the company Hannan noted. The plaintiffs already have lost the first ten, she said.

A second element that may have been present but was not acknowledged directly is anti-semitism. Leon Hirsch is Jewish, according to Hannan.

Ancient Caricature Revived

Hirsch is depicted on a demonstrator’s sign as the Devil (See story, p. 4). An anonymous letter has a similar image.

The “identification between the Jew and the Devil” was a major theme in Christian anti-semitic attacks on Jews in the late Middle Ages, according to historian Leon Poliakov (The History of Anti-semitism. London: Elek Books, Vol. I, p. 144).

“If we examine the legends that circulate about the Jews ... we observe that [they] are believed to unite in their persons the new attributes of the Devil and those of the witch. The Jews are horned. They are tricked out with a tail and the beard of a goat,” Poliakov writes in a section entitled “The Image of the Jew in the Age of the Devil.” Jewish doctors were said to get their magical powers from the Devil, the historian adds: Christians were told to avoid them.

The Jew = Devil equation helped inflame some of the worst inquisitional torture and slaughter of Jews, and may have contributed to their expulsion from Spain — exactly 500 years ago — and other Western European countries. This murderous ferocity, according to Gavin I. Langmuir, Ph.D., a current historian of anti-semitism at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Cal., was heightened by what he calls chimeria, accusations that have no bases in observable fact:

“Chimerical assertions present fantasies, figments of the imagination, monsters that, although dressed syntactically in the clothes of real humans, have never been seen and are projections of mental purposes unconnected with the real people of the outgroup [in this case Jews].”

The accusation that Jews commit ritual murder — the blood libel as Jews call it — is one such example. This chimerical accusation can be sustained, Langmuir says, in his Toward A Definition of Antisemitism (Los Angeles: University of California, p. 334) because the alleged atrocities are not subject to empirical verification — or refutation.

So they can be incessantly hyped, without proof. Hitler used just this reification of chimerical accusations against Jews to

Contain Violent Anti-semitic Threats

...continued on next page

We think that the charges implied or explicit in the Auschwitz imagery displayed by FoA demonstrators — that Leon Hirsch and his employees torture animals, and treat them in a deliberately sadistic and humanly-useless way — have the same chimerical irrationality. They defy rebuttal — and also common sense.

Leon Hirsch has been in the news lately as last year's third highest paid corporate CEO, according to Forbes. It defies reason to believe USSC earns the enormous sums this implies by finding new and gratuitous ways to torment animals. But that's what the demonstrators seemed to be saying.

Imagery Is Widespread

The "Holocaust" imagery is not confined to FoA and the USSC picketing. It is a widely used metaphor — and accusation — of animal activists that is used to attack furriers, and also farmers and other meat-producers, most of whom are not Jewish. Some Jews have seen this as a denigration of the "Holocaust."

But other Jews do not. They include the late Nobel prize-winner Isaac B. Singer, who is quoted (we trust correctly) in a recent published letter by an animal rights advocate as saying: "As long as human beings will go on shedding the blood of animals, there will never be any peace. There is only one little step from killing animals to creating gas chambers à la Hitler ..." (N.Y. Post, April 27).

Tenets Disputed

Most Americans, including most Jews, disagree in practice (they wear shoes and eat meat), and probably also disagree in principle. More importantly, lots of Jews have said and done things that have lent comfort and support to anti-semites, and some, including Karl Marx, and, perhaps also Richard Wagner — who reportedly was the bastard son of a Jew — have been blatantly anti-Semitic.

When we hear incessant accusatory references to Auschwitz, and Dachau, and Hitler (but not to Atatürk, Assad, Idi Amin or other such genocidal killers) our interpretation is that the old, unforgotten canards about Jews — as Christ-killers — are being re-animated. Some could argue that these metaphors respectfully invoke the image of Jews who perished in the Holocaust; Jewish animal rights activists certainly must feel this way. Our opinion, however, is that whether consciously or not, the activists' use of these metaphors re-creates and sustains the irrational hate that is clear in the letters to Hirsch and others.

We hope Langmuir and other researchers will explore this obvious hypothesis; we hope, too, that editor Andrew Rowan (See adjacent story), and others will publish the findings.

As is apparent in the virulent letters to Leon Hirsch (See pages 4 - 5), anti-semitism is an element of the animal activist movement. Less clear is the breadth and depth of this element, and its consequences. To take the latter concern, briefly, first:

Jews and Jewish organizations might have cause for concern, given that Animal Rights is a large, popular, and wealthy movement; it has significant influence. We asked the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a Jewish agency that monitors anti-Semitism, about this link several times in recent years. We were told ADL has little or no information on anti-Semitism in animal activist attacks on scientists and science.

But anti-Semitism is apparent in the virulent letters to USSC's Hirsch — and we think it should be of wider concern: It broaches a civility in protest movements that protects our democratic political process from irrational excess.

Scapegoating Acceptable

We have not seen caricatures of priests or ministers at pro-choice rallies, even though it is well known that Catholic priests and fundamentalist Protestant ministers are leaders of pro-life — and we expect not to. Similarly, black caricatures are not acceptable symbols in the tortured debate about race. But suddenly, as in the letters of animal activists, like the one depicting Hirsch as the devil, anti-Semitic ones are.

This type of anti-Semitic reference could have — and may already have had — a divisive effect in the research and medical professions. As one Jewish NIH scientist recently said, with anguish, Jews have a substantial presence in science. So the activists' attacks have the potential for injuring these Jews, and science, and the larger community it serves; this is why, too, this anti-Semitism is a PROBE issue, beyond being a political and personal concern for this Jewish writer.

Turning to the harder, historical issue of anti-Semitism and animal rights activism: A few analysts and commentators recently have looked at these questions. Their point of departure has been an effort to relate the now heavily documented link between Nazi leaders' love for some animals and their anti-vivisectionist attitudes and laws on the one hand, and their hatred of Jews, gypsies, and some other human groups on the other.

A Harvard student, Christopher Paul Roberts, explored "some interesting parallels" between Nazism in Germany and "the modern animal rights movement" in a paper written in 1990. He cites an exhortatory article in a German propaganda magazine (quoted in a German historian's study of Nazi medicine):

Do you know that your Führer [Hitler] is a vegetarian, and that he does not eat meat because of his general attitude toward life and his love for the world of animals? ... Do you know that your ... Führer is an ardent opponent of any torture of animals, in particular of vivisection, which means the scientifically disguised torture of animals, that is the disgusting product of the Jewish materialistic school in medicine ...

Hitler would "fulfill his role as the savior of animals for
animals from continuous and nameless torments and pain ... by making vivisection illegal."

Hitler's associate Hermann Göring set out to keep this promise in 1933, in a draft law designed to send animal researchers (vivisectors) to concentration camps. Göring, in a radio speech on August 28, 1933, declared: "To the Germans, animals are not merely creatures in the organic sense, but creatures who lead their own lives and who are endowed with perceptive faculties, who feel pain and experience joy and prove to be faithful and attached."

**Similarities Noted**

These sentiments indicate that the Nazis had some "genuine concern for animal suffering." These comments are "remarkably similar," Roberts says, to the current philosophical "concept of animal rights."

Göring also expressed an idea often used by animal rights activists today, when he said: "It may remain a matter for speculation as to how far such vivisection has helped ... achieve an advance in knowledge ... of the human body. Today, science itself holds the view that the torturing and killing of animals through vivisection [research] can further our knowledge no longer ...."

In his essay, Roberts traces these Nazi ideas to a large movement that "rejected modern medical science and technology altogether," in favor of folk medicine and "natural healing." One such advocate, Dr. Karl Kötschau, demanded a new philosophy that would orient medicine toward "more Goethe, and less Newton."

Roberts finds "striking" similarities between the view of "some modern-day animal activists and the Nazis," which, he says, leads one to question "both the ethics and logic, not to mention the morality, of today's ardent animal rights activists."

A recent essay, by academic researchers Arnold Arluke, Ph.D., a sociologist at Northeastern University in Boston, and Boria Sax, Ph.D., a specialist in German literature at Pace University, in White Plains, N.Y., asks why the Nazis "took some pains to protect animals but "treated human beings with extreme cruelty." They find an essential link between the two Nazi activities. Their essay was in *Anthrozoös* (Vol. 5, No. 1, 1992), a journal that explores interactions between people, animals and nature (P.O.B. 1080, Renton, Wash. 98057).

Arluke and Sax offer significant evidence that while the Nazis loved animals, they feared, distrusted and hated some people, particularly Jews and other "inferior" beings. "The compassion normally reserved for humans was to be re-directed toward animals, and the cold aggressiveness of animal instinct" — which Hitler identified with — "became the model German."

**Distinctions Are Blurred**

The Nazis "blurred" the distinction between animals and humans, and in their paranoia they saw — and reacted to — threats against animals as threats to themselves. Delving back to the delusions of the composer and Nazi inspirer Richard Wagner, Arluke and Sax note that he favored breaking into animal research laboratories, as well as physical attacks on vivisectionists.

"Anti-semitic rhetoric in Germany suggested that persecution of Jews was sometimes perceived as revenge on behalf of aggrieved animals. Jews were identified as enemies of animals and implicitly [of] Germans."

A recent commentator, Arluke and Sax relate, sees Wagner as having created a sort of moral Armageddon between those who set trussed animals free and those who truss them to torture them. "Animal protection measures," these authors say, "may have been a legal veil to attack Jews and others considered undesirable."

Are some of the same motives and displacements operative in the modern U.S. animal rights movement? In a phone interview, Arluke said he has not studied this question as a scholar. "It's an area where I haven't looked," he said.

The editor who published the Arluke-Sax study, biochemist continued on next page
Historians continued from preceding page

Andrew N. Rowan, Ph.D., of the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine, in North Grafton, Mass., says he does not think the anti-semitism/animal rights movement link is significant. He pointed out, in a phone interview, that “there are simply too many people whom I see in the Movement who are either practicing Jews, or who come from a Jewish tradition,” for this to be so.

Editor Comments

The anti-semitic epithets in the letters are “just standard stereotypes that are being used — people who write these letters see research scientists as sadistic monsters,” Rowan said. “Adding anti-semitism,” he said, is “just adding more stereotypes to their hate mail. But it’s very unusual for people to act on it — it’s a way for people to let off steam.”

(One woman, Fran Trutt, did act on her impulses: She was arrested, convicted and sent to prison for placing a crude bomb in the USSL parking space of CEO Leon Hirsch. She said dogs are her “only real friends.”)

The hate mail writers tend to be “people with fundamental problems dealing with life,” and their assumption is that what scientists do, basically, is to cause animals “suffering and pain,” explained Rowan. “There are people out there who identify with animals because they have trouble identifying with people,” he added. “But to argue from that that because you’re in the Animal Rights Movement that you’re against people, or can’t get on with people” is wrong.