

one staff person to attend a protest and take photographs and then announce that the group 'joined other animal advocates' for the protest. No mention is usually made of the groups who were actually responsible for funding and organizing the event.

The Coalition Hoax: Another convenient ploy is the 'coalition hoax.' Often, big groups jump at the chance to join in a coalition effort for it means a free ride: no work, but a big payoff. This trick has two forms: either they contact the grass-roots group organizing the coalition and ask to be included, or they initiate the coalition themselves and bank on grass-roots groups to do all the work. All too often, naive grass-roots activists from local groups are delighted to get the 'help' of nationally-known organizations and discover only too late that they get little help and no recognition for their efforts.

In cases where large organizations form 'coalitions' and do *not* get the support of grass-roots organizations, invariably nothing concrete ever gets done, although sometimes vast amounts of money are expended on 'studies' or 'materials.'

Cult of the Experts: The third major fund-raising strategy is to encourage the idea among grass-roots groups and activists that the most effective thing they can do to ensure the credibility and success of their campaign is to 'call in the experts,' i.e. the staff of large national organizations. Because this ploy has had such success, so-called experts and movement 'leaders' from large national groups are repeatedly put in the limelight at conferences, protests, rallies, and other events which are organized by grass-roots activists. Although they usually contribute nothing substantial to the campaign or event and do none of the work, their appearance at the microphone guarantees that their organization will receive primary billing for the event. The 'cult of the experts' is another trick whereby minimal expenditure of effort ensures maximal exposure for the organization and increased opportunities for fund-raising on other groups' efforts.

But why is the question of credit so important? For one simple, *economic* reason: if a group pours all of its limited resources into a campaign and gets no recognition for its efforts, then it receives no public support and cannot continue to work for the animals. The dishonest fund-raising tactics of large national organizations directly threaten *the very survival* of the grass-roots animal rights movement. Until the general public comes to recognize who is

doing what for animals, and begins to *rechannel* its donations into the hands of the *activists*, the grass-roots movement will remain crippled and ineffective.

Discouraging Activism

In addition to its usefulness as a credit-grabbing device, the 'cult of the experts' serves to undermine the grass-roots movement in another way. It is a means deliberately utilized by large national organizations to *discourage* activism. The big groups have an *economic stake* in convincing the public that they are *incapable* of acting on their own, but need to call in the experts. The message that repeatedly goes out from the national groups is that the organization has everything under control—*IF you send them a check today!* Rather than seeking to empower individual activists to act on their own, the national groups *actively discourage* such involvement through the cult of the experts.

The reason is simple: they know that once people start to take the initiative to act on their own, they will realize that they are capable of achieving victories for animals, and will begin to question why the large groups accomplish so little with so much. They will also begin to channel their resources into their *own* local activism rather than exporting it *out* of their local community to the national headquarters of the large organizations. Many of the large, wealthy organizations want to *keep* grass-roots activists feeling incompetent and powerless so as to sustain the maximum fund-raising capability.

How You Can Stamp Out Animal Welfare Fraud

1. Become a Critical Donor: Before you donate to a group, critically assess what the organization stands for, how it makes use of its resources, and what it has *actually accomplished* for animals in terms of those resources. Demand a financial statement with specific information on salary levels and amounts spent on fund-raising and 'membership development.' Find out if the organization uses most of its income for active campaigns or stockpiles much of it in bank accounts. Look critically at the group's fund-raising mailings. Do the contents *educate* you about animal issues and broaden your consciousness? Do they tell you *specific* things you can *do* to help relieve animal suffering? Or are they empty fund-raising appeals which waste vital resources by doing nothing more than asking you for money? Look beyond the rhetoric and glossy