

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

pages of publications and appeals to determine whether the organization is merely *talking about* abuses or actually *stopping* abuses. Measure any achievements claimed against the financial resources the organization has available.

2. Exercise Your Donor Power: If your critical evaluation of an organization leads you to the conclusion that it does not meet the criteria for support outlined above, do not contribute to it, and explain to others who donate to animal groups why you do not contribute to it.

Don't forget that support for organizations is not limited to financial donations, but also includes the purchase of their products and the use of envelope stickers and other advertising items which promote the organization. If you conclude that the group is unworthy of your financial support, then do not support it in these other ways, either.

3. Educate Others about Animal Welfare Fraud: Use the contents of this leaflet to alert others to the crippling effect *Animal Welfare Fraud* has on the animal rights movement. Help others learn to see through the rhetoric and hype of glossy publications and to critically evaluate what an organization is *actually doing* for animals.

4. Join the Grass-Roots Movement: The most important thing that you can do to stamp out *Animal Welfare Fraud* is to join the animal rights movement. On the most elementary level, you can do that by only contributing to groups which meet the criteria of genuine commitment to animal rights outlined above, and which have a proven record of austerity and efficient use of financial resources. **Trans-Species Unlimited** suggests that you contribute to your most effective *local* group, and to one or two of the most effective *national* groups, which promote and encourage local grass-roots activism.

But it is equally important to become *actively* involved to as great an extent as your personal lifestyle permits. Find out from the local group you support what else you can do to help. If you live near one of **Trans-Species Unlimited's** offices, join the working group associated with that office. If a TSU office is not immediately accessible to you, you can still join our national network of key contact people throughout the country who play an indispensable role in helping us to implement our national campaigns in their own areas.