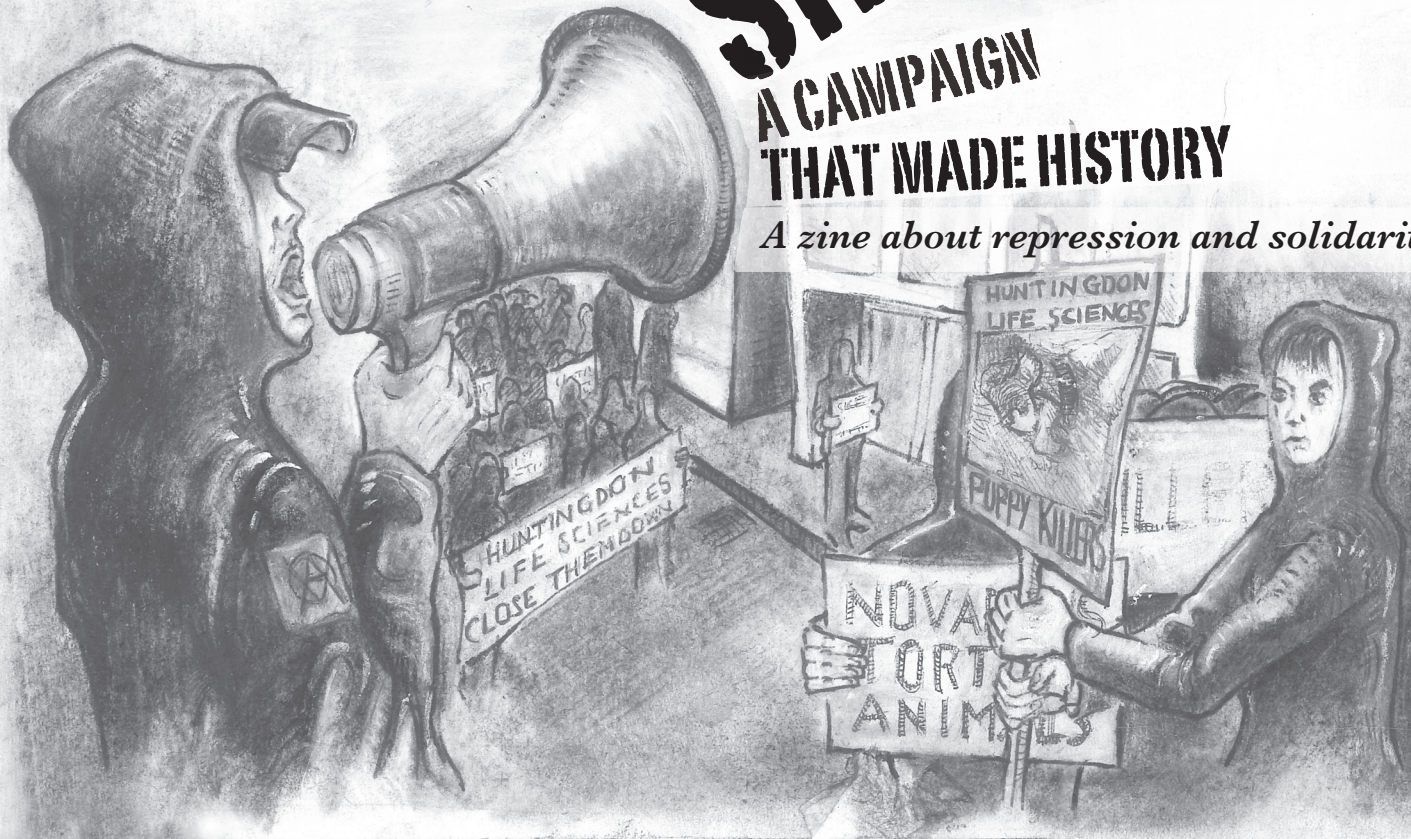


SHAC

A CAMPAIGN THAT MADE HISTORY

A zine about repression and solidarity



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INTRODUCTION



The animal liberation movement went, in the last few years, through a lot of hardships and challenges, and large part of it changed from the past.

From being a grassroots, radical movement, that openly opposed big associations and media opinion makers, it slowly became more and more what we once criticized. A part of the movement started to be blindly obsessed by ‘public opinion’, modifying the contents to fit the media standard, to work hand in hand with institutionalized journalists and lobbyists, focusing on appearing ‘professional’, rather than about what we really want to say and achieve.

Changes and developments are part of every struggle, but we can’t accept the fact that, if the priority becomes to get the consent of the public at all costs, fundamental aspects like solidarity for political prisoners and the support for direct action suddenly becomes largely ignored, we can not accept that this movement is way too often denying its very roots and origins.

The original movement for total liberation has been replaced by a movement more focused on obtaining new laws that should improve the conditions of animals

in nowadays society.

These laws are demanded to the same State that oppress and control us all. The same State that steals the freedom of our fellow comrades, that put them behind bars for years and takes everything away from them.

Reflecting on this recent development of the movement would need a separate work, and this is not the purpose of this zine. However, it is necessary to mention this aspect to better understand why this work was made: as a result of this change in strategy the movement's support for prisoners has slowly lost its crucial importance. That's the reason why we started the "**SHAC made history – SHAC ha fatto storia**" project.

The repression against the SHAC Campaign, during its long history, is one of the strongest our movement ever faced. Through the years, most of us have been active in this campaign. Despite so many individuals all over the world involved in the struggle against Huntingdon, repression hit just some.

These people, that are paying for the strength and

the power of this inspiring campaign, deserve our full solidarity and support.

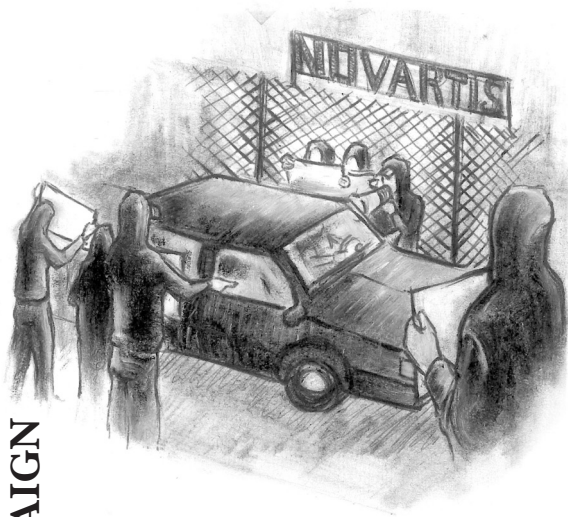
These individuals have lost years of their lives because of this oppressive system. The authorities are trying to isolate them from the movement in every possible way, with strict bail conditions and hard restrictions on their political and personal life. They should not be left alone, in spite of what the 'public opinion' might, or might not, think.

We need to help them to resist and keep their heads and hopes up.

Let us fight their repression and answer with active support!

Let's support our prisoners, because solidarity is still our weapon!

THE SHAC CAMPAIGN



The SHAC Campaign, Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, was started in 1999 by a group of activists that had successfully stopped two other breeding farms for vivisection animals: “Consort Kennels”, a farm of Beagle dogs that closed down in 1997 after 10 months of campaign and “Hillgrove Cat Farm”, closed in 1999 after a pressure campaign that lasted 18 months.

From the SHAC website: *“The most important lesson from all these campaigns is to remember that all those animals would still be inside Consort and Hillgrove if we had waited for politicians to act. The lesson is that if we really want these hell holes to close then we have got to do it ourselves.”*

From these two victories took shape the idea of starting an international campaign against the vivisection lab in Europe: **Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS)**. HLS makes its experiments on more than 70.000 animals a year; rats, dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, birds and monkeys. More than 500 animals die every single day inside HLS. The experiments are commissioned by pharmaceutical companies that test household cleaning products, pesticides, medicines, herbicides, additives, food colorants, sweeteners, etc.

The campaign moves on three levels:

1. Against the customers, that is the companies commissioning the experiments
2. Against the suppliers that furnish HLS of everything needed to conduct the researches (cages, torture instruments, food, transports, cleaning, insurance, etc.)
3. Against the financiers and sponsors (banks, shareholders, etc.,)

The aim is to put all the companies financing HLS or that profit from it under pressure in order to make them stop any kind of relation with the lab. The successes obtained in this way are very numerous thanks to the various and original strategies and tactics used by SHAC.

An extract from the SHAC website shows the style and the philosophy of the campaign: *“The SHAC campaign is all about action. Action is everything. Words and tears mean nothing to the animals trapped in their cages inside HLS waiting to die. They deserve nothing less than our utmost commitment to take action every day to close down the lab that holds them captive and slowly kills them.*

Taking action is coming on demonstrations, writing letters, making phone calls, sending emails or faxes, telling other people about the campaign, distributing leaflets, fund raising, putting up posters and

stickers. Action is whatever you can do to close down the hell-hole that is Huntingdon Life Sciences.”

It's a very heterogeneous campaign. Thousands of people have given their contribution to it and had participated to the demos. Many groups were created in Europe, in the USA and in South America. These groups coordinated each other from time to time, in order to concentrate all the energies on the target of the moment in their own countries.

Every company linked to HLS has been the subject of office occupations, “run-ins”, demos and marches and home demos. The campaign also hit those responsible in their private lives, though the campaign did not invent this tactic, this was a very important element. The exploiters, the multinational companies with their huge buildings, present themselves as inviolable giving a sense of powerlessness. The SHAC Campaign wanted to dislocate this structure, find the weak points and overcome the sense of powerlessness and take back the power to act.

In parallel with the campaign the fight against HLS was also conducted by anonymous groups that were targeting the same companies with more radical direct action

(threatening letter, mischief, arsons, liberations, etc.)

Between 2000 and 2005 seven investigations against HLS were published, making it the most exposed vivisection lab in the world. One of these, published by ADI (Animal Defenders International), shows monkeys being tortured in an incredibly violent way in an experiment commissioned by AstraZeneca.

The constant pressure of the campaign made the prices of HLS shares collapse to a level never seen before, forcing the directors to move the financial headquarters to the USA and to pay 7 million dollars from their own pockets. For the first time the actual price of the shares of a company is in the activists' hands. HLS is still today a laboratory in loss that barely works, but it shouldn't be surprising to discover that its closure has been prevented precisely by the British government in an illegal intervention.

Right now there are fewer groups following the SHAC Campaign, partly because many groups have taken different directions and have decided to use different methods and strategies, but also because of the crushing repression that this campaign had to face.

The campaigns against the customers of HLS have created panic and made the government move: we are talking about multinational with a huge amount of political power, companies with too many skeletons in the closet, with the power of influencing the political agenda of the current government to the point of creating new laws, specifically oriented to the protection of their own company, as well as pushing for the arrests of activists that are making their dirty work difficult.

In spite of everything the campaign is still going on and proceeds against the targets of the moment, among which the main at international level is AstraZeneca, an anglo-swedish pharmaceutical multinational company that at the moment seems to be the main client of HLS. It's the only one that declares to the media of being proud to finance the experiments.

For more information and updates about the SHAC Campaign check the website www.shac.net.



MEGAPHONES AND BURNING CARS

While SHAC activists were organizing demos at companies and home addresses of HLS business partners, associates and investors, ALF activists started almost immediately to show interest in attacking HLS profits as well.

While other campaigns or associations used to distance themselves from “illegal” actions in order to maintain public approval, the SHAC campaign always supported the idea of direct action as an essential tool into the struggle for liberation. Often enough the theory behind direct action was discussed during demo speeches, sometimes with precise references towards some particular actions that happened in the past.

It could have been an underground action of economic sabotage against the director of a company related to HLS or a liberation from an animal breeder for vivisection, in both cases probably at the next demo this was mentioned, to inspire and motivate people to commit themselves to the struggle.

The campaign showed that the impact that direct action as a tactic can have, if empowered by shared and outspoken public support, is huge.

The imagery of the campaign is filled with inspiring images related to direct action: animals saved out of Huntingdon or breeders that supplied HLS were there to remind everyone that liberation is at hand, there, possible for everyone to take it without any need to ask.

Who doesn't remember the famous SHAC T-shirt where a masked liberator sits between freed beagles, with a sentence beneath: "Tell these dogs direct action doesn't work"?

At the time one thing was clear: without ALF activists sharing the goal of closing down HLS, the campaign alone would probably not have reached what it did. From the understanding that governments and corporations don't care about nothing but profit, the campaign defined a strategy of attack built to make the vivisection business unprofitable.

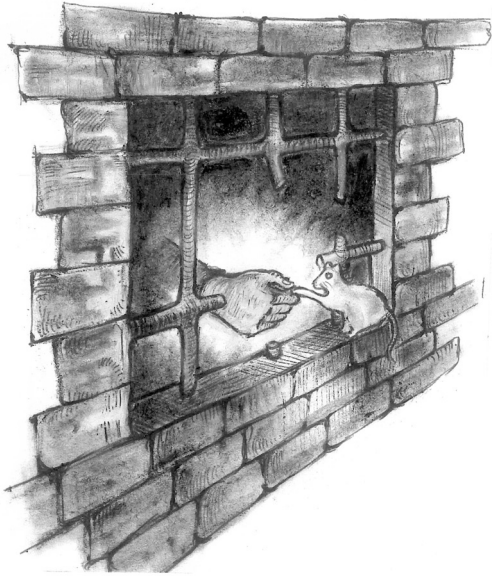
Over 250 Companies have dropped HLS during the history of this campaign, making the struggle against Huntingdon one of the most successful and effective ever.

SHAC always worked on a legal level, but it certainly belong to an animal liberation movement that doesn't recognize the concept of legality and illegality. As a matter of fact, starting from the sad consideration that what happens inside places like HLS is not just perfectly legal, but also strongly defended by the State and its institutions, it's not hard to understand that what is legal is not in anyway related to what is right.

In an unequal and oppressive society that needs and justifies animal and humyn oppression to exist, laws are made by those in power to protect the status quo, to repress dissent, to preserve injustice.

For this reason any revolutionary movement throughout history has rejected these two static terms (legal-illegal) defined by those in society who we want to challenge and fight, in favour of a deeper distinction between what is right and what is wrong, what is just and what is unjust, what is ethically acceptable and what is ethically deplorable.

SPECIAL LAWS AGAINST THE ANTIVIVISECTION STRUGGLE



In 2005 the British government introduced special repressive measures with the aim of obstructing - in a very specific way – the anti-vivisection campaigns that were undermining the future of animal experimentation in the UK at that time.

With the “**Serious Organized Crime and Police Act**” (**SOCPA**) new felonies were introduced in the law:

- *Art. 145:* Interference in the contractual relations of an animal research company.
- *Art. 146:* Intimidation of people connected to an animal research company

The penalty for breaking these laws are sentences of up to 5 years for minor crimes against a company involved with vivisection, such as trespassing on private property or unauthorized demonstration.

One aspect that has to be emphasized is that the laws are extremely specific and one of the most striking examples of specific legislation in force. They are directed exclusively to anti-vivisection campaigns. They do not include activities

against other sectors of animal exploitation like the fur industry, the meat industry or the entertainment one. This is an obvious proof of the power that the pharmaceutical industry had in influencing the British government's choice to adopt these kind of measures.

However, when the activists of the SHAC campaign and of the SNGP campaign (Save the Newchurch Guinea Pigs – a campaign against a guinea pig breeding farm closed after 6 years of struggle in 2006) were arrested, the government was aiming to obtain longer sentences than the 5 years expected with the introduction of the new measures. For this reason the state used an additional imputation: “conspiracy to blackmail”, a crime already present in the British penal code that allowed sentences of up to 14 years of incarceration, and that was adapted to repress the anti-vivisection campaigns.

Following this kind of logic, all kinds of protest and struggle that campaigns might use with the aim of closing down a company or stopping a type of activity could be considered a blackmail, or more precisely a “conspiracy to blackmail”. Every campaign involving more than one person and a basic forms of organization used in resistance was therefore liable.

The British government has studied and put into practice a repressive strategy, by creating a normative frame with the specific intent of minimizing the space for action that anti-vivisection campaigns occupy and to annihilate those who are more involved in the struggle, by employing heavy jail sentences and post-release restrictions .

The British State's frenzy against the anti-vivisection movement is not surprising, considering the economical interests connected to scientific research that are a source of profits for governments, pharmaceutical industries and powerful lobbying groups. This should not burn us out, divide or demoralize us, but rather make us understand how the enemy we have to face is one, and how much all struggles are inevitably connected.

By dividing forces we will always be vulnerable and isolated when facing repression, therefore it's essential to learn from past mistakes and to create moments of sharing and confrontation in order to build bridges in the fight for liberation.



IMPRISONED AFTER PRISON TIME



In Great Britain there is a restrictive and repressive punishment/prison system in which individuals spend a first part of the sentence in jail and the second part outside but under special surveillance called “on probation” or “on license”.

This special surveillance reflects the will of the prison system: to destroy the individual through isolation and constriction, under the fake image of reintegrating former prisoners into society and preventing recidivism. Their true intention is of complete control.

The main goal of this control is an attempt to isolate the person from their political context. Any kind of contact with people and activities connected with their affinities or context is denied. This is used to legitimize surveillance measures (license conditions), to enforce the ban on taking part in any kind of activism referring to animals, having relations with people involved with activism connected to animals, and more broadly, prohibition to engage with anything about animals at all.

In more than one case these unacceptable impositions have been assigned for life.

Therefore it's an attempt to isolate individuals from "the movement", from friends, from family and everything that forms us as individuals and political subjects. As one of the proponents of these restrictions says, they are willingly very general and ambiguous in order to avoid people deflecting them.

The first rule is to "behave well" and this is left completely undefined. Everything is subjectively controlled by police called "probation officers", who adopt the role of the good cop ("when I was young I was vegetarian too"), invading the lives of ex-prisoners. Regular meetings are imposed with this disturbing character, who attempts to gain control over every single aspect of the life of ex-prisoners.

Officially they expect to be told about every movement made and every penny spent through bills and journey tickets, they expect to be asked for permission before starting a relationship of any kind with whoever, and before getting in contact with and taking part in political organizations. These unacceptable conditions, when challenged are increasingly met with predictable responses : "no" or "ask again in some months".

It's also expected that individuals will be available on the cell phone 24 hours a day. It's prohibited to have a private phone number as well as access to internet in order to avoid unspecified "extremist" websites. Individual's are obliged to live in cities decided by the cops and this extends to deciding where people can work and study. If all this isn't already enough, even exchanging two words with a vegetarian could be enough to send you back to jail.

Everything is based on the constant blackmail of being incarcerated again. The threat of jail is intrinsic in the concept of the surveillance itself, where 'good' behaviour is rewarded in an attempt to create model citizens and the little rewards of the state attempt to pacify and keep us quiet. The state aims to make people fear a return to prison because you've got "something" to loose. The cases of re-incarceration are common, with invented or ridiculous motivations, to remind who's in power, who's deciding.

This new repressive system was born in the 2000s. It was applied in the period after imprisonment and in the period before trial. English cops tested it on the animal liberation movement, applying it also here and there on

antifascists and ecologists as well. As always police and journalists collaborate, increasing fears and creating images of terrorists in all directions. The media conflated public campaigns of pressure and direct actions of any kind to create a culture of fear and promote the concept of “extremism”. Because of this, animal liberationists and anti-speciesists are often the choice and the object of repressive experiments, as people working outside of what is commonly acceptable. The animal liberation movement has been portrayed by the media extremist and incredibly violent for a long time. It is yet another example of how the media and the police are supporting each other reciprocally.

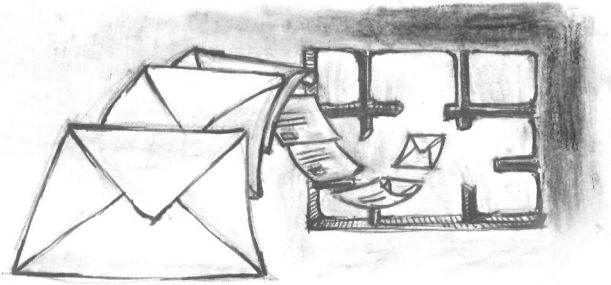
The intent is clearly to create a precedent. The state tries to use psychological pressure to police us, let’s not allow them to accomplice this project.

In the face such of the extreme attempts to annihilate us as political subjects, it’s right to re-affirm our solidarity as a movement, it’s right to resist attempts to divide us.

Doing everything in our power to sabotage the plans of the State must go hand in hand with destroying the institutions of animal exploitation.



POLICE OPERATIONS



Repression in USA

On March 26th, hordes of armed agents from the FBI, the secret services and other police forces rushed into the homes of seven activists in order to arrest them. This was also the beginning of the international solidarity campaign called support the **SHAC7**, whose slogan *“support the SHAC7 ...or you’ll be next”* is a perfect example of the importance of solidarity in response to repression.

John McGee was acquitted before the trial but after two years six people, together with a third entity defined as “the organization Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty USA”, were still waiting to be sentenced following the controversial Federal Animal Enterprise Protection Act special law, the actual **Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA)**, created by the US government with the goal of repressing the Eco-animal liberation movement.

The charges of the six people arrested were for “conspiracy”, for simply having taken part to the international campaign SHAC and having managed the website reporting the actions, the mobilizations and the discussion about the strategies used against HLS and the companies affiliated with it. Jonas, Gazzola, Conroy and Harper, the so-called “leaders” of the

organization were further accused of “stalking”. Kevin Jonas, Lauren Gazzola, Jacob Conroy, Darius Fullmer, Andrew Stepanian and Joshua Harper were then sentenced to penalties between three and six years and to an indemnity of 1 million dollars. Today they all are finally out of prison.

Repression in UK

In order to disturb the SHAC Campaign, the law-makers decided to add to the “Serious Organized Crime and Police Act” of 2005 some specific crimes in order to protect companies working with animal experimentation by punishing any action or threat that endangered their businesses.

The first person sentenced to this law was Joseph Harris, a university researcher against vivisection. He was sentenced to 3 years in prison for damaging of property of companies connected with HLS.

In February 2007, 21 SHAC supporters were sentenced for illegal fund raising. The examining magistrate suspected this was to be designated to “criminal” activities. One month later three activists (Mark and Suzanne Taylor and Teresa Portwine) were arrested for

“intimidation against suppliers of HLS”, through demos and run-ins in the offices of these companies and they were sentenced with penalties between 15 months and 4 years in prison.

In December 2006 Donald Currie was sentenced to 12 years in jail for possession of explosive materials and for actions (4 fires and an attempt of fire) against targets connected with HLS.

On the 1st of May 2007, after a series of house searches in England, Holland and Belgium that involved over 700 cops, 32 people linked with SHAC were arrested, among them Heather Nicholson, Gregg and Natasha Avery (some of the founders of the campaign in Great Britain). This was part of “Operation Achilles”. The accusations were of “blackmail” for Natasha, Gregg and Heather and of “conspiracy in order to commit blackmail” for the others. These accusations referred to a 4 year campaign against HLS with legal protests and night actions against clients and suppliers of HLS.

In January 2009, 7 of the 8 people accused in the trial were found guilty: the judge decided the gravity of the sentence depending on his view of the position of

the person in the presumed hierarchy of the SHAC Campaign. Gregg and Natasha Avery negotiated and were sentenced to 9 years each in jail, Heather Nicholson to 11 years, Gavin Medd Hall to 8 years, Daniel Wadham to 5 years, Daniel Amos negotiated to 4 years, Gerrah Selby received 4 years as well. Today they are all out of prison, but some of them still “on probation”, depending on the duration of the sentence.

The 25th October 2010 another six animal rights activists were sentenced for their participation in the SHAC Campaign with accusations of “conspiracy to interfere with the contractual relations of an organization for animal research” and “conspiracy in order to blackmail”. They negotiated the following sentences: Alfie Fitzpatrick to a suspended year in prison, Tom Harris 4 years, Jason Mullen 3 years, Nicola Tapping 1 year and 3 months, Nicole Vosper 21 months, Sarah Whitehead 6 years. Today they are all out of prison but, again, some of them are “on probation” depending on the duration of the sentence.

In 2012 other three people linked with the SHAC Campaign were sentenced for their involvement in a series of damages against four branch offices of Barclay’s

Bank (financier of HLS) which happened in 2008, with the accusation of “conspiracy in order to commit criminal damage”. One of them is Tom Harris whom is added one year to the previous sentence that is doing for the previous trial bringing it to 5 years in jail. Christopher Potter and Maria Neal are sentenced to a suspended penalty of 12 months and to 120 hours of community work.

On the morning of July 6th 2012 many police squads searched houses and offices in London and Amsterdam (Holland) arresting 3 people with the accusation of “conspiracy in order to blackmail”. The two people arrested in Amsterdam were arrested thanks to a European warrant and after a week in jail they were released with strict restrictions and without their passports. At the moment they are waiting to be extradited to England. The third activist, in London, was released on bail the evening after the arrest and she’s also facing many restrictions both in her private life and in political activities. Some months later a fourth person was arrested in England with the same charges and was also released on bail.

On the 18th of May 2012, in England, four people were

arrested, this time as a consequence of a protest against a supplier of HLS; and charged with breaking SOCPA Laws 145 and 146. All of them were released with restrictions; such as being prohibited from participating in demos and protests. They were forced to reside at a specific address as well.

On the 17th of January 2013 the same four people plus two more were arrested again with the charge of “conspiracy in order to commit SOCPA 145 and 146”. Obviously this seems impossible: how is it possible to conspire in order to commit a crime for which they have already been accused and were awaiting trial?

These accusations refer entirely to episodes connected to the SHAC Campaign and happened between October 2011 and June 2012. The majority of them are protests that one or more of the accused have attended. After being interrogated, all six were released with restrictions and prohibited from communicating with each other.

It’s important to mention the fact that compared to other repressive procedures against SHAC activists, in these cases there was no evidence that connected the people arrested with other direct actions or alleged “crimes”.

During the interrogations the police mainly referred to public protests and demos.

In short, the English police are trying to demonstrate that a group of people that share one or more moments on the street during demos are actually committing a “conspiracy in order to commit a crime”, just by finding themselves in the same place and in the same time having ideas that are hypothetically alike.

All the people involved in the repressive procedures between 2012 and 2013 are now waiting for trial, most of them are in England and two of them in Holland waiting to be extradited.

SOLIDARITY IS OUR WEAPON



In the face of the scale of the repressive phenomenon that hit the SHAC Campaign, there is a weapon that can help to remember such an important part of the story of the struggle against vivisection : solidarity.

We would like to break that wall of silence that is created around the term repression. Sometimes it seems as if mentioning it might bring bad luck, as if the attitude of not speaking about it or not being interested in it makes it disappear. On the other hand, learning what it actually is and preparing oneself for this eventuality can help us to make it a less traumatic and shocking experience, and it will be less scary.

With this chapter we want to express what we mean by solidarity: the recognition of complicity between people or groups that feel part of the same movement. Solidarity means supporting each other reciprocally in times of need, not allowing the people hit by repression to be isolated during imprisonment and after release, when they have to suffer further restrictions.

If our actions are effective, there will be an unavoidable reaction from the state, with restrictive procedures of various kinds. It's therefore essential that we all take on

the possible consequences of our struggle.

The idea of ending up in prison or having people close to you in this situation is not pleasant for anyone. Facing a trial or having some restrictions can be a stressful event that falls on one's life and if it doesn't destroy it, can anyway completely overturn it. The repressive events can last months, years and sometimes unfortunately even the whole life. In any group, collective, association, network or just individuals that act with determination it's of vital importance to discuss how to face possible judiciary consequences, besides how to face possible trials, charges or arrests, how to behave, how to answer publicly, etc.

In the moment when you decide to fight for something you need to be aware of the possible consequences of your choices. The way you face repression shows also the maturity and the strength of a movement.

Sometimes repression comes many years later, referring to campaigns already closed or actions that took place long time before. Meanwhile the movement could have changed priorities, chosen new targets and new strategies. This is exactly the case with the animal liberation movement regarding the first years of SHAC.

Some paths went apart and the mistakes from the past were evaluated. This doesn't change the fact that people have been hit by repression need to be supported; it is important to overlook differences because the basic idea that pushes all of us to fight is always the same one, animal liberation.

The wide diffusion of a campaign like SHAC in so many different countries at the same time it's been one of its strong points: now we must remember those who have to pay for the efficiency that we all obtained, let's make also the solidarity international and as widespread as possible, beyond State borders.

One of the best ways to express solidarity is the continuation of the battles and campaigns hit by repression; of course this is not always possible, sometimes the resources are limited or the will is not the same for everyone but it often happens that repression gives an emotional push to liberate animals or make direct actions in name of the solidarity with the prisoners.

There are many other ways to show solidarity: to organize demos, to create web pages, to block the telephone lines of the prisons (both with specific demands and for

disturbing). In order to break the isolation of those behind bars it's crucial to send postcards, letters, telegrams, books, news and updates on the struggles outside and inside prison. These are really simple and fast things to do, to make prisoners understand that we don't forget them.

It's important to remember people in jail or on licence during talks at some events, or with flyers on stalls, with banners during demos, in newsletters and magazines, on web pages and in general on all our information channels, giving updates about their situation.

It's important to be interested in their legal situation, to understand if they need money or a lawyer, or if there is already someone taking care of these things and if there is the possibility to share the work. To think about the possibility of organizing a demo in front of an embassy or at the court house during the trial: the presence outside a courthouse creates particular attention on what's going on and gives a political value to the cause.

If possible, it's good to go and greet prisoners during hearings. It's a very emotional thing that gives a lot of energies to those who are imprisoned and reaffirms that

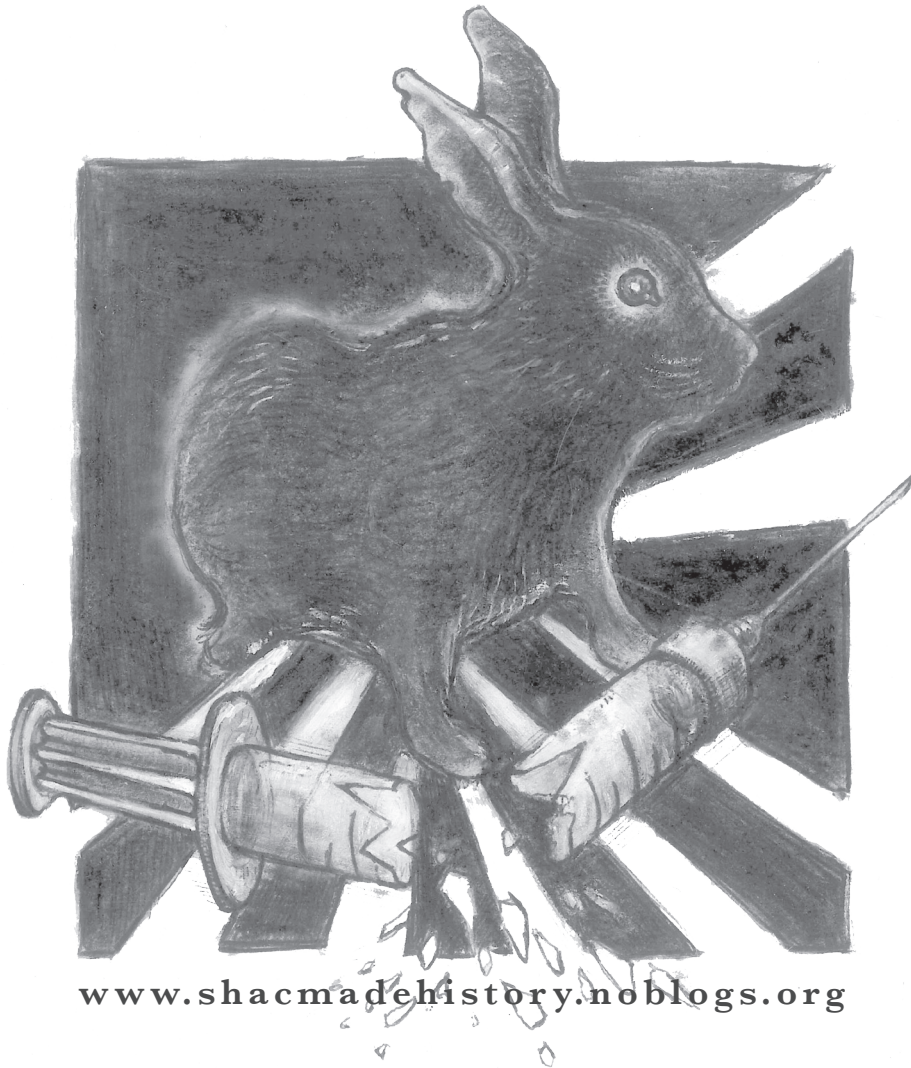
our ideas go through the bars of their cells in order to keep on motivating activists worldwide.

Much more can be done to express solidarity, **but the minimum we can do is to start to see prisoner support as part of the same struggle that is on the outside:** be it against vivisection, against the fur or meat industries and so forth.

These are just a small selection of all the examples that can make us grow both personally, but most importantly, as a movement for animal liberation.



Written in Italy in 2013
www.shacmadehistory.noblogs.org



www.shacmadehistory.noblogs.org

The campaign Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, with its strong points and its limits, had a huge impact on the international animal liberation movement.

The State, hand in hand with animal exploiters, reacted by arresting, persecuting and putting under surveillance those who fought for the closing of Huntingdon Life Sciences, the biggest vivisection laboratory in Europe.

We believe that the strength of a movement lies in the support given to the ones hit by repression; this text wants to be a reflection on our history, for the growth of the animal liberation movement.

*Solidarity is our weapon, let's use it!
For animal, humyn and earth
liberation!*