

SPECIAL FEATURES

, Two Legs Bad

the London Times
rights activists
unkind.

are interested in can be deduced from two unguarded but immensely significant anonymous remarks made by Animal Liberation Front supporters to a reporter.

One said: "We get a buzz of satisfaction because we know what we are doing is right." The other said: "We can cause £30,000 damage in one week, just from smashing windows."

Let me take the second quote first. Here, I step into the dock. I would love to go about smashing windows; my passion for such exciting sport is second only to my deep-rooted pyromania. The very tinkle of broken glass brings me out in a sweat of lust.

Ah, but you see, I do those

things only in my mind; I have never broken anybody's windows, and I have never set on fire anything more insurable than the wick of a candle. The poor crazed creature who admires those who do cause such damage has done no more than cross the line behind which I remain. But that line is the line which civilization draws across the map of human behavior; it marks out where the actions of human beings may be tolerated from those where they cannot.

Criminal law is a clumsy instrument, but without it no civilization can endure. Answer me one question, you Animal Liberation Fronters: If a criminal picked the lock of your car and drove it away, never to be seen again by you, would you cease to feel outrage if you were told that the thief was an ardent member of the Car Rally Drivers Association?

You cannot pick your crimes, you Fronters, even if the stench of self-righteousness that oozes from you makes passers-by gag. For there is now to be considered the other significant comment from one of the gang, the one who said: "We get a buzz of satisfaction because we know what we are doing is right."

I don't mind if I offend criminals, but what I am about to say may offend some among the law-abiding, so I shall apologize in advance. I do assure you Fronters, that in Nazi Germany, men—a substantial number of them, not mad and most of them not even extraordinary—pushed human beings into gas chambers and got a buzz of satisfaction because they knew what they were doing was right.

Is the comparison so extravagant? After all, it can-



A woman protesting against the fur trade takes part in a rally in London. Reuters



spattered with tomatoes thrown at an Italian opera theater in Mi- AP

not be long now until a truck driver is killed by one of the "incendiary devices" you have boasted about putting in vans carrying meat products. You recoil, or more likely pretend to, because most of you would not take part in gassing millions of men, women and children. But you see, the Nazi murderers were every bit as sincere as you are.

One of the ringleaders of this animal gang went a trifle too far, and is spending 10 years in prison; it will be interesting to know, when he comes out, whether he has learnt wisdom.

It is ironic that vegetarians in societies like ours, having long been considered the gentlest and most harmless members of the tribe, now number in their ranks the most vicious, crazed and criminal.

I am no amateur psychiatrist, but no one can look at the arguments and actions of such organizations without seeing that they are based on a misanthropy so profound that it can hardly be classified as sane. For just as the Fronters never concern themselves with the real animals they profess to protect, they never tune their human-hate song to a condemnation of the really evil; when did you ever hear of an Animal Liberation Fronter scattering the white powder of the backstreet drug dealer, or turning their attention to child abuse?

"The more I see of men, the more I admire dogs." The attribution has been disputed for centuries, but it is yet another comment on our time that now there are people who say it without irony, and live by it, too.