

HISTORY OF ANIMAL PROTECTION

Understanding the history of the animal protection movement is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, by studying the history of animal protection, we learn about the animal welfare problems that existed in the past, the efforts made to address them, and specific achievements. This helps us learn from history and helps us to avoid the same mistakes, or repeat successes. In addition, understanding the history of the movement will help us understand how today's efforts may lead to significant changes in the future and how gradual progress will finally help animals to receive better treatment in our society. We may not be able to see all the changes ourselves but by understanding the successes in history we can feel assured that our efforts are moving in the right direction.

Finally and most importantly, studying animal protection history teaches us that the movement cannot be isolated from social change, politics, culture and economics. In fact, the development of the animal protection movement is strongly connected to these areas.

Although each individual country has its own historical perspective, this section focuses primarily on the history of the movement in England. England has the longest history of animal protection and many of its themes are paralleled in the history of the movement in Europe and North America.

Human Attitudes Towards Animals

Historical evidence in England suggests that from 1500 to 1800 "it was conventional to regard the world as made for man and all other species as subordinate to his wishes." However, people lived closely with animals. For example the keeping of pets was widespread and became a normal feature of family life as early as 1700.

Jeremy Bentham's most notable claim in the 18th century, "The question about animals is not can they reason, nor can they talk, but can they suffer?", provides the fundamental concepts for the animal welfare movement. During the same period, many writers and poets started to express their sympathy towards animals and criticised cruelty to animals and their exploitation.

Human-animal relationships have changed as a result of agricultural development, economic growth, urban expansion and political change. In Britain, 19th century industrialisation stimulated changes in attitudes towards the natural world and also affected the urbanisation of social life. With the industrialisation of society, people gradually lost contact and affinity with animals as traditional dependence on animals declined.

As contact with working animals decreased, people developed a closer relationship with their pets. By the 19th century, it was commonplace to keep household animals in Britain; this helped to develop an anthropomorphic view, in which human qualities were applied to non-humans.



Historical Milestones in the Animal Protection Movement

“EVERY GREAT MOVEMENT HAS TO EXPERIENCE THREE STAGES: RIDICULE, DISCUSSION, ADOPTION.” ~ John Stuart Mill

In 1781, the first law relating to animals was passed, which scrutinised the treatment of cattle in Smithfield market in London. In 1786 legislation was passed requiring a license to slaughter. Although it was not passed, a bill to stop bull baiting was read in the British Parliament in 1800.

In 1822, Richard Martin's Act to 'Prevent the Cruel and Improper Treatment of Cattle' was passed by the British Parliament. This was the first parliamentary legislation for animal welfare in the world, and made it an offense to beat or ill-treat a number of animals such as horses, sheep and cattle. In 1824 the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (which became the Royal SPCA in 1840) was established. The society worked mainly on law enforcement and prosecutions. In 1835, the Act was amended and expanded to include protection of all domestic animals, such as dogs and cats.

The first American animal protection organisation, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, was established in 1866. By 1900, several hundred other animal protection organisations had formed in America.

In 1860, Mrs Mary Tealby, who was the first woman to found a British animal welfare organisation, founded the Battersea Dogs Home, formerly named the Temporary Home for Lost and Starving Dogs. The organisation was the first place to provide a home for stray dogs.

Beginning in the 1870s, mammals, particularly dogs and cats, were used by vivisectors instead of reptiles, which had been used during the 1830s and 1840s. During the 1870s, groups were set up to fight vivisection, such as the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection and the National Anti-Vivisection Society. Although the SPCA condemned vivisection from the outset as an abuse of animals, legislation was not introduced until 1876. This 'act to amend the law relating to cruelty to animals', was the first of its kind in the world, and regulated a licensing procedure and general inspection of animal experiments.

In 1906 a famous event known as the 'Brown Dog Affair' occurred. Two medical students exposed shockingly cruel experimental procedures on animals used by medical institutions in the name of science. This led to a statue of a brown dog being erected in Battersea Park, London by the International Anti-Vivisection Council. It was a symbolic memorial for animals vivisected in laboratories. A year later, 100 medical students tried to remove the statue but local citizens successfully defended it. Although the statue disappeared in 1910, in the same year several thousand people attended a protest against vivisection in Trafalgar Square. The incident gained a great deal of publicity for the anti-vivisection cause and also stimulated considerable discussion in the press at the time.

The following year, in 1911, the Protection of Animals Act was passed in the UK, which consolidated all the existing animal protection legislation.

During the First and Second World Wars, the movement was not very active. Richard Ryder, a UK scholar, claims that the history of social reform suggests that war has a numbing effect upon conscience.

In the 1960s the cruelty of intensive farming of 'food animals' (so-called 'factory farming') was revealed to the public and shocked the world. Ruth Harrison's seminal book *Animal Machines*, published in 1964, was instrumental in increasing both public and government awareness and





stimulating public debate. In 1967, Peter Roberts founded Compassion in World Farming to protest against the abuse of farm animals.

However, at the official and legislative level little had changed in practice. The hope of campaigners turned to disappointment and frustration with government inaction. During the 1970s, public recognition of animal rights increased as the idea of stopping animal exploitation was raised. Activists became disenchanted by the failure of the government to take humane, effective action on animal issues. *Animal Liberation*, the highly influential book by Peter Singer, motivated many activists at this time and led to increased mobilisation of the movement. Public demonstrations, protests and petitions were organised. The removal of animals from laboratories and factory farms, as well as the sabotage of hunting, laboratories and breeding establishments, has continued since the 1970s. Such activities and events provided a controversial way to increase public awareness of the animal rights issue.

From the 1970s, the movement for the protection of animals started to split into two categories: animal welfare and animal rights. Those who believe in animal rights believe in an animal's natural right to life. They seek to establish basic rights for animals and stop the abuse and exploitation of animals by humans. Those who believe in animal welfare tend to accept human use of animals, as long as that use is humane. Both welfare and rights groups often refer to themselves as animal protection organisations. There are different views and ongoing debates regarding the difference between animal rights and animal welfare. Some argue that the philosophical differences between animal rights and animal welfare are irrelevant and that only 'compassion, concern and respect for animals' matters.

In 2002, Germany became the first European nation to protect animals in its national constitution, by stipulating that "The state takes responsibility for protecting the natural foundations of life and animals in the interest of future generations." Switzerland also acknowledged that animals were 'beings' through a constitutional amendment. The change of status of animals in the legal systems of these two countries has served as a historic milestone for the animal protection movement.

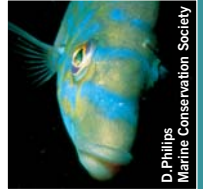
As can be seen in the chapter on Animal Protection Legislation, the European Union has been an enormous force in carrying forward animal welfare advances throughout Europe. The European Union introduced a Protocol to its founding Treaty back in 1997, requiring European institutions to take account of animal welfare when considering legislation in the areas of research, transport, agriculture and the internal market. Another major influence in Europe has been the Council of Europe, which, despite being established in 1949 as the bastion of human rights in Europe, subsequently included animal welfare in its sphere of activities.

Colonial influences led to the setting up of many SPCA-type organisations in Asia, South America and Africa. Some of these were set up decades ago with the majority of groups tackling issues concerning dogs and cats, and most of the founders were 'western' expatriates. Nowadays, however, local people run many of these organisations and more new organisations are being set up by local people to tackle a wide range of animal protection issues.

In the last few decades, many groups in Britain and North America have started to shift their campaign focus from their own countries to countries abroad. Various international campaigns such as whaling, sealing, bear farming, long-distance transport and bushmeat, are calling for international attention and support. Many countries new to the animal protection movement have gained awareness from such initiatives and have started to develop their own animal protection programmes. Long-term support and resources for organisations in these countries is vital for the development of the animal protection movement globally.

Although philosophers through the ages have discussed the place of animals in the world order, the animal protection movement is a fairly recent occurrence in history. Many countries may not

have a 200-year history like Britain in defending animals. However, there are more and more individuals and groups who have started to cultivate the ground and sow the seeds for the global animal protection movement.





History of Animal Protection

Websites

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www.ari-online.org/pages/henry.html

A Brief History of British Animal Welfare

www.all-creatures.org/ca/ark-188history.html

Farm Animal Welfare – the focus of animal protection in the USA in the 21st century

www.tufts.edu/vet/cfa/faw.pdf

History of Animal Protection Laws

www.badgerland.co.uk/animals/animal_protection_laws.html

History of Animal Shelters and Protection Societies

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History of the League and the campaign to abolish hunting 1802-2002

www.league.uk.com/about_us/history.htm

The History and Division of the Animal Protection Movement: Animal Welfare vs. Animal Rights

www.parkc.org/history_division_apm.htm

HSUS: Protecting All Animals: A Fifty-Year History of The Humane Society of the United States

www.hsus.org/ace/20480

Books

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E. S. Turner

Publisher: Joseph

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Animal Century

Mark Gold

Publisher: Jon Carpenter

ISBN: 1897766432

The Animal Revolution

Richard D. Ryder

Publisher: Blackwell Publishers

ISBN: 0631152393



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Hilda Keen
Publisher: Reaktion Books Ltd
ISBN: 1861890141

The Animal Rights Crusade

James A. Jasper & Dorothy Nelkin
Publisher: Free Press
ISBN: 0029161959

Animal Rights: History and Scope of a Radical Social Movement

Harold D. Guither
Publisher: Southern Illinois University Press
ISBN: 0809321998

The Animal Rights Movement in America

Lawrence Finsen & Susan Finsen
Publisher: Twayne Publishers
ISBN: 0805738843

Campaigning Against Cruelty: Hundred Year History of the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection

Emma Hopley
Publisher: BUAV
ISBN: 1870356160

Compassion is the Bugler: Struggle for Animal Rights

Clive Hollands
Publisher: Macdonald Publishers
ISBN: 0904265358

History of the Humane Movement

C. D. Niven
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ISBN: 0853070288

Man and the Natural World: Change Attitudes in England 1500-1800

Keith Thomas
Publisher: Oxford University Press
ISBN: 0195111222

The Old Brown Dog: Women, Workers and Vivisection in Edwardian England

Coral Lansbury
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ISBN: 0299102505

