

## REPORT

Mobilization for Animals Conference,  
October 9 - 11, 1982  
Columbus, Ohio

One of the most exciting and productive developments in the animal rights movement recently is the astounding growth of Mobilization for Animals into a potent networking force of well over 10,000 people and over one hundred organizations. This rapid growth has occurred, under the competent guidance of Dr. Richard Morgan, MFA National Coordinator, in the short space of some ten months.

Mobilization for Animals, which originated as a task force on laboratory experimentation at the Action for Life Conference in July, 1981 (see *E & A*, II, 3), and which was subsequently integrated into the ARM coalition structure (see *E & A*, II, 4), has since incorporated as an independent entity (see *E & A*, III, 1). MFA is devoted to initiating direct action campaigns to relieve the suffering of animals. Its first major objective, and the one to which it is devoting its attention exclusively at the moment, is to mount the largest and most visible protest against laboratory experimentation—and particularly against primate research—which has ever occurred in the U.S., or indeed, anywhere in the world. The April 24, 1983 protest will take place simultaneously at four of the major primate research centers in the U.S., and will be complemented by support demonstrations on the same day at primate centers in a number of Western European countries.

The recent national MFA conference, attended by some two hundred activists from all over the U.S., focused on strategic planning sessions for this coordinated protest, including reports from the four regions and regional meetings. A broad range of general workshops on crucial aspects of effective action on behalf of animals were also offered. These included: community and campus organizing, legislative outreach, fund-raising, direct action, media and promotion, and issue overviews. Unlike previous major conferences where tight scheduling did not permit repetition of workshops, at the Columbus conference each of the workshops was given twice, so that participants had the opportunity to attend them all. The program also included direct action strategy sessions in four systematic areas (experimentation, wildlife, farm animals, domestic animals), at which possible future MFA projects were proposed and discussed. Conference participants also had the opportunity to display literature from their respective organizations, to view a number of excellent films, and to socialize, exchange information, and reinforce one another's commitment to the movement in the context of the leisurely, all-vegan meal periods.

What emerged most clearly from all these activities and sessions was the manifestly increasing sophistication and consolidation of the animal rights movement in terms of information gathering and exchange techniques, communications networking, and perhaps most importantly of all, vigorous legislative and lobbying efforts. In the latter respect, the establishment of a National Antivivisection Society office and an Animal Political Action Committee (ANPAC) in Washington, D.C. represents a decided advance in terms of the movement's capability of

effective political and legislative action on behalf of animals. This increasing sophistication is also reflected in the excellent quality of MFA materials. At the conference each participant was given a complete packet of information including detailed accounts of the type of research being currently conducted at each of the major primate centers targeted for the April, 1983 demonstration. The shared feeling of most of the participants was probably best summed up by Dr. Morgan's moving words in his formal introduction to the conference: "The normal context of our lives as human beings is freedom from pain. Pain is an aberration, an intrusion . . . for animals, however, the normal context of their lives is misery, deprivation, and pain. For them, freedom from pain is the anomaly . . . For a very long time we have been patient in seeking change, even obscenely patient. The time for patience has run out . . ."

George P. Cave  
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