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Blair Once Committed to End Vivisection

It has been a surpassing mystery why the UK's government has had to be dragged kicking and screaming to the point where they will clamp down on AR terrorists, who, in the past year or two, have succeeded in disrupting Britain's pharmaceutical industry.

One piece of the puzzle fell into place not long ago, when it was revealed that the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, was a patron of an organization whose agenda it was to [eliminate the use of animals](#) in biomedical research.

Another [puzzle piece](#) may have surfaced (subscription required):

TONY BLAIR, whose government has pledged to crack down on animal rights violence, expressed his commitment to end vivisection in a letter to activists before Labour came to power, it has emerged.

The three-page letter to a group seeking to abolish animal testing states that Labour wants "a reduction and the eventual end of animal experiments". It does, however, anticipate the "passionate" opposition of many doctors and scientists being an obstacle to any ban.

Many scientists and City institutions are sceptical of Labour's commitment to crush animal rights extremism. The government has tightened legislation but failed to deliver a tough new law as requested by biotech companies and scientists, many of whom have been subjected to hate campaigns.

The disclosure of the letter is an embarrassment to Blair and to David Blunkett, the home secretary. Both last week gave their support to measures aimed at halting the intimidation of staff and executives of companies involved in animal testing. In a further show of strength, Blunkett has told an American animal rights

campaigner who claimed that the murder of scientists “would be an effective strategy” that he is minded to prevent him travelling to Britain.

[. . .]

*Blunkett and Blair have supported the anti-vivisection movement in the past. Blunkett has been a patron of the Humane Research Trust and was among MPs who allied themselves with Plan 2000. **The campaign, founded in 1994, sought a ban on vivisection by the year 2000. The campaign also received the letter stating Blair’s opposition to animal testing. It was written on Blair’s behalf by Elliot Morley, then Labour spokesman on animal welfare.***

Morley wrote: “The problem a Labour government would have is that there are doctors and scientists who are equally passionate in defence of animal experiments. The government is concerned that research companies may relocate abroad rather than expose their staff to harassment in Britain.”

Well! That certainly does - as they say - raise issues: how much of Labor's foot dragging is due to the fact that they genuinely didn't recognize the terrorist threat for what it is, and how much is due to their ideological commitment to an endpoint, if not the means to achieve that endpoint, that is fundamentally the same as that of the terrorists themselves? Did their ideological sympathies with the goals of the terrorists delay action against the terrorists? It's a fair but tough question.

I think revelations such as these are very much a part of the battle against AR terrorists. In my view, this revelation has placed Labor's [foot-dragging](#) deeper into an ideological context, and Blair and Blunkett are going to have to do more than simply speak strong words and take grand-sounding steps that are subsequently [ignored](#):

The government’s responses to the 2001 discussion document refers to a ‘new ministerial committee chaired by the Home Secretary, set up to co-ordinate and

*drive forward action against animal rights extremists'. When I inquired about this committee, however, a Home Office spokesman was unable to name it, let alone tell me how many times it had met or what it had discussed. The government's policing of the biotechnology industry, by contrast, has been enthusiastic. **In four years, the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Committee, which enforces the very strict rules on animal experiments, made 121 visits to Huntingdon Life Sciences alone.***

Time will tell if Labor's backbone really is being stiffened. But it would seem to me that they really are going to have to show measureable results: there is the appearance of a conflict of interest between Mr. Blair and Mr. Blunkett, on the one hand, and British pharmaceutical companies on the other.

Thanks to David S. for the heads up.

Brian