

## **Is there a decline in ecoterrorism?**

### **Abstract**

The purpose of the article is to briefly characterize ecoterrorism, which is based on a specific ideology. Some of the content proclaimed by its promoters might merit support were it not for their overly dehumanizing rhetoric, and especially the practice motivated by it. The phenomenon of ecoterrorism, or environmental terrorism, is associated with the use of violence by extremist pro-environment groups and radicalized individuals. Ecoterrorism is divided into pro-environmental terrorism and pro-animalism. Environmental terrorism can also be divided into terrorism by environmentalists and terrorism by animal rights activists. The greatest development of ecoterrorism has occurred in the United States. Animal Liberation Front, ALF was the most dangerous pro-environmental organization, while the group with the most members was Earth First, EF! Violence by eco-terrorists has occurred in many countries on our continent, most notably in the United Kingdom. The ideology of ecocentrism, which motivates the activities of many groups in the West, has penetrated Poland, but in our country it has not had much influence on the activities of organized groups of environmentalists and individuals. On the other hand, incidents of violence were recorded in a series of events directed against specific companies and institutions that threatened the environment. The research shows that there is a slow but steady decline in the number of ecoterrorism incidents worldwide. It is too early to predict its decline, but there is certainly evidence of declining violent activity. Several circumstances contribute to the downscaling of aggressive environmental activities. Above all, there has been an increase in the environmental awareness of societies and governments. A large impact on the decrease in the number of ecoterrorist events is also due to the tightening of legislation, as well as the activities of environmental organizations.

### **Keywords**

animalists, ecocentrism, ecology, ecotage, ecoterrorism.

The phenomenon of ecoterrorism, also known as environmental terrorism, involves the use of violence by extremist pro-environment groups and radicalized individuals. Therefore, it can be considered as some variation of the general phenomenon of terrorism. Ecoterrorism can be defined as the spectacular actions of various organizations concerning ecology in its broadest sense<sup>1</sup>. The *Lexicon of Ecology and Environmental Protection* defines “ecoterrorism” as: (...) *unlawful radical methods of exerting pressure by conservationists (environmentalists) on governments and industrialists to achieve specific political goals. The reason for this behavior is primarily the lack of dialogue between the conflicting parties*<sup>2</sup>. According to James F. Jarboe of the FBI, ecoterrorism is any action of a criminal nature that results in the use or threat of violence against people or property for ecological/political reasons<sup>3</sup>. J. Cheda characterized environmental terrorism as follows: *However, the actions of terrorists that do not aim to protect the environment, and thus do not serve to ensure ecological security, must also not be forgotten. The environment for them is just a target for attack*<sup>4</sup>. This thesis was developed by Samanta Kowalska. According to her, ecoterrorism is the activities carried out by various terrorist organizations and state actors that target the environment. Their activity may involve situations that pose a danger to the environment, such as: introduction of poisonous substances into the ground or sea in the territorial zone, organizing attacks on nuclear power plants, oil platforms, as well as sabotaging the work of these facilities, attacking tankers, illegal transports of nuclear waste and their storage sites, which may lead to an ecological disaster of cross-border range.<sup>5</sup>

David N. Pellow believes that the term “ecoterrorism” was invented by anti-environmental activist Ron Arnold. He understood ecoterrorism

---

<sup>1</sup> K. Mączkowski, „Ekoterroryzm” to głupota, „Dzikie Życie” 2021, No. 2/200, <https://dzikiezycie.pl/archiwum/2011/luty-2011/ekoterroryzm-to-glupota> [accessed: 30 I 2021].

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ekologia.pl/wiedza/slovníki/leksykon-ekologii-i-ochrony-srodowiska/ekoterroryzm> [accessed: 30 I 2021]. Entry: ecoterrorism, in: *Leksykon ekologii i ochrony środowiska*, <https://www.ekologia.pl/wiedza/slovníki/leksykon-ekologii-i-ochrony-srodowiska/ekoterroryzm> [accessed: 30 I 2021].

<sup>3</sup> J. Cheda, *Ekoterroryzm jako współczesne zagrożenie bezpieczeństwa ekologicznego na świecie i w Polsce*, „Karpacki Przegląd Naukowy” 2014, No. 3, p. 58, [http://ktnio.pl/Home/PokazPdf?nazwaPliku=KPN%20kwartalnik%2FKarpacki%20Przeg1%C4%85d%20Naukowy%20Nr%203\(11\)-2014.pdf](http://ktnio.pl/Home/PokazPdf?nazwaPliku=KPN%20kwartalnik%2FKarpacki%20Przeg1%C4%85d%20Naukowy%20Nr%203(11)-2014.pdf) [accessed: 30 I 2021].

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> S. Kowalska, *Ekoterroryzm - rozważania w kontekście bezpieczeństwa i zasady zrównoważonego rozwoju. Wybrane regulacje prawa międzynarodowego*, in: *Prawa człowieka a ochrona środowiska. Wspólne wartości i wyzwania*, B. Gronowska et al. (ed.), Toruń 2018, p. 6-7.

as a crime committed to save nature<sup>6</sup>. Both conservative media and conservative politicians have taken notice of his views. They then used them in national and international discourse aimed at increasing scrutiny of public environmental activities. The means to achieve this was to hold hearings in the U.S. Congress and pass laws targeting environmental advocates in most American states and other countries.

And in Harvey W. Kushner's *Encyclopedia of Terrorism*, "ecoterrorism" is defined as a general phenomenon referring to various forms of violence and sabotage used in the name of protecting the environment<sup>7</sup>. Initially, the ecoterrorist tactics were inspired by, among other things, the content of Edward Abbey's radical environmental novel, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, published in 1975. It concerns the use of various methods of sabotage to stop human activities that were causing environmental destruction in the southwestern United States. The impact of this publication on the activism of radical advocates was so great that the term "monkey wrench" came to refer to any form of pro-environmental activism, including various forms of sabotage and lawbreaking<sup>8</sup>, that contributed to keeping wild ecosystems intact.

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines the phenomenon of ecoterrorism very broadly, also referred to as "environmental terrorism." This term includes both environmental destruction by states and various entities seeking to induce certain behaviors, as well as crimes committed against companies and government agencies. The intent of this activity is to disrupt or prevent activities that are allegedly harmful to the environment. Ecoterrorism was used by groups engaged in anti-systemic violence (against existing state structures). This type of terrorism, also known as "bioterrorism," includes, among other things, threats to pollute bodies of water, damage or destroy energy facilities, and spread anthrax or other harmful biological substances. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, another form of ecoterrorism, often referred to as environmental warfare, is the deliberate destruction of the environment as part of a strategy used during armed conflict. The best example of this was the use of defoliants by US troops during the Vietnam War. This treatment was carried out to destroy the rainforests where the Vietcong guerrillas were hiding. Huge environmental damage was also caused by Iraqi troops who set fire to oil wells there when they

---

<sup>6</sup> D.N. Pellow, *Eco-terrorism*, in: *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, J. Adamson, W.A. Gleason, D. Pellow (ed.), New York 2016, p. 82, <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.18574/9780814760741-029/html> [accessed: 24 XII 2021].

<sup>7</sup> H.W. Kushner, *Encyclopedia of Terrorism*, Thousand Oaks 2003, p. 116.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.supersummary.com/the-monkey-wrench-gang/summary/> [accessed: 23 XII 2021].

withdrew from Kuwait in 1991. A year later, authorities in Baghdad ordered the wetlands to be drained and the vegetation growing there to be destroyed with napalm, resulting in a complete change of environment. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, adopted in 1998<sup>9</sup> defines such alteration or destruction as a war crime. The final part of the encyclopedia's definition equates ecoterrorism with the activity of certain environmentalist organizations violating the property of companies that harvest timber and companies in other industries. The activity in question is to obstruct the work of such companies by destroying machinery and equipment, sabotaging factories, laboratories, etc., or destroying articles made of leather and fur in stores<sup>10</sup>.

The author of this article narrows the analysis of the phenomenon of ecoterrorism only to the last part of the definition formulated by *Encyclopedia Britannica* and the previously mentioned authors. He also believes that ecoterrorism cannot be described as the cases of the blowing up of oil and gas pipelines by the FARC<sup>11</sup> in Colombia, Ansar Bajt al-Makdis<sup>12</sup> in Egypt or MEND<sup>13</sup> in Nigeria, the poisoning of animal feed, genetic modification of plants or the destruction of ancient Buddha statues by the Taliban in the Bamian province, museum buildings in cities in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, and architectural monuments in Palmyra by the Islamic State, which is cited by Kowalska<sup>14</sup>, despite the fact that they have caused environmental destruction, the death of thousands of animals, and irreparable damage to the world's cultural and artistic heritage. However, they have little in common with ecoterrorism viewed as the activities of pro-environmental organizations, although in extreme cases ecoterrorism may amount not only to the use of violence to implement environmental doctrines, but also to actions intended to cause environmental damage or the mere threat of such an attack (the goal is to make a specific demand). Using the ideology of fighting for the environment, eco-terrorists direct their aggression against state institutions, corporations, businesses and individuals. In doing so, they hit the economy and civil liberties. The catalog of their activities includes such methods of action as: demonstrations, roadblocks, occupation of buildings,

---

<sup>9</sup> *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, done at Rome on 17 July 1998*. (Journal of Laws of 2003, No. 78, item 708).

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ecoterrorism> [accessed: 24 XII 2021].

<sup>11</sup> Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia).

<sup>12</sup> Ansar Bajt al-Makdis (Defenders of Jerusalem). In November 2014, the organization adopted the name Wilayet Sinai (Sinai Province) of the Islamic State.

<sup>13</sup> Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta.

<sup>14</sup> S. Kowalska, *Ekoterroryzm - rozważania...*, p. 225, 231, 238-239.

intimidation, sabotage (so-called ecotage<sup>15</sup>) including destruction of machines, releasing animals used for experiments, scientific experiments, bred for leather and fur and planting explosive charges in headquarters of biotechnological corporations, near homes of their directors, beatings, blowing up laboratories and sending threats to people conducting scientific research with the use of animals<sup>16</sup>.

In the article, the author provides a brief characterization of ecoterrorism under the influence of a specific ideology, some of the content of which might merit support if not for its overly dehumanizing rhetoric, and especially the practice motivated by it. This type of violence is the subject of the analysis conducted by the author, and the primary objective of the research. To achieve this goal, the author formulated the following research questions: what forms of violence has ecoterrorism taken from its inception to the present day? What was the ideology behind the ecoterrorist organizations and what were their directions? What has been the extent of violence over the years? What is the future of the ecoterrorism phenomenon? At the same time, the author posed the following research hypothesis: ecoterrorism was an exaggerated phenomenon and never posed a threat greater than the terrorism of political and religious groups. The author used the following research methods: historical - allowing to trace the phenomenon of eco-terrorism over the years, behavioral - analyzing behavior of individuals and groups, comparative - presenting changes in ideology and methods of operation of eco-terrorist organizations. He also used statistical data to illustrate the extent of eco-violence.

---

<sup>15</sup> The term was created by combining the first and last syllable of the words environmental sabotage. Ecotage has been defined as the tactic of destroying machinery and equipment used to extract natural resources. The purpose of these activities was to prevent environmental degradation. There is a term used in the US: *monkeywrenching*, which is derived from the title of Abbey's book, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. The term was originally used to describe the driving of long nails or sharpened rods deep into trees, which caused damage to the cutting parts of sawmills as they cut the wood. Then, *monkeywrenching* became synonymous with ecotage. Por. T.P. Bondaroff, *Throwing a Wrench into Things: The Strategy of Radical Environmentalism*, „Journal of Military and Strategic Studies” 2008, vol. 10, No. 4, p. 6-7, [https://www.academia.edu/192381/THROWING\\_A\\_WRENCH\\_INTO\\_THINGS\\_THE\\_STRATEGY\\_OF\\_RADICAL\\_ENVIRONMENTALISM?email\\_work\\_card=title](https://www.academia.edu/192381/THROWING_A_WRENCH_INTO_THINGS_THE_STRATEGY_OF_RADICAL_ENVIRONMENTALISM?email_work_card=title) [accessed: 16 II 2021].

<sup>16</sup> Entry: ecoterrorism, in: *Leksykon ekologii i ochrony środowiska*, <https://www.ekologia.pl/wiedza/slowniki/leksykon-ekologii-i-ochrony-srodowiska/ekoterroryzm> [accessed: 30 I 2021].

## **The ideology of environmental extremism and ethical issues**

Ecoterrorism is divided into pro-environmental terrorism and pro-animalism. Another division of environmental terrorism includes terrorism used by environmentalists and terrorism used by animal rights activists. Both trends emerged in the 1970s. It is also referred to as single issue terrorism<sup>17</sup>. At the root of environmental terrorism is a belief in the need to stop dangerous human activity that leads to the destruction of the Earth and the collapse of civilization. Awareness of the finiteness of nature resulted in the mythologized thinking of environmentalists, according to which the introduction of people to the new reality was to be handled by “rainbow warriors.” The emergence of environmental thought and green movements and parties was linked to the search for alternative forms of social life. The conviction that the direction of civilizational development must be radically changed served as the basis for such an endeavor. In order to achieve this goal, the further unrestricted development of technology must be stopped, as it is the development of technology that is causing the world to move towards the annihilation of civilization due to the progressive degradation of the environment. The demand to halt the development of technology and completely change the civilizational paradigm in order to cleanse the biosphere of destruction and allow nature to recover was supposed to be a prerequisite for the transition from the age of economics to the age of ecology. This concept was based on Gaia’s theory<sup>18</sup> as a self-regulating system by James Lovelock. Critics of ecological radicalism have pointed out that this kind of philosophy includes hatred of modernity, cultural leftism, utopian messianism, anti-capitalism, and an ideology of fear. There were anti-democratic and authoritarian themes in the literature of environmental extremists. To this day, extremist ecology is also called revolutionary ecology, and its main demand is the abolition of the primacy of man over nature<sup>19</sup>.

It should be mentioned that radical environmentalists see the ecological crisis as a universal cultural and personal crisis, a crisis of all civilization. The natural world, according to them, is a space in which all elements (flora

---

<sup>17</sup> E. Połuszną, *Ekstremizm ekologiczny, źródła - przejawy - perspektywy*, Warszawa 2012, p. 20.

<sup>18</sup> In Greek mythology, Gaia was the Earth-Mother. According to Lovelock, all earthly organisms, though competing with each other and striving for individual success in maximizing reproduction, form as a whole a higher-order structure, a kind of superorganism - Gaia. See M. Sobczyk, *Gaja - Żyjąca planeta*, „Dziki Życie” 2002, No. 5/95, <https://dzikiezycie.pl/archiwum/2002/maj-2002/gaja-zyjaca-planeta> [accessed: 30 I 2021].

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

and fauna) are assigned equal value. They express the view that there is a deep connection between humans and nature and at the same time reject the idea of a privileged place of the human species in the natural world. This means not accepting civilizational and economic development based on modern technology. In some strands of extremist environmentalist ideology there were neo-Malthusian themes<sup>20</sup> and proposals for the quantitative reduction of the human species, and genocide and wars, natural disasters and epidemics were described as natural remedies for overpopulation. Religious movements inspired by the pre-Christian past and the reconstruction of archaic cults taking the form of neo-pagan mysteries were also connected with the extremist ecological current. Indeed, reaching into the past was dictated by fears of the future. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a connection between environmental extremism and ecoterrorism and the ideological inspiration of such actions, referring to the ancient history of man living in harmony with nature. Ecoterrorism was present in the most industrially developed countries, among others, and the reaction of those dissatisfied with industrial reality was to attempt to annihilate the world around them. According to ecoterrorist visionaries such as: Shoko Asahara, leader of the Supreme Truth sect, and Theodore D. Kaczynski, the famous “Unabomber”, the world has become totally corrupted by consumerism and the use of technology<sup>21</sup>.

An important element of environmental extremism was the ideology of ecocentrism (biocentrism). According to it, man has no privileged place on Earth and therefore no right to dominion over nature. Nor must nature be treated as a means to satisfy man. The elements of nature have their own autonomous value, including moral value, which is equal to or greater than the value (validity) of human interests, human activity, and even of itself<sup>22</sup>.

---

<sup>20</sup> Malthusianism is a theory of overpopulation formulated in the 18th century by Thomas Robert Malthus. He pointed out the correlations that occur between population growth and the level of wealth of a society. This theory has become one of the more important social trends associated with the promotion of birth control.

<sup>21</sup> A. Machniak, *Radykalizm i ekstremizm nowych ruchów społecznych na przykładzie Frontu Wyzwolenia Zwierząt*, „Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i Praktyka” 2018, No. 1, p. 261-262.

<sup>22</sup> The opposite of ecocentrism is environmental anthropocentrism. According to this view, humans, their actions and needs are of greater value than the natural world, i.e. animals, plants and minerals. This belief is based on the claim that products of nature have no intrinsic value, moral or otherwise. Proponents of this view claim that man is the measure of all things and, as a result, the value of nature’s creations is, in their view, entirely determined by the moral value or utility of human actions, aesthetic or economic needs. For more on this, see T.A. Michaud, *Ekoterror a ekoideologia*, in: *Terroryzm - dawniej i dziś*, P. Jaroszyński et al. (ed.), Lublin 2010, p. 73-85.

In short, in ecocentrism, humans have no more value than any other element of nature. In this view, ecocentrism seeks to blur the distinction between humans and other living beings. Ecocentrists believed that there is a complex web of interconnectedness between all the inhabitants of the Earth - humans, all the flora and fauna, animate and inanimate nature, and humans are just one of the many species of beings for whom the Earth is home. It's a form of earth community where people and nature share the planet. According to this conception, ecocentrists did not make a division between humans and non-humans. Radicals have even held that those who maintain that humans are due a higher moral status than other living beings are responsible for the variety of chauvinism that is preference for a certain species. They considered such behavior highly immoral, as was racism.

The ideology of ecocentrism has influenced, among other things, the eco-ideology that prevails in education, media and politics today. One of the most common yet problematic aspects of ecocentrism is the doctrine of animal rights. Opposing ontological and axiological differences between humans and other creatures, many proponents of this idea have argued that ascribing a higher moral status to humans involves confining them within their own species. They argued that such "species classification" is immoral, much like racism or sexism. This belief was based on animal rights dogma and had dangerous consequences. Ingrid Newkirk, co-founder and director of People for Ethical Treatment of Animals, PETA, in the US, once said: *Animal rights fighters do not favor the human species by singling it out from other animals, so there is no natural basis for believing that humans have any special rights. Rat, pig, dog, boy - all are mammals*<sup>23</sup>. The activist, like many animal advocates, not only blurred the distinction between humans and animals, but apparently also rejected the essential difference between types of mammals as a denial of the existing order of nature. Newkirk also rejected the phrase "pet" because she felt it was ideologically charged. Instead, she suggested the term "companion animals." Her point of view was confirmed by PETA's *Statement on Companion Animals*. You can read in it that pets are treated like slaves, sometimes kept in good conditions, but they are still slaves. For Newkirk and those of similar persuasion, the laws of nature can be modified simply by ideologically changing the meanings of the words and concepts we use when we talk about species living on Earth. Extremists sharing Newkirk's views included Michael P. Fox, who as vice president of the Humane Society of the United States stated: *The life*

---

<sup>23</sup> T.A. Michaud, *Ekoterroryzm: kulisy bycia „zielonym”*, <https://3obieg.pl/ekoterroryzm-kulisy-bycia-zielonym-prof-thomas-michaud/> [accessed: 19 IX 2012].



of an ant and the life of my child should have equal value<sup>24</sup>. Peter Singer and Tom Regan presented similar views. Singer stated, for example: *Certainly there are many animals whose lives, by various criteria, are worth more than the lives of some humans*. In contrast, when Regan was asked what he would do if there was only one seat in a lifeboat on the ocean and he had to choose who to save: a dog or a child, he replied: *If I had to choose between a handicapped child and an intelligent dog, I would choose the dog*. For Regan, the handicapped child as part of a web of interdependence was certainly one of those human beings whose life was less important (worthwhile) than that of an intelligent dog<sup>25</sup>.

The organization has taken a very ambiguous stance against violence in defense of animals, even though it has not used it itself. Newkirk said that nonviolence is not effective because PETA has been asking for years but achieving nothing by doing so, while Earth Liberation Front fighters who threaten or use attacks are treated as heroes. PETA has often defended those carrying out sabotage actions and very rarely condemned them. Alex Pacheco, co-founder and former president of PETA, said property destruction, burglary and theft are acceptable when done to protect animals. During the Animal Rights Convention, a spokesman for the organization justified the use of violence in defense of animals. He expressed an opinion at the time: *It would be really great if all the fast food eateries, slaughterhouses, labs and banks that fund them exploded tomorrow*<sup>26</sup>. PETA has also provided financial support to violent groups, and in return, PETA has received videos from them recording the sabotage actions carried out by eco-terrorists and documenting the use of violence against animals<sup>27</sup>.

According to Jesuit Paul Fitzgerald, animals experience pain and suffering and, through instinctive behavior, some species can gain knowledge of their own environment. However, he questioned the claim that animals “desire to lead their own lives”. According to Thomas A. Michaud, a professor at Wheeling Jesuit University (USA), the animal instinct for survival is not accompanied by a sense of duty to others, but only by a need for its own survival. Animals are not moral beings, and in order to survive, they are not guided by any

---

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.naiaonline.org/articles/article/quotes-from-the-leaders-of-the-animal-rights-movement#sthash.q4A1wR4T.dpbs> [accessed: 12 II 2021].

<sup>25</sup> T.A. Michaud, *Ekoterroryzm: kulisy...*

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.consumerfreedom.com/2004/01/2339-peta-and-terrorism-the-real-deal/> [accessed: 12 II 2021].

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.postbulletin.com/letter----animal-rights-movement-wallows-in-human/article\\_e932b1a3-54ac-526a-a086-be4c7deaa75e.html](https://www.postbulletin.com/letter----animal-rights-movement-wallows-in-human/article_e932b1a3-54ac-526a-a086-be4c7deaa75e.html) [accessed: 12 II 2021].

rational, conscious sense of responsibility for the rights of other animals in society. Therefore, there is no basis for claiming that animals have rights. Prof. Michaud's interesting argument is quoted in full below to give the reader an idea of the position of the conservative part of the Catholic Church in the U.S. toward animals and the misalignment of Prof. Michaud's theories with reality:

Their econcentric ideology (this is PETA - author's note) regarding animal rights is confusing not only in terms of their understanding of rights and the consequences they bring, but additionally their dogmatic insistence on animal rights reflects their primitive nominalism. They seek to ascribe rights to animals to legitimize their belief that animals should be respected. However, by claiming that animals have rights, they are not actually respecting animals as animals. Their demands come directly from anthropocentric chauvinism. This is due to their nominalist mentality which, in order to justify respect for animals, demands that human characteristics be attributed to them. The same is true of male chauvinism, which holds that women are entitled to rights insofar as they possess male characteristics. This kind of chauvinism obviously disrespects women as women, as does ascribing rights to animals. Mainly for ideological reasons, it does not respect the essential integrity of animals<sup>28</sup>.

According to Michaud, the ecocentrism so evident in eco-ideology should be analyzed from the philosophical side, if only in relation to animal rights. Criticizing ecocentrism from a philosophical point of view contributed to a better recognition of the confusing doctrines and erroneous dogmatism within it. Similarly, the increasing weakening of ecocentrism made it less able to inspire fanatical eco-terrorists<sup>29</sup>. Of the latter, the animists propounded the most radical theory of violence, perhaps because their consistently ecocentric (biocentric) worldview facilitated violence. One of them, David Barbarash, claimed: *We see no difference between the inherent rights of humans and the inherent rights of animals*<sup>30</sup>. It might have seemed logical to sacrifice a human life to defend the lives of animals. The Animal Liberation Front, or ALF, has set two goals: tactical - to save as many animals as possible and cause an end to animal exploitation, and strategic - to end all oppression of animals by forcing companies that exploit animals to cease operations. The organization's founder Ronnie Lee stated:

---

<sup>28</sup> T.A. Michaud, *Ekoterror a ekoideologia...*, p. 82-83.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> <https://furcommission.com/in-their-own-words-the-animal-liberation-front-alf-has-this-to-say/> [accessed: 12 II 2021].

*It seems perfectly natural and very moral to me to intervene directly to save animals from persecution. Of course, that would often mean breaking the law, but after all, that law was made by the selfish and arrogant human species without regard for animals*<sup>31</sup>. So animals were rescued by using direct action (they were set free) or by exposing their exploiters to financial loss. ALF focused on such actions because of their efficiency. Its theorists argued: *Extremism is a sophisticated political tactic that dramatizes issues and puts them before the public because they would otherwise be ignored in the media; it applies pressure on corporations and government agencies that might otherwise resist legitimate pressure from law-abiding organizations; and expands the spectrum of activity so that pressure from mainstream groups is not considered extremist*<sup>32</sup>. ALF rejected accusations of extremism, violence or terrorism. Robin Webb, representative of the UK wing of the organization, said during a visit to the US: *I totally condemn violence and extremism. He added immediately: However, I do not condemn the sympathetic ALF commandos*<sup>33</sup>. ALF activists believed that even destruction of property was not terrorism if it was done without harming people. This was pointed out in an ALF release dated October 24, 1999: *We don't consider the destruction of property or things as violence. How can violence be directed against something that is not alive. In doing so, the allegation was rejected, arguing that: The real terrorists are the people and businesses that inflict pain and suffering on millions of innocent animals every day*<sup>34</sup>. In this view, the animalist campaigns took on an ethical dimension, even becoming an imperative of conscience. This compared the animalist movement to the activities of the abolitionists, and it was also argued that: *Any freedom fighter was considered a terrorist*<sup>35</sup>. Another frequent comparison was between the situation of animals and the Holocaust, which made the struggle for their liberation from human oppression all the more justifiable<sup>36</sup>.

---

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.animalperson.net/ronnie-lee-on-the-alf/> [accessed: 12 II 2021].

<sup>32</sup> J. Tomasiewicz, *Przemoc w ruchu ekologicznym: od obywatelskiego nieposłuszeństwa do terroryzmu (przypadek Earth Liberation Front)*, „Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe” 2004, No. 1, p. 195.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 196.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> In 2002, Charles Patterson's book *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust* was published in the United States.

## **Ecoterrorist organizations and their methods of operation**

Ecoterrorism was began in the late 1960s and early 1970s by the so-called Eco-Raiders, students from the University of Arizona. They were vandalizing construction sites, believing that the work being done there was disturbing or even destroying the original ecosystem of Arizona's desert lands. Eco-Raiders have been an example and inspiration for other eco-anarchist organizations. Black Mesa Defense was established in Santa Fe, supporting the Navajo Indians during their protests against the construction of an open pit mine. In 1969, Friends of the Earth was founded in San Francisco by David Brower, former executive director of the Sierra Club, the oldest environmental organization in the United States (founded in 1892). In 1970, two married couples Jim and Marie Bohlen and Irving and Dorothy Stowe left the Sierra Club and formed the Committee "Don't Make a Wave: Stop the Bomb"<sup>37</sup>. The reason was to protest U.S. nuclear testing in the Aleutians. The following year in Vancouver, Canada, the Committee changed its name to Greenpeace. Among other things, its activists have tried to prevent nuclear testing, sabotaged whaling, shielded seals from hunters with their bodies, and prevented the storage of radioactive waste. In 1977, Paul Watson, removed from the board of Greenpeace, formed the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, SSCS. The specialty of this organization became actions against whaling, sometimes involving ramming whaling ships<sup>38</sup>.

However, it was the ALF, formed in 1976 and mentioned earlier, that proved to be the most dangerous ecoterrorist organization. It originated from the Hunt Saboteurs Association, HSA, which was dedicated to preventing hunters from hunting in Britain. It is worth mentioning here an action taken by three HSA members in January 1977. Three HSA activists broke into the crypt to desecrate the grave of Robert Peel, a legendary hunter and folk hero of England. After breaking down the tomb and digging up the grave, HSA members threw in a prepared fox head. Although the origins of the ALF are to be found in the United Kingdom, the organization was active primarily in the United States. The intent of the ALF was to liberate animals from human oppression. This organization was conspiratorial from the very beginning, because in pursuit of its plans it decided to use means and methods that were not in accordance with international law. The actions were conducted in such a way as to inflict

---

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/48966/irving-dorothy-stowe-greenpeace-history-founders-mentors/> [accessed: 24 I 2022].

<sup>38</sup> J. Tomaszewicz, *Przemoc w ruchu ekologicznym...*, p. 187-188.

as much material damage as possible on the animal exploitation companies, which in turn would make their production financially unviable. The actions should be so effective that companies that use animals feel threatened and cannot function optimally. ALF animalists have described their methods with the phrase “*non-violent direct actions*”. ALF activity in the 1980s primarily targeted animal testing laboratories that remained at the service of food and pharmaceutical companies. Animal advocates have used a variety of methods to fight back - from protest actions involving appropriate spray-painted signs on the walls of research labs to attaching themselves to trees to be cut down in areas that provide natural habitat for animals. Only in a few cases did the police and other services manage to apprehend the perpetrators of arson and other particularly egregious acts that took on the character of sabotage actions. Animalists were primarily opposed to animal experimentation and industrial-scale animal breeding. Laboratories (medical, veterinary, university or privately owned) have been particularly targeted by animal terrorists. The offices and factories of companies that used the results of such research were also attacked. Animalists have also carried out attacks on food production and trade facilities: slaughterhouses and farms, fast food companies, etc. In addition, the ALF conducted actions against zoos, oceanariums, circuses, rodeos, shows in which animals competed with each other, as well as furriers, veterinarians, owners who mistreated animals, and people dressed in fur (including being doused with paint). The most common method of struggle was vandalism: painting graffiti on walls, breaking windows, taping them over with posters containing hostile content, or boarding up the doors of facilities. Arson and acts of sabotage were equally popular. Both of these methods allowed for severe damage to be done at relatively low cost. A very simple, yet effective method was to warn of alleged food poisoning. Having to recall entire batches of food from the market exposed both producers and retailers to huge financial and image losses. The animalists' calling card was also the release of laboratory animals into the wild. Activists also harassed people. Their victims were scientists conducting experiments on animals. Most often, they were sent hate mail.

In the early 1990s, members of the U.S. branch of the ALF conducted a campaign referred to as “Bite Back”. This was an operation targeting the fur industry and the scientific and research institutions that support it. Its creator and coordinator was Rodney Adam Coronado, a former SSCS activist. In June 1991, the buildings of an experimental mink farm in Oregon were set on fire. Five days later, buildings of a fur animal feed company in Edmonds were set on fire, followed by a research laboratory belonging to Washington State University. In February 1992, a fire was set at Michigan State University's mink research

center. This latest action resulted in losses of more than \$200,000 and the loss of information collected during 32 years of research. For this act, Coronado was sentenced in early March 1995 to 4 years and 9 months in prison and a \$2 million fine<sup>39</sup>. Between 1979 and 1993, ALF attacked 63 academic institutes and 21 private research laboratories in the U.S. (losses calculated at over \$6.5 million) and 76 agribusinesses (losses of over \$1.1 million)<sup>40</sup>.

In Britain, it was assessed that the ALF, and especially its offshoot called the Animal Liberation Militia, ALM, had become, after IRA terrorism, the most serious threat to the people of the United Kingdom. In 1982, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher received two packages containing bombs inside (no detonation occurred). That same year, British media reported that ALM had poisoned Mars candy bars in grocery stores to force the conglomerate that makes the product to end product testing on monkeys. The action proved to be an effective yet costly bluff, as the corporation lost \$4.5 million. In 1988, Dariusz Paczkowski founded the national branch of the ALF in Poland. Its participants, however, abandoned the proclamation of radical slogans and limited themselves to propaganda actions. Members of the Polish ALF were focused on the pacifist activity of making people aware of animal suffering. Occasionally, livestock farms were broken into and animals kept there were released. After 1996, the activity of the Polish branch practically ceased. In 2000, the Russian wing of the ALF carried out attacks on fur stores and meatpacking plants in Moscow, Sochi, and Krasnodar. That same year, the Medical Academy buildings in Moscow were burglarized. During the action, 119 frogs, 110 rats and 5 rabbits used for medical experiments were released<sup>41</sup>.

As mentioned above, SSCS was founded in 1977. The initiator was Paul Watson, who was removed from Greenpeace for his views contrary to the organization's doctrine of "non-violence" and for conducting a protest action involving the sinking of clubs used to kill seals in the water. Unlike Greenpeace, Watson believed that activists should not just stop at peaceful actions, but also develop a new strategy based on ecotage actions, because only they can permanently discourage the destruction of nature. According to him, respect for life should take precedence over respect for property that is used to take

---

<sup>39</sup> In 2010, a book was published in the U.S. by Dean Kuipers, titled *Operation Bite Back: Rod Coronado's War to Save American Wilderness*. In it, the author characterizes the character of Rodney Coronado and provides a history of his activities within the ALF and the FBI's investigation against the organization.

<sup>40</sup> J. Tomaszewicz, *Przemoc w ruchu ekologicznym...*, p. 201.

<sup>41</sup> A. Machniak, *Radykalizm i ekstremizm...*, p. 266.

life. He argued, however, that it was important to take every precaution possible when taking direct action so that no one involved would get hurt. According to the FBI, SSCS was the first organization to use sabotage that extended its activities beyond the borders of the United States. This has made ecoterrorism a global problem. The organization bought an ocean-going boat, and Watson and the volunteers who sailed on it disturbed fishermen who hunted marine animals (mostly whales, dolphins, and seals). The largest action carried out by the organization was the ramming and sinking of the whaling ship *Sierra* in Portuguese waters in 1979. The following year, Watson's group sank four more ships and carried out many smaller actions to interfere with the hunting of Canadian seals. The organization stepped up operations in 1986, the same year the International Whaling Commission, IWC, announced a memorandum for commercial whaling, yet Japan, South Korea, Norway, and the USSR continued whaling. On November 8, 1986, two SSCS activists broke into a whale processing plant near Reykjavik and destroyed machinery and equipment there worth about \$1.8 million, then sank two ships that were standing on the docks (losses were estimated at about \$2.8 million). In October 1998, members of the organization vowed to obstruct the revival of the whaling ritual practiced by the Makah Indians in Washington State. However, the attempt to thwart the hunt was met with determined resistance from the Indians, who pelted the organization's ship with stones. After the incident, SSCS activists decided not to disturb Makah-owned water bodies and lands with their presence anymore. During its 30-plus years of operation, the organization conducted numerous sabotage actions, including sinking 10 whaling ships, damaging more than a dozen others, and destroying dozens of nets used to catch fish. However, it should be noted that no one was killed or seriously injured during these actions<sup>42</sup>. In the summer of 2017, Japan passed new anti-terrorism legislation in conjunction with the Olympic Games scheduled for 2020 (postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Among other things, the new law makes the mere presence of eco-activist ships near whalers a terrorist offense. In 2017, SSCS Chief Watson announced he would abandon his efforts to block Japanese whalers<sup>43</sup>. In light of the new regulations, SSCS has declared that it will stop sending its ships to the Antarctic Ocean against Japanese whaling vessels. The organization also noted that its ships were tracked using Japanese military surveillance satellites. Watson recognized that these two reasons would affect the effectiveness of the operations conducted by the organization, he also stated that his organization

---

<sup>42</sup> E. Postuszna, *Ekstremizm ekologiczny* ..., p. 179-180.

<sup>43</sup> <https://biznesalert.pl/ekoterroryzm-ekologia-klimat-srodowisko/> [accessed: 18 II 2021].



could not compete with military technology<sup>44</sup>. On December 7, 2017, SSCS announced the acquisition of a third vessel, named MV Sharpie. During his maiden mission, he joined Operation Milagro in the Gulf of California and helped rescue endangered vaquita porpoises<sup>45</sup>.

The largest eco-terrorist organization in the U.S. was the group Earth First!, or EF! formed in 1980 by proponents of environmental extremism centered around Dave Foreman and Edward Abbey. It was one of the most famous and active organizations using the method of sabotage. The organization spoke out against logging, mining, road building, environmentally intrusive suburban development, and energy companies. Initially, the actions carried out by EF! were not particularly disruptive, and were more of a symbolic/happening nature, such as the March 21, 1981 demonstration on the Colorado River Bridge against the existence of the structure. Since the end of 1981, in addition to the tactics of civil disobedience and traditional pickets, the organization began to use radical methods to fight the enemies of “Mother Earth”: arson, destruction of heavy machinery, dismantling of high voltage lines, removal of signs from ski trails, toppling and destruction of billboards, sabotage. The most controversial method among those used was the aforementioned *monkeywrenching*. Arson attacks were carried out on corporate headquarters and high-voltage power lines near nuclear power plants were damaged. The organization also destroyed a helicopter spraying herbicide. Sabotage activities were undertaken by individuals or small groups. After 1983, when young people with a different perception of environmental problems joined the organization, EF split into two factions, increasingly at odds with each other. These were the ecocentric faction and the social justice faction. The ecocentric faction consisted mainly of people belonging to the first generation of the organization. They were usually over 30 years old and from the southwestern United States. Most of them were active in traditional environmental organizations before EF! was formed. According to them, the primary and only goal of the organization should be to fight for the welfare of nature as a whole. This fight was to be waged mainly through sabotage. The second faction, on the other hand, included younger people (up to twenty-somethings) who joined the organization between 1983 and 1985. Most of them were from the West Coast, mostly in Oregon and California, where they

---

<sup>44</sup> B. Doherty, *Sea Shepherd says it will abandon pursuit of Japanese whalers*, „The Guardian”, 29 VII 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/aug/29/sea-shepherd-says-it-will-abandon-pursuit-of-japanese-whalers> [accessed: 25 II 2018].

<sup>45</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20171208174807/http://www.seashepherd.org/news-and-commentary/news/sea-shepherd-launches-new-anti-poaching-vessel-mv-sharpie.html> [accessed: 8 XII 2017].



were active in peace movements and movements for free abortion. For them, the environmental crisis was one of many global problems that can be most effectively addressed through education. Although they participated in ecotage, they strongly preferred civil disobedience. The two factions had initially worked together in harmony, but after 1987 the ideological and personal animosities that had been hidden until then became evident and three years later led to the departure of most biocentrists from EF!. Also contributing to this was the formation of a cell within EF! called the Evan Mecham Eco-Terrorist International Conspiracy, EMETIC<sup>46</sup>, which was formed by some of EF!'s most radical activists. They made their presence known in November 1987 when they damaged a chairlift belonging to the Fairfield Snow Bowl ski resort in Arizona. The center's losses were estimated at more than \$200,000. The following year, the same ski resort and uranium mines near the Grand Canyon were targeted again. At the time, 34 power poles were damaged. In late May 1989, the three founders of the organization: Marc Davis, Margaret Millet, and Marc Baker were arrested by the FBI while destroying power lines carrying electricity from a nuclear power plant in Palo Verde, Arizona. The investigation revealed that this action was a rehearsal before conducting simultaneous attacks on nuclear plants in California, Arizona and Colorado. Subsequent arrests ended the group's activities. In 1990, after a series of arrests and ongoing disputes over the ethical aspects of ecotage, some EF! members, led by Foreman, left the organization. Those who remained abandoned sabotage actions because they believed that nature conservation would be better served by educational and propaganda actions<sup>47</sup>.

The disintegration of EF! structures also occurred in the UK. In 1992, during a meeting of the members of the national structures of the British EF!, the organization decided to abandon the tactics of ecotage and decided to "neither condemn nor accept" this method of action. Some members of the organization who did not want to renounce ecotage formed the underground ELF, mentioned above, in Brighton. They were inspired by the name Animal Liberation Front, and in September 1993 there was a close collaboration between the organizations. The following year the ELF, like the ALF before it, established its structures within the United States. Initially, the collaboration between the organizations consisted of posting information about ELF activities and ideology on the ALF website. Since the mid-1990s, ELF and

---

<sup>46</sup> Evan Mecham was the conservative governor of Arizona. EMETIC is also the name of a vomiting remedy.

<sup>47</sup> E. Połuszna, *Ekstremizm ekologiczny ...*, p. 181-185.

ALF began taking joint actions<sup>48</sup>. In October 1996, a truck owned by the U.S. Forest Service in Detroit was set on fire. In July 1997, a horse slaughterhouse in Redmond, Washington, was set on fire (damage estimated at \$1 million), and in November of the same year, a wild horse pen owned by the Bureau of Land Management was set on fire (exposing that agency to approximately \$500,000 in losses). The following year, a similar fate befell the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal Damage Control buildings in Olympia, the Washington state capital (losses totaled \$23 million). The FBI estimated that the aftermath of the ELF and ALF's ecoterrorist collaboration between 1996 and 2002 resulted in the commission of more than 600 different crimes and an estimated \$43 million in losses. In March 2001, six months before the attacks on the WTC and Pentagon, the FBI identified the ELF as the most dangerous domestic terrorist group. On October 7, the day U.S. forces attacked Afghanistan, The Washington Times, in an editorial titled *War against eco-terrorists*, called the ELF and ALF an eco-Al-Qaeda<sup>49</sup>. Not only the sabotage actions, but also the ELF's principles, its ideology, and the perfectly cooperating underground structures contributed to such opinions. The organization preached, among other things, the following principles: to inflict the greatest possible economic damage on entities and individuals profiting from the exploitation and destruction of the environment; to make the public aware of the atrocities committed against the Earth and all the species inhabiting it; and to take all necessary preventive measures against harming any living being. The Resistance magazine published by ELF argued:

In keeping with the principles of justice, freedom, and equal treatment of all innocent life, part of the global revolutionary movement no longer limits its potential to effect change by appealing to a misguided, inadequate ideology that rejects the use of violence. Arms must be grabbed without hesitation to make justice a reality and provide the necessary protection for our planet, which we have failed so badly with decades of legal skirmishes, protests and economic sabotage. Think about it: if someone clamped their hands around your throat, choking you, would you collect signatures on a petition politely asking them to stop their attacker? Would you remain passive, limiting yourself to a symbolic gesture of non-cooperation? We hope you would defend yourself by all means possible. The only way to

---

<sup>48</sup> S. Parson, *Understanding the Ideology of the Earth Liberation Front*, „Green Theory&Praxis: The Journal of Ecopedagogy” 2008, No. 2, p. 52, [https://www.academia.edu/518248/Understanding\\_the\\_Ideology\\_of\\_the\\_Earth\\_Liberation\\_Front?email\\_work\\_card=title](https://www.academia.edu/518248/Understanding_the_Ideology_of_the_Earth_Liberation_Front?email_work_card=title) [accessed: 11 II 2021].

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2001/oct/7/20011007-025834-9663r/> [accessed: 7 XI 2001].

harm a corporation is to hit it in the pocketbook, which is why economic sabotage is so effective.<sup>50</sup>

Thus the ELF combined ecological (“collapse of industry”), anti-capitalist (“scare the rich”) and anarchist (“undermine the foundations of the state”) goals. Anti-capitalism has been closely linked to environmentalism because (...) *the lust for profit, generated and reinforced by capitalist society, is destroying all life on the planet*<sup>51</sup>. The method to achieve these intentions was to be direct action. The ELF, which was organized along the lines of the ALF, used the same strategy of *leaderless resistance*<sup>52</sup>. Supporters of the movement were told to act alone or to join small groups of two to six people who were friends, had known each other for a long time and shared common views. They were told to take the initiative into their own hands and form their own cells, which would operate independently of each other, contact each other sporadically, and often not know of each other’s existence. They were to appear under different names. The same activists used different aliases and were therefore suspected of belonging to several different organizations: EF!, ALF, Justice Department or Militant Direct Action Task Force. Each cell was responsible only for its own actions, so once a group was cracked and its members arrested, other groups could not be reached. The glue that united them was ideology<sup>53</sup>.

Enormous media publicity and political impact resulted from the “Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty” campaign, SHAC, waged from 1999 to 2002 against Huntingdon Live Sciences, HLS<sup>54</sup> and its affiliates. The campaign

---

<sup>50</sup> „Resistance Magazine”, Spring 2010, vol. 2, No. 1, p. 54-55, <http://www.arissamediaigroup.org/book/resistance-magazine-2/> [accessed: 24 I 2022].

<sup>51</sup> J. Tomasiewicz, *Przemoc w ruchu ekologicznym...*, p. 196.

<sup>52</sup> This strategy was first articulated in an essay by Colonel Ulius Louis Amoss (1895-1961), a CIA officer. It was later adapted to the actions of American white supremacists by Louis Beam. Later, the *leaderless resistance* strategy was used to organize ecoterrorist structures by Sam Love and David Obst, which they described in their book, *Environmental Action Says: Ecotage!* published in 1972. This model of action can be defined as leaderless resistance, led by a network of loosely affiliated cells with full autonomy to organize and carry out operations. They are united only by ideology. A variation of this action model is lone wolf tactics. More on the use of *leaderless resistance* strategies in ecoterrorism. See T.P. Bondaroff, *Bitter Green: An Examination of the Strategy of Ecotage*, 2009, p. 72-78, [https://www.academia.edu/238985/Bitter\\_Green\\_The\\_Strategy\\_of\\_Ecotage](https://www.academia.edu/238985/Bitter_Green_The_Strategy_of_Ecotage) [accessed: 12 II 2021].

<sup>53</sup> J. Tomasiewicz, *Przemoc w ruchu ekologicznym...*, p. 197.

<sup>54</sup> HLS was the largest laboratory conducting experiments on animals. The results obtained here were used in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. The laboratory was founded in 1951 in the United Kingdom. Subsequent HLS laboratories were established in the United States and Japan.

included intimidation of HLS employees, customers, and cooperators. Their home addresses and phone numbers were posted online with a note: *Wanted for complicity in animal torture!*, threatening emails were sent to HLS associates and family members, buildings were graffitied or daubed with red paint, vehicles were vandalized, packages of feces and dead rodents were sent to employees, the company's CEO Brian Cass was severely beaten with batons, and low explosive devices were planted. The publication of the HLS shareholder list caused the company's stock price to drop significantly. The banks lending to the company's operations and its insurer withdrew their cooperation. John Levis of the FBI - during a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing entirely devoted to SHAC - said about 100 companies have pulled out of working with HLS, including Stephens Investment Bank, Citibank Marsh Insurance, Aetna Insurance, Deloitte & Touche, Johnson and Johnson or Merck<sup>55</sup>.

In late 2000, a campaign against off-road vehicles developed in the United States. The primary motivation for the action was that these vehicles emit far more exhaust than passenger cars. Attacks that threaten human life have become a new strategy for operations, including the 2001 arson of a tanker truck with a driver inside in Eugene. Some ecoterrorism experts believed that environmental extremists might even use weapons of mass destruction. As early as 1970, the Weather Underground movement planned to acquire biological agents and contaminate the water with them. Two years later, ecoterrorists attempted an attack using several radioactive agents. In July 2000, unknown environmental extremists laid out three jars of cyanide compounds in downtown Minneapolis in protest of a genetic engineering conference being held there. According to some opinions expressed 20 years ago, it will be possible to carry out such an attack in the future - meaning now. Most extremist organizations: Earth First!, Animal Liberation Front, Earth Liberation Front, Vegan Front, Gaia Liberation Front, Justice Department, Militant Direct Action Task Force, David Organization, Paint Panthers, Animal Avengers, Meat Free Mission were to be ready to take any action. Besides, their activists did not hide about it at all. One of them, Keith Mann of ALF, said in December 1998: *No one has died yet, but the time will come*<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> *Eco-terrorism Specifically Examining Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty („SHAC”)*, Hearing before the Committee on Environment and Public Works United States Senate, October 26, 2005, p. 5-8, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-09shrg39521/pdf/CHRG-109shrg39521.pdf> [accessed: 12 II 2021].

<sup>56</sup> J. Tomaszewicz, *Przemoc w ruchu ekologicznym...*, p. 204-205.

## Ecoterrorism in Poland

The threat of environmental terrorism in the United States was incomparably greater than in European countries. The exception is the United Kingdom, which has also experienced a large-scale phenomenon, but comparatively less than the United States. Violence by ecoterrorists has already occurred in many countries on our continent. Although ecocentric ideology has penetrated Poland, it has not had much impact on the activities of organized groups of environmentalists or individuals. On the other hand, incidents of violence were recorded in a series of events directed against specific companies and institutions that threatened the environment. As already mentioned, a branch of the ALF was established in Poland in 1988, but it did not promote radical slogans, instead focusing on conducting educational campaigns to make people aware of animal suffering. The SHAC campaign was also announced to be brought to our country, but its activists acted for a short period in the first decade of the 21st century and were basically concerned with promoting vegetarianism<sup>57</sup>.

In Poland, ecoterrorism had different faces. The media publicized the most spectacular actions of eco-blackmailers, because the activity of alleged ecoterrorists was usually reduced to blackmail. Investors quietly negotiated with them, pouring large sums of money into their statutory activities. Environmentalists have also been used by lobbyists to beat the competition. The ingenuity of the eco-blackmailers was high. They often promised that they would not block investments if they received lavish remuneration, for example, for their cooperation in the implementation of various projects, analyses or environmental expertise, even though such had already been carried out by the relevant institutions in accordance with the law and in compliance with all requirements. But sabotage actions were also recorded. In recent years, there has been much publicity about the destruction of an apartment building under construction in an explosion. The incident occurred on the morning of July 17, 2018 in Bielsko Biała. An explosion of a converted propane-butane gas cylinder caused the apartment building to partially collapse. The second explosion only smeared the wall of another building. Nobody was hurt then, because there were no workers on the construction site, but the material losses amounted to 1.2 million PLN. Remnants of an explosive device were found in the rubble and similar devices prepared to be set off in two adjacent buildings. Ten days

---

<sup>57</sup> E. Pośluszna, *Ekstremizm ekologiczny...*, p. 114; <http://www.wegetarianie.pl/forum/ogolnie/2614/> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

later, a 7-page manifesto letter appeared online. It showed that the perpetrator of the explosion was a female person signed as “Pocahontas” who was acting on behalf of the organization Brygada Wschód. The content of the message included, among other things, the phrase: *You have until August 6 to stop work. By October 31, the blocks are to be demolished, the construction site cleaned up, the fences removed, and you are to leave the land. And in a few years the forest will grow again, as it once was*<sup>58</sup>. The author threatened that otherwise more buildings will be demolished. Letters with the same content, sent by traditional mail, were also sent to several editorial offices, ecological organizations, the Municipal Office in Bielsko-Biała and the police. The author stated that he was speaking on behalf of all residents of the “Sarni Stok” housing estate. Residents of blocks of apartments and single-family houses adjacent to the construction site of apartment buildings admitted that they do not like the development of more green areas. They argued with officials about the new development. The author of the letters indicated that they were made with precautions, without fingerprints, osmological or biological traces identifying the printer or anything else that could be used by investigators. On the basis of an expert opinion, the prosecutor established an e-mail address and IP address assigned to a public wi-fi connection in the branch of one of the banks in Bielsko-Biała. Mateusz H., a student at several Silesian universities who was arrested on February 25, 2019, was identified as the perpetrator of the explosions. He was also charged with burning down an excavator at the same construction site, which occurred in November 2017, eight months before the apartment building blew up. Back then, there was still an empty lot there. A printed sheet was found at the site: *Go away from here. Leave the land alone. This is the first and last warning*<sup>59</sup>. In December 2019, the prosecutor’s office sent an indictment to the District Court in Bielsko-Biała against Mateusz H. He was facing 20 charges, including defrauding various institutions and, most importantly, blowing up an apartment block under construction. In July 2021, Mateusz H. was sentenced to six and a half years in prison, a fine, and restitution for the damage he caused<sup>60</sup>.

Even greater losses than the developer building in Bielsko-Biała were suffered by the owner of logging machines in the Szklarska Poręba Forest District.

---

<sup>58</sup> <https://tvn24.pl/magazyn-tvn24/byly-bloki-bedzie-las-do-poniedzialku-ma-was-tu-nie-byc,167,2880> [accessed: 30 VII 2018].

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2019-02-26/zatrzymano-podejrzanego-o-wysadzenie-jesienia-ubieglego-roku-budynku-w-bielsku-bialej/> [accessed: 26 II 2019].

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2021-07-19/bielsko-biala-sad-wyda-wyrok-w-sprawie-wysadzenia-bloku-mateuszowi-h-grozi-10-lat-wiezienia/> [accessed: 20 VII 2021].

On April 9, 2019, unknown perpetrators, masquerading as the Green Front, completely burned a harvester and attempted to burn a forwarder. The value of one machine is about 1.5 million PLN. Three weeks earlier, another contractor's tractor was destroyed in the same forestry district. The vehicle's windows were smashed and holes were made in the body. The losses suffered were so severe that the owners of forestry companies in the area set a reward of 20,000 PLN for their help in catching the criminal<sup>61</sup>.

The action of Greenpeace Poland in Bełchatów Power Plant was described in the media in terms of ecoterrorism. On November 27, 2018, activists managed to enter the power plant site through the entrance gate, thanks to the fact that they disguised themselves as employees of a company belonging to PGE Group. They then climbed the cooling tower, which threatened both their safety and threatened to disrupt plant operations. The activists demanded Poland's departure from coal in the power industry by 2030<sup>62</sup>. The organization organized several more organizations in Bełchatów. In June 2019, a nighttime projection of an image of Mateusz Morawiecki on the cooling tower of the power plant reminded the Prime Minister of the urgent need to protect the climate, which was their response to Poland's blocking of the European Union's adoption of a climate neutrality goal by 2050. The Prime Minister's photo was accompanied by the caption "Shame" in Polish and English. In December 2019, a likeness of the Prime Minister was displayed on the same cooler with the words "Srsly?!"<sup>63</sup>. The action took place a few hours after the end of the Council of Europe meeting, at which Poland did not accept the commitment to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Both actions were performed from outside the power plant grounds. In turn, in June 2020, activists of Greenpeace and the Youth Climate Strike unfolded a giant sign near the power plant reminding the public of the need to reduce greenhouse gases by 65 percent by 2030 across the EU. The action was organized on the eve of a European Union summit on the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Europe faced with the choice of a "green recovery" after a crisis of policies that ignore climate change, activists say<sup>64</sup>.

---

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.energetyka24.com/ekoterroryzm-w-polsce-tajemniczy-zielony-front-podpalil-harwestery-na-dolnym-slasku> [accessed: 11 IV 2019].

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> <https://publicystyka.ngo.pl/klimatyczne-fiasko-premiera-morawieckiego-greenpeace-pyta-serio> [accessed: 14 XII 2019].

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2019-06-22/twarz-premiera-morawieckiego-z-napisem-wstyd-wyswietlona-na-elektrowni/> [accessed: 14 II 2021].



Greenpeace actions in Bełchatów can hardly be classified as ecoterrorism, like many others carried out by environmentalists. If we assume that the actions of some organizations target against entities conducting activities harmful to the environment and even if they undertake illegal actions to achieve their goals, they cannot be called ecoterrorist organizations, as some media have described them. Some of the disruptive actions of activists, such as demonstrations and pickets in unauthorized places or chaining oneself to trees, especially against companies that destroy nature, are not eco-terrorist events, although they are illegal under the current law. For example, in 2017 in the Białowieża Forest, activists from Greenpeace and the Dzika Polska Foundation protested for several weeks against tree felling. They repeatedly blocked heavy equipment used for logging. This was accompanied by demonstrations by ecologists in Warsaw and other Polish cities and the occupation of the headquarters of the General Directorate of State Forests.

Also of interest is another incident that was deemed ecoterrorism, even though it was lawful and conducted in defense of the law. This is about the events in the Rospuda Valley in 2004. Environmental organizations protested against the construction of a road through an area protected under EU nature conservation law. Environmentalists wanted to block the investment, which by law could not be carried out, but which was demanded by the government of the day and the inhabitants of Augustów. Activists spoke out against the residents and the government. Ecological organizations established the Coalition to Save the Rospuda Valley and within its framework organized blockades, protests; among others, its members tied themselves to trees. In October 2004 Greenpeace activists climbed on the roof of the Ministry of Infrastructure building and hung a banner with the slogan: "Do not destroy the Green Lungs of Poland. About 30 people from Poland, Austria, Hungary and the Netherlands took part in a peaceful, international protest in front of the Ministry building. The event was commented in the national media, thanks to which the problem of areas threatened by the construction of Via Baltica was brought to the awareness of a large part of the Polish society<sup>65</sup>. Determination of ecological organizations and a great resonance of the action in Europe caused that the construction of the Augustów bypass, being a part of Via Baltica, omitted the Rospuda Valley. In 2019, there were fears that such a fate awaits the construction of the S16 road in Mazury, especially since posters protesting the investment were placed along roads in the region<sup>66</sup>.

---

<sup>65</sup> <https://bagna.pl/mokre-tematy/194-dolina-rospudy-historia-i-tlo-konfliktu> [accessed: 14 II 2021].

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/budowa-s16-jak-walka-o-doline-rospudy-ministerstwo-infrastruktury-obawia-się-ostrych-protestow-6381246601533569a.html> [accessed: 14 II 2021].



After successive amendments to the 1997 Law on the Protection of Animals, increasing the penalties for inhumane treatment of animals, there has been a heated discussion about the powers of Animal Rescue volunteers. Often accompanied by cameras and under the protection of police they have taken away neglected cattle or horses from farmers or dogs from professional kennels. Farmers and breeders who felt robbed by Animal Rescue took their cases to court and often won. The former president of Animal Rescue received a conviction for stealing dogs, and the organization's operations were suspended and a probation officer was brought in<sup>67</sup>. Thus, one does not have to be an ecoterrorist in the literal sense of the term to be convicted of pro-environmental activity if it is illegal. Opponents of Animal Rescue directly call their volunteers "eco-terrorists" acting within the letter of the law. In turn, journalist Rafał Ziemkiewicz called members of environmental organizations "ecological ideologists" who have nothing to do with ecology. According to him, ecology, as the name suggests, is one of the fields of science and to become an ecologist one needs studies and specific knowledge. What he left out in silence is that politicians from left to right, not environmentalist organizations, are behind the changes in the law to increase animal protection. In addition, journalists themselves, with no college degree in biology or environmental studies, speak out on environmental issues, causing them to label almost every incident as ecoterrorism. An example is Łukasz Warzecha, who faces accusations that his statements regarding climate change are ideologized, not based on facts, and that his "common sense" is contrary to the state of scientific knowledge. The same goes for the claims he makes about the activities of environmental organizations<sup>68</sup>. It is worth paying attention to the portal [ekoterroryzm.pl](http://ekoterroryzm.pl), of which Warzecha is a contributor. On this portal you can find information about various ecoterrorist events in the world or articles on ecoterrorism reprinted from other media. Many of the texts therein are difficult to agree with. There are also contributions from experts or people who want to be considered as such. Politicians sometimes come up with radical green initiatives themselves. The authors of the draft of the stricter regulations wanted members of a pro-animal organization protected by police officers to be able to enter the property of any citizen and check the welfare of the animals on the property without a warrant from the prosecutor or local veterinarian. Later, it was also one of

---

<sup>67</sup> <https://swiatrolnika.info/ekoterroryzm-haracze-porwania-i-szantaz> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

<sup>68</sup> <https://naukaoklimacie.pl/aktualnosci/warzecha-od-rzeczy-w-do-rzeczy-369> [accessed: 15 II 2021]; <https://www.tygodnikprzeglad.pl/prawdziwy-szwindel-klimatyczny/> [accessed: 15 II 2021]; <https://miastojestnasze.org/dziwny-przypadek-lukasza-warzechy/> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

the demands of the famous “five for the animals,” a bill drafted by Deputy Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński and opposed by some PiS members as well as coalition partners<sup>69</sup>. Its enactment would lead to the elimination of the entire fur industry, which directly and indirectly employs 50,000 people (opponents of the bill have even talked about 100,000). These calculations are based on the fact that Poland is one of the world’s leading producers of natural fur pelts, after Denmark and China, and the Polish fur industry generates profits of 1.5 billion PLN per year<sup>70</sup>. The bill also included a provision to limit the ritual slaughter of animals. Meat obtained in this way is exported by Poland to Jewish and Muslim communities in many European countries and to Muslim countries (the draft allowed slaughter only for the domestic market). Unsurprisingly, the bill caused heated debate and protests of breeders and people living on production and processing of fur. Some journalists from right-wing media took their side. They gave total criticism not to the legislator, but to environmental organizations, even though they had nothing to do with the bill, but were in favor of voting it through, as were most young people in Poland. “Five for the Animals” could be a legal regulation of the protection of farm animal life, which is sought by various environmental organizations, which by their controversial actions expose breeders to losses (e.g. by releasing animals kept in cages). Organizations such as Viva, Basta and Otwarte Klatki organize in Poland the “International

---

<sup>69</sup> The bill provided for: „(...)

- banning the breeding of fur-bearing animals for the purpose of obtaining fur from them, with the exception of the rabbit;
- a complete ban on the use of animals for entertainment and spectacle purposes, which includes the use of animals in circus activities;
- limiting ritual slaughter in Poland;
- increasing the competence of NGOs in the field of animal protection and allowing police officers to assist in the collection of mistreated animals;
- prohibiting the tethering of animals on a permanent basis, and temporary tethering will be allowed for tethers of a minimum length of 6 meters, providing the animal with the use of an area of at least 20 square meters;
- prohibiting the use of spikes when temporarily tethering animals;
- more frequent inspections of shelters, and giving the veterinary inspection the power to impose fines and thus end the keeping of animals in shelters in poor conditions;
- introducing a uniform definition of a pen, with minimum dimensions and technical standard;
- the creation of an Animal Council under the Minister of Agriculture.”

For more on the bill see <https://www.radiozet.pl/Co-gdzie-kiedy-jak/piatka-dla-zwierzat-projekt-ustawy-tresc-co-to-kiedy-glosowanie> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

<sup>70</sup> <https://prawo.pl/56196-ekoterroryzm-nowotwor-zzerajacy-polske/> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

Fur Free Day”, during which they organize pickets and happenings in front of fur farms (e.g. mink in Goleniów powiat) under the slogan “Closing the farms”<sup>71</sup>.

## Statistics and conclusions

In an article published in August 2020 on the Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute’s platform, MDPI, Elżbieta Pośluszna opined that ecologically motivated violence is not a declining phenomenon. In the Animal Rights Militia article mentioned by this author and posted on the Animal Liberation Press Office website in May 2019, the last record of this organization’s activities ends between 2010 and 2012. At the time, there was vandalism and threats against fur farm owners in Sweden<sup>72</sup>. In her monograph entitled *Ekstremizm ekologiczny, źródła - przejawy - perspektywy* published in 2012 and cited several times by the author in this article, Pośluszna states: *It does not appear that the number of sabotage actions will decrease significantly any time soon. Rather, the reverse is to be expected, especially as extremist environmental organizations have steadily broadened the scope of their objectives over the past two decades*<sup>73</sup>. From a study by Sue-Ming Yang published in December 2018 in the “Journal of Quantitative Criminology” it follows that the number of total ecoterrorism incidents that occurred in the United States between 1977 and 2011 was 1141. Included are the ALF and ELF organizations, which carried out 593 attacks, and 83 percent of those attacks resulted in property damage. Between 1977 and 1993, the number of attacks never exceeded 10 per year. The highest number of attacks was reported in 2000 with about 110 and in 2003 with about 70, only to decline steadily in the following years to only a few in 2011.<sup>74</sup> The number of 1141 eco-terrorist incidents reported by Sue-Ming Yang differs significantly from the number listed by the FBI. According to the FBI, the total number of crimes committed by radical environmentalists in the U.S. from 1979 to 2008 was about 2,000, and the damage they caused by their

---

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.ekoterroryzm.pl/index.php/przypadki-ekoterroryzmu/18-dzien-bez-futra-ekoterrorysty-uderzaja-w-polska-gospodarke> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/AnimalLiberationPressOffic/posts/animal-rights-militiathe-animal-rights-militia-arm-is-a-banner-used-by-animal-ri/2278788152207848/> [accessed: 17 II 2021].

<sup>73</sup> E. Pośluszna, *Ekstremizm ekologiczny...*, p. 269.

<sup>74</sup> Sue-Ming Yang, I-Chin Jen, *An Evaluation of Displacement and Diffusion Effects on Eco-Terrorist Activities After Police Interventions*, „Journal of Quantitative Criminology” 2018, vol. 34, No. 4, p. 8, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320213750\\_An\\_Evaluation\\_of\\_Displacement\\_and\\_Diffusion\\_Effects\\_on\\_Eco-Terrorist\\_Activities\\_After\\_Police\\_Interventions](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320213750_An_Evaluation_of_Displacement_and_Diffusion_Effects_on_Eco-Terrorist_Activities_After_Police_Interventions) [accessed: 18 II 2021].

actions is estimated at \$110 million<sup>75</sup>. Pośluszna, using data from the Foundation for Biomedical Research, reports that between 1981 and 2005, environmental organizations committed 529 crimes in the U.S., including 53 arsons, 123 thefts, 36 bomb attacks, 238 acts of vandalism and 79 acts of harassment. A visible increase in the incidents occurred after 1999. While in 1998 there were only 7 incidents, the following year there were already 27. In the following years, the number of such crimes were: 2000 - 28, 2001 - 42, 2002 - 17, 2003 - 101, 2004 - 99 and 2005 - 82<sup>76</sup>. When looking at the statistics, it is important to note that according to information compiled by Animal Rights Extremism.info, there were 27 major ecoterrorist events worldwide between April 2012 and September 5, 2016. Between 2010 and 2019, animal rights organizations committed approximately 2520 criminal acts worldwide, including sabotage, arson, and animal release actions. The number of these incidents by year was as follows: w 2010 - 370, 2011 - 387, 2012 - 251, 2013 - 241, 2014 - 214, 2015 - 139, 2016 - 124, 2017 - 225, 2018 - 3 06 and in 2019 - 264<sup>77</sup>. In contrast, according to a U.S. Department of Homeland Security report released in May 2013, there were 239 bombings and arsons perpetrated by eco-terrorists in the U.S. between 1995 and 2010 (with no casualties). The number of incidents gradually increased from 1995 to 2001 and dropped sharply in 2002 (9 incidents), only to rise again to 27 incidents in 2003. The following years saw alternating ups and downs, but overall the number of incidents declined, only to decrease sharply between 2006 and 2010 compared to the 2003-2005 period<sup>78</sup>. Other analyses also point to a marked reduction in the number of attacks carried out by ecoterrorists. A graphical depiction of these events resembles a sine wave, with its axis clearly decreasing after 2003, with a larger upward anomaly only in 2010-2011<sup>79</sup>.

After analyzing the numbers cited, it is not justified to speak of a great threat from ecoterrorism. The FBI's 2005 identification of ecoterrorism as the greatest

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>77</sup> E. Pośluszna, *A Prognostic View on the Ideological Determinants of Violence in the Radical Ecological Movement*, „Sustainability” 2020, t. 12, nr 16, <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/12/16/6536/html> [accessed: 18 II 2021].

<sup>78</sup> US Department of Homeland Security, *An Overview of Bombing and Arson Attacks by Environmental and Animal Rights Extremists in the United States, 1995-2010*, 2013, p. 8, [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OPSR\\_TP\\_TEVUS\\_Bombing-Arson-Attacks\\_Environmental-Animal%20Rights-Extremists\\_1309-508.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OPSR_TP_TEVUS_Bombing-Arson-Attacks_Environmental-Animal%20Rights-Extremists_1309-508.pdf) [accessed: 18 II 2021].

<sup>79</sup> P.A. Spadaro, *Climate Change, Environmental Terrorism, Eco-Terrorism and Emerging Threats*, „Journal of Strategic Security” 2020, vol. 13, No. 4, p. 66, <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1863&context=jss> [accessed: 17 XI 2021].

domestic threat to the United States<sup>80</sup> is not currently confirmed by statistical data, but even years ago the number of incidents of this nature was much lower than the acts of violence committed by far-right and racist organizations. Between 1970 and 2011, the organizations mentioned above carried out more than 500 attacks in the United States, but only fatal incidents are included in this count<sup>81</sup>. In order to illustrate this issue, it is worth comparing the number of crimes committed by eco-terrorists in the United States with the number of crimes committed in Italy on grounds other than environmental protection. According to the information contained in the FBI report, in the U.S. between 1979-2008, ecoterrorists committed approximately 2000 crimes, while in Italy the total number of non-ecoterrorist attacks is estimated at 6393: 702 in 1975, 1198 in 1976, 2128 in 1977 or 2365 between March 16, 1978 (the day Aldo Moro was abducted by the Red Brigades) and March 1979.<sup>82</sup> After analyzing these data, the conclusion arises that the threat of ecoterrorists in relation to the actual manifestations of their activity is overestimated by the FBI.

While it is true that they caused a great deal of property damage, it is difficult to see this condition as a threat to U.S. national security. This is also confirmed by the results of a study by Michael Loadenthal, who, after analyzing the activities of animalists, states that as many as 88 percent of the acts committed by them are acts of vandalism. They most frequently destroyed fur and leather goods and food in stores and manufacturing facilities, 7 percent were acts of sabotage, and 5 percent were arson and attempts to set fire to facilities<sup>83</sup>. The phenomenon of ecoterrorism in the U.S. could not have posed much of a threat, since research on ecoterrorism in the U.S. ceased after September 11, 2001, and no preventive measures were taken against people who acted in support of it. So what changed between September 11, 2001, and 2005 when the FBI identified ecoterrorism as the greatest domestic security threat to the United States? Rather, not much. According to the author, this may have been an attempt to divert attention from the ever-present threat of Islamic extremism and the military operations

---

<sup>80</sup> T.A. Michaud, *Ekoterroryzm: kulisy...*

<sup>81</sup> C. DeBruin, *Right-Wing Extremism in the United States*, Akron 2019, p. 3, [https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2024&context=honors\\_research\\_projects](https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2024&context=honors_research_projects) [accessed: 22 II 2021].

<sup>82</sup> J. Czaja, *Terroryzm polityczny we Włoszech*, in: *Terroryzm polityczny*, J. Muszyński (ed.), Warszawa 1981, p. 207.

<sup>83</sup> M. Loadenthal, „Eco-Terrorism”: *An Incident-Driven History of Attack (1973-2010)*, „Journal for the Study of Radicalism” 2017, vol. 11, No. 2, p. 13-14, [https://www.academia.edu/33263882/\\_2017\\_Eco\\_Terrorism\\_An\\_Incident\\_Driven\\_History\\_of\\_Attack\\_1973\\_2010\\_email\\_work\\_card=thumbnail](https://www.academia.edu/33263882/_2017_Eco_Terrorism_An_Incident_Driven_History_of_Attack_1973_2010_email_work_card=thumbnail) [accessed: 22 II 2021].

conducted by U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, which have resulted in an increasing number of dead and wounded American soldiers. Nor did the alarmist predictions of [ekoterroryzm.pl](http://ekoterroryzm.pl), for which 2018 was supposed to pose a particular threat to the energy sector in the US, come true. The portal based its conclusions on an unspecified study by U.S. analysts and an increase in incidents over the past two years by the so-called Green Antifa<sup>84</sup>. Indeed, the number of these incidents rose steadily - from 124 in 2016 to 225 in 2017 to reach 306 incidents in 2018. However, nothing particularly dangerous happened in the U.S. power industry that year. In addition, in the following year, the number of incidents decreased to 264<sup>85</sup>.

The analysis shows that the number of ecoterrorist events, including those involving the most radical methods of ecotage, is slowly but steadily decreasing worldwide. It's too early to predict the decline of ecoterrorism, but we can certainly speak of a growing decline in violent environmentalist activity. They are moving away from destroying machinery and equipment and other actions that bring material damage, instead focusing on the use of non-violent resistance (without threat to health and life). This trend is not influenced by events that occurred in particular years of the second decade of the 21st century. The reduced number of aggressive environmental actions is the result of several circumstances. Above all, there has been an increase in the environmental awareness of societies and governments. This has taken place not without the participation of environmental organizations, including violent ones. An example of this is the Japanese whaling fleet, which announced in 2011 the withdrawal of its aircrafts from the Southern Ocean. This was the result of whaling ship crews being prevented from catching these mammals by vessels belonging to the SSCS<sup>86</sup>. However, in 2019, Japan withdrew from its membership in the IWC banning whaling and restarted whaling. Whaling is used by several other countries, including Iceland and Norway. Although international trade in whale meat has been banned, the illegal trade still thrives. Offshore whaling is permitted in Norway, Denmark (Greenland) and Japan. In Alaska and the Philippines, whales can be harvested for subsistence. Despite growing public

---

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.ekoterroryzm.pl/index.php/przypadki-ekoterroryzmu/23-ekoterroryzm-wsrod-najwiekszych-zagrozen-2018-roku> [accessed: 22 II 2021].

<sup>85</sup> US Department of Homeland Security, *An Overview...*, p. 8.

<sup>86</sup> <https://pracownia.org.pl/pracownia-aktualnosci/244-w-obronie-wielorybow-na-swiecie-zwyciestwo-sea-shepherd> [accessed: 18 II 2021].

awareness, many indigenous peoples are insisting that their rights to traditional cetacean hunting be restored<sup>87</sup>.

The International Fund for Animal Welfare, IFAW, one of the largest wildlife conservation organizations, played a major role in ending the commercial seal hunt in Canada. In 1983, Europe banned trade in all white harp seal products, which helped save more than 1 million of these animals. IFAW is active in more than 40 countries, but seals are still hunted, including in Sweden<sup>88</sup>. Much has been contributed to the conservation of fauna and flora by *the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, done in Washington on March 3, 1973*<sup>89</sup> (CITES), also known as the Washington Convention. Poland ratified accession to the Convention on December 12, 1989, and three months later it became effective<sup>90</sup>. Implementation of the provisions of this convention in many countries raises voices of opposition due to the fact that products made from the skins of crocodiles (caimans, alligators), constrictors or ostrich eggs bred in Asian countries, Africa and the USA are not allowed to be traded. The entry into many European countries of articles made from raw materials obtained from these animals risks confiscation and fiscal liability, despite being in possession of certificates that the imported items come from breeding animals.

A large impact on the decrease in the number of ecoterrorist incidents is the tightening of laws, including high financial penalties imposed on the perpetrators of these incidents, if, of course, they are caught and the criminal acts are proven. In some countries, such as the U.S. and Brazil, these circumstances do not play as much of a role because livestock owners can use firearms when protecting their property. The same was true for logging companies. They hired security guards to guard the machines at night or designated armed employees for this activity. At the same time, one can observe opposite situations, e.g., in February 2020, Brazilian authorities ordered their armed forces to support the efforts of environmentalists to fight deforestation in the Amazon. In the United States, state law can diverge significantly from federal law in prosecuting perpetrators of ecoterrorism incidents. In the case of ecotage targeting oil pipelines, refineries, power plants, power and railroad lines, chemical companies and LNG terminals, the law is strict, treating such cases as

---

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.mojanorwegia.pl/aktualnosci/norwegia-ulatwi-polowy-wielorybow-resort-idzie-na-reke-wielorybnikom-17514.html> [accessed: 18 II 2021]; <https://www.defence24.pl/japonia-rozpoczyna-wojnez-wielorybami-niedziela> [accessed: 18 II 2021].

<sup>88</sup> [https://pl.qaz.wiki/wiki/International\\_Fund\\_for\\_Animal\\_Welfare](https://pl.qaz.wiki/wiki/International_Fund_for_Animal_Welfare) [accessed: 18 II 2021].

<sup>89</sup> Journal of Laws of 1991, No. 27, item 112.

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.gov.pl/web/klimat/konwencja-waszyngtonska-cites> [accessed: 18 II 2021].



simple sabotage. In contrast, many other incidents are considered vandalism. Some states have enacted their own laws imposing very severe penalties on offenders who destroy GM crops and animal farms<sup>91</sup>. Also, the aforementioned SSCS received a court restraining order against Japanese whaling aircrafts for using aggressive methods that endangered the lives of sailors, and officials from Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S. announced that they would be sending ships to protect Japanese sailors.

The changes adopted by many countries in favor of nature conservation have the effect of weakening the message of radical pro-environmental ideology and causing a visible decline in the activity of eco-terrorists. Direct actions are already organized without violence and threat factor. Often these seem like disconnected events, but they allow organizations to break through to the media and give them a chance to focus as much public attention as possible on an issue. Greenpeace is no longer seen as the enemy, and is increasingly a partner for conversation. It is hard to overestimate their role in organizing protests against the clearing of tropical rainforests and the establishment of oil palm plantations on these lands in Southeast Asia and Central America. Despite the existence of large areas of non-forested land, growers prefer to establish new plantations on forest-covered land to generate additional income from timber sales used to cover plantation establishment costs. In Indonesia and Guatemala, authorities sent in the military against protesting residents (and they weren't environmentalists) who were trying to stop the creation of new plantations. The scale of this phenomenon is so serious that 1 February was established as a day without palm oil, celebrated in many countries, including Poland. Greenpeace is putting constant pressure on companies using palm oil as a raw material to buy only from certified plantations run in a way that at least somewhat attempts to balance the needs of industry and the environment. In 2018, palm oil was excluded in France from the list of biofuel feedstocks eligible for tax credits, despite opposition from the powerful oil company Total<sup>92</sup>.

The decline in ecoterrorist activity has coincided with the occurrence of climate change caused by the so-called greenhouse effect. Whether it is the result of natural processes in the atmosphere, the depths of the Earth and the oceans,

---

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.ekoterroryzm.pl/index.php/przypadki-ekoterroryzmu/23-ekoterroryzm-wsrod-najwiekszych-zagrozen-2018-roku> [accessed: 22 II 2021]; [https://www.nature.com/articles/nbt0600\\_582b](https://www.nature.com/articles/nbt0600_582b) [accessed: 18 II 2021]; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-environment/brazil-authorizes-national-security-force-to-fight-deforestation-idUKKBN2041XI> [accessed: 18 II 2021].

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.rp.pl/biznes/art1054421-greenpeace-blokuje-rafinerie-biopaliwa-we-francji-z-powodu-suwowca> [accessed: 30 X 2019].



or whether it is influenced by human actions, climate warming is a fact. When most of the well-known environmental and eco-terrorist organizations were founded a few decades back, this climate phenomenon had not yet been mentioned, even though forest robbery was already occurring on forest-covered continents. A slow change of thinking about climate was due to the determined efforts of environmental organizations, including Greenpeace. The activity of this organization, despite its merits, is still controversial for the governments of many countries, but it is difficult to deny the effectiveness of its activities. Thanks to Greenpeace, among other things, U.S. nuclear tests on Amchitka and French nuclear tests on Mururoa Atoll have been completed. In 1985, French special forces sank a ship in Auckland named Rainbow Warrior belonging to Greenpeace. In doing so, they wanted to end Greenpeace's sabotage of nuclear testing in the Pacific Ocean. Greenpeace's action was supported by the New Zealand government, which did not condone nuclear testing in the ocean. A French intelligence operation resulted in the death of a Greenpeace member. The capture of the two French agents by the New Zealand services and the international publicity that was given to the whole event made the organization even more famous, thanks to which a lot of money flowed into their account, including \$8 million paid to Greenpeace by the French government as an adjudged compensation<sup>93</sup>.

After analyzing the development of ecoterrorism in the world, it can be concluded that the threat of ecoterrorism and ecotage will be small in Poland, despite the polarization of attitudes in worldview issues, which does not omit the topic of animal rights and the fight for them. Both some supporters and opponents of these laws have a tendency for exaggerated rhetorics. Suffice it to mention, for example, the MEP Sylwia Spurek of Wiosna party, a radical animal advocate who has been stirring up controversy and even shocking with her statements since 2019. Polemics of representatives of opposing camps intensify primarily in May, when Animal Rights Day is celebrated (May 22), and in October - on the occasion of World Animal Day (October 4). The media publicity and the agitation of a part of the society - which takes place after the information about hunting of wild boars, cutting down the Białowieża Forest and other forestry works, the Vistula Spit diversion, incidents connected with international transport of animals in conditions threatening their life and disastrous conditions in some animal breeding farms testify to the growing sensitivity of Poles to environmental protection and animal welfare issues. These examples also indicate mutual dislike between authorities and environmentalists. Only in exceptional cases do politicians and environmental organizations take a similar

---

<sup>93</sup> [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow\\_Warrior](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_Warrior) [accessed: 18 II 2021].

position, albeit for different reasons. An example is the joint front of the Polish government and environmental organizations, Greenpeace and ClientEarth, which opposed the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. Ecologists justified their position by the threat to the Baltic environment, and the authorities by strategic reasons. However, it is important to keep in mind that environmental messages often involve manipulation and misinformation. It is important to keep in mind that this type of information reaches people who are often uninformed about environmental issues and therefore easily swayed by emotions.

## References

- Czaja J., *Terroryzm polityczny we Włoszech*, in: *Terroryzm polityczny*, J. Muszyński (ed.), Warszawa 1981, p. 206-231.
- Kowalska S., *Ekoterroryzm - rozważania w kontekście bezpieczeństwa i zasady zrównoważonego rozwoju. Wybrane regulacje prawa międzynarodowego*, in: *Prawa człowieka a ochrona środowiska. Wspólne wartości i wyzwania*, B. Gronowska et al. (ed.), Toruń 2018, p. 222-245.
- Kuipers D., *Operation Bite Back: Rod Coronado's War to Save American Wilderness*, London 2009.
- Kushner H.W., *Encyclopedia of Terrorism*, Thousand Oaks 2003.
- Machniak A., *Radykalizm i ekstremizm nowych ruchów społecznych na przykładzie Frontu Wyzwolenia Zwierząt*, „Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i Praktyka” 2018, No. 1, p. 259-269.
- Michaud T.A., *Ekoterror a ekoideologia*, in: *Terroryzm - dawniej i dziś*, P. Jaroszyński et al. (ed.), Lublin 2010, p. 73-85.
- Patterson Ch., *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*, New York 2002.
- Posłuszna E., *Ekstremizm ekologiczny, źródła - przejawy - perspektywy*, Warszawa 2012.
- Tomasiewicz J., *Przemoc w ruchu ekologicznym: od obywatelskiego nieposłuszeństwa do terroryzmu (przypadek Earth Liberation Front)*, „Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe” 2004, No. 1, p. 187-209.

## Internet sources

Bondaroff T.P., *Bitter Green: An Examination of the Strategy of Ecotage*, 2009, p. 72-78, [https://www.academia.edu/238985/Bitter\\_Green\\_The\\_Strategy\\_of\\_Ecotage](https://www.academia.edu/238985/Bitter_Green_The_Strategy_of_Ecotage) [accessed: 12 II 2021].

Bondaroff T.P., *Throwing a Wrench into Things: The Strategy of Radical Environmentalism*, „Journal of Military and Strategic Studies” Summer 2008, No. 4, p. 6-7, [https://www.academia.edu/192381/THROWING\\_A\\_WRENCH\\_INTO\\_THINGS\\_THE\\_STRATEGY\\_OF\\_RADICAL\\_ENVIRONMENTALISM?email\\_work\\_card=title](https://www.academia.edu/192381/THROWING_A_WRENCH_INTO_THINGS_THE_STRATEGY_OF_RADICAL_ENVIRONMENTALISM?email_work_card=title) [accessed: 16 II 2021].

Cheda J., *Ekoterroryzm jako współczesne zagrożenie bezpieczeństwa ekologicznego na świecie i w Polsce*, „Karpacki Przegląd Naukowy” 2014, No. 3, [http://ktnio.pl/Home/PokazPdf?nazwaPliku=KPN%20kwartalnik%2FKarpacki%20Przegl%C4%85d%20Naukowy%20Nr%203\(11\)-2014.pdf](http://ktnio.pl/Home/PokazPdf?nazwaPliku=KPN%20kwartalnik%2FKarpacki%20Przegl%C4%85d%20Naukowy%20Nr%203(11)-2014.pdf) [accessed: 30 I 2021].

DeBruin C., *Right-Wing Extremism in the United States*, Williams Honors College Akron University 2019, [https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2024&context=honors\\_research\\_projects](https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2024&context=honors_research_projects) [accessed: 22 II 2021].

Doherty B., *Sea Shepherd says it will abandon pursuit of Japanese whalers*, „The Guardian”, 29 VII 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/aug/29/sea-shepherd-says-it-will-abandon-pursuit-of-japanese-whalers> [accessed: 25 II 2018].

*Eco-terrorism Specifically Examining Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty („SHAC”)*, Hearing before the Committee on Environment and Public Works United States Senate, October 26, 2005, p. 5-8, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-109shrg39521/pdf/CHRG-109shrg39521.pdf> [accessed: 12 II 2021].

<http://www.animalperson.net/ronnie-lee-on-the-alf/> [accessed: 12 II 2021].

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/ecoterrorism> [accessed: 24 XII 2021].

<http://www.naiaonline.org/articles/article/quotes-from-the-leaders-of-the-animal-rights-movement#sthash.q4A1wR4T.dpbs> [accessed: 12 II 2021].

<http://www.wegetarianie.pl/forum/ogolnie/2614/> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

<https://bagna.pl/mokre-tematy/194-dolina-rospudy-historia-i-tlo-konfliktu> [accessed: 14 II 2021].

<https://biznesalert.pl/ekoterroryzm-ekologia-klimat-srodowisko/> [accessed: 18 II 2021].

<https://furcommission.com/in-their-own-words-the-animal-liberation-front-alf-has-this-to-say/> [accessed: 12 II 2021].

<https://miastojestnasze.org/dziwny-przypadek-lukasza-warzechy/> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

<https://naukaoklimacie.pl/aktualnosci/warzecha-od-rzeczy-w-do-rzeczy-369> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

[https://pl.qaz.wiki/wiki/International\\_Fund\\_for\\_Animal\\_Welfare](https://pl.qaz.wiki/wiki/International_Fund_for_Animal_Welfare) [accessed: 18 II 2021].

[https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow\\_Warrior](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_Warrior) [accessed: 18 II 2021].

<https://pracownia.org.pl/pracownia-aktualnosci/244-w-obronie-wielorybow-na-swiecie-zwyciestwo-sea-shepherd> [accessed: 18 II 2021].

<https://prawy.pl/56196-ekoterroryzm-nowotwor-zzerajacy-polske/> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

<https://publicystyka.ngo.pl/klimatyczne-fiasko-premiera-morawieckiego-greenpeace-pyta-serio> [accessed: 14 XII 2019].

<https://swiatrolnika.info/ekoterroryzm-haracze-porwania-i-szantaz> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

<https://tvn24.pl/magazyn-tvn24/byly-bloki-bedzie-las-do-poniedzialku-ma-was-tu-nie-byc,167,2880> [accessed: 30 VII 2018].

<https://web.archive.org/web/20171208174807/http://www.seashepherd.org/news-and-commentary/news/sea-shepherd-launches-new-anti-poaching-vessel-mv-sharpie.html> [accessed: 8 XII 2017].

<https://www.consumerfreedom.com/2004/01/2339-peta-and-terrorism-the-real-deal/> [accessed: 12 II 2021].

<https://www.defence24.pl/japonia-roz poczyna-wojnez-wielorybami-niedziela> [accessed: 18 II 2021].

<https://www.ekoterroryzm.pl/index.php/przypadki-ekoterroryzmu/18-dzien-bez-futra-ekoterrorysty-uderzaja-w-polska-gospodarke> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

<https://www.ekoterroryzm.pl/index.php/przypadki-ekoterroryzmu/23-ekoterroryzm-wsrod-najwiekszych-zagrozen-2018-roku> [accessed: 22 II 2021].

<https://www.energetyka24.com/ekoterroryzm-w-polsce-tajemniczy-zielony-front-podpalil-harwestery-na-dolnym-slasku> [accessed: 11 IV 2019].

<https://www.facebook.com/AnimalLiberationPressOffic/posts/animal-rights-militiathe-animal-rights-militia-arm-is-a-banner-used-by-animal-ri/2278788152207848/> [accessed: 17 II 2021].

<https://www.gov.pl/web/klimat/konwencja-waszyngtonska-cites> [accessed: 18 II 2021].

<https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/48966/irving-dorothy-stowe-greenpeace-history-founders-mentors/> [accessed: 24 I 2022].

<https://www.mojanorwegia.pl/aktualnosci/norwegia-ulatwi-polowy-wielorybow-re-sort-idziena-reke-wielorybnikom-17514.html> [accessed: 18 II 2021].

<https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/budowa-s16-jak-walka-o-doline-rospudy-ministerstwo-infrastruktury-obawia-sie-ostrych-protestow-6381246601533569a.html> [accessed: 14 II 2021].

[https://www.nature.com/articles/nbt0600\\_582b](https://www.nature.com/articles/nbt0600_582b) [accessed: 18 II 2021].

<https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2019-02-26/zatrzymano-podejrzanego-o-wy-sadzenie-jesienia-ubieglego-roku-budynku-w-bielsku-bialej/> [accessed: 26 II 2019].

<https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2019-06-22/twarz-premiera-morawieckiego-z-napisem-wstyd-wyswietlona-na-elektrowni/> [accessed: 14 II 2021].

<https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2021-07-19/bielsko-biala-sad-wyda-wyrok-w-sprawie-wysadzenia-bloku-mateuszowi-h-grozi-10-lat-wiezienia/> [accessed: 20 VII 2021]

[https://www.postbulletin.com/letter----animal-rights-movement-wallows-in-human/article\\_e932b1a3-54ac-526a-a086-be4c7deaa75e.html](https://www.postbulletin.com/letter----animal-rights-movement-wallows-in-human/article_e932b1a3-54ac-526a-a086-be4c7deaa75e.html) [accessed: 12 II 2021].

<https://www.radiozet.pl/Co-gdzie-kiedy-jak/piatka-dla-zwierzat-projekt-ustawy-tresc-co-to-kiedy-glosowanie> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

<https://www.rp.pl/biznes/art1054421-greenpeace-blokuje-rafinerie-biopalniwa-we-francji-z-powodu-surowca> [accessed: 30 X 2019].

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-environment/brazil-authorizes-national-security-force-to-fight-deforestation-idUKKBN2041XI> [accessed: 18 II 2021].

<https://www.supersummary.com/the-monkey-wrench-gang/summary/> [accessed: 23 XII 2021].

<https://www.tygodnikprzeglad.pl/prawdziwy-szwindel-klimatyczny/> [accessed: 15 II 2021].

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2001/oct/7/20011007-025834-9663r/> [accessed: 7 XI 2001].

*Leksykon ekologii i ochrony środowiska*, <https://www.ekologia.pl/wiedza/slovniki/leksykon-ekologii-i-ochrony-srodowiska/ekoterroryzm> [accessed: 30 I 2021].

Loadenthal M., „*Eco-Terrorism*”: *An Incident-Driven History of Attack (1973-2010)*, „*Journal for the Study of Radicalism*” 2017, vol. 11, No. 2, <https://www.academia.edu/332>

63882/\_2017\_Eco\_Terrorism\_An\_Incident\_Driven\_History\_of\_Attack\_1973\_2010\_?email\_work\_card=thumbnail [accessed: 22 II 2021].

Mączkowski K., *Ekoterroryzm to głupota*, „Dzikie Życie” 2011, No. 2/200, <https://dzikiezycie.pl/archiwum/2011/luty-2011/ekoterroryzm-to-glupota> [accessed: 30 I 2021].

Michaud T.A., *Ekoterroryzm: kulisy bycia „zielonym”*, <https://3obieg.pl/ekoterroryzm-kulisy-bycia-zielonym-prof-thomas-michaud/> [accessed: 19 IX 2012].

Parson S., *Understanding the Ideology of the Earth Liberation Front*, „Green Theory & Praxis: The Journal of Ecopedagogy” 2008, No. 2, p. 52, [https://www.academia.edu/518248/Understanding\\_the\\_Ideology\\_of\\_the\\_Earth\\_Liberation\\_Front?email\\_work\\_card=title](https://www.academia.edu/518248/Understanding_the_Ideology_of_the_Earth_Liberation_Front?email_work_card=title) [accessed: 11 II 2021].

Pellow D.N., *Eco-terrorism*, in: *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, J. Adamson, W.A. Gleason, D. Pellow (ed.), New York 2016, <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.18574/9780814760741-029/html> [accessed: 24 XII 2021].

Posłuszna E., *A Prognostic View on the Ideological Determinants of Violence in the Radical Ecological Movement*, „Sustainability” 2020, t. 12 nr 16, bez numeracji, <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/12/16/6536/html> [accessed: 18 II 2021].

„Resistance Magazine”, wiosna 2010, vol. 2, No. 1, <http://www.arissamediaigroup.org/book/resistance-magazine-2/> [accessed: 24 I 2022].

Sobczyk M., *Gaja - Żyjąca planeta*, „Dzikie Życie” 2002, No. 5/95, <https://dzikiezycie.pl/archiwum/2002/maj-2002/gaja-zyjaca-planeta> [accessed: 30 I 2021].

Spadaro P.A., *Climate Change, Environmental Terrorism, Eco-Terrorism and Emerging Threats*, „Journal of Strategic Security” 2020, vol. 13, No. 4, p. 58-80, <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1863&context=jss> [accessed: 17 XI 2021].

US Department of Homeland Security, *An Overview of Bombing and Arson Attacks by Environmental and Animal Rights Extremists in the United States, 1995-2010*, May 2013, [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OPSR\\_TP\\_TEVUS\\_Bombing-Arson-Attacks\\_Environmental-Animal%20Rights-Extremists\\_1309-508.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OPSR_TP_TEVUS_Bombing-Arson-Attacks_Environmental-Animal%20Rights-Extremists_1309-508.pdf) [accessed: 18 II 2021].

Yang Sue-Ming, Jen I-Chin, *An Evaluation of Displacement and Diffusion Effects on Eco-Terrorist Activities After Police Interventions*, „Journal of Quantitative Criminology” 2018, vol. 34, No. 4, p. 1103-1123, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320213750\\_An\\_Evaluation\\_of\\_Displacement\\_and\\_Diffusion\\_Effects\\_on\\_Eco-Terrorist\\_Activities\\_After\\_Police\\_Interventions](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320213750_An_Evaluation_of_Displacement_and_Diffusion_Effects_on_Eco-Terrorist_Activities_After_Police_Interventions) [accessed: 18 II 2021].