

# **Unconditional Anti-Oppression**

**The Rise of Anti-Speciesism in the Anarchist Movement**

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## **Negotiation is over. Moving beyond liberal veganism**

About 40 years ago animal rights was a concept promoted and activated by determined individuals, passionate about expanding their sphere of compassion. Not only did many of these animal rights activists go vegan but they also took action in the streets. Big colorful signs, petition signing, banner drops, and other tactics were deployed to disrupt the normalcy of routine non-human animal exploitation. Many of these tactics served to spread awareness of slaughterhouse atrocities in hopes of generating sympathy and agricultural reform. Overtime as more and more people began to acknowledge and speak out against non-human animal exploitation, tactics, ideas, and even other movements began to evolve.

Today there is less sign holding and petition signing as these previous attempts for change have left many disappointed. As the treatment of non-human animals continued despite votes and petitions, activists went underground giving birth to many radical groups like the Animal Liberation Front, Animal Liberation Brigade, Animal Rights Militia, Revolutionary Cells, and so on. Many vegan liberals, disappointed by politicians and the state, had begun to re-examine their own political ideologies.

As tactical diversity grows beyond the state's control with the intent of yielding self-initiated results, the animal rights movement is now commonly referred to as the "animal liberation movement". This form of self-determination by individuals working in cells or affinity groups has become appealing for its effectiveness. Online petition signing has seen less activity as prisoner support through fund raising and letter-writing becomes more popular. Single-issue oriented activists have begun to diversify their activism in light of acknowledging the connection with social struggles, eco-defense, and decolonisation. This expanding solidarity and mutual-aid has created new alliances, collective efforts, and new methods of resource sharing in many activist communities. The wave of increasingly radicalised vegans poses a threat to capitalism and the state. Today many once willing-to-negotiate activists have adopted new approaches that defy the lawfulness of peaceful protest and political reform. With an increase in property damage, liberated non-humans and appreciation for direct action, it was no surprise when the state constructed AETA (Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act) in an effort to sway public opinion and discourage the growth of radicalised vegans.

ANTI-SPECIESIST ANARCHISM. NONE ARE FREE UNTIL ALL ARE FREE.

## **Human supremacy and Speciesism**

Human supremacy is the belief that humans are superior and therefore entitled to dominate other animals and the earth. This form of discrimination and privilege exists in the anarchist movement, and has played a key role in the perceiving of non-human animal and earth liberation as secondary movements. As any other supremacist ideology, human supremacy perpetuates discrimination, enslavement, and murder in general, and towards non-human animals in particular. It embodies an interlocking combination of oppressions which manifest in the dominating social relationship humans have towards each other, the earth and other animals. Similar to white supremacy with the discrimination of BIPOC, and patriarchy with the discrimination of women and other non-men, human supremacy refuses equal consideration and opportunity for non-human animals to pursue a life free of human control.

Like racism and sexism, speciesism is irrational discrimination towards non-human animals based on species. Anti-speciesist anarchism is an anti-authoritarian challenge to human supremacy. Biocentrism or Deep Ecology is the re-distribution of power and autonomy equally to all sentient beings through the destruction of human moral elitism. Humans have generally justified their exploitation of non-humans through the categorisation of “animals” as inferior therefore rightfully subjugated. Today many vegan anarchists have replaced “animals” with “non-human animals” or simply “other animals”. This serves to distinguish non-human animals from human animals, while also recognising the shared animality of both. The word “rights” regarding non-human animals is less often used. Since “rights” in the political context imply permissions or privileges granted by the state, anti-speciesists generally feel this term is inconsistent with autonomous freedom. Anti-speciesism as a significant element and concept in the struggle for freedom is expanding as the intersectionality of all oppressions gains recognition. [ASA argues moral rights, that all animals innately have, they are not absent of moral rights but have their basic fundamental rights violated]

## **Intersecting oppressions**

Intersectionality is an examination of how all forms of oppression including but not limited to race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, species or disability do not act independently of one another but instead, are interrelated creating a system of oppression that reflects the “intersection” of multiple forms of discrimination. For example, capitalism utilises speciesism to commodify non-human animals, reducing them to units of production and capital. The legal property status of non-human animals can be compared to that of the enslaved Africans prior to the Civil War. Reproductive control over humans with uterus reflects the reproductive exploitation of non-human animals. Anti-capitalists who have acknowledged the relationship between non-human animals and capitalism have seen that such a relationship is the antithesis of freedom and must be abolished. Consuming non-human animals perpetuates the capitalist and human supremacist notion that they are sources of food rather than sentient beings deserving of their natural born right to freedom as humans expect for themselves.

Communication, language and imagery contribute to the mutual reinforcement of all oppressions. Since non-human animals are viewed as inferior, their imagery and identity is used as a derogatory way of describing disliked, oppressed or uncivilised humans. For example some of the most commonly known slurs towards women & nonbinary people attack their physical appearance and involve non-human animals. In addition to degrading individual women & nonbinary people these insults marginalise entire species of nonhuman animals as well. The hatred and speciesism towards pigs is encouraged when they are used to reference officers of colonial law. In various contexts, pigs, cows, and dogs are considered dirty, unclean, ugly, unlovable beings. These serve as stereotypes that excuse and encourage their exploitation. In the eyes of a speciesist, nonhuman animals serve to metaphorically reference oppressed humans. Some non-human animals are used to describe people of colour (monkey, ape, coon etc) other nonhumans are used in the same way for women (bitch, chick, cow etc). People of colour who break laws or act out their emotions are often referred to as nonhuman animals, and women and nonbinary humans who act out of their frustration or anger are often referred to as a “bitch”. The marginal-

isation of nonhuman animals is intimately intertwined with the oppression upon them. When examined, the mechanisms of domination, violence, and control are the same.

## **Beyond “veganarchism”; anarchism means total liberation for all**

The term “veganarchism” has played an important part in distinguishing the growing wave of anti-speciesist anarchy from traditional anarchism. But as earth and non-human animal liberation gain recognition for their place in the anarchist struggle, the continued usage of “veganarchism” becomes problematic. The term “veganarchism” preserves the same false division currently withering away. It also draws more attention towards veganism as an action without a preexisting cause. This leads to more dialogue and attention on veganism as merely dietary rather than enough dialogue on the oppression of non-veganism. Speciesism, human supremacy, and the authoritarianism in exploiting other sentient beings for food receives less exposure to criticism than veganism. This imbalance usually results in drawn out debates about veganism being classist or racist. While it is a common mistake for speciesist anarchists to impose white imperialism upon veganism (which marginalises vegans of colour by assuming that whites are the only ones concerned with deep ecology, health, and non-human animal liberation), this mistake is almost inevitable when the scope of veganism is reduced to Western culture rather than global anti-colonialism. Anti-speciesism is increasingly viewed as consistent with anti-oppression, and biocentrism consistent with anti-authoritarianism. This combination of earth, non-human and human animal liberation presents an anarchist struggle for total liberation.

Speciesism is still widely tolerated in many anarchist communities. Despite the growing number of anarchist vegans, speciesism and human supremacy are still viewed as secondary problems. Some blame the language barrier between human and non-human animals for this lack of consideration. Intelligence, physical limitations and sometimes even the question of sentience all play a role in speciesist apologism. But as more anarchists acknowledge intersectionalism and interdependence of all oppressions, veganism is viewed as the logical process of being anti-speciesist. Anarchism without anti-speciesism allows space for irrational discrimination, domination, and oppression. Furthermore, anarchism without veganism allows space for patriarchy and rape culture. The exploitation of milk from cows or eggs from chickens enables the coercive and sexual exploitation of uterus-bearing individuals. Without total freedom for all, authority and oppression remain over some to benefit those in a position of power and privilege.

More anarchist collectives have extended solidarity to nonhuman animals through promoting veganism, opening up anti-speciesist spaces, and being vocal against non-human animal oppression. Guerrilla gardening, community gardening and polyculture are on the rise in many anti-oppression communities in an effort to combat monoculture and Genetically Modified foods which colonise other lands with industrialisation and environmental destruction. Despite ever-increasing state repression, a gradual increase of property destruction attributed to non-human animal liberation continues. In online forums and in the streets, speciesism within the anarchist community is receiving more constructive criticism. Anti-speciesism means critically examining social interactions and communication between all animals, human and non-human alike. In the process of eliminating oppressive language and practices, solidarity is extended with power, respect, and equality to all who are oppressed. Many anarchists across the globe have embraced veganism not only as a practice of healthy survival but also as an extension of solidarity be-

yond the speciesist limits of human struggle. Today one can see the merging of the anarchist anti-capitalist/anti-fascist struggle with the eco-defense, animal and earth liberation movements. These struggles in combination present an uncompromising war against capitalism, the state, civilisation and the myriad of colonial oppression.

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<https://antispeciesistaction.com/blog/the-rise-of-anti-speciesism-in-the-anarchist-move>

This is an article from the US context also posted on [veganwarfare](#). Although we agree with much of it, we would stress that anti-speciesism has been a long-running current through anarchism, from Elisee Reclus to Louise Michel

**[usa.anarchistlibraries.net](http://usa.anarchistlibraries.net)**