

Animal liberation

Let's put veganism aside and relaunch the struggle

October 24, 2016

We are not writing this piece to start a debate within the antispecist movement (which is dead and buried under the weight of its chatter, self-proclaimed spokespersons and philosophic rhetoric) but to highlight the fact that there are individualities in the movement for animal liberation who are driven by a revolutionary tension, which they want to turn against animal exploitation.

Although veganism¹ can be seen as the rejection of the methodical suffering and exploitation of animals, therefore a way not to be accomplices of those who systematically massacre them, we think it is just a first step towards what we consider a trajectory for the liberation of animals and from all forms of domination. Over and over again we see a tendency that passes off veganism as a means for Animal Liberation but which only concerns the symbolic and social power of meat and animal products. No one can seriously believe that their diet has dealt a fatal blow to the animal exploitation industry; as a matter of fact veganism acts against the collective imaginary.

To be vegan (however ethical) and think that in this way one can end animal exploitation and even LIBERATE other animals is misleading and dangerous because it is an attempt to pacify resistance.

It is the same as believing that abstaining from voting can subvert the system. If we don't vote it is because we have decided not to delegate our choices and lives to anyone. If we don't vote it is because we reject this system. But to believe that simply not voting can move the scales in our favour would be naïve.

Instead of lighting new sparks they blow out the feeble flame of revolutionary action for animal liberation, extinguishing it by proposing veganism as a political act of opposition. While it is an act of awareness and consistency with one's own conscience intended as perception of the surrounding reality, which some consider political because they have decided to analyse the relations of power in society, it is not a gesture of revolt. It is the rejection of a practice of exploitation, not actual resistance, which inevitably affects the range of food choices and for this reason can be absorbed by the capitalist system. The only way out of this impasse is to create irrecoverable conflict, which can only be achieved if the analysis of the dynamics of dominion towards a certain kind of exploitation can lead to the identification of not only the structures but

¹ We are not philosophers nor are we interested in discussing the distinctions within veganism; we think it is irrelevant to our arguments.

also the roles that build and maintain their (economic and social) power on exploitation, and by striking the capitalist mechanism that produces the destruction of animals.²

The revolutionary potential of the animal issue will be realized if we are able to face it with the right instruments: animal liberation considers animal exploitation a first step towards the complex challenging of a wider authoritarian system. One of the animal liberation movement's strong points has always been that of defending radical practices, creating a high level of conflictuality against those considered responsible for animal exploitation, permanent conflictuality able to limit the institutions' recuperation of certain practices. The struggle for animal liberation has always openly supported any attack carried out against those who were identified as responsible for the perpetration of the slavery of other animals. A struggle that sees the institutions as the first forms that guarantee specism and anthropocentrism, the legitimizers of our and other's individual annihilation, and for this reason the struggle will never enter into dialogue with those that speak a different language.³

In this respect, no process of commercialization or consumer grabbing will ever be able to transform a radical struggle into fashion and even less into supermarket and restaurant products (it matters little whether companies are vegan or not, as we reject the consumer role regardless). It is naïve to believe that the word vegan expresses absence of cruelty: nothing is devoid of exploitation in this society. No one can drop out of the world we are living in. Not even a vegan who doesn't go shopping in supermarkets. Either we support genocide, or we fight against it. There are no alternatives. One can't defect, even through careful choice of the products one buys.

It is impossible to remain silent, otherwise we become accomplices. It is possible to denounce but in so doing one hasn't yet deserted. Besides denunciation there is attack on the people and structures responsible for the genocide.

By developing the ethical concept that the animalist struggle starts off from we arrive at real revolutionary conflict against those who oppress and dominate us.⁴

We should turn our gaze towards a world where not even the debris remains of every place of production (all production, including vegan-cruelty free), a world where there will be no more eco-friendly (intelligent, sustainable, solidarity-targeted) products, because there will no longer be producers.

And this world is not possible if first we don't destroy the one we find ourselves in. But in order to do so we need to restore dignity to the struggle for animal liberation and place it within a revolutionary trajectory (not in a philosophical sense but in the sense of radical practices) where idea and direct action are strictly connected and become fertile ground for other trajectories of permanent conflictuality.

If the antispecist movement's most important concern is that the sharp line of separation that certainly exists between 'ethical veganism' and 'alimentary veganism' be clear and obvious, then minks, partridges, quails, boars, pheasants and so on will have to find some autonomous kind of conflict and escape themselves. Because ethical vegans are more concerned with their ideological purity than with direct action and the creation of a culture of support and spreading of the latter.

Mononoke

² A. Bonanno, *Di quale natura parliamo?*, ed. Anarchismo, 2015

³ Animal Liberation gathering 2015

⁴ See note 2

PS: If supermarkets and health shops offer a variety of meat-free products, then we'd like to suggest that hands grab what eyes see.

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