

“RESTLESS VEGANS” CALL ANIMAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT FOR SECOND WAVE *

“Veganism propaganda overshadows the theory against oppression with practices based on consumption”



*This is the English translation of Turkish original. [Click to read online / download in Turkish](#)

This manifesto consists of considerations of some vegan/vegetarian animal liberation activists about the course of veganism. The meeting took place in Namekan Sanat Sepet (İzmir, Turkey) on 2nd November 2013. The clauses below were noted with consensus, and open to discussion and suggestions. Continuation of this debate is expected in different cities. The goal here is self-questioning of people who are close to animal liberation discourse and veganism, a change of direction in personal and political sense. In this regard, almost all criticism below includes self-criticism.

What do “restless vegans” say:

-We have noticed in a local Google Trend research that the search of the term vegan hits the top while the search of the term animal liberation is on the lowest level. We wanted to open a discussion to consider why animal liberation is not spoken while veganism is being popularized in Turkey.

-Present supporters of vegan/vegetarian culture (which has got its current shape following the foundation of vegetarian and vegan societies in England and is roughly defined as abandoning products of animal origin) should get to the second wave just like feminists evolved with self-criticism. We should better leave the politics in which calls to “consume this/not consume that” dominates the discourse while we continue to protect and promote veganism as a personal behaviour. Politics of “consume this/not consume that” are consonant to expectations of states and companies. Instead, through a new discourse which emphasizes more clearly that all states and companies are murderers, we should come to a new ground which is closer to animals in cages and right behind of the institutions which safeguard those cages. This groundbreaking change would presumably lead to an exchange in which every operation of animal liberation results in an operation of “activist imprisonment”, as long as states and big companies exist. However in this oppressive system there seems no other way than taking the risk of human cages for several years in order to provide an environment in which all animals live their entire lives cage-free.

First wave animal liberation	Building vegetarian and vegan cultures respectively. Ethical rejection of products and services that kills or exploits animals is the only political discourse.
Second wave animal liberation	While maintaining vegan & vegetarian practices, shifting the trajectory of politics from "consume this/not consume that" to the active fight against exploiters such as direct actions to liberate animals or undercover footages to expose slavery conditions.

-Animal liberation and anti-oppression are theoretical causes. Veganism is a practical effect. The original motivation is always a cause not an effect. We observe that the effect begins to overshadow the cause. We adopt the practical effect (vegan identity in this case) while we attempt to clarify our political/ethical standpoint to members of dominant culture which basically asks us “Then you don’t eat this?” etc. Prominence of “vegan identity” instead of “anti-oppression identity” or “animal rights activist identity” occurs after we accept the consumerist culture of the society. It means we could not save ourselves from being homo-consumericus. Yet, life cannot be reduced to consumption. It makes no sense to discuss whether we are carnivores, herbivores or omnivore anymore. We are only homo-consumericus!



-We should look into the contradiction of a vegan who takes medicines that are produced after animal experiments and also judges another vegan because that another person consumes palm oil. These kinds of contradictions are inevitable outcomes of defining politics according to consumer behaviours. They are signs of losing anti-oppression ground and do not necessarily sanction a side as right. Whoever assumes that there are some “practices that all vegans agree on”, he/she is mistaken by generalizing his/her own social circle. Any totalitarian approach towards the practical solution of animal slavery turns leadersless and bibleless animal liberation movement into an institution to preach what is licit and what is illicit. After this point those might follow: Arrogance against non-vegans, aggression, considering meat-eaters equal to killers, becoming wrong while originally right, degrading veganism to lifestyle or gourmet kitchen... The question “If I eat this, is my veganism flawed?” is problematique itself. It’s a sign that veganism is on the way to become something like a religion. Everybody in the movement is supposed to define their own practices according their own conscience and facilities after agreeing not to enslave and not to kill. Vegans who just altered their consuming habits are still inside the capitalist system that is founded against all animals including us when they accept the invitation to consume a new product range (niche market).

-Another question to consider is this: “Didn’t veganism originally mean being against any kind of oppression?” Veganism should stay out of modernist approaches; because modernism is anthropocentricist, and just like speciesism anthropocentrism is a form of oppression. Although being anti-oppression or anti-authoritarian is not a decisive principle among vegans, it’s neither marginal nor utopic. When one observes that majority of vegans did not adopt those, it is because they refer to “vegan consumer identity” that is motivated by society instead of theory against slavery.

-Vegans who went vegan only by changing their consuming habits are vulnerable against humanists and modernists. Human the tool-maker is praised to the skies with “his” science and technology, and “his” superiority against other animals is justified solely with rationality. Vegans who argue that all animals are entitled the right to live just as humans should criticise the Enlightenment vehemently in order to reinforce their own arguments. Modernism is anthropocentricist. Europe is still latently racist, and its speciecism and militarism are constant and overt. A vegan who does not have any criticism to the civilization is prone to be in peace with dishonest civil cultures which target the savage (meaning either an animal that is away from human sovereignty or a primitive person that is not yet enslaved by the system) as the source of exploitation by using the word savagery as the synonym of cruelty/ferocity within civilized-savage dualism. Although violence did not start with civilization, it has been legitimized through the laws which are imposed by the actors of civilization following triumphs of wars.

-Like all practices, practice of veganism cannot be described independent of the personal effort of an individual to keep the image of consistency in the eyes of society. Most people proclaim themselves vegan by adhering to boundaries (instead of listening to her/his conscience or creating her/his ethical stance) that are created by others to confirm what vegans can consume. Boundaries of practice are in fact inconsistent all the time; because veganness of packaged supermarket products (from the fact that they are transported from other continents by airplanes to the fact that farmers may be slaves) is always a question, and animals are also killed for fruit-veg that are coming from industrial agriculture. Thinking little of some people in animal rights cause with respect to differences in the

modes of consumption is a pressure, playing the vegan police. Should not we consider freegans and roadkill eaters as vegans?



-Vegan industry can only be a transition period for the ones who miss meat and dairy products which they were accustomed since babyhood. That vegans look for artificial forms of murder whereas feminists have never recommended artificial devices of rape for old rapists can be a sign that human food turned into something for taste, gusto and social acceptance than for nutrition. Consumption and recommendation of meat analogue products are not so surprising when we consider that most activists are coming from meat-eating backgrounds and are still purchasing fruit-veg from supermarkets as well; however animal rights campaigns of activists should not turn into something like advertisements of soy milk / cruelty-free shampoo. Propagandizing consumption practice more than the theory against oppression might also be a strategical mistake that has a role to prevent the movement to popularize. Discourses such as “Sole remedy is veganism!” are conceit, smells like the power and pushes non-vegans away. What’s more, vegan people who tell vegetarians that veganism is the final (and the top!?) point unfortunately admits that they have no further plan for disruptive actions against the industries that produce wars and exploitations, continuous activism and saving their own life from cities and capitalist oppression.

-“Animal liberation = veganism” may not be a correct hypothesis for each and every situation. Going vegan is not a peak, an end-point for animal liberation; it could only be the first step. People who choose direct action, save many animals from torture by taking imprisonment risk but rarely consume some animal products belong to animal liberation movement as well. Groups that attempt to be ALF demonstrate their ALF affiliation by direct action. Not killing any animal during the action is essential; but activists are not questioned whether they consume eggs or not in their personal life. ALF promotes veganism; but realizes itself by risky actions for animals instead of producing political discourse from consumption habits. We must read “Do Not Support the Animal Liberation Front” call of ALF again and again.

-If some cities, restaurants and supermarkets do not have vegan/vegetarian options, this might be something good for animal liberation activists. One way of destroying the capitalist economy and

empowering do-it-yourself culture is getting involved in solidarity and do-it-yourself culture instead of economical system.

-We all agree that exploitations would go on even if everyone in this world go vegan. Despite the expectations, all-vegan world would not easily be solution to environmental pollution, carbon emission and fresh water problem. Even if the meat packing industry disappears, it would be replaced by another exploitative industry to satisfy the needs of 7 billion people. Since any ferry to sail kills hundreds of fish and jelly fish beneath the engines and any asphalt to furnish as highway means graveyard for mice and insects that are crushed beneath it; can cities be vegan themselves?



Northern Forests of Istanbul. Devastated due to massive plan of a new Bosphorus Bridge and its highways

-Some vegans remember ecology only if they want to persuade others not to eat meat, and this could indicate some sort of insincerity. Comparing to a vegan “motorist”, A non-vegan person who only and only drives bicycle might be saving more animals from death and contributing to the earth more. When we look back to 2010 disaster which our automobile culture is accomplice, 11 workers died, 17 more workers were injured, 4 million barrels of petroleum were spilled to the environment and countless animals died in Mexican Gulf because of BP. Leakage was stopped after 85 days. Remaining picture was birds and fish soaked into oil.





-It is important that people from animal liberation movement act in unison with other social struggles (such as LGBTQ, ecology, feminism, free kitchens, squats etc); but the idea should be sincere contribution not recruiting new people for animal cause.



-It is a tragicomical reality that we sometimes need to remind some vegans who reject animal slavery that “human is an animal too”. Chocolate products for instance cannot be vegan even without milk because people who pick chocolate fruits from trees are mostly “slaves” not contracted workers. Then what should we do? For instance, every new computer and smart phone include some mines that are very rare on earth, and those mines are sometimes called “conflict mines” because those mines are extracted by some gangs that enslave children. Can capitalist technology be vegan?



-Veganism was born right in the heart of capitalism, London. It should never be forgotten that it was born as a reaction to the systematized and standardized exploitation that had hit the record high. Meat eating and fur wearing have lost its class-specific meaning, became available for masses, hence the anger against them got bigger. However (after rural depopulation, recruitment of almost everyone as workers and marketing of anything belonging to nature on the cheap) the Industrial Revolution turns out to exploit the animal indirectly even in some cases it exploits no animals directly. Exploitation is a rule in an effective capitalist system.

-Justifications such as “We anciently wore fur to stay warm, and we don’t need that anymore” are unfortunately human-centric as well. The argument that we don’t feel cold by courtesy of capitalist textile industry which is based on technology equals to be grateful for anthropocentrist modernism. If arguments of animal liberation activists are fed by anti-speciesism which puts human interests on top of interests of others under no circumstances, those arguments would be more substantial against the unity of oppression.



-Vegans/vegetarians should be careful to get enough nutrients simply because they too are animals. It is beneficial for all of us if we not only reject animal products but also question all refined and processed food. Everybody cannot be “role model”; but malnutrition would only help medicine and pharmaceutical companies which would pretend to save us heroically. Moreover, since human is an animal, misanthropy for a vegan individual is cognitive dissonance. Instead of hating people, we should clarify that we are against authorities and discriminations.

-Our disagreement is on reformism vs radicalism... Activists who call the scientific institutions to leave archaic methods of testing and global companies to go on with alternatives to animal testing can make some global companies give up animal tests with the fear of losing profit and prestige. Although this is reformist, it would somehow be pleasing because it saves certain amount of animals from torture. However as long as global companies that only and solely seek profit exist, it is very

likely that world would go to destruction once again because of the massive scale of “scientific craziness” that will replace all animal experiments. See: Nanotechnology and genetics!



-Everyone has a unique vegan perception. Many people might be talking about speciesism without entirely grasping it. Sometimes you can hear a person talking about brotherhood of species while denying brotherhood of people. That veganism starts with criticism of fascism is not a certainty. Some animal liberation activists who at the same time hold some fascist opinions might gradually become anti-fascist through discovering the parallelism between speciesism and other types of discriminations.

-Some people express their anger to “human” perpetrator during Muslim Fest of Sacrifices (Eid ul Adha) only, so we doubt how much of animal rights motivation they actually have. People defending animals only during Sacrifice Holiday might be doing that from Islamophobia or civilization perspectives. The civilized world such as Europe and United States in which animal blood is invisible on the street but spilling behind closed doors serves the human only not all animals.

-We often receive questions regarding to religious beliefs and veganism. Historically many religions addressed the question of animal rights. Followers of Budism, Jainism and Manichaenism do generally go vegetarian. Many communities in the world have seen some individuals opting out of meat. Although vegetarianism and veganism are fairly new as worldwide trends, they are not new when we consider the entire history of humanity. Therefore questions from Muslims about relevancy of veganism to Islam can be replied by activists from the perspective of Muslims even though many activists do not believe so. A healthy communication is not possible without understanding the values of the other side. Muslims who persistently ask questions about animal rights are often the ones who wish to persuade themselves to animal liberation without leaving Islamic beliefs. These people can be replied with references to some verses of the Koran that prohibits torture to animals and arrogance of humans. We can ask them whether capitalism is halal. By referring to sections of the Koran that tells how to have human slaves, we can tell them “You can still be Muslim without enslaving any animal since you remain Muslim without enslaving any human being.” We should underline that slaughterhouses are Fordist designs, hence irrelevant to religions.

-There are some people who just spend their time trying to troll vegans. This anti-vegan team might have been irritated because they are called murderers by vegans. Are meat-eaters murderers? It is controversial. We must direct our rage to slaughterhouses as well as meat eaters. A meat eater is a killer if a voter of Hitler' party is genocider. Other reasons for anti-vegan campaigning might be arrogance of vegans, consumption focus of vegans or repressing the cognitive dissonance (for people who wish to be vegan soon).

FUTURE HYPOTHESIS AND SOLUTIONS

-In 10 years time, we expect some changes in consumption of animal products in Turkey. To reckon with an example; in London in which both capitalism and animal rights movement are older than here, a website for organization and socialization called Meetup.com has approximately 560 people registered to London Animal Rights group while London Vegan group has 2310 members. London Animal Rights group organizes actions against the industry that exploits animals all the time while other group organizes some events such as vegan wine party. We estimate that we will see more organic meat consumers, only free-range consumers, animal welfare customers, meat reducers and vegans out for socialization in 10 years time in Turkey which proceeds on the way to developed capitalism. One day everyone will share recipes of vegan cakes; but recipes to save hens that are imprisoned for their eggs will not come from eating culture.



-We live in the society of the spectacle not in the society of agriculture. Mass media and other communication tools have great effects on masses. Animal rights defenders should read the mechanisms of the media closely. We should create the public opinion by sharing every action and campaign with mainstream media, alternative media, social media etc. Instead of using those mediums mixed, the message should be conveyed to specific channels our target mass follows by adjusting them according to target mass. Creating public opinion will help animal liberation activists receive fewer punishments in the future if their actions are taken to the court. Black Bloc activists that recently saved 200 dogs from animal testing labs made headlines all around the world, and more importantly their action has been presented as legitimate. The process of their lawsuit is closely related to how much of the public continue to embrace them. Accordingly, animal liberation activists elsewhere should continuously cry out that all companies are killers. Exposing companies that apply

tests on animals instead of applauding companies that do not apply tests on animals would help Brazilian animal liberation activists to be released.

-We are coming to the end of 2013. We should now speak about the methods of liberating animals and the steps of legitimizing liberations. Unfortunately, Gezi Park riots of Turkey did not see an action similar to the one that happened in Brazil. We could not save even a few of animals that are waiting for freedom in the chaos. On the other hand, Turkish law which stipulates that slave animals are equal to property could be a tragic advantage; because if some of those animals are liberated, liberators would only be tried of theft and trespassing to private property. Starting from today, we should pave the way for similar liberation stories that would take place in the next chaos. Though, we don't think that there would be a knock-on effect even if an animal liberation story is covered in the press. The reason may be the engagement of dissidents in Turkey with hierarchical leftist politics or absence of animal and environment question in the left. The topics that must be covered in future leaflets are the ones that urban people have never heard of. For example it is still shocking for urban people that cow's milk is impossible without pregnancy. Activists who cannot risk direct animal liberation could choose to take undercover footage from industrial farms as it is still not counted as terrorism here in Turkey unlike United States. Vegan picnics in Turkey are on the way to become regular; whereas we do not even have a single footage from a university lab that cuts animals live just next to where we have our picnics. Just because of this reason we should better put our thinking caps on.

