

ways they have managed to find a balanced and largely healthy diet without any scientific nutritional knowledge. Now this chain of oral dietary culture has been broken and replaced by large multinational companies and their marketing budgets.

As a result working class dietary habits are on rapid decline. Capital is trying to extract as much profit by cutting corners. It uses the cheapest ingredients, often genetically modified organisms and polluting production methods. Our new dietary culture dictated by capitalism is largely about processed foods, hormone and antibiotics ridden meat products, factory farmed animal products, fast food, empty carbohydrates, genetically engineered foods and so on.

We can react to this by spreading healthier dietary culture among our class and working for affordable access to better foods. Vegan campaigning can play an important role in this by advocating diet as an area where one can take control of your own life and make diet a conscious deliberated decision rather than being in the hands of multinational companies marketing strategies.

LIBERTARIAN VEGANISM

By going vegan we are not asking politicians, leaders or professional do-gooders to solve social problems that we feel strongly about. It is not delegating responsibility or power, but trying to find an empowering solution independent of representatives.

Veganism doesn't spread via big famous men and great theories, despite some attempts to define the movement in that way. Commentators and even some vegan activists with



hierarchical and capitalist thinking do try to explain the whole vegan movement via famous philosophers or founding fathers. This is a fallacy and misses the true nature of the movement. Veganism goes from a friend to another, among family members and workmates in a true grassroots fashion relying on mutual aid and support.

Veganism alone can't challenge capitalism and can't be a replacement for collective mass class struggle. Political libertarian veganism is not about personal purity or ethical hand washing, but an attempt to create a new dietary culture.

Since it is simply impossible to feed the worlds population on a diet high in animal products be it in a capitalist or communist society, the cultural shift towards a plant-based diet is needed. The vegan diet also represents a change in our relationship to animals in cultural terms showing cross species empathy by living your life as animals were not ours to eat, wear or use as tools for entertainment or product development and so on. It also reclaims the dietary culture from the unhealthy direction that transnational capital is driving it towards. Working class movements have a proud history of creating new cultures within the shell of capitalist exploitative culture.

MORE INFORMATION

Beasts of Burden: Capitalism - Animals - Communism
<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/3909/beasts/index.html>

Animal Liberation: Devastate to Liberate, or Devastatingly Liberal? <http://www.anarchosyndicalism.net/analysis/animal-liberation.htm>

Sites and resources about veganism: <http://www.vegansociety.com>, <http://www.viva.org.uk>, <http://www.veganfitness.net>

Anarchist and libertarian communist groups in UK:

Anarchist Federation <http://www.afed.org.uk>
Class War Federation <http://www.classwaruk.org>
Solidarity Federation <http://www.solfed.org.uk>

Libertarian communist community & organising resource for Britain: <http://libcom.org>

This pamphlet has been written by a few class struggle anarchist vegans who are involved with libertarian organising in and out of the national anarchist groups.



A LIBERTARIAN LOOK INTO THE REASONS FOR VEGANISM

WHY ANARCHIST VEGAN?



MAINSTREAM VEGAN MATERIAL is written from a liberal rather than class based perspective. It is basing arguments on charity instead of solidarity, and offering individualistic and consumerist rather than collective solutions. The material often blames the individual choices for the rampant industrialised animal abuse instead of understanding underlying economic and hierarchical structures and empowering people to organise against them.

THIS SHORT PAMPHLET aims to offer another perspective. This perspective is built on anti-capitalist, libertarian communist, class based anarchist view. It is assumed that the reader is aware of the exploitative nature of capitalism and social hierarchies. This pamphlet aims to show how capitalism and hierarchical structures affect issues relating to use of animals in agriculture, land ownership and use as well as environmental degradation related to food production.

Due to space shortage arguments here can only be explained briefly. Please see further detailed information on issues such as animal cruelty and environmental impact of animal-based food production from the web sites mentioned in the end of the pamphlet.

CAPITALISM AND ANIMALS

In the past century food production has undergone a massive shift to more capital intensive methods. This affects the food production across the board, but this pamphlet seeks to examine how it has affected the use of animals in agriculture.

As an example, let's take a look at the average broiler lifespan. Broiler is a purpose bred bird which has undergone a strong selective breeding to emphasise qualities that maximize production and cut costs. Selective breeding has focused on for instance big breast muscle production and increasingly rapid growth at the expense of the animals' welfare.

The life starts at the hatchery where large hatching machines keep thousands of fertile eggs in optimal temperatures. As soon as the chick hatches, the sex is determined and since the male chicks grow faster, females are put through a high speed grinder at birth. Ironically, in egg production exactly the opposite is done by putting the male chicks through the grinder since they have no use in egg production. These two breeds are different and follow a different selective breeding path. Broiler chicken is not a breed, but a hybrid called Ross 208 (patented).

The male chicks are then moved in boxes to a broiler unit where the chick is now to spend the next 35 days during which they reach their full growth. The broiler units are windowless halls which house tens of thousands of birds at a time averaging 21 birds per square meter, slightly less than A4 paper sheet per broiler. The temperature is controlled automatically and the dim lighting is cycled often to trigger the natural effect of eating during dusk and dawn. The growth rate of these birds has doubled in the past couple decades causing different problems with bone structure and so on.



Once the optimal weight is reached, broilers are packed in boxes and transported to a slaughterhouse. During this transport around 0.5% of the birds die, and a larger portion gets injured due to weak leg bones and so on. The birds are then put on a hook attached to a conveyer belt upside down. The first stop is a tray with water where the birds head should hit and the electric current in the water should stun the bird. Of course this doesn't always happen as the bird tries to struggle and free itself from the hooks. Next stop is an angle saw which should slit the throat. The broiler then heads to the automated machines which pluck and clean the animal before reaching the packing facilities.

This example of industrialised animal agriculture hopefully demonstrates how the switch to capital- intensive agriculture has intensified the exploitation of sentient beings. The capitalists are not speciesists however; they will try to exploit anyone and anything they can, given the opportunity.

ANIMAL AGRICULTURE HURTING HUMANS

The use of animals in agriculture is expanding rapidly, there are three animals used in agriculture per human being, increasing five fold from 1950's. Already 50-60% of the worlds grain is being fed to animals and the ratio is increasing.

Why is this an issue? Animals in agriculture can be described as "reverse protein factories" meaning that they will consume more protein and energy than is stored in the products extracted from them. Animal will need energy to move (the little space that is allowed in factory farming conditions), to produce heat, produce things which capitalists haven't yet found a purpose such as joints, hair or feathers and so on. In statistical terms this means that as a rule of thumb 10 times of the land area is used to grow feed for a cow than equivalent production of plant-based protein would consume.



Meat production has many other severe environmental impacts, such as methane production, animal manure waste, deforestation, soil erosion, high fossil fuel use in comparison to vegetable based food production and consuming up to 100 000 liters of water for every kilogram of beef against potatoes (500 liters), rice (1000 liters) and soya (2000 liters) while worlds water resources are running dry.

The reason why capital is keen on animal agriculture is the way it adds value. It offsets the costs as environmental pollution to the society as a whole to worry about and consumes cheap non-marketable resources which are often in "common"; ownership, such as water resources.

We live in a finite world and the resources are in private capitalist hands. This means that the resource flow will always be towards where the purchasing power lies, not where peoples' needs are as would be the case in a libertarian communist world. Injustices in land ownership mean that the capitalist is always keen on producing export items for foreign capital. This has lead to situations where local people go hungry while the land is being used to produce animal products or animal feed to European or American markets.

HEALTH AND CLASS

The old stereotypical anti-capitalist cartoons portrayed the boss class as fat old men with a funny hat and a cigar. Modern reality is rapidly changing. It is the working class who are more likely to be obese and unhealthy while wealthy have access to better food, better information and all privatised health services from exercise possibilities to health care. The modern boss class looks healthy, eats well and lives long.

For centuries dietary cultures were formed to build a balanced diet according to the environment you lived in. Just take a look at the different dietary cultures around the world and the

WHAT IS LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM?

Libertarian communism is a political tradition including all class struggle forms of anarchism seeking to create a free world based on co-operation and mutual aid using directly democratic non-hierarchical ways of organising.

More info on anarchism and libertarian communism, see the web resources in the end of the pamphlet.