

FEMINISTS FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS ===== NEWSLETTER

Vol. I, No. 2

FUND-RAISING

F.A.R raised \$194 at the Berkeley flea market on January 7. We also received a number of very generous donations for our newsletter for which we are extremely grateful. As a result, we are proud to announce that we are no longer in debt and are thus able to restock our literature reserves and publish this newsletter!

FLYERS

If you are short of time but would like to help out in some way, you might think of posting our flyer in women's centers, book stores, etc. If you don't have a copy of the flyer and would like one, let us know and we will send you one or more.

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is, perhaps, the most confused and contradictory of all the holidays. In all fairness, it should be a day of atonement for the theft of the land from the Native Americans with thoughts directed to how we can make reparations. Instead, it has become a day that focuses on the mass slaughter and over-consumption of turkeys. While F.A.R. did not wish to acknowledge the traditional holiday in any way, we did wish to provide an alternative and therefore we held a vegetarian potluck. We also had a letter to the editor published in both the S.F Examiner and the Oakland Tribune expressing our point of view.

STAMPS FOR SALE



Sixty of the above rubber stamps were kindly donated to our group by Cheela Smith. In order to help raise money, we will be selling them for \$3.00, including postage.

ON THE CONTINUED USE OF SENSES IN THE MODERN WORLD

--Tremor Landauer

She picks up the chicken
all wrapped up in cellophane
remembering her childhood
friends on the farm
fingers her raincoat
fondles the acetate
steps up to the counter
unswayed by the blood
her collar is tight
she wants to undo it
her head is too light
for any shopping that day.

ANIMAL RIGHTS IS A FEMINIST ISSUE

A SLAUGHTERHOUSE—A VIEW FROM WITHIN

On an overcast Tuesday morning, Ellen, Ericka, and I arrived at the Moeller Brothers' Slaughterhouse in Pleasanton. Having been refused access by all the larger slaughterhouses, we had settled on this small one. On Tuesdays, they told me on the phone, they did the killing. So cameras in hand and emotions aside, we readied ourselves to record this week's carnage. On the side of the building near the entrance, a white-on-black bumpersticker claimed compassionately, "Beef Eaters Make Better Lovers." We made our presence known, and began our photographic project.

Adjacent to the slaughterhouse was a barn and a house that undoubtedly housed the Moeller family. Nearby were fenced in grounds that held a small army of desolate-looking pigs. Toward the front of the slaughterhouse was a wood-working building that served as temporary housing for animals in transit to the slaughterhouse. The sole occupant in this muddy, cavernous manger was a trembling baby pig. Opposite her were briskly written instructions for custom-processing her into pork with tail intact. We touched her barely responsive face through the wiring and vaguely contemplated carrying her off. In a small room beside the slaughterhouse, we were greeted by the sight of unidentifiable visceral parts distributed in several drums. We turned and approached the big room where the killing and quartering took place. A recently killed bovine body hung headless by chains and was skinned in one effortless pull by a man. He sharpened his knife noisily and slit the stomach length-wise to expose steaming entrails which he pulled out onto the concrete. A corpse down, another man carefully halved a suspended body with a chainsaw. A shot rang out, immediately followed by the sound of a great weight crashing. They had just stunned a cow. Their "stunning device" appeared to be a .22 rifle. The cow's inert body slid from the chute onto the tiled floor. She began her journey down the disassembly line by being shakled by her back legs and hoisted up and slashed on the jugular. The shower of blood drained into the drain-hole below. Occasionally, the cow would slowly undulate her sides, as though moving in sleep. I approached

the youngest worker, who looked like the Pillsbury Doughboy. "When are you next going to ...uh, dispatch another cow?" I asked carefully. "You mean KILL?" he replied, amusement glistening through his blood-spattered spectacles at my reticence. "There will be another one in ten minutes." Near the back wall, the hanging bodies were in progressive stages of mutilation. Around the perimeter of the wall hung efficient looking black hooks where the men would place favored bodily parts. One set of hooks held skinned tails, another a collection of livers, and another skinned heads. From the distance, like a death knell and coming closer was a cow bellowing and a man urging her on. It was time for another slaughter. The doors burst open, and the cow was bullied into a cramped concrete enclosure. I followed the Doughboy up the platform that ran alongside the pen, he armed with his .22 and I with my camera. The cow was subdued now and looking up at me. I found myself thinking, "You are going to die now. What are your last thoughts?" I tried to exude comforting feelings toward her as I gazed back at her. Alongside me, the Doughboy squarely placed his .22 to the top of her head. Feeling the pressure, she slowly lifted her head in curiosity and he shot her. Immediately, she crashed down. Seconds after, her head slowly and sickeningly strained upward, then slowly sank down.

Ellen, Ericka, and I emerged from the slaughterhouse, stunned and numbed, with fresh images of death to digest. The images of the workers



going about their work stayed with me. It was just a job for them, and a laid-back job at that. I counted three Coors cans in the killing room. Reserved at first, they soon grew inquisitive and even sociable. "Do my boys photograph well?" Ellen was asked by the old Moeller patriarch. Someone once said, "If all the slaughterhouses in this country were made of glass, we would all be vegetarians." I had no doubt at the end of the day that this was true.

--DOROTHY VINALS

BOOK REVIEW: ANIMAL FACTORIES
by Jim Mason and Peter Singer

There is a tendency for newly converted vegetarians to rely heavily on eggs and dairy products while breaking away from meat. They may not be fully aware that they are still participating in a major part of the meat industry. Animal Factories brings the connection between meat and dairy to the forefront.

Jim Mason, editor of Agenda and Peter Singer, author of Animal Liberation, have written Animal Factories to reach American consumers. Factual material about factory farms is presented in an easily understood manner. There is no dry statistical information to trudge through. The hideous scenario of the mass corporate use of animals is plainly described. Animal Factories outlines the governmental-scientific-agribusiness game of public subsidies to promote exploitive interests. The meat/dairy industry is constantly plunging into our wallets with its bloody hands.

Whether a woman has become a vegetarian for ethical or health reasons, she will want to know about factory farming methods. Many kinds of drugs and a variety of other chemicals are used in large amounts to foster the dairy industry. Animals as "bio-machines" is thoroughly and concisely described.

Cows, pigs, and chickens are filled with antibiotics, hormones, and additives to boost their production. The normal life-span of a chicken is 15 to 20 years. As cogs in factory farms' grinding wheels, they last about a year and a half. There is only one ending to the life sentence of a bored, stressed, worn-out bio-machine: being processed into soup and t.v. dinners.

The connection between feminism and vegetarianism (women's rights and animal rights) was apparent to many suffragists in the early part of this century. This connection has been re-established in current times. Susan Griffin's Woman and Nature, the "Oedible Complex" in the Lesbian Reader, and a variety of articles currently surfacing in feminist newspapers and magazines reflect this.

The photographs in Animal Factories reminded me of drawings I have seen of women in the previous century incarcerated in institutions. These animals (those women) are (were) strapped and chained in various positions in metal cages so that their bodies and bodily functions can (could) be directed and controlled. The emotions of pain, fear, and horror are discounted. All that remains is restraint and inevitable slaughter.

The photograph on the bottom of page 66, showing de-feathered, stripped, bare bodies of chickens, reminded me of the tender, hairless, exposed flesh of young beauty contestants. These slaughtered chicks hanging in the factory have their every muscle, shade and tone of flesh available for inspection.

Animal Factories is a well-organized book, providing easy access to the facts. The description of how cancerous tissue is recycled through human and animal tissue is devastating. The systematic, scientific, calculated domination of nature's

reproductive systems and the wasteful insanity of meat/dairy production is blatantly exposed.

Furthermore, from an environmental/ecological sense, the amount of waste and sewage spewed forth from animal industries will concern you. The toppling of the ecological balance and the enormous amount of fuel required to do this is similar to situations in other super-industries.

The facts are there. Read the book and consider your ethical values. The book also provides further references and a list of animal rights organizations. Or contact F.A.R. for a list of vegetarian and vegan cookbooks.

Let us, as feminists, acknowledge our connection to other species. The abuse of women and animals and the connection between meat and dairy are basic feminist concerns.

Animal Factories may be ordered for \$7.95: Agenda, P.O. Box 5234, Westport, CT. 06881

--KAREN DEBRA MESSER

LETTERS

F.A.R. would like to hear from you!! Let us know what your reactions are to our newsletter and/or anything else concerning feminism and animal rights. Write us at:

P.O. BOX 10017
NORTH BERKELEY STATION
BERKELEY, CA. 94709

FILM

The Berkeley premiere of "The Animals Film" will be held at UC Theatre on April 18th. Showtimes are 1:50, 4:25, 7:00, 9:35. The showing is sponsored by Action for Animals.

TAPES AVAILABLE

Copies of Sally Gearhart's "Feminism and Animal Rights" is available from F.A.R. courtesy of Action for Animals. The lecture explores the connections between the exploitation of animals and of women. Tapes are \$3.00. Write F.A.R. at the address above.

THE MONKEY BUSINESS BEHIND AIDS RESEARCH

The following letter appeared (in edited form) in the Oakland Tribune. We encourage others to write similar letters. Petitions demanding that alternative methods of research be used are available upon request.

"I was saddened and outraged to read (12-31-83 Oakland Tribune) that monkeys at NIH facilities in Bethesda Md. and Davis California are being injected with the blood of monkeys who have already contracted an AIDS-like disease. One might naively think that a facility beset with a wide-scale epidemic might be closed down by the NIH (close to 50% of the monkeys at UC Davis died suddenly and unexplainably in an epidemic.) Instead, the researchers have cleverly turned these monkeys' misfortune to their advantage by claiming that it gives them the perfect opportunity to do research on AIDS. Their sophisticated research shows us the surprising finding that monkeys do indeed die when infected with blood from diseased monkeys.

I am as anxious as anyone to find a cure for AIDS (although, I suspect, as with so many diseases, that the best cure lies in prevention.) However, I can in no way condone the suffering of another group of beings to achieve this goal. There is increasing evidence that research on animals is not only morally bankrupt but scientifically invalid as well. After 30 years of cancer research on animals, we find that the cancer rate has actually increased. Many dangerous drugs are also marketed for humans because they prove safe and effective on animals. (The 10,000 children born to pregnant mothers who took thalidomide are a sad testimony to this fact and far from the only one.)

As a gay person, I sincerely hope that the gay community will question the type of research being done on their behalf and condemn all research that inflicts pain and suffering on innocent beings. Let's not let animals pay, once again, with their lives for human disease."

--MARTI KHEEL

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

PLEASE COPY & PASS TO OTHERS