

Vi proponiamo il testo di Steve Best commentato da Aldo Sottofattori nel [numero 24 di Liberazioni](#).

13 Ways to Promote Alliance Politics and Total Liberation

Steve Best

We are thankful to all those who have shown keen interest in our recently published “Manifesto for Radical Abolitionism,” and the corresponding Facebook group, Radical Abolition: Total Liberation By Any Means Necessary.[1]

We launched this group in the hope of revitalizing a vegan abolition movement mired in complacency, timidity, and dogmatic slumbers — a small but hegemonic approach paralyzed by pacifism and a cult-like following of an authoritarian leader.

We accurately identified this moribund manifestation as a bourgeois, elitist, single-issue, consumerist, apolitical, *pseudo*-abolitionism going nowhere fast.

We established that this insular, complacent, and pretentious lifestyle narcissism exacerbates the isolation of veganism and animal rights from other movements. It reinforces the dominant image of a movement of privileged white liberals indifferent to the social, political, and economic realities that devastate and destroy billions of people throughout the world.

We dispelled the disabling illusions of pathological pacifism and exposed the arrogance, aggression, and verbal violence hiding behind the mask of ahimsa and Jainism.

We redefined veganism and abolitionism as social in outlook, pluralist and contextualist in method, and radical in politics.

We said what had to be said.

We framed our approach not just as a critique and negation of lifestyle veganism, “culinary activism,” and bedroom bloggers blathering in cyberspace vacuums, but also as a *positive alternative* to its blasé bourgeois values and utter sterility. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to suggest new, creative, constructive, and concrete courses of action, such as can thrive only in alliance with a diversity of social movements and progressive political voices. Indeed since our debut on November 13, 2009, people from all over the world — clearly yearning for new visions, politics, and possibilities — have expressed gratitude for our critiques and enthusiasm for our project, while eagerly requesting suggestions for promoting total liberation.

What follows then are thirteen initial suggestions for building the diversified and unified global movement that alone can dismantle the systems of oppression that have devastated biodiversity, triggered ecological collapse, and thwarted human potential for over ten thousand years — which is quite long enough. We enjoin those interested in enlivening possibilities for change through a markedly different theory and politics to read, learn, think, grow, and expand their frames of reference until problems and potential solutions come into focus. In this evolutionary process, we mediate theory and practice, such that we learn not only by reading but also by doing; not in solitary confinement, but in dialogue with others.

As we exit the insular comfort zone of single-issue advocacy, and venture into the vast and complex global battlefield of power politics and resistance movements, it is necessary to cultivate the virtues of strength, fortitude, courage, and patience. Building a radical coalition — one that is *unprecedented in depth, scope, and inclusiveness* — is a formidable challenge. One runs into the same wall of dogmatic speciesism among the peace, justice, and ecology crowd of left-wing humanists and sundry “progressives” that surrounds social consciousness in general and repels

subversive ideas and anti-hierarchical politics.

We must approach others with respect and humility, keenly aware that while we have much to teach, we also have much to learn, and to unlearn. For as we engage others about the monumental significance of the rise and potential fall of speciesism, people will also be challenged to recognize any latent racism, sexism, heterosexism, ablism, elitism, and classism. The project of radical alliance politics, moreover, will not be any easier with the backlash of corporate power and fascist police states, such as is already underway.

Yet with past publications, conferences, and alliance building projects in numerous countries, and with the current Manifesto and Radical Abolition Facebook group, we have initiated the process of dialogue and bridge-building indispensable for a mass, multidimensional movement with the potential for revolutionary change.[2] Our modest goal is to help break new ground and plant the seeds for global resistance and social reconstruction.

The politics of total liberation have yet to be invented, and we hardly pretend to understand all the questions, let alone have all the answers. But we know the animal rights “movement” is at a standstill and impasse, and that we need a new way. We know that the hegemonic model of vegan abolitionism was co-opted in conception; emerged dead-on-arrival; and was doomed to fail. It was, is, and always will be fatally flawed in its hermetic state of isolation; its religious conviction in the possession of Truth; its dogmatic censure of dissent; its mind-numbing denial of social and ecological crisis; and its collective hallucination of peaceful change.

This is the first of many drafts, and we seek your suggestions for further actions and your input on the politics of total liberation overall. We hope you will join us in the exciting, experimental process of building new communities and broader alliances by utilizing strategies such as we suggest below. Please share your experiences and ideas in our discussion forum and elsewhere. A global crisis and challenge such as humanity has never before faced is upon us. We have no time to waste. Apathy and complacency are more dangerous enemies than capitalism itself.

1) Begin with a thorough and ambitious reading project that provides grounding in history, social theory, political movements, and political economy (i.e., the critical analysis of the capitalist economy and the decisive influence it has on aspects of reality, society, experience, and thought). Such a project would involve immersion in Marxist, anarchist, feminist, anti-racist, anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist, and anti/alter-globalization literature, along with general history. Difficult? Yes. But who said revolution is easy?

2) While it is essential that you read the manifesto, understand its motivation, and absorb its philosophy, we encourage study of the following books and resources sure to broaden your understanding of total liberation politics:

- The [total liberation](#) resource page on either Thomas Paine’s Corner (TPC) [3]
- Explore total liberation sites such as The Vegan Ideal,[4] Humans, Earth, and Animals Living Together Harmoniously (HEALTH),[5] Superweed,[6]and the Canadian Animal Liberation Movement (CALM)[7]
- [Terrorists or Freedom Fighters? Reflections on the Liberation of Animals](#) (edited by Steven Best and Anthony J. Nocella II)
- [Igniting a Revolution: Voices in Defense of The Earth](#)(edited by Steven Best and Anthony J. Nocella II)[8]
- [An Unnatural Order: Why We Are Destroying The Planet and Each Other](#) (by Jim Mason)
- [The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery](#) (by Marjorie Spiegel)
- [Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust](#) (by Charles Patterson)
- [A Tale of Two Holocausts](#) (by Karen Davis)
- [Animal Rights/Human Rights: Entanglements of Oppression and Liberation](#) (by David

Nibert)

- 3) Contact groups such as [Vegan Outreach](#)[9] and urge them to diversify their message in order to reach the struggling working classes, people of color, and financially depressed communities. They must show that good health, compassion toward other animals, and a sustainable environment are vital interests for all and they must acknowledge people who struggle just to survive. While you are at it, ask mainstream groups like Vegan Outreach to stop bashing protests and direct action and trying to squeeze everyone and all approaches into the same homogenized category.
- 4) Form alliances within your own area and community. Network with other individuals and groups fighting oppression, discrimination, hierarchy, violence, militarism, capitalism, imperialism, and so on (e.g., LGBT groups, racial equality movements, feminists, anti/alter-globalization networks, leftists, anarchists, and environmentalists). Explain to people who are skeptical of privileged white vegans and animal liberationists that our causes are crucially important for ending violence, eliminating oppression, and averting social and ecological crises, as you affirm the need for and validity of their cause. While recognizing positive differences that should prevail, strive to identify shared concerns over issues such as violence, discrimination, capitalist exploitation, and environmental degradation. Introduce veganism/animal rights as a social movement that seeks to eradicate violence and discrimination for all animals — human and nonhuman.
- 5) Move beyond trendy cafes, upscale malls, and uptown and suburban comfort zones, into areas completely neglected by the vegan and animal rights communities. Veganism needs to be demystified and made accessible to the entire socio-economic spectrum, not just the white privileged elite. It must be repackaged as a cost-effective diet, as well as the healthiest, most ethical, and best path toward ecological regeneration and sustainability. It's time to engage the other 99% of the population that our communities have blatantly ignored. Teach, but don't preach; talk, but listen; instruct, and be instructed; support, and you just might be supported in turn. The process of learning about and sensitizing oneself to other causes, histories, cultures, identities, and experiences with oppression not only is instrumental to alliance formation, it expands one's intellectual and moral horizons. The hard work of alliance politics can then be seen as a process of growth and fulfillment rather than a monumental obstacle or burdensome task.
- 6) Organize a vegan food drive for the poor and underprivileged in your community. Or, feed people at the homeless shelter or hangout with large batches of vegan chili, cornbread, and ice tea. Send press releases about the event to local media and highlight the connections between poverty and class, various oppressions and speciesism, and the homelessness of human and nonhuman animals alike. Show the world that the dominant image of vegans and animal rights advocates as misanthropes unconcerned with human tragedy is untrue always true and never consistent with our principles and ethics. Demonstrate by example and concrete actions that our social and ethical framework addresses human and nonhuman exploitation alike, and that alliance politics and bridge-building are vital tools for the liberation of one and all.[10]
- 7) Outreach needs to happen on the Internet as well, so begin building bridges online, while never neglecting the streets. Pick a few individuals or groups on Facebook or MySpace and initiate a discussion about common concerns and potential alliances.[11] Engage them about veganism and animal rights as they address you about their concerns and struggles. Join forums advocating social revolution and find common ground with veteran freedom fighters such as the Black Panther Party. [12] Take the initiative by adding them to your pages or blogrolls and ask them to add you to their sites. Examine your friends list and wall posts: do you find an overwhelming single-issue focus neglectful of human oppression and struggles with racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, and state repression? If so, you might want to diversify your pages and politics. Quite usefully, both MySpace and Facebook allow you to organize your friends into category titles of your choice, such as "European animal liberation," "feminism," "anarchism," and "anti-prison."
- 8) Moving from the local to the global, research, publish, and educate on the profound changes unfolding in China and India, two crucial flashpoints of change. Indicative of their bourgeois

mindset and complete withdrawal from ongoing global crisis for cookie baking in the kitchen, vegan abolitionists utterly fail to discuss the monumental social transformations in China and India (as the world's most populous nations shift to a consumer and carnivorous society) and the biological and ecological breakdown of mass extinction and global climate change. Initiate the most urgent form of "vegan outreach" yet by locating and working with vegan groups in these countries.

9) Work with newly created total liberation groups, such as the Alliance for Progressive Science (APS), which NIO, TPC, Steve Best, and the North American Animal Liberation Press Office (NAALPO)[13] formed to combat "Pro-Test" vivisection activist groups in the UK and US. APS urges the abolition of vivisection, it shows how a flawed research model kills nonhuman and human animals alike, and it reveals how the "research" and marketing of drugs is done not to advance science and cure disease but rather to maximize the profits of corporations such as Merck, Pfizer, and GlaxoSmithKline.

10) Creatively develop new tactics by engaging innovative models such as developed by the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP).[14] Wanting to break through the walls of public apathy and passivity in order to reach and inspire large numbers of people, ACT UP abandoned conventional protest models (which limit people to holding signs and chanting in conditions approved by police) in favor of festive demonstrations and civil disobedience tactics such as sit-ins, die-ins, and building blockades. Other contemporary examples of creative resistance include the "subversive" bicyclists of Critical Mass[15] and the rural women's Chipko ("treehugging") movement in India.[16]

11) Join or start a support network for political prisoners from animal rights, environmental, or political movements. Support actions include disseminating information about their case, writing letters and mailing books and articles, personal visits, sending out flyers, organizing events, and fundraising to help pay for legal fees.[17]

12) Unlike pacifists, radical abolitionists support Animal Liberation Front tactics such as laboratory raids, mink liberations, and economic sabotage. In contradistinction to those who issue blanket condemnations of such actions as counter-productive and "violent," we see them as legitimate, necessary, and effective ways of stopping the real violence which exploiters inflict on their nonhuman animal victims. We encourage those who do join the underground, however, to carefully research and plan their action. Don't do the crime if you can't do the time; there's nothing worse than a scared snitch.

13) Write and publish on NIO, TPC, and social networking sites about your research and experience with alliance politics and creative action. Share your thoughts, concerns, questions, and experiences on the Radical Abolition discussion forum.

We have four key objectives if we are to survive the ecological crisis bearing down on us: (1) abandon all prejudices, including speciesism; (2) educate ourselves and learn to think from a systemic standpoint; (3) dialogue and learn from one another; and (4) form strategic alliances and mutual support networks. There are alliances of domination, or commonalities of oppression (e.g., overlapping ideologies and structures of speciesism and sexism or capitalism and racism), and alliances of liberation, whereby combined forces can provide the battering ram to smash systems of oppression and knock open the door to an alternative future.

Politics as usual just won't cut it anymore. We will always lose if we play by their rules rather than cast a pox on their house and invent new forms of struggle, new social movements, and new sensibilities. Causes require decisive and direct action: logging roads need to be blocked, driftnets need to be cut, and cages need to be emptied. But these are defensive actions; new movements must be built, ones that incorporate both social and ecological issues in multiracial and global alliances. Such approaches have been taken by Judi Bari and Earth First!, the environmental justice movement, the international Green movement, the Zapatistas, and alter-globalization struggles

against transnational capitalism.

A new revolutionary politics will build on the achievements of democratic, libertarian socialist, and anarchist traditions. It will incorporate radical green, feminist, and indigenous struggles. It will merge nonhuman animal, earth, and human animal standpoints in a total liberation struggle against global capitalism and its omniscidal grow-or-die logic. Radical politics must reverse the growing power of the state, mass media, and corporations to promote egalitarianism and participatory democratization at all levels of society – economic, political, and cultural. It dismantles all asymmetrical power relations and structures of hierarchy, including that of humans over other animals and the earth. It is impossible without the revitalization of citizenship and re-politicization of life, which begins with forms of education, communication, culture, and arts that anger, awaken, inspire, and empower people toward action and change.

The alliances needed for a politics of the 21st century – the most crucial century in the history of humanity — will not be easy to form. It is difficult to build a single-issue movement, to organize a local group, and even to have a relationship with another person, let alone to build the complex alliances necessary to avert social and ecological catastrophe.

There is no guarantee humans can get it together to overcome apathy, complacency, egoism, fear, and social fragmentation, such that they live harmoniously with one another, other species, and the earth. The one certainty we have, however, is that single-issue reformist politics is a recipe for failure, disaster, and extinction.

NOTE

[1] <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=309613730182>.

[2] On three separate occasions, for instance, Steve Best did extensive lecture tours throughout South Africa, speaking about total liberation to community groups and university audiences, and doing radio, television, and newspaper interviews in Johannesburg and Cape Town. In one significant event, he helped organize and gave the keynote lecture to the first ever total liberation conference in South Africa. Before a diverse audience of 300 people, he debated a panel of activists and humanists on issues such as veganism, animal rights, and alliance politics. For full coverage of the event and the text of his keynote speech, see: <http://www.animalrightsafrica.org/onestruggle/index.php>; for a video clip of his speech and highlights from the ensuing debate, see: <http://www.animalrightsafrica.org/onestruggle/>.

[3] <http://thomaspainescorner.wordpress.com/total-liberation/>.

[4] <http://veganideal.org/>.

[5] <http://eco-health.blogspot.com/>.

[6] <http://patricejones.info/blog/>

[7] <http://calmaction.org/>.

[8] *Terrorist or Freedom Fighters* and *Igniting a Revolution* not only talked about alliance politics, they put it into action. These stimulating anthologies brought together a rich diversity of voices exploring common interests – including activists, academics, poets, artists, political prisoners, feminists, queer theorists, freegans, Native Americans, black liberationists, animal liberationists, and earth liberationists – in conversation over common interests in defeating capitalism, ecocidal systems, violence, and hierarchical domination in all forms.

[9] <http://www.veganoutreach.org/>.

[10] For advice on a related project, how to start a local Food Not Bombs group, see: <http://home.earthlink.net/~foodnotbombs/seven.html>.

[11] Examples might include [Vegans of Color](http://vegansofcolor.wordpress.com/) (<http://vegansofcolor.wordpress.com/>), the American Indian Movement (<http://www.aimovement.org/>), Earth First!

(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2260520127>), Resisting Oppression – India
(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=112047929155>), and Violence Against Women
(<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=446738067754>).

[12] <http://www.blackpanther.org/>.

[13] <http://www.animalliberationpressoffice.org/>.

[14] See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AIDS_Coalition_to_Unleash_Power. Also see ACT UP's
"Civil Disobedience Index," <http://www.actupny.org/documents/CDdocuments/CDindex.html>.

[15] <http://www.criticalmass.com/>.

[16] <http://www.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/80a03e/80A03E08.htm>.

[17] See, for instance, Free All Political Prisoners (http://www.facebook.com/group.php?v=app_2373072738&gid=309613730182#/group.php?gid=75734019762), Prison Abolitionist
(<http://prisonabolitionist.blogspot.com>), Anarchist Black Cross Federation
(<http://www.abcf.net/abcf.asp?page=warchest>), and Earth Liberation Prisoner Support Network
(<http://www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk/addresses.html>).

Fonte: <https://carmen4thepets.wordpress.com/13-ways-to-promote-alliance-politics-and-total-liberation/>