

## **Discourse on Exclusive Non-Violent Action: A Reply to Peyser (Unabridged)** **By Jeff Perz**

### Introduction

In “Exclusive Non-Violent Action: Its Absolute Necessity for Building a Genuine Animal Rights Movement,”<sup>1</sup> I argue that the only ethical and effective tactics open to non-human (and human) animal rights activists are non-violent. In his essay “Response to Perz’s ‘Exclusive Non-Violent Action’,”<sup>2</sup> Daniel Peyser objects to the arguments and historical evidence I present. In closing his essay, Peyser writes:

I don’t think that Jeff Perz is a speciesist, and I don’t necessarily think he is an anti-Semite. In an objective sense, this is uninteresting to me, as the effect of what Perz writes does not really change depending on intent.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, Peyser thinks that the effect of my article is speciesist and anti-Semitic and it does not matter that I am not a speciesist or an anti-Semite because the harmful, unintentional effect that I have allegedly caused remains unchanged. Peyser, however, fails to demonstrate that the effect of my article is speciesist or anti-Semitic. He also does not offer sufficient argument or historical analysis to refute my principal claims that violent tactics are unethical and ineffective.

### Solidarity and Discord

Peyser contends that it can be ethical to use violent tactics in human and non-human rights campaigns. In such campaigns, I contend that only non-violent tactics are ethical. Peyser is a Marxist.<sup>4</sup> I am an anarchist. Noam Chomsky said:

It may seem quixotic to group left Marxism and anarchism under the same rubric, as I have done, given the antagonism throughout the past century between the Marxists and the anarchists, beginning with the antagonism between Marx and Engels on the one hand and, for example, Proudhon and Bakunin on the other. In the nineteenth century at least, their differences with regard to the question of the state was significant, but in a sense it was tactical.<sup>5</sup>

Peyser and I disagree over the ethics of tactics. I nevertheless suspect that Peyser and I share many ideas in common. We certainly share the same goal of the abolition of non-human animal exploitation, and we both reject new welfarism. Sincere abolitionists can have disagreements over various issues, but we can also have solidarity with one another. This essay is analytic and

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05\\_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml](http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)

<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)

<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Bob Torres, *Making a Killing: The Political Economy of Animal Rights* (Oakland: AK Press, 2007), p. v.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.chomsky.info/audionvideo/19700216.mp3>

presents rigorous rebuttals of Peyser's arguments. In spite of the analytic style of this essay, it is nevertheless offered in the spirit of solidarity and respect. I thank Daniel Peyser for the opportunity to discuss this important issue with a fellow abolitionist.

### Ethical Argument

Peyser observes that those who argue that violence may be ethically used in social justice movements do not deny that, aside from violence and passivity, social justice advocates may employ active non-violent resistance. According to Peyser, this fact is problematic to my support for exclusive non-violent action. Peyser does not, however, explain why the abovementioned fact is problematic for my position. As such, his claim is a non-sequitur. In my original article, I used the fact that active non-violent resistance is always an option or third way in social justice campaigns *as a premise in the following ethical argument*:

In situations where there *is* a third option between responding with violence and doing nothing, does someone lose her or his basic rights and moral value simply because she or he is in the act of doing harm, or intending to do harm? An example of why the answer to this question is “no” is as follows. Imagine that a convicted three-time murderer is sitting in a prison cell with the door open. You are 50 metres away and have your finger on a button that will automatically close and lock the cell door before the prisoner can get out. The prisoner picks up a knife, says “I’m going to kill you” and slowly but determinedly starts walking in your direction. Should you push the button and lock the prisoner in the cell or should you shoot the prisoner in so-called self-defence? Obviously, *it would be unethical* to shoot the prisoner because there is a highly effective third option between passively waiting to die and using violence.<sup>6</sup>

Although the above argument by analogy is on the level of the individual, there is no apparent reason why it cannot be unproblematically generalised to the level of society: it would be unethical to kill vivisectionists as part of a social justice campaign because there is a highly effective third option between doing nothing and acting violently.<sup>7</sup>

Peyser fleetingly responds<sup>8</sup> to the above argument and does not explain why its premise that there is always the option of using active non-violent resistance in social justice campaigns is supposedly problematic for advocates of exclusive non-violent action. Indeed, Peyser's admission that the abovementioned premise is not rejected by people who argue for including violent resistance as an option is problematic for those people because it leaves them more subject to the logic of the above-quoted argument.

### Historical Examples

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05\\_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml](http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml) (Emphasis added.)

<sup>7</sup> See “Micro / Macro” section below.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

In response to my defense of the thesis that “our actions must be strictly and exclusively non-violent *if they are to be ethical and effective*,” Peyser claims that “Perz never takes issue with any of the historical examples commonly used to prove the efficacy of violent resistance...”<sup>9</sup> To the contrary, with the aid of George Lakey, I take issue with the example of Britain ending its colonisation of India supposedly because Britain lacked the military resources to maintain violent dominance after World War II.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, in the article by Lakey that I cite, Lakey takes issue with the supposed effectiveness of violence used in the U.S. civil rights movement.<sup>11</sup> The examples that Peyser uses of violence supposedly conducing towards social justice are “John Brown or the Civil War in the U.S., to ghetto and camp uprisings in German-occupied Europe, to the resistance of the Palestinians and other oppressed groups today.”<sup>12</sup> I will consider each example in turn and show that the violent tactics involved are either unethical, ineffective or both—as I claimed more generally in my original article.

John Brown was an American human slavery abolitionist who used violent resistance prior to the U.S. Civil War. The action Brown is best known for was his 1859 Harpers Ferry, Virginia raid on the U.S. federal armory. In this raid, a free African-American and six other people were killed and the federal arsenal was commandeered. Although Brown planned to give the arsenal to slaves for violent resistance, his attack failed. Everyone acting under Brown’s command was captured by local farmers, militia, and U.S. Marines within 36 hours of the raid. Brown was later captured by federal forces and hung for treason. The U.S. Civil War followed sixteen months later.<sup>13</sup>

Brown’s Harpers Ferry raid is generally considered to have significantly contributed to starting the U.S. Civil War. Although Southern slave owners were relieved that Brown’s raid failed and involved relatively few abolitionists, they believed that others would follow Brown’s example. So, in response to the raid, the South transformed the then weak militia system into well established militias that became the Confederate army. In this way, the South was better prepared for war when it might not have been without the impetus of Brown’s raid. Historian Daniel W. Crofts states that Brown’s raid succeeded in further dividing the Opposition-Republican coalition

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)

<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05\\_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml](http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml)

<sup>11</sup> “In the case of the U.S. civil rights struggle, at the risk of over-simplification I’d identify the curve of effectiveness in achieving tangible, concrete goals like this: 1955-1965, the curve goes up and up. Some of the goals were: to integrate buses (Montgomery, Freedom rides); to integrate lunch counters and other public accommodations (sit-ins, stand-ins, swim-ins, etc. the Birmingham campaign and the 1964 Civil Rights Act); to enable blacks to vote in the deep South (Mississippi Summer, Selma March, the 1965 Voting Rights Act).

The curve starts downward from 1965 in terms of major beachheads taken by the mass movement, although for years afterward there was implementation of what was made possible by earlier gains, like getting black officials elected even in the deep South. Notably, from 1965 there were riots in northern cities like Newark, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Watts, and the rise of the Deacons of Defense and Black Panther Party. By 1968 even non-threatening legislation like a bill to fund rat control in inner cities was openly laughed at in the House of Representatives. The mass civil rights movement lost much of its power precisely at the time when it lost its consensus on nonviolent struggle as the basis for mass action.”

<http://globalsolidarity.transcend.org/articles/nonviolent.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)

<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

<sup>13</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Brown\\_\(abolitionist\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Brown_(abolitionist))

and contributed to the sectional polarisation that destroyed the old Democratic party and the Union.<sup>14</sup>

Contrary to Peyser's contention, the above example of Brown serves to illustrate that violent tactics are unethical and less effective than non-violent tactics. Considered in themselves and apart from the Civil War that followed Brown's death, all of Brown's acts of violent resistance throughout his lifetime saved a few individual slaves and also resulted in a few innocent lives being lost.<sup>15</sup> From this perspective, the acts themselves did not constitute a successful social justice movement. This is especially the case when one considers that at least some of Brown's violent acts against pro-slavery forces were solely motivated out of self-preservation, not to further the abolitionist movement.<sup>16</sup> Historian Paul Finkelman calls Brown "simply part of a very violent world" and concludes that he "is a bad tactician, a bad strategist, he's a bad planner, he's not a very good general-but he's not crazy."<sup>17</sup> My original article was only concerned with actions that fall within the scope of social justice movements, so I will not comment further on the ethics of Brown's actions considered in themselves.

From the perspective of Brown's actions contributing to the start of the U.S. Civil War, which resulted in the abolition of human slavery, however, more can be said about the ethics and efficacy of Brown's violent tactics. In the Harpers Ferry raid, Brown caused the deaths of seven people. If this act of violence contributed to the U.S. Civil War starting, and Brown intended this to be so, then one must consider the ethics of the U.S. Civil War itself—which is Peyser's next example.

My original article discusses the ethics of a different war: World War II. In my original piece, I quote Mohandas K. Gandhi's observation that despite the massive violent resistance employed by the Allies (and, as Peyser correctly observes, the violent tactics employed by the Jewish resistance), approximately six million Jews nevertheless died in the Holocaust. To this, I would add that a total of perhaps 50 million people died as a result of World War II from all causes.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> "Brown conducted surveillance on encamped 'ruffians' in his vicinity and learned that his family was marked for attack, and furthermore was given reliable information as to pro-slavery neighbors who had aligned and supported these forces. The pro-slavery men did not necessarily own any slaves, although the Doyles (three of the victims) were slave hunters prior to settling in Kansas. According to Salmon Brown, when the Doyles were seized, Mahala Doyle acknowledged that her husband's 'devilment' had brought down this attack to their doorstep--further signifying that the Browns' attack was probably grounded in real concern for their own survival.

Brown has usually been portrayed as seeking to avenge Lawrence and Sumner, and to intimidate proslavery forces by showing that Free Staters were capable of violent retaliation. There is clearly divided opinion regarding the extent to which pro-slavery terrorists would have gone in assaulting free state men. John Brown and his sons Oliver, Owen, Salmon, and Frederick, his son-in-law Henry Thompson, and two other free state settlers determined that danger was imminent. Some might suggest that they went to Kansas primarily to confront that risk, but the Brown boys had gone only as settlers and were not even armed for the kind of terrorist threats they began to face in 1855-56. Brown had gone to Kansas with a bellicose attitude, but his letters in 1855 suggest he was at first optimistic that the free state side would win by the ballot. His determination to 'fight fire with fire' and 'strike terror in the hearts of the proslavery people' was only solidified by the realities of pro-slavery terrorism. The personal concerns that Brown had for his family's safety were his priority, and his efforts were urged on by other free state men who chose not to join him and his killing party." (*Ibid.*)

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstat1.htm#Second>

As I noted in my original article, Gandhi acknowledged in 1938 that active non-violent resistance, had it been employed on a *grand scale* during the Holocaust, would have required the deaths of myriad non-violent resisters. The implication is that the number of deaths would have been much lower and the duration of the struggle shortened by the exclusive use of non-violent resistance on a grand scale. Either that, or the deaths and duration would have been the same.

As Gandhi stated, “Millions sacrifice themselves in war without any guarantee that the world will be better as a result or even that the enemy will be defeated.”<sup>19</sup> Again, perhaps 50 million people died in World War II. Perhaps 650 000<sup>20</sup> died as a result of the U.S. Civil war. As of July 2006, 654 965<sup>21</sup> Iraqi deaths have resulted from the U.S. invasion. Contrast this with another struggle for independence: perhaps 23 000<sup>22</sup> died in the non-violent struggle for Indian independence from 1918 to 1938.

The morbidity rates for the abovementioned four struggles will differ due to the differing populations of the different places at different times, as well as other factors such as technology, population densities and so on. The logic of Gandhi’s argument, however, still holds: over 655 000 dead and dying for a so far unsuccessful violent Iraqi resistance movement versus 23 000 dead for a successful non-violent Indian independence movement. Further; 650 000 dead through violence and violent resistance during the U.S. Civil war versus what would undoubtedly be a smaller number had U.S. slavery been abolished through the exclusive use of non-violent action on a grand scale. I say “undoubtedly” but one might object that it is impossible, or at least very difficult, to take examples from history, speculate about the results if things had happened differently and expect one’s speculation to be reasonably accurate. This objection is well taken, although some types of historical “what ifs” can be said to be reasonably accurate.<sup>23</sup> It is not necessary, however, to answer the above objection about speculative historical analysis in order to show that Peyser is incorrect when he says that, amongst others, the historical example of the U.S. Civil war “proves the efficacy” of violent resistance. Rather, all that is necessary is to:

- (a) point to actual examples where non-violent resistance was *effective*,
- (b) employ the above-quoted *ethical* argument about the prisoner, which concludes that violent resistance is unethical if an effective non-violent option exists and
- (c) acknowledge, as Peyser does, that active non-violent resistance is always an option in social justice movements.

When I claim in my original article that “our actions must be strictly and exclusively non-violent if they are to be ethical and effective,” I do not regard ethics and efficacy to be mutually

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<sup>19</sup> Mohandas K. Gandhi, in *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, ed. by Louis Fischer (New York: Harper & Row, 1950; reprint ed., New York: Harper & Row, 1983), pp. 346-348.

<sup>20</sup> <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/wars19c.htm#ACW>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.thelancet.com/webfiles/images/journals/lancet/s0140673606694919.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstat5.htm#Amritsar>

<sup>23</sup> An archetypical example is the statement: “If Brown had escaped capture, then he would have given his stolen weapons to slaves for violent resistance as he had planned.” Furthermore, if this plan of Brown’s had succeeded, then it would have very likely provoked an even stronger response from the pro-slavery forces who strengthened the Confederate army as a result of Brown’s raid. Some scenarios are more complex than others and historians can analyse probabilities with varying rates of accuracy, depending on the strength of the arguments, evidence and complexity of the circumstances.

exclusive. For example, in my original article, I acknowledged the fact that World War II and all of the violent resistance that it involved resulted in the Holocaust being stopped in 1945. Similarly, I acknowledge that the violence of the U.S. Civil War significantly contributed to the abolition of human slavery. It is a simple historical truth that violence has been used in the past to achieve good outcomes, such as the two outcomes mentioned above. So, when I assert, “our actions must be strictly and exclusively non-violent if they are to be ethical and effective,” I am not placing ethics in one category and efficacy into another. Rather, I am making a chiefly ethical *argument*. So, when Peyser objects that “Perz never takes issue with any of the historical examples commonly used to prove the efficacy of violent resistance...” he misses the point. The validity of my argument holds, even without addressing historical examples that have been used to attempt to prove the efficacy of violent resistance.

Peyser’s final historical example that supposedly supports the efficaciousness of violence is the Palestinian resistance movement. Although my argument is primarily an ethical one (which incorporates the history of the successes of active non-violent resistance *as a premise in that argument*) Peyser’s example of violent resistance in Palestine can be rebutted on the basis of historical data alone. Chomsky has observed that Henry Kissinger created U.S. policy on Palestine. Chomsky notes that “official” U.S. policy towards Palestine is one of diplomacy and negotiation directed towards peace, with police and military serving the role of restoring order on the regrettable occasions that diplomacy and negotiation fail. Actual U.S. policy, however, is what Kissinger called “stalemate;” where the U.S. blocks diplomatic agreement, prevents meaningful negotiations, promotes slow integration of the territories under Israeli government control and employs delaying tactics otherwise known as “the peace process.” On December 14, 2001, the United Nations Security Council debated a resolution calling for implementation of the Mitchell Plan, which by all accounts would have reduced violence in Palestine. The resolution was vetoed by the U. S. This is only one of the many examples that Chomsky points to of the U.S. encouraging violence *and violent resistance*, and blocking a peaceful agreement between Israel and Palestine.<sup>24</sup> U.S. policy expects and encourages violent resistance in Palestine because those who implement it know that the stalemate strategy is slowly working as intended. Violent resistance in Palestine has not worked in the 37 years that Kissinger’s policy has been in place. Rather, violent resistance in Palestine is part of the U.S.’s stalemate strategy and plays into the hands of the oppressive U.S.-backed Israeli-Government. Hence, contrary to Peyser, the presence of violent resistance in Palestine does not prove the efficacy of that violence. The above conclusion has absolutely no bearing on the moral characters of Palestinian people who use violent resistance, as will be explained below.

### Definition of “Violence”

I define violence as:

[T]he intentional infliction of physical or psychological harm upon a sentient being. Property destruction may or may not be violent, depending on the circumstances. If someone burns down another’s home and cherished possessions whilst the home is empty, this form of property destruction is psychologically

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/12044>

violent towards the people who lived in that home; they feel extreme loss, anger and fear.<sup>25</sup>

Peysner objects:

Perz ignores the obvious contradiction, which is that even through exclusively nonviolent action, the oppressor will undoubtedly feel “anger and fear,” and possibly “extreme loss,” and as a result, exclusively nonviolent action is actually, by Perz’s own definition, violent.<sup>26</sup>

Peysner, however, ignores my definition: only the “intentional” infliction of psychological harm is violent.<sup>27</sup> To this, I would add that any unintentional infliction of psychological harm upon someone as a result of Gandhian non-violent resistance is necessarily temporary and positively transformative. Gandhi writes:

Violence and non-violence are mental attitudes, they concern the feelings in our heart. A slap given through anger is pure violence, whereas a slap given to a person bitten by a snake to keep him awake is pure non-violence.<sup>28</sup>

Just as slapping someone to keep him or her awake long enough to survive a snake bite is non-violent, so too was the act (during the struggle for Indian independence) of non-violent resisters attempting to pass through the gates of a salt factory to take salt whilst guards severely beat them away. Just as the slap is physically painful to the snakebite victim, the abovementioned act of non-violent resistance was psychologically painful for the guards at the salt factory, the owners of the factory and those in the British government who supported the economic exploitation of India. Nevertheless, the resisters acted non-violently because they did not intend for the colonisers to psychologically suffer, and because the action transformed the colonisers for the benefit of all:

Gandhian non-violent resistance entails that the resisters only carry an attitude of love, caring and respect toward their opponent, with the intention to convert. Once converted, the oppressor is freed of the “venomous” idea that imperialism and everything it involves are morally

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<sup>25</sup> [http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05\\_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml](http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml)

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)

<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

<sup>27</sup> Peysner also ignores the fact that – at least to a limited extent – I anticipate and respond to his objection in my original article: “[I]f someone destroys a vacant construction site where a slaughterhouse was to be built, this act of property destruction is not psychologically violent. *Some might object to this*, perhaps arguing that the stockholders in the company will lose money, this will affect their ability to meet their needs and they will experience worry, panic or something else that could be described as psychological harm. This concern, however, is exaggerated. *Whether an act of property destruction is psychologically violent is a matter of degree and is open to interpretation. Gandhi destroyed the property of the Government of South Africa when he burned the permits that all Indians in that country were required to carry.*” (Emphasis added. [http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05\\_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml](http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml)) The inference I am making here is, in part, that Gandhi’s burning of the permits was not psychologically violent towards the police who stopped him or the Government of South Africa that created the permit law.

<sup>28</sup> Monandus K. Gandhi, *The Complete Works of Mohandus K. Gandhi*, Volume 43,

“46. LETTER TO BHOGILAL” (September 22, 1928) <http://www.gandhiserve.org/cwmg/VOL043.PDF>

acceptable. The oppressor and resister cease to exist and are transformed into friends who willingly cooperate with each other; both are better off for having been involved in a psychological “slap” done purely out of love for everyone involved. General Jan Christiaan Smuts wrote:

It is fitting that I, as an opponent of Gandhi a generation ago, should now salute the veteran as he reached [70 years of age]. Men like him *redeem us all* from a sense of commonplaceness and futility, and are an inspiration to us not to be weary in well-doing.

The story of our clash in the early days of the Union of South Africa has been told by Gandhi himself and is well known. *It was my fate to be the antagonist* of a man for whom even then I had the highest respect. ... *[H]e never forgot the human background of the situation, never lost his temper or succumbed to hate, and preserved his gentle humour* even in the most trying situations. His manner and spirit even then, as well as later, contrasted markedly with the ruthless and brutal forcefulness which is the vogue in our day.

I must frankly admit that *his activities at that time were very trying to me*. Together with other South African leaders I was then busily engaged on the task of welding the old colonies into a unified State ... Suddenly, in the midst of all these engrossing preoccupations, Gandhi raised a *most troublesome* issue.

We had a skeleton in our cupboard in the form of what is called the Indian question in South Africa. ... His method was deliberately to break the law, and to organise his followers into a mass movement of passive resistance in disobedience to the law objected to. In both provinces *a wild and disconcerting commotion* was created, large numbers of Indians had to be imprisoned for lawless behaviour... For him everything went according to plan. For me – the defender of law and order – there was *the usual trying situation* ... and finally *the discomfiture* when the law had to be repealed. ... In [jail] he had prepared for me a very useful pair of sandals which he presented to me when he was set free! I have worn these sandals for many a summer since then, even though I may feel that I am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man! Anyhow *it was in that spirit that we fought out our quarrels in South Africa*. There was no hatred or personal ill-feeling, the spirit of humanity was never absent, and *when the fight was over there was the atmosphere in which a decent peace could be concluded.*<sup>29</sup>

Thus, in the absence of any intention to cause psychological harm – and in the presence of the intention to appeal to the oppressor’s own sense of morality whilst the resister has an attitude of love, caring and respect – any temporary psychological suffering that the oppressor may undergo as a result of non-violent action is transformed into relief, growth, friendship and gratitude. Thus, contrary to Peyser, active non-violent resistance is not psychologically violent and, accordingly, my definition of violence involves no contradiction. Contrast Peyser’s charge of psychological violence on the part of non-violent resisters with the car burnings, false accusations of

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.mk Gandhi.org/Associates%20&%20Disciples/rem.htm#GANDHIS%20POLITICAL%20METHOD>

paedophilia and gruesome death threats inflicted upon vivisectionists and their families by so-called animal rights activists. Clearly, the latter are psychologically violent and the former are not.

### Ethics and Efficacy

Next, Peyser analyzes my discussion of the Holocaust and non-violent resistance. Peyser objects that I do not discuss any examples of violent resistance against the Nazis and the Holocaust:

[O]ne of the biggest of many problems with Perz's analysis is that he ignores the active violent resistance of the Jews, something he implies, in the introduction of his essay, that he will address. He might have, for example, mentioned the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. He might have mentioned the overthrow of concentration camp Sobibor with the aid and leadership of imprisoned Red Army soldiers, where it was decided that simply escaping from the camp would leave it fully functional. They realized they needed to smash the apparatus of the camp and kill the Nazi officers and camp guards.<sup>30</sup>

This objection is answered in the above discussion of the U.S. Civil War and the three requirements for showing that violent resistance is neither efficacious nor ethical. Undoubtedly, the Warsaw ghetto uprising and the overthrow of concentration camp Sobibor succeeded in saving lives. Undoubtedly, the armed conflict carried out by the Allies during World War II had the effect of stopping the Holocaust. These examples do not establish that violent resistance is effective and ethical because (a) there are countless co-examples of non-violent resistance working, (b) the above-quoted ethical argument about the prisoner establishes that violent resistance is unethical if an effective non-violent option exists and (c) active non-violent resistance is always an option, as acknowledged by Peyser. It follows from the above three points that the effectiveness of non-violent resistance renders violent resistance unethical. *This is what I mean when I say that violent resistance is neither ethical nor effective: ethics and efficacy are not mutually exclusive.* In other words, the reason why violent tactics are unethical is, in part, because other just-as-effective non-violent tactics are always available in social justice movements. Again, see the prisoner analogy above. I fully agree with Malcolm X's adage "by any means necessary," with the proviso that violent means are never necessary at the level of social justice campaigns—although they are sometimes necessary at the level of personal self-defence devoid of larger social context. Gandhi said the same thing: one's means and ends are not mutually exclusive. The beauty of this argument is that one can acknowledge that violence sometimes "works," avoid lengthy analyses of violence "working" throughout history and still rightly conclude that violent social justice campaigns are unethical. This is why my original article only addresses one example of violent oppression in depth; the most extreme example of the Holocaust and its relationship with World War II.

### Non-Violent Resistance and The Holocaust

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<sup>30</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)  
<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

Peysner maintains that my discussion of the Holocaust contains contradictions:

First, [Perz] asserts that the Jews practiced nonviolent resistance. Then, he argues that they should have practiced nonviolent resistance ...<sup>31</sup>

To the contrary, I state that although my hypothesis regarding the non-violent tactics that Gandhi would have advocated during the Holocaust (had he been fully informed) “might sound bizarre ... *many* Jews did employ non-violent action against the Nazis, and this should be honoured.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, contrary to Peysner’s depiction, I do not assert that “the Jews” practiced non-violent resistance. Rather, I assert that “many” (but not all or most) Jews used non-violent action against the Nazis. Hence, there is no contradiction with the quotation of Gandhi that appeared *earlier* – not later as Peysner suggests above – in my article:

Hitler killed five<sup>[33]</sup> million Jews. It is the greatest crime of our time. But the Jews *should* have offered themselves to the butcher’s knife. They should have thrown themselves into the sea from cliffs. ... It would have aroused the world and the people of Germany. ... As it is they succumbed anyway in their millions.<sup>34</sup>

Peysner later rephrases his claim that my discussion of the Holocaust is contradictory:

Perz, writing of how the Jews should have resisted if they had been brave/smart enough, states that “Perhaps this would have involved [examples of non-violent tactics] ... All of this might sound bizarre, but, as Lakey points out, many Jews did employ non-violent action against the Nazis, and this should be honoured.” In other words, the Jews should have resisted nonviolently. Or rather, they did, and should be honored. Unfortunately, Perz does not tell us which of these two mutually exclusive assertions is correct: either the Jews should have resisted nonviolently and didn’t, or they did and should be honored.<sup>35</sup>

First, I do not write of how the Jews “should” have resisted. Rather, I make the above quotation of Gandhi, which – contrary to Peysner’s depiction – does not refer to being brave<sup>36</sup> or smart. I

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<sup>31</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)

<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05\\_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml](http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml) (Emphasis added.)

<sup>33</sup> Modern, more accurate, estimates are that Hitler and the Nazis killed approximately six million Jews. Gandhi’s figure was based upon a 1946 estimate.

<sup>34</sup> Fischer, *Op.cit.*, 348. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)

<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

<sup>36</sup> In an entirely different section of my article – the introduction – I state:

“I have ... not hesitated to say that it is better to be violent if there is violence in our breasts than to put on the cloak of non-violence to cover impotence. Violence is any day preferable to impotence.

- Mohandas K. Gandhi

Rod Coronado, the Animal Liberation Front activist who was jailed for freeing non-human animals and burning down a fur ‘farm’ without physically harming anyone, states, ‘Even Gandhi said that nonviolence was only appropriate when used against an opponent who respects it.’ To the contrary, Coronado’s paraphrase is actually what Gandhi said about fasting in protest—not non-violent action generally. *Regarding the latter, Gandhi firmly*

agree with the idea behind the above quotation of Gandhi, but I do not endorse any (real or imagined) moral condemnations behind Gandhi's use of the word "should." Peyser misrepresents my views when he says "Perz, writing of *how the Jews should have resisted* if they had been brave/smart enough, states that 'Perhaps *this* would have involved ...'" I do not write about the non-violent tactics that Jewish people during the Holocaust should have used. Rather, I state:

I would hypothesise that *Gandhi would have*, if fully informed, *advocated* mass Jewish non-cooperation and civil disobedience against the Nazis at every stage. Perhaps *this* would have involved [examples of non-violent tactics] ...<sup>37</sup>

The word "should" (in the instances when it carries connotations of guilt and moral condemnation) is very different from the word "advocated" (in the instances when it carries connotations of appealing to people's own moral judgement and who then go on to make voluntary decisions without threat of condemnation or praise). Peyser uses the former connotations<sup>38</sup> of the word "should" and I maintain that Gandhi (and my quoting of Gandhi) use the latter.<sup>39</sup>

Secondly, as noted above, Peyser's assertion that I contradict myself is based upon a misrepresentation of my views. The following two assertions of mine are not mutually exclusive: (a) *Some* Jews in Nazi Germany did not resist non-violently and Gandhi "wrote to a leading Berlin Rabbi urging him to organise a resistance and to mobilise as many Jews and allies as possible against the threat." Again, I maintain that any such urging consisted of an appeal to the Rabbi's own moral judgement and it was clear that the Rabbi could voluntarily say "yes" or "no" without threat of condemnation or praise from Gandhi. (b) *Other* Jews in Nazi Germany did resist non-violently. Thus, Peyser makes a logical fallacy when he replaces "some" (and the implied "other") with "the" (or "all") Jews. Far from contradicting themselves, my claims compliment each other. Although the 1946 quotation of Gandhi uses the phrase "the Jews," I reject the idea that all of the Jews during the Holocaust did not practice non-violent resistance:

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*believed that anyone's heart can be melted by non-violent action, including Adolph Hitler's.* The quotation from Gandhi that I opened this article with refers to impotence, or the inability to act or exercise power. In it, Gandhi says it is better to act violently than not to act at all in response to oppression, and I agree with that. Directly following this quotation, however, Gandhi says, 'There is hope for a violent man to become non-violent. There is no such hope for the impotent.' Immediately prior to the above quotation, Gandhi asserts 'But this non-violence has to be non-violence of *the brave and the strong*. It must come from inward conviction.' Gandhi knew that there is always an effective third way between passively doing nothing and acting violently. That third way is truth-force, or active non-violent resistance." ([http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05\\_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml](http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml) Emphasis added. Internal citations removed.)

Although I *paraphrase* Gandhi's belief that even Hitler would have been susceptible to non-violent action, nowhere in the above three *direct quotations* of Gandhi does Gandhi refer to Jewish resistance during the Holocaust. In other words, Gandhi's reference to being brave above refers to the courage required for non-violent action generally; not during the Holocaust specifically. I would add to this that, although Jewish non-violent resistance during the Holocaust did indeed require courage, Jewish *violent* resistance during the Holocaust also required tremendous courage. Accordingly, Peyser misrepresents my views when he depicts me as saying that the Jews during the Holocaust were not brave (or smart) enough.

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05\\_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml](http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml)

<sup>38</sup> See below.

<sup>39</sup> Above, I describe Gandhian non-violent resistance as involving "the intention to appeal to the oppressor's own sense of morality whilst the resister has an attitude of love, caring and respect..."

my original discussion of Lakey makes this clear, and I maintain that Gandhi believed the same thing despite his use of the word “the.”

Peyser’s charge of anti-Semitic effect is in response to the above quotation of Gandhi regarding the Holocaust. Peyser objects:

All of this, however, relies on notions about what an oppressed group “should have done” at the height of their oppression, a position which is not only cruel and arrogant, but objectively anti-Semitic in that it effectively blames the victim for their victimization.<sup>40</sup>

I have already answered the above objection. I would also add that it is nonsensical to maintain that the only people who are qualified to have a valid opinion about how to respond to a particular instance of oppression are those who directly suffer under it. For example, Martin Luther King was influenced by Gandhi and Che Guevara was influenced by Mao Tse-Tung. The facts that Guevara was Argentine and Tse-Tung was Chinese do not entail that it was “cruel and arrogant” for the former to follow the latter. The fact that countless African-American civil resisters followed the Indian Gandhi does not entail that Gandhi’s writings had a racist effect. Similarly, the fact that my quotations of Gandhi contain advice for Jewish people during the Holocaust does not entail that they have an anti-Semitic effect. Peyser objects:

To begin his bizarre study of the historical example of the Nazi Holocaust, Perz cites Gandhi, who was quoted [above] ... Perz writes that while he initially “felt shock and disgust” at this statement, that he later realized he had simply misunderstood what Gandhi really meant: the Jews should have resisted differently. Of course, as those readers capable of even the most basic level of reading comprehension will duly note, this is the same thing the initial quote from Gandhi suggested. Perhaps Perz hopes that more words will simply make the initial quote less ugly.<sup>41</sup>

To the contrary, I stated in my article that the above 1946 quotation of Gandhi regarding the Holocaust can be “better understood” by examining an earlier 1938 quotation of Gandhi, where Gandhi says that “if” he were a German Jew, then *he would* – not “they should” – employ non-violent resistance and this would lead to converting the rest of the German public (including Nazis and non-Nazis alike) away from Nazism and towards an appreciation of human dignity.<sup>42</sup> Again, this is what Gandhi said in 1938: what he would have done if he were a Jew born in Germany and – as I maintained above – this carries with it the connotation of appealing to people’s own moral judgement and who then go on to make voluntary decisions without threat of condemnation or praise. After the 1938 quotation and a couple of others, I go on in my article to argue that Gandhi would have advised non-violent tactics that are “less costly in terms of lives...” It is this position, combined with the lack of guilt or moral condemnation, which entails

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<sup>40</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)  
<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)  
<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

<sup>42</sup> [http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05\\_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml](http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml)

the 1946 quotation is not ugly. Contrary to Peyser's depiction, I neither say that the Jews should have resisted differently nor imply that they are to blame for the Holocaust.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, Peyser's accusation of objective anti-Semitism is false. This, however, does not stop him from elaborating:

The whole notion of suggesting that the Jews might have resisted differently--and more "ethically," whatever that means--if they had engaged in more active nonviolent resistance, is audacious and outrageously anti-Semitic. It is a liberal racism which assumes the Jews were either too naive, too stupid or too morally deficient to engage in different forms of resistance than those actually practiced, including in some cases violent resistance that Perz neglects to mention. This is akin to wagging a finger at a rape victim for not resisting their attacker differently, or worse, more "ethically."<sup>44</sup>

Nowhere in my article do I state that the Jews during the Holocaust should have resisted differently. Nowhere do I state that they should have resisted more ethically. Rather, I *generally* argue that non-violent action is the only ethical option in social justice movements. Contrary to Peyser's suggestions, this does not imply or assume that those Jews who did employ violent resistance were unethical, stupid or naive.<sup>45</sup> In my original article, I also quote Gandhi as saying that more Jewish people during the Holocaust should have used non-violent resistance in a context where the word "should" solely carries connotations of appealing to people's own moral judgement such that they make voluntary decisions without threat of condemnation or praise. Similarly, after someone has been raped, the rape victim wants to avoid being raped again. Is it audacious and outrageously sexist for Wen-Do to offer instruction in women's self-defense? Does Wen-Do involve a liberal sexism that assumes that rape victims are either too naive, too stupid or too morally deficient to engage in different forms of resistance than those actually practiced? The reason why the answers to these questions are "no" is because Wen-Do does not involve connotations of guilt and moral condemnation directed towards women who have been raped, or women generally. Neither does the 1946 quotation of Gandhi involve those connotations directed towards Holocaust victims, or Jews generally. Hence, my use of the quotation does not constitute anti-Semitic "finger wagging." The essence of Gandhi's entire world view is that of appealing to people's own sentiments, not morally condemning or judging them. This is what Peyser fails to realise when he mistakenly claims that the effect of "Exclusive Non-Violent Action" is anti-Semitic.

Peyser argues that Lakey's examples of effective non-violent resistance were, in fact, part of movements that involved and were dependent upon violent resistance. Peyser also argues that Lakey misrepresents Ward Churchill.<sup>46</sup> Although I maintain that Peyser's counter-arguments against Lakey are not valid, I will leave it to Peyser or others to directly rebut Lakey's analysis and for Lakey to respond.

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)  
<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

<sup>45</sup> See below.

<sup>46</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)  
<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

## Contrasting Self-Defence and Social Justice Movements

Peyser quotes my statement, “I agree with Gandhi’s view that, in circumstances of personal self-defence where there genuinely is no other option, it is ethically acceptable to use violence.”<sup>47</sup>

Peyser responds:

Who decides where there is “genuinely” no other option--or what the options are at all, for that matter? ... Perz ... has now passed moral judgment on their tactics of resistance based on a series of normative judgments about what factors add up to constitute an “ethically acceptable” use of violence.<sup>48</sup>

To answer Peyser’s question, in situations of personal self-defence, it is the individual being attacked who decides that there is genuinely no other option except violent self-defence. If there is any question about this, the Courts decide the matter, and this is proper. In social justice movements, some individuals come to their own personal conclusions that the use of violent resistance is ethical. They should not be morally condemned for their decision. At the same time, I have offered an ethical argument above, which shows the reasoning in support of the view that violent resistance in social justice movements is ethical to be unsound. Consider the following analogy.

I can present an objective ethical argument that – in an extreme emergency situation where there is absolutely no food or hope of rescue – killing a human being against her will and then eating her to survive is highly unethical. Nevertheless, if someone did resort to killing and cannibalism in an extreme emergency situation, I would not “pass moral judgment” on their actions “based on a series of normative judgments about what factors add up to constitute an ‘ethically acceptable’ use of violence.” In other words, it is entirely consistent to both refrain from moralistic “finger wagging” at individuals and make moral conclusions about a class of actions generally. Thus, I do not morally condemn the violent Jewish resistance during the Holocaust—far from it. At the same time, the objective moral argument I make above concludes that violent resistance in social justice movements is unethical. Peyser wrongly assumes that I am looking for someone to blame, judge and morally censure. I am not. Rather, I argue that exclusive non-violent action is the only ethical form of resistance in social justice movements, and this constitutes a positive appeal to people in the present (not the past) to embrace that form of resistance to oppression.

Next, Peyser claims:

Perz makes some inherently speciesist comments as well, stating confusingly that, “Since it [violent action] ignores the third way of active non-violent resistance, the use of violent tactics is always seriously unethical.” In other words, one of the

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<sup>47</sup> [http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05\\_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml](http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml)

<sup>48</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)

<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

“three ways” is invalid from the outset and “seriously unethical” because of the existence of another (the “third way”).<sup>49</sup>

What’s confusing? It’s a very simple point. In the above example of the prisoner, it would obviously be unethical to shoot the prisoner when there is also the option of pushing a button to close the cell door. So yes, a violent option is unethical when a just as effective non-violent option is also available. Peyser claims this view is speciesist when he relates it to the following quotation of me:

[Killing a vivisectionist] is unethical because it ignores the inherent value and fundamental rights of the sentient being who is being treated as an object.<sup>50</sup>

Peyser replies, “Ignoring the ethical confusion here (the vivisectionist is not being treated as an object or instrument, but as a subject--the enemy), if we’re to follow Gandhi’s lead, we should not only be not harming the vivisectionists, but praying for them.”<sup>51</sup>

First of all, “the enemy” is never a subject. For example, U.S. soldiers in Iraq label the people they kill “rag heads,” U.S. soldiers in the Vietnam war labelled the people they killed as “gooks” and, when British planes bombed civilian targets in Germany during World War II, they were killing “Jerries.” When the U.S. dropped nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they labelled the innocent people they killed “Japs.” Labelling individuals as “other” or “monsters” or “the enemy” transforms them in the mind of the oppressor from subject to object. In the case of the murdered vivisectionist, the vivisectionist is being used exclusively as a means to saving the lives of non-human animals. There is no ethical confusion here. The Doctrine of Double Effect does not apply because the same non-human animals could have been saved by the would-be killer persuading others to avoid animal-tested products.

Secondly, although Gandhi’s views are rooted in Hinduism, Gandhian non-violent action need not be, so there is no need to pray for vivisectionists. I prefer the option of educating the public (including vivisectionists) about a vegan lifestyle, which includes avoiding animal-tested products. The long-term goal of this strategy is to create a world in which no one consumes animal or animal-tested products.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, Peyser does not explain his claim that my view on anti-vivisection campaigns is “inherently speciesist.” My views are not speciesist because I maintain that violence is unethical in both human and non-human animal rights campaigns.

## Micro / Macro

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> [http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05\\_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml](http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml)

<sup>51</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)

<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

<sup>52</sup> Although consumer choices do not affect all types of vivisection, if a critical mass of the population were vegan and believed that all non-human animal exploitation ought to be abolished, then that social climate would greatly increase the likelihood of all vivisection being made illegal.

Peysner addresses my prison argument, albeit very briefly:

After going on to engage in a typical new welfarist smokescreen of confusing the micro and the macro in an ethical example related to prisons...<sup>53</sup>

The above remark contains very little detail, so I will attempt to unpack it. In his book *Rain Without Thunder*, Gary L. Francione responds to an objection made by PeTA President Ingrid Newkirk. Newkirk objects that those who oppose laws to ensure that cows receive sufficient water are callous because, since it is impossible to stop all cows from being killed (at least for now) the least we can do is insure they are not suffering from dehydration and parched throats when they are on their way to slaughter. Francione responds by analysing this example from both the “micro” and “macro” points of view. From the micro perspective, Francione concludes that a slaughterhouse or factory farm worker can ethically give a thirsty cow water. This small ethical act takes place within an overall unethical situation. Similarly from the macro perspective, a guard employed by a prison that confines unjustly prosecuted humans can ethically make efforts to avoid the prisoners being tortured.<sup>54</sup>

Conversely, from the macro perspective, Francione concludes that an animal rights activist cannot ethically campaign for a general law that requires that all cows get a certain amount of water. Such a law is welfarist because chronically dehydrated cows do not reach maximum slaughter weight, which is not profitable for exploiters. The law is new welfarist if it is advocated by people like Newkirk who supposedly believe that it will eventually lead to the abolition of cow exploitation. This view is false because welfarist laws merely serve to make non-human animal exploitation more efficient and further ensure that only institutional interests<sup>55</sup> of non-human animals will be protected. Similarly from the macro perspective, Francione argues that when the guard of a political prison quits her job and joins a human rights campaign, it would be ludicrous and unethical to campaign for “gentler” torture in political prisons. Rather, the human rights campaigner should seek to abolish political prisons generally.<sup>56</sup>

Peysner applies Francione’s above analysis to my prison example, referring to it as “a typical new welfarist smokescreen of confusing the micro and the macro” levels of action. Above, I state that there is no apparent reason why my prisoner example cannot be unproblematically generalised to the macro level. Let us analyse this claim.

In Francione’s thirsty cow and prison examples, what is true of the micro level is not also true of the macro level for the following reason. On the micro level, giving a cow some water (or asking a fellow guard not to torture a prisoner today) does not result in the cow’s (or the prisoner’s) status as property<sup>57</sup> being further entrenched. On the macro level, however, the water law does

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<sup>53</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)

<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

<sup>54</sup> Gary L. Francione, *Rain Without Thunder: The Ideology of the Animal Rights Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), pp. 141-146.

<sup>55</sup> For example, an institutional interest is a cow’s interest in receiving enough water to be killed for the largest profit.

<sup>56</sup> Francione, *Rain Without Thunder*, *Op. cit.*

<sup>57</sup> To be treated as property is to be treated as a mere means. The innocent political prisoner is being used merely as a means to protecting the “security” interests of the state.

result in the property status of cows being further entrenched, thus making it even more likely that the only interests of cows that will ever be protected are those that are incidental to profit and efficiency for exploiters—as explained above.

Conversely, in my prison example quoted above, what is true of the micro level is equally true of the macro level for the following reasons. On the micro level, choosing not to shoot and kill a dangerous prisoner who is threatening oneself (and instead simply closing a door) has no relevance to the question of whether the prisoner is being used exclusively as a resource. In my prison example, the prisoner is not being used exclusively as a resource because the prisoner is genuinely guilty and her freedom is not being restricted to benefit a corrupt state, but rather solely to protect other potential murder victims. This example on the micro level leads me to the general conclusion that it is unethical to use violence to stop violence in instances *where there is a non-violent option available*.

On the macro level, the example I used was an anti-vivisection campaign.<sup>58</sup> It might be objected that the example of vivisection on the macro level does not parallel my prison example on the micro level. If my prison example were paralleled on the macro level, it would involve a law or policy requiring that all prison guards use non-violent tactics in quelling prisoner violence—if such tactics were deemed to be effective in any given situation. For example, such a macro level law or policy might require guards to be trained in conflict mediation, use sedative dart guns instead of lethal weapons if prisoners were harming people in riots, address the root issues that caused riots or address the root causes of the existence of prisons generally. The difference between Francione’s example of a prison on the macro level of action and the example currently being discussed is that the latter does not involve treating the prisoners exclusively as resources, and the law involved does not facilitate that goal. Again, I have constructed my prison example such that the prisoners are not political prisoners and the only reasons they are incarcerated are that they are genuinely guilty of serious crimes and – more importantly – to prevent them from committing additional serious crimes. In all respects, the prisoners in my example are being treated as persons with full moral standing. One can make this truth even more apparent by altering the example.

Suppose the situation involves not prisoners and guards, but members of the public and police. If someone starts a bar flight with a knife and the police are called, the police are not using the offender exclusively as a resource when they non-violently prevent the offender from harming others. Similarly, if a law or policy on the macro level required all police in similar situations to use conflict mediation or some other way of non-violently subduing attackers (provided that tactics such as these were genuinely effective options in any given situation) then the police would not be using the violent offenders exclusively as resources.

The point of discussing the above examples is to illustrate two truths. First, Francione’s examples of action on the micro level do not involve exploiting others as property whereas his examples on the macro level do, which entails that the micro and macro levels are not at all complementary in Francione’s examples. Secondly, none of my examples above involve exploiting others as property, regardless of whether a particular example is on the micro or

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<sup>58</sup> Incidentally, I maintain that such a campaign should also take a position against non-human animal exploitation generally, and for a vegan lifestyle.

macro level. Therefore, my examples on the micro and macro levels complement each other and Peyser's claim that my prison example (which differs markedly from Francione's) is an example of new welfarist micro-macro confusion is false.

Regarding the abovementioned law or policy for police, assume that there are two and only two options: (1) create a law or policy allowing police to use physical violence, including killing, in any situation where someone is putting others in serious danger, or (2) create a law or policy requiring police to assess situations<sup>59</sup> to determine if non-violent tactics would be effective in preventing violence and, if so, requiring them to use the non-violent option. Clearly, option (2) above is the only ethical option. *In other words – even on the macro level – using violence to stop or prevent harm is always unethical if an effective non-violent option also exists.* This ethical principle applies to any example on the macro or micro levels, including vivisection.

On the macro level, excluding the murder of vivisectionists from the list of tactics in an anti-vivisection campaign does not serve to further entrench the status of non-human animals as property. This is so because vivisection can be prevented via non-violent means.<sup>60</sup>

Unlike police attending calls, those who plan social justice campaigns do not have to assess whether non-violent tactics would be effective in any given situation; non-violent tactics are *always* effective in macro level social justice campaigns. For example, even if all the non-violent resisters at a particular event are severely harmed and jailed, that painful outcome is a victory because it contributes to the overall goal of the campaign.<sup>61</sup> Again, at both the micro and macro levels, violence is always unethical when there is a non-violent option available. Peyser fails to address the compelling logic of this argument.

### Veganism as Active Non-Violent Resistance

As a viable example of non-violent action in animal rights advocacy, I state:

If an activist helps five people move towards veganism per week, which is entirely possible, that adds up to multiple hundreds of thousands of non-human animals saved in just one year. Over ten years, it becomes multiple millions of lives saved. Compare that with what violent animal rights activism could achieve.<sup>62</sup>

Peyser objects:

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<sup>59</sup> Of course, there would be some situations in which there is very little or no time for assessment and police would have to use their best judgement in that instance.

<sup>60</sup> For example, vivisection can be prevented by an educational campaign encouraging consumers to only buy products that are not tested on animals. Much more significantly, a general campaign encouraging a vegan lifestyle will eventually result in a critical mass of people who are vegan and believe that all non-human animal exploitation should be abolished. Once such a social climate is achieved, it will be possible to make all vivisection illegal. See below in main text.

<sup>61</sup> This is what happened numerous times during the non-violent struggle for Indian independence.

<sup>62</sup> [http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05\\_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml](http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml)

I am quite sure that for every person who becomes vegan, hundreds more are born every moment that will eat meat and consume animal other products. This is part of the reason animal exploitation is still on the increase. At the moment, you are not saving animals when you go vegan; you are simply practicing what you preach. For veganism to be an effective tool to stop animal suffering in and of itself, it will need to spread faster than non-veganism. Right now, we are making minor quantitative changes that are not really saving animals. At some point, we hope these quantitative changes will translate to a qualitative change. Perz, of course, confuses this as demonstrated, and in doing so contradicts himself.<sup>63</sup>

Obviously, at the moment, there are many more babies born into non-vegan families than there are newly converted vegans and Peyser is correct that this fact partly explains why non-human animal exploitation is increasing. Our job as animal rights advocates is to reverse the present trend. We must do a better job of educating the public than the societal values and customs we have inherited, and a better job of educating than the animal product advertising and lobbying industry. This is no small task, and I believe it will require strong independent media institutions and united grassroots activism on a grand scale. Such a revolution of hearts and minds, in my view, would not be limited to non-human animal exploitation, but would also include anarchist political and economic systems. I choose to concentrate my efforts on non-human animal rights because non-human animals are the largest class of the oppressed, and arguably the most oppressed. With time, thought and effort, vegan education will create a world in which vegans outnumber non-vegans until there are only vegans.

In one sense, I agree with Peyser that “[a]t the moment, you are not saving animals when you go vegan...” This is because refraining from breeding a non-human animal into existence and then killing her does not save any individual who exists now from being exploited and killed. On the other hand, when a vegan helps someone else go vegan, animals are being saved. For example, if a vegan is sitting in a train beside a non-vegan stranger and the vegan remains silent, then the following number of non-human animals will be exploited and killed:

Scenario 1

A (total number of non-human animals exploited and killed by existing non-vegans)

plus

B (total number of non-human animals who will be killed by new babies born into non-vegan families)

minus

C (zero)

Conversely, if the vegan in the train helps the other passenger become vegan too, then the following number of non-human animals will be exploited and killed:

Scenario 2

A (total number of non-human animals exploited and killed by existing non-vegans)

plus

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<sup>63</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)  
<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

B (total number of non-human animals who will be killed by new babies born into non-vegan families)

minus

C (however many thousands of non-human animals the new vegan would have continued to eat, had it not been for the vegan who spoke up)

At the moment, in both scenarios 1 and 2 above, categories A and B combined are much greater than category C. Therefore, the rate of non-human animal exploitation is increasing in both scenarios. Nevertheless, non-human animals are being saved in scenario 2 and not in scenario 1. *If*, at some point during World War II, Oskar Schindler<sup>64</sup> (falsely) believed that the Nazis were going to win the war, one can imagine someone who subscribes to Peyser's logic telling Schindler: "I'm sorry, Herr Schindler, the tide of the war has turned against the Allies. Right now, you are making minor quantitative changes that are not really saving human beings." This ridiculous implication of Peyser's logic is obviously false.

Furthermore, as argued above, our job as animal rights activists is to increase the number of vegans in category C such that, eventually, there will be no one left in categories A and B. Contrary to Peyser's suggestion, veganism and vegan education save animals – multiple thousands per new vegan – now and in the future. Thus, Peyser's view that veganism does not save non-human animals is false.

The above scenarios and analysis of the effect of vegan advocacy are a detailed way of expressing a very simple truth. Namely, veganism reduces demand for breeding, exploitation and murder. Without demand, there would be no supply.

Peyser states:

I believe that in the vast majority of the work we are doing in building a new and genuine animal rights movement will only be effective if it is carried out in a totally nonviolent fashion.<sup>65</sup>

I challenge Peyser to provide one example of an effective and ethical use of violent resistance to build a genuine animal rights movement. Regardless of the example, I am confident that there will be a non-violent alternative that is just as or more effective, and that better addresses the root cause of the animal use in question.

### Marxism and Anarchism

Peyser lodges this interesting objection:

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<sup>64</sup> Oskar Schindler saved approximately 1,200 Jews during the Holocaust by having them work in his enamelware and (intentionally inept) ammunition factories.

<sup>65</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)  
<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

Perz also fails to address a core question related to the use of nonviolent resistance: it only works when there is a power structure open to moral persuasion. Capitalism is not such a structure and it never will be. As long as we are serious about the fight for animal liberation, we can talk about its effectiveness, when the time will come to use it, and its ramifications, but we cannot exclusively forbid the use of tactical violence.<sup>66</sup>

Although I agree with Peyser that capitalism (as an economic and political system) is amoral, the human beings who (knowingly or unknowingly) give their consent to allow this system to operate are not amoral. For this reason, capitalism can be dismantled through non-violent resistance.

In recent years, one major example of non-violent resistance successfully persuading morally responsive people who are enmeshed in the amoral system of capitalism is Argentina's recovered factories movement. Argentine workers have seized capital – entire factories – from their legal owners and started worker controlled cooperatives. There are no owners, bosses or managers and the workers make all decisions collectively. There have been repressive police responses to this anti-capitalist resistance, and the most violence that resisters have offered is slingshots against the firearms, clubs and riot gear of the police.<sup>67</sup> Most of the factory takeovers in Argentina, however, have been completely non-violent.<sup>68</sup>

In capitalism, private property is ultimately protected by the threat of police and military violence. The capitalist machine – that individual police officers, soldiers, government officials, corporation management, stockholders, World Bank and IMF directors and architects and maintainers of the global economic system find themselves enmeshed within – strongly encourages them all to act in accordance with the amoral values of the machine. This, however, need not be the case; the individuals who make choices every day that allow capitalism to exist can be non-violently resisted. For example, after a police officer has severely clubbed his umpteenth non-violent resister, who perhaps is a worker attempting to regain access to a reclaimed factory, the police officer may think to himself “no, this is wrong. I’m going to stop now.” This response is only likely to occur if the resister is not responding with violence of any sort, and is supported by very many other resisters who are doing the same thing. If a non-violent resistance movement is extremely widespread amongst the populace, then those at the top of the capitalist hierarchy will be affected, and morally persuaded, as well. This is what happened during the Indian independence movement. In my original article, I provided a hypothetical example of non-violent animal rights resistance against a capitalist institution:

At this point in history, sacrificing one's life in the service of non-violent animal rights activism is neither necessary nor effective. In the future, however, when the percentage of vegan animal rights supporters is much higher, non-violent animal

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<sup>66</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)

<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>

<sup>67</sup> If anything, in my view, all that the slingshots have accomplished is to make it easier for the police to attempt to justify their repression.

<sup>68</sup> Rosa, Yeidy. “A New Form of Resistance: Argentina's Recovered Factories” in *Nonviolent Activist*, May-June 2005: Worker Control Through Nonviolent Action. <http://www.warresisters.org/nva0505-4.htm>

rights activists sacrificing their lives will be appropriate. For example, if 50 percent of the population were vegan and believed that non-human animals have basic rights and that their exploitation ought to be completely abolished, a large and committed group of activists could blockade a slaughterhouse. They would attempt to stop living non-human animals from entering and dead ones from leaving. They would attempt to give all the living non-human animals on-site emergency veterinary care and transport them to sanctuaries.

In a social climate where 50 percent of the population is vegan and believes in animal rights, the government and the animal exploitation industry would feel very threatened by the above action. Thus, when faced with the prospect of the demise of their industry, the likelihood of a violent response to non-violent action is greatly increased. Employees, security guards, police or military might assault or kill activists as they persist with every last bit of strength they have in continuing the blockade, without fighting back and instead simply taking the fists, clubs, teargas and bullets. This would have a profound affect on those actually committing the violence, as well as on the public that sees the images in the media. All support for the animal exploitation industry and the consumption of animal products would dwindle and the 50 percent would soon become 99. If, instead of responding with beatings and killings, the government or animal exploiters responded with arrests and imprisonment, the 50 percent population base of vegan animal rights supporters would allow many similar actions to take place until all the jails were filled to capacity. Then more actions could continue unencumbered. If the exploiters did not respond at all, this is a great outcome because the blockades will have saved all the animals destined for the slaughterhouse. The job of the active non-violent resister is to provoke a response.<sup>69</sup>

Peyser refers to the above hypothetical example as “a series of strange speculations about the future.”<sup>70</sup> Indeed, the example is speculative, but the general idea behind it is realistic. This is because scenarios similar to the above have already occurred in struggles for human rights. In the future, a similar scenario could also take place within a genuine animal rights movement, provided enough social support existed to allow it. Our job as animal rights activists is to build that social support through abolitionist vegan education.

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<sup>69</sup> [http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05\\_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml](http://www.abolitionist-online.com/article-issue05_exclusive.non.violent.jeff-perz.shtml)

<sup>70</sup> [http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response\\_to\\_Perz.pdf](http://www.dispatchesfromhell.org/Response_to_Perz.pdf)

<http://animalliberationfront.com/judgePractical/Shop--ToDo/Activism/Non-violence.htm>