
Book Review

Peter Singer: Another Promoter of 'Humanicide'

by Mark Burdman

Writings on an Ethical Life

by Peter Singer

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After World War II, the late Bruno Bettelheim reported on an unusual, and most unsettling phenomenon, the which became known as the "Bettelheim Syndrome." The renowned psychologist recounted how, in the Nazi concentration camps, certain camp prisoners, as they became broken psychologically, adapted their mannerisms, clothing, behavior, and ultimately values, to conform to those of their Nazi torturers.

During numerous investigations over the past two decades, this writer, himself Jewish, has often come across a curious phenomenon of a kindred sort, what might best be called the "Bettelheim Syndrome, Second Generation." It involves the advocacy and promotion, by sons or daughters of concentration camp survivors, of ideas and policies that are, in some sense, modelled on those of the Nazis, but are even more drastic in their actual consequences, than what Adolf Hitler advocated and executed.

Such a "Second Generation" type, is Peter Singer, the Australian-born son of Holocaust survivors. As graphically elaborated in various of the essays in this book, Singer *wittingly* agitates for ideas and policies that would, if effectively applied, necessarily lead to the elimination of most of the human species, if not the human species in its entirety. His program might, justifiably, be called "humanicide."

Over recent years, Singer has become the center of controversy, and attacks, for his support for Nazi-modelled euthanasia, and for his advocacy of infanticide, in the case of handicapped infants, who, he argues, have less claim to life than does a healthy animal. As a consequence of such ideas, his public appearances have often been disrupted by protests in various parts of the world, most regularly in Germany, where sensitivity to Hitlerite ideas, for obvious reasons, is very strong. There have also been protests at Princeton University, where Singer is currently Professor of Bioethics, at the Center for Human (sic) Values. In 1997, the famous Austrian "Nazi-

hunter" Simon Wiesenthal released a letter, protesting Singer's euthanasia and infanticide policies.

But as serious as these atrocious ideas are, they are relatively benign, in comparison to the central thrust of Singer's program, as a whole.

Liberating the Beast

The main theme that runs through Singer's writings, is fanatical opposition to the reality, that human beings are differentiated from, and superior to animals. He denounces those who insist on this reality, as "speciesists." In so doing, he attacks those beliefs that are at the core of the Western, Judeo-Christian tradition.

The point has been made in scores of locations in the recent period, by *EIR* Founding Editor Lyndon LaRouche. What absolutely distinguishes the human race from animal species, is the human capacity for cognition. Cognition gives the human species, uniquely, the ability to change the basis of its existence, to higher and more effective orderings. Cognition has given humans the capability to progress beyond the caveman status that Singer and his "animal liberationist" friends idolize, to the current capacity to sustain the present 6-plus billion people, and potentially far more, and, some day in the not-distant future, to visit and colonize distant planets.

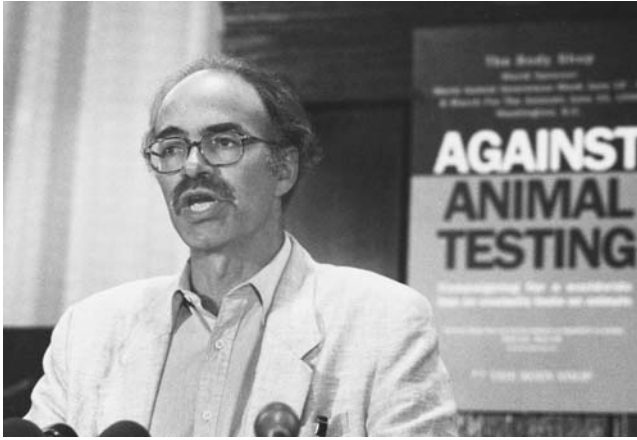
Of course, animals can learn. As anyone who has had a pet dog can attest, dogs can learn tricks, express emotions, and even do unexpected things, to the joy and surprise of their owners. But the dog species can not change the basis for its own existence, and is significantly dependent, for what it learns, on humans. Apes have the ability to learn a lot more than dogs, including elementary language. But the level an ape can reach, is, in human terms of reference, not more than that perhaps fit for an aficionado of the "New Economy," obsessed only with "information." That, however, is not *human knowledge*.

To eliminate "the distinction between man and beast," and to insist that "man is just another Great Ape," as Singer does, means, necessarily, vastly lowering the relative potential population density of the human race, and thereby eliminating billions of people. It means reducing humans to the level of beasts, liberating the most bestial instincts in humans.

Adolf Hitler was a fanatic, cultist vegetarian. So is Singer, as he explains in one essay. He even suggests, that it will become a criminal offense, for humans to eat meat! But Singer has extended the vegetarian obsession to its *reductio ad absurdum*, against humanity as such.

Fulminating Against the Hebrews

In a mid-1990s essay entitled "Bridging the Gap," published in *Writings on an Ethical Life*, he attacked the idea of "many writers" over the centuries, that "it was to humans that God gave dominion over the other animals; it was humans who were made in the image of God; and it was humans, and



Peter Singer, here addressing the 1996 “March for the Animals” press conference in Washington, D.C. Singer’s hatred of human beings marks him, whose parents escaped Hitler’s Holocaust, as a sad case of second-generation “Bettelheim syndrome.”

only humans, who had an immortal soul. For thousands of years, the human-centered Western tradition ruled without serious opposition.” That all changed, he exults, in the 19th Century, with Britain’s Charles Darwin, with his (scientifically fraudulent) theory of “evolution.” Singer reports that Darwin wrote, in his notebook, already in 1838, and then, in 1871, in the book *The Descent of Man*: “Man in his arrogance thinks himself a great work, worthy of the interposition of a deity. More humble, and I believe, true to consider him created from animals.”

What Darwin began, Singer claimed in that essay, was given a great boost in the 20th Century, by the findings of molecular biology and genetics, which further removed the distinction between man and beast.

In his 1991 essay “Environmental Values,” Singer attacked “both the Hebrew and the Greek traditions,” for having “made human beings the center of the moral universe.” To demonstrate this, this son of survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, blasted “the Biblical story of creation,” which “makes very clear the Hebrew view of the special place of human beings in the divine plan,” and then quoted from what he regards as the most egregious document of them all, the Book of Genesis: “And God said, Let us make man in his own image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. . . . And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.”

Having finished thus attacking Judaism, Singer then attacked three of the greatest figures in the Christian tradition, whose views embodied what was just quoted from the Book of Genesis: St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas.

Most of the essays in the second half of the book, derive both from Singer’s manic obsession, to attack what he calls the “Western Christian notion of the sanctity of human life,” and from his apparent euphoria, that the era dominated by

this notion, is coming to an end—helped, no doubt, by the rampages of the Nazis. Employing the worst forms of sophistry, masquerading as “philosophy” and “ethics,” he wrote one essay entitled “Justifying Infanticide”; he attempted to do exactly what the title announces. Another essay is devoted to undermining the arguments of Dr. Leo Alexander, who wrote that section of the Nuremberg war crimes indictments against the Nazis, condemning Nazi euthanasia. A third essay rails against “overpopulation,” and promotes “population control.”

Bentham’s Child

It is quite revealing, who it is that Singer identifies as his philosophical mentor.

In “Bridging the Gap,” he wrote that the animal liberation movement is based on the idea that “we go beyond our speciesist morality and give equal consideration to the interests of all beings who can feel pleasure or pain, irrespective of species.”

Already back in 1975, in an essay entitled, “All Animals Are Equal”—extracted from his book which, for all intents and purposes, launched the “animal liberation” movement—he reported that this idea of the supremacy of the “pleasure-pain principle,” comes from the late-18th-, early-19th-Century British philosopher Jeremy Bentham, and his doctrine of “utilitarianism.” Singer quoted Bentham: The ultimate question is not “Can they *reason?*,” but “Can they *suffer?*” (emphasis in original).

Bentham was a senior figure in the ideological division of the British East India Company. He was the first head of the Secret Intelligence Service of the British Foreign Office, after the latter was launched, in 1782, and was one of the main agents of the all-powerful Lord Shelburne. In this capacity, Bentham ran networks of British agents around the world, most notoriously in France, where certain of his key operatives played commanding roles in the French Revolution, thus ensuring no repeat of the American experience. Respecting the United States, he was one of the main controllers of traitor Aaron Burr, and harbored Burr in London, when the latter was forced to leave the United States for some years, in the early 19th Century.

In his *The Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Bentham lambasted the founding ideas of the American Republic, and counterposed to these, a notion of “happiness” that was simply radical hedonism. Not surprisingly, he was, himself, a notorious degenerate, one of whose writings was *In Defence of Pederasty, or Offence Against One’s Self*. He led the satanic revels of Britain’s Hell-Fire Clubs.

Bentham, over the past couple of centuries, has become the guru for all those in Britain, and elsewhere in the world, who insist that “there is no difference between man and beast.” Peter Singer is his student, and has acquired the kind of pernicious influence Bentham had. Singer recently triggered a big controversy, even inside the “animal rights” movement, with an article defending human sex with animals!