

DO YOU EAT ANIMALS?

War is not an abstraction--
It's blood and guts and killing.
To oppose war means that you cannot kill.
Nevertheless, many pacifists still kill animals to eat
or have others kill the animals for them.
If you say love
rather than make war
your intelligence must lead you
to give up eating cattle, chicken, and fish
because you don't love them by killing them.

You may argue, however,
that because everything our side of a virus
is living we are killing most of what we eat.
We are living by killing
just as Nature destroys in order to create.
Plants sense we are going to cut them
and tomatoes are said to scream when sliced.

Surely, on the other hand,
there is a vast difference in degree
between the modest amount of killing involved
in obtaining the grains, fruits, and vegetables
one needs to survive,
and the systematic slaughter of thousands
of cattle, chickens, and fish for food.
In fact, seeds and fruits are produced
in immense abundance and only one is needed
to replace the original plant.
Moreover, you are not really killing by eating them
because seeds and fruits are gathered at that
curious twilight zone between the death of the old
and the life of the new.

There are a variety of meat substitutes.
If you want to be a purist,
there are even canvas, plastic, and rubber
shoes and belts.
Common decency dictates that if you refuse them
you are taking pleasure in killing
by the enjoyment of your hamburger or filet.
After all, you are what you eat.
The way you eat can make you brutal,

like the way you attack your food
with knife and fork.
Or, what you eat can make you sane,
if you just pay attention to what you are doing.
Thou Shalt Not Kill.

Many of you, although feeling guilty,
have continued to eat animals
because you are afraid of social pressure
or of not getting enough protein.
Nonetheless, your body, if you listen to it,
can tell you a great deal.
After all, our current preoccupation with diet
is preceded by 2 million years of evolutionary
give-and-take and adaptive interchange
with the environment, and you will observe
that what is an adequate balanced meal is also
a comfortable amount to eat.

There are also several arguments
for not eating animals from the standpoints
of ecology, efficiency, and pollution,
such as that plant protein requires less acreage
and water than animal protein, and contains
lower levels of cholesterol and persistent pesticides.
But these are secondary considerations.

Therefore, for the benefit of you
who want a good starting point, this booklet
sets forth instructions about how to meet
your nutritional needs
on a diet of just cereal grains, legumes,
fruits, vegetables, nuts, and some eggs
and milk products.

"To the children of backward countries who never
attain their full promise,
or who have died of kwashiorkor,
because the fish meal which might have saved them
has fed the chickens gorged by the rich."

Rene Dumont and Bernard Rosier, The Hungry Future,
Praeger, New York, (the dedication), 1969.