

BABY BUTCHERS



Skinning PETA Alive by Dominick Cancilla

PETA, a group which seeks to promote its animal-rights agenda through various means, has gone too far. Its most recent campaign juxtaposes photographs from the Holocaust with images of animals intended for human consumption. The idea is to shock viewers into seeing the killing of animals in a new way.

When I saw one of the images from this campaign, my first impulse was to make fun of it. In that image, they show starved Holocaust victims on one side and a skinny goat on the other, with the caption “Walking skeletons.” I thought I’d put together a few parody ads, perhaps showing a protesting monk setting himself on fire on one side and a barbecue on the other, or maybe the L.A. riots with the running of the bulls. But after paying a visit to the PETA Web site, I found myself unable to see anything to add to a campaign which is essentially self-parodying.

Even if we ignore the ridiculousness of

PETA’s comparison (there’s an enormous difference between killing people because of their race and raising and killing food animals), the campaign is still hideously flawed in three ways.

First, PETA is not using willing spokespeople. True, there are Jewish people who apparently agree with PETA’s position (see their Web site), and some of the financing behind this campaign is from a Jewish person, but that doesn’t give PETA the right to use any Holocaust survivor or victim to make its point. If the backers of this campaign are survivors and want to use photos of themselves, fine, but that is not the case here.

One of the campaign’s images shows men in a Buchenwald barracks alongside a photo of caged chickens with the caption, “To animals, all people are Nazis.” In the upper right bunk in the Buchenwald photo is author, Holocaust survivor, and Nobel Peace Prize winner **Elie Wiesel**. Wiesel was not aware that his image was going to be used for the campaign.

PETA says that, to its knowledge, none of the other photos in the campaign depict

living survivors. As if that matters. A PETA representative is quoted in the *Ventura County Star* as saying that the idea of apologizing to Wiesel “hasn’t come up within the organization.”

The second major problem PETA has is with its choice of images. One pair shows a group of children in concentration camp uniforms alongside a picture of baby pigs behind bars. Another shows a pile of corpses next to a pile of slaughtered pigs. I don’t think I’m the only person who will find it particularly distasteful that PETA decided to compare Holocaust victims, who were largely Jewish, with pigs. This choice of images seriously calls into question PETA’s sensitivity to the material they are using and their ability to see Holocaust victims as people.

I have to admit that, if I thought that PETA wholeheartedly believed what they were saying I would have to at least grant a grudging respect for their willingness to stick their necks out for their beliefs. Unfortunately, the third problem with PETA’s campaign is that they quite

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obviously don't believe their own rhetoric.

The PETA spokesperson quoted above said, "the skin of Jews was made into lamp shades. They were made into soaps just as animals are today." I was able to locate someone who actually owns a Nazi-created lampshade, but Holocaust scholars largely agree that the the soap rumor is untrue (much to the delight of Holocaust revisionists). So ignoring PETA's apparent ignorance, let's assume that they really believe that making a leather jacket, for example, is equivalent to making a human lampshade.

With that in mind, visit the PETA Web site. At the time of this writing, one of the links at the bottom of the site's home page is to an article about how PETA collected fur coats from wealthy Americans who had "seen the light" and would no longer wear anything but fake fur. PETA then took these coats and, while patting themselves on the back, donated them to needy people in Afghanistan.

This doesn't sound to me like the actions of a group which believes that animals and humans are equivalent. Could you imagine any group gathering human-skin lamp shades and donating them to needy people? Give me a break.

Which is why I can only believe that, with this campaign, PETA is more interested in gathering publicity than actually trying to educate or make a serious point.

Perhaps they should change their name to People for the Exploitation of the Terror of Auschwitz. It might be a better fit. 