

# **Are Vegetarianism and “Plant-Based Diets” Effective Solutions to Climate Change?**

Joey Moncarz

**T**he answer is no. Eat a vegetarian diet if it makes you feel good, but it will not affect climate change or the current ecological collapse in the slightest. Let's walk through the reasons.

### **It Contradicts Evolution**

First of all, a vegetarian diet contradicts human evolution. Our bodies and digestive tracts are designed for an omnivorous diet and resemble carnivores, not herbivores. Humans have been eating meat for two million years, and it is only with the protein and saturated fats from meat that our brains grew and made us who we are. (Gedgaudas 2011, 2018; Keith 2009; Ratey 2014) The diet we evolved to eat is based on animal meat, fats and organs, tubers, edible plants, fruit and nuts. A diet without animal protein and animal fat consequently leads to poorer health and all the neurological and cognitive deficits that result.

### **It's a Creation of Civilization**

Vegetarianism, on the other hand, is a creation of civilizations, which only started roughly 6,000 years ago. (Diamond 1987; Jensen 2006; Scott 2017) One example is how vegetarianism arose among the Indian Hindus who had overpopulated and destroyed the land to such an extent that vegetarianism had to be imposed through religion to keep their culture from a total ecological and social collapse. (Harris 1991) The reason that people eat meat when they're given the ability to is that meat, not plants, gives us strength:

Meat provides the essential nutrients in highly concentrated packets. As a source of protein, it is physiologically more efficient than food plants and this fact is reflected in the virtually universal preference exhibited by pre-state village people for meat over vegetable foods... (Harris, p. 195)

Thus, vegetarianism historically has only been a response to ecological degradation (though the elite have always continued eating meat, no matter what), and ecological degradation is a result of civilizations, not the hunter-gatherer life that humans lived for two million years. (Ponting 2007; Diamond 1987, 2005; Redman 1999; Tainter 2017) That is exactly the situation we find ourselves in now and why vegetarianism is being promoted.

But in actuality, most humans living in civilizations have – by force – been eating primarily vegetarian diets because civilizations quickly destroyed the surrounding environment and then the elite kept the meat for themselves:

The ancient empires were warrens full of illiterate peasants toiling from morning to night only to earn protein-deficient vegetarian diets. (Harris, pp.234-235)

### **Our Brains are Shrinking**

Further proof of the results of this civilized-vegetarianism is that the human brain has shrunk 10% since the dawn of agriculture 10,000 years ago. (Alban 2014; McAuliffe 2011)

We've become dumber from an agricultural diet! Looking around at the current state of the world and how people spend their time, this shouldn't be surprising. Compare that to the hunter-gatherer life we're genetically pre-disposed to, which was the only sustainable way of life humans have ever known. (Diamond 1987, 2012; Ingold; Sahlins 2009; Suzman 2017; Woodburn 1982) Agriculture hasn't helped us. In short, we evolved to eat meat, and without meat we have less strength and less mental vigor.

### **The Land Will Still Be Exploited and Destroyed**

Let us now suppose that world governments imposed plant-based diets on everyone. They did in the past, so they will surely do it again. The United Nations is already recommending plant-based diets, and the elite such as Bill Gates, James Cameron, Peter Jackson, and a host of others are also. (Ettinger 2019; Gates 2013)

If people started eating plant-based diets, do we believe that all the land currently devoted to animal agriculture will be re-wilded? Do we believe it will be allowed to revert to wilderness full of all the animals now disappearing? Of course not. Governments and corporations will exploit the land and destroy it for some other purpose, to increase their profits and power. *There will be no increase in wilderness, no increase in biodiversity, only destruction, because plant-based diets do not threaten capitalism nor do they threaten the real problem, which is the brutal, idiotic social arrangement known as civilization.*

### **We'll Eat Any Animal We Can Find**

Another result of forcing people to eat less meat is that people will start eating other meats. They will first start eating easily available animal proteins from cats, dogs, rats, various birds, horses, insects and so on. Where people are in even more desperate situations, they will eat any animal, whether it's common, endangered or on the verge of extinction. Biologically, people need meat. The end result is further ecological devastation.

### **Overpopulation**

The reason why plant-based diets solve nothing is because it does not question overpopulation. It is an attempt to feed more than 7 billion people and the several billion more that are on the way. But considering that there is currently enough food to feed 12 billion, it is unlikely that the additional billions of people will actually get fed. More likely, they will live starving, or on the edge of starvation, as most of humanity has for the entire, 6,000-year history of civilizations:

An existence under the constant threat of starvation and in the face of the daily reality of an inadequate diet and malnutrition has been the common lot of most of humanity since the development of agriculture. (Ponting, p. 108)

The fact is, there are too many humans. There is a finite amount of room on the planet, with only so much biomass, and more humans means less of all other living things. More humans means less elephants, less tigers, less wolves, less birds, less dolphins, and so on.

(More rats, though.) It doesn't matter what our 'ecological footprint' is. All past civilizations, even with extremely low ecological footprints (by today's standards) destroyed their landbases and collapsed. (Ponting 2007; Diamond 2005; Redman 1999; Tainter 2017)

Our hunter-gatherer ancestors purposely kept their populations low so as not to destroy the land they depend on for life. (Diamond 2012) If we aimed to do the same, then there would be no reason to impose plant-based diets and we could instead continue to eat the diets we evolved to eat. Recent comparisons on the effectiveness of various personal lifestyle choices confirms that having less kids is far more effective than anything such as what we eat or what we drive. (Wynes 2017) Of course, personal lifestyle choices don't challenge capitalism or civilization, so ultimately we should stop trying to tell others what to eat and what not to eat, and instead focus on the real enemy.

### **Grains are *Not* Healthy**

This brings us to what we did NOT evolve to eat. We did not evolve to eat wheat, corn, soy and rice. Yet that is what we would continue to be dependent on in this plant-based diet scheme. It is that high-carbohydrate, low-nutrient diet that is responsible for the “diseases of civilization”: heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, Alzheimer's and dementia. It is the civilized diet that is also responsible for tooth decay and the associated problems of poor oral health. (Gedgaudas 2011, 2018 ; Perlmutter 2013; Taubes 2008)

### **We Need Healthy Fats**

Our bodies require fat, and without fat we lack strength and our brains stop functioning properly. Without animal fat, what fats will we be eating? Vegetable oils are the cheapest, most unhealthy oils around. Healthier plant-based oils, such as avocado oil and coconut oil, are expensive. Or will we create massive avocado and coconut plantations to provide the world with healthy oil? Unlikely. It is more likely that the world will continue to be fed on carcinogenic vegetable oils such as canola, soy, safflower, cottonseed and rapeseed. (Fallon 2003; Gedgaudas 2011, 2018; Keith 2009; Ratey pp 84-87)

Thus, the promoters of a plant-based diet are also promoting poor health, because if we don't eat meat then we'll be eating a lot of carbohydrates and cheap vegetable oil. As it is, most people already eat primarily these foods because they're the cheapest foods available.

### **Agriculture is Inherently Destructive**

But how exactly are all these staple grains grown? The promoters of plant-based diets seem to be quiet about how to grow all the grains to feed 7+ billion people. The current way is directly responsible for climate change, mass extinction and ecological collapse. (Hemenway 2011; Keith 2009)

To begin with, in order to grow these grains, what was there before has to be destroyed. Generally that's forest or prairie. Industrial agriculture's monoculture's have as much biodiversity as a highway or parking lot. In other words, agriculture kills the land. Just step

back and think. If you leave the land alone, what happens to it? Give it several years, and you'll have forest again. The Earth wants to be forested and it takes constant killing by psychotic humans to stop it. In order to maintain agriculture, life has to be prevented from flourishing. The land has to be killed, over and over again. In the modern version that also includes highly toxic and carcinogenic pesticides, herbicides and fungicides, in addition to all the oil and petrol that leaks out of the tractors and other farm machinery.

The tractors and farm machinery, by the way, are made in factories. The factories themselves are made of parts made in other factories. The factories run on fossil fuels. Fossil fuels require extraction, production and refining, and transport. They also require wars to be fought to control the fossil fuels. Wars require militaries and their countless weapons and death machines, all which run on fossil fuels and are made in factories which also run on fossil fuels. All the metals that go into these machines are mined. Mining requires destroying the land first. Then large, fossil-fuel-powered machines are used to dig down into the Earth. Mining pollutes the land, water and air, just like all the other steps.

Without farm animals which traditionally provided fertilizers, and through the constant depletion of soil nutrients, industrial agriculture requires artificial fertilizers. Phosphate comes from mining such places as the Pacific island of Nauru (now totally destroyed), Morocco and Florida. Nitrogen is artificially created (using fossil fuel energy) and the result is a disruption of the nitrogen cycle, with dead rivers and massive oceanic dead zones the result. (Joy 2015; Ponting 2007)

Don't be fooled by organic agriculture. Unless the global population is reduced, then "organic" farms will have to replace every last bit of wilderness left. Remember, until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all agriculture was organic, and civilizations did a wonderful job destroying the land around them.

A plant-based diet challenges doesn't change any of this. All it does is reduce your guilt.

### **Media Frames the Discussion**

The reason we never think of agriculture as being inherently destructive, or of the pathology of civilization, is that what we're allowed to think about is carefully managed. The mass media only ask the question, "How will we feed everyone?" But they've long since stopped raising the issue of overpopulation, because it means reduced consumption, and capitalism, like all civilizations, are based on growth and increasing consumption. Thus, if the media don't talk about it, then we never think of it.

What we think about and how we think are managed through school, school textbooks, anything in TV, movies, the internet and what governments and corporations publically discuss. (Chomsky and Herman 1994)

### **Conclusion**

In the end, it comes down to this. We evolved to eat meat, which is why most humans crave

it. Many people may be convinced to *reduce* their meat consumption, but it's absurd to expect people to give it up. The ongoing ecological collapse, including Climate Change, is not a result of eating meat, which humans have been doing for two million years, but rather a result of a relatively new, highly-diseased and brutal social arrangement known as *civilization*, which by definition, is characterized by overpopulation, ecological devastation, widespread misery and high energy living. The high-energy demands of civilizations *always* – in every case - result in the exploitation and domination of the surrounding land, animals and people – domestication and slavery.

The only way to solve climate change and stop the ongoing ecological collapse is to face civilization and take it apart. But the mass media, corporations, governments and the elite want you to believe that it can be as easy as personal consumer choices – like what we eat. And we believe it, too! We want to believe that doing the right thing can be as easy as buying tofu or a solar panel or an electric car. Unfortunately, no matter what we buy, we cannot buy away capitalism. (Jensen 2009) We cannot buy away a brutal, patriarchal, endlessly violent culture.

The painful reality is that the elite and those in power are not about to change, no matter how much we beg, no matter who we vote for, and no matter what we eat. They will never change. The only effective solutions will be those which directly challenge the elite and take their sources of power away from them. (Churchill 2007; Jensen 2011; Gelderloos 2007, 2015)

#### References:

Alban, Deane. (2014, July 30). “Human Brains are Shrinking – Are We Getting Dumber?” Natural News Blogs. Retrieved from <https://www.naturalnewsblogs.com/human-brains-shrinking-getting-dumber/>

Byrnes, Stephen. (2002). “Myths & Truths About Vegetarianism”. Weston A. Price Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.westonaprice.org/health-topics/vegetarianism-and-plant-foods/myths-of-vegetarianism/>

Chomsky, Noam and Ed Herman. (1994). *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. Vintage

Churchill, Ward. (2007). *The Pathology of Pacifism: Reflections on the Role of Armed Struggle in North America*. AK Press.

Diamond, Jared. (2005). *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. Penguin Books.

Diamond, Jared. (2012). *The World Until Yesterday: What Can We Learn from Traditional Societies?* Viking Press.

Diamond, Jared. (1987, May). “The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race”. Discover

Magazine. Retrieved from <http://discovermagazine.com/1987/may/02-the-worst-mistake-in-the-history-of-the-human-race>

Ettinger, Jill. (2019, June 17). “James Cameron and Peter Jackson to Build Vegan Meat Factories In New Zealand”. Live Kindly. Retrieved from <https://www.livekindly.co/james-cameron-peter-jackson-vegan-meat-new-zealand/>

Fallon, Sally. (2003). *Nourishing Traditions: The Cookbook that Challenges Politically Correct Nutrition and the Diet Dictocrats*. Newtrends Publishing.

Gates, Bill. (2013, March 18). “The Future of Food”. GatesNotes. Retrieved from <https://www.gatesnotes.com/About-Bill-Gates/Future-of-Food>

Gedgaudas, Nora. (2011). *Primal Body, Primal Mind: Beyond the Paleo Diet for Total Health and a Longer Life*. Healing Arts Press.

Gedgaudas, Nora. (2018). “Primal Restoration: A Discussion on Health and Civilization”. Interview by Kevin Tucker. *Black and Green Review, No. 5*. Black and Green Press. pp. 155-175

Gelderloos, Peter. (2015). *The Failure of Nonviolence*. Left Bank Books.

Gelderloos, Peter. (2007). *How Nonviolence Protects the State*. South End Press.

Harris, Marvin. (1991). *Cannibals and Kings*. Vintage Books.

Hemenway, Toby. (2011, June 1). “Is Sustainable Agriculture an Oxymoron?”. Retrieved from <http://tobyhemenway.com/203-is-sustainable-agriculture-an-oxymoron/>

Ingold, Tim. “On the Social Relations of the Hunter-Gatherer Band”. Retrieved from <https://ia800303.us.archive.org/6/items/OnTheSocialRelationsOfTheHunter-gathererBand/TimIngold-OnTheSocialRelationsOfTheHunter-gathererBand.pdf>

Jensen, Derrick, Lierre Keith and Aric McBay. (2011). *Deep Green Resistance: Strategy to Save the Planet*. Seven Stories Press.

Jensen, Derrick. (2006). *Endgame, Volume One: The Problem of Civilization*. Seven Stories Press.

Jensen, Derrick. (2009). “Forget Shorter Showers”. Orion Magazine. Retrieved from <https://orionmagazine.org/article/forget-shorter-showers/>

Jensen, Derrick. (2016). *The Myth of Human Supremacy*. Seven Stories Press.

Joy, Mike. (2015). *Polluted Inheritance: New Zealand’s Freshwater Crisis*. BWB Texts.

Keith, Lierre. (2009). *The Vegetarian Myth: Food, Justice, and Sustainability*. PM Press.

Manning, Richard. (2004). *Against the Grain: How Agriculture Has Hijacked Civilization*. North Point Press.

McAuliffe, Kathleen. (2011, Jan 20). "If Modern Humans Are So Smart, Why Are Our Brains Shrinking?" Discover Magazine. Retrieved from <http://discovermagazine.com/2010/sep/25-modern-humans-smart-why-brain-shrinking>

Perlmutter, David. (2013). *Grain Brain*. Little, Brown and Company.

Ponting, Clive. (2007). *A New Green History of the World: The Environment and the Collapse of Great Civilizations*. Penguin.

Ratey, John J. and Richard Manning. (2014). *Go Wild: Free Your Body and Mind from the Afflictions of Civilization*. Little, Brown, and Company.

Redman, Charles. (1999). *Human Impacts on Ancient Environments*. University of Arizona Press.

Sahlins, Marshall. (2009). "Hunter-Gatherers: Insights from a Golden Affluent Age". Retrieved from <http://pacificecologist.org/archive/18/pe18-hunter-gatherers.pdf>

Scott, James C. (2017). *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States*. Yale University Press.

Suzman, James. (2017). *Affluence Without Abundance: The Disappearing World of the Bushmen*. Bloomsbury.

Tainter, Joseph. (2017). *Collapse of Complex Societies*. Cambridge University Press.

Taubes, Gary. (2008). *Good Calories, Bad Calories: Fats, Carbs, and the Controversial Science of Diet and Health*. Anchor.

Woodburn, James. (1982). "Egalitarian Societies". Retrieved from <http://web.mnstate.edu/robertsb/380/egalitarian%20societies.pdf>

Wynes, Seth and Nicholas, Kimberley. (2017). "Personal Choices to Reduce Your Contribution to Climate Change." Environmental Research Letters. Retrieved from <https://3c1703fe8d.site.internapcdn.net/newman/gfx/news/hires/2017/themosteffec.jpg>

\*Author's Note: Be wary of this graph, as the impact of having less kids is skewed by cutting the bar. If it was drawn to scale on an ordinary piece of paper, all the other bars would barely register at the bottom of the page, and the bar representing having fewer kids would reach to the top of the page. Reporting on this study is also dishonest, making it seem like the other choices are just as effective.

Zehner, Ozzie. (2012). *Green Illusions: The Dirty Secrets of Clean Energy and the Future of Environmentalism*. University of Nebraska Press.

Zerzan, John. (2018). *A People's History of Civilization*. Feral House.