

Enduring Prejudice

Bigotry is born from ignorance; it is nurtured by dogma; it matures into slavery, torture, and holocaust. Education can lead to understanding; it can forestall the harm that indifference and prejudice inevitably spawn.

Today's widespread ignorance of the minds of other species allows members of Congress to approve the expenditure of billions of dollars to fund experiments on animals that no sane person could claim are humane. The ignorance of *who* these animals are allows an indifference that leads to endless atrocity. Nowhere is this situation more clearly on display than in the nation's premier National Primate Research Centers.

“Regulating” Slavery

No federal regulation of the African slave trade could have made the industry moral or just. No national need could have justified the 300 years of iron shackles, whips, rape, and enslavement. Slavery is simply wrong.

Research into the minds, emotions, motivations, and cognitive

The Congressional Educator is mailed quarterly to members of Congress.

For information contact:

The Primate Freedom Project
P.O. Box 6219
Santa Barbara, California 93160

www.primaterefreedom.com

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capabilities of other primates has been ongoing for over a century.

The results present a picture of animals who see the world in much the same way as we do. Peer reviewed scientific evidence demonstrates that these animals engage in sophisticated social politics, grasp abstract principles, and can utilize abstract symbols to communicate with us. We know that these animals' emotional needs – as children and adults – are indistinguishable from our own.

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A founder of the National Primate Research Center System said in 1965, that, like human children, a lack of nurturing is devastating to other young primates:

We first encountered the destructiveness of partial social isolation when we raised our rhesus monkeys in individual wire cages... At that time, the importance of peer love and agemate play was nowhere fully realized. Indeed, many facets of the value of agemate affection and peer play became realized through the inadvertent incidence of raising monkeys in partial social isolation. Knowledge of the extent of maternal contributions to infant weal and welfare was also unexpectedly increased though the same experience.

Congress grudgingly acted to shield the public from the continuing physical and emotional pain suffered by animals in American laboratories by passage of the Animal Welfare

Act. But, as with African slavery, regulation has proved impotent. Pulling babies from their mothers, keeping them in cages, experimenting on them, and killing them is simply wrong.

“Humane” Torture

No label, no regulation, no law, no pronouncement of need, morality, or superiority could whitewash the crimes that occurred in the Nazi laboratories. Experimenting on the unwilling, is simply wrong.

The industry labels all animal experimentation “humane.” Regulations and laws stipulate which form must be filled out and filed in order to claim an experiment is “humane.” We hear the incessant drumbeat of justification by need: disease, terrorism, old age, death; and the moral claim that we *must* sacrifice *subhumans* for our children. Our superiority is claimed to justify any cruelty.

The industry fights hard for its place at the public teat. Congress can expect no moral leadership from the agencies it pays so richly to hurt so many. Members will have to act independently with courage and moral resolve. They will need to ask themselves what they would have done during the Jewish Holocaust and during America's days of slavery.

Hook, Line, and Sinker: The NIH recently decided to increase its promotion of the Primate Research Center System based on the self-serving and spurious unsupported claim that essentially *every* breakthrough in medical science has relied on primate experimentation, and Congress bought it.

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Abolition is the only moral and ethical course.

Monkeys and chimpanzees are not humans. But women are not men, Jews are not Christians, Blacks are not Whites, Protestants not Catholics, Iraqis not Americans, northerners not southerners, and neighbors not family. But we, as members of an enlightened society, extend basic rights to all who are similar enough to ourselves to make their pain understandable to us. It is this sameness in our most basic experiences that unites us all. We all love, hate, fear, tremble, swell, thrill, and long for freedom. We see these things in each other.

Claims that we can and should continue the massive program of experimentation called the National Primate Research Center System are simply no different in kind from past claims of a right to hurt those weaker than ourselves. There is no justification other than an appeal to the lowest, most base self-interest: Hurting them might help us. **It is a demeaning, ugly, and filthy philosophy.**

In the News: Did you read?

... that researchers just published a study that demonstrates monkeys' sense of fairness? They said that many monkey species, "may hold emotionally charged expectations about reward distribution and social exchange that lead them to dislike inequity." (S.F. Brosnan and De-Waal, F. Monkeys reject unequal pay. *Nature* 425, 297-299 (2003).

... or that monkeys have advanced cognitive abilities? "...such as (1). flexibility in applying previous experience in accordance with the requirements of the learning situation, (2). the foresight needed to conduct a series of acts in a continuous sequential manner and the ability to internally plan the necessary strategy." (Hihara S, Obayashi S, Tanaka M, Iriki A. Rapid learning of sequential tool use by macaque monkeys. *Physiol Behav.* 78(3):427-34 (2003).

... or that nearly all individually caged monkeys go crazy and that some actually gnaw on themselves? (Lutz C, Well A, Novak M. Stereotypic and self-injurious behavior in rhesus macaques: a survey and retrospective analysis of environment and early experience. *Am J Primatol.* 60(1):1-15 (2003).

... or that after being awarded nearly \$1 million in 2002 alone, by Congress to study *Ecstasy*, Johns Hopkins researcher George Ricaurte now says that he was injecting monkeys with the wrong drug? There were obvious weaknesses in his claims, said one scientist. "First, 40% of the animals given supposed MDMA at a 'common recreational dose' were found to be dead or dying. But police [in the UK] estimate that one million young people take Ecstasy each weekend, yet there are only a few deaths each year." (Retracted Ecstasy paper "an outrageous scandal." *The Scientist.* Sept. (2003).

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Santa Barbara, California 93160
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