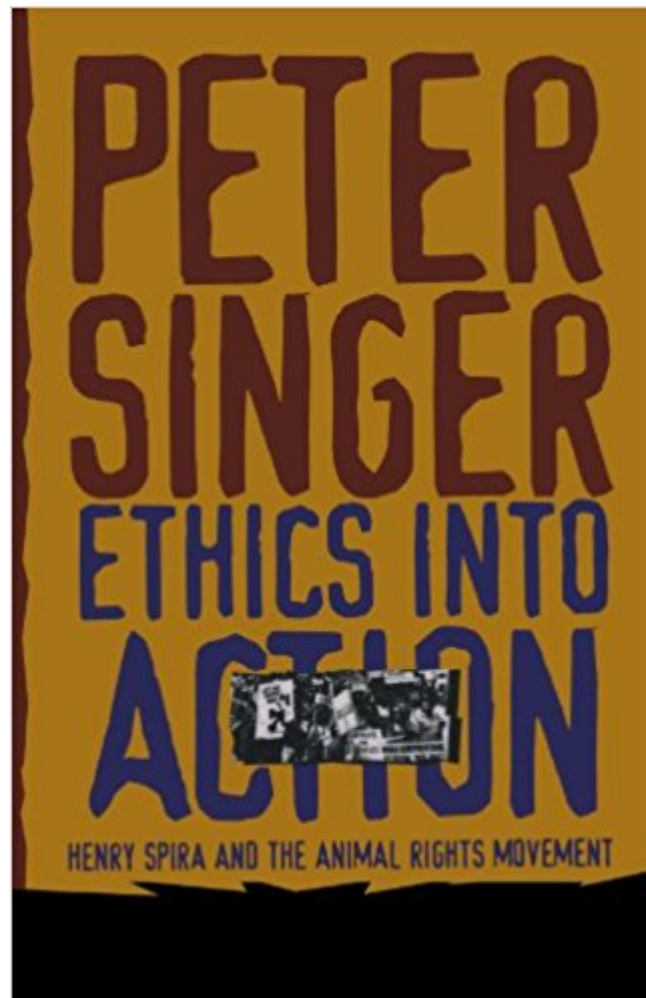




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# Ethics Into Action: Henry Spira And The Animal Rights Movement



## Synopsis

This book tells the inspiring story of a lifelong activist whose creativity and careful thought set the standard for the animal rights movement in the twentieth century.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The eminent philosopher of the animal rights movement skillfully profiles pioneering animal rights activist Henry Spira, whose organization, Animal Rights International, operating on a shoestring budget, has taken on corporate giants like Revlon, Procter & Gamble and Perdue Farms, waging influential campaigns against cruel animal experimentation, against the eating of meat, against the mistreatment of animals on factory farms. Born in Belgium in 1927, Spira, who fled Nazi Germany in 1938 and settled in New York with his family two years later, had no interest in animal liberation until his late 40s. Yet several formative experiences paved the way for his animal rights activism?immersion in left-wing and socialist causes in the 1950s, which led to an undesirable discharge from the Army for "subversive activities

Henry Spira has been a teacher, a guide, an inspiration to his generation and the one that is about to take over. (Roger Caras, president of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)One life's calling, one life's passion, one life's work of conscience and art. Here is the story of someone who dances to his own drummer, leading the revolution forward. (Carol J. Adams, author of *The Sexual Politics of Meat* and *Neither Man Nor Beast*)Henry Spira is a shining example

of how to be an effective, pragmatic, and humane animal activist. In this volume, world-renowned philosopher Peter Singer, who was the inspiration for Spira's start in animal activism, has produced a marvelously lucid and insightful biography of his life and activist philosophy. (Paul G. Irwin, CEO of the Humane Society of the United States) You cannot have an accurate understanding of what the animal rights movement has achieved these last three decades without reading what the movement's most revered philosopher relates in *Ethics into Action* about the movement's most tactically brilliant activist. . . . To have insight into the still-spinning web of Henry's life is to understand how compassion sensibly lived can drive humane accomplishments. (John F. Kullberg, executive director of the HSUS Wildlife Land Trust) The name Henry Spira is synonymous with activism that makes a difference . . . and that carries with it the broad perspective that is needed. When the animal rights movement finally achieves the respect it deserves . . . Spira will be to animal liberation as King was to civil rights. . . . and Singer, a giant himself in our field, tells his story as no one else could have. (Doug Moss, cofounder of *Animal's Agenda Magazine*) Henry Spira is not a Catholic, but if he were his patron saint would surely be St. Francis of Assisi. . . . he who loved all God's creatures. All his life Henry has fought for the helpless, but most of all for the most helpless of the helpless. Here is his story in Peter Singer's *Ethics into Action*, a powerful scholarly and often painful narrative, a book bristling with facts and documentation. If you are Catholic you'll put Henry Spira's picture right up there with St. Francis, and, in honor of Peter Singer, you might pass on that next sirloin steak. (Frank McCourt, author of *Angela's Ashes*) Without being preachy or polemical, this brilliant consciousness-raising life story makes a strong case that it's time to phase out the needless suffering of animals. (Publishers Weekly) Singer has produced a clear, engaging and useful account of Spira's productive career. (The Nation) Singer's well-written and fascinating book is essential for animal welfare and animal rights collections. (Peggie Partelo, Keene State college, NH Library Journal 1999-01-01) inspirational to those who are working for any kind of social change, because they demonstrate that it is possible . . . (Bloomsburg Review 1999-03-15) Singer has written an admirable biography of an individual whose life can provide lessons to us all: a man who cut through the nonsense and had a profound effect on many who knew him. But above all else, *Ethics into Action* demonstrates how important certain unique individuals are to political movements. (David J. Wolfson *The Animals' Agenda*) Peter Singer has done well to introduce Henry Spira to a wider public. (E.S. Turner *Times Literary Supplement*) Singer's story of his friend [Henry Spira] is engrossing, and will inspire moderate activists the world over. (The New York Review Of Books) This unique book explores the way philosophical arguments on behalf of non-human animals shaped one man's life and the way that man's life subsequently shaped the strategies and activism

of an entire social movement. (Political Studies Review)An inspiring introduction to the world of animal rights, environmental ethics, social activism, and personal choice. The book flows in a lively fashion and should prove both interesting and informative to readers at all levels. (CHOICE)Social movement scholars will enjoy reading Ethics into Action as a case study of an early animal rights activist. More importantly, this book provides an alternative view to the single-minded focus of the animal rights movement by displaying an activist whose pragmatic approach connected themes from myriad social movements. Above all, the book is a primer for social activists who are interested how to achieve change. For those dissatisfied with simply yelling at the public, Singer has written a book that can help activists envision how activists can take on seemingly impossible opponents and win. (Social Movement Studies)

I bought this book when I was a vegan. Well I am no longer one but am considering buying myself another copy. This is an excellent book about ethics not only where being a vegan is concerned but one can apply it to many professions like sales, counselor and attorney. Many of these trusted professionals could use a brush up or a reminder on ethics.

This book is a must-read for anyone who is into activism. The first chapter you can skip if you're in a hurry (it goes through a short biography of this amazing man). The rest of the book is GOLD! Henry has single-handedly, through careful planning, won important battles against multinational corporations. With his immense contribution, the beauty industry no longer does tests on animals - because through Henry's persistence they developed new, more-effective and cheaper ways of testing beauty products! The book isn't just a story about how one man did so much good work - it will help you understand a process and strategy for making large positive changes within society. READ NOW, and GO DO GOOD!

The story of Henry himself is amazing enough, but this wonderful book is even more than that. Weaved into the life story of Henry are the stories of so many other people. There are those who are not as famous but nonetheless critical to all the achievements, like the donors who supported Henry, like the volunteers who handled the daily work, like Henry's advisors who turned his idea into concrete actions, like the numerous individuals who gave followed his call to write letters or picket or take any other action. Then there are also those sincere and good people who is not in the "movement". There is Senator Lombardi who gave Henry a fair hearing, and Roger Shelley from Revlon who believed there is a win-win solution, and Susan Fowler of 'Lab Animal' who interviewed

Henry the anti-vivisectionist. And then there are also those who are apparently on the side of the "movement" but cared more about themselves. There are the researchers who abuse money donated by people and industry, and there are groups who seem to care more about getting people's donation and their personal glory than helping victims. And then there are people who seem to really believe that everything on earth are just for their personal gain. From the hideous boss of NMU to the cat-vivisectionist Aronson, from "tough" guy Frank Purdue to the more scheming Leon Hirsch. There is such a rich spectrum of people in this book, it is worth reading even if you don't agree with anything else from Peter Singer. There are also many hilarious stories. The visit of congressman Koch to the cat experiment lab, the "biological fluid collection units", and the story about the super condom for the chicken-in-a-condom ad. This book is definitely worth reading, and not just once. Each time I turned the pages and got to the part where Henry told the author that he's got the cancer, my heart sank like a rock. Oh, no, not him, not so early, please. I really wish Henry is still with us today, the whole world might be a different place.

I stumbled across a glowing recommendation for this book within a blog entry posted by a fellow vegan. I was intrigued, given Peter Singer's name on the dust jacket -- his book on Animal Rights, which is written in such a memorably concise, levelheaded and rational fashion, ranks right up there as one of the penultimate reasons I decided to go vegan, myself. That little sense of intrigue was more than well rewarded by what I found in this book. Henry Spira's story is downright inspiring (to such an extent, while reading this slim bio, the bad punster in me couldn't help toying with the subject's name: "Henry Spira's in-SPIRA-tional". If you're not groaning, you should be). The practice of veganism can raise discomfiting questions -- how does a compassionate individual with a strong sense of personal ethics grapple with a profoundly careless world in which cruelty is commonplace to the point of mundanity and concern for the disenfranchised may seem alien to the point of provoking fear, even open hostility in others? What happens when a compassion for the voiceless develops into an inured hostility toward those who are careless? How can an ethical individual work toward reducing unnecessary suffering while continuing to extend compassion even to those who create that selfsame unnecessary suffering? Henry Spira responded to such open ended questions by focusing on action. How could he, as one individual, work to bring about the greatest cessation of animal suffering possible? His answer -- via a mastery of relentless focus, indefatigable optimism, careful planning and a ceaseless upwelling of drive -- made him a matchless force within the movement toward animal rights. I noticed, as I reading this book, that Mr. Singer's writing style seemed a bit rough in some places. Initially, I chalked this up to the notion that philosophy and

storytelling, though similar, are fundamentally divergent if equally challenging forms of communication. The real reason for this narrational shakiness, however, is revealed towards the end of the book and works as a spuriously poignant denouement. I'd recommend this book to anyone -- vegan or omnivore, activist or armchair guerrilla -- because, at heart, it is more than the story of one lesser known hero from the folds of the animal rights movement; it is a roadmap to dynamic compassion, the pinnacle win-win.

A must read for anyone looking to support animal testing alternatives. Henry Spira was a visionary!

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