

THE BULL TRIBUNE

Number 26 from June to September, 2006
Number 27 from October to December, 2006

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The Bullfighting Offensive

In view of the increasing and progressive rejection from the majority of the Spanish population to bullfights, those who defend them are spreading their cunning and "broken record" lobbies, in the old-fashioned way, refusing to accept the rules of democracy. Spain needs to define itself by celebrating a referendum.

Barcelona Gives the Surprise

In times of the Dictatorship bullfights were something untouchable. Spain was "the spiritual reserve of the West" with bulls as one of its spiritualities. Bulls and football: the bread and circus of the Romans. Democracy brought freedom of expression and for the first time, the possibility of saying that bullfights were cruelty, not art nor culture, but a pure torture.

In the so-called "Bull Skin" (the contour of Spain reminds of it), it was soon clear that the majority of the population rejected this cruelty. **ADDA**, in collaboration with the **World Society for the Protection of Animals, WSPA**, started in 2002, a campaign, with the support of numerous Spanish and foreign associations, one that after 3 successive accurate inquiries, that proves that a large majority of Catalans declared themselves against bullfights.

Taking the opportunity of the proclamations of the **World Forum of Cultures** held in Barcelona, a petition was started urging the City Hall to declare itself anti-bullfighting and, in a spectacular public act, 275.000 signatures were handed in. Shortly after this outstanding fact led, a proposal was made in the plenary of the City Council of Barcelona, where, unexpectedly, the former Major **Joan Clos**, gave freedom of vote to his group and, consequently, Barcelona was declared "free of bullfights", that is, anti-bullfighting. At present, almost 40 Catalans towns have declared themselves anti-bullfighting.

Bad Digestion

The supporters of the torture, caught by surprise, digested badly this fact. They started to worry themselves for something they never thought could occur. And they started to organize themselves. As the Declaration of Barcelona was not binding and the petition had to be presented to the Catalanian Parliament, **ADDA** and **WSPA** handed in a total of 550.000 signatures – plus those that will come – to the Parliament coinciding that both **Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, ERC** and **Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds, IC-V**, were putting forward a petition for its abolition. An intricate negotiation process concerning the procedure of the Catalan Statute (sort of a Constitution of the local Government) between **PSC** and **ERC** stopped a process that seemed to be to be quick and well managed. Once the Statute resolved, once **ERC** was excluded from the Government due to frictions with the **PSC**, **Esquerra**, resentful, returned to the attack two sessions before the legislature ending, the and, freed from its commitments with its previous associate, in an impossible mission, put to the vote the proposal, which was rejected. However, in that which was the last plenary session, they took that occasion to modify the Catalan Protection Act in order to find a covert moratorium to the coming into effect of the prohibition to kill pets scheduled for the first of January, 2007. It was like keeping up appearances, in a well staged comedy, to postpone *sine die* the prohibition of bullfights in Catalonia, a political game of transactions to which animalists are already used to when animal issues are involved.

As time goes on, the offensive, inside and outside Catalonia to maintain the cruelty of bullfights is better organized day by day. There is one **Luis Corrales** who introduces himself as the speaker of a Platform of unknown members, who already acts as a professional nationwide coordinator. **Televisión Española** (the Spanish Television), **TVE**, in its first channel, is broadcasting again bullfights in the afternoon when children use to watch TV. The yellow programs about celebrities' affairs, that first avoided bullfights, now give coverage to bullfighters' romances and to the *milieu* of the celebrities connected to high aristocracy. The bullfighting businessmen, **ANOET**, assigned to the **CEOE**, call the Government and Communities for the protection of "the Feast". An amendment to the Andalusian Statute, which was recently approved, tried to "armour" bullfights as a "cultural property". It was fortunately rejected. And so on.

PSOE and PP quarrel in the Spanish Parliament and go hand in hand in the European Parliament

While in Spain the **Partido Popular, PP**, maintains a bitter and out of tune opposition to the **Partido Socialista Obrero Español, PSOE**, when it is a question of animal welfare and fights between animals, including bullfights, both parties in Europe go hand in hand to stop the proposal that was put to the vote last October 2006. The same occurred years ago with the Schmit Report. The Spanish Euro MPs in Brussels, when the matter concerns them, know how to convince their colleagues from other countries, who do not know the reality of bullfights. The "picaresque" (roguishness) was a Spanish invention.

It's Time for a Referendum

The offensive against the feeling of the majority of citizens shoes how weakened the democracy by private, not nationwide, interests. It is already time to lay the foundations and go out of this impasse supported by lobbies and groups strategically located within the political-economical status. It is already time, according to the situation, to call a referendum nationwide in order to resolve this question for good. And however the result will be, to comply with it.

"Scientific" Investigations

The Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Tecnología Agraria y Alimentaria (National Institute for Agricultural and Food Investigation and Technology), which depends from the Agriculture, Fishing and Food Ministry, **MAPA**, publishes a brainy comparative study between the bulls fought in San Fermín (Pamplona) and the bulls fought in El Pilar (Zaragoza), considering that the most marked difference between both "fairs" is the running of the bulls, which only takes

place in Pamplona: bulls have to be led from their enclosure to the bullring early in the morning and they are fought in the afternoon. Thus, for the purpose of determining if this entails a benefit to the bull before being fought, they study the haematological and behavioural characteristics of the bulls fought in both fairs. The results show that the bulls fought in San Fermín endure better the stress of the bullfight after the running.

The study concludes that the majority of the bulls arrive to the bullrings without having been trained that might bring them some relief when they fight. According to experts, "an appropriate training implies an important cardiovascular and muscle skeletal adaptation of the animals".

Madrid Bullfighting School: a Teaching practice

✚ Madrid.- An animalist was able to video the teaching practice of the Madrid Bullfighting School last 15th of July, 2006. The film shows six little calves, as big as a big dog, been run through with rapiers. As they were so small the rapiers came out of their guts. The next step was to cut them the ears off, which is forbidden in the Madrid Bullfighting School. The so-called "show" was broadcasted by a local television. And, although it was a public lesson, there were no spectators.

Anti-bullfighting Demonstration in Saragossa

✚ Saragossa (Aragon).- The animalist associations organised last 8th of October, 2006 a merry demonstration in Saragossa, with theatre performances, handing out of leaflets, megaphones and an information centre. Besides having fun and getting information, the aim was to absolutely reject bullfighting and the people who torture a so beautiful animal just to pass the time.

It is the second anti-bullfighting demonstration that has taken place in Saragossa; the first was last year, with a big participation. Since then, many things have happened, almost all positive for the anti-bullfighting movement.

The anti-bullfighting movement has also proved to be more alive than ever. In addition to last year's demonstration in Saragossa, many other cities have resolved to demonstrate against bullfighting torture: Madrid, San Sebastian, Oviedo, Cádiz, Castellón and others, with a bigger participation each time.

Carlos Pinazo supported in Valencia

✚ Valencia.- The Valencian former priest **Carlos Pinazo** reported that he would demonstrate again, all alone in front of the Valencia bullring last 7, 8 and 9 of October, 2006. This man carries on a wonderful labour, alone or accompanied by his wife in wheelchair, and demonstrates in those towns in which bulls are tipped with wooden balls (*embolaos*) or tortured. His proclamation was strongly supported by the animalists that came to the gathering which took place that week-end in Valencia.

Leon Rejects Bullfights

✚ Leon (Castile-Leon).- The groups for the defence of animal welfare publicly declared their outright rejection to the first bullfight that took place in Leon, on the occasion of the festivities of Saint Froilan. From now on, both the **Leon Association for the Defence of Animals** and **Ecologists in Action** will demand to be reported in every financial year report the amount of public money with which the City Hall directly or indirectly subsidizes bullfights, which subsist due to the investment of public funds, although there are real social needs to be satisfied with the taxpayers' money.

The transfer of public money to bullfighting businessmen – via some politicians– will become untenable because of the mere fact that the majority of the citizenry (almost 80% in Leon, according to Gallup poll) is not interested in bullfighting.

To call a spade a spade

✚ In a letter sent by a reader and published in the weekly *magazine* of the newspaper "La Vanguardia" (06, 27, 2006), **Luis Gilpérez** invited the bullfighting supporters to call a spade a spade. "The reader Mercedes Zamorano – Gilpérez explained –told Lucía Etxebarria off for having used the adjective "subnormal" mentioning bullfights aficionados". "I understand that Lucía Etxebarria used it in a figurative sense as acceptable as that the reader used when she affirms that "she likes bulls". We can deduce that she does not like the bulls but she shows in which bulls are mistreated to the death" –the author argues. "In any case Spanish-speaking bullfighting supporters are not the best to ask for an accurate use of the language", concludes. "They call "*bull feast*" to something that, for the bulls, is anything but a feast; "*master*" (maestro) to the apprentice butchers; "matador" (diestro) to lots of sinister characters; "*luck*" to something that is never fortuitous. So let's accept "subnormal" as synonymous of "below the norm" and nobody will get upset about it".

In addition we also invite the bullfighting supporters to substitute the word "*traditional show*" for "retrograde", "*master*" (maestro) for "innocents' killer" and "*noble fight of man against bull*" for "unfair and disloyal task of the matador".

Anti-bullfighting Activist Attacked

✚ Barcelona.- The daily "La Vanguardia" (08/28/2006) published a bullfighting chronicle by **Salvador Boix** entitled "Rightful Triumph of Ivan García" : he told how "the bullfighter went out the grand entrance, followed by admirers clapping and cheering on "matador". Two days after, **Luis Villacorta** sent a letter to the newspaper, explaining another version : "this critique is an explicit example of the cruelty toward an animal, so splendid, because, for the second time, it was attacked without any explanation, with extreme physical and verbal violence, by about fifty aggressive and overexcited bullfighting supporters who confront every Sunday the people who demand the ban on bullfighting". This critic only wants to see his own reality.

Two Sides of the Same Coin

➤ The program "Public Mirror" on Antena 3 channel, broadcasted a documentary (09/17/2006) about "Popular Fiestas" which gave a quite favourable vision of the work that the different animalist groups are carrying out. Nevertheless, the program "The Seeker", on Telecinco channel emphasized, "the courage of the competitors who spear the bull "Toro de la Vega and a journalist who took part on it, even spoke of "adrenalin release". He would rather stay at home and have a lime flower tea than torture and innocent animal.

Spain Breaks Up!

➤ The fact is that bullfights do not go through one of its best moments. The names of the most popular Spanish bullfighters, such as **Enrique Ponce** o "**El Juli**" are not on Spaniards' lips , who prefer sport outstanding figures such as **Rafael Nadal**, the tennis star, or **Ronaldinho**, the Brazilian star that plays soccer in the Fútbol Club Barcelona.

Several studies reveal that the people who watch bullfights on TV are getting older; the typical bullfighting supporter is a man over 40 years old, according to the bullfighting critic of the Spanish Public Television Paco Delgado. The surveys confirm these data; the number of Spanish people who declare not to be interested in bullfights has increased from the 40% in 1970 up to the 70% nowadays. Young people are even less interested. As a result the TV channels are less interested in broadcastings bullfights and therefore fewer people have no endure this kind of "show". In Catalonia, the Parliament is considering to ban bullfighting for good.

The bullfighting business responded rather quickly and the bullfighting critic, Paco Delgado stated: "these nationalist parties are trying to break up Spain, they want to ban bullfights because they represents Spain and its national heritage" What that got to do with it? Those who want to avoid the suffering of living beings are dismembering Spain?

Book "When the Bulls Cry"

➤ In his last work, published in English, *When the Bulls Cry*, the American writer and animalist **Michael A. Ogorzaly**, recently passed away, destroyed the romantic view of bullfighting and gives unquestionable reasons to abolish this cruel and violent show. He finds bullfighting guilty, because of its extreme cruelty and brutality towards the animals.

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NEWS FROM FRANCE

Anti-bullfighting Demonstrations

➤ Fréjus (France).- Last Sunday 8th of October groups for the defence of animal welfare demonstrated in front of the cathedral of the French city of **Fréjus** asking the Catholic Church to respect the animals and stop being accomplice of bullfights

Marseille (France).- The **Federation of Anti-bullfights Associations, FLAC**, organised a great gathering in **Marseille** on the 21st of October, 2006 for the purpose of expressing their outright rejection to the bullfighting pressure group who are not sparing efforts to set up in the city multi-purpose bullrings.

Nîmes (France).- "Stop bullfights", "Bullfight is not culture" and "Make love not bullfight" were the slogans of the demonstrators called by the animalist association **PETA**, in the city of **Nîmes**. They gathered at the Place de l'Horloge for the purpose of demanding the end of bullfights. Practically naked, in PETA's style, and with fake horns in their heads, two men and three women protested in the main bullfighting city of France against the bullfights of the beginning in July of Pamplona (Spain).

Signatures of 200 Personalities

➤ More than 200 French personalities have already signed the petition of the association **CRAC** demanding the suppression of **line 3 of the article 521.1 of the French Penal Code**, which tolerates bullfights because it is a "uninterrupted local tradition". They consider that the barbarity of bullfighting is contrary to the essence of the Republic, unique and indivisible, since this practice is penalized with a 30.000 euros fine and 2 years imprisonment in a large part of the country, while bullfights are allowed in a small part of Southern France. Animalists demand that, for now, to forbid the admission to the bullring to people under 18s' because this barbaric and violent "show" is harmful to their education.

NEWS FROM PORTUGAL

Portugal.- The association **Animal** in cooperation with the **League Against Cruel Sports, LACS**, with headquarters in London, launched the first campaign in Portugal aimed to declare the first anti-bullfighting city in this country as is happened in Catalonia (Spain) where Barcelona and almost 40 towns declared themselves anti-bullfighting – have already declared themselves as anti-bullfighting. In France, one city. has already followed the Catalan example. the Portuguese campaigners are focusing their actions on 10 cities of Southern Portugal (Algarve): Portimao, Lagos, Lagoa, Aljezur, Silves, Albufeira, Loulé, Olhao, Tavila and Faro as well as Sintra, near to Lisbon.

Visit ciudadeantitouradas.com. This website has a section in English which informs the foreign or national tourists of what they can do to support the campaign. The goal is to make them write to the Majors of these towns (which depend basically on tourism) and urge them to condemn publicly bullfighting and declared themselves anti-bullfighting

NEWS FROM SOUTHAMERICA

Peru.- The Member of the Peruvian Congress **José Urquiza Maggia** put forward a bill, getting up petitions in order to modify article 11 of the **Animal Protection Act**, forbidding the use of animals in activities which cause them suffering or death. The bill also intends to abolish article 24, the Third Additional Disposition and the Transitional Disposition, which excludes animals used "with cultural purposes", such as cock fights, etc. And also article 450 Inc. A of the Penal Code, sanctioning those that infringe the Law with up to three hundred days, a fine and disqualify them during three years holding public office.

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