

THE BULL TRIBUNE

Number 28 from January to April, 2007

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The Bullfighting Offensive

[Forced to lose money](#)

The ban on bullfighting is becoming a highly topical issue in Catalonia. The new government, called before "Tripartite" and now "l'Entesa" (the agreement?), has been formed although the partners are the same. Now the question is if ERC and ICVerds will keep on working on the bill to ban bullfighting they both proposed in the Catalan Parliament.

The PSC (Catalan Socialist Party) is in the majority in the new government and its leader, José Montilla is the new President of the Generalitat (Catalan Government). Mr. Montilla was born in Andalusia, and as he had been seen watching bullfights at the Monumental, we presume he is an "aficionado". As a democrat, Montilla must be in line with the Catalan citizens whom he represents and with the results of the surveys which state that 73,1% of Catalan people want bullfights to be banned.

The Catalan Law for the Protection of Animal of 1988, the first in Spain, banned the construction of new bullrings in Catalonia. Consequently, there are only 3 bullrings (formally there were 7) at present: The Monumental, in Barcelona, owned by the Balaña company (their main business are movie theatres), organises bullfights all along the bullfighting season, from April to October; The Tarragona bullring organised a few bullfights and is always in search of an investor; the Olot (Girona) bullring only organised 2 bullfights a year and in practice is inactive.

Consequently, the issue is focused on the Monumental and the bullfighting lobby is quite aware of it. They probably knew that Mr. Jordi Portabella, the 2nd deputy major of Barcelona City Council wanted to remove the flea market to the Monumental. At present this market is settled close to the bullring. The City Council has invested millions of euros to redesign this area, called Las Glorias.

It is well-known that the owner of the Monumental, Balaña, has been losing money year after year because in Catalonia there no support, and consequently bullfights have a few audience and are not financially profitable. The loss might be over 24.000 euros each bullfight. The meeting between Jordi Portabella and Balaña was leaked out to the Catalan edition of the newspaper "El País" as there was a lot of interest in discussing this issue in the media. The response of the media was predictable and there were a great controversy amongst people in favour and against it. ADDA together with WSPA neither believed in the removal of the flea market to the Monumental nor the closing down of the Monumental in 2008. Their campaign aimed to the Catalan Parliament where actually the issue must be discussed.

According to some news, Luis Corrales who proclaims himself "Director of the Platform for the Defence of the "Fiesta", has said that there is no "expire-date" for the Monumental. Therefore, it seems that bullfights will keep on being held despite there are a waste of money, just to keep the minority which supports bullfighting happy. These few supporters have a cruel fun paid for by the owner who is forced to lose money. This is a very difficult decision to be taken by a businessman and jeopardize the future of his business which may go bankrupt and would affect creditors and employees.

Obviously, there are powerful interests to keep the Monumental opened. The media have advertised with a wealth of details that Balaña, who runs other bullrings in Spain, has given the running of the Monumental for the 2007 season to the firm from Salamanca "Casa Mantilla" (do not confuse José Montilla with Mantilla). Furthermore, José Tomás, a former bullfighter who will go back to bullfighting, has been signed up to fight next July in the Monumental. The bullring will probably be filled with people from somewhere else but it is a matter of time. Sooner or later the reality of bullfighting in Catalonia will prevail.

[Who is the insensible one?](#)

Professor Juan Carlos Illera del Portal, Director of Animal Physiology of the Veterinarian Faculty of Madrid has stated that he has scientifically discovered that the bull is able to deal with stress much better during the bullfight than during the transportation to the bullring. From what he says, the bull releases high levels of beta endorphins, the happiness hormones that block pain, because he is "special" and his endocrine system is completely different from other species, including human beings. So the bull is perfectly adapted to the fight.

Thanks to this amazing study, the bullfighting supporters have found the answer to the problem: the bull does not suffer because he was born to entertain them while he is tortured, furthermore he takes pleasure. Only the transport may bother him a bit but certainly not the weapons that tortured his body during the bullfight. We should nominate Prof. Illera for the Nobel Prize.

Who is in fact insensible? The bull or those who make him suffer with senseless cruelty? Is it the bull or the spectators?

[Minors under pressure](#)

Cádiz.- Although young people are less interested in bullfighting nowadays, the bullfighting lobby is trying to influence them, by saying that bullfighting is "culture" and should be a part of their education. Regrettably, the pro-bullfighting supporters have many contacts amongst politicians and that is why the town Los Barrios near Cadiz has promoted a bullfighting school, supported by the education councillor Miguel Angel Palomo (Socialist).

The goal of that school is to make the aficionados of the future. And arouse their sensibility in order to understand and

enjoy the "Fiesta". What kind of sensibility are they arousing when they force children to watch the senseless death of an animal? What should the Minor Defender say about it? Should not it be penalized?

➤ **Bullfighting Fallas** (Las Fallas are the Valencian celebration of the feast of St. Joseph)

Valencia.- The former Priest Carlos Pinazo will demonstrate in front of the Valencia bullring during the celebration of Las Fallas to protest against the 12 bullfights scheduled from 8th to 19th March, including morning performances and even a special performance for children.

Mr. Pinazo sent a protest letter to the President of the Valencian County Council, Fernando Giner and to the Mayor of Valencia, Rita Barberà.

➤ **In defence of Cristina Narbona**

Recently Cristina Narbona, the Minister of Environment of the Spanish Government declared that the bull should not be killed in the bullfight. She has been attacked by the bullfighting supporters for her comments. Consuelo Polo, an ecology activist (Ecologistas en Acción) sent a letter to the newspaper "Tú Dirás" to speak up for Cristina Narbona.

The animalists together with other citizens urge our Government not to support anymore such a cruel and degrading spectacle as bullfighting. Spain ought to put an end to cruelty towards animals. Tradition is not worth when it ethically and morally degrades us.

As the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham argued, animal pain is as real and as morally relevant as human pain. He said : "The question is not, Can they reason?, nor Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?"

➤ **Incredulous bullfighting supporters**

Minister Cristina Narbona said that the results of the surveys demonstrate that only 8% of the Spaniards support bullfighting This not the opinion of bullfighters and bull breeders who argue that last year more bullfights were performed than the year before. Aren't they just pretending things are going well, as people are less and less interested in bullfighting.

➤ **Join PETA's human race!**

For the sixth year the powerful American organization PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) is calling for "the running of the nudes" which will take place the 5th July, two days before the beginning of Pamplona festival. Hundreds of activists will converge on Pamplona to protest against the bull runs. This event is so expected and popular that the Government of Navarra wants to include it as a traditional event of Pamplona.

The media coverage and the number of participants show that this is the best way to put an end to the cruelty of bull runs. It is a funny and festive alternative.

The buses to Pamplona will leave from Madrid and Barcelona on 4th July and will go back on Saturday 7th July. For further information, please contact francisco@peta.org

➤ **Protest in front of PSOE headquarters in Madrid**

Madrid.- Although there was not a media coverage, as usual, nearly two thousands activists gathered in front of the socialist headquarters located in calle Ferraz, Madrid, when the meeting of the Federal Committee was being held.

The demonstrators urge the socialist representatives (among them President J.L. Rodríguez Zapatero, Minister Cristina Narbona and socialist leaders of autonomous regions) to hear the Spanish public who wants bullfights to be banned.

They called for the Penal Code reform and a law for the Protection of Animal. Later the activists moved on the Spanish Synod headquarters, to protest against the Catholic Church's permissiveness towards bullfighting and demand to ban chapels inside the bullrings.

➤ **Anti-bullfighting arguments**

Anti-bullfighting activist Carlos Pinazo has written a list of arguments against bullfighting:

1. Bullfighting is the "national shame" not the "national fiesta";
2. It is an unfair fight because the bull is intentionally weakened.
3. According to the Universal Declaration of Animal Rights "Any act unnecessary involving the death of an animal, and any decision leading to such an act, constitute a crime against life."
4. The UE condemn bullfighting , as well as cock fighting and fox hunting
5. According the recent Demoscopia opinion poll conducted by ADDA and WSPA, 96,3% of Spaniards call for a ban of any entertainment in which animals are tortured. An overwhelming majority of Spanish people has never gone to a bullfight.
6. Admission should be ban to minors and bullfighting schools should not be paid with public funds. Have our rulers any concept of how must be our children's education?
7. The bull is a mammal with a nervous and muscular system similar to ours. During the bullfight, the lances, pikes, banderillas, dagger and sword with which he his tortured cause him deep and painful wounds.
8. It is not "culture" because it degrades human beings.
9. It is not an "art", because art is creation not destruction.
10. Bullfighting is an outdated "tradition" comparable with Roman circus, slavery, and public executions.

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NEWS FROM FRANCE**➤ The 2006 season in France**

The season began on 12th February and closed on 19th November. The main towns which organised bullfights had been Nîmes (15 bullfights), Arles (1), Dax (10), Bayonne (8), Béziers (6) and Palavas (6). In all, 141 bullfights (149 in 2005) were organized, in 53 bullrings. Good news, the Floirac bullring will close down in 2007.

➤ The French Greens say NO to bullfighting

The French green party has declared itself to be against "the cruel and degrading use of animals for entertainment" and that bullfighting ought to be banned.

The French "aficionados" have admitted that bullfighting is in decline.

Two French towns have declared themselves anti-bullfighting so far.

The CRAC "Comité Radicalement Anti-Corrída" together with other associations handed in the Jérôme Lescure's DVD "Alinéa" to every MEP in Strasbourg to show them the cruelty of bullfighting that many of them ignore.

In a "Written Declaration" to the European Commission, MEP's Robert Evans (UK), Mojca Drcar Murco (Slovenia), Gitte Seeberg (Denmark) and Carl Schlyter (Sweden) called on the EU to push for a ban on bullfighting and on subsidies given to farmers who breed bulls to be used in bullfighting. 393 MEPs' signatures were needed to obtain the majority. Finally, 207 MEP's signed the Written Declaration stating their support for an EU-wide ban on bullfighting.

The French "Fédération des Luttes pour l'Abolition de la Corrida FLAC" is calling for the participation of anti-bullfighters supporters to the demonstration to be organized in Bayonne (France) next 4th August. Buses will leave from Paris, Toulouse, Montpellier, Marseille, Perpignan, etc. For further information, visit their site: www.flac-anticorrída.org

NEWS FROM PORTUGAL**➤ The 2006 season in France**

Next 17th May there will be an anti-bullfighting demonstration in front of the Campo Pequeno bullring in Lisbon. Animal welfare associations from Latin America, Spain, France, Holland, Ireland and the UK will participate in this demonstration which has been organized by the Portuguese Association Animal jointly with the League Against Cruel Sports (Ireland) and the CAS (Dutch Anti-bullfighting Committee).

If you want to participate, please send an email to campanhas@animal.org.pt

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