

THE *on-line* BULL TRIBUNE



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Previous numbers [21](#) - [22](#) - [23](#) - [24](#) - [25](#) - [26](#) - [27](#) - [28](#) - [29](#) - [30](#) - [31](#)

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Platform 'Prou'

The Platform 'Prou', created for those who fight for the suppression of bullfighting in Catalunya, has begun a campaign that could bring about the definitive end of bullfights in Catalunya. Prou has collected 50.000 signatures over a period of 120 days, aimed at persuading the Parliament of Catalunya to allow a Popular Legislative Initiative that will modify the existing Animal Protection Law to prohibit these types of shows. This popular legislative initiative voices the purposes of Prou in respect of a spectacle that it considers a relic from the past. The Parliament has already accredited 880 persons who will gather and stand witness to the authenticity of these signatures. After the period of collection, counting and validation the proposal will have to continue through several parliamentary steps before coming to the final stage of voting for approval or rejection. Catalan Law prohibits the death of animals in public spectacles, but it makes an exception in case of the bulls. Prou proposes a removal of this incomprehensible exception. The issue is that of modifying Article 6 of the recast text of the Catalan Animal Protection Law, prohibiting bullfights and spectacles that include the death of an animal by spears and the sword, as well as bullfighting spectacles of any form that are celebrated in the bullrings or out of them. As an exception, the proposal accepts those spectacles involving oxen where the animal is not killed or harmed, such as 'bull running,' that are traditional and very popular in parts of Spain. The debate in the plenary meeting of the Catalan Parliament would begin with the presentation of the initiative by a member of a member of the Prou commission. If, after full debate, the proposition succeeds, it would continue through a committee of the Catalan Parliament before returning to the plenary meeting for the final debate and voting.

The reaction of bullfighting supporters

Even bullfight supporters accept that times are changing and have expressed some concern about the debate. In an interview granted to a bullfighting website Luis Corrales, Director of the Bullfighting Platform, assures that "the spectacle has to be able to evolve and address the behaviour and issues that cause negative reactions". According to Corrales, "the important thing is that the debate proceeds within the law and it is explained to the Catalan, Spanish and European society that "these" people are not exclusively anti-bullfighting, they are vegetarians and they are animal lovers, who say, (and they say it without shame and without fear), that the life of a dog has the same value as that of a child. What the people should realise is that, if they give their support and signatures to the anti-bullfighters they are also giving their support and signatures to these other things. They should know that the people who wish to prohibit bullfighting do not want them to eat entrecote or Catalan sausage either". In this article we wish to clarify that the people who give support to the Popular Initiative are giving their signatures, only and exclusively, for the suppression of the bullfights in Catalunya, and people may give their support in the full knowledge that there is no confusion with any other issues.

Reprieved, but of what crime?

In an article published in the newspaper, "La Vanguardia", in the edition of November 3, 2008, the journalist Paco March assures us that the bull 'reprieved' in the Monumental in Barcelona after being fought by the bull killer José Tomás went on to be given an idyllic existence and to become the "king of the pasture." According to the journalist the bull is, "practically convalescent and can expect to gain a few kilos whilst waiting for the

moment, perhaps in December or January, in which the most select cows receive his favours. It is the beginning of a new life, which can come to as many as fifteen or more years, when all he has to do is to father the heirs of his bravery and nobility." What the reporter forgets to mention is that, far from this idyll, the bull, according to an article published in "EL País", returns home (...) covered in scars (...) weighing hundreds of kilos less than when it left for the bullrings of Barcelona because of the trauma of the experience and the stress of the trip (...). He also ignores the fact that, although the official line is that these 'reprieved' bulls return to the pasture to be put out to stud, nothing is known in reality of the destination of these animals. The most probable thing is that, considering the extent of the wounds inflicted upon the animal, the majority die shortly after the fight. The only beneficiary is the bull killer who can feel proud of his generosity in apparently sparing life of the animal." (La Vanguardia and El País).

What would San Francisco of Asíssi say?

✚ Badajoz. - Last October 24, 2008 Bull killers and priests played a football match in Badajoz to raise funds for the construction of a soup kitchen in Peru. As reported by the news agency "Europe Press", the event was organised and run under the authority of the Episcopal **Delegation for the Missionary Cooperation**, and was supported by **El Corte Ingles**, the **Town hall of Badajoz** and the **Foundation of Sports**, among others. 2.500 entry tickets were sold at a price of 5 € each. They were distributed in the parishes of Badajoz, from the headquarters of the Archbishopric of Merida, and from tobacconist stands at the bus station, among others. In the advance publicity, the bull-killer Israel Lancho declared that they "also try to help others whenever possible". This is praiseworthy altruism from a killer, who first turns the death of an animal into a public spectacle and then plays football in a 'united initiative' with religious people who also seem to have forgotten the idea of respect for animal life.

The attitude of the Defender of the People

✚ The senator Josep Maldonado is a member of the Parliamentary Association in Defence of the Rights of the Animals. Last December 15th he presented a request for the appearance of the Defender of the People, Enrique Múgica, at the joint Commission of Relations with the Defender of the People. The senator wanted Múgica appear so that "he can explain his motives for publicly insulting all those who do not share his passion for bullfighting, by calling them "idiots " in the COPE program "an evening with Cristina". The senator's opinion is that, "it is surprising that Múgica would insult in this way so many citizens who do not support the maltreatment of animals". The affiliation APDDA (Parliamentary Association for the Defence of Animals) has already denounced, in a press release last December 10th (International Day of the Rights of the Animals), the declarations of Múgica. In the opinion of the animal rights supporters this is a wrong attitude in an institutional figure. Such a person should be protecting the rights and duties of the citizens, in which we understand that the freedom of speech and thought are included. Animal rights supporters also think that the representatives of the people should set an example of sensitivity towards all living beings. APDDA also denounced in the bulletin the current role of the gossip press which gives more importance than ever to toreadors, and the continued transmission of bullfights – including during the hours when children would be watching - by public television channels, TV Madrid, Castilla - La Mancha TV and Andalusian Canal Sur, among others.

The Bullring remains empty

✚ Castro Urdiales (Cantabria). This year the bullring at the town of Castro Urdiales has welcomed, uniquely, the festival of music "Castro Rock ". The president of the Peña San Martín , Dionysius González, says that "the necessary paperwork asking for bids to put on the festival were put out late. I do not know what the motive was, but by the time we were ready it was too late, we were already in June". According to reports in "antitauromaquia.com", in an article by Abel Verano, González assures us that, "although the Mayor was interested in a festival including bullfights, the town councillor in charge of celebrations Arantza Gorriarán is anti-bullfighting, and this is one of our big problems." He goes on to say that

"there are many disappointed members and furthermore, bearing in mind that we have the most beautiful bullring of its kind in the North we certainly could put it to a use that is both beneficial and socially useful."

News from Latin America

✚ Michelito Lagravere, an eleven-year-old child, has fought solo with six erales (bulls of 2 years) in the Square of Merida (Mexico), completely within the law as it stands. The law allows it since the regulations of the Ruling Government of Performance imposes no limit the number of bulls that a minor can fight at once. Even bullfight supporters warn of the risks that such a practise carries. The president of the bullfighting Commission of Merida, Hernán Evia, declared that "it is the feeling of the Commission, that four should be the maximum. We must ensure the protection of the child. To fight solo with six animals requires an enormous physical effort, you are alone with six bulls, steers or erales, and the outcome is down to chance. It could result in a goring and God does not want that. Two and a half hours alone in a dangerous situation is already difficult, even more so when we are talking about a child."

No love of bullfighting in Colombia

✚ Cartagena (Colombia). Bullfighting is not popular in Colombia. The newspaper "*El Universal*" reported rumours that were circulating before the beginning of the bullfight. The rumours said that the two-hour delay to the start of the bullfight was due to the fact that two of the most important toreadors of today refused to leave their hotel until they had been paid, to the last cent. Then, according to the same newspaper, the Technical Committee had overspent on getting the square prepared for bullfighting, so that there was no reserve bull. When one of the animals went lame (we will never know what happened to him), there was no "replacement bull" available and, the presidency claims, the bull killer fought a crippled animal.

In truth, despite the interest of the company to 'encourage' the love of the activity with a few 'good cartels', the bullfighting period has been an absolute disaster, since neither locals nor foreigners have shown interest. Additionally, every day opposition is growing to these cruel spectacles. Even young people do not consider them interesting.

Peru speaks loud and clear in favour of the animals

✚ Peru has spoken loud and clear in favour of the animals and against bullfights, and has done it in the first opinion poll on bullfighting carried out through the length and breadth of the country. The study was prepared by the independent polling company "Datum" and commissioned by the Dutch 'Committee Anti Stierenvechten (CAS)', in affiliation with the Peruvian animal protection group 'UPA (United for the Animals)' and the results surprised even these animal protection and defence groups. Of the 5.394 adult Peruvians who were asked their opinion on bullfighting, 86 % answered clearly that they were not at all interested in them; 68 % were opposed to kind class of exhibition, and 66 % want a national law to prohibit them. 64 % would like their municipality to declare itself anti-bullfighting. At present there are already more than 60 places in the world that have been so declared.

News from Portugal

✚ Viana do Castelo (Portugal). Viana do Castelo has turned into the first anti-bullfighting Portuguese municipality. In a meeting of the mayoralty, on March 2nd, 2009, the socialistic majority voted for the rejection by the municipality of these spectacles. Mayor Defensor de Moura has assured that no bullfights will be allowed in the city, in either a public or a private space, since "the defence of the rights of the animals is totally incompatible with these spectacles of torture that inflict completely unjustifiable

suffering". The ancient bullring of Viana do Castelo now serves as a centre dedicated to the study of the science.