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Against Bull-Fighting and Human Exploitation

Francisco Ferrer

17 February 1905

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This letter was sent to the president of the Commission for the Abolition of Bull-Fighting. It was reprinted in *¡Tierra!* (Havana, Cuba) on 13 October 1911 and in *Tierra y Libertad* (Madrid), No 280, November 2011.

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Dear Sir

In reply to the circular published in this city's press, the Modern School is pleased to associate itself with the rally scheduled for Sunday next in opposition to bull-fighting.

However, allow me, on behalf of the body which I represent, to point out that such association is merely a gesture of support for opposition to that barbaric practice and is devoid of any patriotic or regionalist implications.

The point here is not to pit Catalonia against Castile, because in breathing new life into the differences that have artificially been created between regions and nations, to the cost of these societies and to the sole advantage of the ruling classes, the Commission would be departing from the purpose for which it was appointed: campaigning for the abolition of bull-fighting.

I should also like to advance a thought that seems to encapsulate this point: since the exception taken to bull-fighting has sprung from the noble sentiments of the founders of the campaign, might the Commission not see its way clear to raising

an objection also the suffering that owners inflict upon their horses in the form of over-work and under-feeding?

And having thus spoken up in defence of animals, why should we not also busy ourselves setting up a league for the protection of man? Tormenting a bull is barbaric. The sight of men dressed in motley tackling a wild animal in order to earn a crust is savagery; but it is more barbaric and greater savagery to witness, acknowledge and support a regime whereby man is exploited by his fellow man, where human life is so undervalued that, from the industrialist less upset by the death of a workman than the death of a chicken, through to governments that dispatch men to war in their thousands, we are all of us unworthy of the description 'civilised' unless we speak out equally against bull-fighting and torture and exploitation in all guises.

Most affectionately yours,
F. Ferrer Guardia
Barcelona, 17 February 1905