

Commercial Bigotry

Editorial Reporting By William Roberts (AKA mayesvara dasa ACBSP)

Published By Star Free Press – Ojai Valley Voice –

Ojai Valley News – LA Times Ventura County Edition

Week of August 26, 1990

Background & Introduction

Balabhadra Prabhu (William Dove) spent his whole life raising and training oxen to work the land like every farmer knew how to do prior to the creation of the tractor. In the summer of 1990 he brought his magnificent bulls to walk in the Los Angeles Rathayatra and the one in San Francisco a few weeks later. He came to my home in Ojai California during the interim period to let get the bulls out of the city, and relax in comfort in my large front yard. When he went to the local feed store the clerk recognized that he was not local and asked who the feed was for. When Balabhadra said it was for two full grown oxen, their curiosity was tweaked so Balabhadra invited them to come out and see them in his trailer parked outside. This particular feed store had been contracted by the fair to provide all the grains for the animals at the Ventura County Fair and when the clerk was so astonished to see these bulls, that stood larger than six feet tall, he immediately asked if Balabhadra would be willing to have them exhibited at the fair. The answer was a no-brainer and so Balabhadra was contracted for \$300 to show Burfi and Lee at the fair for the full two weeks of its duration.

The first week went very well because it highlighted the display of exotic animals. The second week all the llamas, yaks and exhibit animals were sent home and the cattle ranchers from Midstate California descended onto the fair. They come to auction of the breeds of livestock they raise for the slaughterhouse. When these breeders discovered that there was an exhibit educating the public about the advantages of NOT killing the bull but instead, how a loving owner can train them to cultivate the earth, they were furious!

At 10 am Monday morning, four very large big hat cowboys weighing at least 250lbs or more drove up to Balabhadra's "Cow-Protection exhibit" in a golf cart with clear intent to make a proposal to him that he could not refuse. They looked Balabhadra sternly in the eye and instructed him to pack up his literature, load his prize bulls and immediately get out of the fair. Balabhadra informed me later there was no question of negotiating with these thugs based on the contract he had with the Fair. It was clear they wanted him gone and considering their size and the demeanor, Balabhadra realized the smart response was to pack up and leave without any objections.

As soon as Balabhadra got back to my home he called me at my office to inform me about what happened. When I realized how he had been intimidated I became indignant and felt the way he had been confronted and betrayed by the Fair was a newsworthy issue the public should know about. I immediately wrote the following "Commercial Bigotry" editorial and submitted it to the local KVEN radio station and every newspaper in our area. I requested the owner of the radio to read what I submitted and consider if he would be willing to broadcast a live interview with Balabhadra. KVEN agreed to have Balabhadra interviewed on Frank Hanes one hour news show the following Thursday at 3pm. By the time it was all over there was a public uproar and Balabhadra's picture with the bulls Burfi and Lee were all over the news including the front page of the Ventura County Edition of the Los Angeles Times.

The attempt of the cattle ranchers to silence the message of the "Working Oxen" completely backfired. Their intolerance inadvertently triggered what is referred to as the "Barbara Streisand" effect. Instead of quietly shutting down Balabhadra's peaceful message and shooing him away, they ended up generating millions of dollars of free advertising informing the public how it is more intelligent to protect the bulls and not eat them!

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Commercial Bigotry Newspaper Article

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Many folks had the opportunity to see a unique exhibit in the livestock section of the Ventura County Fair, but unfortunately many others will be deprived of that opportunity because of commercial bigotry.

For the first five days of the fair, William and Irene Dove introduced Lee & Burfi, their two prize winning bullocks. They were living proof of an alternative agricultural way of life that utilizes oxen not for food, but as partners in working the land for a truly organic harvest. From ten in the morning till ten at night thousands of fascinated fair goers crowded around their corral to admire the beauty of the two, 2000 lb, fully grown Brown Swiss Oxen.

Children were fascinated by the docile nature of these tremendous animals and with the help of a chair they were able to pet their huge head and feel their horns. Adults admired that they weren't just dumb beasts, but intelligent enough to respond to voice commands and had been fully trained to plowing and haul tremendous weights. Indeed, Lee and Burfi were not ordinary oxen, they were the shining example of what the 20th Century left behind when the world embraced the industrial age of tractors and fossil fuels.

Thousands of people appreciated the message. It was actually quite simple. "Get back to the land". In the presence of these majestic animals it was painfully obvious how our so called advanced society has somehow been duped: We had traded the opportunity to work in an open field, under a blue sky with a beautiful animal, for dirty factory jobs, in confined areas, with loud, dangerous equipment that erodes our health and destroys the environment.

William and Irene had come all the way from Pennsylvania where they tend a full herd of 135 Brown Swiss bovine. They started the International Society for Cow Protection and to teach small farmers, and environmentalists, how there is greater benefit in protecting bulls than in selling them to the slaughter house. Everyone can appreciate the tremendous amount of milk that comes from the Cow because by nature's arrangement the volume of milk she provides every day weighs more than the total weight of her baby calf. The excess miracle food milk is God's gift to us so we can produce cheese, yogurt, butter, and ice cream etc. Similarly, the bullock is capable of providing such a phenomenal amount of energy they can easily till the earth to grow grains for bread. Anyone who has had the opportunity to travel to a third world country knows how important these animals are because they provide a pollution free low cost energy. The people of India understand these facts so well that is why they treat the cow as their mother.

It should not be too difficult to understand why so many people appreciated Lee & Burfi even though they initially seemed to suggest a step back to the 1700's. What they really represented was hope, the alternative to pollution, factory work, the oil crisis, chemical pesticides, and the artificial way of life that has driven many people to depression despair and apathy. Why then were they driven out of the Ventura County Fair? The Fair that is portrayed as a family event, educational, fun, a reflection of our own beautiful community and whose purpose is to promote agriculture? It seems the only real answer is commercial bigotry.

While the common folk were crowding to see the harbingers of hope - Lee & Burfi, behind closed doors the cattle ranchers plotted to expel the heretics. Apparently the very idea of raising animals in a loving community, where man and beast work cooperatively together for the mutual benefit of all, was just too radical. The decision had been reached. Even though the Fair is billed as an educational, community event, it really isn't. Alternative viewpoints to that of the cattle ranchers would not be endured regardless of how nicely they are presented. The Pennsylvania farmers Bill and Irene were demonstrating the environmental and social benefits of how to live in a harmonious relationship working the land instead of polluting it and the protecting of cows instead of eating it. It had been decided that, that message was not appropriate for the Ventura fairgoers!

Evicting Bill and his wife raises the question about the very core of the Fair's purpose. Is it an educational, community centered event, or is it just a big marketing tool that serves as a mouthpiece for the vested commercial

interests of a few? Using the legal convenience of corporate policy, the Fair's board of directors made it perfectly clear that they were diametrically opposed to anything that did not promote the cattle industry. Bill was specifically told not to present anything to the public about a vegetarian lifestyle, cow protection, or raising oxen for working the field! The obvious enthusiasm that the general public had for the first, to hear their message was totally irrelevant. All that mattered to the cattle ranchers was that they were the biggest patrons of the Fair and they were going to dictate to the Fair what they wanted!

Monday morning Bill Dove were approached and he was told to cease, desist and go home. If he wanted to challenge the Boards decision, there were several large, unhappy, ominous looking large men who routinely slaughter thousands of innocent animals ready to "help him understand their viewpoint." The tension was evident and Bill wisely chose to put Lee and Burfi back into their customized rig and depart.

If you are interested in learning about the practical aspects of Cow protection or want to know more about a sane alternative lifestyle then give us a call at (805) 640-0405. Despite the commercially bigoted behavior of the Fair directors it's reassuring to know that there is a real alternative lifestyle available for real people wishing to live it!

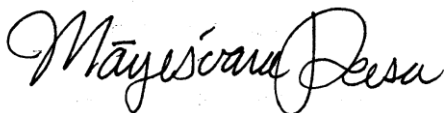
URL To Youtube Audio Interview with Balabhadra On Frank Hanes Radio Show, KVEN Ventura

The 35 minute KVEN Audio Interview of Bill Dove (Balabhadra Prabhu) is quite captivating and worth the time to listen to. It is presented here with visuals lofted from his International Society for Cow Protection (ISKCOP) organization:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AY_52BgO-B0

Hare Krishna

Thank You!



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