ANIMAL CIRCUSES ARE ANIMAL TORTURE by Teresa Hele

"But for the use of physical punishment by their oppressors, animals would never be part of a circus."  Richard Pryor

IT'S CIRCUS TIME AGAIN! TIME FOR CLOWNS AND COTTON CANDY, FOR LIGHTS AND LAUGHTER, FOR DEGRADACTION AND DEATH. That's right, Ladies and Gentlemen, Girls and Boys, the greatest show on earth would not be possible without what most Americans would call inhumane treatment, chaining, muzzling, cages, electric shocks and starvation. As we look toward the Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus coming to Fresno this July, we must also look at what that means to the animals that are forced to perform with the show. We must recognize what our patronage to animal acts means to those kidnapped from their natural environment, held against their will, beaten, and often killed as a result of this unnatural and uncaring form of entertainment.

For several months running we have attempted to demonstrate that the basis of corporate capitalism is violent exploitation of nature. The animal circus is no exception. According to their website, Feld shows operate in 47 countries on six continents with an estimated 25 million customers a year. Feld/Ringling claims that it provides the highest standards of care, but according to former animal trainer Pat Derby, "After 25 years of working with animals that are forced into the performance world, I have never seen one that is not physically and emotionally violated. The History of the African Elephant, says that it is unusual to see wild elephants cry but that it's common among captive elephants. One Ringling Bros. employee told the Elephant Advocates Alliance how the circus treated one animal: "She was a sweet little...brown bear...but sometimes she had trouble balancing on the high wire. She was then beaten with long metal rods - in rememberance of Clyde the Lion, Jasmine the elephant, and finally died." A reporter who travelled with Ringling Bros. reported about an elephant named Terry: "After 25 years of observing and documenting circuses, I know there are no kind animal trainers." No matter what Ringling may claim, they obviously do not "love" animals.

If you think that a circus trainer is trying to make a point, your response should be: "You are no better and no worse than those you abuse." PETA's Animal Times magazine reported that PETA has been sent a letter by Teresa Hele.

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