

The discipline and fury of ancient Crete was awakened to breathe its anger on the modern world last September 7 in, of all unlikely but ideal places, Atlantic Shitty, at the Miss America Pageant. Crete, because it was one of the last civilized societies where women held a degree of honest power over their own lives (not the stereotypical ~~manipulative~~ manipulative power we ~~are~~ forced to resort to ~~it~~ ever since, but decent self-determination as human beings), and Atlantic City because one of the most horrific combination-symbols of all America stands for was being re-created there in a barbaric ritual.

The Miss America Pageant--a seemingly ludicrous target for an action--is actually one of the more dangerous little rituals going. It neatly combines all the good old American values: racism, capitalism, competition, militarism, vulgarity, male chauvinism, puritanism, and light-heartedness, which protects it from anyone taking it seriously, and maybe doing something about it.

About two hundred women from the Women's Liberation Movement, however, were not so taken in by its "harmlessness." (Florence Kennedy, the black civil-rights lawyer and a militant on women's rights as well, said, "Chicago is comparable to throwing a brick through the window of a police station. The Atlantic City action is comparable to peeing on an expensive rug at a polite cocktail party. They never expect the second kind of protest, and very often it is the one that really gets

them

them up-tight.")

The gut issue at the Pageant, of course, and the basic reason why our sisters ~~were~~ ^{were there,} ~~was~~ was because all of the disgusting values represented (mentioned above) were personified--or rather packaged--in the guise of Woman. It figures. All through history, empire-building, conquest, class-struggle, the one groups ^g everybody could agree was inferior was women. Human females are the oldest oppressed people on earth. I can see the smiles on the faces of some male-chauvinist readers of Rat, self-styled revolutionaries who have studied their Marx, Guevara, Marcuse, Fanon (go back and read the chapter on Algerian women, by the way, in A Dying Colonialism), but who haven't given quite the same attention to endless anthropological studies that: 1) there is no difference/ between men and women but the obvious one of genitals and reproduction, --that means no inherent psychological separateness, brothers, 2) only in those societies where the sexual ^{and functions} roles ~~overlap~~ can there be lasting cooperation and peace (such tribes do exist); contrarily, those cultures that polarize the ~~sexes~~ sexes are aggressive and warlike --familiar? 3) the Hemingway mystique (slap women and shoot animals and you're a real man) is as brutalizing to men as ~~is~~ the "intuitive, emotional, passive," stereotype is degrading to women.

O.K., you immediately agree. Now we're to the male liberals. Then why did the insistence of Women's Liberation Groups on recognizing only women reporters for their action

put the press (underground as well as Establishment) so up-tight? Possibly because the "news chicks" were shuttled off somewhere covering fashion shows (the Voice) or school and day-care crap that is "women's news?" Well, we found our own for the Miss America zap: women reproters, women photographers, women from BAI lugging tape recorders, women from LNS and Newsreel hung with six cameras each--and they were with us in participatory journalism from the ~~meeting~~ planning sessions through the bus rides down, with us on the boardwalk, with us inside the Convention Hall, with us in the jail, (Carol Ann Jones, tape recorder and all, was one of those busted). Not that this is unusual--the "weaker sex" has been busted and beaten everywhere from Chicago to Columbia to Oakland--but somehow we always get ~~xxx~~ ignored when "movement leaders" get together' (Remember the hair-raiser in Fayerweather Hall when an SDS guy asked for "chicks to volunteer for cooking duty?) For that matter, Up Against the Wall, Rat!, for ads that ask for "a chick to do typing," and for playing the circulation skin-game on its covers. Nothing against skin--its grrovy, man, but why always only a naked women? Is it because we're just sex-objects after all and couldn't possible actively dig sex ourselves, dig looking at a naked guy on a Rat cover? What the hell is going on here?

We in the movement are supposed to be trying to create alternative life-styles to the putrid swamp we see all around us. Can we dare, then, to lug with

the auctioning off of a huge Miss America dummy to which some of the women chained themselves-- the auctioneer dressed as a classical Wall Street financier cum male chauvinist; the filling of a huge Freedom Trash Can with instruments of women torture: bras, girdles, curlers, false eyelashes, steno pads and dishcloths, and issues of women's magazines. All this to the accompaniment of songs that Beverly Grant and Lyn Loreda, among others, had written: "A pretty girl is a commodity", "We shall not be Used," and "Ain't she sweet/ makin' profit off her meat/ beauty sells she's told so she's out pluggin' it/ ain't she sweet."

The fuzz were "gallant-polite" to the extent of causing paranoia at first, but as the day wore on (we were there until ^{3 am.} ~~midnight~~) they began acting like normal pigs. (Some interesting side bonuses-- a ladies' room rap with policewomen, who aren't allowed to stand picket duty, and can't make arrests in Atlantic City, about their rights. This put a younger one ~~wik~~ through changes until her older superior rescued her from corrupting influences.)

A headquarters in the black community had been established through the good graces of Flo Kennedy, where people went to rest and eat and where the "inside squad" went to change into straight disguise before entering the Hall on tickets bought weeks earlier. ~~Some stayed~~ ^{twenty-member} The rest stayed on the boardwalk, picketing, singing, and rapping furiously with the crowd of about five hundred spectators held back by

us old values and prejudices of such insidiousness?

The suburbanite commutes to Wall Street while his wife plans little gourmet dinners of squab--the

"new man" ~~gxxxxxxff~~ leaves his Lower East Side pad to work for the Revolution in anyone of a hundred ways, while ~~his~~ ^{his woman "old lady"} ~~his "chick"~~ stays home and stirs

the brown rice. This has got to stop, and new, brothers,

before we turn into our own oppressors all the

more. "Imperialism," as Judith Duffett of Women's

~~---And-this-brings-us-back-te-Atlantic-Titty.~~
Liberation says, "begins at home."

And that brings us back to Atlantic Titty.

Women's Lib. groups have been functioning for a

few years now, all over the country, but the

Pageant brought them together for their first

major militant demonstration. People came from

Florida, Washington, Boston, New Jersey, Phila.,

and New York, and messages of solidarity arrived

from California, Chicago, etc.--groups that couldn't get us the bread to make the trip.

We arrived at about two p.m., having already accomplished a spontaneous triumph--liberating a men's room in a turnpike restuarant (fuck these puritanical rules when people have to go to the john)--and established a basic picket line directly in front of ConventionHall.

Some signs read: Miss America Sells It, The Living

Bra and the Dead Soldier, Everyone is Beautiful, Miss

America is Alive and Angry in Harlem, and Up Agaainst

the Wall Motherhood. Guerrilla theater exploded every hour or so: the crowning of a live sheep as Miss A.,

police barricades. Double barricades had to be put up at one point, when the heckling began to be physical (that's O.K., too--some of the sisters are into learning judo). Atlantic City is Wallace country, so we got the usual commie-calls in addition to being called uglies, dikes, whores, and castrating bitches. (There are no uglies--only ugly beauty standards; Lesbians are people who want to love in peace, and we're all bi-sexual anyway, if we'd come off it; whores are the creations of whoremasters; and castrating bitches are people who might just be fighting for their lives.)

Women from the crowd did join the demonstrators (one complete with baby-carriage and toddler), but most just smiled when their purple-faced mates weren't watching. At midnight, a candle-light dance was held in funeral celebration for Miss America, and in solidarity with the inside squad who, by that time, had disrupted the Pageant on live television.

The first to be busted, Peggy Dobbins, had been Toni Hair Conditioner spraying near the Mayor's box. This junk smells like what was put into the ventilation system of Humphrey's hotel in Chicago, and Toni is, what's more, a sponsor of the Pageant. (So is Oldmobile and Pepsi. Women's Liberation is boycotting all three.) Dobbins was charged with disorderly conduct, with bail set at 1000 dollars (the Mayor ~~was~~ obviously hates Toni). Since then, the charge has been escalated to an indictable offense with a possible two-to-three year rap. We had hit right at the soft white underbelly of the beast, and Atlantic City doesn't fool around. Women's Liberation is mobilizing

Morley's
ad 02

a defense fund, and contributions and letters
of support can be sent to: .

Meanwhile, in the balcony, sixteen sisters unfurled a huge Women's Liberation banner over the rail, and shouted "Freedom" and "No More Miss America" until the telecast stopped dead for over ten seconds. The contestants turned as lily-white as their gowns, Bert Parks forgot his lines (aided by scrambled cue cards, thanks, we have been told, to a sister-traveler among the contestants themselves!), ~~xxxx~~ an NBC cameraman asking permission to focus on the banner was told he'd be fired on the spot if he did, and the blue meanies finally came charging in.

Elizabeth Natale-Regina was hit on the head with
by a pocketbook by a livid lady who felt the center of ~~American~~ parriotism had been invaded, and Susan Silverman said she felt more afraid of the all-American audience's rage than of the plice themselves. There were at least six arrests in all, some forcible because a number of women locked ~~wrapped~~ their arms around the balcony rail and kept shouting until muzzled and dragged out. Naomi Jaffee returned to her chair and refused to leave, showing her ticket, until she was wrenched away. Peggy Dobbins, already in custody, was meanwhile ~~havingxxxx~~ being given Indian-burns by five cops

in the police station--they have to get their jollies somehow.

Some of the women were released after charges had been dropped. This "compromise" was reached after Police Chief Florella was informed ^{that} the outside women were about to march into the hall in protest. He demanded we leave the city immediately and commandeered our buses an hour early to get us out. We said we weren't going without Dobbins, Jaffee, and Jones, still in jail, and Flo Kennedy, who was trying to extricate them. The chief backed down and we went instead to our headquarters, feeling better because the fuzz were more than alarmed at making a scene in the black community. The brothers and sisters there were beautiful, and ~~ax~~ of inestimable help when the pigs wouldn't let us out of the buses. Confrontation. Women getting angry now. Cops getting freaked. Finally we won our point, got our bail together, ~~xx~~ and a delegation went to the jail. ~~xxxxxx~~ The group included two witnesses to Florella's lies about dropping the charges against everyone (and making a "deal" about Dobbins), as well as press. The home-in-bed-you-can't-reach-him police chief was suddenly available. Bail was reduced, we got our sisters out, and even commandeered police cars to take the extra people back to the busses.

The Atlantic City aftermath is weird. It seems the town feels convention business is harmed (more they say, than Chicago's, because they're nearer to

New York and these wild-eyed radical women could come down any time); the Pageant may have to be taped next year, without a live audience (except for the twenty, the audience was dead, anyway). But what will they do for contestants, whom they can no longer trust, or judges, for that matter, one of whom, a newspaper woman, resigned in sympathy with our protest)?

Atlantic City was only the beginning for the Women's Liberation Movement, and it was an apt place for a debut. Future plans include a round the clock open storefront disseminating everything from birth-control and abortion information to judo lessons and coffee and liberation rapping; actions against the cosmetic and fashion empires, debutante balls, all-male public restaurants and bars. Women's Liberation will be in Boston when Bill Baird's case comes before the Mass. Supreme Court (for giving away instruments of birth control). Judo-trained Women's Liberation cells will be at Columbia this fall. Others are planning actions to once and for all hit the hellhole that is the Women's House of Detention.

There's no end from here on in, right up to and through the revolution. Women are angry now. Women are sick of dying on kitchen tables from abortions. Welfare women are sick of living under the threat of losing their kids ~~if they~~ unless they deny their own sexual being. Black women have had it with the kind

of Stokely pronouncemtn that boasts," the only position for women in SNCC is prone". Poor women are sick of being even more oppressed than their husband^s, who can beat them up ~~and~~ in order to regain lost "manhood". College women are sick of prison dorm-rules. Even "establishment" women are sick of job discrimination and being patronized for doing equal work at less pay than men. And Movement women are sick and goddamned mad at playing home-fire to their revolutionaries, at being lays but never comrades, at being called frivolous to demand their own rights as human beings "when more serious revolutionary problems are at stake."

Your own gut issue is the key to your commitment. Empathy for others does not ^a case radical change, only an awareness of your own oppression. Malcolm said ~~it~~ no country is free where its women are enslaved. Algeria, China, Cuba, North Vietnam--they're all learning that. But don't wait to admire women as people until we carry machine-guns. We'll do that too, when the time comes, and it's coming. What about now, unglamorous now? Look at how youn live, brothers. Look how you are being made into oppressors to further oppress us. The revolution begins at home.

And sisters, join us. We're a motley crew, not free because how can anyone be free in the midst of this society, but trying to learn the awkward motions

Men
wait
be free

of being ourselves, of loving and respecting ourselves and each other, of refusing to prostitute ourselves before our own degradation.

Black people no matter how committed, ^{militant} are still a minority, Peace people, no matter how committed, are still a minority. Under-25's are fast becoming a majority, but women are a majority right now. Dig it, sisters. We can be the cutting edge . We are the Revolution.

And up against the wall any frivolous male reactionary who gets in our way!