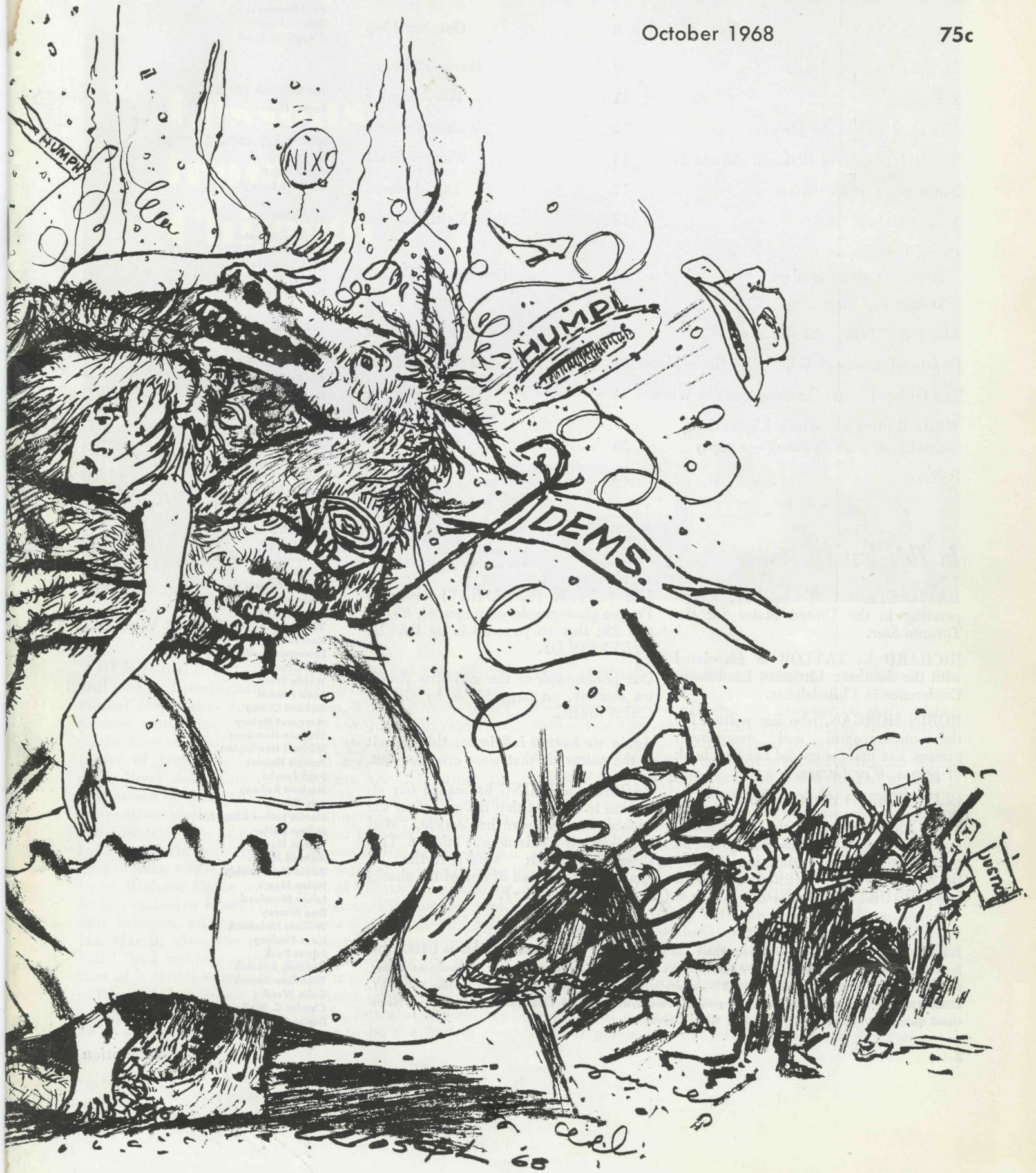


LIBERATION

October 1968

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CONTENTS

Vol. XIII, No. 5

October 1968

Lessons from Chicago	3	Dave Dellinger
2 Poems	11	Gary Snyder
Chicago: Terror on Display	12	Walter Schneir
There Is Nothing Straight About It	14	Warren Sloat
Notes on a Police State	17	David Stein
Young Rebels Rap	18	Keith Lampe
Czech Revolution		
Resisting the Invaders	21	Richard K. Taylor
It Has to Come	24	Sidney Lens
The Paris Talks and the War	29	Wilfred Burchett
Captured Airmen: Who's Got them Now?	32	Stewart Meacham
The Oldest Front: On Freedom for Women	34	Robin Morgan
White Radicals & Black Liberation		
Coalition with Whom?—a reply	36	Julius Lester
Letters	38	

In This Issue

DAVID STEIN is a Canadian, corresponding in the United States for the *Toronto Star*.

RICHARD K. TAYLOR is associated with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Philadelphia.

ROBIN MORGAN, who has written for the underground and overground presses, has just completed her first book of poems, *War Games*.

CLIFF JOSEPH drew our cover.

The Chicago photographs on page 3 and 19 are by STEVE REES; those on pages 5, 6 and 16 (a Mace-ing) are by HOWARD HARRISON; that on page 10 is by MAURY ENGLANDER.

JIM MAYER (L.N.S./RAT) took the Prague photographs on pages 24, 25, 27 and 28; that on page 23 is by DAVID McREYNOLDS.

Our photograph of the anti-Miss America dummy, on page 35, is by GRETCHEN BERG.

Again we have a full issue; this time it is the editorials that were crowded out.

BARBARA DEMING has called our attention to the fact that the quotation she wished to cite above her article, "Mud City," in our last issue was omitted. This should have read: "Mud is fertile . . ." (painted on the wall of one of the shacks in Resurrection City)."

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The Oldest Front

On Freedom for Women

ROBIN MORGAN

"The way I see it, the Women's Liberation Movement can function as the cutting edge of the larger Movement. I say this because black people, no matter how militant, are still a minority; peace groups, no matter how committed are still a minority; the under-twenty-fives are fast becoming a majority, but women are a majority right now."—Florynce Kennedy

NO MATTER how empathetic you are to another's oppression, you only become truly committed to radical change when you realize your own oppression—it has to reach you on a gut level. This is what has been happening to American women, both in and out of the Movement. Down through history peoples have persecuted and fought one another on the bases of color, culture, religion, etc., but there has always been one group that served as a constant for everyone's persecution: *women are the oldest oppressed people on earth*. Since the first rigid patriarchies created hunting-murder cultures and overthrew planting societies which were basically peaceable, women have been treated variously as property, cattle, creatures without souls, sex objects, and—today, euphemistically—"second-class citizens."

The Women's Liberation Movement, a loose alliance of all-women "cells" around the United States (and, indeed, the world) is not a joke or a fad. It is a serious sisterhood composed of young radical women. There are liaisons with older, more moderate organizations like NOW (National Organization for Women—which does valuable work in the areas of job discrimination and constitutional inequities) as well as with black women, college women, welfare women

and Puerto Rican women. Such coalitions can grow into major movements. Women's Liberation Groups span age, class and economic barriers, and at present operate "cells" in Boston, Florida, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Detroit, North Carolina, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Iowa, New Jersey and New York.

Soft White Underbelly

Having functioned "underground" for a few years now, this Liberation Movement surfaced with its first major militant demonstration on September 7 in Atlantic City, at the Miss America Pageant. The Pageant was chosen as a target for a number of reasons: it has always been a lily-white, racist contest; the winner tours Vietnam, entertaining the troops as a Murder Mascot; the whole gimmick is one commercial shill-game to sell the sponsors' products. Where else could one find such a perfect combination of American values—racism, militarism, capitalism—all packaged in one "ideal" symbol, a woman. This was, of course, the basic reason why the protesters disrupted the Pageant—the contestants epitomize the role all women are forced to play in this society, one way or the other: apolitical, unoffending, passive, sex-ob-

ject-drudge, delicate mindless thing. The crowning of a live sheep as Miss America (part of the boardwalk guerrilla theatre that went on all day) was relevant to where this society is at; the crowning of Miss Illinois as the "real" Miss America, her smile still blood-flecked from Mayor Daley's kiss, was also relevant.

One of the picket signs outside Convention Hall read "Miss America and Valerie Solanis* are our sisters, too"—emphasizing solidarity with the polarized victims. (Possibly an *active* solidarity, for that matter: it has been rumored that one of the contestants decided to function as an infiltrator, and was responsible for the scrambling of Bert Parks' cue cards.) But the huge banner that twenty brave sisters hung from the balcony rail during the live telecast inside the auditorium read simply "Women's Liberation," and the accompanying shouts (that stopped the show cold for about ten seconds) were for freedom to be human beings.

There were arrests, to be sure. Some of the press (who had been put through considerable changes by the demonstrators' insistence on recognizing only

*Author of the S.C.U.M. (Society for Cutting Up Men) manifesto and alleged unsuccessful assassin of Andy Warhol.

What is frivolous about the college kid who finds herself treated like a prisoner in her dormitory?

women reporters) had assumed there would be no arrests—that the protesters wouldn't be taken that seriously. This prophecy came from reading too much Marcuse, and from not realizing that the real soft white underbelly of the American beast was being socked in Atlantic City. So "seriously" were the women taken, in fact, that a disorderly conduct charge against Peggy Dobbins (for allegedly spraying Toni Hair Conditioner—a vile-smelling sponsor of the Pageant—inside Convention Hall) has been escalated to an indictable offense with a possible two-to-three-year sentence.* Reports are coming back that the Pageant may have to be taped next year, without an audience—but what will they do for contestants, when they can no longer even trust "their own"? It would appear that the demonstrators were taken quite seriously by the Man.

*Women's Liberation is setting up a Defense Fund. Contributions can be sent to P.O. Box 531, Peter Stuyvesant Station, N.Y.C., N.Y. 10009.

JOB WANTED

Malcolm Boyd, author of *Malcolm Boyd's Book of Days and Are You Running With Me Jesus?* and renowned Coffeehouse Priest, has offered to speak for LIBERATION'S benefit during the next several months, preferably in the Northeastern United States. Fr. Boyd would expect a fee of \$1,000, payable to LIBERATION. Anyone in a position to arrange such an appearance (before college, peace, religious or other assemblies) should communicate immediately with LIBERATION Magazine, 5 Beekman Street, New York, New York 10038.

"Volunteer Chicks"

Nevertheless, some male reactionaries in the Movement itself still think Women's Liberation "frivolous" in the face of "larger, more important" revolutionary problems. But what is "frivolous" about rapping for four hours across police barricades with hecklers, trying to get through to the women in the crowd who smile surreptitiously but remain silent while their men scream vilifications? What is frivolous, for that matter, about a woman who isn't rich enough to fly to Puerto Rico for an abortion and so must lie on some kitchen table watching cockroaches on the ceiling articulate the graph of her pain? What is frivolous about the college kid who reads about the "sexual revolution" but finds herself treated like a prisoner in her dormitory, or even more dishearteningly, finds that almost every guy thinks the Pill has now "liberated" her to have sex with anyone, and if she might not "want to" with him, then *she* must be hung-up? What is frivolous about the young black woman, proud and beautiful and militant, whose spirit cracks when she hears Stokely say that "the only position for women in S.N.C.C. is prone"? What is frivolous about the welfare recipient who must smuggle her husband or boyfriend out of the house when the worker arrives, denying her own sexual being, or risk the loss of her sustenance, to say nothing of having her children taken away from her? What is frivolous about the migrant-worker mother who must be yet one step lower than her oppressed husband, must let him beat her up a bit, impregnate her just after she's dropped her seventh child, and maybe disappear for a year now and then so that he, at least, can feel a little of his "manhood"? And what is frivolous about the women in Fayerweather Hall at Columbia last spring, new-minted revolutionaries ready to be beaten and busted as well as anybody (and they were), ready to form a commune that would reflect alternative life-styles to this whole sick culture, only to hear a male S.D.S. leader ask for "chicks to volunteer for cooking duty"?

Death of a Concept

Sexual mores lie at the heart of a soci-



ety. Anthropology has taught us that when a culture allows overlap of roles and functions between men and women, this creates a peaceful society. Where sexual stereotypes are most polarized, one finds an aggressive, warlike society, which surely is our own. Men will not be liberated until women are free—truly free, not tokenly equal. The Women's Liberation Groups, already becoming a Movement, take on this task of liberating themselves and their society on a new (although the oldest) front. Their plans include twenty-four-hour storefronts providing everything from birth-control and abortion information to child day-care services, English lessons for Spanish-speaking women and judo lessons for all women, free food and coffee and liberation rapping. They are mapping actions against cosmetic and fashion empires for perpetuating ludicrous beauty standards, against malechauvinist No Women Allowed public eating places, against debutantes' balls and the conditions in decrepit women's houses of detention.

The death of the concept of Miss America in Atlantic City (which was celebrated by a candlelight funeral dance on the boardwalk at midnight) was only the beginning. A sisterhood of free women is giving birth to a new life-style, and the throes of its labor are authentic chapters in the Revolution.