

6/24/81 Beauty Pageants

DISPATCHES

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Myth California

AS THE FESTIVITIES for the 1981 Miss California Pageant proceeded apace last week, a group of local women opposed to the Pageant carried out demonstrations against the event.

On Wednesday of last week the protestors held a mock beauty pageant in the parking lot of McDonald's restaurant on Mission Street. About ten protestors arrived in a "float" dressed in costumes suggesting that the Miss California Pageant was not what the promoters cracked it up to be. The protestors dubbed their event "Myth California." The sashes these women wore with their costumes sported such titles as "Miss Directed," "Miss Used," and "Miss Informed." Protestor "Miss Directed" made it clear to this reporter that the Miss California Pageant was a degrading and even dangerous spectacle for not only all the women involved but also for the safety and dignity of women in general. "The women involved with the pageant are forced into this position by the culture we live in," she said. "Most of the girls in the pageant are fresh out of high school," she added.

The protest was held at the restaurant because it was thought that the contestants were to appear there as part of a promotion. The pageant organizers, however, switched the promotion to the 41st Ave. McDonald's when they caught wind of the planned demonstration.

Later that same day the protestors moved to the Cocoanut Grove where a Miss California ball was in progress. At that location the demonstrators picketed the proceedings. Participants of the ball were confronted with vials of human blood that the protestors said was the blood of raped women (which indeed it was). People arriving for the ball were asked if they endorsed rape and the protestors passed out leaflets explaining their case that the pageant encouraged the rape of women by making them into sexual objects. "Objects lose the protection that people get," explained protestor Nicki Craft.

The general reaction of the pageant sponsors seemed to be that the women protestors were "jealous," "misguided," or otherwise out of tune with the alleged purpose of the pageant. Clark Terrill, a long-time pageant associate and father of Miss California 1968, said, "It's a shame that girls like those [the protestors] can't see the true scope of what such a program like the Pageant encompasses." He added, "Whether they are misguided, jealous perhaps, or whatever the situation, they miss the whole point."

Whatever point the protestors miss or otherwise, they continued to demonstrate against the Pageant for the entire week of the event. Indeed there are rumors that the Pageant will be moved to Santa Barbara to avoid such protests in the future. ■

Gavin Bourne

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