

We are Angry! 1972

Framing this unit

This is an advertisement of the Women's Liberation Movement in Jerusalem campaigning against the annual Israeli Beauty Pageant from 1972. In addition to protesting the pageant, the movement includes its demands for equal pay and taxes for equal work, civil marriage, free abortion, and free day care.

This is an advertisement of the Women's Liberation Movement in Jerusalem campaigning against the annual Israeli Beauty Pageant from 1972. The title of the notice reads: "We are not beautiful, we are not ugly, we are angry!" Next to the title appears the logo of the International Women's Liberation Movement which includes the women's gender symbol with a clasped fist in the center. To the left of the text is a black and white picture, which has a number of pig-looking figures pointing at a solitary woman, who appears to be unclothed except for a towel wrapped around her. The woman looks nervous and unsure of herself.

The advertisement states that the Women's Liberation Movement is strongly opposed to the beauty competition which humiliates women. They claim that the beauty pageant is the equivalent of sizing up "chickens in a butcher's shop" and that the real purpose of these competitions is to increase profits for the beauty industry. A woman's appearance, they go on, is not important while she does not receive real rights, such as the freedoms to decide whether to give birth, to choose her profession, and to decide about her role in the household and whom she lives with. In light of these claims, the movement calls on the candidates to withdraw from the competition and appeals to the public not to support the competition and to participate in a demonstration against the competition. At the end of the poster, the movement includes its demands, which include equal pay and taxes for equal work, civil marriage, free abortion, and free day care.

The first beauty queen pageant was held in Israel in 1950, following the success of similar competitions around the world. Since then, the competition has been held annually despite public criticism. In Israel, as in other countries, there is much controversy about these contests for both feminist and religious reasons.

Group Activity

Stage a debate on the question of "Should beauty pageants be banned?" or "Are beauty pageants empowering or objectifying to women?"

Discussion

- Why are the contestants in the beauty pageant compared to chickens in a butcher's shop?
- What is the symbolism of the different images that appear on the poster?

- Are you in favor of or against beauty competitions?
- Which inequalities mentioned in this poster still exist today?
- Is Israel a more gender-equal society than other countries?
- The poster calls for a protest gathering. Do you believe protests are effective in creating social change?
- Does Judaism put any value on physical beauty?

Creative Activity

Design your own protest poster against a cause that is important to you. What images, slogans, and content would you include?

Read this article about the 2021 Alternative Beauty Pageant called [“Miss Fix Universe”](#). Design a competition based on categories and characteristics other than physical beauty and research Jewish or Israeli women who would you nominate to compete.

Israeli Eurovision winner Neta Barzilai refused to perform at the 2021 Miss Universe competition held in Israel, saying: *"Even though I see a lot of beauty in it, I still cannot see myself standing on a stage where women are judged by appearance, body size, height, and weight. Although updates have been made in accordance with the times, I still think beauty pageants are a harsh concept. They are outdated and diminishing. It's time to move on."* Learn more about [Netta Barzilai](#) and prepare a presentation about her life and accomplishments.

Primary sources in this lesson

[We are Angry! 1972](#)