terests of the poorest, most insulted, most despised, most abused woman on earth. Her lot, her suffering and abuse is the threat that men use against all of us to keep us in line. She is what all women fear being called, fear being treated as and yet what we all really are in the eyes of men. She is Everywoman: ugly, dumb (dumb broad, dumb cunt), bitch, nag, hag, whore, fucking and breeding machine, mother of us all. Until Everywoman is free, no woman will be free. When her beauty and knowledge is revealed and seen, the new day will be at hand.

We are critical of all past ideology, literature and philosophy, products as they are of male supremacist culture. We are re-examining even our words, language itself.

We take as our source the hitherto unrecognized culture of women, a culture which from long experience of oppression developed an intense appreciation for life, a sensitivity to unspoken thoughts and the complexity of simple things, a powerful knowledge of human needs and feelings.

We regard our feelings as our most important source of political understanding.

We see the key to our liberation in our collective wisdom and our collective strength.

NO MORE MISS AMERICA
August 1968

On September 7th in Atlantic City, the Annual Miss America Pageant will again crown "your ideal." But this year, reality will liberate the contest auction-block in the guise of "genyooine" de-plasticized, breathing women. Women's Liberation Groups, black women, high-school and college women, women's peace groups, women's welfare and social-work groups, women's job-equality groups, pro-birth control and pro-abortion groups—women of every political persuasion—all are invited to join us in a day-long boardwalk-theater event, starting at 1:00 p.m. on the Boardwalk in front of Atlantic City's Convention Hall. We will protest the image of Miss America, an image that oppresses women in every area in which it purports to represent us. There will be: Picket Lines; Guerrilla Theater; Leafleting; Lobbying Visits to the contestants urging our sisters to reject the Pageant Farce and join us; a huge Freedom Trash Can (into which we will throw bras, girdles, curlers, false eyelashes, wigs, and representative issues of Cosmopolitan, Ladies' Home Journal, Family Circle, etc.—bring any such woman-garbage you have around the house); we will also announce a Boycott of all those commercial products related to the Pageant, and the day will end with a Women's Liberation rally at midnight when Miss America is crowned on live television. Lots of other surprises are being planned (come and add your own!) but we do not plan heavy disruptive tactics and so do not expect a bad police scene. It should be a groovy day on the Boardwalk in the sun with our sisters. In case of arrests, however, we plan to reject all male authority and demand to be busted by policewomen only. (In Atlantic City, women cops are not permitted to make arrests—dig that!)

Male chauvinist-reactionaries on this issue had best stay away, nor are male liberals welcome in the demonstrations. But sympathetic men can donate money as well as cars and drivers.

Male reporters will be refused interviews. We reject

* Bras were never burned. Bra-burning was a whole-cloth invention of the media.—Ed.
patronizing reportage. *Only newswomen will be recognized.*

The Ten Points

We protest:

1. *The Degrading Mindless-Boob-Girlie Symbol.* The Pageant contestants epitomize the roles we are all forced to play as women. The parade down the runway brays the metaphor of the 4-H Club county fair, where the nervous animals are judged for teeth, fleece, etc., and where the best “specimen” gets the blue ribbon. So are women in our society forced daily to compete for male approval, enslaved by ridiculous “beauty” standards we ourselves are conditioned to take seriously.

2. *Racism with Roses.* Since its inception in 1921, the Pageant has not had one Black finalist, and this has not been for a lack of test-case contestants. There has never been a Puerto Rican, Alaskan, Hawaiian, or Mexican-American winner. Nor has there ever been a *true* Miss America—an American Indian.

3. *Miss America as Military Death Mascot.* The highlight of her reign each year is a cheerleader-tour of American troops abroad—last year she went to Vietnam to pep-talk our husbands, fathers, sons and boyfriends into dying and killing with a better spirit. She personifies the “unstained patriotic American womanhood our boys are fighting for.” The Living Bra and the Dead Soldier. We refuse to be used as Mascots for Murder.

4. *The Consumer Con-Game.* Miss America is a walking commercial for the Pageant’s sponsors. Wind her up and she plugs your product on promotion tours and TV—all in an “honest, objective” endorsement. What a shill.

5. *Competition Rigged and Unrigged.* We deplore the encouragement of an American myth that oppresses men as well as women: the win-or-you’re-worthless competitive disease. The “beauty contest” creates only one winner to be “used” and forty-nine losers who are “useless.”

6. *The Woman as Pop Culture Obsolescent Theme.* Spindle, mutilate, and then discard tomorrow. What is so ignored as last year’s Miss America? This only reflects the gospel of our society, according to Saint Male: women must be young, juicy, malleable—hence age discrimination and the cult of youth. And we women are brainwashed into believing this ourselves!

7. *The Unbeatable Madonna-Whore Combination.* Miss America and Playboy’s centerfold are sisters over the skin. To win approval, we must be both sexy and wholesome, delicate but able to cope, demure yet titillatingly bitchy. Deviation of any sort brings, we are told, disaster: “You won’t get a man!!”

8. *The Irrelevant Crown on the Throne of Mediocrity.* Miss America represents what women are supposed to be: unoffensive, bland, apolitical. If you are tall, short, over or under what weight The Man prescribes you should be, forget it. Personality, articulateness, intelligence, commitment—unwise. Conformity is the key to the crown—and, by extension, to success in our society.

9. *Miss America as Dream Equivalent To—?* In this reputedly democratic society, where every little boy supposedly can grow up to be President, what can every little girl hope to grow up to be? Miss America. That’s where it’s at. Real power to control our own lives is restricted to men, while women get patronizing pseudo-
power, an ermine cloak and a bunch of flowers; men are judged by their actions, women by their appearance.

10. Miss America as Big Sister Watching You. The Pageant exercises Thought Control, attempts to sear the Image onto our minds, to further make women oppressed and men oppressors; to enslave us all the more in high-heeled, low-status roles; to inculcate false values in young girls; to use women as beasts of buying; to seduce us to prostitute ourselves before our own oppression.

NO MORE MISS AMERICA

LETTER TO OUR SISTERS IN SOCIAL WORK

WAR (Women of the American Revolution)

What is Illegitimate?

[law] "nullius filius"... "nobody's child"...

[Encyclopedia Britannica, 1958 edition: ] "Not to condemn illegitimacy would be to attach no special significance to marriage. Recognizing the great importance of marriage for social responsibility and stability and the corresponding dangers of non-marriage, the state makes marriage easy ..." Implication: The state makes non-marriage a criminal undertaking and the children outcasts. So you thought marriage a pleasant religious tradition? The encyclopedia sets us straight on that. Marriage is an economic disposition of individuals into units beneficial to the state. What would happen to our economy if people didn't establish themselves in nuclear family units? They would stop spending millions on wastefully duplicated supplies of china, linen, furniture and appliances. And women would no longer constitute an unpaid labor force performing the socially valuable work of caterers to their husbands and child care for future citizens.

The Prevention of "Illegitimacy"

Obviously a first step towards abolishing the syndrome of shame, poverty and discrimination bound up with "illegitimacy" would be to end the branding of children as illegitimate. But what's in a name? Everyone knows about the high crime rate among "illegitimates." Doesn't that prove there's something behind it?

The significance of "fatherlessness" is social, not biological. In our society the "illegitimate" child is made to feel, every day, that his very existence is abnormal. If "fatherlessness" leads to crime then we would have to blame welfare regulations that make it impossible for poor fathers to stay near their children. But that is only another way of saying that criminals are a product of a society where vast wealth rests in the hands of a few.

Your Mother Wears Army Shoes

When will women social workers recognize our common bond with poor women, including unmarried mothers? We share with such women the common oppression of our sex. Every insult to a woman insults you.

All women should have the right to determine whether or not to have children. Women should stand together in demanding readily available birth-control information and free abortions for all who wish them. Any woman who chooses to have a child does so legitimately.

Women all over the world have not only been assigned a dependent social role for centuries: they have