

## The Pro-Life Agenda: Control of Women

by Joan C. Manning

All of a sudden the "Pro-Life" crowd has shifted its emphasis from the fetus to the one subject it has avoided until now: pregnant women.

Last September *The Progressive* magazine ran an article titled "Glee in the Anti-Abortion Crowd". The article describes what many of us already understood: the so-called "Pro-Life" movement is really about the control of women. The thirty-fifth Annual National Right to Life convention probably didn't mentioned the burqa, but like the men of the Middle East, they imagine that male supremacy is the will of God.

Journalist Eleanor J. Bader describes how Pro-Lifers refer to women as wounded victims of abortion. "Women look to men for decisions," they say. Men, who are supposedly suffering all manner of psychological symptoms as a result of abortion, have failed to "help the victims of abortion." How quickly the woman who has made the difficult choice to have an abortion has been transformed into a victim, too childlike to function without male guidance. This mischaracterization of women for the benefit of men displays the awesome ignorance of such men, and their obedient female counterparts.

In most cases, poor and/or very young women forced to give birth with no means to support and raise a child, will depend on the welfare system, the very same system the Pro-Lifers are so eager to dismantle. A few lucky infants may be adopted by good families. Others risk growing up in crime-infested neighborhoods with no father, a three-job-mom and with drug users and petty thieves as role models.

One National Right to Life speaker advocated that mandatory ultrasound images be shown to pregnant women so they could "hear the beating heart." Requiring a naive young woman to view pictures of her unborn fetus is a sneaky way of guilt-tripping her into acting in the interest of strangers with a political agenda, rather than allowing her to decide what is best for her.

When it comes to decisions about personal and private lives, history shows that most people will make their own choices, legal or otherwise. Government has been very slow to learn this. We failed at prohibiting alcohol. We are suffering through the monstrous problem created by prohibiting drugs. We will fail at prohibiting abortion. The back alley operators will again set up shop. Tijuana will welcome back young American women tourists, and the well-off will go abroad. One way or another, the job will be done.

What stresses the Right to Life conventioners is the introduction of a new Equal Rights Amendment. Speaker James Bopp Jr. says, "If the Equal Rights Amendment were to pass, none of the restrictions on abortion would survive. If abortion was considered necessary for the equal protection of women, every decision since *Roe v. Wade* would be thrown out."

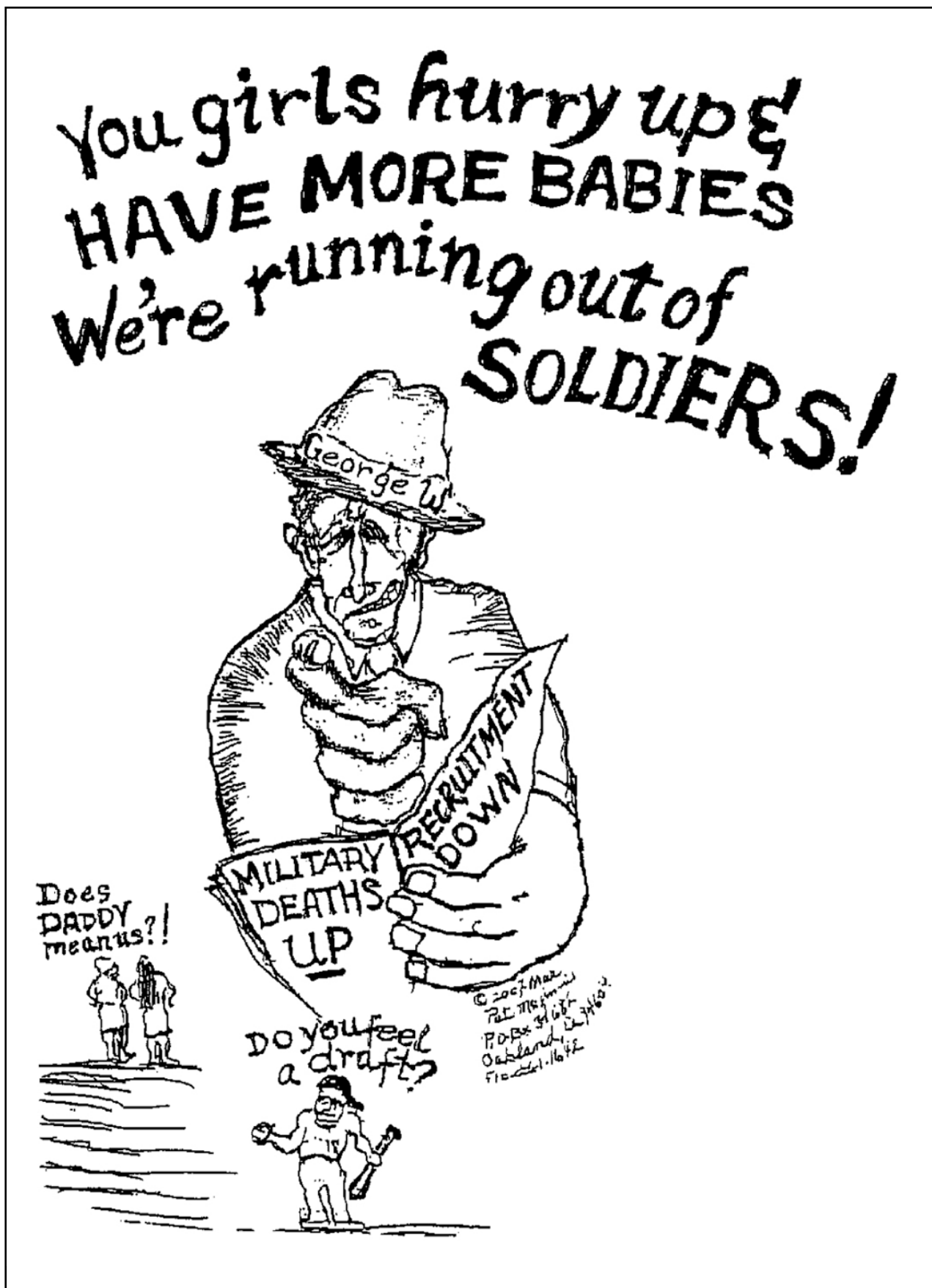
Let's make it happen.

## A Traitor in the Camp

Doctor Susan Orr has been named the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population Affairs. She will oversee Title X, the nation's family planning program. Before joining the Bush Administration Orr was Senior Director for marriage and family care at the Family Research Council, a religious advocacy group founded by James Dobson. Susan objects to requiring health insurers to pay for contraceptives. When Bush proposed ending contraceptive coverage for federal employees, Orr said, "We're quite pleased because fertility is not a disease. It's not a medical necessity that you have it." (*contraception*;) Editor's clarification

Vicki Saporto, President of the National Abortion Federation says "Dr. Orr should not be entrusted with the oversight of the federal family program and the health of millions of Americans. For more than 35 years, the Title X program has been the hallmark of quality preventive care, enabling practitioners to provide family planning services to low-income individuals."

Cecile Richards of Planned Parenthood said, "The appointment of Susan Orr is a nightmare for anyone who believes in birth control and sex education, and is further evidence that the Bush administration is intent on appointing an anti-choice extremist to head Title X."



cartoon by Pat Maginnis