Photo: Cathy Rasmey

pression of hope that "our country can achieve a new commitment to justice." That is a noble goal. Yet, one might ask, how consistent with this goal of justice is the essay's focus on opposing "abortion on demand" rather than on the injustice of abortion?

One might argue that "political realism" dictates abortion on demand as the primary target; that the protection of the unborn must be sought "to the maximum degree possible." Political circumstances, to be sure, dictate what is realistically possible. One can settle for less than one wanted. But not at the cost of conceding a right to abortion, as Weigel and Kristol do when they propose regulating the abortion industry. "Curbing" abortions becomes synonymous with rejecting abortion on "demand," but this is not yet the same thing as rejecting injustice. Weigel and Kristol, and the Republican Party, must confront the implications of a rhetoric that affirms justice "in the end" but is willing to accept the injustice of "regulated," and therefore "curbed" abortions "in the meantime."

The constitutional issue

5 . Another indicator that the inalienable rights of the unborn have been thrown out of focus, or perhaps even abandoned, is Weigel's and Kristol's treatment of the "constitutional question." They speak of the court's "increasingly strained attempt to establish a constitutional rationale for abortion on demand." Yet in the course of their discussion, it becomes clear that the issue has shifted to the constitutional right of American citizens "to debate and decide this matter in their legislatures." Thus, they propose "returning the issue to the people." This is a precondition for any "long term legal or constitutional remedy for the practice of abortion on demand."

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that a rejection of abortion on demand is not the same thing as protecting—either in the Constitution or in state laws—the inalienable right to life of all the unborn. Nor is the defense of the constitutional right of the people to participate in the making of laws the same thing as the defense of the right to life. In each case one might logically and practically defend the former and deny the latter.

Political realism

6. Perhaps the most problematic aspect of the Weigel-Kristol defense of the proposal is their understanding of political "realism," what

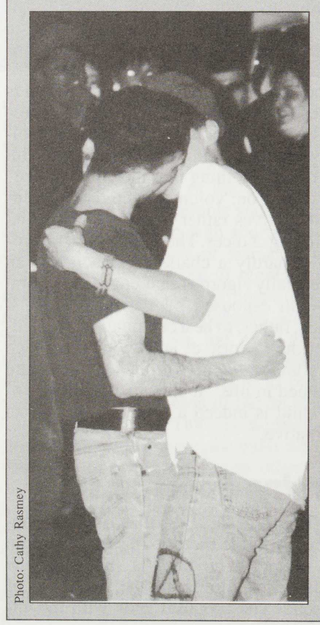


Photo: Cathy Rasmey

THE "LIBERALS," FOR THEIR PART, ARE QUITE OPEN TO THE USE OF POWER AND FORCE, TO INCLUDE ILLEGAL AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AS A PREPARATORY PHASE FOR LEGAL "EMPOWERMENT." THERE IS NO NEED TO CITE THE FRAUD BEHIND ROE V. WADE, THE CRIMINAL ABORTIONS, CRIMINAL HOMOSEXUALITY AND CRIMINAL PORNOGRAPHY WHICH BYPASSED THE "DEMOCRATIC PROCESS" AND APPEALED TO A POLITICIZED JUDICIARY TO CAPTURE THE LEGAL STRUCTURES OF POWER.

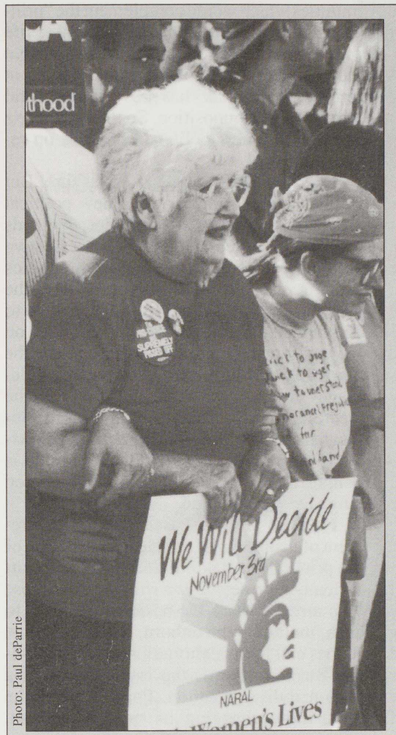
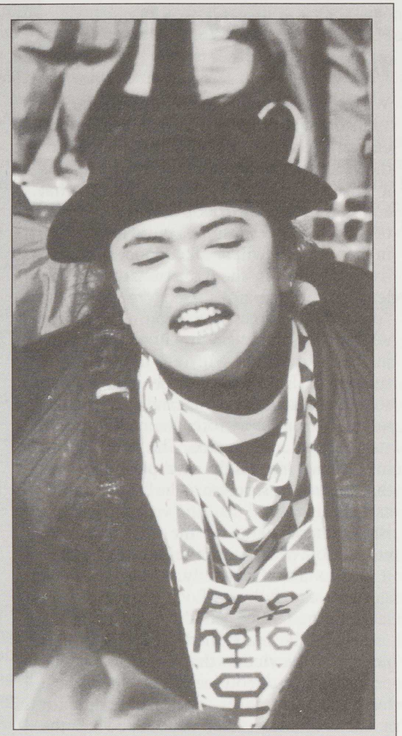


Photo: Paul deParrie

THE ABORTION MOVEMENT DERIVED ITS VITALITY NOT FROM ANY RATIONAL ARGUMENTS BUT FROM THE WILL TO HAVE ABORTION. THE ONLY "REASON" WAS A CLAIM. AND THE CLAIM WAS GROUNDED IN POWER. THE PRO-LIFE SIDE HAS TO RECOGNIZE THE HISTORICAL REALITY THAT TODAY'S "RADICAL ABORTION REGIME" PREVAILED ONLY BECAUSE IT HAD A STRONG WILL—AND NOTHING ELSE.



what they call "politically doable pro-life strategy." We have already quoted the passage: "It means contesting the abortion issue on a broad front through the arts of democratic persuasion and voluntary activism."

The focus on the morality of abortion intends the conversion of the sinner. This can be achieved only by dialogue, persuasion, discussion, debate, bearing witness and prayer. Now, a political party may, if it wishes, restrict itself to being a debating club, bound only by the rules of "polite and civil discourse." But this would imply a curious vision, indeed, of politics, whose essential mark would be the activity and the "art of democratic persuasion."

We have the interesting situation where politics is conceived as something that takes place and exists after the elections. Politics becomes on that account, the management of the formal structure of power by elected politicians. Prior to this, there can exist only the democratic process of debate and the formation of consensus. The winner of the debate gets the power of government as the prize. Prior to that mystical moment of "elections" the use of power is not permitted.

It is not permitted for the "conservatives." The "liberals," for their part, are quite open to the use of power and force, to include illegal and criminal activity as a preparatory phase for legal "empowerment." There is no need to cite the fraud behind *Roe v. Wade*, the criminal abortions, criminal homosexuality and criminal pornography which bypassed the "democratic process" and appealed to a politicized judiciary to capture the legal structures of power.

Polite and civil discourse is demanded by the etiquette of democracy when a government is committed to justice. The greater the commitment of the governors and of the people to justice, the more will a political party in fact appear as a discussion club. Once, however, a regime abandons its commitment to justice and refuses to use its civil power for justice, the greater will be the justification of the use of power on the part of the governed.

It is a lack of political realism not to recognize current reality. Our government, in all of its branches, not only has abandoned a commitment to justice but actively pursues injustice. Political realism bids us recognize that the search for truth restricts us to discussion, debate and persuasion; and it always demands courtesy. But justice calls for action. Political realism bids us recognize that the failure to see truth is not due to simple ignorance or lack of intelligence; it may be rooted in a will that rejects it.

Pro-choice success and power

The abortion movement derived its vi tality not from any rational arguments but from the will to have abortion. The only "reason" was a claim. And the claim was grounded in power. The pro-life side has to recognize the historical reality that today's "radical abortion regime" prevailed only because it had a strong will—and nothing else. The academies sponsored moral relativism, to be sure. But it was the weakness of the parents, not the ignorance of their children that allowed the radical abortion regime to come into power.

The demand that a political party become a debating club, using the arts of democratic persuasion with a generation that wills injustice can hardly initiate a vigorous intellectual challenge. The use of force will not achieve a moral change or a change in the moral culture. But to restrict the use of force when it is a matter of justice is politically unrealistic because the "rank and file" of the pro-life movement realizes that in the abortion issue justice for the victims is at stake. It is politically irresponsible for the leadership to reject all use of force.