

Let's Get The Facts, Not Distortions

How Right-Wingers Fought Sex Education

Some months ago, when sex education first became controversial, we discovered the involvement of the right-wing John Birch Society in the issue. We didn't say that everyone opposed to sex education was Birch, but we did point out that Birchers were in the fight very deeply. We pointed out that much of the anti-sex education literature came from "American Opinion," a sister outfit of the Birch Society under the common fatherhood of Robert Welch.

This story, capably written and intelligently researched by Martha Mahan of our Livonia staff, got more than a few persons sore. The Birchers were sore because they had been exposed. Some well-meaning sex education opponents were sore at us because we showed they had been exploited. But facts are facts.

AND SO IT WAS with some sense of pride, as well as great interest, that we read the 37-page report on "Radical Right Involvement in the Current Sex Education Controversy: A Michigan Overview," published last week by the regional office of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

The report tells the extent of radical right activity, shows the interlocking directorate nature of the campaign in Michigan, and explains in the clearest manner we've seen yet the twisted thinking of the extremists who are seeking to confuse well-meaning and concerned parents.

To those who think that such crackpot activity is something that happens only in Berkeley or Belmont or Biloxi, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has news: A lot of the fight occurred right here in Observ-

land.

Often, passing out literature at meetings on sex education was Bruce Duke of Farmington, "whose business card is imprinted with 'Join the John Birch Society; Get Us Out of the UN; Support Our Local Police; Impress E. Earl Warren; Support Rhodesia,'" according to the ADL.

Much of the activity was organized by committees called "MOTOREDES," "Decency" (it seems that even the far right isn't above using Great Society-style abbreviations.)

LOCALLY WE SAW the technique of organizing a multiplicity of committees to make the groups seem larger than they really are.

For example, ADL notes that MOTOREDE committees in Livonia, Westland and Garden City "have on at least one occasion

combined forces and called themselves the Western Wayne County MOTOREDE Committees and programmed under that name, too. Using that name, they sponsored Birch speaker Lt. Col. (ret.) Gordon L. (Jack) Mohr . . . The meeting was held in the Gallien Baptist Church in Livonia."

ADL points out: "While most radical right groups oppose sex education, not all of the opposition to such instruction comes from radical rightists," and we agree that this is clearly the case in Observerland, too.

HOW, THEN, does the average cool-headed but perhaps perplexed parent tell a radical right opponent of sex education from the well-meaning opponent? ADL has some good suggestions for spotting the radical rightists who exploit sex education as a political issue:

"First, all of the materials reveal the typical radical right preoccupation with a sinister or evil plot or conspiracy (by the Communists or Communist forces) to destroy the morals, incentives, individuality, etc., of our youth, to corrupt a generation, etc.

"There is very little attempt to deal with, or evaluate the issue involved" in the preoccupation with loyalty.

"It is interesting that virtually all of the radical right groups have attacked the proposed guidelines of the State Board of Education (on sex education), at least on the grounds that SIECUS (Sex Information and Education in the United States) is involved . . . Neither the president of the State Board of Education nor assistant state superintendent of education know of any school district wherein SIECUS material actually is used.

"Another indication of radical right involvement is the connection of sex education with other social ills, particularly narcotics and pornography."

A commonly repeated story is that a fifth-grade teacher decided to spice up her lecture with an attention-getting visual aid—she took her clothes off in class. The place changes each time the story is told, which would lead the normal intelligent listener to conclude that the story—and the entire right wing attack—are probably false.

We believe that the issue of sex education should be determined on its own merits and without the interference of self-serving radicals interested in control, not educational betterment.

—The Observer Newspapers



OBSERVATION POINT

GOP Blackens Own Eye With Fund Demands

By Philip H. Power

Some random political notes and observations, as we come toward the Labor Day weekend and head into the fall:

The Republicans in the legislature have suffered a big black eye as a result of putting pressure on staff members to fork over one per cent of their annual salaries to a campaign fundraiser. A letter signed by Rep. Martin J. Buth (R-Comstock Park) was mailed to GOP state representatives, their secretaries and legislative aides asking them to buy tickets; it carried with it the implication that if they did not, their jobs would be in jeopardy.

I suspect that kind of thing goes on much of the time, in both parties. But putting the pitch in print was silly, and I imagine that Buth is being chewed over by many embarrassed leaders in his party.

After all, even if everybody on the list pitched in, the take would be only \$14,000. And political parties pay twice that much to get favorable public images.

Aside from short-run aggravations for the GOP, the whole incident merely proves that laws having to do with party and campaign financing need a thorough revision. Right now.

for mayor are busy shaking hands and saying nothing.

Dick Austin, the black Wayne County Auditor, is as nice and thoughtful a guy as could be imagined. But his major campaign stand has been to support a police review board, and it appears he got trapped into that one.

Sweet Miss Mary Beck is publishing a newspaper, The Broom, which ominously talks of sweeping the city clean. But it sure isn't saying how. Wayne County Sheriff Roman Gribbs, the favorite in the pre-primary betting, is having trouble getting his campaign staff shaped up. Besides, he isn't going to do much to jeopardize his iron-clad role.

Walter Shamie, who suffered the unique distinction of having his TV special scheduled precisely at the same moment men were landing on the moon, has come out with a reasonably detailed set of programs. He has to, since he is currently expected to run a clear last.

It may be good strategy to keep mum about what you plan to do if elected. But it's bad government. It leads to an uninformed electorate. And it breeds irresponsibility in politicians.

Only problem is that it's hard to stop.

THEY'LL BE in the field within a few months to take the 1970 census. That means that redistricting and perhaps legislative districts cannot be far behind.

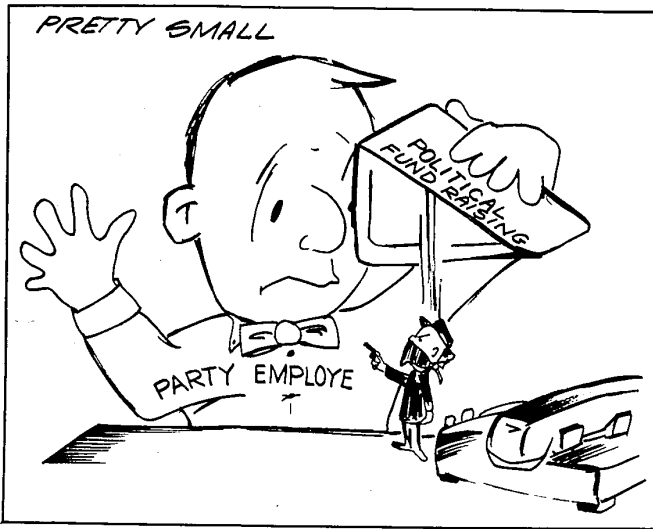
Both Democrats and GOP are concentrating heavily on state legislative races for 1970, since it will be the staff legislators works out just how the districts are going to be changed. Don't say "gerrymandering" out loud, but that's what it will be—within the framework of the Supreme Court's one-man one-vote rule.

In the meantime, the districting problem is causing local politicians fits.

Nineteenth District Congressman Jack McDonald is establishing a residence in Farmington, allegedly because he guesses that he'd have a better (i.e., more Republican) district up that way.

Livonia's gift to the State Board of Education, James O'Neill, is rumored to be thinking of a primary fight against McDonald. But neither he nor anyone else is entirely sure what the 19th district is going to look like after it's all over.

No one expects redistricting before 1972. But between now and then, look for congressmen to have that worried look as they start cultivating friends in the state legislature.



IN DETROIT, all candidates

"This Is The Week That . . ."

Tim Richard writes

We're Up To Here With Hangups

Here's How To Write College Exams-- With A Moral

By Don Hoenshell

From the things that go bump in the night and darken our days with illogic, the Saints preserve us.

It is the litany of the confused wanderer from fear to fear, relying on nerve ends to guide him.

How far we have come and where we are going is lost in it all.

There was a pleasant serenity in a stroll about the neighborhood at night, savoring the smell of a freshly-cut lawn—maybe stopping to chat with some folks on a front porch.

Your parents used to say the longest way around was the sweetest way home. Taffy-pulls and ice cream socials. That was in the 1920s and 1930s, falling off in the 1940s and now rare.

Fear.

IN LIVONIA a couple of years ago, a reporter enroute to a school for a political meeting, lost his way. The first four porches with lights looked friendly, but doors were locked and curtains were drawn. Nobody came to the door, though television noises and child sounds came through.

Now we pick up hitchhikers only at fear for our lives. We tend to suspect people who aren't exactly like ourselves. The young are alienated and we fear them because we no longer know them.

Credit cards and traveler's checks (or cheques) were built in part on fear and suspicion. Don't carry money. Telephone ahead. Let people know where you are.

Fellow in upstate New York last week took a stroll around the neighborhood to check on his neighbors' lawns. A police car stopped, recited his rights under that constitution and asked him what he was doing.

But the same guy dressed in a sweat suit and jogging would be looked upon with smiles—either as an eccentric or a fellow safe-

guarding his health. So keep moving at a jog.

Four years ago in Detroit I was stranded on Grand River, about 1200, as I recall. A friend suggested if I were going to wait for a bus, I'd better stand tall and look mean. At 5-7 and 147 I was a patsy and how does one look mean wearing glasses?

Suspicion.

PEOPLE WOULD like to think that John Norman Collins, now held in durance vile to await trial for the murder of Karen Sue Feinerman, is the answer to all the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti co-ed murders.

He's not even guilty of the Beineman tragedy until somebody proves it. But people are tired and frightened—and suspicious. It would be a comfortable answer. Thank the Saints, too, for our system of justice, however imperfect it is, or Collins and more of us than you think—would have been hanged by now, or worse.

So 5-7 people in a crisis they fancy try to look 6-5 and 247 pounds. There are no other answers here. Everybody's on his own.

But it would be nice to go for a stroll of an evening without wondering—idly, if possible—whether the muggers or the cops will get you first.

Things still go bump in the night.

I had a professor in one of the leading departments of one of the Wolverine State's most magnificent institutions—a man who was considered one of the best in the nation in his field.

HE TAUGHT with three kinds of materials: Lectures, a textbook and a second book of outside readings (essays by a variety of authors). All were important, he emphasized.

Sure, I knew teachers could be biased, but I didn't suspect that a full professor would ever lie. So I dutifully attended all the lectures, took copious notes, read the textbook, took copious notes on that, and read all the outside readings, and took copious notes on those, too.

Came time for the final exam, and I put all the forces of fact and logic together and anticipated a question the professor might ask. Drawing on all my copious notes on the lectures, the text and the outside readings, I constructed an answer—the perfect answer.

And the guy asked that question—word for word, he asked the question, exactly and precisely as I thought he would. And in the bluebook, I confidently

perenned my perfect answer.

THE TEST CAME back, and on that particular question I got the equivalent of a "C" for my supposedly perfect answer. I was astounded. What could have gone wrong?

Applying more research, fact and scientific logic, I figured it out. When he read back the correct answer, I took copious notes on it. Then I compared it to my course notes and discovered the truth:

The correct answer was word-for-word what he had said in the lecture. If you introduced material from the text or outside readings, you got marked down.

I took another course from the man. This time, I faithfully took lecture notes, but skimmed over the text, and virtually ignored the outside reading, even though he said they were all important. My unscholarly and lackluster work of the second semester was rewarded with a considerably higher mark from the professor. I learned less, but got a better mark for it.

The professor himself was shortly thereafter promoted to dean.

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