

Flint's New Right: Small, But Potentially Potent

By Michael Moore

Flint's "New Right" consists of a small fledgling group of religious activists who have been successful in stopping the teaching of birth control in 15 of the 16 local high schools and the passage of a county-wide referendum against pornography.

Beyond these two successes, though, they have been unable to unseat pro-choice politicians, ban books from area libraries, close up abortion clinics or stop the publication of this newspaper.

The New Right in Flint, as of now, poses little threat to the area. The active, hard-core consists of probably no more than twenty people. Card-carrying Moral Majority ministers in Flint number around five while the liberal Flint Interfaith Alliance has over twenty clergy meeting each month.

Flint's right-wing can be broken down into the following categories:

THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT—The ministers of the Moral Majority—Rev. Lee Vandenberg of Flushing's First Baptist Church and Rev. Edmund Dinant of Twin Cities Baptist Church in Grand Blanc Township. Also included in this group is the Great Lakes Baptist Temple in Burton, Rev. Jack Waters of Faith Baptist Church in Davison and other fundamentalist churches in the area. They're against abortion, homosexuals, socialism and state licensing of private schools.

THE WOMEN AGAINST WOMEN'S RIGHT—Four successful "housewives" who fight sex education, ERA, freedom of choice and books they don't like. They include Janis Rinks, Bettye Lewis, Joan Visser and Joan Smith. They believe in the traditional role of women and see "humanists" behind all of the ills of our society.

THE RIGHT TO LIFERS—A husband and wife duo—Gerald and Amy Throop. Not too much success here, although they are pleased that the county's "liberal Democrats—Kildee, Crim and Harold Scott support their position.

THE REAGAN RIGHT—Again, nobody's paying much attention to these people who make up the Republican Party in Genesee County. Reagan couldn't carry Flint and only one new Republican was elected to any area position in November. County Commissioner Nancy Gadola is the leader of this group which is still disorganized, not respected by the state Republican party and without a large sum of money!

THE FAR, FAR RIGHT—The U.S. Labor Party (Lyndon LaRouche), the Identity Church Movement, the Ku Klux Klan and the John Birch Society all have a number of members in the Flint area, and, though small, are among the most dedicated of all right-wing groups. Max Dean is the local leader of the U.S.L.P. and Rev. Paddy Quinn is the head of the Identity Church in Genesee Twp.

Whether these groups will be successful in putting their plans into action will depend, in large part, on the responsive chord they strike in a community beset with racial problems and struggling in the midst of a depression.



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