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NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

There is a certain group of Congressmen who have become super- solicitous about every dollar of defense expenditures. They are unwilling to accept the recommendations of our military experts, and require them to justify every weapon and explain every cost overrun in minute detail.

These same Congressmen, so cost-conscious when it comes to defense, are perfectly· willing to write a blank check when it comes to. huge budget requests in the educational field. Their curious double standard was exposed last month during the House debate on the appropriation for the National Science Foundation.

Congressman John Conlan proposed an amendment which reserved to the relevant Senate and House committees the right to pass on the Foundation's curriculum projects. The House erupted in oratory about "thought control!' tactics and "censorship" at the very notion that anyone would dare to supervise or second-guess the psycho-. logical experts who are trying to remold the minds of our children.

What stimulated the Conlan amendmen as the protests of thousands of. parents against a National Science Foundation curriculum project for ten-year olds called "Man: A Course of Study" or MACOS for short. It is full of references to adultery, cannibalism, killing female babies and old people, trial marriage, wife-swapping, violent murder, and other abhorrent behavior of an almost extinct tribe of Eskimos.

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When the MACOS program was completed at a cost of nearly $7 million, more than 50 publishers refused to market it because of its objectionable content. The National Science Foundation then subsidized a promotion and marketing scheme in direct competition with regular textbook publishers so that 1,700 schools could buy it at cutrate prices. Many have since dropped it because of parental opposition.

What is the purpose of inducing fifth-graders to spend so much time on an off-beat, remote, and immoral society that could be of incidental interest only to graduate-level anthropological historians? The MACOS supporters readily admit that its purpose is to require ten-year olds, through the technique of "role-playing" in class, to identify with the various customs described in the curriculum, and thereby conclude that there are no moral absolutes. MACOS thus teaches that, in moral values, anything goes, and it all depends on the situation.

After Congressman Conlan's amendment failed by a narrow vote, Congressman Robert Bauman proposed a similar amendment which re quires the National Science Foundation to provide Congress with a 30-day notice of proposed grants, during which time Congress has the option to veto them. Any grants disapproved would become effective at the end of the 30-day period.

The Bauman amendment passed the House and is a step in the right direction toward calling a halt to the ridiculous projects funded by the U.S. Government and foisted off on our school children in the name of education. The M.ACOS project indicates that the experts financed by the National Science Foundation may need more supervision than the ten-year olds they are supposed to be educating.

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