

Textbooks for Wholesome Living

Textbooks created such a volcanic eruption in Kanawha County, West Virginia, that schools were boycotted for nine weeks with more than 15,000 out of 45,000 children absent at one time. Some 10,000 coal miners and other workers staged sympathy strikes; Charleston's transit system was closed down; 30 protesters, including ministers, were arrested; violence flared as rocks were thrown, windows broken, and tires slashed; two dynamite blasts went off; two men were shot, one critically; and schools were firebombed.

Textbook Fury

The cause of such fury? Alice Moore, a school board member and mother of four school-age children, and her husband, a Church of Christ pastor, began to examine 300 basic and supplementary readers. The books, worth half a million dollars and already purchased according to a five-year textbook adoption plan, were to be used from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Parents read the approved books with such alarm that, in an area with a student population of 45,000, some 12,000 individuals signed petitions opposing them. Customarily, when the school board met they usually had less than 25 onlookers. But when the board was scheduled to make its final decision, nearly 2,000 parents attended to protest these books. The meeting room was too small; most of the 2,000 stood out in the rain to express their disapproval. The board split 2 to 2, and Albert Anson, the lame-duck member of the board, cast the deciding vote to approve the books. As a result, a school boycott was initiated lasting nine weeks.¹

Textbook Supporters

Supporters of the textbooks claimed they were relevant, pictured the real world, and prepared students for a place in that world. Kanawha County school superintendent Ken Underwood vowed angrily he would not remove any books; he likened the protest to book-burning days of Nazi Germany. He resisted parental efforts, claiming that their actions would clothe teachers with academic straitjackets. He asked whether the Charleston school system should give rose-colored glasses to students by presenting only the pleasant facts of life, which would abolish

“our responsibility as educators by letting students leave school with a distorted—perhaps unhealthy—view of the world as it exists.”²

Others expressed their opposition. The *American School Board Journal* reported, “The most populous and prosperous county in West Virginia was experiencing a school book-banning war more complex and fanatical than any in recent U.S. history.”³ James Lewis, a minister in one of Charleston’s churches, said, “The books in question are creative books, written with the intention of helping our children discover the truths.” He explained that “these books open up a world of opinion and insight,” and were “not un-American or ungodly.” The problem, said Lewis, is that “this country is experiencing a religious crusade as fierce as any out of the Middle Ages. Our children are being sacrificed because of the fanatical zeal of our fundamentalist brothers who claim to be hearing the deep, resonant voice of God.”⁴ A *New York Times* editorial appraised the situation: “Even here in the heart of the Appalachian coal fields, where the airwaves are full of emotive radio preachers’ fire and brimstone and roadside signs carry the bullet pocks of beery Saturday night automobile snipers, the Fundamentalist bill of particulars seemed too thin to many this week to explain the near chaos that is still disrupting Kanawha County and West Virginia’s capital city.”⁵

Textbook Protesters

In response to those opposing the textbook removal, Elmer Fike, president of the Business and Professional People’s Alliance for Better Textbooks and president of Fike Chemicals, said, “Naturally, the liberals try, as they always do, to cloak themselves with intellectualism and paint their opponents as ignorant but this charge just won’t hold up.” Fike objected that the textbooks contained little that was inspiring or uplifting; attacked civilization’s social values; pitted blacks against whites, stirred racial animosity; dwelled on sex in such a manner as to encourage promiscuity; taught throughout the theme of pacifism, without ever suggesting that some wars were worth fighting because of intolerable conditions; and concentrated on the sordid while failing to motivate upward.⁶

Christianity Today, one of the leading conservative religious magazines, commented, “Because the West Virginia protests were inspired by ‘fundamentalists’ identified as such, one of the few remaining minority groups that are targets for ridicule, and because the protestors

object not only to material that has to be recognized as blasphemous and insulting to their religious views but also to many other things that elsewhere are considered normal and representative literature, it has been even easier for observers to label the Kanawha County protests as blatant attempts at censorship by a group of religious fanatics. In doing so, such observers fail to grapple with issues deserving closer scrutiny.”⁷

In the *Borger News-Herald* Mel Gabler said the textbook protesters were portrayed as “indulging in fire-bombing, shooting and other violence;” but he pointed out that nearly all the violence had been against the protesters, not by them, and that the two shootings and two bombings of automobiles were against parents protesting textbooks.⁸

In evaluating the Kanawha situation, *Wall Street Journal* observed, “A reading of some of the textbooks indicates that we may owe the demonstrators a vote of thanks. The appalling third-grade volume of the D. C. Heath series on reading and grammar entitled *Communicating* consistently deals with frightening themes.”⁹

Investigating the Textbook Controversy

After reading about this conflict, I decided to investigate the matter firsthand and flew to Charleston. While there I examined the controversial textbooks and for approximately three hours interviewed Alice Moore, who spearheaded the protest. The major criticisms, she said, were of the teacher’s edition, so that parents viewing their children’s books were unable to know what teachers were discussing in class. The objections were not against the one or two unpleasant stories the books contained, Moore said, but rather to the constant diet of negativism; the undermining of parent-child relationship, morals, and religious faith; and the teaching of situation ethics.

Some people portrayed the protesters as ignorant hillbillies and religious fanatics; others presented them as parents concerned with the social and moral values their children were taught. To gain a true perspective, the following sampling will show some of the controversial material offered to these children. Under the caption “Talking About Your Own Ideas,” a *Communicating* series published by D. C. Heath and Company, three objectives are listed for the teacher: “(1) to discuss personal experiences or ideas; (2) to tell or write about an experience or idea; (3) to read what one has written.” The eight year-old children are asked in their textbook the following questions:

1. Most people think that cheating is wrong, even if it is only to get a penny, which is what Shan did. Do you think there is ever a time when it might be right? Tell when it is. Tell why you think it is right,

2. Have you ever cheated or stolen something? What happened? How did you feel when you did it? How did you feel after you did it? Did you get caught? If so, tell about this too.¹⁰

Parents object when their eight-year-old children are asked to justify cheating and resent having teachers probe their private lives. In the same book the children are instructed to make their own myth:

There are a lot of puzzling things in our world:

1. Why do we have pain? . . .

One way to make up a myth is to think of a question like one of these. Suppose your question is *Why do men have pain?* Now, imagine a time when man did not have pain. Pretend that the first men on earth went around without ever feeling pain. Next imagine that some kind of god walked among men and something happened. Maybe a man did something bad or made a bad mistake. Because of this the god punished men, giving them pain for the rest of their days.¹¹

Anyone acquainted with the biblical story of Adam and Eve can see a near perfect correlation. Across the nation millions of homes and thousands of churches hold to the literal account of Adam and Eve. These parents do not want their children to be encouraged “to make up a myth” about a god that tends to undermine their faith. Then the sixth-grade Communicating series mockingly describes a group of religious people as “shuffling Holy Rollers at an all night inspiration.”¹²

In the same book children are taught how to use “standard” and “nonstandard” English. “Rewrite the paragraph below so that it looks like ‘standard’ English to you.” The example presented is the antisocial reaction of a young bully who justifies his stealing:

When I was five years old, I was just about the biggest kid in kindergarten. I didn’t take no lip from nobody, not even in first grade. My mom, she said I just growed and growed like a sunflower. So I guess that’s

what give me this view of life I seem to have took. I weren't mean by nature. It just seem to me that, you know, I can get anything I want just by taking it. Nobody ever stop me.¹³

One of the junior high school books adopted by the school board was a three-act play, *Scripts 3*, published by Houghton Mifflin Company. It was to be read aloud by 12- and 13-year-old children. The play shows Arthur and Ernie conversing about Clifford Truckston, who was getting drafted next month and had got his girl "knocked up." Clifford was going to "get four other guys to swear she'd put out to *them*, too, but then he decided he'd better do the honorable thing and get her an abortion.

ARTHUR. (*A great effort to be nonchalant and keep up his part of the "man of the world" act.*) I'm gonna be *really* careful from now on!

ERNIE. A guy's gotta be. (*A very short pause.*) Did your old man ever take you into the bedroom and give you the old peptalk? About women and diseases and all?

ARTHUR. No, he never. ERNIE. Mine did. He really did. Only he waited till I was twelve, for Godsake! All I could do to keep a straight face.¹⁴

The following scene is found in Act Two:

ERNIE. Okay! That's all you had to say! They would've stopped talking about their goddam problems, but you didn't want them to stop and listen. You were scared they'd hear you!

ARTHUR. (*Turning on him, viciously.*) Get out of here, you sonofabitch! Get out! (*He rushes ERNIE, who turns and exits up the steps to the yard with ARTHUR pushing him.*) Get out, God damnit! Get OUT!¹⁵

Here are some additional phrases children will learn in junior high from this approved play: *hell, fat old bitch, by God, work your ass off, stupid son of a bitch, and Christ, no.*¹⁶ Some of this wording is repeated over and over. All the previous textbook materials were shown to me when I visited Charleston.

These and other selections aroused citizens of Kanawha County. From this protest the dispute has spread to dozens of communities

throughout the nation. The board of Island Trees School District in Long Island, New York, banned certain books from junior high and high school libraries because they contain “obscenities, blasphemies, brutality and perversion beyond description” and “materials offensive to Christians, Jews, blacks and Americans in general.” Representative Norman F. Lent of New York supported the board’s decision, and its responsibility for determining what schools taught. Lent wanted to discover what would happen if he submitted excerpts from these banned books for insertion into the *Congressional Record*. He received this reply: “The Joint Committee of Printing, after reviewing the excerpts submitted, has refused to print the same. The general rules governing the Record prohibit the inclusion therein of profanity, obscene wording or extreme vulgarisms.”

Lent viewed the *Congressional Record’s* refusal to print these excerpts as support for his position that the board’s action was proper and that no infringement of the First Amendment was involved. If individuals wanted to get these books, they could obtain them from public libraries and bookstores, said Lent.¹⁷ In a 5-to-4 decision in *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico*, The U.S. Supreme Court did not define the precise constitutional limits but did decide that school officials may be required to defend their motives in federal court.¹⁸ The school board dropped its ban on the books in order to avoid “judicial control” of its school libraries. Now when anyone checks these books out, they are required to notify parents.

U.S. News & World Report cites the following excerpts found in school libraries and on approved lists in Montgomery County, Maryland, to which parents objected unsuccessfully:

From *Manchild in the Promised Land*, by Claude Brown:

But the chick was really something—she couldn’t see anybody knocking her off just one time. . . . She just kept forcing me. . . . When she got high, all she wanted to do was screw and screw.

From *Real Magic*, by P. E. I. Bonewits, on “How to Cast a Lust Spell”:

There is a particular person you really want to go to bed with but he or she isn’t interested. . . .

You surround yourself with the sounds, smells, lights, textures and colors that remind you of pure, unadulterated lust! . . . You

imagine the target as passionately assuming a sexual position, ready and willing. . . Wait as long as you can to build up your lust to its peak, and then fire. . .

Some readers might think that this is merely a description of sexual fantasy. It's more. . . In a lust spell, any orgasm is a mere side effect on the way to the real goal, which is the discharge of psychic energy to affect someone else's mind.¹⁹

Textbook Reformers

Among the leaders in stressing educational and moral excellence in textbooks are Mel and Norma Gabler. Their concern over textbooks was aroused when their son Jim came home from school and asked his father a question concerning states' rights and the Constitution. As the father told his son, the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution provides that powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it belong to the states and their people.

"That's not what my textbook says," replied Jim.

Jim brought his history textbook home the next night and proved his point. The parents examined the book, along with others, and were shocked. This episode started the Gablers on their tedious and meticulous work of examining textbooks 20 years ago. Today, they head a nonprofit organization, *Educational Research Analysts*, in Longview, Texas, with a staff of seven workers.

Jimmy Brown says, in the *Gladewater Mirror*, "The Gablers are not by any stretch of the imagination self-righteous busybodies, intent on entering the twilight zone of censorship. They are intelligent, cheerful people who simply take the time to become deeply involved." The Gablers "have built a solidly respected reputation as perhaps the most authoritative and expert public school textbook reviewers in Texas. Their work, now a fulltime task, has earned them a great deal of publicity, many honors-and quite a number of verbal brickbats. But now, when the Gablers speak out on a textbook a great many important people listen intently. More often than not these days their recommendations are accepted." They have more than 300 different printed forms covering textbook content as well as the largest assortment of textbook reviews in the nation. They have jointly received the Texas Outstanding Citizenship Medal for 1973, and at the National Congress for Educational Excellence, which is composed of approximately 350 affiliated parent groups, they were awarded the Outstanding Parent Leadership Award in 1976.²⁰

“We’ve been concentrating on parents,” Mel Gabler told me in an interview, “because we’ve found wherever parents do get concerned, educators give in, but other than that they ignore parents.”

Their influence is also enhanced because Texas is the nation’s largest textbook purchaser, spending up to 30 million dollars a year. Because the state exerts a strong influence on publishers that desire their market, many textbooks have been altered to meet Texas specifications.

Though deeply concerned that patriotism and morality have been severely downgraded in recent years, the Gablers also examine textbooks for facts, skills and knowledge. Norma Gabler says teachers have been handicapped by many poorly written textbooks. “I feel review of textbooks is one of the most important things I’ve ever done,” she says. “I don’t think there’s anything more valuable than the mind of a child. A child is only as informed as what he reads and studies. In the final analysis this determines the kind of men and women they will become.”²¹

Norma Gabler objects to the new role given to mothers in current textbooks. “They give the impression that a woman becomes a slave in marriage.” She notes “They also act as if motherhood is second-class, a burden, when that’s the highest privilege a woman can have. My point is that they’re trying to force women into a role reversal that’s against our culture and tradition and in some instances against the Bible.”²²

In their perusal of textbooks, the Gablers found this selection from a rhyme book entitled *The Inner City Mother Goose* for nursery children:

Jack be nimble, Jack be quick. Snap the blade and give it a flick. Grab the purse—it’s easily done. Then just for kicks, just for fun, plunge the knife and cut and run.²³

In reviewing a group of five high school textbooks on sociology and psychology, Mrs. Gabler said that they heavily favored legalizing homosexuality. Many of these books also downgrade free enterprise, traditional American standards, religion and prayer, the home and family life. A high school psychology textbook, *Behind the Mask: Our Psychological World*, suggested this:

To truly induce completely creative thinking, we should teach children to question the Ten Commandments, patriotism, the two-party system, monogamy and the laws against incest.²⁴

New History Textbooks

In a fifth-grade history book, *Search for Freedom: America and Its People*, published by Macmillan (Benziger), Norma Gabler found that on several pages a few sentences were devoted to George Washington, whereas the late film star Marilyn Monroe received six and a half pages. She said, “We’re not quite ready for Marilyn Monroe to be the mother of our country.” The more than six-page spread included photos and personal background on Marilyn. “Most of the questions at the end of the chapter were related to her and specifically about her marriages, for example, what she liked about being married.” Gabler was unable to see how this could be “pertinent reading material” for fifth-grade history students.²⁵

Norma Gabler tells an incident showing how textbooks have changed: “Mel and I read in the new histories that George Washington had a violent temper—period. We didn’t know. We couldn’t argue with the book until we found the same statement in an old history book by the same publisher, with an added qualification: ‘George Washington had a violent temper, *but* he kept it under masterly control.’ You see how the new history casts doubt on his leadership?”

“We find examples like that all through the new histories. Our heroes are constantly put down and obscure characters put in to prove the author’s point.”²⁶

Mrs. Gabler found that history texts demoted national heroes, minimized important historical events, dwelt on the frivolous, and made students feel ashamed of their national heritage. When comparing modern histories with old ones, she wondered, “Has history changed or have the new books changed history?”²⁷ Historian Frances FitzGerald supports Gabler’s perception of altered textbooks. “Textbooks published since the 1960s,” says FitzGerald, “contain the most dramatic rewriting of history ever to take place in American schoolbooks.”²⁸

A fifth-grade book, *Many People, One Nation* (Random House, 1973), had this to say about our American heritage:

No nation on earth is guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than is the United States at this very hour.

Go where you may and search where you will. Roam through all the kingdoms of the Old World. Travel through South America. Search out every wrong. When you have found the last, compare your facts with the everyday practices of this nation. Then you

will agree with me that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America has no rival.²⁹

“Textbooks today major in the defects and faults of our government,” says Norma Gabler, “in our free enterprise system, and in our society. Too often they decline, or refuse to point out, the successes and achievements of our system. The mild patriotism, if any, with their indoctrination in the weakness and problems of our American system has made our youth think, ‘The American system has failed. It must be replaced.’”

“And we parents wonder why some young people are dedicated to the destruction of our American way of life.

“Each generation has the responsibility to pass their heritage to the succeeding generation. As parents, we have fallen down. Today’s youth have received a distorted version of our heritage. It is late, very late—but not too late.

“We, the parents, should demand that a true and unbiased picture of the American system be presented to our young people. If this ‘equal time’ plan could be used in textbooks and in the schools, we guarantee that young Americans will develop a keen appreciation for the heritage which is theirs.

“If not, we will soon see a real revolution and the death of a great nation.

“The training we give our children is important-very important for youth holds the key to the future of this nation.”³⁰

Children’s Liberation

Instead of a positive program of training there are those who advocate greater freedom:

In the outside world, kids should be able to:

Smoke and drink. Some state laws say a person must be 16 to buy cigarettes and 18 to drink liquor. Once they have been made fully aware of the possible health hazards, all kids should be allowed to drink and smoke. . . .

Vote. Thousands of senile, alcoholic, and mentally ill adults can vote. So why can’t kids?

Statements from an underground press? Communist newspaper? Speech from a far-out radical? No. These statements are from an

educational magazine my son received in seventh grade from a New York City public school.

The article, “No Kidding? Kids’ Lib Is Coming?” by Steven A. Otfinoski, was in the magazine *Read*, published by Xerox Education Publications. The author quoted Dr. Richard Farson, a California psychologist, and other liberationists in their support of giving children the right to drink, smoke, and vote.

Otfinoski wrote how American minorities have gone liberation mad, but the “biggest minority group of them all—80 million—has been the slowest to pick up a protest sign.” Who were these poor depressed minorities? The kids reading the article—this time it included my son.

Dr. Farson said today’s children are “patronized, ignored, dominated, and abused” by adults. But the article does not stop at student rights; it gives the doctor’s and other liberationists’ concepts of how parents should treat their children at home:

Stop babying. Kids should not be talked down to, treated like infants, or made to do things their parents don’t do. For instance, they shouldn’t be forced to “clean their plates” at dinner when their parents can eat what they want.

Give them a choice. Children from troubled homes now must either stay with parents they often hate or enter a detention home—although they haven’t committed a crime. These kids should be able to make their own choice of where to live, whether it be with relatives, friends, or by themselves.

To counteract these comments, and apparently to show impartiality, the magazine quotes Ann Landers on Kids’ Lib:

DEAR ANN LANDERS: I am writing to tell you about a new group that I am trying to start. It is called *Kids’ Lib*.

We want the right to express ourselves without being told we are too young to know anything. We also want the right to smoke and drink if we want to at age 13.

I saw a man on TV the other night who gave me this idea, and a lot of my friends think it’s neat. He said kids at age 13 should be able to handle their own money, choose their own clothes, and pick which parent they want to live with if there’s a divorce. Will you back me up?

DEAR KIDS: No way. You are adding apples and oranges and getting bull feathers. I agree a 13-year-old should be able to express his opinions, pick his own friends, and handle his own money (an allowance, in most cases), and the judge often will allow a 13-year-old to decide which parent he wants to live with. All those things are reasonable, but that crock about 13-year-olds being allowed to smoke and drink is strictly for the birds—the loons, that is. Forget it, buster.³¹

I complained to the substitute teacher at my son's school and to Xerox Corporation. Xerox Corporation replied and sent me the teacher's edition of *Read*. To generate class discussions, teachers were encouraged to take a children's poll. It was suggested that the following be put on the blackboard: "The right to vote, smoke, choose your own bedtime, quit school and work, and take only the school courses you want to. Then take a hand vote as to who wants what. After the votes are tallied, you might ask students to defend their position for or against a particular right."³²

Imagine school situations in which 12-year-olds are discussing the parental prerogatives of whether children should have the right to smoke, choose their own bedtime, and quit school. So long as schools give both sides to any question, it appears, anything becomes legitimate material for discussion, even whether parents should be obeyed or not. In good faith millions of parents send their children to schools, yet in some classrooms their parental authority is being questioned.

"ON THE RISE across the U.S. is a 'children's liberation' movement that is forcing the nation's elders to sit up and take notice—often in disbelief," notes *U.S. News & World Report*.

"At least four national organizations of attorneys and countless public-welfare groups have joined the fray in behalf of the 68 million Americans under 18 years old—whom some libertarians call the country's 'most oppressed minority.'

"At times, the movement resembles a pint-sized version of the youth revolt that shook campuses in the past decade.

"One underground pamphlet, which the National Association of Secondary School Principals says has been distributed at many high schools, mixes current concerns about students' rights with warmed-over rhetoric against defoliation in the Vietnam War. This 'school—stoppers textbook' tells disgruntled students 61 ways to shut down their schools—including burglary and arson."³³

The Children's Rights Organization in Playa del Rey, California, the majority of whose members are under 18, was founded by Morley Cowan, a psychotherapist and family counselor. One of its positions states, "Alternate home or living environments must be given Youth, who will have freedom of CHOICE where and with whom they reside." The question was raised concerning the inadequate knowledge of young people on how to live alone. The solution: "That will be the first change in the School curriculum. Grade 7. Course #1: How to live alone. How to cook. How to shop. Where to catch a bus. How to avoid being cheated. Same argument used against freeing slaves is used against freeing Youth."³⁴ (Notice Youth is capitalized.)

Progressive Goals

In the progressive 30's, Ethel Mannin said in *Common-Sense and the Child*. "Parents, nurses, and teachers are the natural enemies of the child because they are the destroyers of its freedom. They represent authority from the beginning."³⁵ But in the 70's, John Holt, who has taught in Colorado, Massachusetts, and California, and has written many popular educational books and articles, set forth these progressive goals for children in his book *Escape from Childhood*:

I propose instead that the rights, privileges, duties, responsibilities of adult citizens be made *available* to any young person, of whatever age, who wants to make use of them. These would include, among others:

1. The right to equal treatment at the hands of the law—i.e., the right, in any situation, to be treated no worse than an adult would be.
2. The right to vote, and take full part in political affairs.
3. The right to be legally responsible for one's life and acts.
4. The right to work, for money.
5. The right to privacy.
6. The right to financial independence and responsibility—i.e., the right to own, buy, and sell property, to borrow money, establish credit, sign contracts, etc.
7. The right to direct and manage one's own education.
8. The right to travel, to live away from home, to choose or make one's own home.
9. The right to receive from the state whatever minimum

income it may guarantee to adult citizens.

10. The right to make and enter into, on a basis of mutual consent, quasi-familial relationships outside one's immediate family—i.e., the right to seek and choose guardians other than one's own parents and to be legally dependent on them.

11. The right to do, in general, what any adult may legally do.

Referring to the age of voting, Holt says, “When I say that I want all young people to be able to vote, older people ask with amazement, disbelief and even anger whether I mean children of any age. That is exactly what I mean. I am talking not just about the sixteen-year-old vote but about the six-year-old vote. I think a six-year-old who wants to vote ought to be able to vote.”

Holt elaborates on his guaranteed income plan: “What I propose is that such an income should be guaranteed, not just to all adults, male or female, single or married, but to all children as well, down to an early age—as early as the child wants to receive it. For obviously the right to leave home, to travel, to seek other guardians, to live where they choose, and alone if they choose, cannot be an active or meaningful right for most young people unless they can get the money they need to live. Some will object that this much financial independence might weaken family ties. But the state ought not to use the threat of poverty as a glue to hold the family or other personal relationships together.”

Holt also proposes “to allow all people to use what drugs they want,” and says that “ALL PEOPLE, INCLUDING young people, should have the right to control their own private sex lives and acts.”³⁶

Social Engineering—MACOS

One of the most daring attempts at reshaping American children has been directed through the implementation of the federally subsidized course called MACOS (Man: A Course Of Study), for fifth grade children. The development of MACOS began in 1963 when the National Science Foundation (NSF) was given a federal grant of 4.8 million dollars. More than 50 commercial textbook publishers refused to market the course because of its high expense, objectionable content, and philosophy. Finally, the Educational Development Center marketed the program, but only after the NSF provided the center with an additional 2.16 million dollars; by 1974 MACOS was taught in 1,700 schools in 47 states.³⁷

Initially, MACOS sold well, but as parents became aware of the program, protests and resistance arose. Because the federal government subsidized the program, Congressman John B. Conlan of Arizona brought the issue of MACOS before the House of Representatives. Conlan proposed an amendment to “reassert congressional authority over NSF curriculum activities to stop what is shaping up as an insidious attempt to impose particular school courses and approaches to learning on local school districts—using the power and financial resources of the Federal Government to set up a network of educator lobbyists to control education throughout America.” He noted that the NSF provided a special 80 percent reduction in the normal royalty to Curriculum Development Associates so that “MACOS would sell and undercut competition from other curriculum materials available in the private sector.”³⁸

Congressman Conlan spoke before the House of Representatives:

Mr. Chairman, MACOS materials are full of references to adultery, cannibalism, killing female babies and old people, trial marriage and wife-swapping, violent murder, and other abhorrent behavior of the virtually extinct Netsilik Eskimo subculture the children study.

Communal living, elimination of the weak and elderly in society, sexual permissiveness and promiscuity, violence, and other revolting behavior are recurring MACOS themes.

This is simply not the kind of material Congress or any Federal agency should be promoting and marketing with taxpayers’ money.

The course was designed by a team of experimental psychologists under Jerome S. Bruner and B.F. Skinner to mold children’s social attitudes and beliefs along lines that set them apart and alienate them from the beliefs and moral values of their parents and local communities.³⁹

The following material is from various MACOS books about the Netsilik Eskimos to which elementary school children are exposed:

Adultery and Wife Swapping

Husbands have a very free hand in their married life and it is considered to be quite in order for them to have intercourse

with any woman whenever there is an opportunity. (“The Netsilik Eskimos,” MACOS Volume I, p. 117)

If a man is about to set off on a journey and his wife is sick or unable to go with him, he may borrow the wife of his song partner to take along, giving his own wife in exchange. This kind of wife-exchange is necessary in the kind of life the Eskimos lead. (“A Journey to the Arctic,” MACOS Booklet 18, P .23)

Two men who become song partners . . . are so closely bound together that they can exchange wives if they choose. (“A Journey to the Arctic,” MACOS Booklet 18, p. 38)

Cannibalism

The wife knew that the spirits had said her husband should eat her, but she was so exhausted that it made no impression on her. She did not care. It was only when he began to feel her, when it occurred to him to stick his fingers in her side to feel if there was flesh on her, that she suddenly felt a terrible fear; so she, who had never been afraid of dying, now tried to escape. With her feeble strength she ran for her life, and then it was as if Tuneq saw her only as a quarry that was about to escape him; he ran after her and stabbed her to death. After that, he lived on her, and he collected her bones in a heap over by the side of the platform for the purpose of fulfilling the taboo rule required of all who die. (“The Netsilik Eskimos,” MACOS Volume I, pp. 97-98)

Divorce and Trial Marriage

Divorce is common as long as there are no children, and there are women who go through seven or eight trial marriages before they finally settle down. (“The Netsilik Eskimos,” MACOS Volume I, p. 115)

Female Infanticide

[The Netsilik Eskimos] would like to have many sons and few daughters. If a baby girl has not already been promised as a future

wife, her family may feel that they cannot provide for her. If there is no family to adopt her, it is their custom to allow the child to die. (“A Journey to the Arctic,” MACOS Booklet 18, P. 24)

I talked to several Netsilik women in one camp about the children they had. One had borne eleven children-four boys and seven girls, of which four girls had been allowed to die at birth. (“A Journey to the Arctic,” MACOS Booklet 18, pp. 24-25)

Senilicide

When we spoke of Eskimo murder, Father Henry told me about a man now at Committee Bay who had come to him one day, and, after the usual tea and silence, had said to him suddenly: “I took the old woman out on the ice today.” It was his own mother that he had driven out and set down at sea to freeze to death. He was fond of her, he explained. He had always been kind to her. But she was too old, she was no longer good for anything; so blind, she couldn’t even find the porch to crawl into the igloo. So, on a day of blizzard, the whole family agreeing, he had taken her out, and they had struck camp and gone off, leaving her to die. (“Old Kigtak,” MACOS Volume 7, p. 18)

We have a custom that old people who cannot work anymore should help death to take them. (“Songs and Stories of the Netsilik Eskimos,” MACOS Booklet 16, p. 44)⁴⁰

During the congressional debate over MACOS, Congressman Annunzio said, “As a former teacher in the Chicago public school system, and as a parent and grandparent, it is my firm conviction that our schools should be seen as an extension of the family function which instills moral standards in children. The exposure of children during their formative years to these vagaries of other civilizations and cultures without appropriate perspective constitutes a condemnation of the moral standards of the Judeo-Christian culture which have made this Nation so great.”⁴¹

In contrast, Congressman Ottinger said that under the test to which MACOS was subjected “the Holy Bible would not pass. It is just as easy to show out-of-context examples of murder, adultery, et cetera in the

Bible as in MACOS.”⁴² But there is an important difference between the Bible and MACOS: The Bible condemns murder and adultery; MACOS justifies immoral behavior.

MACOS is a subtle attack on our social moral values foisted upon impressionable 10-year-old children. For example: When Arfek left his old mother-in-law Kigtak, who was half-blind and crippled, to “crawl over the ice and catch up if she could;” he “had no choice but to leave Old Kigtak behind.” The people “have a custom that old people who cannot work anymore should help death to take them.” So Old Kigtak thought of this and decided, “Why hang on as a burden to her children.”⁴³ In support of their behavior: “You see, it is not that we have hard hearts but that the conditions of life here are merciless and to survive in a land of ice and snow sometimes we must be without pity.”⁴⁴ In the teacher’s edition a suggestion is made for interested classes to role-play the act of senilicide of Kigtak and to present “reasons for their opinions.”⁴⁵

Infanticide is justified. Boys are valued much more than girls because of their ability to obtain necessary food. Wife swapping is defended because “they are so closely bound together that they can exchange wives if they choose. . . This sharing of responsibilities is necessary in the nomadic life the Eskimos live.”⁴⁶

There would be few objections to having a history course spend time on various cultures even if some had cruel and inhumane practices. However, when the worst acts of the human race—senilicide, infanticide, suicide, and promiscuity—are justified, as Congressman Conlan pointed out, in “a subculture group with only 30 or 40 people in it,” and “a culture that is so low that even the other Eskimos do not want to associate with this clan,” one realizes the serious implications of such material.⁴⁷

Perhaps schools should also rationalize the ancient practice of placing jars containing infants in the walls of new houses to bring blessings from the gods, or the use of temple prostitutes by worshippers, or the act of widows of India throwing themselves upon their husband’s funeral pyre. With such reasoning one could even exonerate Hitler in his extermination of the Jews and other “misfits” to develop a superior race. Stalin and Mao Tse-Tung could be hailed as benefactors; though they murdered millions, their brutal acts benefited communism.

Imagine children taught to empathize with a culture that practiced wife swapping, adultery, and the killing of infants and elderly. These impressionable children may one day have to make similar difficult decisions. What should they do when their parents become old and feeble?

Should they deprive their family of comfort to take care of them? They will long have forgotten this social studies course, but the subconscious approval of senilicide will remain. Parents should not be shocked if their children ignore their agonies because of the sacrifices entailed. Indeed, children may even condemn their parents for trying to make themselves a burden upon them. After all, the good Netsilik parents who were a hindrance were to “help death to take them.” So parents should be good—hang themselves or go out into the cold and let themselves be frozen to death. If some leaders have their way they may allow parents to die with dignity; they will provide painless gas chambers. Quite a contrast to our historic Judeo-Christian ethic: “Honor thy father and thy mother.”

MACOS Evaluated

When the National Council for Social Studies issued a report on MACOS, it had the audacity to state that this course fostered “decision-making and other analytical skills, multi-cultural understandings, sensitivity to human relations, strengthening of human compassion and love for and appreciation of the family and its role as a personal and social institution.”⁴⁸

Rhoda Lorand, a psychologist with a Columbia University doctorate in educational psychology, does not agree that MACOS strengthens human compassion and love for family. “It is incredible that this exercise in sadism should be foisted upon a captive audience of children who are undergoing the crucial process of adaptation to our culture and civilization,” says Lorand. “Equally incredible is the fact that a program so lacking in awareness of children’s emotional development and needs, as well as in the purposes of education and the processes of character development, should have been given government support.”⁴⁹

Sheilah Cambell Burgers, who taught MACOS in Sheffield, Massachusetts for one year, flatly declared, “I refused to teach it again.” She told how “after having read nine teachers’ manuals and 31 books, after having seen the 21 course films several times, and after having worked with 75 fifth-graders, I felt that MACOS not only restricted academic freedom but also inhibited the development of my students by presenting a negative, one-sided and dishonest picture of man. In short, MACOS is a brainwash—clever, well executed, and lethal.

“The method of teaching is inquiry. The teacher asks questions; the student finds answers.

“All answers are found in course books and films. Outside sources

cannot be used because material concerning the course content (the social structure of the herring gull, salmon, baboon, and the Netsilik Eskimo) is understandably non-existent at the fifth-grade level. Input and output are thereby totally controlled.

“Books cannot leave the classroom. Except for projects, homework is discouraged. Manuals are kept at school for professional use only. Adult intervention, therefore, is minimal.”

The children also play a simulation game: Hunt the Seal. As Burgers tells it, the game “takes a week to play. The victor must procure enough seals to insure his own survival. He can do this only by starving his co-players. The price of survival is killing; the lesson is re-enforced by the story of the old woman who was left on the ice to die because she could not contribute to her society.

“The book word for this is ‘senilicide,’ a tough word for fifth-graders, but they got it. They approved and defended abandonment of the old woman. At this point I deviated from the manual and asked one of the children what he would call this act in terms of his own culture. He gulped and answered, ‘murder.’” When Sheilah Burgers was confronted with having departed from the manual, she says, “I was reprimanded for infusing irrelevant questions into the program”⁵⁰

Courses like MACOS, says Dr. Onalee McGraw, coordinator and spokeswoman for the National Coalition for Children, in speaking before the Senate subcommittee that controls the NSF’s budget, have caused functional illiteracy and social and moral uncertainty in today’s high school students. These “hip” literature and behavioral social studies courses have been substituted for geography, history, economics, English, and hard sciences. McGraw blames the educational philosophy of these contemporary courses that question and discard parents’ views, moral standards, and religious beliefs as being largely responsible for America’s severe social youth problems.⁵¹

MACOS is not just an anthropology course. It is a subtle social engineering and psychotherapy program whereby 10-year-old children are molded to accept humanistic concepts. The course suggests that man’s values and behavior are determined by specific environmental pressures as opposed to theistic principles. MACOS implies an evolutionary and mechanistic philosophy of relativism that denies traditional American values based on the Judeo-Christian heritage. Consequently, it dehumanizes man and humanizes animals by implying that man has evolved from lower animals and has received his social behavior from them. Then, through

open discussions, man's antisocial actions are rationalized.

Due to the religious zeal of progressive educators to resocialize school children to accept morals contrary to those of the majority of Americans, loud voices within our nation are demanding action to stop this undemocratic incursion into school children's minds. Today a battle rages between liberal educators who insist on having academic freedom while charging parents with censorship, and parents who demand selection guidelines while charging progressive leaders with social engineering.