

Intense Persecution in Germany

Amid rumours that both the MoE and ERO are starting to put up unreasonable barriers against home educators in New Zealand, German home educators are being hammered. The Bauer family (Michael & Sigrid), members of the Professing Evangelical-Reformed Church in Giessen, had removed their five children from the local state school back in 2001, saying the school taught many things contrary to their religious beliefs. When they were brought to court last July, things did not go well.

But according to the judges in Giessen, the state does not need to heed parents' educational principles when creating contents for public schools. On the contrary, the parents must accept the educational aims, contents and methods of the public school even if they *contradict* their religious convictions. When creating school lessons, they have to take into consideration the influences that children are confronted with in their daily life through the media and classmates.¹ Such considerations are largely irrelevant to many Christian home educators, however, who do not have either televisions or classmates.

But this kind of logic is often lost on state bureaucrats. Threatened with losing their child, one family escaped to Austria. Yet even though they no longer lived in Germany, a judge gave custody of the child to the state and let the family know if it ever returned to Germany, the child would be taken. Another German home educating family lost a court case when the judge ruled that the parents had no rights to have

input into the manner and method of education in government schools. In this case, hard-core pornography reportedly was being used to teach the children in their German-language course.²

Another group of home educators in Bavaria, the Twelve Tribes Community, have been fined for not sending their children to school. Authorities raided their community, Klosterzimmern, on Thursday October 7, 2002 and forcibly bused their children to school.³ (See photo on page 2.)

Though the German government talks of a mandatory school-attendance law, the home educa-

tors say no such law exists. Instead, they cite articles of freedom of religion, freedom of conscience and parental rights that are supposed to be upheld.⁴

Since the families all refused to pay the fines they continued to receive, 18 of the parents were ordered to go to jail in August 2004. Repeated attempts to communicate and meet with state authorities fell on deaf ears. The home educators noted that it was becoming more and more obvious that the issue at stake was not the well-being of the children, but to demonstrate who has more power.

At last 7 fathers were rounded up and actually imprisoned on October 18, 2004. When the first was released six days later, he said, "The prison sentence wasn't easy, but it did nothing to change our convictions. Wrong will not always remain wrong. To act according to the dictates of our con-

"Discretionary Entrance" Is Our Door into University

A helpful update from the Massey University website follows (http://enrol.massey.ac.nz/eligible/eligible_home.htm). (For other NZ universities, look up their regulations for "Discretionary Entrance" and get an interview with the enrolment officer.)

Home schooled students who will not be working towards the NCEA may apply for Discretionary Entrance (DE) on the basis of what they have achieved. However, the onus is on the student (or his/her parents) to provide evidence that the work completed is at an equivalent standard to the DE requirements set out above. This is likely to mean that the parent seeks the assistance of a regis-

tered teacher to assess a sample of the work and to write that, in his/her professional opinion, the work is of equivalent standard to a student studying Level 2 unit standards.

The ACE programme (Accelerated Christian Education) followed by some home schooled students has been recognised so that a student who holds a Year 13 Certificate which includes at least four credits in subjects designated Year 13 level may be considered for Admission with Equivalent Status (AES) at Entrance level. Holders of Year 12 Certificates may be considered for Discretionary Entrance if they are NZ citizens or permanent residents.

science is right. Conscientious objectors are also granted the freedom of conscience. The “wrong” of the members of the resistance in the Third Reich is being praised today, the members are being esteemed as heroes. Our conscience resists the one-sided education of the state with the values of a consumption and achievement-oriented society. How far have we fallen, if any kind of perverse way of life is being applauded, but a sincere education according to the Bible is being punished? Where are the citizens of this country who will stand up against injustice?”⁵

Richard Guenther, an American expatriate who lives in Germany and is helping the Twelve Tribes Families, says, “The claim of the parents is that the local school is raising the children to be promiscuous and the girls prostitutes. Christian family values are being replaced by the state’s moral values, which are designed to create autonomous individuals. The authority of the parents is not being recognized. As is typical, the parents are declared to be incompetent to raise their children, and the state is given right in whatever approach they take. Here the state is replacing the Christian



7 October 2004, Klosterzimmern in Bavaria, Germany: Female police officers carry a 17 year old girl out of the way....she apparently held onto her siblings, obstructing police from loading them onto the bus.

worldview with those of the New Age, particularly the use of its psychological techniques and occultism. Relaxation techniques are being used in school, which include darkening the room and having the small children lay down beside each other, boys and girls together. Using a feather, they are to explore the neighboring child to find out where the

most sensitive part of his body lies. They are encouraged to touch their neighbor anywhere on his body. Fourth grade students are shown videos of sexual intercourse and how a baby comes forth from this act. The narrator of the video assures the students that this sexual act feels good and is fun. Homosexuality must be accepted as normal, and the children are encouraged to examine themselves as to their own sexual orientation. Darwin’s evolution theory must be accepted as truth.”⁶

The state holds that their public school attendance is more important for the well-being of the children than the parents’

homes. Thirteen children are threatened with removal from their families.⁶

One of these fathers shared with us that in the old Communist USSR, he was not afraid of the government officials. When they once told him that he had to enlist in the military or else face prison, he chose prison. But here in Germany he says that he is very much afraid of the government officials. Whereas under the oppressive communist regime the families were left intact, here in Germany’s “free” democratic federal republic, where the federal law guarantees citizens freedom of religion and conscience and parental rights, children are at risk of being taken away from their God-given and natural parents when government “experts” deem it best for the well-being of the child. This is a scandal and a travesty of justice!⁶

Thomas Wriessnig of the German Embassy in Washington, D.C., has responded to the situation by writing: “Article 7 of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany ensures that the government makes education available to every citizen. Homeschooling may be equally effective in terms of test scores. It is important to keep in mind, however, that school teaches not only knowledge but also social conduct. Daily contact with other students from all walks of life promotes tolerance, encourages dialogue among people

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All correspondence to:
The Editor, Craig S. Smith
PO Box 9064
Palmerston North
New Zealand
Ph.: (06) 357-4399
Fax: (06) 357-4389
mail@hef.org.nz
www.hef.org.nz

Hear, my son, your father’s instruction,
and reject not your mother’s teaching.
— Proverbs 1:8

Trading Post



For Sale:

Easy Grammar Plus (as new)....\$40
 Natural Speller
 by Kathryn Stout.....\$15
 Wordly Wise Vocabulary bk. 5
 (year 9 students).....\$10
 Wordly Wise Vocabulary bk. 6
 (year 10 students).....\$10
 Complete Writing Lessons for the
 Primary Grades.....\$15
 Complete Writing Lessons for the
 Intermediate Grades....\$15

Contact:

Sue
 Ph. (06) 342-5747

For Sale:

A Beka

Language A, Teachers Ed....\$15
 Language C, Teachers Ed....\$15
 "The Mighty Acts of God", a guide
 to simple family drama times,
 by Doorposts.....\$5
 (All in excellent condition.)

Contact:

Helen
 Ph. (06) 327-5080

of different beliefs and cultures and helps students to become responsible citizens. The public has a legitimate interest in countering the rise of parallel societies that are based on religion or motivated by different world views and in integrating minorities into the population as a whole. If we are to achieve integration, not only must the majority of the population prevent the ostracization of religious minorities or minorities with different world views, but minorities must also remain open and engage in dialogue with those who think differently or share different beliefs. Such a dialogue with minorities is not only necessary but also enriches an open, pluralistic society."⁷

The Home Educators had a court case on Tuesday 18 January 2005, which went really badly. According to Richard Guenther:

"The law certainly was not applied in this case and the prosecution's attorney, because he was mad at our attorney for exposing the fact that he didn't even know the laws of his own state of Bavaria, recommended to the judge that the fines against the family being tried be tripled to 6,000 Euros (NZ\$10,940) per child. The judge of course ruled in his favor. The press published an article about how the German government was now going to hunt down other possible homeschoolers who may be doing it underground.

"The [state bureaucrats] we are dealing with on behalf of these poor families have no heart whatsoever. They have all been so conditioned that they seem unable to have any natural feelings. What is amazing is that they seem unconcerned about their own children in the school system after we expose to them what is going on in the schools. If they had any feelings, they certainly would at the least look into the matter for the protection of their own children.

"It has gone so far that the German health department sanctioned a study about parents and their little two and three year old children and their sexuality. The recommendation of this study was that the parents should sexually arouse their small children and encourage their children to touch them as well!"⁸

And now the problem is escalating even more. Guenther again: "The Education Minister of the German state of Nordrheinwestfalen, Ms. Ute Schaefer, stated that she is now pursuing to prose-

cute 26 families with 54 children in her state. The families are now being hunted down like dogs just like the Jews were hunted down under Hitler. Schaefer's argument is that the children have a right to school, and therefore the mandatory school law is legitimate. Now, if the child chooses not to go to school, then the state steps in because the state knows what is good for the child."⁹

The American Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) and the Twelve Tribes Community are both encouraging home educators everywhere to email the German authorities to object to their repressive tactics. Education Minister for the state of Nordrheinwestfalen, Ms. Ute Schaefer, can be emailed at: ute.schaefer@msjk.nrw.de. Other officials to contact can be found at the Twelve Tribe's website: <http://www.twelvetribes.com/controversies/protestletters.html>

Notes:

1. <http://tinyurl.com/4akle>, Hessian's State Court of Appeals: Compulsory school attendance is more important than religious faith, *idea-Pressdienst* – 088/2004/3 magazine, July 29, 2004.
2. http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=40332, Judges try to snatch homeschoolers, September 8, 2004, WorldNetDaily.com
3. See photos of the raid at <http://tinyurl.com/56old>.
4. http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=42476, Germany continues targeting homeschoolers, January 21, 2005, WorldNetDaily.com
5. See the chronology of events at <http://tinyurl.com/46xah>.
6. Email from RGuen1000@aol.com on 17 January 2005.
7. Email from anfrage@germany.info on 19 January 2005.
8. Email from RGuen1000@aol.com on 20 January 2005.
9. Email from RGuen1000@aol.com on 26 January 2005.

Some of the German home educating families: these fathers pictured have already spent time in jail for their convictions.



Home Educators to Get Same Student Tracking Numbers as Schools

If passed, the Education Amendment Bill, introduced to Parliament November 30, 2004, will see all children given unique identity numbers as soon as they have any contact with the Ministry of Education or any licensed “education and care provider”. The Bill specifically identifies home educators, those with exemptions from the system, as being liable to receive these ID numbers. In fact any licensed early childhood education and care facility could assign these numbers, meaning children could receive their numbers before their first birthday. In other words, from the day this Bill is passed into law in its present form, *all children* will receive unique identifying numbers, from no later than their 6th birthdays (in the case of home educators).

The Bill deals with quite a range of issues. Part 30 of the Bill deals with the numbers. It starts off by saying, “The purpose of this Part is to authorise the use by authorised users of national student numbers for specific purposes, in order to facilitate the accurate use and transfer, by authorised users, of information relating to individual students.” Section 343 of the Bill says, “The Secretary may assign a national student number to any student who has been granted an exemption under section 21 or section 22.” That’s us home educators. These numbers are designed to be used across various state agencies known as “authorized users” for “specific purposes”: the bill lists these purposes as: “monitoring and ensuring student enrolment and attendance; ensuring education providers and students receive appropriate resourcing (“appropriate” means they don’t want all these immigrants with unusual names double dipping by signing up twice to get the 20 hours of free day care a week for 3-4 year olds currently on offer); statistical purposes; research purposes; ensuring that students’ educational records are accurately maintained.”

And who are the “authorized users” of these numbers? So far the Bill lists: education providers, the MoE, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, the Tertiary Education

Commission, some kind of Crown Entity that used to be known as the Career Service and any other agency or body declared by regulations made under section 347 to be an authorised user. Section 347 says, “The Governor-General may from time to time, by Order in Council, make regulations identifying any agency or body as an authorised user.” For those who didn’t know, an Order in Council is a handy device which allows even unelected people like the GG to slip clean past the entire Parliamentary process those laws, rules and regulations which might prove embarrassing in the light of public debate. Of course, the Governor-General is supposed to first consult the Privacy Commissioner. What a laugh! The Privacy Commissioner has already given approval for this Bill to go through!

We had thought that our much-vaunted Privacy Act, which actually addresses the issuance of unique identifying numbers in Privacy Principle 12, would protect us from these kind of “Big Brother” tactics which will allow the state to chart every aspect of our individual private lives. We definitely thought wrong. I suggest to you that even though this is an Education Amendment Bill, the reasons given to justify issuing these numbers will apply to every single person, no exceptions. I further suggest that purposes for which these numbers can be used which are as vague as “statistical and research purposes” could easily reach into every single area of your life. I see no guaranteed protection whatsoever for our personal privacy from any agency whatsoever in either this Bill or the Privacy Act of 1993. (To see a review of that Act, refer to *TEACH Bulletin* #25, March 1999).

To summarise so far: from the passage of this Bill, all children will be getting unique numbers which will allow them to be tracked by virtually any agency of the state (and in time, many non-state agencies as well), for virtually any reason, and all these agencies can happily trading this information among themselves.

So then, will this next generation carry these numbers for life or are they really only “student numbers” that will cease to be operative at the end of their academic careers? There is nothing in the Bill about that. And since research is a stated purpose of the number, “longitudinal studies” lasting the entire life of the student will be facilitated by these numbers.

Section 345 says, “Despite anything in this Part, a student may use or disclose his or her own national student number for any purpose.” Think of the implications. Students could be encouraged by all kinds of agencies to give their numbers as de facto all purpose ID numbers, for the only prohibitions I could find against an “unauthorized user” were rendered totally toothless by the allowed defense of having a “reasonable excuse” for possessing such numbers, the most obvious excuse being, “The student gave it to me.”

This Bill extends Trevor Mallard’s political agenda into the preschool, for it gives him the powers to prescribe a curriculum framework for early childhood education and care centers as well as strengthen licensing and administration regulations. If your playgroup wants even a look in at receiving any government grants, this will apply to you.

You know, the Privacy Act, the NZ Bill of Rights Act, this Education Amendment Bill and others do not do what they all profess to do: enhance personal freedom and security. Prior to their existence, the state did not have the clear power to collect and collate information on people or to tell them whom they could and could not rent their own property to. Now the state most definitely has these powers over us. The state got these powers by passing legislation that sounded as if it was protecting us, when in fact, it was delineating that the state now had these powers. The powers to intervene in our private lives are now clearly spelled out in legislation and with all kinds of loopholes and mechanisms for extending these powers.

This writer sees a definite trend here. I remember the days, only

back in the 1970s, when people didn't even have IRD numbers! Now even children will have numbers issued to them with this latest Education Amendment Bill with the express purpose of state agencies tracking them through a not-specified open-ended number of years, with the information shared with a non-specified and non-limited number of agencies. Parts of this Bill define what groups look like who are not subject to its provisions, the idea being to exempt private families in their own homes. But since private homes are partly subject to this Bill's provisions already and since the basic activities of "education and care" (undefined) are being licensed and regulated by this Bill, it seems only a couple of small tweaks would be needed to make every home with children subject to the NZ Education Act.

This isn't being paranoid. Just last December the USA did the unbelievable: the Intelligence Reform Bill was passed giving the Department of Homeland Security the power to override the 50 state governments and issue all driver's licenses and birth certificates. Newborns will automatically be given Social Security numbers which will track them for life. (See <http://tinyurl.com/5pfk4>).

Home Educators who withdrew or kept their children out of the state system because they didn't want their children being tracked and compared and recorded by the Ministry of Education need to protest against this Bill. A good place to start would be the Privacy Commissioner, Marie Shroff, PO Box 466, Auckland, ph. 0800 803 909, www.privacy.org.nz asking what ever happened to protections to our privacy? There are certainly none guaranteed in this Bill. (The Bill can be viewed at: <http://www.knowledge-basket.co.nz/gpprint/docs/bills/20042361.txt>).

The Language Police, Part 4 (Final)

The new consensus that undergirds the contentless curriculum is built on certain assumptions: that America lacks any common, shared culture worth speaking of, much less

preserving; that there are no particular literary works that should be read by all students; that historical studies are problematic insofar as they require students to memorize and recall certain facts (this is derided as "rote learning"). The traditional curriculum could have been expanded to make it more inclusive of women and minority groups, but instead critics attacked its very nature. They derided it for emphasizing a "canon" and for expecting students to master a "body of knowledge" (the notion of "mastery" was itself suspect). Once the very idea of mastering a specific set of facts and texts was discredited, there was nothing left to teach but various methods, such as "basic skills," "discovery learning," "critical thinking," and "problem solving."

Wars were waged over various Educational Standards. What should and shouldn't be taught? What could and could not be tested? Attempts to compile a standard (for example, a list of books each student was expected to have read) ended in uproars. The books, for example, would be condemned as too white or too male or too Eurocentric, etc. The moral of this story about standards is all too clear. Any effort to prescribe content will provoke controversy. And remaining silent about "content" has one obvious advantage: no one can complain about "what" is taught if there is no "what" to argue about.

Politically, the path of least resistance has been to issue "standards" that offend no one. Controversy is far more likely to erupt in response to sins of commission than to sins of omission. So omission is the order of the day — a goal achieved by concentrating on skills while ignoring content. Since most state standards do not include any specific content, the state tests of English cannot ask questions that assume any specific prior knowledge. When taking a test, students are given a poem or short story and asked to answer questions about it, either in multiple-choice, short-answer or extended-essay form. They are tested on their ability to analyze an unfamiliar passage, not

to reflect on a text they have previously studied. Most state history exams similarly assume no prior knowledge. Tests typically include "document-based" questions in which students are asked to analyze a document (for example, a cartoon, a short passage or an excerpt from an article) that pertains to some historical issue. The correct answer can be found by reading the "documents" carefully without knowing anything about the historical context. Also common is a type of question in which the student is given a quotation from some historical figure and then asked to pick a multiple-choice answer that captures the meaning of the quotation. The 1999 New York Regents exam in global history included a map question about "the Mongol Empires, 1200-1350," which could be answered correctly without knowing anything about the Mongol Empires. Then there is the "historical" graph, which contains information about an issue like wages or unemployment or gross domestic product in certain decades; students are asked to read the chart to answer questions, which they can do without any knowledge of the historical period.

This approach to testing — similar to that found on the SAT — is different from the one used for the Advanced Placement, Cambridge International and International Baccalaureate examinations. All of these elite programs publish a syllabus which describes the material that will be examined; teachers and pupils prepare for the examination by studying the syllabus. The exams are based on specific, clear content standards. Students are expected to study specific events in history and specific works of literature in order to prepare for the exams. To prepare for the new state tests, by contrast, a student need only be able to read and express an opinion. In effect, testing agencies and state education officials have figured out a way to administer "standards" that do not require any specific knowledge of literature or history.

It is unrealistic, obviously, to expect the government to lead the way in establishing high standards for history and literature. As my own ex-

(Continued on page 6: Police)

Coming Events

Tue, 1 Feb 2005

5th Annual Home Education Celebration

Venue: One Tree Hill/ Maungakiekie Domain (adjacent to Stardome Planetarium) 670 Manukau Road, Royal Oak, Auckland.

Contact: Dawn Burgin, Ph (09) 274-3296, Mob: 027-435-8922

Time: 11:00am-2:00pm

Cost: Free. BYO picnic.

Co-ordinated by Auckland Home Educators Inc

A popular gathering of 200+ parents, kids & supporters. Let's see how big we can make it for 2005! Fabulous opportunity to mix 'n mingle, buy/sell resources, enjoy a sense of belonging, play games, etc. If you're investigating the Home Education option, come and see first-hand what we're all about. Also refer to the poster in your local library & check out our website at www.home-education.org.nz for updates.

Mon, 21 February 2005

ERO Review Workshop Christchurch

Venue: Bishopdale Reformed Church, 90 Highsted Rd, Bishopdale, Christchurch.

Cost: \$5 per family prepayment.

Contact: Adrienne, Ph (03) 347 7168, braams@slingshot.co.nz, www.che.org.nz

Programme

7:00pm start. If you are having a review, or want some idea of what to expect and how best to prepare when you do have one, this is the evening for you. We are hoping to have Russell Cannon, Review Officer in Canterbury and South Island, speak for the first part of the evening, with remaining time covering the following topics: Preparation for a review; What happens at a review; Review questions examined; Support at a review.

Sat, 19 March 2005

Palmerston North Home Educators Workshop

Venue: Harmony House, Reformed Church, 541 Ruahine Street,

Palmerston North

Cost: \$15.00 per person/couple or \$5.00 per session

Contact: Barbara. Ph: (06) 357 4399, Barbara@hef.org.nz

Programme

9.00am Registration

9.15am Welcome & Notices

9.30am Session 1: Two Electives:

1a What a Christian Marriage Looks Like - Ed Rademaker

1b Getting Started in Home Education: getting an exemption, pulling children out of school, ERO visits etc. - Craig Smith

10.30am Morning Tea

11.00am Session 2: Three Electives:

2a Biblical Marriage: the environment for effective home education - for the men - Ed Rademaker

2b Biblical Marriage: the environment for effective home education (for women only) - Carolyn Rademaker

2c Raising our daughters to be Godly wives and mothers - Craig Smith

12.30pm Lunch - byo - hot drinks provided

1.30pm Session 3: Two Electives:

3a Raising Our Sons to Be Godly Providers, Husbands and Fathers - Craig Smith

3b Make appointment for personal time with the Rademakers

3.00pm Afternoon Tea

3.30pm Session 4: Two Electives:

4a Reforming the Future through Home Education - Craig Smith

4b Make appointment for personal time with the Rademakers

5.00ish Finishing up.

(Continued from page 5: Police)

perience in the standards movement confirms, the government, like the educational publishing industry, abhors controversy — and establishing standards with real content is nothing if not controversial.

What, then, is to be done?

Parents must inform themselves. And even when they seem to be

standing alone, they must insist upon something better than the current fare. For their part, teachers must free themselves from the expectation that whatever they teach must boost children's self-esteem, and that whatever students read should mean whatever they think it means in light of their own personal experience.

Great literature in any event does not comfort us. It does not make us feel better about ourselves. It is not written to enhance our self-esteem or to make us feel that we are "included" in the story. It takes us into its own world and creates its own reality. It shakes us up; it makes us think. Sometimes it makes us cry. The same is true for the study of history. It is possible to spend one's time learning only about one's own family or ethnic group. But there are worlds of adventure, worlds of tragedy awaiting us if we are willing to let go of our solipsism, our narcissism, our need to study only ourselves.

There is a price to be paid for the flight from content and from knowledge during the past generation. As they advance in school, children recognize that what they see on television is more realistic than the sanitized world of their textbooks. The numbing nihilism of the contentless curriculum produced by the puritans on the Left and Right merely feeds a popular appetite for the exciting nihilism of an uncensored and sensationalized popular culture, skillfully produced by amoral entrepreneurs who are expert at targeting the tastes of bored teenagers.

Intelligence and reason cannot be developed without the judgment that is formed by prolonged and thoughtful study of history, literature and culture, not only that of our own nation but that of other civilizations. That we have turned away from such studies is not encouraging. But I do not believe that we should accept mediocrity as our fate.

(Edited by Genevieve Smith from an essay by Diane Ravitch titled, "Education After the Culture Wars", <http://catholiceducation.org/articles/education/ed0188.html>)