

Brought to School by the Police?

by Henning Köhler

Translated by Ted Warren

Never give in. Force the children to school no matter what. Use medicine, the police or pills. This is serious.

In a *Spiegel* Online-Interview, the leading German SPD politician, Sigmar Gabriel tried to use the “Sarrazin-Effect” for his own purposes. Thilo Sarrazin’s book, *Deutschland Schafft Sich Ab*, proposes expulsion if the foreigner’s will to integrate is missing and threatens to use the police to do so. For example, if immigrant children do not attend school.

But it is difficult for the police to pick up a Turkish child who skips school and not a German. That is too stupid! Gabriel must allow justice to reign within his threats. Whoever does not send his children to school consistently and on time, whether he is German or an immigrant, “We will send over the police and you will pay the fine.” As so often in our beautiful, new world, the maxim for crisis management is threat rather than cooperation. As if that is how we will resolve the integration problem!

In order to control more of the suspected or actual black sheep, Gabriel wants to sharpen mandatory school attendance to the point of including tardiness as deserving of punishment. For him tardiness is so important that children, in case of an emergency, should be brought to school by the police. Recently there was an article in the German medical periodical, *Deutschen Arzteblatt*, concerning fear of school. The tone of the article was to never give in, force the children to school no matter what. Let us remember the following facts:

In most European countries there is not mandatory school but rather mandatory education.

According to the United Nations Convention on Children’s Rights, all parents may decide which type of education they want their children to experience. This privilege is removed only if the parents lose their right to parenting.

School today is a leading pathological factor in the childhood years. Responsible parents have the duty to seriously consider whether or not they want to send their children to school.

Critical experts in education doubt whether “the school arrangement is the right prerequisite for educating human beings.” (Ursula Germann-Mueller)

Rather than perfecting the imposed school system, should we not take an example from Denmark? There almost anyone can start a school with very few bureaucratic regulations, even in their own living room. The government takes on 80% of the costs. This model works. A study showed recently that in Denmark the world’s most satisfied people live. Is there a correlation here?

Forty years ago a priest Ivan Illich became famous due to his appeal in the book, *Entschulung der Gesellschaft (Deschooling Society)*. Today we experience a repressive trend towards total “schooling” of our children’s lives. How the times have changed. Slowly a new movement is emerging. Here is some literature for interested parents:

Andre Stern: *Und ich war nie in der Schule. Geschichte eines glücklichen Kindes* [And I was never in school. The story of a happy child.]

Johannes Heimrath (editor): *Die Entfesselung der Kreativitet. Das menschenrecht auf Schulverweigerung*. [Unleashing creativity: The human rights on truancy].

Small, but fine contributions.