

## **Why home schooling should NOT be regulated.**

### **A British home educator's reply to a hostile global agenda**

by Neil Taylor

Stimulated, or more accurately provoked, by a Stamford Professor's article of the same title (minus the 'NOT') this is a UK home educator's response to what home educators experience as a direct threat to, and attack on, their legally protected freedom. That is the freedom to take direct responsibility for the education of their children, for which they are legally responsible. Such articles are invariably used in the courts to legitimise limiting those freedoms and inform policy makers by telling them what they want to hear. In the view of this writer, while they may be for the most part well meaning and informed by liberal sentiment and genuine concern for the wellbeing of children, they unconsciously reinforce totalitarian tendencies and threaten the very pluralistic society they espouse.

Although the author of this reply possesses a BA 2:1 (Hons) in Philosophy, I consider it almost an irrelevance and certainly nothing to compete with an author near the top of the academic profession in one of America's most prestigious universities. What gives me the temerity to take on this professor and say that he could not be more wrong in his thesis, is a far more relevant and unique qualification, unrecognised by academia as of any credible status: I am his subject! I am a home educator in the UK to our 3 children, the eldest of whom, at 18, is now in full time employment in a much coveted position carrying huge responsibility; rare to be awarded to someone considered so young by today's standards of the infantilised adult. People forced by economic coercions and the ever rising compulsory education age to be denied adult responsibility. He is doing very well, and is very happy. He has a life I envy, a life I never had.

Yet according to Professor Reich, my son does not and cannot exist. Because we not only failed to send him to a state school to be instructed in how to be a citizen, in order to avoid becoming a 'civically disabled adult', but worse than that, we never overtly taught him citizenship at all! He has never come to the attention of the police, or taken drugs or committed petty acts of vandalism or theft, yet is full of life, interests and has a wide circle of friends. He has never taken any GCSE's or 'A' levels nor shown the slightest interest in going to university, despite having graduates for parents. A home educated friend of his, by contrast, has just been accepted into Oxbridge to study law, also with no GCSE's or 'A' levels, something that is also not supposed to be possible according to the normal propaganda. The secret world of home educators seems destined not only to remain secret, but if at all possible, to be eradicated, and become subsumed under the monolithic globalised 'one right way', subject to spurious 'standards' and 'testing', as if all the ways in which humans may successfully learn could possibly be subject to such blunt instruments without damage, when they are barely even understood. As John Taylor Gatto points out, standardized testing is not about determining excellence, it is about standardisation.

Another qualification which entitles me to argue with Stamford professors is one that I feel immensely proud of and privileged to have obtained. I consider it my real education. For the last dozen years I have been in daily email contact with hundreds of other home educators; supporting one another, comparing notes, discovering patterns to hitherto lonely experience and in the process making new discoveries and creating new knowledge. Such forms of association are unprecedented in human history, and an aspect of the communication revolution's potential to contribute to the sum of human knowledge that I have yet to see treated seriously by academia. That we might be dismissed in such forms of association as a self selecting mutually reinforcing bunch of deluded individuals seems a likelier response to such potential competition to academia's

fancied, but itself deluded, monopoly on the advancement of knowledge. But we have a secret, which should be fatal counter to such potential charges: the empirical evidence of our own children and what becomes of them. Their quiet success, enjoyment and fulfilment in life whatever they chose to do. But to academia we are mere anecdotes, and thereby easily dismissed, as indeed Reich does: 'To promote unregulated home schooling on the basis that home schooled children often win the National Spelling Bee and annually win coveted admissions spots to Stanford and Yale is poor argumentation.' Maybe it is poor argumentation, but it also begs the question just what we do have to do to get noticed and taken seriously, when jumping through the highest hoops simply won't cut it. Notice that he doesn't have to make the case for regulation; it is enough to simply state it, despite the absence of the kind of regulation he seeks for ways of learning that are as old as the species itself. No, *we* have to justify what we do by the imposed standards of the state education system. He doesn't say that exactly as I have, but what alternative institution other than one set up by the state is going to compel the standards and testing that he seeks? Home educators already know what that means from at least half a century of encountering the ignorance and despotism of the local education authorities who wrongly imagine, or simply decide, that they have such powers of inspection and testing already; without necessarily any reference to or knowledge of their actual statutory duties.

Reich's two central arguments to justify state regulation of home schooling are to avoid creating 'civically disabled adults' and, through being narrowly confined to the sphere of influence of parents only, 'ethically servile adults'. Once home educators stop rolling about laughing at the breathtaking irony of having the principle faults of the institution of forced education projected on them the main difficulty they experience in dealing with such arguments is the frustration of living in a world rigged to deny them a voice – any meaningful right of reply at a similar volume level to the original insult. Only in this way is such arrant nonsense able to mis-define reality for all with impunity, and thus colonised, silenced and oppressed 'for our own good' by all 'right thinking' people. The arguments themselves are easy to dismiss, the only reason for their persistence is basically their ability to shout down the answers to them.

One of the important discoveries made during this period of my real education is that almost all of the criticisms by the school establishment of home education turn out to be the system's own faults, projected onto those to whom they least commonly apply. Thus an institution which incarcerates all children by force away from society in the exclusive company of their age peers, accuses those whose children remain in the world mixing with people of all ages, of being kept away from society! The state creates a forgery of society and accuses those remaining in the real one of failing to socialise *their* children! 'Teenage rebellion' gets elevated to the status of a child developmental stage, while in our 'experiment' it is barely experienced at all, the obvious rejoinder being to ask, if the child's autonomy is respected, what is there to rebel against? Incarceration perhaps? Meanwhile schools regularly go into dysfunctional meltdown and children become bullies and bullied, drug addicts, etc. Because the system is successfully established and imposed absolutely on all, those few escapees that quickly learn that the emperor really has no clothes, don't stand a chance against the deafening clamour of the rest of the world that 'knows' (from their experience no less) that we must be wrong!

What home educators are essentially doing is conducting an experiment on their children by cutting out the major formative influence on almost all children, and in the process, that altered viewpoint determines a different perspective on how we best learn and ultimately about human nature itself. Quite apart from claiming a right to making our lives our own unique experiments, our experiments are really experiments within an experiment or more precisely, experiments in undoing the bigger experiment of which we are mostly forced to take part in. My wife's great

uncle recounted to her one day how as a child he shared a bedroom with his grandfather; of his grandfather recounting his childhood days to him from a time before the advent of compulsory state schooling. That's how short this period of human history is; it can still be spanned by a couple of lifetimes! We are used to thinking in terms of compulsory schooling not only as if there was never a time when this didn't exist, but as if it is somehow 'natural', 'right', 'essential', 'a human right of the child' even. With apologists like Reich, or Daniel Monk in the UK, that school should have this indispensable status is always simply implicit and never explicit. It is never questioned. Such, it would seem, is how short the collective memory is and how ahistorical.

Quite how a coercive state institution, openly in the service of the corporate interests who shape it to produce the 'human capital' to its desired specification, gets to be unquestioned and unquestionable should be the real subject of concern here. Of course there will be narrow educations by parents seeking to hide other points of view from their children, but state schooling's more subtle and deeply established ways of indoctrination and ways of limiting the child's world is so successful it does not seem to have occurred as a possibility to this professor, who must therefore be its 'victim' no less. He appears to fondly imagine that he lives in a liberal democracy, which is alarming when you consider he lives in George Bush's America, and it is hard to know what more could be said about that without recounting the obvious arguments and evidence a plenty of how states are the principle threat to a pluralist liberal democracy. Again, the irony here is not wasted on home educators in the UK currently being exhausted by our own government as we seek to protect the rule of law and essential liberties that are currently being undone by them at alarming speed. It is us and other concerned citizens in other walks of life who are the principle protectors of Reich's desired society against its usurpers in government; this is no less true on either side of the Atlantic or anywhere else in the world. We don't need lessons in citizenship from government; it needs lessons in government from us. Only when you have fought hostile uncomprehending government agendas for a decade or more, witnessing their treachery and lies and not even managing to stand still for your pains are you qualified to talk about whether or not you live in a liberal democracy. Being showered in establishment plaudits, comfortable salaries and status in the world disqualifies, if anything, and merely points to the likelihood of successful seduction by a system which rewards those who sing its tunes. Ultimately ideas such as Reich's are not even properly his own and he is an unwitting tool of those interests who are irreconcilably opposed to the classical liberal values I have no doubt he genuinely espouses, as do I.

Most home educator's children own their own minds far more completely than their brainwashed school counterparts. For the minority who endure the mental tyranny of their parents their plight can either be addressed by another competing tyranny pretending to offer a 'rounded', 'broad based' (as they like to pretend in the UK) 'education', overtly teaching 'pluralism' 'tolerance' and 'citizenship' in trivial and subtly limiting ways designed to teach relativism and distract from and prevent any real dissent to or meaningful participation in the prevailing status quo, or, if the state stopped posing such a threat to views and ways of life it dislikes and hasn't sanctioned such narrowness itself might ease up. It would certainly no longer need to be so defensive and isolating; preferring openness and dialogue if unaccompanied by direct threats and coercions. It is alarming that someone professing classical liberal beliefs should so eloquently make Mussolini's argument for him; in *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism* (1932) he wrote: 'It is the State which educates its citizens in civic virtue, gives them a consciousness of their mission and welds them into unity.' The old Soviet Union should teach us all that the more beliefs and ways of life are threatened and suppressed the further underground they go and the more dogmatically they are likely to be held.

Parents represent the accumulated lessons learned by their parents, and earlier ancestors, handed

down in ways too numerous and subtle to list here, positive and negative. This experience of life is passed on overtly as well as unconsciously by default to ones children, usually with the hope that they will avoid the mistakes, frustrations and impoverishments their parents endured, or conversely, to be able to learn from and build on their positive achievements. The state seeks to compete with this influence, and to 'mold its future workforce', undertake 'human resources management' – and these are direct quotes from our department of education that can be looked up on their web site. In France, they don't mince words, or pretend the family is the sovereign unit of society as they usually do in the UK. – In March 2000, it was reported that the minister of education further 'regrets that some children are still receiving a double education – at school and at home. Moreover, it is unacceptable that any law should be obeyed except that of the Republic.'

The same fascist sentiment was articulated by Professor Frank Musgrove in *The Family, Education and Society* (RKP 1966): 'It is the business of education in our social democracy to eliminate the influence of parents... We have decided that children shall not be at the mercy of their parents. It is the business of the local education authority to see that they are not.' 'We have decided....' Clearly the royal 'we'. But they had already understood their mission long before he so clearly spelt it out for them, it is just that the law has always preserved that hated parental autonomy and sovereignty, so they have had to act despotically and illegally instead, deliberately hiding or mostly not even knowing or caring what the law is. Why does the law in both our countries protect these liberties? Why is the US constitution silent on the subject of education? Could it be that once this sovereignty of the family was so clearly understood and respected it wasn't considered to need stating? Reich observes but passes no direct comment on what his context inescapably implies is some deficiency or oversight of the law, in need of remedying.

The state moderates such language when talking directly to us as opposed to the business community. This is a narrow monolithic view determined by the dominant user group. It can never compete with the real pluralism that parents' bring to the upbringing of their children and is the only reliable mechanism by which society and government which should serve it can truly tap into and be the product of ordinary people; not so called experts in the lives of others they know next to nothing about.

Parents mostly want their children to be happy, and since we are innately social beings, this guarantees that we will live well with and by the others we share the planet with unless we are mutilated and bullied, which coercing school attendance is. As Thomas Paine understood, society arises out of men's virtues, government out of its vices. One obvious way to grow government therefore, is to grow 'men's vices' in order to justify more government in precisely the kind of vicious downward spiral we are all currently enduring, Stanford professors possibly excepted. A proven way to do that very efficiently is to compel everyone to be schooled. In response to the information revolution that now makes a non-officially sanctioned or directed education easy the globalised education system, based on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Prussian model, is reinventing itself with hitherto unprecedented vigour; lest it lose its control over its subject populations. Its principle use for the technology that is liberating ordinary people is to use that same technology to create mass surveillance and 'citizen' databases of all kinds and to get inside the heads of the 'consumer'. Better to both increase and continue to pull on the strings they have attached. In what amounts to an arms race for who gets to own and control lives more and more of life is being regulated and controlled by government.

The principle successful modus operandi of the dominant user group, basically corporations and banks, is to front dupes who genuinely believe in their cover stories and pretend to, for example, seek to protect children from the toxic influence or abuse of their parents; in reality being merely in direct competition with them, so that they may grow up to become most useful to maintaining

privilege. Government is the principle child abuser. It abuses all children, literally systematically, institutionally, by stealing and institutionalising their lives, creating weakness and neurotic dependency, permanent immaturity, compensatory consumption, and ever increasing dependence on government and the rule of 'experts'. It lowers self esteem and destroys self confidence for all but the few it rewards with the best positions in order to ensure its own survival and the elite it really works for. The rest are encouraged to believe 'you can't change the world' by those who make it their business to do precisely that.

We live in a sad world where Stamford professors can make idiots of themselves without substantial risk of ever discovering that they are doing so in front of their colonised subjects. Subjects who can only impotently laugh and rage at them and whose voice is comfortably silenced or, if heard, easily dismissed by the rigged rules of academe backed by money and power, which can determine, for example, that herbalism is unproven if it hasn't submitted to double blind testing only the big drug corporations can afford, never mind humanity's successful use of medicinal plants for millenia from which many drugs are themselves derived. These spurious standards that frequently poison, maim or kill people with their mistakes, also poison and maim all our lives if we did but realise it, by preventing that vital different viewpoint from which to be allowed to truly know ourselves and our true, unmolested natures. Home educators who have stepped outside the universal box viewpoint and absolutism cannot and will not tolerate it. In the ironic name of preserving the very liberal pluralist democracy which is its real enemy, it employs well meaning dupes to pull the wool while sincerely believing in the righteousness and goodness of their actions. Regulation of home schooling threatens to impose its will and its purpose on all. No system based on lies can survive many who know the truth and they must never be allowed to be heard, except when accompanied by decisive ridicule. That system of suppression has been successfully honed for millennia, and is essentially nothing new. So whose side are you really on, professor, bearing in mind that your comfortable life and status might depend on your answer?