

How an Imaginary Movement Is Being Used to Attack Courses and Books

When irrational attacks are made on teaching materials, educators must be prepared to defend curricular freedom.

Tactics debated

Opposition continues to Tactics in East Gibson School board Monday

Patron concerns and considerable time comprised a major portion of the Monday night meeting of the East Gibson School Board. Jeannine George addressed the board on the subject of Tactics, saying that she felt the program was put on hold only to give those teaching it time to drum up support. She referred to a sample work unit, which she said was good for adults, but not for children.

coming to all the board meetings for the four year period. She presented a study in progress. The board has to be held in the library Monday night.

that a person cannot vote until the age of 18, when becoming an adult. She said that the children do not be making decisions. —Altkas said it.

the committee compiling the survey. Several others asked to be included on the committee. Roger Demann was named acting principal of Oakland Elementary following the recommendation of the administration. —The board that the

not recommendations for kindergarten and first grade admission policy. Beginning with the 1988-89 school year a child will have to be five before July 1 to begin school. This date will be moved to June 1 for the 1989-90 school year. This is in keeping with the state guidelines.

Tactics debated; board eyes June vote

Alameda City Journal

45 attend East Gibson meeting

The regular meeting of the East Gibson School Board was held in the library Monday night.

Seitz also explained such skills as recognition, listening, and the skills of every day. He felt that he should be being appointed to the position of principal.

Barthey said he had not been contacted and that he would be interested in the position. He would like to be interviewed for the position.

In the reorganization of the board, Barthey was re-elected as president. Other officers chosen were: Steve Black, secretary; Donnie Barbers, treasurer; and Steve Barbers, secretary.

Tactics decision now set for June by school board

While Tactics was again a major topic of discussion at the Monday night East Gibson School Board meeting on December 18, 1987.

Carnegie school that... the board has to... Vol. 95 No. 48 did not succeed. He addressed the board in the early 1970's. He compared the methods of the schools and the "success" and the "failure" and the religion to play the role until the events of the school.

On-hold Board agrees to stop 'Tactics'

...board did not make a decision on Tactics until June. Mrs. Cecile Caldermeyer, a Wood Memorial teacher and the opponent of Tactics, asked the board if they would oppose the agenda. She was told that the agenda would be held in a separate meeting. She said that the agenda would be held in a separate meeting. She said that the agenda would be held in a separate meeting.

...laughters were heard in the board room. Jeannine George was next to address the board. She said her group had continued researching the Tactics manual, unit two, processing, and what was read in yesterday's Education by A. A. Shek's. She said they had read and instructed the teacher how to use semantic description. George said she felt that it is possible a teacher from East Gibson would be turned down for a teaching position at another school because of the Tactics controversy.

...for posting the minutes in the hallway. He is a financial representative. Under present board contracts to the three year contracts to the building principals. It was noted that this includes Roger Demann of Oakland City.

TAXPAYERS! TAXPAYERS! ARE YOU LOSING YOUR FREEDOM OF SPEECH?

Section 1:B-6-1 Citizens participation 1) Citizen must submit in a signed request, the Monday prior to the meeting, a reason, a denial by the Board President designee. 2) Citizen will be granted consent or certain agenda items at discretion of the 4) Citizen's limited to 5 minutes and discussion of no more than 15 minutes. Your \$ supports the school and the admin. salaries, yet you need permission to speak? DON'T LET THIS AMENDMENT PASS!! Contact your school board members before Mar. 14th

Tactics discussion dominates again

Angry citizens in Washington and Indiana have attempted to remove a thinking skills program from classrooms, claiming it is tied to the New Age Movement. In at least 12 other states, groups have demanded the banning of textbooks and library books that, they claim, contain elements of global education and New Age religion.¹

What Is the New Age Movement?

In some communities, the New Age Movement has replaced secular humanism as the *cause celebre* in attempts to ban books and courses from the schools. The New Age Movement is a supposed conspiracy that allegedly aims to impose one-world government and one-world religion on all peoples of the earth.

A number of recent books describe this purported conspiracy. For example, in *New Age Globalism*, H. Edward Rowe states:

The humanist "educrats" who control our government schools from the teachers' colleges to the curriculum are not there to raise up a new generation of American patriots who would defend their freedoms to the death. To them that is "passé." They are trying to raise up a new world order of "internationalists" or "one worlders." They are convinced that nationalism is the cause of wars, poverty, disease, and ignorance. They teach that only by raising up a generation of young people who see beyond the borders of their nation to a world order of peace and brotherhood among all nations will we solve these problems. They are convinced that world socialism will rid the world of greed and we will all have enough.

In *Dark Secrets of the New Age* (a 1987 book already in its sixth printing), Texe Marrs declares:

The New Age has cast its rotten net in a bold quest to destroy an entire generation. Its subversive influences permeate all of society. It is imbedded in the curricula of our public schools, infecting kids' library and comic books; it has reared its hideous head on Saturday morning TV cartoon shows and turned many popular cinema productions into celebrations of sorcery, violence, and sadism.

According to Douglas R. Groothuis in *Unmasking the New Age*, the New Age Movement is a result of the counter-culture's displeasure with secular humanism, which they say failed them.

Other critics of the New Age see it as a direct outgrowth of secular humanism, which they believe destroyed public schools.

Anti-New Age books such as those quoted here give schoolbook protesters a pretext for censoring books and courses. The targets are nearly the same as those that have preoccupied the anti-secular humanists for 20 years: values clarification, situational ethics, the occult, global education, one-worldism, Eastern mysticism, transcendental meditation, and so on.

Three Protests

Recently, three school systems in Battle Ground, Washington, and Gibson County, Indiana, have experienced bitter battles in which ASCD's publication, *Tactics for Thinking*, a thinking skills program, was characterized as a manifestation of the New Age Movement.

The first of the three incidents occurred in Battle Ground, where a group of 25 to 30 irate citizens alleged that *Tactics* advances the occult and brainwashes children. Many of the protesters were "home schoolers" who did not even have children in public school at the time. The school board heard the charges and decided they were unfounded. The protesters then took the issue to the Instructional Materials Committee, and that group voted 24 to 1 to deny the challenge.²

But at the time this article was written, *Tactics* was "in a holding pattern" along with other teacher training programs, according to the Battle Ground superintendent, as a "result of the backlash from the community." He added that a district committee was thoroughly investigating a number of thinking skills programs, including *Tactics*, and was preparing a report.

During the spring of 1987, one of the Gibson County school systems invited three educators from Battle Ground to conduct a training program in Indiana. Shortly after that session ended, an Indiana parent read about the Battle Ground controversy in a publication on home schooling. She wrote to Washington for more information about *Tactics*, became convinced that it was tied to the New Age Movement and globalism, and re-

cruited six others for a group that began to protest the thinking skills program in two of the three Gibson County school systems.

In school board meetings at East and North Gibson and in intense letters-to-the editor campaigns in several area newspapers, the seven protesters denounced *Tactics*, the New Age Movement, and globalism. In North Gibson, the superintendent, school board, school administrators, and teachers stood firmly behind *Tactics*. The program had also been endorsed by the Chamber of Commerce, Partners in Education, the Community Advisory Council, and the Ministerial Association. Thus, it was not surprising that the North Gibson School Board, at its meeting in early May 1988, voted 5 to 0 to keep *Tactics*.

The situation in East Gibson was more volatile, however. Three of the protesters teach in East Gibson, and thus they became powerful critics-from-within. Then the president of the East Gibson classroom teachers' association added his voice to the protest: he was quoted as saying that the decision to use *Tactics* should be made by the parents and not by teachers because "students belong to parents, not teachers."³ He also openly opposed academic freedom and teachers' freedom to choose teaching methodology.

The protest leader, who does not have children in public schools in Gibson County, delivered an 8-page statement at the December meeting of the East Gibson School Board. In the statement she charged that *Tactics* uses "the same technique" employed "by hypnotists" and that the technique is also used in mind control and in "New Age meditation."⁴

At the March meeting of the school board, the seven protesters presented their 42-page "Preliminary Report Taken from the Supporting Research of the *Tactics for Thinking* Manual."⁵ In it they claimed that "globalists" will accomplish their goals by being critical of the United States and by stressing the need "for a breakdown of ethnocentrism (nationalism) and a need for some form of world government."

The protesters' report scrutinized all of the references cited by the au-

thors of *Tactics*, Robert Marzano and Daisy Arredondo—a technique I have never before seen in more than 15 years of research on the schoolbook protest movement. By ludicrously strained logic, the protesters linked many of Marzano and Arredondo's references to the New Age Movement. For example, Marzano cites *The Working Brain* by Alexander Romanovich Luria, a standard reference for many psychologists. Luria's involvement in a cross-cultural experiment in Uzbekistan, however, prompted the protesters to tie him to the quest for one-world government.

Early in their document the protesters noted that Marzano does not cite page numbers in his references (*Tactics* uses a modification of the APA referencing system, which does not cite page numbers except in direct quotations); that failure, they assert, "necessitates a reading of the entire book. Exactly what material he is referencing he does not say." They note further: "He makes the chore of researching his work as difficult as possible; therefore any rebuttal by Marzano of a critical appraisal of his work would to us have no credibility. Nor would any rebuttal of anyone we would suspect as a supporter of this liberal thinking be acceptable to us."⁶

The seven protesters tied *Tactics* to globalism by noting that Marzano "references *Megatrends* by John Naisbitt, who states, 'The fact is we have outlived the historical usefulness of representative democracy and we all sense intuitively that it is obsolete.'" The protesters further noted that, on the back cover of *Megatrends*, Naisbitt "received glowing endorsement from Alvin Toffler, author of *The Third Wave*, a New Age book, and from Marilyn Ferguson, one of the world's most infamous New Agers and the author of *The Aquarian Conspiracy*." Thus, the protesters implied that Marzano's *Tactics* should be considered a product of the New Age Movement because he "references" Naisbitt who is endorsed by "New Agers."⁷

Tactics Defended

"Supporters of this liberal thinking" were invited to present a case for

Tactics at the May meeting of the East Gibson School Board. Ronald S. Brandt, executive editor of ASCD, and I were given 35 minutes to present a case for *Tactics* and to refute the arguments of the protesters, who were also given 35 minutes. Then each side was given 15 minutes for rebuttal.

In his opening statement, Brandt explained that *Tactics* "has no relationship whatever to global education. *Tactics* neither favors nor opposes global education; it deals with completely different content. Neither is it intended to promote any form of government; that is not its purpose. We do believe, though, that by teaching individuals how to be responsible, how to organize and remember knowledge, and how to reason logically, *Tactics* will help children become better American citizens."

In the remainder of the 35 minutes, I focused on the arguments the protest leader had presented to the East Gibson School Board in December. I gave the members of the school board and the protesters my commentary on that 8-page presentation.⁸ I also distributed a two-page definition of global education by James Becker, compared the attacks on *Tactics* to the strategies used against secular humanism, and refuted the protesters' definitions of global education, attention control as hypnotism, and pantheism. I further noted that in reviewing the protesters' documents I had detected the direct influence of five national organizations that typically attempt to remove materials from public schools: Eagle Forum, Concerned Women of America, National Association of Christian Educators, Citizens for Excellence in Education, and Educational Research Analysts. Through further investigation, I found materials that could be traced to the John Birch Society. My findings were not disputed in the protesters' rebuttal.

In their 35-minute presentation, the protesters read from their 42-page document and had students act out the similarities among yoga, self-hypnosis, involuntary attention, semi-trances, and three exercises in *Tactics* that they claim could cause students to fall into trances without teachers' realizing it.⁹

In the 15-minute rebuttal, Brandt disputed the charge that the three exercises constitute self-hypnosis. He also repeated his contention that *Tactics* has no connection with global education, globalism, or any "New Age Movement."

The main spokesperson in the protesters' rebuttal was former Indiana State Senator Joan Gubbins, who currently serves as a member of the President's Committee on Education. She congratulated the protesters on their fine work and their concern for the children in the community. Then she read selected passages from Marzano's own evaluation of the thinking skills program and concluded that it is "a little oversold and grossly underinvestigated." Approximately 60 percent of the audience gave Senator Gubbins and her companions a standing ovation. The school board president announced that the board would vote on *Tactics* at its June meeting.

At that meeting, the board passed two resolutions concerning *Tactics* and thinking skills programs. The first called for the East Gibson school corporation not to use *Tactics* in its staff development program, yet allowed teachers who had been using *Tactics* to continue to do so.¹⁰ The second resolution called for the appointment of a team of administrators and teachers "to work together to select materials to formulate a program that will teach our students thinking skills."¹¹

Members of the audience jeered the resolutions and stomped their feet; some loudly sang "God Bless America." The president was forced to adjourn the meeting before business was completed. The protesters vowed to continue their fight to remove *Tactics* from the Gibson County schools, to recall board members if necessary, and to elect their own candidates to the board. They have also called for the removal of *Tactics* from school systems in at least two adjacent counties.

Recommendations

How can educators prepare to meet charges that schoolbooks and courses should be removed because they allegedly reflect the New Age Movement or secular humanism?

Resources

The following books are examples of sources of irrational charges that courses and teaching materials reflect the alleged New Age Movement.

- Becker, James M., ed. *Schooling for a Global Age*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979.
- Bowen, William M., Jr. *Globalism: America's Demise*. Shreveport, La.: Huntington House, 1984.
- Copelan, Rachel. *How to Hypnotize Yourself and Others*. New York: Bell Publishing, 1984.
- Cumbey, Constance E. *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow*. Shreveport, La.: Huntington House, 1983.
- Fross, Garland H., D.D.S. *Handbook of Hypnotic Techniques*. South Orange, N.J.: Power Publishers, 1979.
- Geisler, Norman L. "The New Age Movement." *Bibliotheca Sacra* (January-March 1987).
- Groothuis, Douglas R. *Unmasking the New Age*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1986.
- Hunt, Dave. *Peace, Prosperity, and the Coming Holocaust*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1983.
- LaHaye, Tim. *The Battle for the Public Schools*. Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1983.
- Marrs, Texe. *Dark Secrets of the New Age*. Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1987.
- Rowe, H. Edward. *New Age Globalism: Humanist Agenda for Building a New World without God*. Herndon, Va.: Growth Publishing, 1985.
- Schlafly, Phyllis, ed. *Child Abuse in the Classroom*. Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1984.

1. Become familiar with charges about secular humanism and the New Age Movement. (See resources box and my book, cited in footnote 13 below.)

2. Become familiar with court decisions about secular humanism,¹² keeping in mind that the New Age charges may have to be taken through the courts before they, too, are less threatening. Don't respond hastily to the charge that courses and books reflect the religion of the New Age Movement. Critics must prove that there is a single New Age religion and that it is the religion of the public schools. That charge will be impossible to prove, just as it is impossible to prove that secular humanism is, indeed, a religion and that it is the religion of the public schools.

3. Review the school district's policy for selecting materials, making sure that it is comprehensive.

4. Review the school district's procedures for handling complaints, making sure that no individual has the authority to remove a book or course unilaterally. Then make sure that the procedures are followed in every complaint.

5. Make sure that the policies and procedures adopted by the school system are available to all citizens.

6. Select materials that are consistent with the educational objectives of the school system and of specific courses.

7. Form a support group of persons in the community who are committed to a sound education for all students.¹³

As the controversy over *Tactics* has shown only too clearly, unfounded charges against school materials do not necessarily burn themselves out for lack of substance. Protesters can pose a genuine threat to curricular freedom, no matter what their claims. Educators should not accede to the demands of a vocal minority merely to keep the peace; that would be directly opposed to our American values of freedom of thought and expression. Instead, educators must be prepared to defend their choice of materials with fairness and reason.□

1. Sources: *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association* for January, March, May, July, September, and November of 1987 and for January, March, and May of 1988; also books cited in the resources box by Bowen, Marrs, and Schlafly.

2. Steve Hoskins, Co-President, Battle Ground Education Association, Letter to the Editor, *Oakland City Journal*, Dec. 16, 1987, p. 2.

3. "45 Attend East Gibson Meeting," *Oakland City Journal*, Nov. 10, 1987, p. 1.

4. Presentation of Jeanne Georges to the School Board of the East Gibson School Corporation, December 14, 1987.

5. "A Preliminary Report Taken from the Supporting Research of the *Tactics for Thinking Manual*," March 14, 1988. Compiled by Camille Aydt, Patricia Burkhart, Cecile Caldemeyer, Deborah Cochrane, Jeanne Georges, Vicky Georges, and Abby Vukovich.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

8. Edward Jenkinson, "Commentary on the Presentation of Jeanne Georges to the School Board of the East Gibson School Corporation on December 14, 1987," May 9, 1988.

9. According to the protesters, three exercises in *Tactics* could cause students to fall into self-hypnotic trances. The first suggests to teachers that they have students "focus their attention on some stimulus (e.g., a spot on the wall). Explain to them that you want them to focus all of their energy for about a minute and ask them to be aware of what it is like when they are really trying to attend to something." The second exercise suggests that teachers again have students focus their attention on a stimulus, only this time students are asked to "identify the physical characteristics they associate with raising their energy level (e.g., sit up straight, raise your head off your neck)." The third exercise: "Have students practice the attention control process periodically throughout the day."

10. East Gibson School Corporation, Board of School Trustees, Resolution 3, passed 3-2 on June 13, 1988.

11. East Gibson School Corporation, Board of School Trustees, Resolution 4, passed 3-2 on June 13, 1988.

12. See *Grove v. Mead School District No. 354*, 753 F.2d 1528 (1985), *Mozert v. Hawkins County Board of Education*, 827 F.2d 1058 (1987), and *Smith v. Board of School Commissioners of Mobile County*, 827 F.2d 684 (1987).

13. Edward Jenkinson, *The Schoolbook Protest Movement: 40 Questions and Answers*. Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1986, p. 93.

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