

Victoria Climbié Myth Trotted Out Again

In an article (Guardian 6-10-06) about children whose educational status is unknown by LEAs, many of whom are home educated children, the death of Victoria Climbié again receives prominent mention by highlighting the fact that Victoria was not on a school roll at the time of her tragic and avoidable death. By doing so they hope that readers will assume that Victoria was a home educated child.

What the article does not say, of course, is that the reason that Victoria was not attending school was that there was a failure to provide sufficient school places in her locality. Both the LEA and Social Services knew of her existence and her lack of education and even visited her on several occasions, despite which they still spectacularly failed to meet her needs or indeed protect her welfare.

Baroness Walmsley (Liberal Democrat) in a House of Lords debate on the Education and Inspections Bill also referred to Victoria (17-10-06) when she said: "Children who do not come in front of teachers and other professionals every day may escape attention when they show signs of abuse and mistreatment. That is what happened to Victoria Climbié."

This view fails to account for the fact that many children who are seen by professionals and even attend school die every year from abuse while at the same time there is no record of any child belonging to the home education community suffering a similar fate.

The government has for years shamelessly used Victoria's tragic death to pass new laws in accordance with the European agreement known as the Lisbon Protocol. Even though they were forced to admit, during an exchange in the House of Lords, that plans were already being drawn up prior to Victoria's death. Laws which will eventually (should they ever get the computers to work) mean database tracking for all children in the UK along with complex flagging systems are, we are told, to prevent children falling through the net.

Yet many children's organizations such as Arch have pointed out that these systems will flood social services departments with thousands of bogus cases misdirecting the already stretched resources on the one hand while leading to breaches of human rights on the other. It is time Victoria was allowed to rest in peace.

References:

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www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2006-10-17a.651.0&s=Home+Education#g720.1

