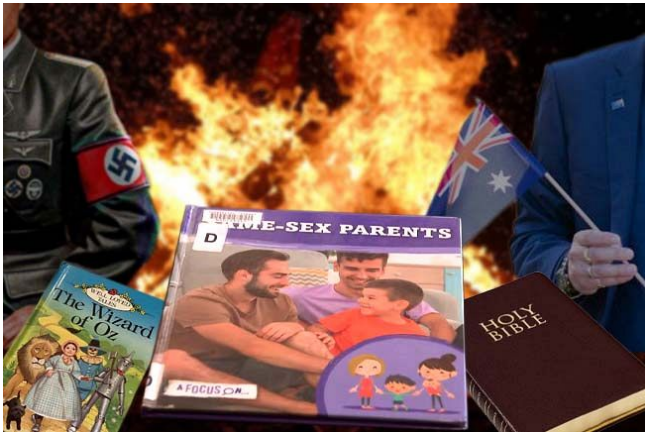


Same-sex parenting book-ban today, world domination tomorrow

By Michelle Pini

10 May 2024



Cumberland City Council's ban on same-sex parenting books has more to do with fascist ideals than any professed concern for the well-being of children, writes [Michelle Pini](#).

NAZI GERMANY infamously burned all books opposed to its fascist ideology in 1933, before Hitler raged his violent onslaught on the world. And this week, a Sydney council has decreed same-sex parenting to be immoral and banned all books on the topic from its libraries.

In an Australian adaptation of the dystopian novel, [Fahrenheit 451](#), a Western Sydney council has used Christian and other assorted religious values as justification for banning the books — though it has not yet ordered they be burned.

Cumberland City Council's chief proponent for the ban, Councillor [Steve Christou](#), declared:

"They [parents] don't want such controversial issues going against their beliefs and indoctrinated into their libraries."

Warming to his subject, Christou claimed unidentified parents *"were very distressed 'cos a two-year-old saw it and was asking questions"*, adding:

"Our kids shouldn't be sexualised!"

Christou, who admits he hasn't even bothered to read the book that sparked the move, did not explain how a book which discusses same-sex marriage parenting is sexualising anyone.

Perhaps someone should let Steve know that a few short years ago, this country finally joined the 21st Century and [permitted](#) people to marry whomever they choose, regardless of gender. The provision of this basic human right belatedly improved the social standing and acceptance of LGBTIQ+ citizens — though it was hardly a radical move, given almost every other democracy in the world had already passed such legislation. Oh, child rearing is also allowed in same-sex marriages, Steve.

These facts kinda make Steve's book ban look less like protecting children and more like plain old homophobia.

There have been some voices of reason, [such](#) as that of NSW Attorney-General

Michael Daley, who has referred the motion to the Anti-Discrimination Board for urgent advice, and Labor councillors who voted against the ban moving to have it overturned.

Describing the move as a "U.S. culture war", NSW Arts Minister John Graham said:

"It's a terrible message to send, to have this councillor importing this U.S. culture war into our country and playing it out on the shelves of the local library."

Ideological book burnings are not new and have occurred since books were invented, including in China in 213–210 BCE, in 20th Century Italy, Russia, Sri Lanka and on and on.

Ironically, the [most banned book](#) in the U.S. is George Orwell's [Nineteen Eighty-Four](#) – in which the central themes are totalitarianism and manipulation of truth – and the most ridiculous example would have to be L Frank Baum's [The Wizard of Oz](#). The latter was [banned](#) from all U.S. public libraries in 1928 because the book was deemed "ungodly" for "depicting women in strong leadership roles".

We're sensing a theme.

Like Orwell's terrifying depiction of "Big Brother" and the "Thought Police" through which all information is controlled, all of these incidents have one thing in common: the shutting down of all debate opposed to the regime of the day.

As [Noam Chomsky explained](#):

'The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow lively debate within that spectrum ...

That gives people the sense that there's free thinking going on, while all the time the presuppositions of the system are being

reinforced by the limits put on the range of the debate.'

Still in the land of the star-spangled banner, book burning is currently enjoying a massive revival in several states, which are banning anything considered "sexually explicit". Florida seems to be taking the lead on this newfound idiocy, even going as far as [prohibiting](#) dictionaries and encyclopedias because they explain sexual conduct.

This created an interesting [controversy](#) over whether the Bible should also be banned, given its sexually explicit content.

Unsurprisingly, the Bible did not join the bonfire. This is because – like the case of Steve Christou and Co, the Florida bans have more to do with worshipping a particular brand of god – such as the "one nation under one god" happy-clapping brand, spruiked by former Trump chief advisor, [Michael Flynn](#) – than with the education or "protection" of its population.

Indeed, in the special Far-Right universe inhabited by people like Steve Christou, Donald Trump, Pauline Hanson and Peter Dutton, everything that doesn't conform to the narrowest possible conservative measure needs to be opposed at all costs. This includes but is not limited to: LGBTIQ+ rights; Indigenous rights; anything that advances women; poor people; refugees; non-Anglo migrants and the downtrodden in general.

Of course, as the [reversal](#) of [Roe v Wade](#) in the U.S. proves, the seemingly infinite capacity of those wishing to undermine the rights of anyone choosing a path not wholly aligned with their own – usually conservative and often religious-based – beliefs should never be underestimated. And today, like the true Americanophiles we are increasingly becoming, an Australian local council has

banned books it doesn't like.

All of which brings us back to the issue of same-sex parenting book bans today, world domination tomorrow.

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