

Appendix N

**The Bing–Franke letter of 26 November 1999
to the FASS Ethics Committee**

26 November, 1999
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Te Kura Kete Aronui
The University of Waikato
Private Bag, 3105
Hamilton, New Zealand

Dr. Anna Green,
Convenor/Chairperson FASS Human Ethics Committee,
University of Waikato

For the attention of the Committee meeting on
Monday, 29 November 9.30 am.

Confidential

It has come to our attention that the then Postgraduate Research Committee approved the DPhil topic 'German in New Zealand' from a postgraduate student in German by the name of Hans J. Kupka towards the end of 1998. A copy of the proposal which was forwarded to us by the University Mediator is attached.

It has to be noted with considerable regret and misgivings that Mr Norman Franke, a member of the German Department was refused access to this proposal by Associate Professor Knufermann, even though Mr.Franke is a member of the German Department and is engaged in research on the use of German in New Zealand. Similarly

Professor Bing was refused access to this proposal by the Deputy Chairperson of the Postgraduate Research Committee Professor Middleton and by the FASS Representative Associate Professor Foster, even though Professor Bing has an interest in the D.Phil research topic because of his ethnic background. The Library which always has the synopses available for all Doctoral proposals, 'unfortunately' did not have Mr Kupka's proposal on file. The other German Department Doctoral student's D.Phil proposal is on file in the Library. Finally, it has to be observed that in the file of the Research and Ethics Committee of the former School of Humanities, the D.Phil proposal of Mr.Kupka is also missing, even though the proposal of the other Doctoral candidate from the Department of German is on file. It seems that somebody has gone to considerable length to withhold Mr.Kupka's Doctoral proposal from scrutiny.

Even though Mr Franke and Professor Bing had expressed considerable reservations about the suitability of Mr Kupka as a Doctoral candidate and about the 'cultural safety' of Mr Kupka's Doctoral proposal, these reservations were to the best of our knowledge not conveyed to the Humanities Research and Ethics Committee by Associate Professor Knufermann and Dr Anne McKim, the Humanities representative on the Higher Degrees Committee. Dr. McKim, moreover, failed to inform the Higher Degrees Committee about the controversial nature of Mr.Kupka's doctoral proposal when that proposal was submitted to that Committee late last year.

Instead of bringing these matters raised by Mr Franke and Professor Bing to the attention of the established committee structure, i.e. the Research and Ethics Committee of the School of Humanities and the Higher Degrees Committee, Associate Professor Knufermann in consultation with Dr. McKim of the then Dean, Professor Oettli, proceeded to set up their new ad hoc committee, to which Mr Franke, but not Professor Bing was invited. Mr Franke submitted a large number of internet writings by Mr Kupka. In its deliberation, after Mr Franke had left the meeting, it was decided that Mr Kupka was entitled to his political views and that there was nothing 'threatening, abusive, or insulting' to the Jewish community in Mr Kupka's writings. Moreover, it was agreed that there were no concerns about the 'cultural safety' of Mr Kupka's Doctoral proposal.

Following that meeting both Mr Franke and Professor Bing were informed of the outcome of the meeting. Professor Bing was informed by Associate Professor Knufermann that he had abstained from voting on the matter.

The Mediator, Ms. Bethea Weir, has informed us that this ad hoc committee has no standing in the University. It was set up to circumvent the normal existing channels of communication and its proceedings were unfortunately not reported to the Higher Degrees Committee.

We have expressed our reservations about the suitability of Mr Kupka as a Doctoral student to the Mediator and the University has decided to refer this matter to the Human Rights Committee for resolution.

In this instance, however, we are addressing the FASS Human Ethics Committee on an academic matter, i.e. the 'cultural unsafe nature' of Mr Kupka's thesis proposal. Mr Kupka informs us in his proposal that his thesis intends 'to take stock of the role the German language plays in contemporary New Zealand. ...In doing so it aims to shed more light on one specific strand of New Zealand's ever more complex and rich social, economic and cultural texture: Her 'German Connection'. In this context Mr Kupka refers to James Bade's (ed.) 'The German Connection: New Zealand and German-speaking Europe in the Nineteenth Century OUP, 1993. Since Mr Kupka is intending to take stock of the role of German in contemporary New Zealand, he more appropriately should have referred to Associate Professor Bade's (ed.) more recent book 'Out Of the Shadow of War: The German Connection With New Zealand in the Twentieth Century', OUP 1998. It should be noted that two members of the German department at Waikato are contributors to this book.

This book consists of 36 chapters written by many contributors. Twenty chapters of the book are about Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany or Austria. In part II entitled: 'The German Connection in the Arts', 6 out of the 9 chapters are about Jewish refugees. In part III entitled: 'The Academic World' 6 out of 7 chapters are on Jewish

refugees. And in Part IV entitled: 'Business and the Professional World', 8 out of 10 chapters are on Jewish refugees.

On pages 2 and 3 of the Kupka proposal there is further reference to the main body of the proposed study, i.e. a) Schools, Universities and the Goethe Institute. In all of these institutions you will find either Jewish students or Jewish members. In the topics b, c and d, Business, Culture and Immigration, significant Jewish participation has to be observed.

About 1100 Jewish refugees come from Central and Eastern Europe. About 900 came from Germany and Austria in the years between the rise of Hitler and the outbreak of the Second World War. This group made a significant contribution in the fields of music, theatre, architecture, medicine, engineering and business. They played a big part in enlivening the social and cultural climate of their adopted country.

Some of these Jewish refugees were and are:

Karl Wolfskehl, Poet
Sir Karl Popper, Philosopher
Professor Peter Munz, Historian
Ernst Plischke, Architect
Sir Thomas Eichelbaum, Chief Justice
Professor Paul Hoffman, Germanist
Dr Alice Strauss, Germanist

Maria Dronke, Actor
Marie Vandewart, Musician
Margot Philipps, Painter
Professor Wolfgang Rosenberg, Economist
Dr Erick Geiringer, Physician
Dr Peter Jacoby, Diplomat
Dr Georg Lemchen, Physician
Arthur & Lisl Hilton, Business and W'ton Chamber Music
Fred Turnovsky, Businessman and Patron of the Arts
Dennis Adam, Business and Patron of the Arts
Hugo Halberstam, Businessman
Willi Fels, Businessman
Dr Walter Auburn, Art Collector
Herman Struck, Printmaker
Hans Hoffman, Painter
Frank Hoffman, Photographer
Dr Margot Ruben, Germanist

No serious Doctoral study of 'German in New Zealand' can be undertaken without extensive reference to these Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe and without the cooperation of these refugees and their families. It should be noted that most if not all of these Jewish refugees lost large numbers of their families in the Holocaust.

Numerous statements made by Mr Kupka on the internet are extremely offensive and painful to the Jewish people to put it mildly. It is unthinkable to us that a person like Mr. Kupka who suggests that the total number of Jews murdered by the Nazis may have been a mere 325,000 and who refers to Professor Elie Wiesel as 'a revanchist of the worst kind, has been allowed to undertake this study. Mr Kupka, moreover, suggests that Professor Wiesel is a 'malicious agitator who wants to persecute the Germans and wants to hold them liable until the tenth generation'. In fact, Professor Wiesel is probably the most distinguished and respected Jewish moral leader alive. He is a survivor of the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps of Birkenau, Auschwitz and Buchenwald and the sole survivor of his entire family. Professor Wiesel is also the most prominent writer about the Holocaust. For his work he received the Nobel Peace Price not so long ago.

It is our view that to allow Mr Kupka to continue with his research would be 'culturally unsafe'. The Jewish community would regard it as a grievous insult if Mr Kupka would be allowed to undertake this project. The Jewish community would certainly not be willing to cooperate with Mr Kupka and Mr Kupka's approach in person or in writing to a Jewish refugee family would be regarded as unthinkable and would inflict unnecessary post traumatic stress. The elderly refugees in the Jewish community have to be protected, not provoked by people of Mr Kupka's ilk. To undertake this doctoral study without reference to the Jewish community would make the study 'Judenrein', an approach practised by the Nazis in the thirties

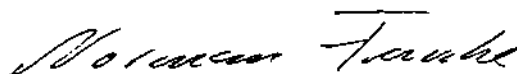
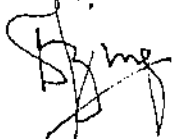
and forties. We do not believe that the university of Waikato would approve of such an approach.

In our desire to bring this matter to the attention of the Faculty's Human Ethics Committee, it proved very difficult to find out the membership of this Committee. When after several enquiries, we finally approached Dr.Green who appeared to be the Convenor of this ad hoc committee, she refused to divulge the membership to Professor Bing even though she was asked for this information in writing.

We are submitting a selection of Mr.Kupka's internet writings for your perusal. At the same time we are submitting a copy of James Bade's 'Out of the Shadow of war; the German connection with New Zealand in the Twentieth Century' for your perusal.

We trust that the FASS Human Ethics Committee will consider our views carefully and act in a resolute manner.

Sincerely yours,



Enclosures:

- a) Selection of Mr. Kupka's internet writings
- b) Copy of Mr.Kupka's Doctoral proposal
- c) Copy of Bade's book'Out of the Shadow of War'

cc. Associate Professor Ruth Busch, Law

Professor Jane Ritchie, Psychology

Dr.Norman Simms, English

Dr.Sarah Shieff, English

Dr.Rob Baum, Drama

Ms.Judy Katzenellenbogen, Demography

Ms.Elaine Bliss, Geography

Ms.Jenny Ritchie, Education

Dr.Judith Cukier, Geography