

Four Insubordinate Young Schoolteachers

Assistant Teacher Bofinger and the Teacher-helpers Riethmueller, Schanzenbach and Grau 1838

Squatting in a house 160 years ago—this we also had in Geradstetten. Both teacher helpers Riethmueller and Schanzenbach moved without permission of the school board into the newly outfitted room designated for the assistant teacher. The reason for this was simple – the room assigned to them was unheated.

Pastor Wittich, as the school supervisor, naturally did not want this to be allowed. But in the end he could not prevent it.

Act. 23 Feb. 1838

Both teacher helpers assigned here, Schanzenbach and Riethmueller, moved out of the schoolhouse without permission of the school board, and took possession of the newly built room for the future assistant teacher in the second schoolhouse. As brought out in the last church court hearing, to heat this room they made unauthorized use of community firewood, and they were instructed by the pastor to return to the room for teacher helpers, on the following grounds:

They had no claim to the newly outfitted room. It was too small for two students to be used as both workroom and living space, and because the construction was not yet completed, it was unhealthy. On the other hand the usual place for the teacher helpers is roomy and healthy, and all former helpers were satisfied there.

Law and custom places the teacher helpers under the immediate supervision of the schoolmaster, so that when they live and indeed sleep outside of his house [the schoolhouse] he is less able to answer for their performance. The community is not inclined to keep a schoolroom so warm for teacher helpers in winter outside of school time, merely for the pursuit of their learning.

All these reasons did not deter the helpers from their wrongful occupation of the heated room in question, indeed they refused to move out and threatened to leave the school service if they had to move out. At the same time the school board held fast to its decision for the reasons cited above.

Now however helper Schanzenbach put before the church court a note from his doctor that his lymph gland swelling was getting worse in the unheated room.

The church court then was moved on ground of the doctor's note to allow the use of the room for the period through the end of the school year, as long as they do not abuse the privilege by conduct such as returning home late. When spring comes they are to move back into the helper rooms.

In his yearbook for 1839, Pastor Wittich reports new vexations in the following year:

Conversion of the second teacher helper position into an assistant teacher positions

In order to bring school ways into accord with the new rules, it was decided that instead of the second helper for the middle classes, a single teacher assistant would be hired. He would be housed in one of the upper stories of the new school house in a room outfitted for heating, and be supplied with 150 fl. worth of firewood.

The filed request to fill the post with a conscientious and decent schoolman did not have the intended effect, as the newly hired assistant teacher gave much trouble with his disorderly living and drinking habits, and he had a bad influence on the teacher helpers.

After many informal reminders, as well as a consistorial rebuke, turned out to be fruitless, the Pastor called this person to come before the board where his offensive behavior was earnestly reprimanded, under threat that the upper board would immediately make official notice of further excesses.

This had the effect that from then on he satisfied his drinking needs outside of town.

Through a remark in the church court proceedings we learn the name of the rule breaker:

Censure the drunken assistant teacher Bofinger and his companion, teacher helper Grau.