



Voorbereidend
Wetenschappelijk
Onderwijs

Tijdvak 1
Vrijdag 28 mei
13.30–16.00 uur

Tekstboekje

For whom the bells toll

Campanologists of Britain – your country needs you. Come midnight on December 31st 1999, there is going to be a shortage of rope pullers to ring in the millennium. The problem isn't the bells. There is a huge excess of churches with belfries over regular ringers. At least 5,000 people are needed if millennium midnight is to chime at appropriate volume for the planned five minutes. Denomination is no objection – this will necessarily be an ecumenical sound. But 1 is a prerequisite. Church bells badly rung make an awful din. It would be a shame to begin the next thousand years in cacophony.

'The Independent', September 10, 1997

Schools on alert as former pupils sue

John Carvel and Clare Dyer

1 **L**OCAL authority insurance companies this week promised vigorous resistance in the courts to litigation by two teenagers who are trying to make legal history by suing their former schools after failing to get good enough exam results.

2 Zurich Municipal, the largest local government insurer in Britain, said it had a duty to policy-holders to avoid out-of-court settlements which might encourage a rash of speculative claims by disgruntled students.

3 The educational establishment was shocked by the disclosure that two 17-year-olds have secured legal aid to sue the governors of schools criticised by the inspectorate for 'failing to provide a satisfactory education'.

4 Graham Lane, education chairman at the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said the action was outrageous. 'You cannot run society like this. This must be fought properly. We cannot have another out-of-court settlement like the one conceded recently by the London Borough of Richmond, which paid £30,000 to a 20-year-old

claiming compensation for bullying at school.'

5 Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said the case opened a frightening prospect. 'The costs might be met by public liability insurance, but that would lead to higher premiums, which could have a devastating effect on schools' ability to provide education for every child.'

6 Jack Rabinowicz, solicitor for the 17-year-olds, said it was 'unlikely the case would open the floodgates'. He did not name his clients or their schools – two out of more than 200 classed as failing by the Office for Standards in Education.

7 The girl left school two years ago without GCSEs and the boy got much worse grades than expected. Both say they had reasonable school reports and had been expected to do well. They are studying at sixth form colleges and are suing for the cost of tuition, as well as loss of earnings from delayed entry into the job market.

8 Mr Rabinowicz said young people were entitled to compensation in cases where the school was officially labelled as failing its pupils and when it could be shown that they

should have done better. 'If you have a Hackney Downs situation and kids lose out, shouldn't you have a right to compensation?'

9 Last year the Government closed Hackney Downs, an east London comprehensive, after a team of experts decided its standards had declined beyond rescue.

10 The Department of Education said the case was a matter for the schools and individuals concerned. But David Blunkett, the shadow education secretary, said he was against the US approach to litigation, which led to allocating blame for problems instead of solving them.

11 The case is one of dozens of pending 'educational negligence' suits being brought by ex-pupils against schools and local education authorities they claim let them down and ruined their prospects.

12 In a test case on expulsions, a 25-year-old who was asked to leave school at the age of six because he was 'too difficult to teach' is claiming compensation for having his education ruined.

13 The flood has been unleashed by a House of Lords ruling in June 1995, which laid down that schools owe a duty of care to pupils.

*'Guardian Weekly',
December 8, 1996*

Making the world seem good again

Hugh Freeman

Listening To Prozac: A Psychiatrist Explores Anti-depressant Drugs and the Remaking of the Self
by Peter D. Kramer
Fourth Estate 409pp £16.99

THERE IS a long American tradition that anything is possible with human effort. Unlike members of older societies, Americans have never felt constrained by genetic endowment, established social structures, or an unfriendly natural environment, from expressing support for this notion. But although in some ways liberating, this 9 is also a fertile ground for false messiahs.

For 35 years, anti-depressant drugs have relieved an enormous amount of human suffering. Chemically, they are dissimilar, varying in their unwanted effects and in extra qualities such as relief of anxiety. Yet in two respects they are all the same – in the proportion of depressed people who will respond (about two-thirds), and in their lack of effect on the non-depressed (unlike euphoriant drugs such as amphetamine).

Through steadily growing knowledge of 10, it is now generally believed that these drugs act by raising the available levels of neurotransmitters – the chemical messengers that convey impulses from one nerve cell to the next. One of the most important of these is serotonin.

In the early 1980s, several pharmaceutical companies produced drugs acting specifically on serotonin (unlike older anti-depressants which affect several neurotransmitters at once, often resulting in more side-effects). Those new ones are described as “selective serotonin-reuptake inhibitors” (SSRIs). Yet because of the very conservative policy of the Food and Drug Administration, only one of them – Eli Lilly’s Prozac – came on to the US market. It was 11 – as much a reflection of the particular conditions of American practice, as of the drug’s properties.

So far, this story is one of steady progress. America, 12, loves to cast down the idols it has recently set up, and there were reports that Prozac could sometimes cause serious suicidal or aggressive behaviour. Extensive studies failed to confirm these reports, but the controversy had hardly subsided before Dr Kramer – a young Rhode Island psychiatrist – claimed that this drug was in fact much more than 13.

Listening to Prozac is based on some case histories of his patients, all of whom are said to have had a change in personality – becoming more confident, effective, and socially attractive – through taking Prozac. From these anecdotal accounts, a dizzy theoretical superstructure has been built, and by verbal sleight of hand, speculation is somehow 14. Dr Kramer

refers often to “the effect of medication on personality”, when no such effect has been proved; confusion between how people *feel* and how they *are* invalidates the whole argument.

There is only one way to prove the effect of a drug: by a controlled trial in which neither patient nor doctor knows whether a real drug has actually been given. Dr Kramer has never done this with Prozac, and neither have any of the “thousands” of practitioners he claims have had the same experience. On the other hand, the exhaustive scientific testing of this drug has shown no evidence at all that personality, rather than 15, has ever been changed by it.

What has happened, though, in recent years, is that psychiatry has gained a much better understanding of chronic mild depression, which is relatively common and may last for years. It can make people persistently gloomy, pessimistic, and socially unattractive. But when they are treated successfully by anti-depressants – whether Prozac or one of the others – the world seems good to them, in a way they had virtually forgotten. It’s a 16 story than changing one’s personality with a bottle of pills, but it happens to be true.

Professor Hugh Freeman was the editor of the British Journal of Psychiatry from 1983 to 1993

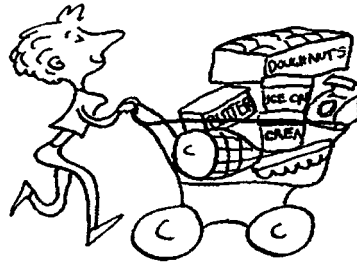
‘Guardian Weekly’, June 19, 1994

The Fat of the Land

Jonathan Yardley

LOSING IT: America's Obsession with Weight And the Industry That Feeds on It

By Laura Fraser
Dutton, 328pp, \$24.95



1 **L**AURA FRASER is here to say, to thee and me: Lighten up! Obsessing about weight, she says, is pointless, counter-productive and self-destructive. That she is absolutely right makes it not a bit easier to believe her, for her message runs contrary to everything else our culture would have us believe.

2 On the question of weight as on so many other matters, America is terminally weird. On the one hand it insists that only thin is genuinely beautiful, a message reinforced by mass media that fawn over pencil-thin female models and impossibly trim male movie stars and athletes as well as by a food industry that has turned "local" and "fat free" into cash cows. Yet on the other hand the dominant ingredients of the American diet are high in calories and fat, and the weight of the average American bulks ever larger year after year. On the one hand we talk incessantly about weight and spend staggering amounts of money trying to get rid of it, yet on the other hand we are probably the fattest nation on earth. Go figure.

3 Fraser is less interested in figuring than in reporting. She is better on the whats than on the whys, but that is a forgivable shortcoming in what is otherwise a sound and informative tour through the darkest recesses of what she calls Dietland, the basic character of which she defines at the outset:

4 "Nearly half of all American women, and a quarter of all men, diet... Most diets, several studies have shown, don't work for at least nine out of ten people, who will just regain the weight. (People who lose weight on their own and aren't counted in medical studies seem to do slightly better at keeping the pounds off.) Still, we keep trying, and collectively we spend an estimated \$34 to \$50 billion a year on dieting – that's about the gross national product of Ireland – which comes down to roughly

\$500 a year per dieter. Despite our efforts, we are still gaining weight: In the past decade, the average American adult has put on eight pounds."

5 The ideal of thinness, as Fraser and many others have pointed out, is relatively recent. The Victorians celebrated the well-padded physique, and the robber barons measured their success at their waistlines. But around the turn of the century, an evolutionary chain began that ran from the plump Lillian Russell to the athletic Gibson Girl to the boyish flapper to the "ubiquitous ideal" of Barbie, with "proportions beyond the reach of ordinary women." For all Americans, but for women most especially, thinness became at once mandatory and elusive.

6 The industry that soon settled down to cater to and profit from this enduring contradiction is all too well-known to most of us, but Fraser provides an illuminating tour. She presents a parade of diet doctors and gurus, from Jack LaLanne to Herman Tarnower to Dean Ornish to Susan Powter; she explores the underworld of diet fraud, with its "long history... full of colorful American character types: confidence men, hucksters, shady doctors and fly-by-night entrepreneurs"; she examines the corporate interests that roll out diet and fat-free food or food "products"; she visits (and enrolls in) some of the more notable commercial diet groups, Weight Watchers and Jenny Craig among them; and she explores the scientific, academic and industrial world of "bariatric physicians" and "obesity research."

7 It is hardly a pretty picture. The sum of all this labor is a system determined upon "proving that everyone is at an increased risk of dying early if they aren't super-thin, frightening people into going on starvation diets to reach an improbable weight, and ignoring reams of studies that demonstrate there are much more sophisticated ways of looking at health risks." Even

among relatively serious and responsible people who know that diets simply do not work – at least not diets as the interconnected interests of commercial clubs and food products define them – she finds a prevailing assumption that, as one reformed dieter put it, "dieting doesn't work, but we don't want to discourage people from doing it."

8 This is hypocritical indeed, but it is a clumsy way of saying that even if the stereotypical American "diet" is a fraud, the question of weight is far from unimportant. What Fraser calls "the new paradigm about weight" – it "encourages people to stop dieting, to develop lifelong healthy eating and exercise habits instead, and to accept whatever weight they end up with" – is admirable, but one need only look at the human evidence all around us to understand that it is a paradigm still in search of a following.

9 Still, the essential drift of Fraser's reportage and her argument is on target. Dieting as most Americans practice it does them far more harm than good. Yo-yo weight shifts are generally believed in responsible quarters to put the body at greater risk than steady if moderate overweight, and many of the food products low in fat and calories are poor eating and inadequate nutrition.

10 In what is generally a sensible and balanced presentation, Fraser skips too quickly over one important element. However fraudulent and exploitative many inhabitants of Dietland may be, most of them could not have got where they are without the eager cooperation of the press. Most of these media people know as little about nutrition and biology as the rest of us, but this does not prevent them from acting as messengers of false hope and inner panic. The media worship thinness and shamelessly promote impossible means of achieving it. In Dietland, they are as much at fault as anyone else.

*'The Washington Post',
January 19, 1997*

Improving the world

Václav Havel

On March 25, 1995, President Havel of the Czech Republic gave an address at Victoria University, in Wellington, New Zealand. The following text contains the opening passage of the address.

1 Some time ago a wise old man came to see me
in Prague and I listened to him with admiration. His name was Karl Popper. He was a world
traveler who watched the course of the biggest
5 war ever waged by humankind – the war unleashed by the tribal fury of Nazi ideology – from
this country, from New Zealand. It was here that
he thought about the state of the world, and it
was here that he wrote his most important books.
10 Undoubtedly influenced by the harmonious
coexistence of people of different cultures on the
islands of New Zealand, he asked himself why it
was so difficult for the idea of an open society to
prevail against wave after wave of tribalism, and
15 he inquired into the spiritual background of all
enemies of the open society and into the patterns
of their thinking.

2 Addressing you on this ceremonial occasion,
I should like to offer a few remarks on Sir Karl
20 Popper's thoughts. One of the targets of Popper's
profound criticism – criticism he supported by
ample evidence – was a phenomenon he called
holistic social engineering. He used this term to
describe attempts to change the world for the
25 better, completely and globally, on the basis of
some preconceived ideology that purported to
understand all the laws of historical development
and to describe inclusively, comprehensively,
and holistically a state of affairs that would be the
30 ultimate realization of these laws. Popper clearly
demonstrated that this pattern of human thinking
and behavior can only lead to totalitarianism.

3 I come from a country that lived for several
decades under a Communist regime, and on the
35 basis of my own experience, I can confirm that
Sir Karl Popper was right. In the beginning was
an allegedly scientific theory of historical laws; it
was Marxist theory and it subsequently gave rise
to the Communist utopia, the vision of a paradise
40 on earth. That vision eventually produced the
gulags, the endless suffering of many nations,
the endless violation of the human being.
Anything that in any way opposed the Communist
vision of the world – thus calling that
45 vision into question or actually proving it wrong –
was mercilessly crushed. Needless to say, life,
with its unfathomable diversity and unpredictability,
would not be squeezed into the crude
Marxist cage. The guardians of the cage could

50 only suppress and destroy whatever they could
not force into it. Ultimately, they had to declare
war on life itself and its innermost essence. I
could give you thousands of concrete examples
of how all the natural manifestations of life were
55 stifled in the name of an abstract, theoretical
vision of a better world. It was not just that there
were what we call human rights abuses. This
enforced vision led to the moral, political, and
economic devastation of all of society.

4 60 Instead of such holistic engineering, Popper
argued for a gradual approach, for an effort to
improve incrementally the institutions, mechanisms,
and techniques of human coexistence, and to improve them by remaining constantly in
65 touch with experience and constantly enriching
it. Improvements and changes must be made
according to whatever has proved to be good,
practical, desirable, and meaningful, without the
arrogant presumption that we have understood
70 everything about this world, and thus know everything
there is to know about how to change it
for the better.

5 I In my country one of the understandable reactions
to the tragic experience of communism is
75 the opinion we sometimes encounter that man
should, if possible, refrain altogether from trying
to change or ameliorate the world, from devising
long-range concepts, strategic plans, or visions.
All this is seen as part of the armory of holistic
80 social engineering. This opinion, of course, is
greatly mistaken. Paradoxically, it has much in
common with the fatalism Popper sees in those
who believe that they have grasped the laws of
history and that they serve those laws. This fatalism
85 takes the form of the peculiar idea that
society is nothing more than a machine that,
once properly set in motion, can run on its own,
automatically and forever.

6 I I am opposed to holistic social engineering. I
90 refuse, however, to pour out the baby with the
bath water and I am a long way from thinking that
people should give up altogether on a constant
search for ways to improve the world in which
they must live together. It must be done, though
95 they may never achieve more than partial improvements
in particular areas, though they will always
have to wait to see whether the change was the
right thing to do, and though they must always
be prepared to rectify whatever life has
100 shown to be wrong.

'New York Review', June 1995

Wives' tales

Rebecca Abrams

From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers
by MARINA WARNER
458pp £20
Chatto & Windus

1 “**T**HINK what you would have been now,” Charles Lamb remarked to Coleridge in 1802, “if instead of being fed with tales and old wives’ fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history!” In fact, as Marina Warner makes abundantly clear in her new book, *From The Beast To The Blonde*, many of the tales which had fattened the young Coleridge are as rooted in social and historical reality as any geography lesson would have been.

2 Following on from earlier books, such as *Alone of All Her Sex* and *Monuments and Maidens*, in which she explored myths and symbolism from a feminist perspective, Warner has now turned her attention to that enduringly intriguing corner of the fictional world: the fairy tale. The book is divided into two sections; the first half looks at the women and men who have been responsible over the centuries for the transmission, collection and publication of fairy tales, while the second half examines the tales themselves, their overt and covert meanings, their relation to social customs and contexts, and their evolution from the sometimes macabre to the often saccharine. It is lusciously illustrated throughout with pictures of etchings, woodcuts, frescos, comic books and film stills.

3 According to Warner, women have traditionally been the keepers of these tales, passing them on in the enclosed worlds of the bedroom, the kitchen and the nursery. Charles Perrault, the Frenchman who published one of the first collections of fairy

tales in 1697, attributed his sources as “old women, grandmothers and governesses”, while the German brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, collected many of their stories from female friends and relations. Women, whose speech has so often in the past been reviled, have found in the fairy story a voice with which to explore female experience, sometimes using that voice to challenge social convention, sometimes to uphold it.

4 Warner is at her strongest when she argues for a historical, rather than a psychoanalytical, reading of the tales. “The thrust towards universal significance has obscured the genre’s equal powers to illuminate experiences embedded in social and material conditions,” she writes.

5 With an unfailing eye for small, quirky details, magpie-like, she tracks down these glittering trinkets and assembles them into a convincing argument for the historical relevance of these tales. Stories such as Bluebeard and Beauty and the Beast reflect very real, and realistic, fears of the consequences of marriage: before the age of reliable contraception or modern obstetrics, love led invariably to the perils of pregnancy. The murdered wives of Bluebeard may have been the victims of childbirth; likewise, the dead mothers of Snow White, Cinderella and countless other fairytale heroines. The prevalence of unsympathetic step-mothers would also have reflected the social reality of a society in which women died young and widowers quickly remarried. Warner is particularly revealing in her analysis of the term “step-mother”, which she argues could denote a husband’s mother, as well as a father’s wife. Seen in this light, fairy tales articulate and explore not only a young woman’s anxieties about her new husband, but also the fraught and often hostile relationship between a new wife

and her mother-in-law.

6 Warner takes an unashamedly feminist perspective on the genre of fairy tale without resorting to didacticism or polemic. Instead, she makes her point through sheer weight of evidence. She shows, for example, how aristocratic Frenchwomen in the 17th century used fairy tales as a political vehicle to protest against arranged marriages and financial dependency; and how vulnerable older women used tales to assert the value of their experience and knowledge of life.

7 But for a book that includes so much, there are some striking omissions. She entirely neglects the contribution of the 19th century Scottish writer, George MacDonald, creator of powerful fairy tales often with powerful heroines. Oscar Wilde is barely mentioned. Even Hans Christian Andersen is passed over with frustrating rapidity. Another striking absence from this otherwise comprehensive study is the cycle of stories which have boys as their key protagonists: Puss in Boots, Tom Thumb, Dick Whittington, Jack And The Beanstalk.

8 In her otherwise compelling analysis of the family relations portrayed in fairy stories, Warner makes scant mention of the brother/sister relationship, yet this is a central theme in many classic fairy stories (Hansel and Gretel, Babes in the Wood), and highly relevant to the rest of Warner’s investigation of the genre.

9 Paradoxically, the book suffers most from an occasional surfeit of information. Unlike the fairy tale itself, that exquisite distillation of history, myth and experience, it seems occasionally at risk of buckling under the weight of its own facts. Nevertheless, *From The Beast To The Blonde* is unquestionably a work of immense erudition and impressive scope.

Rebecca Abrams is one of the Guardian’s regular reviewers

‘The Guardian’, November 8, 1994

MANAGEMENT

No smoke without firings

1 GEORGE Orwell's warnings about Big Brother may have proved groundless, but his smaller sibling appears to have surfaced.

2 Little Brother has shown himself in a number of US companies and his malign influence is spreading – manifesting itself chiefly around issues of employees' physical and mental health. Consider his appearance at Butler Properties Management Associates, a real-estate outfit in Georgia. When one of the firm's staff had a serious sporting accident, the company, which self-insures worker health benefits, declared that it would not employ anyone engaged in 'hazardous activities' – pursuits such as skydiving, piloting private aircraft, mountain climbing and use of illegal substances.

3 Butler's lawyer predicts that this shackling of employees' 'out-of-hours' activities will become more common, 'because healthcare expenses are becoming one of the biggest lines on the P&L statements'.

4 But such prohibitions are not confined to high-risk recreations. The biggest attack on personal rights concerns smoking and drinking. Several thousand companies refuse to hire smokers. A couple of years ago Ford Meter Box Co of Wabash, Indiana, fired a clerk after urine tests revealed traces of nicotine.

5 The term invented for this conduct by the American Civil Liberties Union is 'lifestyle discrimination'. 'Employees are not pieces of equipment owned by the company. Nor are they children whose parent is the company,' says ACLU executive director Ira Glasser.

6 Industrial psychologist Harry Levinson agrees: 'Many of us do dangerous things, like driving down the highway at 90 miles an hour – how are corporations going to intrude on that?'

7 Little Brother seems perverse with his assumption that employees can be personally in control of ill-health and its costs. That is the rationale of 'wellness programmes' in which financial carrots are created for workers who meet targets for weight control, blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar and lung capacity.

8 Other companies use a stick, if mildly, to the same ends. At Texas Instruments, workers are charged \$10 a month if they smoke or chew tobacco. U-Haul International's penalty for smokers and overweight workers is \$5 a week.

9 Medical evidence on Little Brother's side is sparse. 'High cholesterol and hypertension can be inherited characteristics. They do not indicate that an employee is being irresponsible,' notes Dr Paul Berger of benefit consultant William M. Mercer. 'There is an errant use of epidemiological data here,'

adds Paul Terry, director of health education at the Minneapolis-based Park Nicollett Medical Foundation. 'I think one should draw the line at pointing to a particular individual and saying that he is likely to incur higher health costs. You can't take it that far and say, "If this person gives up smoking he will not get cancer or emphysema", or vice versa,' Terry says.

10 Lifestyle discrimination is part of a growing pattern of diminishing workers' rights. The International Labor Organization reports that nowhere in the industrial world has worker privacy been so eroded by computer monitoring and electronic and photographic surveillance as in the US. Even humanitarian corporate welfare programmes, ostensibly sympathetic to human frailty, may be insensitive to human rights. In the last decade thousands of corporations have formed Employee Assistance Programs, free or subsidised services for workers with addiction or psychiatric problems. In theory EAPs are confidential and use of these services cannot be prejudicial. In practice the courts have heard many cases where secrecy was violated and workers with problems were demoted or dismissed.

11 In recent discussions about the New York City Police Department's EAP, and why none of the 10 policemen who committed suicide this past year had sought counselling, the truth came out. The service psychiatric providers for the EAP are required to file detailed reports. As a result, many law enforcement personnel

choose not to use their mental health benefits because these reports get fed into a databank. Although EAPs have by and large played a useful role in getting dysfunctional or unhappy workers to lead more productive lives, they are open to misuse.

12 In mid-October an American Eagle ATR-72 turboprop crashed in icy weather in the Midwest, killing 68. The National Transportation Safety Board recommended that all ATRs be grounded in icy conditions until the crash was fully investigated and analysed. The Federal Aviation Administration rejected this advice, though it ordered air traffic controllers to beware of putting this plane in holding patterns in bad weather. Although the airline pilots' union went along with this, the flight attendants did not and asked for a grounding of ATRs.

13 American Eagle, a subsidiary of American Airlines, ordered all recalcitrant pilots to fly ATRs in all weather. When three of them refused to take off in bad conditions one day they were asked to seek counselling at the EAP.

14 'Well, sure,' says Little Brother, 'these guys have to be nuts to question the management's wisdom.'

American employees increasingly live in fear of the corporate lifestyle police, writes John Thackray

'The Observer', February 26, 1995

A protest protest



THE Third Battle of Newbury has a period charm rare in the field of transport planning. Named after two English civil war battles, this struggle between environmentalists and the government over the building of a road has a cast to go with its pedigree. On one side, the Under-Sheriff of Berkshire, leading an army of bailiffs and tree-fellers trying to clear the site; on the other side, a band of merrie environmentalists trying to stop them, holed up in tunnels, perched in tree-houses, occasionally leaping through the branches wearing nothing but Vaseline to escape crane-borne bailiffs hovering among them. There is even a druid.

It is all great fun, but it has gone too far. What will probably be Britain's last big roads protest for some time (the government has run out of money and enthusiasm for road-building) has long since trespassed over the border between welcome expression and intolerable obstruction. The country, and local residents, have long ago heard what the protesters had to say, and have not risen up in

their support. The government, having carried out two public inquiries to gauge the (largely favourable) opinion of locals when drawing up its plans, is now, armed with eviction orders from the courts, turfing protesters out of their trees and tunnels.

Some of the environmentalists are going quietly, some are not. Those who hang on in their trees may delay the road further and put off construction companies from bidding for the road-building contract. But they are also generating widespread irritation with the business of protest itself.

This is even more dangerous than swinging through trees clad in Vaseline. The right to protest, which derives from the right to freedom of expression, is fundamental to a democracy. But, like other things, its preservation requires popular support. And that, in turn, requires that protesters recognise the limits to legitimate protest. If they do not, they will reinforce what is already a disturbing trend: the effort by the government, through the Public Order Act of 1986 and the Criminal Justice Act of 1994, to gag protest.

'The Economist'

Einde