

Book Reviews

“demographic time-bomb”, and Project 2000, the authors provocatively conclude that even in the next century the handywomen/supportworker will still provide care,—“No elitist programme of nursing has yet been allowed to succeed. Would an alternative based on open entry and continuing opportunity have more prospects of serving both the occupation and its public?”

Currently this must be the best single introduction to the history of nursing.

Malcolm Newby, Newark-on-Trent

GEORGE E. AYRES, *Social conditions and welfare legislation 1800–1930*, Documents and Debates, Houndsmill, Hants, and London, Macmillan Education, 1988, 8vo, pp. ix, 126, £4.25 (paperback).

This is a wide-ranging and useful collection of sources aimed, realistically, at sixth-form students. Each of the eight chapters is prefaced by a succinct and thought-provoking introduction, which effectively sets the documentary extracts in context. Areas covered include the philosophical debates which surround reform, with an examination of *laissez-faire*, Malthusian, and utilitarian approaches, for example, and the carefully chosen sources succeed in conveying the full horror of the social misery that accompanied nineteenth-century industrialization and urbanization.

The process of reform which eventually emerged is seen to be motivated largely by pragmatism (fear, for example, that an unhealthy and ill-educated work force would undermine Britain’s economic leadership, in the face of growing competition from continental competitors in the mid-nineteenth century) rather than philanthropy. The sources also reveal the extent of the entrenched opposition to reform from those in authority; the medical profession emerges with little credit here, it being quoted, for example, that in 1818 “a Manchester Infirmary physician, Dr Edward Holme, could not be drawn to admit that 23 hours labour for children would necessarily be harmful, while Thomas Wilson, a Bingley surgeon, ‘did not see that it was necessary’ for children to have recreation”.

There is a detailed chapter on educational reform, which reveals, among much else, that teachers’ salaries have been a perennial issue: “there is no class of men [school masters] whose reward are so disproportionate to their usefulness to the community” (Lord John Russell writing to Lord Lansdowne in 1839).

The short series of questions which follow many of the documents are perhaps narrower in range than those found on many ‘A’ level papers (which tend to emphasize the role of documentary evidence in historical analysis as well as their specific contents) but they will undoubtedly help to focus classroom discussion.

An index and a general bibliography would have been helpful.

Jeffrey Davis, Roedean School

SUSAN SPURLING, *Animal liberators: research and morality*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, University of California Press, 1988, 8vo, pp. xiv, 247, illus., \$19.95.

This book deals with a subject of increasing importance to the medical scientist—the ethics of animal experimentation. It does this in a unique way by endeavouring to identify a parallelism between the growth of womens’ rights groups and the anti-vivisectionist movement. These two threads of protest are seen as rising out of periods of major social and economic change—the Victorian backdrop of the first truly industrial society, and the affluent, and possibly post-industrial, society of Californian North America. The author clearly indicates that these two eras have similar anti-scientific attitudes resulting from the alterations in the environment that were produced by urbanization in the first case, and the resulting level of environmental pollutants in the second.

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The factors underlying the growth of Victorian protest against animal experimentation are somewhat conventionally assessed, apart from highlighting women's role in the movement. In both Victorian and contemporary times, the researcher is seen as a "corrupt, greedy and cruel part of an impending ecological apocalypse". There is a belief that this is an example of "the central moral dilemma of society". Victorian women found the anti-vivisectionist movement accessible, whilst even the liberal established humane societies remained in more conservative hands. Adherents of one were often also members of other protest movements, feminist, anti-vaccination and anti-Contagious Diseases Acts movements. Today, the feminist is often part of the radical environmental lobby and, as such, is attracted to the anti-vivisectionist movement as a further way of attacking the "dehumanising society". In much of this the author probably stresses the shared membership of the two divisions of protest rather too strongly since, in Victorian times, many women were embarking on scientific and medical careers and, most certainly, the role of women in science is expanding at the present time. However, there is no doubt that in many cases there is joint membership of many of the protest movements, and that in many cases, these do not stop simply at protest, but move on to violence.

The philosophical arguments regarding the morality of exploitation of man and animals are less well defined in this text, but the identification of the pressures that lead to protest is handled in a valuable and informative manner. The antipathy to science is well chronicled, although not explicitly discussed, but the inter-relationships between protest movements and their developments into extremism is well illustrated. Altogether, this is a valuable book with much to commend its attempt to preserve objectivity. It is also a source of useful reference.

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