

Management f-Laws

Great reviews for Triarchy's latest book

Management f-Laws was launched in January to coincide with author Russell Ackoff's visit to the UK to receive an honorary degree from the University of Hull. We held a public discussion between him and co-author Sally Bibb at Hull and also at the London School of Economics.

You can see highlights of the Hull event on January 24th [here](#).

Since then we've also had really enthusiastic coverage in the press from some of the big names in this field.



Charles Handy (left, who ranked 10th in the latest list of the world's most influential business thinkers - compared to Russ Ackoff at number 26!) wrote in Management Today:

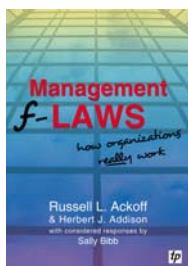
"This book is fun - not something one can often say about a management book. It's also a compact piece of distilled wisdom. That's because it has its origins in the fertile mind of Russ Ackoff. He has been studying, advising and working with organizations of all sorts for more than 60 years and is world-renowned for his work on systems thinking.

...Eighty-one f-Laws cannot be assimilated in one sitting. Skim it, if you like, and raise the odd wry smile of rueful recognition. Or undergo a self-examination course. Take each f-Law in turn and ask yourself how it applies to you, to your role in the organization and to your organization as a whole. Do it seriously and you might learn a lot. But the book might be best used as the basis for a serious conversation with colleagues. There is truth at the heart of all the laws, and it will be best dragged out in discussion...

...Ackoff has seen a lot and been around a long time - he is 88 this month. He has learnt a lot along the way. We should all be grateful that he has chosen to share his profound wisdom, and that of his long-time friend and collaborator, Herbert Addison, in such an enjoyable and compressed way... Ackoff's friendly, quizzical, ironic self shines through in these pages."

Read the full review [here](#).

Visit the Management f-Laws [website](#).



Welcome to the latest issue of the Triarchy Press newsletter. Here you'll find details of new and forthcoming book titles and news of other Triarchy events.

in the absence of justice...

...is a unique, collaborative project exploring human rights and civil liberties in the context of art and organizational practice - and sponsored by Triarchy Press.

The project runs for one year - from this Human Rights Day to the next - and is an imaginative partnership between internationally renowned artist Ricky Romain, Tooks Chambers (the chambers of Michael Mansfield), Amnesty International, Bail for Immigration Detainees, Dartington Creative Enterprise and Triarchy Press.

The Exhibition

Ricky Romain's paintings and works on paper evoke subjects connecting to migration, asylum, alienation and displacement.



The exhibition locates these images inside the walls of an organization that advances justice (Tooks) and is proactive in the protection of human rights. The chambers are also, and primarily, a workplace.

Triarchy's involvement in the project has developed alongside our interest in the multi-faceted processes of reciprocal intervention: on the one hand, how will the experience of exhibiting in a public space affect the artist and his subsequent work and, on the other, how will the exhibition, the presence of the works of art and the public interacting with them, affect Tooks Chambers - the organization, the workers and the clients?

The exhibition runs until February 28th. For more information click [here](#).

For more on Michael Mansfield's plea for political art, click [here](#).

Publications

Triarchy Press is also planning a number of publications arising from the exhibition and the recent [seminar](#) at Tooks on Human Rights and the absence of justice in the workplace. (See also Rosie Beckham's [thoughts](#) on the exhibition and seminar later in this newsletter).

Project Red Stripe

Take six VERY bright people; put them in a VERY small room together for six months with a lot of computers; give them £100,000; ask them to invent the future for The Economist Group's web presence.

The logo for Economist.com, featuring the text "Economist.com" in white serif font on a red rectangular background.

That's what the board at The Economist Group (publishers of *The Economist* amongst many other things) have done - and they've called it Project Red Stripe.

Now if you were them, you might want to keep quiet about the whole thing. And, of course, some of what they're doing will be a bit secret. But the project team has a public website and blog and they're going to be inviting the public to submit ideas for their next generation web offering.

What's more, they've invited Triarchy to write and publish a book about the project - which includes allowing Andrew Carey to call in and observe the group at work at any time.

They're also using Gerard Fairtlough as their project consultant - an interesting mix as a bunch of technically-literate youngsters turn to a wise owl who sharpened his management teeth before the PC (never mind the Internet) was invented.

Click [here](#) to visit the project website.
Click [here](#) to read Andrew's first blog about it.

First thoughts on the project from Andrew:

...some time over Christmas I read this on Tom's blog:

Yes! I got on Project Redstripe

Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! I'm on the team. I got it. I did it. Mouth, sing it to the sky: "I'm doing the coolest job in the world".

If I were Alan Shearer I'd be peeling away to the Milburn Stand with my right hand in the air. And, if I were a bell, I'd be ringing.

...to be standing on the cusp of a communication revolution brings on the shakes. We're 15 years into the internet but the fun is only just beginning.

Oh, oh, oh my!

I'm torn between recording this moment, eating a delicious platter of cheese and ringing everyone to tell them the news.

There's an unashamed joy here. And an unashamed admiration for *The Economist*. In my day (that's, say, 25 years ago), we'd have been very, very reticent in the UK about talking publicly or privately like this about our employer. It would very definitely not have been cool... I think there's going to be some enthusiasm in this Red Stripe. Some energy.

In the pipeline

As well as the books and pamphlets mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, we're working with the wonderful Wrights & Sites on producing a Mis-Guide to Organizations.

If you've never seen their *Mis-Guide to Anywhere*, [take a look](#). *The Times* said "You'll never have to buy another guidebook again."

There's a new and expanded second edition of Gerard Fairtlough's [The Three Ways of Getting Things Done](#) with a foreword by Stewart Clegg - coming in April.

Myth, Organization and the World Today - What are myths, how do they arise, how have they operated historically, why are we so short of them now, how do they affect organizations and society at large, how do they relate to scenarios and scenario planning in business?

Look out for a fascinating new book from Graham Galer.

More reviews of Russ Ackoff...

"Reading Russell Ackoff's slim new volume, Management f-Laws, is like being pricked by a series of delayed electric shocks. At first glance and on their own, the book's 81 short aphorisms, paradoxes and put-downs seems nothing special. The first shock comes as the implication sinks in, followed by a chain-reaction of secondary ones as the first implication interacts with subsequent ones, until shocks are going off all over and you are left in no doubt that you are in the presence of one of the profoundest and wittiest brains ever to engage with the bizarre human activity called management."

Simon Caulkin ~ The Observer

[Full review](#)

"If you ever need a reality check after stumbling out of some appalling management meeting, or just need cheering up on a long business trip, this is the book for you. Just about every myth or pompous delusion about management gets punctured in the course of 160 feisty pages."

Stefan Stern ~ The Daily Telegraph [Full review](#)

The Shadow Organization: Rights and the absence of justice in the workplace and beyond



When Triarchy Press began it set out to be a new kind of publishing house. There were some things we wanted to do differently from mainstream publishers. One was to be author-friendly. The main concerns of our authors were: an editorial staff

who were prepared to spend time discussing and assisting in finding the best way to produce a good book, then to promote it and the author really well, and finally to design a streamlined contract that was easy to understand and put the author's interests first.

Another thing was that, if we were to really get people engaged and thinking, we would really need to tease out new ideas about organization and how organizations work, as well as reminding people of great ideas by presenting them in new ways. Of course, this is easier said than done. There are tons of 'how to' books on leadership, strategy and organizational learning management. Many just don't make the grade, somehow missing completely the legitimate concerns of people with responsibility in the workplace. Very few come up with exciting, responsible and inspirational perspectives. So, one of our activities is to listen to our readers and authors about the things that most interest and involve them - then to put them together by initiating debates and discussions.

At first sight, a partnership between an artist whose work portrays issues of social exclusion and de-humanization, the human rights legal chambers of QC, Michael Mansfield, and Triarchy is not at all obvious. What could we possibly have

in common with them when our publications are about organizations and how to make them work better? The answer to that is a common concern to explore the spectrums between human rights abuse (asylum and migration) and organizational abuse (whistle-blowing and workplace bullying). For, after all, an organization is a group of people doing things together with a common purpose. And how they organize themselves involves all kinds of social patterning if not pathologies.

On 5th February, we held a Triarchy seminar at Tooks Chambers to ask a panel of experts and their audience to audit our strategies and behavioural patterning in the workplace and other organizations. The panel consisted of Dr Heaven Crawley, Senior Lecturer on migration and asylum at Swansea University, Charlotte Rayner, Professor of Human Resource Management at Portsmouth Business School, Richard Harvey, Human Rights barrister at Tooks Chambers, Gerard Fairtlough, entrepreneur and author of books on organizations (and founder of Triarchy Press), Diana Phillips, consultant for the *Great Place to Work*, and Richard Wells, Senior Creative Enterprise Fellow at Dartington College of Arts.

Together with the informed audience, exciting connections were made between the debilitating effects of a bullying culture which, it was agreed, is prevalent in many of our workplaces (as well as in family, schools and government) and the way we respond to, and organize, the treatment of asylum seekers and migrant workers.

It's too early to say quite what will come out of this seminar - the enthusiasm of the participants was palpable. I suspect there will be more events to expand the focus of the debate. And there will be some publications. Just watch this space!

Rosie Beckham

The gateaux trolley

Triarchy Press has been at its Axminster Station offices for about 9 months now. A suitable gestation period. So we thought we'd share some of the good things we've stumbled across:

1. **Delicious** is a wonderful tool for Internet users. It lets you neatly organise, cross-reference, search and view your favourite pages. You tag them with keywords to help sort and index them. Best of all, you can see who else has tagged the same pages as you - and check out what other websites they've tagged. It's a phenomenally fast way of learning about what people like you are interested in at the moment. [Delicious](#)

2. **Open Space** is a simple way to run productive meetings, for 5 to 2000+ people, and a powerful way to lead any kind of organization, in everyday practice and ongoing change. [Open Space](#)

3. Parker J Palmer said, *"Our obsession with the organizational model may suggest something more sinister than mere ignorance... We sometimes get perverse satisfaction from insisting that organizations offer the only path to change. Then, when the path is blocked, we can indulge the luxury of resentment rather than seek an alternative avenue of reform and we can blame it all on external forces rather than take responsibility upon ourselves."* [Parker J Palmer](#)