

ANTI-SOCIAL TRENDS?

Pluto Press intend in the near future to publish a 'Workers Handbook of Statistics', complementing their 'Your Employer's Profits' and 'Health Hazards in Industry'.

The Handbook is intended to bring together concise and clearly presented data which will be of use to workers, members of oppressed groups, and other engaged in political struggle. The statistics included should be such as to present a powerful challenge to the 'official' image of society, with individual tables, pie charts, cartoons, etc. demolishing specific bourgeois myths.

Within the limited space available it is hoped to provide data on all major aspects of everyday life: work, leisure, wealth, health, depression, oppression, etc. We hope to be in clear contrast with the type and form of information available in current 'popular' digests like 'Facts in Focus', 'Britain in Figures'. The statistics we will present will be neither incomprehensible, irrelevant or mystificatory. We would thus include information on such topics as:

- (1) The share of workers in national income, the myth of a classless society;
- (2) Coloured immigration not the source of housing shortage and unemployment;
- (3) 'Lazy workers' not the cause of low productivity in Britain;
- (4) Women workers: equality and discrimination, the 'pin money' thesis;
- (5) Unions: composed of 'extremists'; democratic?

A small coordinating collective is discussing the types of questions that we would like to see covered in this handbook, but it is hoped that suggestions will be forthcoming as to specific topics. We also plan to decentralise as much of the actual formulation of questions, preparation and presentation of data, and the like to those interested in helping. The collective currently consists of Chris Hurd (The Economist), John Irvine (Radical Statistics Group), Mike Kidron (Pluto Press), and Ian Miles (Radical Statistics Group).

We feel that such a handbook has been needed on the Left for a long time, and that this is the sort of practical political activity that the Radical Statistics Group could be fruitfully involved in. At this point in the process of organization, we would welcome any help, particularly commitments to dealing with specific sections where you may be particularly conversant with data sources.

Already Tony Bendell (Sheffield Polytechnic) has agreed to work on the section regarding immigration, tackling issues such as:

- (1) What are immigration and emigration levels, what have they been and how are they related to government policies and needs for labour?
- (2) What types of jobs do immigrants find, what contribution is made to the economy? (Do they take jobs from natives, do they take more from the welfare state than they put in?)
- (3) Immigration and housing and unemployment.
- (4) The fuss about immigration: when and why has racism developed before (e.g. Jews and Irish in the 1930's)?, where did the present British population come from, where do British emigrants go and what sort of people are they?
- (5) How and why are these statistics generated? What do they show and what do they leave out?

Many members of Radical Statistics work in the government institutions which produce the official statistics which may need disaggregation, reinterpretation and critique, so your contribution may be valuable! Although official statistics will probably provide most of the information in the handbook, given that virtually no-one else has the resources to generate the large-scale statistics required, we would hope to use other sources where possible (e.g. perhaps Julien le Grand's analysis of access to N.H.S. services, which provides evidence of discrimination against the working class. "Allowing for the different age structure of the classes, where £1 is spent

on an unskilled or semi-skilled worker, £1.02 is spent on the skilled worker, £1.12 on the next group up, and £1.34 on the professional man, employer, or manager", Guardian, 5/7/76.)

We believe that producing this handbook is an important political task. Would anyone willing to join in this work, offer suggestions or take responsibility for particular sections please write in to us at the addresses below as soon as possible. We will then be able to coordinate the various separate efforts that will be required in the near future.

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