

EDITORIAL

Editing RSN requires a LIFE and an AFTER-LIFE. How an atheist like me ever came to get the job, God only knows (and I hope He will pardon the expression). I had my little burst of LIFE way back in June, when I wrote round to a few cronies suggesting that as this was to be a GRAND FIFTH BIRTHDAY ISSUE, we should concentrate on a "stocktaking" theme - considering questions such as "Who are we, where are we, and where are we going?" (And as the Cheshire cat said, "That all depends on where you are starting from").

My suggestion of a stocktaking theme was greeted with the typical divided response that one expects of any left-wing group. On the one hand was the "GROAN" response - "not ANOTHER stocktaking issue; we've had far too much introspection, navel-contemplation, etc., etc., already". On the other hand, believe it or not, I got the "Whoopee" response - "What a great idea!", they said (although even I could hardly call it novel after Ian Miles' thought-provoking piece in the last issue of RSN).

Thus, confronted with this divided feedback, I can only suggest that the "WHOOPEE" exponents should start on p. 7 of the current issue, the "Groan" exponents should begin on p. 17, while those who are neither WHOOPEE nor GROAN should begin on p. 35, where hopefully they will find something to their taste.

My AFTER-LIFE began in early September, when I found a veritable pile of RSN goodies in my in-tray - thank you to all the contributors, especially to the anonymous cartoonist who dreamed up that old folk-hero SUPERSTAT. I hope we will be hearing more from you (and I have my suspicions as to who you are!). I apologise for the delay in producing the newsletter. Apart from the more usual excuses, the Open University is suffering from the sharp end of Thatcher's Hatchet which brings me to the more serious part of this editorial.

Looking back over the five years since the inaugural meeting of Radical Statistics, I feel it can largely be characterised as a saga of lost opportunities. Just in the last few months we have had

- the cuts
- jury selection
- Maggie's Tax and Price Index

Each of these issues contains a strong statistical component; yet we, the vanguard of progress in this area, have remained ingloriously silent. Each one of us bears a personal responsibility for this, but perhaps there are organisational reasons too.

Ian Miles makes some suggestions about how our organisational structure can be made more effective, in his article beginning on page 15. The cuts and jury selection are raised as issues on pages 11 and 16 respectively, so we are not completely silent. However, one does have to listen very hard before one can be sure that Radstats has not succumbed to some infantile disease. (Or is it premature senility?).

On the Tax and Price Index I would like to get in a plug for a meeting at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, 14th November in the London School of Hygiene, Keppel Street. A Mr. Flaxen from the Inland Revenue will discuss the TPI, using as background the recent article in Economic Trends (August, 1979). I suggest we turn up in force to listen and criticise, and also that we adjourn afterwards (around 6.30 p.m) to the University Tavern on Store Street to discuss what action Radical Statistics can be taking in this area.