

"WHAT DID YOU DO DURING THE CUTS, DAD?"

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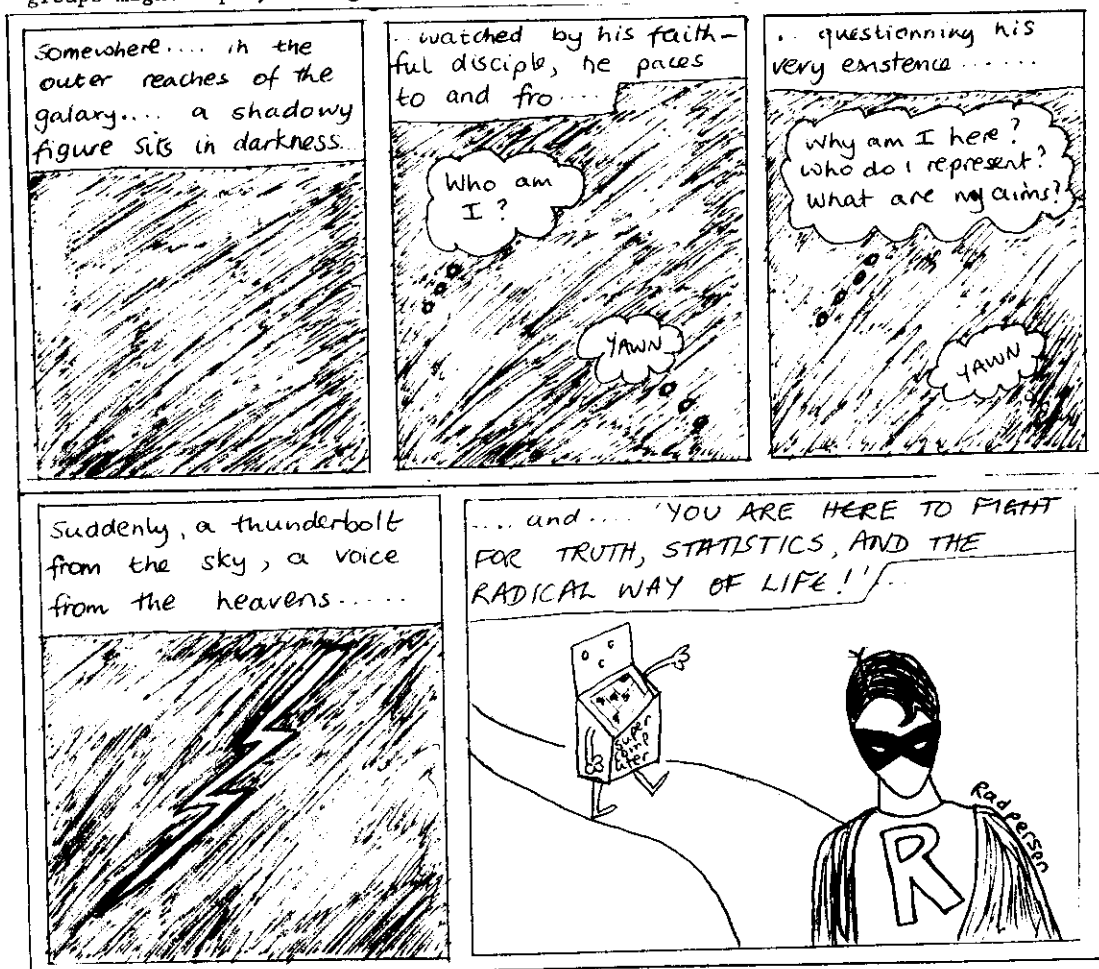
Like most other Rad. Stats. members, no doubt, I have spent the past few months alternating between fits of extreme anger and periods of abysmal despondency over the doings and sayings of Mrs. Saatchi and her crew. For a few crumbs to pass around amongst the already-fat they seem hell bent on destroying public services in the U.K. The cuts in those services (and let's not play around with nice words like "efficiency", "effectiveness", "trimming administrative costs"; cuts in finance mean cuts in levels of service) are probably going to have an impact way beyond their relative size. This I suggest is because most of those services have for years been under-financed anyway, a situation which has produced a praiseworthy evangelical spirit in some of the people responsible for running those services. The present cuts are already turning this enthusiasm into cynicism and alienation so that the lowering in the level of service produced will be far more drastic than the size of cuts might suggest.

And who is mounting the defence against this assault on what has come to be the fabric of British society? Not the Labour Party, to their discredit, who seem much more interested in preparing for a night of the long knives within their own top ranks. The unions too seem disunited in confronting the impending destruction of a social welfare system built up slowly since the turn of the century, and for which at times they have struggled and suffered. Until recently, indeed, it has been the size and

quality of the so-called "social wage" that has kept wage demands within bounds and contributed to a relatively stable economy. What has happened I wonder to our collective consciousness that has us in such a relatively brief period teetering on the edge of a return to 19th Century capitalism.

If we do nothing else (and perhaps we are ill-constituted to do anything else) we can at least speak up for social welfare. This issue of *Radical Statistics* has the theme of "Where have we been, where are we going?" I suggest we have been on a pilgrim's progress, taking with us only a tradition of speaking heresy. If ever a heretic were needed, he is needed now. At a time when the clamour is for cuts in over-financed services we need to speak out about under-financing. Even those bastions of conservatism, the Area Health Authorities, are raising some form of protest. Surely as Radical Statisticians we can do no less.

As a postscript to this piece, might I propose that times are extraordinary enough to call an Extraordinary General Meeting of Rad. Stats. to discuss a unified approach and specific tactics that individuals or groups might employ to fight back.



more adventures of RADPERSON and SUPERCOMPUTER in the next issue.