

# Primitive Accountants



# Radical Statistics

NUMBER

20

FEBRUARY 1981

Radical Statistics 20 was edited by John Lintott.

The Radical Statistics newsletter is available by subscription. Current rates are £2 per year for individuals and £4 for institutions (less if you can't afford it). The newsletter is available from Radical Statistics Group, c/o BSSRS, 9 Poland Street, London W1. Issues are normally produced in February, May and October.

The next newsletter (no.21) will be edited by Ben Armstrong. All contributions should be sent to him at 104 Bellenden Road, London SE15 (Tel. 01-701 0442) by the copy date, May 19.

### Contents

Editorial.....	page 1
News and notes.....	2
Women in government statistics.....	3
RSS social statistics conference.....	27
Health group report.....	28
Race group report.....	29
Statistics against the missiles.....	32
Official energy forecasts.....	33
The Census.....	35
What the papers say.....	36
Troika news.....	37
Correspondence.....	39
AGM details.....	40

### Guidelines for Editors and Contributors

The Radical Statistics Newsletter is normally produced three times a year: February, May, October. Editors - normally send the typed newsletter to John Bibby ( Faculty of Mathematics, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA) one month before they want the newsletter to reach readers.

- at the same time should notify the Troika (RSG, c/o BSSRS, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG ) so that they can update the mailing list with John Bibby.
- will be provided with A3 sheets ( for typing articles to be reduced) from John Bibby on request. (Note that these sheets require a wide typewriter, eg IBM)

Contributors should send typed contributions, single-spaced on A4 paper (or on A3 as above), where possible.

RadStats 1981 Annual General Meeting

This will be held on Friday evening, 13th March (keynote address and party) and Saturday 14th March (AGM itself, group reports, etc.). Full details at the end of this newsletter.

Royal Statistical Society - East Midlands Group meeting

This meeting will be held on Tuesday 28 April at 5.30 (tea at 5), at Leicester University, Bennett Building, lecture room 5. John Bibby and Jeff Evans will talk about 'Radical Statistics: Origins and Current Concerns', and summarise their talk as follows: 'The evolution of the Radical Statistics movement will be described, and tied in with other recent developments in the scientific professions. Several issues of current concern will be discussed, such as statistics as ideology, and statistics as a profession, and we shall ask why these issues are traditionally excluded from teaching programmes.'

Troika members (until March 1981 AGM)

Heather Booth	021-327 0194 ext 11 (work)
Jeff Evans	01-248 5514 (home)
John Lintott	01-254 6560 (home)
Ian Miles	0273-601369 (home)

Subscribers

As of 16 January, there are 142 subscribers to Radical Statistics newsletter (London 49, rest of UK 79, other countries 14).

BSSRS - Appeal for funds and personpower

The British Society for Social Responsibility in Science, which lets Radical Statistics use its office (9 Poland Street, London W1) to receive mail, is appealing for money to provide minimal payment to a regular office worker, and also for people to help out in the office for a few hours a week meanwhile. At a meeting in November the Troika decided to donate £30 from RadStats funds and to pass on this appeal.

(Editor's comment: It seems to me that it's one thing for BSSRS to appeal to people to get involved in it generally, i.e. more than giving money or helping out in the office, say because they're scientists or work in an area that BSSRS works in; and quite another for them to ask them to help out in the office without this general involvement - which makes it as boring, meaningless and alienating as any other office job. Of course if people are going to be alienated they should be paid at least the going rate for it. But BSSRS, more than anyone else, should be doing its bit to abolish the division between intellectual and menial labour; and I don't see why the people who do the glamorous 'tasks' (writing articles; putting out periodicals; giving lectures; sitting on committees and taking decisions) shouldn't do their own chores. If one person spends an hour writing for 'Science for People' say, and another spends an hour renaddressing envelopes for sending SFP out, they are not equally contributing to BSSRS, revolution, whatever; one of them is working for the other)

MON 13 APRIL

1st speaker

-

Roger Jowell (SCPR)

Privacy and data protection

2nd speaker

-

Henry Wynn (Imperial College)

Issues of professionalisation

TUES 14 APRIL

3rd/4th speakers-

(parallel sessions)

Peter Brierley (British & Foreign Bible Society)

Statistics and religion

Hazel Gem (SSRC Centre for Socio-Legal Studies)

Statistics and lawyers

5th/6th speakers-

Harvey Goldstein (Institute of Education)

Statistics in education - or out?

David Wishart (Scottish Education Dept.)

Statistics of falling rolls: the implications for education services

7th/8th speakers-

Alan Murie (School for Advanced Urban Studies, Bristol)

Housing statistics

Nick Raynsford (SHAC)

The Use and Abuse of Statistics in the Formulation of Housing Policy in Greater London

9th/10th speakers-

Mike Derbyshire (Lancashire Social Services Dept)

Applications of statistical ideas in the Social Services : a general review

David Gwynne (Cumbria Social Services Dept.)

Equity & efficiency of the home help service

WED 15 APRIL

11th speaker -

John Hilby (Open University)

Understanding statistics: what  
do all these numbers mean?

12th speaker -

Barry Whitefield (DSS)

Accountability of the Government  
Statistical Service

Further information from: Royal Statistical Society  
25 Enford St.  
London W1H 2BH  
tel. (01) 723-5882



TROIKA MEETING - 4th November 1980

Present: Heather Booth, Jeff Evans, John Lintott, Ian Miles

ACTION

1. Procedures for newsletter led to confusion in the case of RSN 19. From now on the guidelines are to be sent by the Troika to each editor for inclusion at the beginning of each newsletter. Jeff to check subscribers' list when he goes to the O.U. in February if this hasn't already been done. Troika, RSN editors  
Jeff
2. RSS General conference in March 1982. Should we do something and if so what? Jeff will pursue this through the social statistics section of RSS. Possible contributions include 'Statistics as a Profession' and 'Statistics and the crisis of social science'. Jeff, you?
3. Heather to reply to the letter from Ankie Hoogvelt (reproduced in RSN 19). Heather
4. John Bibby and Jeff Evans will give a talk to the East Midlands group of the RSS on 28 April, on 'Radical Statistics: Origins and Current Concerns' (details elsewhere).
5. Following a suggestion by Edinburgh BSSRS group, we will aim to do a pamphlet on the arms race and demystifying its statistics. Ian will do a mailing in January with a view to a meeting of interested RSG people in late Jan. Ian
6. BSSRS have appealed for funds to pay their office coordinator properly. It was decided to give them £30 and pass on the appeal through the newsletter.
7. Following non-response to the Fire Brigade idea, Ian suggested a 'roadshow' e.g. suggesting to colleges they invite us to speak, putting together a package of notes, ... Ian will do a piece for the next newsletter. Ian
8. John will write some proposals for a pamphlet about the census for inclusion in the mailing (see (5) above), with a meeting to be arranged for February. John
9. The provisional date for the AGM is the weekend of 14th March. A speaker is to be invited for Friday night, followed by a party. Business meeting to be held Saturday. All this to take place at the National Children's Bureau, failing that at the Urban Studies Centre. Jeff to investigate. Jeff  
(but see elsewhere in this newsletter for more final arrangements).

TROIKA MEETING - 9th January 1981

Present: Heather Booth, Jeff Evans, John Lintott

This meeting was largely to discuss planning and allocation of tasks for the AGM, hence formal minutes weren't kept. Details of the AGM are elsewhere in the newsletter. Other topics discussed included new Troika members - it would be a good idea to get more RSG members more actively involved through taking part in the Troika; and finances - since we now have about £320 in the bank it was suggested we might put £200 in a buiding socity. It was also suggested that the money could be put to some more 'radical' use, though on the other hand we may want to use it to pay for printing of a pamphlet, so that the 'investment' may have to be fairly short-term. The matter will be brought up at the AGM.

It was also decided to abandon the special mail out planned for early January (see minutes of previous Troika meeting), and so to include proposals for a pamphlet on the arms race and for one on the census in this newsletter.

New Troika members

Since the Troika arrangement has been put into practice, it has tended to work in a very conservative way, in the sense that once people are in the Troika they are encouraged to stay in it as long as they can stand it; when they leave no volunteers are forthcoming to replace them, and eventually someone is persuaded or pressured into it, very likely someone who is already relatively actively involved. We (the present Troika) think it would be excellent if the administrative tasks of the group were more evenly distributed - for one thing more people would be better placed to contribute ideas about projects the group could get involved in...

Troika members commit themselves to attending the occasional Troika meeting (say every 2-4 months), and, for 4 months, to taking care of the files, answering correspondence, etc. (This takes an average of about one hour a week).

We urge people to think now about the possibility of standing for election to the Troika at the AGM, since the tendency to leave it till the last minute at the AGM itself probably just encourages this tendency for the same people to be in the Troika year after year.

---

Arrangements for dealing with correspondence, etc.

This is to remind people of the present arrangements for dealing with RadStats correspondence and other administrative work: each AGM chooses a small group of people (or 'Troika') who then take these tasks on in rotation during the following year. So unless there's a special reason for it, people shouldn't address general RadStats mail to a specific Troika person, since as likely as not the recipient will have handed the job over to another Troika person and will be hoping to enjoy a rest from answering the mail.



Radical Statistics AGM 1981

Friday evening, 13 March: Institute of Education Student Union, room F1  
Bedford Way, London WC1  
nearest tube Russell Square

7.30 Keynote speaker:

followed by a wine and cheese party  
-- PLEASE BRING A BOTTLE --

Saturday 14 March: National Childrens' Bureau  
8 Wakley Street, London EC1  
nearest tube Angel

Provisional timetable:

10.00 Coffee

10.30 Subgroup reports

1. Health
2. Education
3. Race

1.00 Lunch

2.00 AGM

3.30 tea

4.00 Organisation of new subgroups

4. Nuclear
5. Others (?)

Cost: £1.50 or 50p. unwaged

---

Please return to: Radical Statistics Group (AGM), c/o BSSRS, 9 Poland Street,  
London W1

I am coming to the RadStats AGM on 13th/14th March 1981.

I enclose cheque for £1.50/50p.

I need/do not need/can offer for...persons a floor to sleep on for the Friday  
night.

Name:

Address:

Phone number (if offering floor space):