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MUSINGS

It will be obvious that this is a thin number. Whilst we acknowledge that we did not expend great effort in soliciting contributions, very few actually volunteered anything. Given recent policy changes and proposals involving devaluation (a subject close to this loose association's hearts), higher education, the mines, rail privatisation, the slump, etc, there is surely no shortage of subjects to write about. If we want the newsletter to flourish then we have to ensure the contributions keep rolling in.

We were all very sad to learn of the death of Cathie Marsh on 1st January 1993. To record our sorrow and as a tribute to her work, the next editors of RSN 54 have decided to make the issue a Cathie Marsh Memorial Issue (see later for details).

Roy Carr Hill and Bob Lavers

THANKS

Thank you to all who took the trouble to complete the mini-survey in the last issue of Radical Statistics, and even more so to those who offered an article, to work in a subgroup, or to contribute in some other way. Your contributions will have effect already at the February conference and hopefully in a stronger Radical Statistics Group over the next year.

The Troika

Feedback from our Readers (*very rare commodity*)

Aux armes citoyennes (our feeble attempt at European integration)

Philip Bertrand's editorial in RSN52 contained some rallying calls for those of us who want to adopt an active role in the pursuit of social change for the better. Paraphrasing, Philip said that the radical statistician has to embark on the intelligent selling of the statistics which indicate that socio-political improvements and changes should be made. "Intelligent" because multi-dimensional figures must be accessible to Mr and Mrs Average whilst being presented in the context of a complex system - thus building pressure for constructive intervention rather than encouraging tendencies for those in power to react hastily to mere symptoms.

There are many challenges here, none of them new to RSN readers:

Which are the critical sets of information that we would like to make accessible?;

How can we illustrate or present the information so that it illuminates the social system?;

Who should we aim to reach and how?

I wonder if there are others who would like to be part of a supplementary (sub?)-group with an orientation towards communication in this broad sense? I see plenty of scope for a group with diverse skills, some time and energy, and a learning orientation. Perhaps we could cut our teeth on materials for use in education - and explore new ways of presenting information to support learning about a system. We now have much more accessible tools which can help to illustrate system dynamics and I'd like to explore the opportunities presented by computer software or video. And later?...well perhaps we could compile a video or a TV programme which would give real insight to a section of the general public. What about it?

Rachel Bodle

(who would like to be part of such a group, and is prepared to volunteer some time to co-ordinate a get-together and audit of interests and resources offered, for those interested.

Britain's Black Population

A new edition of Britain's Black Population is being edited by Mohan Luthra of Southbank University (he was the author of the housing chapter in the last edition). The focus of the new edition will be less on analysis of past discrimination and more on good practice and dilemmas in social policy. The book chapters are being written jointly with practitioners to ensure a strong practice dimension.