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Radical Statistics, (Newsletter),  
c/o B.S.S.R.S.,  
9, Poland Street,  
London,  
W1V 3DG.

Dear Radical Statistics and Newsletter Editor,

I enjoyed reading RS13 and was provoked by it to realise that while, in my memory, issues of the Newsletter are mostly gossip and requests for information, in actuality they have been a source of much of my current thinking about statistics and have included many valuable essays and debates. In the case of RS13 I have been provoked by a non-editorial by Ivan Rappaport to reply with some comments of my own, pretty hastily and sketchily scribbled down, and I am enclosing this.

In addition, I have some points of information to relay. First, the Monthly Review Press have sent a blurb on their book Studies in Socialist Pedagogy, edited by Theodor M. Norton and Bertell Ollman (£9.75). This is a reader with a lot to interest socialists in education - like essays on conzientizations, on radicals teaching bourgeois economics, on male whites teaching minority group members, and an extensive bibliography and listing of relevant organisations including Radical Statistics! Probably worth getting your libraries to order.

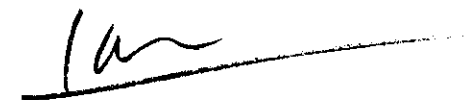
Second, Demystifying Social Statistics (Irvine, Miles and Evans) is now with the publishers (Pluto) and should be out in the spring at £3.95 (not the £5 advertised in their latest leaflet) for about 500 pages. Despite getting them to lower the price so as to make it within students reach, Pluto are still amenable to selling at a discount to RSG members. Details yet to be negotiated - perhaps by the time this Newsletter gets into print more information will be available. For our new readers, Demystifying Social Statistics aims at a radical critique of statistics under capitalism, with studies of the history, philosophies, and uses of statistical data and techniques, and extensive surveys of British official statistics and alternatives to dominant statistical practices.

Third, I have some suggestions in reference to David Cope's letter of 1st April which might be of general interest. David asks about the topic of political valuations in forecasts. An interesting collection is being brought out by Macmillan in 1979 called (ugh!) Uses and Abuses of Forecasting (ed. Tom Whiston). Some chapters are useless, but there is the best critique of British traffic forecasts I've seen by Jay Gershuny, and a good analysis of how shopping models depend upon

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non-technical criteria by Sam Cole and Roy Turner. These authors can be contacted at SPRU, where I am. Other papers deal with education forecasts, history and ideology of forecasting etc. In Demystifying Social Statistics we have chapters on social forecasting and on operations research and cost-benefit analysis (the latter by Jonathon Rosenhead and Colin Thunhurst). There's lots of relevant material on the critical fringes of forecasting and social indicators research: for those interested I could provide more bibliography, but for now try Sam Cole Global Models and the New International Economic Order (Pergamon, 1977); Ake Sandberg The Limits to Democratic Planning (this may be hard to get, but well worthwhile, its Liber Förlay, Stockholm, 1976); Ida Hoos Systems Analysis in Public Policy: A Critique (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); a book on C.B.A. by Peter Self whose title is something like The Econocrats; RSG pamphlet no. 4 Social Indicators: for Individual Well-being or Social Control; Brian Wynne 'The Rhetoric of Consensus Politics: a critical review of technology assessment', Research Policy 4 (2) 1975; etc..... I have published steps toward a bibliography of such material in a piece in Job Fowles' Handbook of Futures Research (1978, Greenwood Press: Dorsey: Illinois) and in the Demystifying article. However, there is much fruitful work to be done by RSG in and around forecasting issues, as David Brown's piece in RS13 demonstrates. Likewise 'political valuations' crop up in the CPPI article. Which takes me back to the point at the beginning - receiving an issue of the Newsletter is a welcome event.

All the best,



Ian Miles

Enc.