

THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN SCIENCE

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The Radical Statistics Group and the Radical Statistics Health Group are both affiliated to the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS). The decisions to affiliate, and subsequently annually to re-affiliate, have been taken as recognition of the mutual support that RSG/RSHG and BSSRS can offer each other. This support is both of a general political nature and, at times, extremely practical.

Practically, the RSG and the RSHG have benefited from the availability of the office services and the mailing address offered at 9 Poland Street. And the original float for the publication of the RSHG's pamphlet 'In Defence of the NHS' was provided by the Science and Society Trust, a charitable trust established in parallel to BSSRS.

More generally, BSSRS is pursuing aims over the broader areas of science and technology which mirror those being pursued in specific areas by RSG and RSHG. The structure of BSSRS is loosely knit and largely de-centralised. Its 'work' is performed through its local groups, which are regionally based; through its working groups, covering areas such as agricapital, sociobiology, race and IQ, genetic engineering, nuclear power, computers for people and the various work hazards groups; and through the affiliated groups, which as well as RSG and RSHG, include the Radical Science Journal and the Politics of Health Group. Such a 'centre' as there is exists to co-ordinate and generally facilitate the operation of these various groups.

In the past BSSRS has seemed to many of us as an oversize centre trying, more or less successfully, to generate the activity of the periphery. However, at the moment, this position is markedly and seriously reversed. The periphery flourishes whilst the centre ails. At one level, this is clearly an extremely healthy sign. The politics of BSSRS are defined by its activities, and its activities are conducted almost exclusively in its associated groups. But without any centre these groups run the risk of political isolation, which could cause their individual weakening and the undoubted collective weakening of the radical science movement. In brief, BSSRS now needs the active support of its associated groups and

their individual members. This support can be effected in a number of ways.

First, members of affiliated groups can join BSSRS as individual members. This will enable you to keep in contact with the activities of the other associated groups through Science for People and the BSSRS Internal Bulletin, and provide some of the much needed finance to assist BSSRS's functioning. (A membership form is attached at the end of this newsletter).

Second, affiliated groups are entitled to a member on the BSSRS Steering Committee. This meets bi-monthly, currently in Birmingham or London, and is composed of up to ten elected members, a few co-opted members and delegates from working/local groups and affiliated groups. It is through the Steering Committee that the general co-ordinating function of BSSRS is performed and it is therefore vitally important that the affiliated groups, including of course RSG and RSHG, send a delegate to Steering Committee meetings to ensure the cohesion of the radical science movement.

Third, BSSRS needs help with the relatively undemanding task of staffing the office. All this entails is just being around to answer the phone and take messages and to chat to the occasional visitor. No experience necessary ! And it's a good opportunity to find out more about what's going on and how BSSRS works and to read a bit of the large amount of excellent material that BSSRS has accumulated over the years. If you can spare half a day - or even just an hour or two - on a regular weekly basis, give the office a ring (01-437-2728) and they will be more than pleased to hear from you.

Lastly, money again I'm afraid. A lot of the more major projects of the radical science movement, particularly publications, are supported by grants from the Science and Society Trust. This unfortunately is not a bottomless pit, and, as I have explained in a separate appeal elsewhere in this newsletter, is urgently in need of long term support. I hope you will give the possibility of taking out a covenant, for however small an amount, your serious consideration.

Over the last ten years (yes ! this year is BSSRS's tenth anniversary) BSSRS, directly or indirectly has a large number of achievements to its credit. Let's hope we can offer an even healthier review in ten years time.

the **SCIENCE** & **SOCIETY** **TRUST**

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26th April 1979

Dear Radical Statistics Group Member,

At the AGM of the Radical Statistics Group it was agreed that I could use the opportunity of this, the next newsletter, to tell you something about the Science and Society Trust. In particular, I want to outline the way that it has been used in the past, to support the work of the radical science movement, including the Radical Statistics Group, the way that it might be used in the future, to continue this work, and the way that you can help to support it.

The Science and Society Trust was founded in 1971. Since its foundation it has been able to make some £8000 available for the activities of the radical science movement.

This money has gone to support conferences, publications and other projects, many of which could never have happened without the assistance of the Trust. The Trust has made grants to the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science for the organisation of conferences on: "Social Factors in Health and Disease"; "Concorde and Urban Transport"; "Racism, IQ and the Working Class"; and "Is There a Socialist Science?"; and, most recently, for the forthcoming "Science Under Capitalism" conference. It has supported research for the Penguin book 'The Technology of Political Control' and made grants towards the publication of a large amount of material including BSSRS's pamphlets on the health hazards of Noise and Oil, the Radical Statistics Health Group's pamphlet "In Defence of the N.H.S.", and the Agricapital Group's pamphlet "Our Daily Bread".

The Science and Society Trust is a registered charity and, as such, has enabled the channelling of larger grants from other charitable trusts towards, for example, the Sheffield Science for People Group for its risk advisory work, and, again, the Agricapital Group for the publication of "Our Daily Bread".

The Trust has helped to make possible a broad range of activities which fall within its charitable purposes of "educating the public in the social implications and consequences of scientific development so as to create an informed public which can exercise choice in such matters" - a brief which would clearly allow the Trust to further assist the radical Statistics Group.

Secretary: C.P. Thunhurst

Trustees: Dorothy Griffiths; Professor T.W.B. Kibble; Jonathan Rosenhead;
Harry Rothman; Dr T. Shallice; Colin Thunhurst; Judith Walker; Professor M.W.F. Wilkins CBE, FRS

The Trust's income has come from a combination of grants from charitable foundations and seven year covenants donated by individuals. The former source has produced approximately £6000, a substantial amount of which has come earmarked for specific purposes. The latter source has produced approximately £2000, which has provided the Trust with its bread and butter supply of funds to support the various projects illustrated above.

And this is where we are seeking your support in assisting the Trust. If you enter into a seven year covenant the Trust can claim back from the Inland Revenue the tax which you would otherwise pay on that part of your income. So that, for each £1 donated the Trust receives approximately £1.50. For example, a covenant of £4 per month over seven years will provide about £500 for the Trust's work.

Alternatively, you can of course make a direct donation of a lump sum. We would not suggest any specific amount but rather ask for a donation which is meaningful to you personally (say one or two days wage). This method of donation is, though, less cost-effective for those who pay income tax.

The radical science movement has many achievements to its credit, but too often is unable to follow-up and maintain the momentum which has been generated. To help provide this organisational muscle, the Science and Society Trust needs to secure at least £15,000 over the next five years to meet the minimum demands of the movement. For example, there is urgent need for a full-time national organiser, and a queue of pamphlets coming up for publication, including those from the Radical Statistics Group.

If you would like to contribute, please use the form accompanying this newsletter. If you have any queries - or suggestions as to how our target can be achieved, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me or directly with the MSSRS office at 9 Poland Street, London W.1.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. If you can give financial support to our work it would, at this time, be particularly valuable for the radical science movement.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Thunhurst

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