

## THE CENSUS

The next decennial census is due to be held on 5 April 1981. Although we've left it to the last moment, it still seems possible for a group of us to produce and distribute a pamphlet in time for this event. And there's the special incentive that we won't get the same opportunity for another ten years.

Below is a rough outline of what could be included, as a basis for discussion and for a group forming. From a practical point of view, and given the time limit (copy date could be just before the AGM, 13 March, where it could be discussed) it seems best if we can get together a small group, each person writing one or two sections, geographically not too dispersed.

It's possible that there will be considerable divergence among us about ways of opposing (or not) the census. Thus for example some may take the view that the census is a source of useful information (to who?) and wish to emphasise specific issues such as privacy, race,...; while others might argue that the concentration of information involved in the census can only be useful to those who hold a concentration of power, and they might support a campaign of abstention or of systematic lying. It would be necessary to establish a degree of agreement, or at least some way of accomodating differences.

A rough outline of what the section headings could be:

1. Introduction (relevance of census to people, authority,...)
2. History (from 18th century debates to the present)
3. 'Validity' of census data (ideological nature of concepts, problems of interpretation,...)
4. Use of census data by government (and also perhaps the press, researchers, etc.)
5. Civil liberties (the law concerning the census, secrecy/security,...)
6. Resistance to the census (boycotts, falsification, etc.)

Any Radical Statistics Census Group formed around such a project might also want to consider other ways of publicising the issues involved, e.g. distribution of leaflets, posters, etc.

Although I can't take on more than part of such a project, I'm willing to act as post box for the time being, and will organise a meeting for early February if the response seems to justify it. Write, with phone number if any, to

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