

Report of Pentagon meeting 3rd September, 1981

1. Subject to approval at the A.G.M. the cost of the newsletter is to go up to 5 per year for individuals, 1.50 for unwaged and 5.00 for institutions.
2. Letter received from John Gubay saying interested in coordinating response to cuts in higher education. Ben to reply offering support and recommending involvement with TUC Education Alliance.
3. BSSRS asked for assistance from us on their stall at the Socialist Bookfair. Ben agreed to liase and find others to help.
4. Jeff to contact Argentina solidarity committee about Carlos Noriega.
5. After the business was finished there was a general discussion about what the group should be doing.

Next meeting December 4th 6.30

Pentagon members

	home	work
Ben Armstrong	01 701 0442	01 636 8636ext265
Heather Booth		021 327 0194
Jenny Head	Leeds 784959	Leeds 31751ext7116
Ian Hiles	0273 601639	0273 686758
John Lintott	20, Florence Street, London	N1 (new address, no phone)

It was always our intention to write for the man on the Clapham Omnibus giving statistics back to the people as it were. Then we realised that this hypothetical person was not particularly interested in statistics. Our book "Britain's Black Population" cannot therefore be described as light reading material though one of the authors claims to have read it, for the first time, as bedtime reading. But we have always felt the need for a less academic presentation. The result of these ideas is a collaboration with Sheffield youth workers, teachers and the Anti Nazi League to produce the kit described below.

Anyone interested in the work of the group or in obtaining this kit can write to us.

Dave Drew, Department of Mathematics, Statistics & Operational Research,  
Sheffield City Polytechnic, Pond Street, Sheffield - 0742 20911

Heather Booth, Research Unit for Ethnic Relations, University of Aston,  
College Road, Saltley, Birmingham - 021 327 0194

RACISM : A KIT FOR WORKERS WITH YOUTH

Price 50p + 30p post & package.

Available November 1981

The kit contains up to date information on fascist and racist organisations in the Sheffield area and elsewhere, statistical facts in a cartoon format, debunking some of the myths about blacks and a bibliography of books useful to workers with youth. The material is designed for use directly in clubs and schools as discussion material.

Reduced prices can be negotiated for bulk orders.

The project has been supported by the Sheffield Education Department.

35mm slides have been produced of all the figures in Britain's Black Population. These can be borrowed or purchased for a small charge by teachers or lecturers. They are useful but as illustrations of sensible use of statistical graphics and to make a political point. Please contact Dave Drew

Note: Heather Booth was not involved in the production of the kit.

## Health Group

Having obtained several different lists, each of which purported to contain all the new drugs for arthritis and rheumatism introduced onto the United Kingdom market in 1978 and 1979, we temporarily abandoned the search for a definitive list. Five people reviewed 80 comparative trials of seven of the drugs and Martin Bland and David Jones presented the results of this at the Institute of Statisticians in July. Most trials were found to have random allocation, but many had small sample sizes and lacked any clear statement about criteria for selection of patients and evaluation of the effects the drugs had on them. The next step is to prepare a written version for submission to a journal, starting with 'The Statistician'. Then we shall meet again in the new year to discuss how to pursue the project further.

The new initiative on private practice mentioned in the last newsletter had the fatal flaw of relying on one person to do all the work, and he has been snowed under by other things. This means that instead of producing a new brickbat against private practice in the next month or two, we shall wait until more people find the time and energy to do so.

Two meetings were held in the summer under the broad heading of 'Labour movement epidemiology'. They were organised by Tony Fletcher who invited various interested people, including people from Radical Statistics, BSSRS and Politics of Health Group (indeed few people who came belonged to less than two of these august institutions). The meetings were informal and a number of ideas were suggested. The first was a list of sympathetic 'experts' (persons with experience in epidemiology and interested in sharing it with safety representatives etc.). Another was possible publications, and included the suggestion that Radical Statistics should publish David Jones and Peter Smith's statistical guide for detecting health hazards at work. No further meetings are planned for the moment, but Tony Fletcher is collecting names of further people who might be interested. He would be glad to receive names, ideas and anything else of relevance at 15 Westminster Road, Handsworth, Birmingham B20. Tel 021 523 8592.

Martin Bland  
Alison Macfarlane

## Radical Demography

Anyone interested in forming a group concerned with political issues in population studies? If so, please come along to a meeting on Monday 14 January at 8.00pm at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street (Gower Street), London WC1. (room number will be displayed at the entrance.)

For further information, contact:

Fatima or Kath M.	at work: 01.636.5281
Fatima	at home: 01.459.0363
Heather	at work: 021.327.0194

4th August '81

Education Sub-Group

The education sub-group has been following up and enlarging on some of the issues arising from Statistical Responsibility and Demystification in education research. (see Hutchison and Evans in RS 17). We are at present working on a booklet, aimed at education administrators, college of education lecturers and research students as well as lazy university academics.

The booklet will focus on what we consider the most important and influential British studies in the last decade, namely Nevill Bennett's Teaching Styles and Pupil Progress, Rutter et al's Fifteen Thousand Hours, and the National Children's Bureau study Progress in Secondary Schools, and will discuss the responsibility (or otherwise) of the researchers and others involved in reporting the results, as well as that of their critics.

The group has produced 2 internal drafts so far and aims that the next draft should be approaching the final version. We should be glad of volunteers who could read and comment on the draft fairly quickly. The group aims to publish the booklet towards the end of this year or early next year.