

ANTI-SOCIAL TRENDS : PROGRESS REPORT AND APPEAL FOR IDEAS

A meeting at the London School of Hygiene on April 30th (1982) discussed various possibilities for useful Radstats productions. These included: a relatively wordy account of what we can say using statistics about crucial areas of British society (perhaps a volume, with more emphasis on the conceptualization of the data, like P Abrams (ed) 'Work, Urbanism and Inequality'; a social indicators collection evaluating British ways of life (perhaps like Irvine and Miles' chapter in I Miles and J Irvine (eds) 'The Poverty of Progress'); a how-to-do-it book about getting and using statistics to make critical interventions (like a less academic version of the 'Official Statistics' chapters of 'Demystifying', drawing upon Radstats work in health, education, nuclear, employment).

Most enthusiasm was generated around a more popular version of the second product. The idea is as follows. A very visual book, making use of smart, attractive graphics, perhaps doing the same thing for 'Social Trends' as the 'State of the World Atlas' does for your school atlas. We would seek to provide (revealing, startling, informing) data on a key set of issues. As far as possible the statistics will be transparent, requiring little commentary or explication. However, full details on the limitations of the data, the reasons for choosing one statistic rather than another, and sources, will be provided in notes at the end of the volume.

A number of common themes will run through the statistics presented for each key issue, like common structural dimensions of British society.

These are:

Common themes :

BASIC INFORMATION

DEBUNKING IDEOLOGY AND MYTH

INEQUALITIES IN WELFARE - region, sex, class,  
age, ethnicity.

POWER or DISADVANTAGE - 'elite' structures,  
role of state.

ALTERNATIVE STATISTICS.

The key issues suggested are :

- MONEY (income, wealth, poverty, tax and redistribution)
- EDUCATION
- HEALTH
- HOUSING
- CRIME + LAW/ORDER
- WORK + EMPLOYMENT
- MILITARY, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
- ENVIRONMENT
- CONSUMPTION : LEISURE, SPORT, TRANSPORT
- POPULATION, FAMILIES, REPRODUCTION
- IRELAND
- POLICY QUESTIONS LIKE EEC, MONETARISM

We have in mind a volume of about 100 key statistics - a volume which could well very widely as a controversial, stimulating book, which could be used in education, in social movements, and for interesting reading.

And here's the appeal.... This is a project which could be the first of a series, which could make our analyses in general far better diffused.

We're looking for :

- offers to help with the work
- ideas about presentation
- ideas about what data to include (and what to exclude)

For example, what are your favourite statistics? Can we have a Radstats hit parade?

For the time being, our contact address is 9 Poland Street.  
 Write care of Anti-Social Trends, Radical Statistics, BSSRS.  
 Our next meeting will be the evening of June 25. Please write in, or come to the meeting (whereabouts can be ascertained from Katy Barrat, John Bibby, Jeff Evans, Ian Miles, Jean Martin).