

"Health Group Report

As predicted in the last newsletter, 'Two statistical methods for assessing health hazards at work' has now been published, and an order form plus further details is to be found elsewhere in this newsletter. Although, because of a minor misunderstanding, the details which were intended to appear on the back and inside the covers didn't actually make their way there, the contents are as they were planned to be.

The drugs project was discussed at a meeting on June 29. As those present didn't want to pursue it further it was decided to write up the work already done in a way which would bring out its wider implications and submit it to the Lancet. Martin Bland is doing the first draft. Anyone who would like to read and comment on it should contact Martin at 18 Porden Road, London SW2 (Tel 01 274 3904) for a copy.

A circular was sent to schools of nursing and midwifery offering them the amazing bargain of buying 'The unofficial guide to official health statistics' at the price of £1.00 instead of the institutional price of £2.00. As a result, about 120 copies have been sold to them. The appeal for further people to circularize brought the suggestion that we try the new CHC's and departments of Community Medicine of the new District Health Authorities. Further suggestions and offers to address envelopes will be welcome.

At the meeting in June, it was decided to pursue the idea of doing a project concerned with the statistics of health in the third world.

A meeting has been held at which more specific aims for the project were discussed, such as concentrating on Western involvement, or exploding popular myths about the 3rd world.

It was felt that the most useful thing we could do would be to compile statistics to back up the arguments of those already campaigning in this field. To this end, we arranged to make contact with the various campaigning agencies such as War on Want, Christian Aid, etc, to find out what statistical ammunition we could most usefully provide.

Anyone who has any ideas for contacts or other suggestions should get in touch with Steve Bennett, 38 Oaklands Ave, Isleworth, Middlesex (Tel: 01-560-1945), or come along to our next meeting:

Health statistics of the 3rd world - 6.30pm Tuesday
November 30th
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (room
will be displayed on the noticeboard on the day).

Alison Macfarlane
Steve Bennett

Race Group Report

With the prospect of a second edition of Britain's Black Population, the Race Group has been reconvened after much collective inactivity. The group has gained three or four new members, and lost none for definite, though one or two have less time than previously.

Our main topic for discussion was whether we were prepared to do further work with the Runnymede Trust. Basically we would prefer not to, but the contract with Heinemann gives both parties the right to produce the second edition. We had a meeting with Runnymede and Heinemann which was suspiciously like the first meeting we had with Runnymede for BBP1: everyone was in agreement and things went very smoothly. However, we have one more point to raise: we think that the authorship of the book should reflect the division of work. Under this not unreasonable rule, the authorship of BBP1 would have been RSRG and RT. Instead, and reflecting the relationship between us, it was RT and RSRG. By raising this point, we run the risk of ruining our relationship altogether.....but then we would be able to get on with writing a second book by ourselves as we all said we would prefer.

As things stand at the time of writing, that is in cooperation with the RT, we have two extra chapters, one on the police and law, and the other on community groups and initiatives. Interestingly, the police and law is an area (previously called crime, because that's what the statistics are called) where we originally drafted a chapter for BBP1, but RT opposed its inclusion at any early stage on the grounds that this is not something that every black person has contact with.

We also have a book coordinator, Atam Vetta. The timetable is tight: first draft by 31 January 1983, final draft by early May 1983, ready for publication in late 1983. If anyone is willing to read and comment on early drafts, or has any specific comments on BBP1, please get in touch. We could also use some help on the housing chapter...anyone interested?

We have had a change in group coordinatorship. Dave Drew has resigned from this role and so I have taken on the job. My first task is to thank Dave for all the work he did in coordinating BBP1 on behalf of the group.

Heather Booth
RUER, St Peter's College,
College Rd, Birmingham B8 3TE

August 1982

STOP PRESS - It has been agreed that the authorship should be in the order RSRG and RT, and that the royalties will be divided in the ratio 2:1.

Layout of this newsletter: Jenny Head
and Ludi Simpson, with the help of a couple
of cartoons from Nancy Worcester.
Yes, you could do better!

Radstats Nuclear Disarmament Group report

The RSNDG came into being to write what turned out as the 'Nuclear Numbers Game'. We continue to exist partly in order to carry out bureaucratic tasks remaining around the book, and partly to consider whether on occasion further 'radical statistical' input is required in the nuclear weapons debate, and generally act as a resource for the disarmament movement.

Since the publication of the book, our main activity has been surrounding a wall chart on nuclear disarmament produced by the government. An article written by the group for 'Science for People' on this issue is reproduced here. This article followed a press release put out by us.

An issue which cropped up for us when writing the press release and article seems to me to be one which is quite often a problem in radical statistical criticism. The figures presented on the wall chart (and military statistics generally) show the 'social product' aspect of statistics particularly clearly. We are able to show how choice of assumptions on what to include in comparisons, what to count, etc., radically alter the statistics of 'balance'. Perhaps we go too far towards complete relativism, however. Our criticism sounds a bit weak if all we are saying is that the government statistics are valid, but only in terms of what they think is important. Don't we really think that the statistics are presenting a distorting picture of the real situation?

Ben Armstrong

ps. with about 3000 'Nuclear Numbers Games' now sold, we have broken even financially (when our debtors pay us). Our thanks to those who lent us money. You will be repayed shortly.

100 nuclear
bases = 100 military
targets