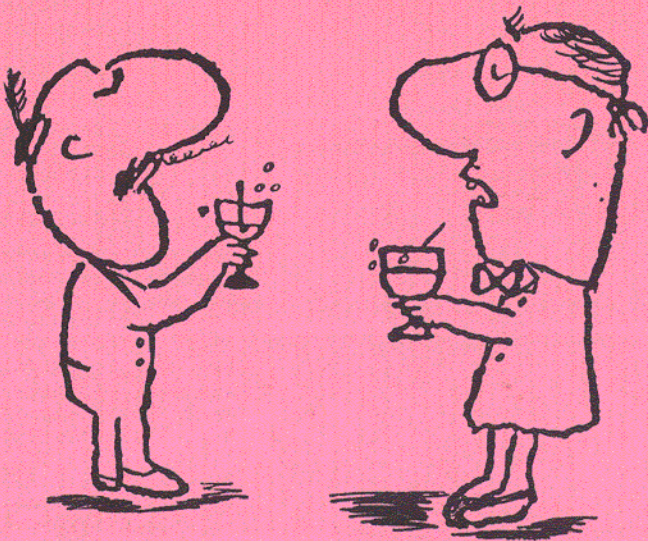


RADICAL STATISTICS NEWSLETTER 35

*Don't be a novelist -
be a statistician,
much more scope
for the imagination...*



The Radical Statistics Group is a network of individuals based on the distribution of this Newsletter. The small amount of central administrative work is done by a three person committee elected at the Annual General Meeting known as 'The Troika' - names below. The editorship of the Newsletter rotates - next editor listed below. Apart from producing a Newsletter, the work of the Group is done by its subgroups, whose membership is open to all interested parties; simply contact the person below. Use the Newsletter to advertise if you wish to start a new subgroup.

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Copy Date 15th June 1986

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AGM

RADICAL STATISTICS CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
21 AND 22 FEBRUARY, 1986

Friday, 21 February:

Public meeting on "Freedom of Information". The talks of the two speakers, Roger Jowell and Neil Stewart, will be summarised in the next newsletter (a speaker from the Campaign for Freedom of Information had to cancel at the last minute). A very stimulating meeting though with disappointingly low attendance.

Saturday, 22 February:

The morning was devoted to two speakers. Alison MacFarlane described the campaign of the Health Group over the last year to provide an up-front context-for critical examination of the government's publicity "The Health Service in England" (see RSN 33). A useful discussion pursued the lessons learnt in terms of publicity and impact and broadened into aspects of education (fighting school closures). Cecilio Mar Molinero outlined the work he had done in this area. Roy Carr-Hill then reported on the considerable progress of the Race Group with the second edition of "Britain's Black Population" (now without the collaboration of the Runnymede Trust).

The afternoon comprised the business meeting:

Treasurer's report: membership had increased over the last year by 11. However the (central) bank balance is down (see report elsewhere in this newsletter). An increase in subscriptions was agreed on: to £5 p.a. for individuals (£1.50 unwaged) and £7 for institutions. It was agreed that subscriptions would last for three issues, no matter how long the interval between them.
Newsletters: firm commitments were obtained from Roy Carr-Hill and Jeff Evans for the next two Newsletters.

Reports from Subgroups and Activities

Trade Union Sub-group: Peter Ramage, Nicky Britten and Alison MacFarlane are keen to reinstate this Sub-group. Colin Thunhurst is willing to take over from Mike Hill the coordination of the Rates Support Grant Group if enough interest is forthcoming. Reports were also obtained from the Health Group and the Race Group and from a largely dormant Education Group. Colin Thunhurst and Dave Drew's proposal for a book was debated (see following article in newsletter). It was stressed that Pluto Press are keen to publish. It was agreed that the Troika would review the position of the existing editors and offers of help with editing are invited. The idea of collective editorship was mooted. The Troika was also asked to check on the state of completion

of articles not already completed and to coordinate a meeting of all interested people at a date to be arranged.

Population polling: Jeff Evans and Jenny Waterton have met with representatives of a new organisation who aim to do polls for Trade Unions and for local authorities. They would welcome offers of support from statisticians with relevant experience. Further information from Population Polling, 13-16 Borough Road, London SE1, tel. 01 - 928 3384 or 01 - 928 3193 (contact Pat Edlin).

Recruitment/Networking: concern was expressed at the lack of attendance at this year's AGM. It was agreed that the Troika would produce a suitably stimulating and enticing poster to be used in a recruitment campaign. It would also select Local Recruitment Coordinators who will be requested to carry out the following functions:

- a) display poster
- b) arrange local meetings and invite speakers
- c) they would have a local literature holding which they would promote.

In addition Regional Coordinators/Contacts will be sought by the Troika. They will act as support, particularly for new members and will be given the names and addresses of Radical Statistics members within their region. The following Regional Contacts were appointed (Troika to confirm willingness):

South	Judith Brodie (Southampton)
North East	Roy Carr-Hill (York)
North West	Liz Atkins (Liverpool)
Scotland	John Bibby (Edinburgh)
Central	Jean Ullman (Manchester)

Offers of willingness to be a Contact (particularly in London), please to Troika.

Troika: Dave Saunders, Janet Shapiro and Roy Carr-Hill agreed to be Troika next year.

Next AGM: The next AGM will be in York, hosted by Roy Carr-Hill who will ask Ludi Simpson for help. The proposed weekend is 28th February, 1987. PLEASE PUT THIS DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW.

Party: Russell and Tineke Ecob gave a party. They will be moving to Glasgow in April; their new address will be 15 Hillside Road, Mansewood, Glasgow.

RADICAL STATISTICS GROUP

Financial Statement for 1985

(actually for the period 11 Jan 1985 to 7 Jan 1986)

Income

Balance Carried over	483.29	
Demystifying	210.92	
Standing Orders	121.50	
Memberships & Misc Orders	547.65	
	>	880.07
Total Income	>	1363.36

Expenditure

Newsletter 31	165.00	
Newsletter 32	216.28	
Newsletter 33	172.29	
	>	553.57
bank charges	4.33	
1985 AGM expenses	65.00	
Troika expenses (stamps etc)	66.48	
BSSRS	300.00	
recruitment drive (ads)		
SFP	25.00	
TEOS	15.00	
	>	40.00
reimbursement		
RS Health Group	13.18	
J Evans	5.50	
	>	18.68
Local Radio Workshop	4.00	
Total Expenditure	>	1149.06

Money in current account Jan 7 1986	214.30
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RADICAL STATISTICS GROUP

MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

1985

	UK	Eire	Europe	Other	
individual	149	4	8	10	171
institution	9	-	2	4	15
	158	4	10	14	186

1986

	UK	Eire	Europe	Other	
individual	160	4	10	8	182
institution	13	-	3	4	20
	173	4	13	12	202

(Unless there are more mailing list members who should be deleted:)

There was a gain of 44 individuals and 5 institutions
and a loss of 33 individuals and 0 institutions

giving a net gain of 11 individuals and 5 institutions.

The current subscription fee for the newsletter is £3 individuals & £5 for institutions. However the newsletter has almost reached the stage where it costs £1 per member per newsletter to send it out. This would leave us with no income to pay for other necessities such as recruitment, use of BSSRS as a mail & phone address, administrative tasks, etc, nor to subsidise conferences if we feel that this is desirable. Nor does the current fee allow for any further increases in costs or for expansion. We should note that "Demystifying .." provided an amount of income equivalent to one newsletter. This will not continue forever!

The membership fee therefore needs to be increased to at least £4 pa for waged people on the mailing list. I would like to recommend that the standard subscription fee be £5 pa. for individuals & £6 for institutions.

I also suggest that overseas members be asked to pay extra to cater for extra postage charges overseas, unless we feel that such people would not get the benefit of subsidised conferences etc.

RADICAL STATISTICS - Proposal for a Book

PROGRESS REPORT

Dave Drew and I first discussed the idea of a Radical Statistics; Collected Works on our way back from last year's 10th Anniversary get-together in York. It seemed to us that, over the years, Rad Stats, either through its sub-groups or individual members, had produced a lot of very useful material that was in danger of getting lost, or at least remaining inaccessible to people that could be putting it to practical use. I approached Pluto Press (publishers of Demystifying Social Statistics) with the idea shortly after and they were extremely enthusiastic, offering a contract on the spot. The offer still stands, though no formal negotiations have been completed. Following these preliminary discussions with Pluto we invited responses from Rad Staters to the suggestion in last summer's Newsletter. Could we take this opportunity to apologise to those people who did respond for not having followed up their responses nor even giving them the courtesy of an acknowledgement. Changed and additional commitments for both Dave and myself have prohibited us from progressing the venture as we would have wished. I am just about to take up a new and more demanding job at the Northern College and cannot see myself being able to play a major active part in the near future. Dave's expectations are similar.

Despite this, the responses that we received do seem to suggest that there is merit in trying to advance the project. Jean Ullman and John Abrahams have indicated an interest in being involved in the editing (we hope that offers of last summer still stand); a number of previously written articles have been proposed for inclusion; and there have been offers to write some original pieces. These span out as follows:

Previously written articles suggested for inclusion;

Radicalising Survey Methodology	Roy Carr-Hill
Is there Equality of Opportunity in Education in Southampton?	Cecilio Mar Molinero
Previous Rad Stats pamphlets suitably adjusted for length	

Offers to write articles

How Statistics Understate Certain Sections of the population	Jean Ullman (co-authored)
Choices and Problems in Statistics Education	John Abrahams
Whose Measures in Toxicology?	John Abrahams
A Consumers Appraisal of Radical Statistics	Kev Hopayian

An Analysis of the Risk of Nuclear War Statistics in the USSR	Stephen Shenfield
National Comparisons of Urban Growth in the 3rd World	Stephen Shenfield
	Ludi Simpson

Suggested additional articles;

Politics and Statistics of Poverty	Colin Thunhurst
Origins of RSS	John Bibby
Introductory chapters on the general use and misuse of statistics	
Using Statistics Critically	Rad Stats Groups (various)

We have also received some very useful general comments on the idea.

It would be useful if the A.G.M. could consider whether/how we could proceed with the project. I would be happy to play a lesser role in helping get it together (including even coming to a meeting in London!). Could I once again apologise to everybody for lack of progress so far.

Colin Thunhurst
16/2/86

Reports from Subgroups

Health group report

Despite appearances from other items in this newsletter, our main efforts have been directed towards getting our long awaited pamphlet on statistical myths about the NHS finished. There is considerable progress to report, but the end is not yet in sight.

The pilgrimage to Sheffield referred to in an earlier newsletter has now been made. On February 8, some of us attended a conference on 'Progressive strategies for health'. In response to the request from Colin Thunhurst and his co-organisers, Gavin Ross and Jenny Head ran a workshop on conducting a local health service canvass, that is a quick and dirty survey of people's views about the NHS locally and nationally. Many of their participants, who had not read the description of the workshop, were disappointed that they did not give a seminar on methods of social research. In general, the audience seemed to be polarised between Labour Party activists and full time workers on community health projects, and we did not feel at home in either category.

Nothing daunted, we are running our own, smaller conference on April 12. Entitled 'Making health information work' and subtitled 'Campaigning locally and linking nationally', it is intended both to discuss the problems of getting hold of and interpreting data and to put people in touch with each other. We have somewhat ambitiously said we want to set up a national network. It will probably have happened by the time you read this so wait for the next newsletter for further news.

Further Reports from Subgroups

Law Police and Social Control

Whilst, at the moment only a one-man band, I am always on the lookout for confreres. Presently, I am attempting to fathom the mystery as to why police forces have increased substantially in every West European country.

RSRG and Britains Black Population II

The work of the Race Group has concentrated on the re-edition of Britain's Black Population which is being coordinated by Ashok Bhat. Whilst the first edition was produced jointly with Runnymede Trust and published by Heinemann, this edition is our own problem and is being published by Gower.

This new edition will include chapters on Government Legislation, Employment, Housing, Social Services, Health, Education, Police and Crime, Demography, Equal Opportunities and the Ethnic Monitoring Debate. By the time the Newsletter appears, we shall have completed final drafts of most of the chapters with a final submission date at the end of April for publication on January/February next year.

After this long gestation period, the Group would hope to turn to another kind of activity, and, in particular learning from the experience of the Health Group "fire-brigade" activities.

Please let us know if there are any obvious debates in which we could (should?) intervene; and we would be more than happy to welcome any new members...

Community OR

The Operational Research Society has decided in principle to launch and partially fund an initiative aimed at extending the range of OR's clients to include groups having characteristics such as the following:

- relatively small financial resources
- representing basic interests of their members
- no managerial hierarchy
- not producing goods or services for sale
- operating through consensus or internal democracy

Proposals are currently being invited for a Community OR Unit based at an educational or other institution.

Further details are available from the Operational Research Society, Neville House, Waterloo Street, Birmingham B2 5TX.

The question arises of whether Radstats should do something similar, or whether the initiative of the OR Society should be extended to include statistical services also. Anyone interested in developing this, please contact me on 031-664-3765, or at 29 Liberton Brae, Edinburgh EH16 6AG. (I also have copies of the "further details" concerning the OR Society initiative.)

John Bibby

STATISTICS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In October 1984 the Clearinghouse on Science and Human Rights of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) received a grant from the Ford Foundation in support of the Clearinghouse's work to prevent human rights violations. The grant supports three projects, each of which aims at the application to human rights work of scientific techniques from a particular discipline: the three disciplines are medical science, forensic science, and statistics.

The goal of the statistics project is to encourage statisticians to work with other scientists and with human rights organizations to develop improved methods for measurement and analysis of human rights performance and progress. To achieve this goal, the AAAS Clearinghouse is encouraging and assisting the publication of papers and reports and the organization, at professional meetings of sessions on statistical issues related to human rights.

A special issue of Human Rights Quarterly is planned for the autumn of 1986. Five papers have been commissioned and will be included in the special issue:

"The Analysis of Human Rights Data Over Time," David L. Banks, University of California, Berkeley

"Political Rights and Political Liberties in Nations: An Evaluation of Human Rights Measures, 1950 to 1984," Kenneth Bollen, University of North Carolina

"The Limitations in Using Quantitative Data in Studying Human Rights Abuses," Robert Goldstein, Oakland University

"The Reporting of Human Rights Statistics as a Policy Tool," Judith I. de Neufville, University of California, Berkeley

"Guidelines for Field Reporting of Human Rights Violations," Viki Zunzunegui, University of California, Berkeley

This special issue, which will be edited by Richard Claude and Thomas Jabine, members of the project steering committee, will also include one or two additional papers and a bibliography on statistical issues in human rights measurement.

A symposium, "A Review and Assessment of Human Rights Statistics and Indicators", has been organized for the AAAS annual meeting in Philadelphia, in May 1986. Banks and de Neufville will speak on the topics listed above; additional participants are Michael Stohl, Purdue University, who will speak on "State Violation of Human Rights: Problems of Concept, Measurement and Data Collection"; Raymond Gastil, Freedom House, who will speak on "The Comparative Survey of Freedom"; and Robert Boruch, Northwestern University, who will be a discussant.

Earlier, the American Statistical Association (ASA) Committee on Scientific Freedom and Human Rights, which is collaborating with the AAAS Clearinghouse on this project, arranged for papers on human rights topics to be presented at the 1984 and 1985 annual meetings of the ASA.

Under consideration is the development of a brochure or primer on statistics and human rights for the benefit of human rights workers who are not statisticians but might have some interest in understanding and using human rights data.

For further information on these activities, please contact the project director, Mr. Eric Stover, Clearinghouse on Science and Human Rights, AAAS, 1333 H St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005,

Hansard . . .

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ORAL ANSWERS 14.1.'86

Strategic Defence Initiative

Mr. Dalyell asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his Department's discussions with members of the department of artificial intelligence and other scientists at the University of Edinburgh on research under the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Younger: Ministry of Defence officials met Dr. Thompson from the department of artificial intelligence, Edinburgh University, on 20 December to discuss various aspects of the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Dalyell: The Secretary of State will know from his previous incarnation that the department of artificial intelligence in Edinburgh is one of the most distinguished in the world. How, then, does he answer the point put by Dr. Henry Thompson and his colleagues who say, as do scientists at Imperial college, that the scheme can never come to fruition? In the absence of the spare planet, which the Ministry of Defence presumably does not have, how is the testing to be done? Unless there is a spare planet, there is no way that the scheme can be tested.

Mr. Younger: The discussions with Dr. Thompson have been fulfilled as my predecessor undertook that they would be. Dr. Thompson and his colleagues are entitled to their view, but that does not alter the fact that the research will go on in any case; and if this country is involved, there will be considerable spin-off effects, both civilian and military. We should be foolish to turn our backs on it.

Mr. Ashdown: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that I gather that the same scientists have suggested that the computer system to run the SDI would have to be hundreds of times more powerful than the current NORAD early warning system? Is he aware that that system crashes every 30 seconds on average and has never worked for longer than half an hour? Why is the Secretary of State diverting a precious part of our human resources in computer research to this ridiculous red herring?

Mr. Younger: The point of the research is to find out whether the scheme is feasible and, if so, how. We should bear in mind that views are strongly held by individuals all over the place and they do not necessarily reflect the views of a university or a department as a whole.

The Radical Statistics Newsletter is available by subscription. Current rates are £5 per year for individuals and £7 for institutions and £1.50 for the unwaged. The newsletter is available from the Radical Statistics Group, C/o BSSRS, 25 Horsell Road, London. N5 1XL. Tel. 01-607-9615.

The Radical Statistics Newsletter is produced three times a year in May, July and December

Editors: send the typed newsletter to Russell Ecob one month before they want the newsletter to reach readers. Copy to be typed on A4 paper.

Contributors: send articles to the Editor by the copydate on A4 paper, typed single-spaced with 1½ inch margins all round. All members of RSG are invited to contribute to the newsletter - articles may vary from very short to quite long. Letters and reviews are also welcome.

Addresses: The Editor's address usually appears in the last newsletter, but articles can also be sent to The Editor, RSG, c/o BSSRS, 25 Horsell Road, London N5 1XL.

NEXT EDITOR Roy Carr-Hill (address on inside front cover)

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D A T A P R O T E C T I O N A C T

In accordance with the DPA, any member is entitled to ask

- (a) for a printout of his/her personal details (name and address) as kept on the Radstats computer
- (b) that his/her personal details should not be so stored.

Anybody wishing to avail themselves of this right, please contact the Troika with requests in triplicate.