

Duncan Campbell describes the official contingency plan for a new Dark Age Britain

The British way of life — after the Bomb

FURTHER AND FULL DETAILS of the government's plans for the aftermath of nuclear war, complete with plans for the resurrection of the central banking system and the 'summary execution' of unwilling workers have been obtained by the NS. The plans — a set of 'Briefing Material for Wartime Controllers' — were obtained in outline last year (NS 5 December 1980) but are now available in full. The Briefing is described as:

classified information (which) is part of some background briefing given to certain officers designated to be senior members on the staff of the regional and sub-regional commissioners in war. It has been decided that it would be prudent to give the same information to London Group, London borough, county and district controllers (designate) and chief officers of police . . .



'Controller' and 'Commissioner' are of course terms completely unknown to our contemporary and roughly democratic system of government. Such appointments are, however, already planned, in some detail, together with the more powerful posts of Regional Military and Police Commanders, as the shadow government of Britain in crisis or war. 'Controllers' will be the existing peacetime chief executives of each local authority. Councillors are not appointed to the job.

This material — issued in 1976, but still current — is deeply secret, as well as being deeply ludicrous. The very first words warn that:

The information given in this circular is not to be communicated to the Press or to any person not specifically authorised to receive it . . .

The wartime Controllers can only pass the information on to others on a 'need-to-know' basis, or if the government puts the country 'onto a war footing'. It is all hush-hush, giving details of the effects of nuclear war on law and order, industrial resources, manpower, and the monetary economy. The author of the circular was Duncan Buttery, a Home Office Assistant Secretary then in charge of the Home Defence Division.

The Home Office's observations

on the effects of war are profound:

In conditions of anarchy, the implementation of measures necessary for national survival would be impossible . . . (para 4)

A large scale nuclear attack would disrupt the production and distribution of power supplies and hence most industrial and commercial activities . . . (para 8)

Above all:

A large scale of nuclear attack on this country would completely disrupt the banking system . . . (para 14)

Clearly a serious matter. Indeed, 'even a small scale attack on London and the major facilities of the big clearing banks would have a similar effect. In a situation where power supplies would be cut off, public and private transport brought to a standstill, and industrial and commercial activities halted, the major sources of income would dry up.'

THERE WOULD also be the slight matter of a few tens of millions of the populace left in a permanent state of unproductivity. But, worse:

money in its present form would cease to have any significance . . . in the survival period, when all efforts would be concentrated on providing the bare essentials of life . . . Some token exchange might be needed . . . It might be feasible to allow the use of existing currency (but) barter and the government issue of food and clothing would prevail.

A government monopoly of food and clothing might indeed quell awful anarchy. Other methods to be adopted include a new system of special courts administered by Regional Commissioners, and protected by armed police and military guards. The target would be citizens who didn't behave as they were told, and didn't accept the authority of a government which had just turned the place into a wasteland:

The main resources of the wartime judicial and penal system would be concentrated against the anti-social conduct of individuals which seriously interfered with the essential



life of the community.

But:

In conditions in which death destruction and injury were commonplace, such penalties as probation, fines or sentences of imprisonment would no longer be effective in dealing with anti-social offenders.

No beating about the bush here. The answer is the great leap back into the Dark Ages, and the re-introduction of the stocks; plus — um — execution — but they don't quite describe it in such terms:

Such penalties as communal labour, restricted rations, and exposure to public disapproval would be appropriate for all but the gravest offences, but in the case of flagrantly anti-social behaviour there might be a need for harsher penalties than would be generally acceptable in peacetime. Provision for appropriate penalties, not normally available to courts, would be made under emergency regulations . . .

The Home Office here displays an undue modesty and wordiness in explaining how business for the hangmen and firing squads will be booming come the day of the Bomb. Curiously, they find no such difficulty in expressing precisely their sentiments on the matter of what to do about workers who won't work:

In the absence of effective sanctions, short of summary execution, for dealing with those who might not comply with directions, success in the allocation of labour, throughout the survival period, would in practice depend on the community's acceptance of the need and their voluntary co-operation.

There will be no tedious red tape to impede the passing of death sentences. 'In capital cases, wherever practicable, there would be . . . a court consisting of not less than three commissioners.'

The bureaucrats' design for a ship-shape, well-ordered, post-holocaust society.



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13. Regional Commissioners would have statutory powers to direct labour, but in the absence of effective sanctions, short of summary execution, for dealing with those who might not comply with directions,

14. A large scale nuclear attack on this country would completely disrupt the banking system on which the whole monetary economy is based.



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The 'commissioners' would be appointed from any one 'holding any form of judicial office'. An emergency court could be held 'anywhere . . . where radiological conditions permitted.' No time for layabouts after the Bomb, either:

. . . one aim would be to provide as many people as possible with some form of useful work to sustain morale . . .

Of course: the main demand would be for heavy manual labour . . . for such immediate tasks as . . . the burial of the dead.

And, at least: in spite of heavy casualties among the able-bodied population, there should be no general shortage of manpower, since industry as it existed before the attack would be virtually at a standstill.

Cheering to know that there wouldn't be a shortage of survivors to order around, just to establish who was the government and who wasn't. But, worryingly:

national recovery to establish a new monetary system . . . might take a year or more, depending on the scale of the attack . . . it could not be assumed that the old currency would be redeemed . . .

Bad news there for the rich, unless their old style pre-holocaust Elizabeth 2 pounds were to be honoured, as the plans suggest might happen:

at a considerable devaluation of its earlier purchasing power.

A sensible line of argument. There won't be quite the same choice of consumer goods in the shops, one might expect.

This gem of official planning for a sort of ideal post-nuclear world finishes up with the promise of the relaunch of money as a top priority:

The creation of a new monetary system would be a national matter . . . Regional Commissioner would be assisted in these monetary and other economic problems by financial advisers drawn from the Treasury and the private sector.

No doubt a special Bankerbunker has already been allocated for this vital job. □

Readers who wish to further examine this subject may obtain the fuller New Statesman critique of this document, appended to which is a copy of the document itself. Please send £2.00, plus a large stamped addressed envelope, to Bomb Offer, the New Statesman. The £2.00, less copying cost, will be sent on to the European Nuclear Disarmament Campaign.

Patrick Wintour on union affiliation row

Right wins round in Labour battle

THE LABOUR Party's attempt to clarify the rules on how trade unions affiliate to Constituency Parties has come a little unstuck. Skilful interpretations of these rules by the EETPU, the electricians' union, led to an inquiry by the Party's NEC into the EETPU's affiliations to the Bermondsey Labour Party. After inquiry, the NEC wrote to the Bermondsey Party, ruling that they had been wrong not to accept all the union branch delegates the EETPU had put forward. Bermondsey has now refused to accept the ruling. At the worst, Bermondsey might be suspended by the NEC.

The problem arose last November after a rapid increase in the EETPU delegate applications to Bermondsey. The Left-wing controlled CLP had refused the delegates, questioning the bona fides of the branches involved. Now after the NEC ruling Bermondsey has accepted most of the EETPU's delegates but they are still refusing five, asking where and when the delegates' particular branches had met. Ber-

mondsey thinks that these delegates' branches — three Telecomms and the General Office branches of the EETPU and EESA (the union's white collar section) — do not actually meet. Bermondsey says the delegates cannot therefore comply with the NEC ruling that they should be 'elected or approved by their branch.'

Bermondsey has asked David Hughes, the party's national agent, for the names of the officers of the five branches and for copies of notices of branch meetings sent to members. Mr Hughes replied on 11 March saying that the five branches must be accepted:

As long as the branches have members residing in the Bermondsey CLP who are paying the political levy they are entitled to affiliate.

Bermondsey wrote back saying that Mr Hughes had avoided their main point:

Are you saying we must accept affiliations from branches who never meet and the membership of which is not even known to the members? Your letter implies that we must accept applications from any branches nominated by the unions — indeed from as many branches as the union cares to create for such purposes!

Bermondsey have also refused to accept a delegate from the union's London Central branch who has been appointed centrally and not been approved or elected by the branch. London Central do not want the 'delegate' — Mr Lees — because they say he will not represent their views. It is within the EETPU rules to appoint delegates centrally: the union general secretary Frank Chapple's justification is that many of the branch meetings are unrepresentative and poorly attended. Last week John Spellar, Frank Chapple's aide-de-camp, attended a London Central branch meeting and insisted they must accept Joe Lees. One present says: 'the clear implication was that if we did not we would be closed down'. □

Peter Kellner reveals that social democracy means all things to all protest voters

'Moderate' hopes confused

EVERY SURVEY in the past six weeks has reported that 30 to 40 per cent of the electorate say they would support a Social Democratic/Liberal alliance if an election were held now. With the Social Democrats planning to launch their new party formally next Thursday, one of the more intriguing questions is, what sort of people are its supporters — genuine social democrats looking for a new political home, or a random collection of discontented voters, united only by their disenchantment with the current Labour and Conservative leaderships?

Unpublished details from a recent MORI poll conducted for the *Sunday Times* indicate that most 'Social Democrats' are malcontents with only a vague knowledge of, and partial affinity with, the new party's policies. The table shows the responses, on five issues at the heart of the new party, of the 30 per cent of MORI's sample who said they would vote Social Democrat in an election held now, if no Liberal were standing locally.

Despite the wide publicity given to the policy disputes between the Gang of Four and the Labour Party, less than half the 'social democrats' in MORI's sample know that Social Democratic policy is to keep Britain in the Common Market; as many as 37 per cent think the new party will actually seek British withdrawal. And more than half the sample would personally support withdrawal themselves.

On the other four issues, MORI's 'social democrats' are less out of line; even so, between 34 and 44 per cent appear to be ignorant of what the party stands for on any particular issue; and

sizeable minorities hold views directly contrary to those of the new party.

There is, moreover, a close relationship between what 'social democrats' themselves want, and what they think — rightly or wrongly — the new party's policy to be. This relationship holds up with seven other policies MORI inquired about, where the new party's attitude is less well developed. This suggests that many, probably most, 'social democrats' see the new party not

for what it is, but as a reflection of their own ideas of what a new party *ought* to be about. By definition, it will be impossible for the real thing to satisfy every supporter's wishes: many are likely to be disillusioned.

On the other hand, the evident degree of protest-vote support for the new party should not be dismissed by the existing parties. The fact that 83 per cent of 'social democrats' are dissatisfied with the Government's performance — while 60 per cent are dissatisfied with Michael Foot's leadership of the Labour Party — suggests that the new party could continue to do well in the polls as long as the big parties are thought to be doing badly. But this should not be confused with positive, overwhelming support for social democracy in itself. □



Are the gang of four hopelessly out of step with their supporters?

What 'Social Democrats' think

- What do you think the policies of the Social Democratic Party will be?
- Do you personally favour or oppose these policies?

(Figures show answers, in percentages, of people saying they will vote Social Democrat)

	Social Democratic policy?			Your personal view?		
	For	Against	Don't know	For	Against	Don't know
Proportional representation in general elections	61	11	28	55	16	29
Introduce an incomes policy	59	11	30	46	23	31
Take Britain out of the Common Market	37	45	18	54	37	9
Unilateral nuclear disarmament	26	56	18	30	60	10
Nationalise more industries	19	66	15	21	70	9

Latest on locker-room cache from Rob Rohrer Police say weapons 'used as paperweights'

THE ARRAY of unauthorised weapons found in Manchester police lockers last month were confiscated from football hooligans and used as 'paperweights', according to one remarkable explanation offered by serving police officers to a Manchester newspaper. (At the Blair Peach Inquest a similar collection found in SPG lockers were referred to as 'mementoes').

The *New Statesman* revelations about the offensive weapons found at the City's Moss Side station are now being investigated by Deputy CID Head, Chief Superintendent Geoffrey Rimmer. Two days after the *NS* report, 6,000 other police lockers were searched: in some cases, where officers were off duty, lockers were forced.

The weapons' haul — including coshes, knives, a hatchet, and home-made clubs — came to light during a search for missing pornography. On 4 February the vice squad had seized 171 items from a city shop. A number