

THE RECENT decision by the Ministry of Defence to confirm its purchase of the American Trident Missile system is being made in almost total ignorance of Trident's most vital features: whether it can resist Soviet defences. The *New Statesman* has obtained the US Navy's official instruction about what it can and cannot tell the British. There are nine major prohibited areas of information, including everything to do with the nuclear reactors which power the submarine. US naval officers are instructed to tear any pages containing the prohibited information out of manuals before giving them to the UK.

The document is marked 'for official use only' and 'may not be released or otherwise disclosed, in whole or in part, to foreign governments and their representatives'. The Ministry of Defence confirmed this week that they had not seen it and did not know its contents. Its formal title is Naval Operations Instruction OPNAVINST 5510.48H dated 29 July 1981. A confidential annexe provides hitherto unpublished details about the Polaris Sales Agreement between Britain and the United States. The Polaris Sales Agreement also covers the sale of Trident submarines, missiles, and 'know-how'. The instructions were obtained by researchers at the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies.

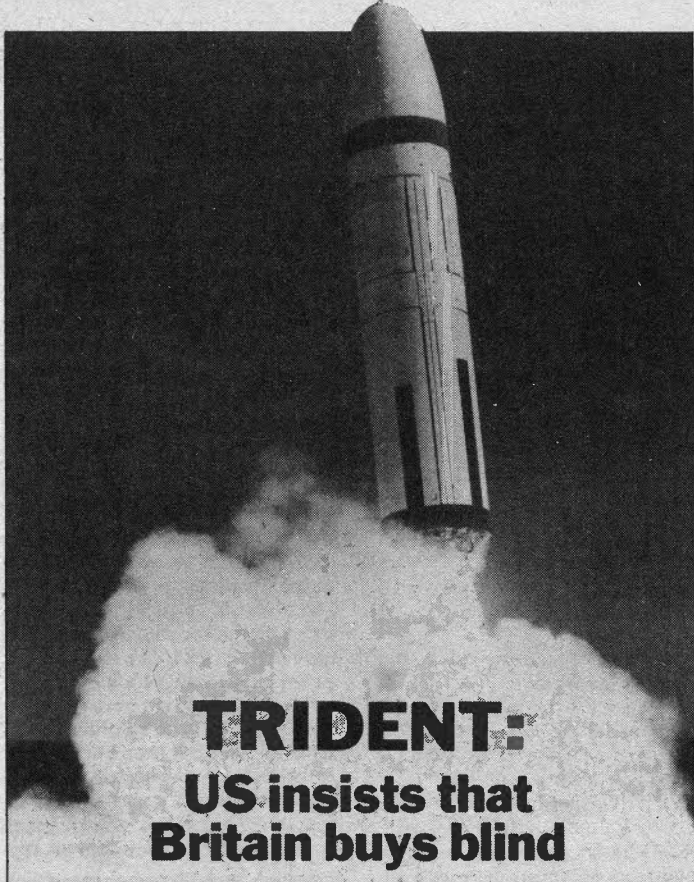
The document starts by listing general restrictions and orders American liaison staff 'to take particular precautions to insure that information in the following areas is not disclosed':

- Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information, classified or unclassified (our italics)
- Strategic and Operational planning information
- Tactical doctrine . . . command and control methods.

Amrit Wilson on a new move to find biological roots to race inequality

'Racist' storm over conference

'BIOSOCIAL ASPECTS of Ethnic Minorities' is the subject of a conference due to start at University College London, on 31 March. It is being held by the Galton Foundation and the Biosocial Society and is due to go ahead despite accusations of racism and a picket by the Black Health Workers and Patients' group. According to the group the conference is an example of the recent increase of academic interest in research of a particular kind — studies which seek inherent biological or cultural reasons for any disadvantage that black people might suffer. The group fears that the conference will produce new



TRIDENT: US insists that Britain buys blind

Duncan Campbell investigates a £10 billion smokescreen

The Trident missile system is — as has now been well aired — a radically new nuclear weapons system. Each of the huge new submarines will have 24 missiles with 14 warheads, instead of 14 missiles and three warheads on Polaris. The MoD has explained that these submarines must be bought to replace the existing Polaris submarines, which have become vulnerable to Soviet defences. The MoD has offered two reasons for

this: one, that Polaris is 'noisy' and could be attacked by Soviet anti-submarine forces; secondly, that the key task is to threaten Moscow, and that the warheads which are released by Polaris might be vulnerable to new types of anti-missiles placed around Moscow. The MoD has argued that if there is a risk of the Polaris subs being detected and attacked, or the chance that the warheads might not get through, then Polaris isn't

sufficient to provide the independent deterrent they seek.

The Naval Instruction, however, makes quite clear that the British are not to have any information about how detectable Trident and its submarines will be. All information on 'SSBN (submarine) acoustic or magnetic signatures' is banned from release. This means the MoD can only guess at whether Trident is going to be safe from detection by the Red Navy. Since the submarines are much larger than Polaris, it may reasonably be expected that they are at least as noisy, and more magnetic.

A similar instruction prohibits Britain from obtaining any details of whether the warheads would make it through to Moscow: 'absolute values of the vulnerability of the re-entry systems (i.e. warheads) . . . are not to be disclosed.' All that may be discussed is the 'general relative merit' *vis-à-vis* Polaris (i.e., the fact that it is better, but not how much better).

Secrecy will also surround the use of 'penetration aids', which are devices to jam and confuse any attempts to intercept the incoming missiles: 'penetration and information on US operational and future strategic systems will not be disclosed.'

Another critical problem with nuclear missile submarines is telling them when to fire, during a war. The main system is the use of VLF (very low frequency) radio signals, and Britain has three stations for doing this, at Rugby, Anthorn and Criggion. But these stations can be bombed or jammed. And there are problems ensuring that only the right messages get through, and are known to be authentic. The US prohibitions include 'command and control', 'communications effectiveness', 'authentication procedures and

theories 'to justify further racist policies and practices in schools, hospitals, police stations and prisons.'

However, the organiser of the conference, Sir Alan Parkes, insists that there is nothing racist about it. 'It is purely scientific. Ethnic Minorities are topical at the moment. In fact they are a burning question. We thought a purely scientific and objective discussion of it might be of interest.' As for the term biosocial, it 'describes the interaction between social, biological and environmental factors in man'.

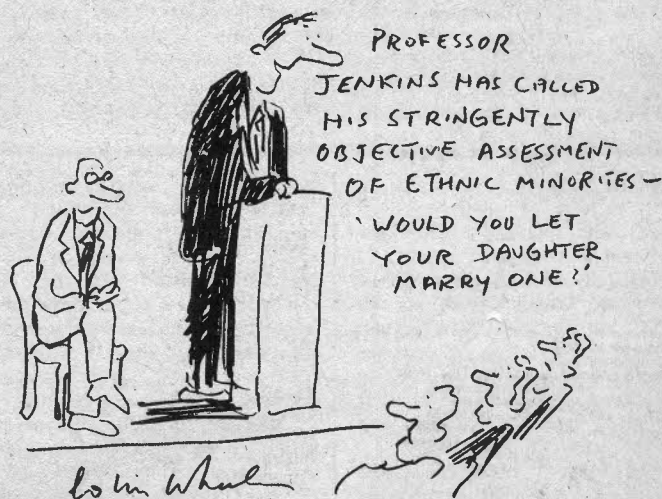
The Foundation calling the conference has an interesting background of 'objectivity'. It is named after Sir Francis Galton, the 19th-century psychometrist, who wrote: 'the number amongst Negroes of those whom we should call half-witted is very large'. Galton was afraid that in Britain the owning and ruling classes would be swamped by the inferior but fast-breeding lower classes. The Eugenic Society was based on his ideas and the Biosocial Society is a recent breakaway from it. The secretary of the Biosocial Society,

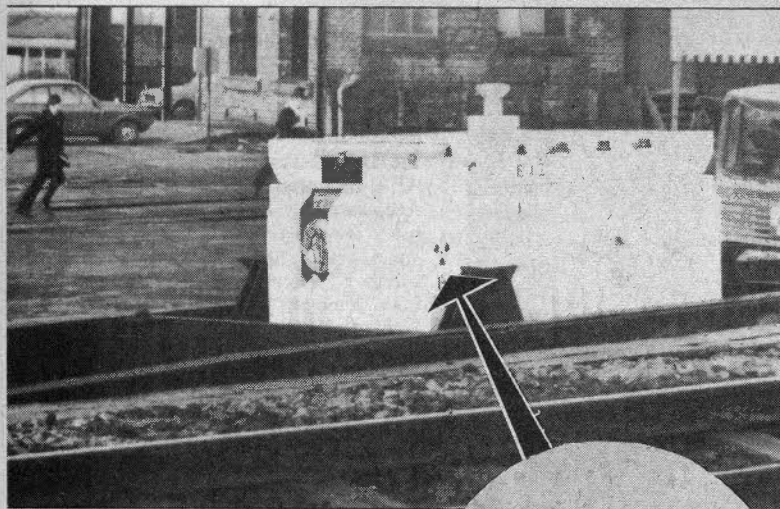
Robert Snowden, is also interested in fertility. He is planning a study of unemployment and fertility behaviour.

At the conference itself the subjects discussed will include genetic assimilation, ethnic intermarriage, and the socio-economic aspects of interaction between ethnic groups and host commu-

nities. Among the speakers who are all 'experts from a wide range of disciplines' will be Farrukh Hashmi, a commissioner from the government's own Commission for Racial Equality. □

Picket: Wednesday 1.30 p.m., Botany Theatre, University College, Gower St WC1.





Photos: Keith Lomax/Leeds Other Paper

Nuclear train derailed

A GOODS TRAIN with a nuclear waste transporter, said to be empty at the time, was derailed in Holbeck, a district of Leeds, last Wednesday morning. Although the accident provoked an emergency response by the police to a possible radioactivity incident both British Rail and the Central Electricity Generating Board at first denied that nuclear flasks were involved. Police cordoned off the area, and threatened photographers and reporters with arrest if they entered the area in

which the train stood. A fire brigade team surveyed the area with geiger counters, after the train had been rerailed and shunted into a siding. Subsequently the presence of the flask was admitted, but it was claimed (inaccurately) that empty flasks would carry no radioactivity whatsoever. British Rail confirmed that city centre routes for nuclear waste trains are used to avoid 'having to charge (our customers) too much'.

Duncan Campbell



Trident contd

codes', and 'specific... VLF jam-resistant techniques'.

Critically, in view of the public debate on Trident's price-tag, the US is unwilling to give Britain 'budget information, except as necessary to enable the UK to measure the implications of their choice of operating strategy and size of forces'. In other words,

The Ministry of Defence was unwilling to say whether it had or

had not got the 'specific' information which was prohibited. A spokesman suggested that because US and UK submarines sometimes passed each other in the Atlantic, we might know how noisy they were. Did we spy to get the information the US wouldn't hand over, then? 'That's not what I meant.' The Ministry claimed to be 'satisfied' that it had the necessary planning, technical and financial information on Trident despite the US ban. □

Board defeats motion which says NS shall not be a 'Social Democratic' paper

THE DIRECTORS of the *New Statesman* have again refused to give a straightforward assurance that the paper is not to be pushed into the arms of the Social Democratic Party.

At a meeting on Wednesday this week the board defeated, by five votes to four, the following motion proposed by Professor Peter Townsend and Benedict Nightingale: 'that the board is committed to ensure that the characteristics and policy of the *New Statesman* as a broadly-based and socialist and not a Social Democratic newspaper, independent of all political parties, are perpetuated.' This motion, with specific reference to the SDP, was put in view of widespread concern that the members of the board wished to move the paper to the political centre. (This has been vehemently

denied by some board members.) After the vote, the board also decided that the text of this defeated motion should not be published.

The board approved instead a motion proposed by the chairman, Graham C. Greene, which said that the *NS* should be a 'broadly-based socialist paper which will be independent in the terms stated in its first editorial of 12 April 1913: "we shall deal with all current political, social and intellectual questions; but in doing so we shall be bound by no ties of party, class or creed".'

The latter motion might, in other circumstances, seem to be an undertaking of a sort. However, both Anthony Sampson and Graham C. Greene have said that they think members of the SDP can be called socialists. □

Rob Edwards on a legal victory that came too late

Plessey sit-in 'torpedoed'

TUESDAY'S unanimous Appeal Court ruling in favour of the Plessey workers in Bathgate effectively legalises sit-ins in furtherance of trade disputes in Scotland. But it is of little more than academic interest to the 200 workers, mostly women, because they had already ended their eight-week sit-in at the weekend.

Earlier this month, the workforce had voted by a large majority to reject an offer by a new Dutch-registered company, Arcotronics Holdings, to buy the plant, on the ground that the deal was conditional on the successful completion of negotiations and allowed Plessey access to the factory. The workers were anxious about the management links between Plessey and the new company and feared asset-stripping.

However, within ten days they had reversed their decision, in line with advice from union officials, in particular those from the AUEW Engineering Section which represents the vast majority of the workforce. AUEW district organiser Tom Adams, divisional organiser Ernie Leslie and national executive member Gavin Laird, along with Norman McIntosh, divisional organiser of the white collar engineers' union, TASS, all lobbied vigorously to get the workers to accept the offer. In the judgment of one of the leading occupiers they managed to 'torpedo' the sit-in. The only significant improvement secured in the original deal was a guarantee by

Plessey to underwrite the wages of 80 employees for a year if Arcotronics went bust. It is argued by some that with the help of the court verdict and mounting labour movement support, more jobs and better terms could have been won by continuing to impound the company's valuable stock and equipment.

It was the union lawyers' misjudged scorn at the idea of fighting Plessey in court that enabled a team of Scottish National Party lawyers to move in and gain kudos from winning the case.

The implications of the legal victory, while presenting employers in Scotland with a major headache may not extend south of the border. The main argument successfully advanced on behalf of the workers was that, as the occupation was a legitimate attempt to get management to begin meaningful negotiations, it was part of an industrial dispute which, under section 13 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974, should not be dealt with in the courts. It is doubtful whether the same arguments would apply in similar circumstances in England and Wales, where the fact that trespass alone can be actionable means that companies have an added lever to use against an occupying workforce. In Scotland, as a general rule, simple trespass is not an offence unless damages arising from it can be proven.

Meanwhile, following the sit-in and picket organised by the women workers at the Loveable underwear factory in Cumbernauld (see *NS* 19 February 1982) a business consortium has bought the factory and re-employed 90 of the 300 women made redundant in February. □