

# Not-so-secret nuclear bunker targeted

1/1/98  
RADICAL anti-war protesters ran rings round government officials in a series of embarrassing security breaches at its main Scottish nuclear bunker, 30-year-old secret files disclose today.

The supposedly state-of-the-art installation at Barnton Quarry in Edinburgh was built to house government offices in the event of nuclear war, but became a focus for campaigners after it was named in one of the most serious security breaches of the 1960s.

On Good Friday 1963, a group calling itself Spies for Peace leaked details of 14 secret bases which were designated regional seats of government, where the nation's administrators would go to if there was a war.

A poster glued to a vacant shopfront in Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, informed passers-by: "These secrets are kept from you because you may be a spy. Not for Russia but for all people everywhere - because you may believe you have a right to know what is being done about your future, in your name, at your expense but without your consent."

Meanwhile, 4,000 copies of a pamphlet sold across Britain for 10p gave details of an top secret exercise known as Fallex 62 - undertaken around the time of the Cuban missile crisis the previous autumn 1962 - in which a simulated civilian evacuation effectively failed and Britain suffered "widespread devastation" as roads were "choked".

The breach was so serious that the prime minister, Harold Macmillan, cut short his holiday to tackle the crisis and make a statement in the Commons. Addressing the question of the failure of Fallex 62, on 25 April, 1963, he responded: "I think that neither this government nor the government of any other country can deny that any form of nuclear warfare, if it ever came, would have the most terrible results, and all that the civil defence measures can do is try and mitigate them."

However, Scottish Office documents show that the wider security question continued to plague officials in Edinburgh.

Days before the PM's statement, about 200 protesters marched from the Mound to

the perimeter fence at Barnton and managed to paint CND symbols on the steel doors of the ventilating shafts and cut through the fence.

A Scottish Office report on the incident assured that "the break in the wire will be repaired and also the gap through which children were seen crawling in a film on television last night", though this detail was later removed for a briefing to the PM.

The breaches, including wire-cutting, graffiti, hoax phone calls, even an amateur map of the installation found on one protester, continued throughout the 1960s until it was decided that the main government operation would have to be based elsewhere.

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