

## How to Handle Difficult Questions

The following might be useful when meeting candidates or at a public meeting:

**Q. Why do you bring this up in a local election? Defence policy is for the government to decide.**

**A. The law says that local authorities have got to defend local people against a nuclear attack. We say the only way to do that is to make sure that a nuclear attack never happens. So it is our duty to protest when we see the government adopting a defence policy that makes nuclear war more likely.**

**Q. A NFZ is as useless as a snow-teeze zone—or do you have a special agreement with Comrade Cherenko?**

**A. No-one says the declaration alone can protect people from the effects of a nuclear attack, but it is a small step towards reducing international tension and removing the nuclear bases that make us a prime target.**

**Q. Civil defence is a humanitarian duty—even the most ardent unilateralist can support it.**

**A. (i) It won't work. Scientists have said, again and again, that there's no way of protecting the population from a nuclear attack.**

**Roughly 80 per cent of people in the UK would be killed or seriously injured in a 'limited' attack because there are so many military targets packed into this small and densely populated island.**

**Those who survived the initial weeks would face radiation sickness, epidemics, the destruction of water supplies, starvation, lack of shelter and power.**

**A nuclear war could even destroy the world's climate, causing a black-out for months, temperatures of 20 to 30°C, the failure of all crops and the complete destruction of human life.**

**(ii) It misleads the public. The government says that we must whitewash the windows and hide under the kitchen table for two weeks. Then we can 'resume normal activities'. If it wasn't so tragic, it would be funny.**

(iii) Its aim is to keep the public quiet in the run-up to a war. Civil Defence doesn't offer people any realistic ways to survive a nuclear war—there aren't any.

However, it does place a great stress on 'maintaining public order'. The reason for these plans is to ensure that the public can't get in the way of the government when it is thinking about launching a nuclear attack.

Remember that NATO has a policy of being prepared to use nuclear weapons first.

(iv) It's part of a nuclear war-fighting policy. A Home Office training manual says 'No defence strategy based on deterrence can be convincing if it fails to include an element for Home Defence. A potential attacker must be persuaded that the nation is ready to accept and survive an attack, at least to the extent of being able to retaliate.'

**Q. Nuclear waste transport is perfectly safe.**

**A. The government has been assuring us of that for years. But the safety tests on flasks used to carry nuclear waste are unrealistic. Confidential CEGB reports have shown that there are frequent low level leaks from the flasks.**

**Q. Peace education is political propaganda.**

**A. The UK has endorsed a United Nations statement calling on all governments to develop programmes of peace education. So far our government has done nothing. However, there are balanced courses available**

for different age groups. These have been devised by teachers, not politicians, and have been approved by HM Inspectors of Schools as being fair and unbiased.

## Day schools

British CND's Nuclear Free Zone Working Group is intending to help organise a series of day-schools around the country as part of the Nuclear Free Counties campaign. We would like to prioritise those areas where there is a realistic chance of Nuclear Free gains in the elections. We will be contacting groups in these areas to see if there is a demand for a day-school on 'NFZ Campaign and Local Elections'.

The next issue of Campaign will report on the progress of the Nuclear-Free Counties Campaign and include artwork for a 'Why your council should declare itself a Nuclear Free Zone' leaflet.

Please send details of the campaign in your area to:

Fred Barker  
11 Goodwin Street  
N4 3HQ

continued pa

Mr E.E. Alley, Civil Defence Officer, F6 Division of the Home Office, sent out a circular letter on November 9 1984 to all County and Regional EPOs about "the Nuclear Winter." The purpose of the memorandum was to boost a letter from an American scientist attacking the whole idea of the Nuclear Winter. But Mr Alley did conclude his letter with this splendid sentence:

"Surely no truly democratic government can function effectively if most of its people are misinformed on critically important issues."

This splendid thought may be useful in speaking, writing, etc.

Supplied by The BK Information Service.