

Top brass see 'nuclear winter' video

# CND realism at civil defence talks

M.S.  
2/7/84

By JIM SAUNDERS

COVENTRY peace campaigners brought an air of reality to the 32nd annual gathering of emergency planning officers debating civil defence.

Simon Turney, chairman of the Greater London Council's planning service committee, told the ace demonstrators he was delighted to see them.

"The nuclear-free zone movement," he said, "is here in forcing questions and trying to persuade the civil defence industry that what they are doing on nuclear warfare is useless."

A CND banner from the '60s with telling posters greeted 300 members of the Association of Civil Defence Emergency Planning Officers as they arrived at the De Vere Hotel.

Hundreds of leaflets were liberally taken up by passers-by, many of them visiting the nearby theatre.

Sponsored and paid for by the Home Office, the gathering of Brigadier-General, majors, captains, wing commanders, police inspectors and sergeants plus 150 councillors, discussed civil defence — facing the future.

It seemed a heavily stage-managed affair with very few dissenting voices from the floor and only a whisper of dissent. The organisers, after strong

representations to the chairman, agreed to allow Scientists Against Nuclear Arms to show its latest video on the nuclear winter.

The dozen or so people attending the showing expressed some criticism of the video and seemed disconcerted by it.

Dealing with the effects of nuclear war on agriculture, Professor Tony Jackson, with great caution and many reservations, sought to show that survivors of a nuclear war in Britain could receive 2,000 calories of food a day. But farmers, he said, are not being trained in civil defence.

The association's president-elect Sir Leslie Mavor, in an impassioned intervention, called on the conference to defeat what he called the "doomsday boys" on the other side.

He declared nuclear war "is a most unlikely event."

In a witty and oblique critique of civil defence, Prof. Keith Boddy of Newcastle cast serious doubts on the ability of the health service to function during or after a nuclear war.

He urged that civil defence planning be brought down to the lowest level of the Health Service, namely, the cottage hospital and the community health centres.

All the contributions yesterday reflected the serious concern in government circles with widespread public indifference to civil defence.

## Tory attacks civil defence planning

TEL.

18/5/84

A FORMER Tory junior Social Services Minister attacked the Government's handling of civil defence planning in the Commons yesterday.

Sir GEOFFREY FINSBERG (Hampstead and Highgate), accused the Government during Question Time of being "exceptionally dilatory in a matter on which there has been grave public concern for a long time."

He said new guidelines urging local authorities to prepare civil defence plans should be in force before the Commons rose for the summer recess, otherwise the Government would be letting down people who wanted to do voluntary civil defence work.

Mr DOUGLAS HURD, Home Office Minister of State said the Government was preparing a consultative circular bringing together all previous guidelines and adding new functions. Consultations would take place with local authorities in the summer and it was intended to issue the improved guidelines in the autumn.

### Adjournment debate

"We intend to proceed in an orderly and effective way. We have the will and the power to make the new regulations work."

But Sir GEOFFREY described Mr Hurd's answers as "wholly unsatisfactory" and said he would raise the question of civil defence planning in a late night adjournment debate.

GUARDIAN 2.7.84

Stage 1 is "a covert stage, knowledge of which must be confined to a very senior level." Stage 2 consists of "Unobtrusive Preparatory Action. This stage directs limited activity which could be carried out without inviting public attention." Stage 3 is the "Overt stage"—the full implementation of the NHS war measures.

The measures to be taken in these stages are listed in detail in a document entitled Proposed Transition To War Measures drawn by the joint home defence planning team of the South-western, Oxford and Wessex regional health authorities. The first instruction in the covert Stage 1 is: "Dust off war plans."

There are 50 things that the NHS war officers must do unobtrusively in Stage 2. They are to notify all staff at the first opportunity, train them for war duties and test the emergency balloon aerial.

The war officers are instructed to "consider role of dentists, chiropodists, physiotherapists, etc.," check stockpiles of drugs; "review protective factors of all buildings, prepare to bring vulnerable properties up to required standard."

Then they must: "Send home staff not fully engaged to carry out individual protective factors (sic) of their homes — inner rooms — water, etc."

After that they will have to "start crash training courses in first aid — fire fighting — radiac instruments — elementary Boy Scout survival, etc." Having harvested "any crops in the hospital grounds," they must "consider what additional ground can be cultivated for quick returns."

## 'Boy scout' code for nuclear survival

By Andrew Veitch  
Medical Correspondent

Hospital patients in the South-west will be given advance warning of a nuclear attack: they will know the balloon is about to go up when their doctors start resorting to "boy scout survival techniques."

This has been made possible by the Department of Health's war planners who, on Government instructions, have told health authorities to keep initial preparations for an attack secret in order not to alarm the public.

These covert and unobtrusive (sic) measures are listed in two confidential documents which have been passed to the Guardian. They include crash training courses for staff in boy scout survival techniques, tests of the emergency balloon aerial for the National Health Service communications scheme and the harvesting of crops in hospital grounds.

The Wessex health region's Check List For Use In A War Crisis says: "The Government's policy in a crisis is to keep disruption of the normal life in this country to a minimum for as long as possible. Activity which looks like preparations for war could be misconstrued."

A "Transition To War state" will be authorised by the Department of Health or the Government, says the Wessex document.