

# Why civil defence is starting to look

IF A NUCLEAR attack seems likely advises the Government pamphlet *Protect and Survive*, your best move is to "stay at home." An accompanying film, to be shown repeatedly as the crisis deepens and war looms, backs this up with the comment: "No part of Britain is safer than any other."

But a very different picture emerges from the official plans of the Scottish Home and Health Department. The department's circulars to local authorities — which have never before been published, although they are not classified — describe at length plans to seal off major roads, impound food and petrol stocks, cut off the telephone system, and withhold food from anyone who leaves their home.

A disturbing picture of what the Government really expect emerges from further plans for the home defence exercises in which the Scottish Office has participated. One such exercise — "Square Leg" — led to a controversial and contested move by Lothian Regional Council to prohibit their emergency planning officials from taking part.

These exercise plans detail measures to control the civil population ranging from internment camps to the "subjugation and elimination of hostile elements."

The Scottish Office's series of emergency services circulars — they began in 1972 — describe how Scotland will go to war. A Commissioner for Scotland will be appointed by royal warrant, and will have absolute power to rule by decree. This appointment would normally go to the Secretary of State. He will take up office, and power, from the specially prepared Scottish Central Control. He will administer in conjunction with two other officials, the Scottish Police Commander and the Military Commander of Scotland — a new job for the Scottish Army General, Sir David Scott-Barrett.

The Military Commander will have his own bunker, "Armed Forces HQ Scotland," and will control all military units in the country.

Three other government bunkers have also been reserved for Scottish Office and other officials. These are the Western, Northern, and Eastern Zone Controls. Each Zone Commissioner will rule over two or



Civil defence is already a hotly controversial subject on the Government agenda. But the Scottish Office's plans are rather different from what the public has been told. A special report by (left) **DUNCAN CAMPBELL**



## Scotland: the official plans for war

Government have assumed that about 200 megatons of nuclear weapons will be used



more regions. Eastern Zone, for example, comprises Lothians and Borders. It, too, will have a military and a police commander.

Most of the necessary bunkers were built more than 25 years ago, and their whereabouts are generally known to the public. The Scottish Central Control, on the A71 at Kirknewton, was openly listed during the 1960s as the regional civil defence headquarters. Then it was extended and modernised to meet its new role.

The Eastern Zone Control, at Barnton Quarry in Edinburgh, was the site of a CND demonstration at Easter 1963. It was then Scotland's regional seat of government.

In 1973, the Scottish Office distributed copies of its plans for sealing off major roads as "essential service routes." All of the country's major roads are included. These roads would be taken over to "facilitate the free movement of essential traffic of

all kinds engaged in the implementation of transition-to-war measures." Refugees would not be allowed.

A later circular, "Communications in War," explains the telephone preference scheme which has been installed throughout the country. All telephones are graded in three categories. Once an attack seems imminent, everyone in categories two and three will be cut off, leaving the phone system to serve only a tiny number of offices and defence HQs.

A September 1976 and other circulars reveal that although there are no general bunker places for MPs, councillors or the public, there is space reserved at the Scottish Central and Zone Controls for "advisers" from industry — for example from the construction industry. These are and other home defence preparations for war include "measures to be carried out without becoming public knowledge (covert measures)."

While the crisis was low "very little material" would be released to the public. "Government broadcasts will give the first indication of possibility that war might be averted . . . the emphasis would be . . . on reference to the effectiveness of the nuclear deterrent."

If war seemed imminent BBC would go off the air and be replaced by "WTBS" — the Time Broadcasting Service — by small teams of BBC personnel who have also been allocated space in the government bunkers. They would transmit normal BBC Scottish transmitters.

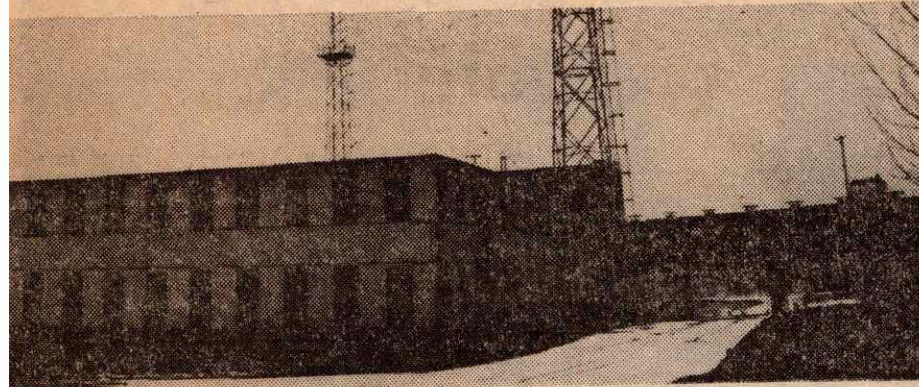
But it is during the peacetime home defence exercises more disturbing Government intentions and expectations have been revealed. There have been three nationwide exercises in 1975 — "Inside Right"; "Square Half" in 1978; and "Square Last September."

A briefing distributed

**JULIE DAVIDSON**



# y much like a confidence trick



*The Scottish Central Control at Kirknewton, Midlothian: it has been extended and modernised for its new role.*

**"Some visionary interpretations . . . have anticipated that the mass graves of nuclear war dead may eventually become the 'shrines' of subsequent centuries. . ."**

**"The major roads would be taken over to 'facilitate the free movement of essential traffic. . .'. Refugees would not be allowed."**



cial courts" — and, inevitably, the "execution of sentences" by firing squads.

The Scottish Office anticipates that many might be offended by its advice to local authorities on preparations for mass burial or cremation sites. The relevant circular, somewhat elliptically entitled "environmental Health in War," cautions: "some of the information in this circular may offend individual beliefs. Recipients may wish to limit its distribution to those who have a need to know." The circular advises that desires for religious rites and "separate registration and burials" might "have to be ignored." Some visionary interpretations of this circular have anticipated that the mass graves of nuclear war dead might eventually become "shrines" of subsequent centuries, and sites should thus be chosen with care.

Health services would be equally scarce. According to the guidance on this subject, for example, "people suffering from radiation sickness only should not be admitted" to medical care. The same circular also reveals that wounded or trapped survivors can expect absolutely no assistance from rescuers:

"General life-saving operations in areras of fallout might not be possible . . . until days or weeks after a nuclear strike."

The Scottish Office are now working on producing a further issue of guidance for local authorities, responding to the new Government boost on civil defence spending. The boost will mean more supplies and staff for the SHHD's few emergency depots, with stores of biscuits, sugar, flour and the like.

But the changes will not be fundamental: rescue services, public shelter and health care cannot be provided without considerable expenditure. And most local councils are likely to follow Lothian Region in their unwillingness to inject scarce cash into civil defence.

The fact remains that the only aspects of the home defence system which have been tested and tried are the military ones. Many of these aspects are concerned with disposing of civil opposition to military aims. Exercises like "Square Leg" have been overwhelmingly military. Unless credible resources for civil protection are provided, many people will continue to think that civil defence is a confidence trick.

start of the "Scrum Half" exercise "play" indicated how bad officials expect an attack to be: a signal sent to the Scottish AFHQ from the national military control centre stated:

"The overall situation is one of vast destruction, enormous casualties and widespread chaos. . . . Conditions vary from complete obliteration and no sign of life in the main target areas."

During each of these exercises, the Government have assumed that about 200 megatons of nuclear weapons will be used — the equivalent of 10,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs. This immense overkill is assumed to have devastated all major military and industrial targets in Scotland — centres like the submarine bases at Holy Loch, Faslane, and Rosyth; Glasgow; Stornoway, Leuchars, Kinloss, Machrihanish, and Lossiemouth RAF bases; Glasgow, Prestwick, and Edinburgh airports; and US bases at Edzell and Thurso. Nuclear reactors like dounreay

and eventually tornness would also be targets. During "Square Leg," more than 100 "borabns" landed between noon and four p.m. on Thursday, September 19.

But most of these exercises are not concerned with what happens after such an attack, but what happens before. The exercises have largely been military — and mostly concerned in controlling civilians, not rescuing them. This objective is confirmed in the official circular on home defence planning assumptions which was issued in 1973. Aim number one of home defence is defined as "measures necessary . . . to secure the United Kingdom against any internal threat."

The "measures" are not attractive. During "Scrum Half," for example, enormous supplies of CS gas were distributed to all military units to put down public unrest, days before a nuclear attack had begun. During "Square Leg," troops

were sent against peace demonstrators; pacifism was regarded as a "front for subversion"; dissidents were interned, or perhaps worse; refugee movement was prohibited.

All of this, of course, took place on paper. A few practice skirmishes between Army units and pretend "saboteurs and subversives" discreetly took place on Army ranges.

In one of the "Square Leg" planning documents, a chillingly precise list of military tasks is given. The list leaves little doubt that the Government feel they will need to be brutal with survivors. The tasks include: guards on internment areas; control of selfish and disgruntled minorities; subjugation and elimination of hostile elements; personal protection for VIPs. Guards for "special courts," will be created to disperse rapid, and probably flimsy, justice.

Military tasks therefore include "support and protect spe-