

# Peace News

## The spies were right

On Thursday, April 11, a pamphlet entitled "Danger Official Secret RSG 6" was circulated to the national press, political parties, prominent personalities in the peace movement including Bertrand Russell, Albert Schweitzer and Klaus Pauling, to a number of MPs and to MI5. The pamphlet gave details of the Government's plans for setting up 12 regional seats of government (RSGs) in secret underground offices, naming the sites of several of them and giving names and telephone numbers. It also gave details of the results of the military exercises Paraplue and Fallex 62 which showed that a nuclear attack would reduce this country to chaos.

A Government official was quoted by the "Daily Express" on April 13 as saying: "The location of these centres is an official secret and this document could be of value to spies. The information is restricted to certain Government departments concerned with defence." The accuracy of the pamphlet was not called into question.

"Peace News" went to press this week Special Branch were reported to still making enquiries about the source of the pamphlet.

"Peace News" welcomes the publication of the Spies for Peace pamphlet and considers it to have been in the national interest. It is a valuable supplement to the Black Book which we published on the effects of nuclear war, because it shows that the Government is well aware of the total devastation that war would bring, but is trying to withhold this from the public.

A really important revelation in the document concerns the effects in Britain of the Fallex 62 NATO exercise in September, 1962. The Defence White Paper for 1963-4 states: "In the course of participating last year in the NATO Exercise Fallex 62 an opportunity was taken to practise our mobilisation plans, and to exercise procedures for co-operation with the civil authorities in home defence. . . . In general the exercise showed that the plans were really sound and practicable." The Spies for Peace pamphlet shows on the contrary that the exercise proved that a nuclear attack would result in complete chaos:

The medical services broke down completely. Every hospital in the Southern Region was destroyed or put out of action by fall-out, the death of doctors, the lack of supplies. The communications system broke down and the roads were blocked. Gloucester, Oxford and Plymouth were eliminated by small bombs. London was paralysed; to go above ground was death. A lethal belt of radiation extended as far out as Windsor. Headquarters of the police in the Southern Region were killed, injured or immobilised. Losses among the civilian population were proportionately even higher. Whoever won the war, we lost it."

This confirms the report on Fallex 62 published by Der Spiegel last October and reported in Peace News November 9.

The indication that it is the information about the results of the NATO exercises which is really worrying the Government is shown by the fact that the Daily Mail was obliged to black out such information when it published a shortened version of the pamphlet on Tuesday.

The section on civil defence the White Paper also states: "The Government have always recognised the importance of informing the public of the effects of nuclear war and the steps that could be taken to mitigate these effects." By informing the public the Spies for Peace document was in fact carrying out avowed Government

policy. Certainly there can be no justification on grounds of security or anything else for the Government to deceive the public in defiance of its own avowed policy.

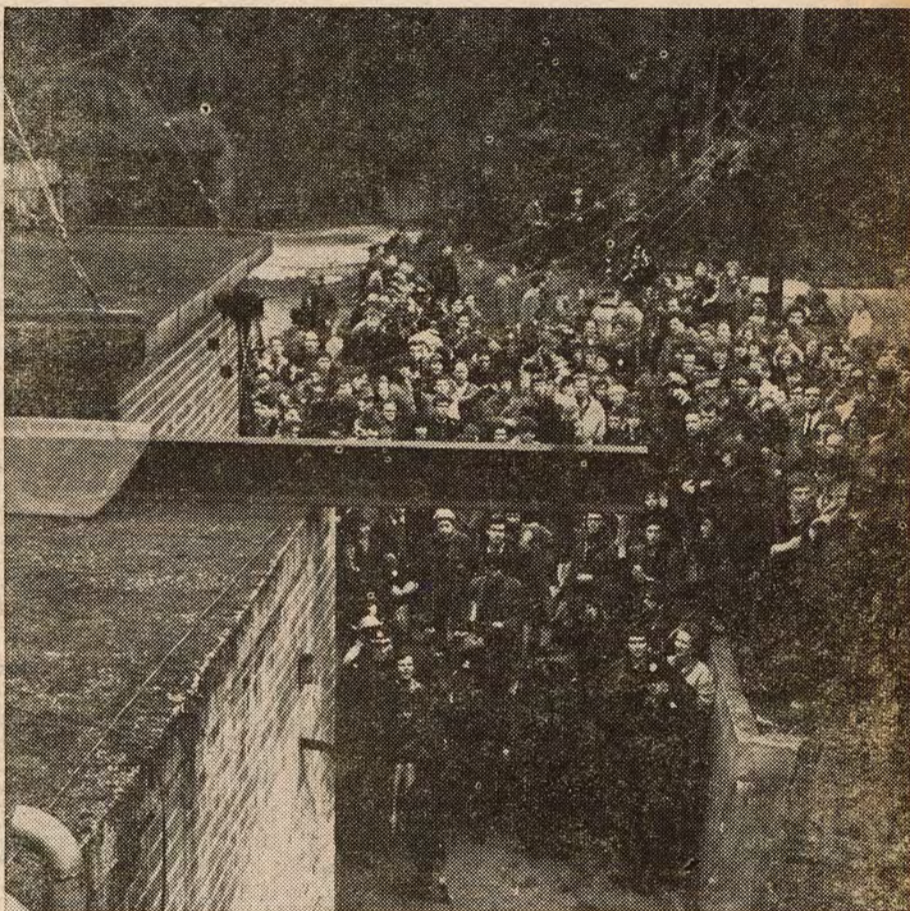
The Labour opposition could make much of the Government's deception of the public. Unfortunately they are so committed to the arms programme that they seem more likely to use the opportunity to attack the Government for not taking even stricter security precautions.

The Spies for Peace pamphlet also gives details, including telephone numbers and addresses, of the 12 underground Regional Seats of Government that would be set up in the event of war. The general outline of the plan for Regional Commissioners had already been made public. What the pamphlet does is to show in some detail the sort of powers that such Regional Governments would have, assuming that the plan worked out and that there were still other people left alive to govern. Regional Commissioners would have absolute power in their regions and would have under them an administrative staff in which the main departments of government would be represented - the Army, Navy, Air Force, police, etc. It would in fact be a completely authoritarian administration, governing by decree.

More important is the fact that the system of Regional Governments could only operate at all if the nuclear attack was on an absurdly small scale. A large scale attack, which seems more probable, would leave the Regional Government in charge of several million corpses for the few weeks it might hope to survive itself.

The picture that emerges from the pamphlet is this: the Government are spending millions of pounds on a system of regional military dictatorships, to operate from secret underground offices in the event of a nuclear attack. Even with this system in operation the results of NATO exercises show that there would be complete chaos. As the Spies for Peace pamphlet comments: "It (Fallex 62) proved once and for all the truth of the 1957 Defence White Paper that there is no defence against nuclear war."

The British press has accepted without indignation or even surprise a plan which, ludicrous as it may be, envisages a form of military government in the post-nuclear era. It has complied with the D notice warnings not to publish the names of the sites



or the details of the Fallex 62 operation. It is a frightening reminder of the totalitarian implications of nuclear war preparations and of the way they have come already to be accepted as necessary in the national interest.

Instead the press has concentrated its attack on the irresponsibility of the authors of the pamphlet. They suggest that by naming the location of the Regional Seats of Government the authors pinpoint new nuclear targets for an enemy and thus render a genuinely defensive system inoperable. This is not a very serious point. The pamphlet states that 5,000 people are involved in the plans for Regional Government and thousands more workers and administrators must know of the existence of the sites. It is inconceivable that the Russians are unaware of their existence, even if they do not know exactly what is going on in them. Several newspapers, in fact, point out that national security was not vitally affected by the publication of the addresses of the sites; bomber and rocket bases and the seat of the central Government would be the priority targets, not the Regional Seats of Government. The argument against revealing the whereabouts of the RSGs operates even more strongly therefore at supposedly secret rocket and bomber bases where nuclear disarmers have been holding demonstrations since 1958. It was Peace News which first published a map showing the location of rocket bases in East Anglia.

It is argued that the RSGs are purely defensive, and that even a disarmed and neutralist government would have to set up some such system. In fact, the whole civil

defence programme is part and parcel of the nuclear system. As the Defence White Paper states:

"These plans (for civil defence) which provide for the close co-operation of the civil and military authorities are an integral part of our defence plans."

From time to time reports circulate about massive dispersal plans in the Soviet Union in the event of nuclear attack, and these, in conjunction with its nuclear arms programme, are invariably seen as evidence of sinister designs. The irony of the present situation is that the more thorough a nuclear armed government's plans for civil defence are, the more nervous its opponents will be that an attack is impending.

A neutralist government could not possibly have a system of secret underground centres, if only because secret operations would completely destroy the confidence of other countries in its sincerity. It would either have to provide an enormously costly deep-shelter programme or rely on its positive foreign and domestic policy to deter attack in the first place. Secrecy is a concomitant of militarism and will have to be discarded with it.

The press has attacked the Spies for Peace pamphlet as irresponsible. The people who have really been irresponsible are the Government who have kept important information secret and the press which has assisted them in doing so.

Any man whose conscience is outraged by the preparations for nuclear war and feels he must let the public know about them, even if this means breaking the Official Secrets Act, has our support.