

# CIVIL DEFENCE-NOTHING FOR SOMETHING



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## A Trade Union CND Briefing

WASTON  
THE PRIS





## YOUR LOCAL SERVICES

Local authorities, despite all the things that have happened to them in recent years, provide good and much-needed services in a whole range of areas. We are, however, witnessing the slow and systematic erosion of these services with the constant scaling down of the finance available to run them, with the exception that is of civil defence. This is why we are seeing the tangible benefits of funded local services sacrificed in order to pay for a massive escalation in the nuclear arms race. The scale of the cost of projects such as Trident makes it clear that we cannot have both.

Civil defence has to be judged against this background of the underfunding of our social services, even those such as the fire service which are allegedly seen as an important part of the proposed response to a nuclear war.

## WHAT ON EARTH IS THE PPI?

Councils are required by law to take part in civil defence. The Home Office monitors progress through the Planned Programme of Implementation (the PPI),

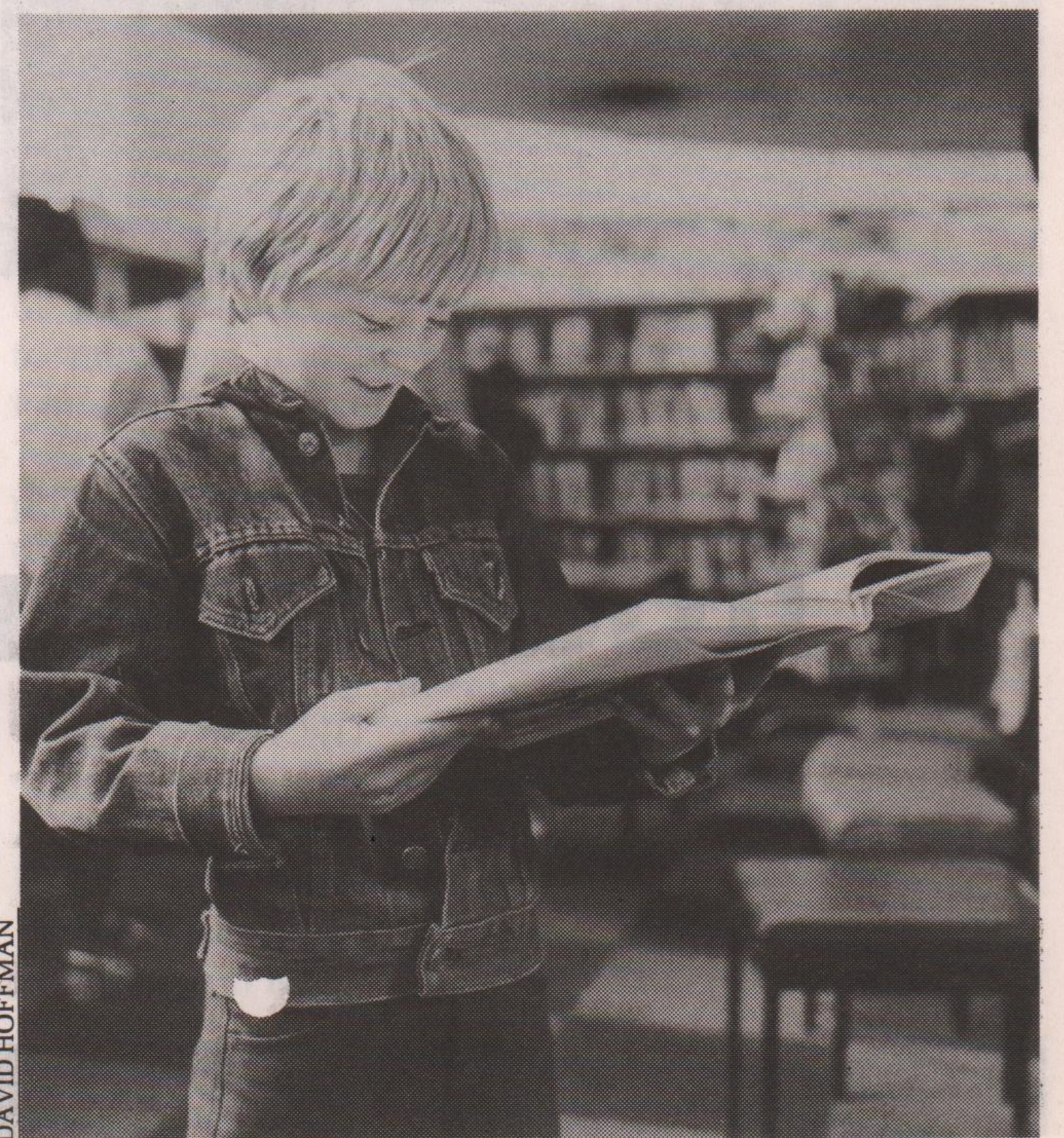
**Refuse collectors – a vital service threatened by underfunding**

which sets priorities and a timetable.

The approval of civil defence grant is linked to satisfactory progress in the civil defence plans drawn up by Counties, Scottish Regions and Fire and Civil Defence Authorities. Plans have to cover:

\* Collecting and distributing information (the effects of attack, casualties, radiation hazards, damage etc)

**Libraries – the type of service regarded as expendable because it's only our education that suffers**





- \* Control and co-ordination (wartime organisation with nominated key officers, community leaders etc)
- \* Advice and instructions to the public (covering protective measures, effects of attack etc)
- \* Identifying potential public shelters
- \* Rescue services (involving the fire brigade, works and engineering services and volunteers)
- \* Billeting and temporary accommodation for the homeless
- \* Preventing disease through sanitation, waste disposal etc
- \* Disposal of the dead (earmarking sites for mass burial)
- \* Emergency feeding (including food control and conservation as well as emergency cooking arrangements)
- \* Works services for repair, replacement, demolition or clearance of buildings and roads
- \* Essential services (welfare, education, transport, finance etc)
- \* Volunteers.

## WHAT IS 'CRITICAL COMPLIANCE'?

An approach of 'critical compliance' has been adopted by local authorities who are declared nuclear-free zones. It means that they intend to fulfill their legal obligations in the most honest way possible, fully confronting the likely situation in wartime. Many councils are carrying out research to establish their own detailed 'planning assumptions' about the likely scale, nature and effects of an attack affecting their area.

This approach should help to ensure that staff and the public are not misled about the likely effectiveness of the plans in the face of nuclear attack. It should also highlight the contradictions within the Government's civil defence arrangements and the problems of providing any form of protection for the public while Britain remains a nuclear weapons state and member of a nuclear alliance.

## HOW ARE COUNCIL STAFF AFFECTED?

Local authority staff could become involved through:

- \* Officer designations to wartime roles
- \* The earmarking of staff in particular categories, for example librarians, catering staff, social services staff
- \* Being asked to provide information for the plans
- \* Local civil defence training and exercises.

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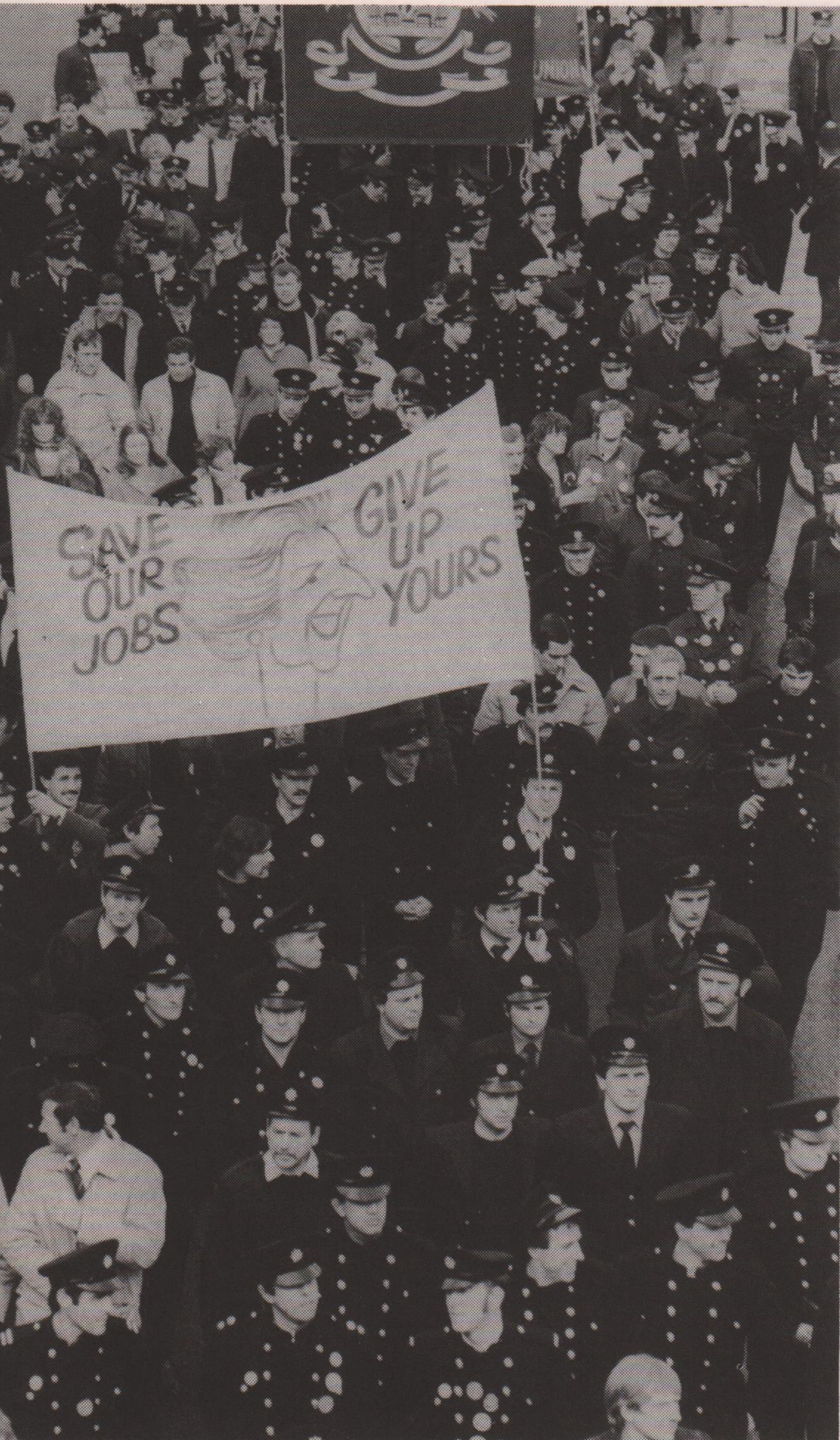


Local authorities working to make your locality worth living in and hamstrung by cuts and underfunding



ANDREW WIARD





Firefighters demonstrating in defence of their services. This government see that service as having a role in civil defence while their union regard current civil defence plans as simply a system to justify military spending

## THE POSITION OF STAFF

Unions which have members who may be affected will be concerned to advise them of their position and to ensure that no-one is dragooned into war-planning against their will.

Although councils have a legal responsibility to take part, their staff are not obliged by law to accept civil defence roles, including designation as key officers. In fact government guidance emphasises that designated staff should be willing.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- \* Make sure your fellow union members are aware of the reality behind civil defence planning and what it may mean in their job
- \* Make sure that they are informed about the union's and the council's policies on these issues
- \* Raise the issue at your trades council and at your union's conferences
- \* Pass a resolution covering the following points:

## MODEL RESOLUTION FOR TRADE UNION BRANCHES

This branch agrees

1. To seek from the council an absolute assurance that no member of the union will be disciplined, prejudged or disadvantaged in any way as a result of refusing to take part in civil defence work or refusing to accept any changes to his/her duties which have civil defence implications. (NB. This has the endorsement of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities).
2. To seek a clear assurance from the council that no job descriptions will be altered to add wartime duties or civil defence roles. (NB. This does not preclude work planning for peacetime emergencies).
3. To demand that union representatives are given the opportunity within work time to discuss these issues with members who may be asked to work on civil defence, in parallel with any briefing sessions organised by the council.
4. To inform any branch members in community organisations which may get written into the local war plans.
5. To organise a programme of departmental meetings, with a speaker and video, on the implications for different departments of the civil defence planning process.
6. To distribute information from Trade Union CND to members and to include information about this issue in branch mailings.
7. To issue a statement to the press setting out union policy and the reasons for the union's stance on civil defence.

Sources of further information and material:

Trade Union CND, 22-24 Underwood St, London N1 7JG (01-250 4010).

National NFZ Steering Committee, Manchester Town Hall, Manchester M60 2LA (061-234 3244).

London Nuclear Information Unit, Camden Town Hall, Euston Rd, London NW1 2RU (01-860 5747).

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