

There are now over 3,200 Nuclear Free Zones worldwide, some of which are governed by treaty, ordinance or constitution, others which are local authority initiated.

Looking back it is easy to see how the seeds of our progress were sown. Even in those earlier days of the worldwide local authority movement, more than 200 delegates attended meetings to discuss topics as wide ranging as civil defence, peace education and the 'Nuclear Winter' theory.

The first formal International NFZ Local Authority Conference took place in Manchester in April 1984. It was at this Conference that agreement to use the now famous Dove of Peace logo internationally was reached. Few people know the story behind our inspiring symbol. In fact, the dove came into being in an office in Manchester Town Hall, its shape torn from scrap paper by one of the Council's publicity officers!

In the earlier years much of the work carried out reflected the concerns of the peace movement. Perhaps, as the local authority movement itself grows and develops, it is proper to recall the ways in which the grass-roots peace movement set

the scene for popular support of peace initiatives everywhere. Local politicians have now taken up a role to which they were previously unaccustomed — that of international peacemakers.

By the time of the second conference in Cordoba, Spain, in March 1985, the onerous nature of local authority activities was being acutely reflected in debate and resolution. Seventeen nations were represented and these included, for the first time, delegates from South America, North Africa, the Middle East and some eastern bloc countries. The main achievement of this Conference was the founding of International NFZ Day, providing an annual opportunity for the co-ordinated promotion of NFZ initiatives across national frontiers.

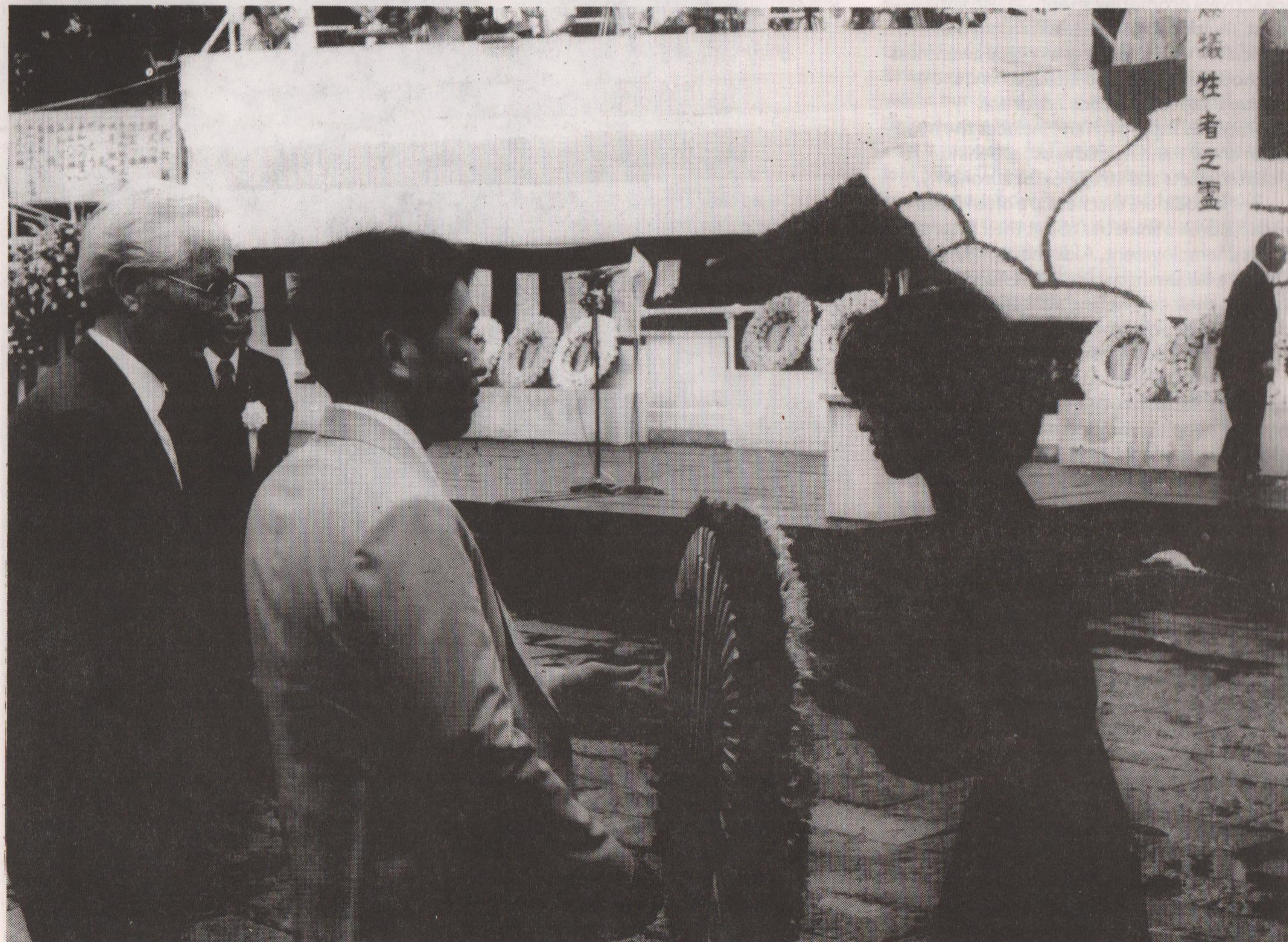
At the last Conference, held in Perugia in Italy during October 1986, it was agreed to set up an International Committee (ISC). Its tasks will include: the organisation of the bi-annual Conferences; acting as an intermediary for exchanging information between different countries; promoting the development of local authority NFZ initiatives by fostering the formation of national steering committees; and publishing a

regular Bulletin detailing the activities of NFZ councils world-wide.

It is hoped that all countries with NFZ districts, cities, towns or villages will form National Co-ordinating Bodies which will then liaise through the ISC. The role of the International Secretariat is clearly not to decide what initiatives should be followed in each country. But by providing a common focus it will help each of us campaigning for peace in our separate countries to realise that similar activities are taking place elsewhere.

Looking ahead, to some extent it is not possible to set a rigidly defined agenda for the future. Experience has shown that, with the setting up of NFZ structures, work expands to overwhelm the people allocated to do it. Certainly the direction for NFZ authorities will continue to be modified by grass roots peace movements and government legislation. But the fundamental aim remains clear: to rid the world of the nuclear threat and look forward to the day we can declare our world nuclear free!

Elizabeth Forder (Manchester City Council)



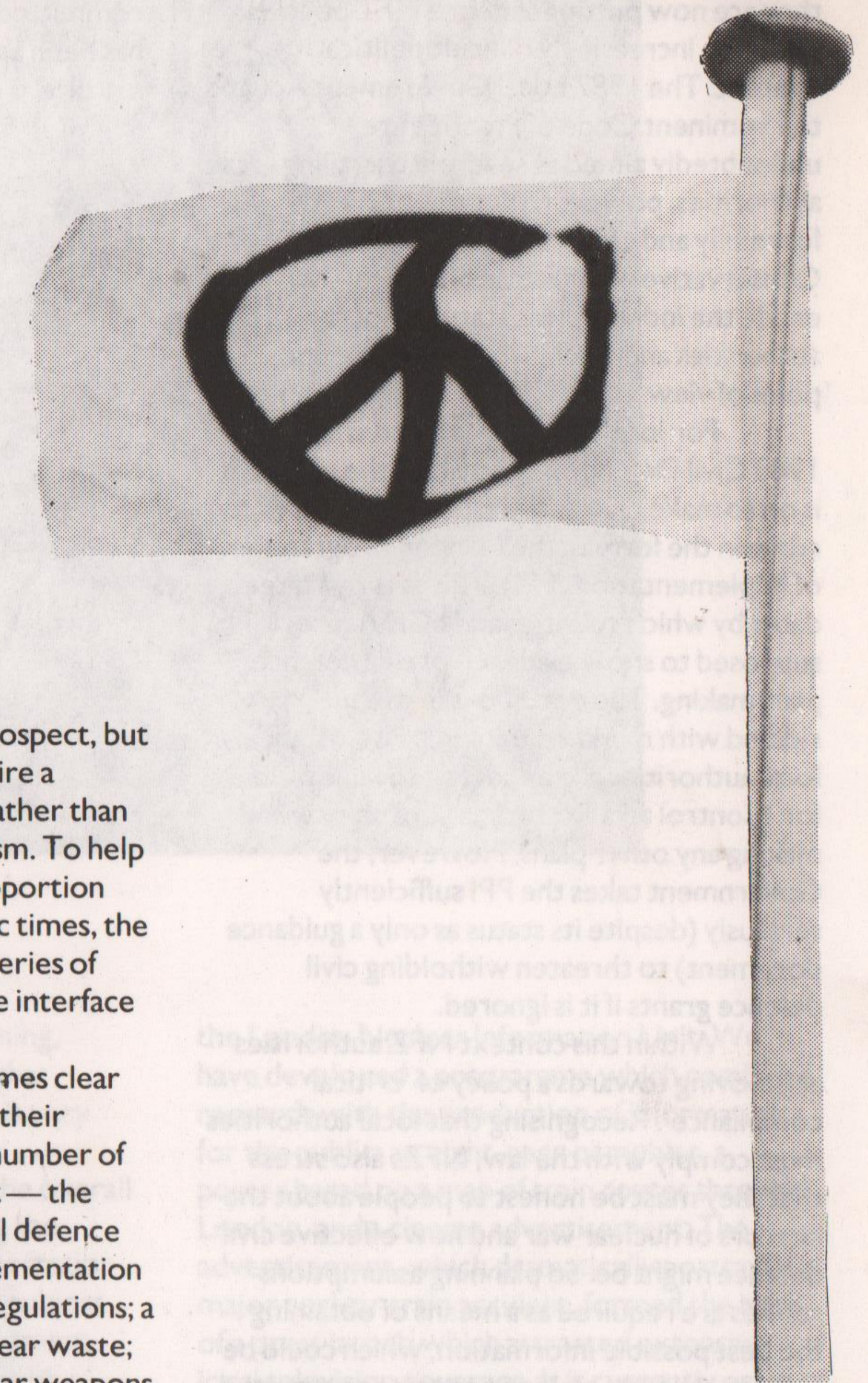
Dutch councillors help lay a wreath to Hiroshima survivors in 1985



NUCLEAR FREE ZONE BULLETIN

No 16 August 1987

Keep the NFZ Flag Flying



In the wake of the third Thatcherite landslide it would be very easy for peace campaigners to throw up their hands in despair and retire to the less taxing pursuits of tilling their own gardens. For those involved in pursuing NFZ initiatives through their local councils such a course must seem even more inviting, given the new Tory administration's declared aim of rubbing out the few remaining vestiges of opposition to its rule. In the published programme of legislation for the first Parliamentary session alone, the Government has signalled its intention to close the last loopholes through which councils have been able to publicise their anti-nuclear policies. It is also targeting those local authorities which have used contract compliance to prevent companies involved in nuclear weapons and construction work from tendering for council contracts.

The position of NFZ councils has been made even less comfortable by the crumbling political consensus for the policies they espouse. Politicians like David Steel, running scared of being tarred with the brush of 'loony leftism', have distanced themselves from the NFZ concept by making disparaging remarks about the 'gesture' politics behind it. Even the Labour Party, in its haste to yuppify its image, may well downgrade its support for such displays of municipal socialism.

All in all a pretty gloomy prospect, but one which has the potential to inspire a renewed sense of determination rather than bring on a bout of disabling defeatism. To help us to retain some semblance of proportion and perspective in these pessimistic times, the *NFZ Bulletin* has commissioned a series of articles from people working at the interface of NFZ-dom.

From these it quickly becomes clear that NFZ councils are only getting their second wind. Already they have a number of victories to chalk up to their credit — the cancellation of the 'Hard Rock' civil defence exercise in 1982; delay in the implementation of the subsequent Civil Defence Regulations; a climb-down over the burial of nuclear waste; and the identification of both nuclear weapons and waste transportation routes. Added to these are policy developments in new areas of concern: on peace education; opposition to the total nuclear fuel cycle; alternatives to nuclear power and arms conversion. Nor should it be forgotten that Britain's 180 NFZs are part of a burgeoning world-wide movement: there are now 3,200 declared NFZs in over 20 countries.

This hardly reads like a litany of defeat — more like the cause for hanging out yet more NFZ flags.

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

- ★ Civil Defence
- ★ Transportation of Nuclear Materials
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- ★ Radiation Monitoring
- ★ Alternatives to Nuclear Power
- ★ Arms Conversion
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- ★ International NFZs

NFZs & CIVIL DEFENCE

Civil Defence has arguably provided NFZ authorities with some of their greatest successes. From the indefinite postponement of the Government Civil Defence exercise 'Hard Rock' to setting up Planning Assumptions Studies (PA Studies), NFZ Authorities have been able to take the initiative by showing themselves to be responsible in not wanting to mislead people about what civil defence could actually do. But they are now putting forward NFZ policies within an increasingly difficult political context. The 1987 Local Government Act and the imminent Code of Practice are undoubtedly aimed at severely curtailing local authorities, powers to put their policies forcefully and effectively. The return of a Conservative administration will further erode the independent status of local authorities and their right to put an opposing point of view.

For local authorities faced with the 1983 Civil Defence Regulations, the pressure is on to make civil defence plans. Pressure has come in the form of the Planned Programme of Implementation (PPI). This sets out target dates by which counties and FCDAs are supposed to show evidence of civil defence plan-making. The document is, as usual, riddled with muddled thinking. For instance, local authorities are expected to have plans for 'Control and Co-ordination' before making any other plans. However, the Government takes the PPI sufficiently seriously (despite its status as only a guidance document) to threaten withholding civil defence grants if it is ignored.

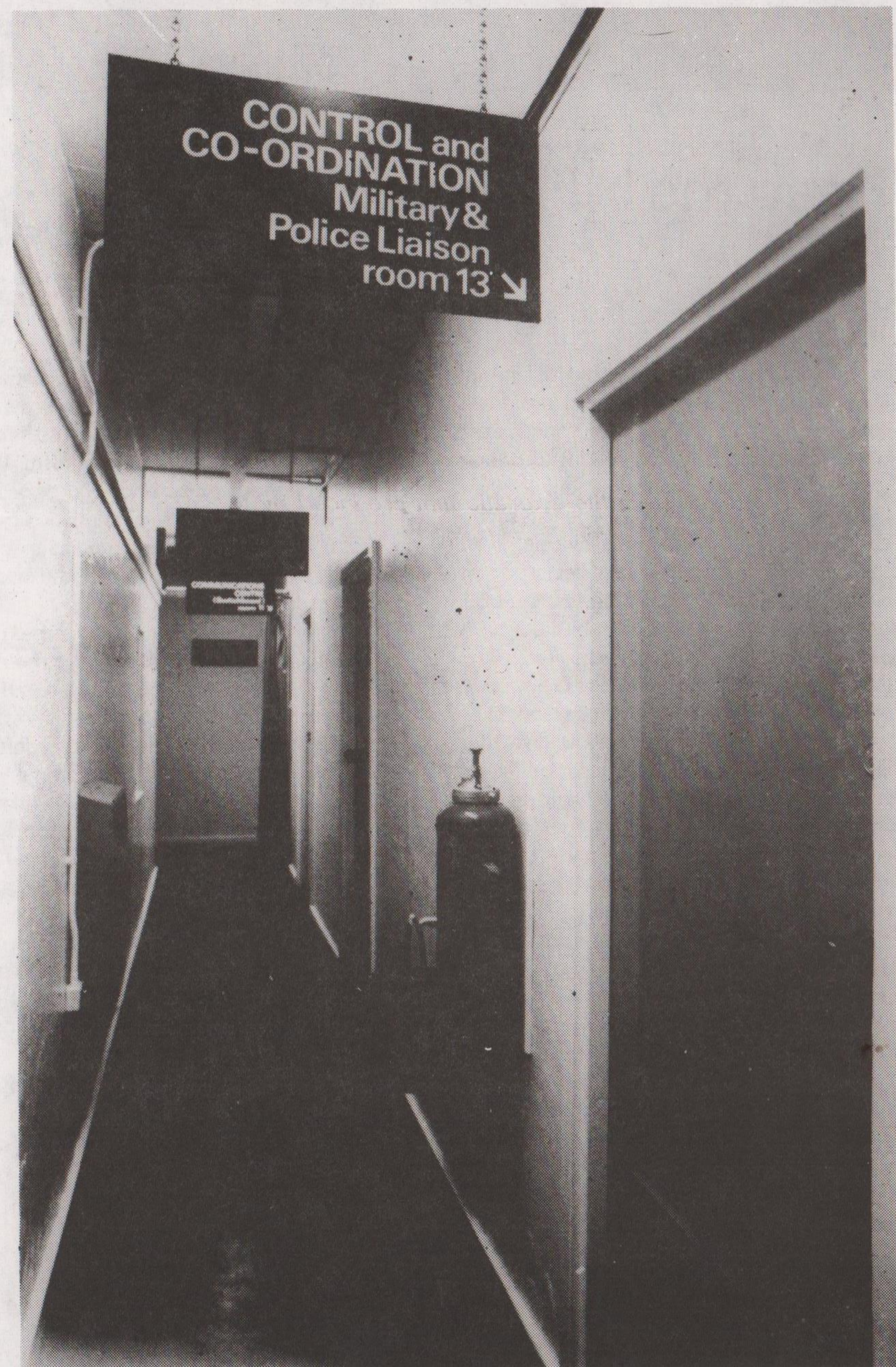
Within this context NFZ authorities are moving towards a policy of 'critical compliance'. Recognising that local authorities must comply with the law, NFZs also stress that they must be honest to people about the horrors of nuclear war and how effective civil defence might be. So planning assumptions studies are required as a means of obtaining the best possible information, which could be fed into the plan-making process as suggested in the PPI. The process should be analogous to doing a survey of the land before building on it but because the PPI expects plan-making simultaneously with gaining information from the PA Study, it's actually more like building a house at the same time as doing a survey to see if the ground is safe.

Nonetheless, PA Studies are absolutely critical if local authorities are to comply with the PPI and still act responsibly to the public. An opportunity has been opened up to move from either a symbolic rejection of civil defence or a policy of just "going through the motions" towards a soundly researched and informed policy which seeks to provide full and detailed information on war, its effects and civil defence. In fact, local authorities will be following the Home Office's own advice by ensuring that all the information from the Study and the civil defence plans themselves are open documents, easily accessible to enquirers. The

information will help promote public debate about the issues, especially amongst those voluntary organisations, community groups and trades unions who may become directly involved in civil defence activities.

So far, South Yorkshire FCDA, Strathclyde Regional Council, and a number of councils in the North-West have set up PA Studies. Others, such as districts in East Anglia, Hertfordshire and Essex also are committed. A National Study Co-ordinator has been appointed and national resource material is in preparation.

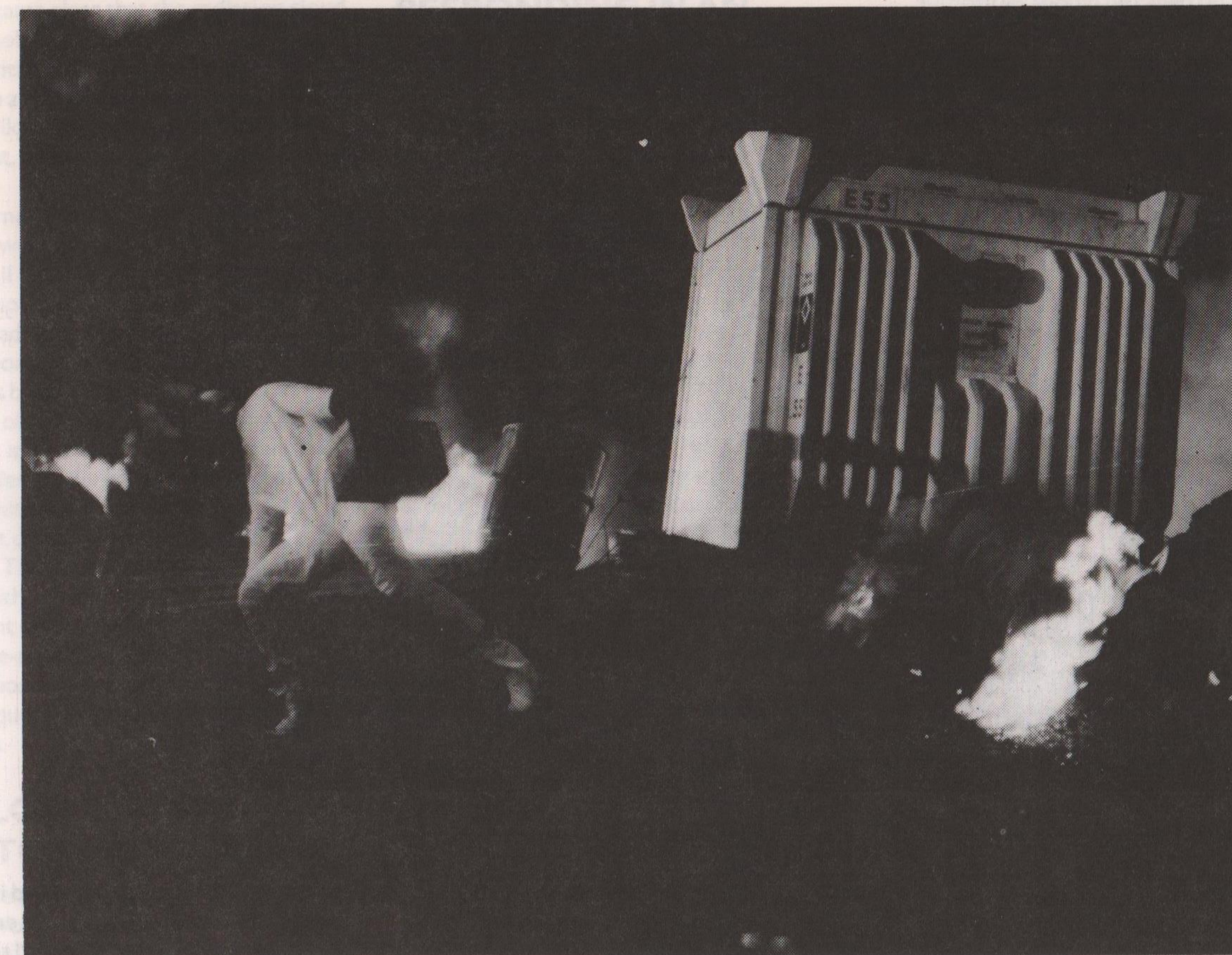
The PPI sets out a programme until October 1989. These two years must show an increase in NFZ involvement in the civil defence issue. By undertaking PA Studies; by continuing to publish information; by developing a responsible approach to public protection and continuing to press for proper peacetime emergency planning; in all these ways, NFZ authorities can continue to be an important voice of criticism, and can promote debate on the issues whenever possible. **Gill Keep** (Manchester City Council writing in a personal capacity)



Andrew Ward

The nerve centre of the ex Greater London Council's nuclear bunker at Wanstead

NFZs & TRANSPORTATION



Parallax Pictures Ltd

A still from the dramatic film produced by NFZ authorities in London to illustrate the dangers of nuclear waste transport

In London, much concern has been expressed about the risk posed to the public by the transportation of spent nuclear fuel. Both the general public and independent researchers have voiced alarm about the movement of three or four trains carrying some ten tonnes of this material through the heart of the city each week.

The nuclear trains start their journey at one of the CEGB nuclear power stations on the south and east coast: Bradwell, Sizewell, or Dungeness. Caskets, or 'flasks', containing spent fuel from the three stations meet in London, where they are transferred to a north-bound train headed for the Sellafield (Windscale) nuclear factory in Cumbria.

Spent fuel flasks from abroad which reach Britain by ferry have also been observed travelling across London. This activity seems likely to increase in volume when the Channel rail tunnel is completed.

At Sellafield, the spent fuel is reprocessed to recover uranium and plutonium from the 40 or so fission products. The question of whether spent fuel needs to be reprocessed is a contentious one. Most nuclear states, including the US, store spent fuel at civil reactor sites. Reprocessing is very costly, and adds to the price of the electricity generated by the nuclear industry.

How dangerous is the transportation of spent fuel? Risk is defined as the product of

the probability of an accident happening, together with the consequences of that accident. Therefore something that is very unlikely might have such enormous implications, should it happen, that the overall risk is high. It is generally agreed that the probability of a major nuclear transportation accident is low, however how low is subject to debate. There is also general agreement that the flasks containing spent fuel hold sufficient radioactivity to present potentially a very serious environmental impact. Considerable disagreement exists over the extent of these radioactive contents that would be released in a major accident, or following sabotage.

Following the nuclear accident at Chernobyl, concern was expressed throughout the world about the safety of nuclear power. In London, NFZ authorities have developed a policy centred on a concern for public protection: by commissioning research into the likelihood and consequences of nuclear accidents, and using this information to draw up emergency plans; by setting up radiation monitoring schemes; and by engaging in the obligation to carry out civil defence planning in a critical, yet constructive, manner.

Work on the transportation issue has formed a key component of the activities of

the London Nuclear Information Unit. We have developed a programme which combines research with the production of information for the public: an eight-page pamphlet, a poster based on a map of train routes through London, and a cinema advertisement. The advertisement, which dramatically portrays a major nuclear train accident, formed the basis of a press launch which attracted extensive local television coverage. It is currently on show in cinemas around the city.

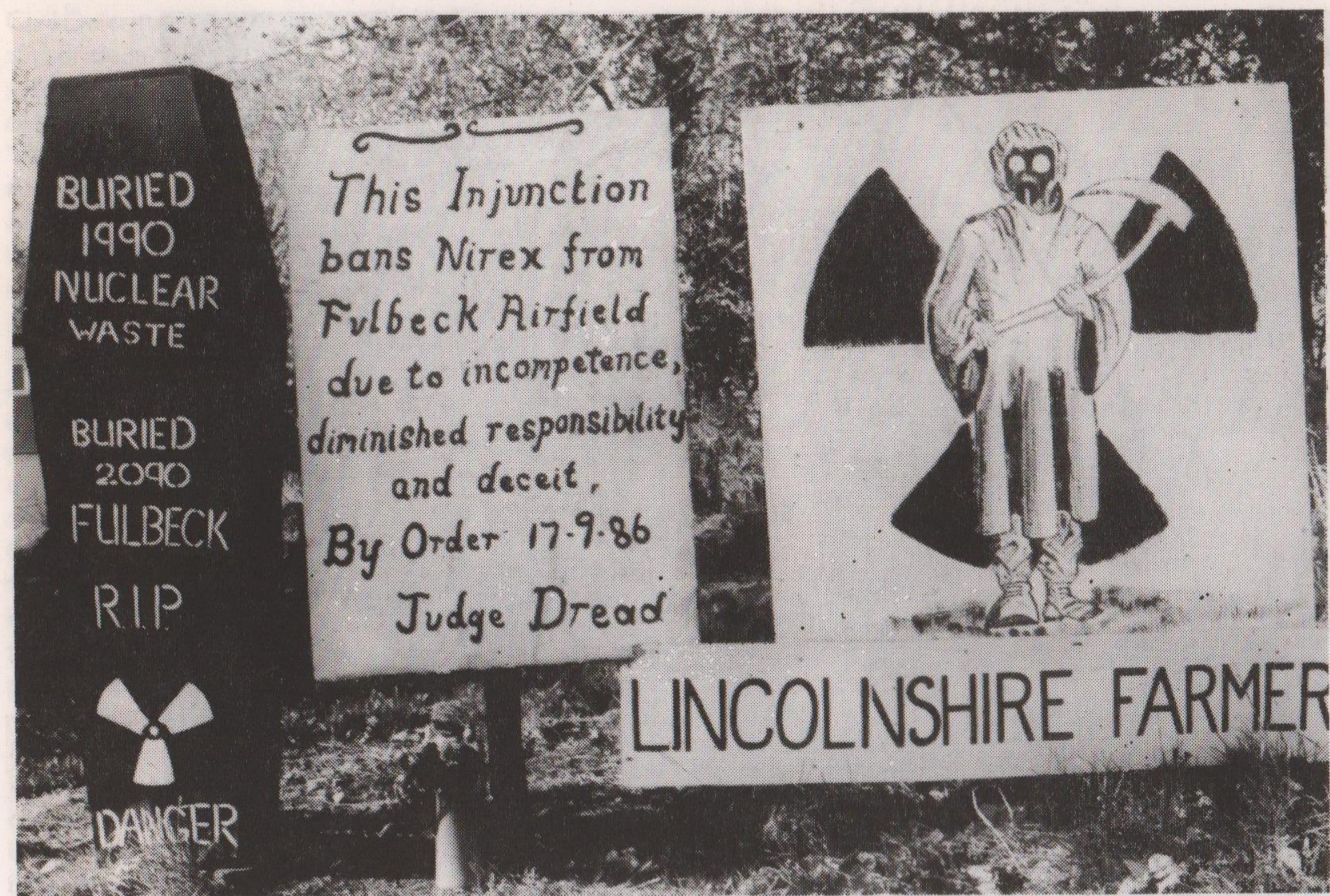
A major research project by consultant nuclear engineers Large & Associates into transportation has been commissioned. The work will concentrate on three main areas: the engineering aspects of the spent fuel flasks, the risk posed by transportation, and a critical analysis of existing emergency plans.

The research promises to provide a substantial body of material that will allow London authorities to give authoritative information to the public, and to undertake serious emergency planning for possible nuclear train accidents.

Further details of NFZ work in London on the nuclear transportation issue can be obtained from the London Nuclear Information Unit, 141 Euston Road, London NW1 2LL.

Tom Horlick-Jones

NFZs & NUCLEAR DUMPING



NIREX buried by popular opposition at Fulbeck in Lincolnshire

Following the success of the recent campaign led by the County Councils Coalition against shallow land burial of nuclear waste, local authorities have been presented with an unexpected opportunity, created by NIREX's temporary retreat, to ensure that a safe and publicly acceptable solution is found.

Contrary to popular opinion, the concept of shallow land burial has not been totally rejected. This option is still favoured for the disposal of bulky items from decommissioned nuclear power stations, since NIREX consider that the cost of cutting them up into manageable portions for deep disposal is prohibitive.

Clearly radioactive waste is a national problem to which local government must respond collectively. If it fails to do so then we are likely to witness again the spectacle of a few hapless authorities fighting a rearguard action against central government and its agencies.

There are already rumblings of discontent in Cumbria as residents of Drigg begin to realise that the existing dump will have to be extended to accept the backlog. In Scotland, too, a number of authorities are beginning to wonder if parts of their more sparsely populated areas are on NIREX's shopping list.

Having lost the first two rounds (remember Billingham?) NIREX will now be under immense pressure to get it right this time, while the Department of the Environment can be expected to be less likely to listen to reasoned argument against the choice of a particular site, or fears about safety.

NIREX appear to be learning that it is

better to consult and attempt to agree a solution rather than try to impose its wishes on an unwilling public. They are currently hard at work evaluating different repository designs for deep burial and identifying types of geology which will complement the steel and concrete barriers. They appear intent on consulting local authorities, environmentalists and protest groups following publication of their proposals later this year. It is unlikely that any new sites will be revealed before a measure of consensus has been achieved on the method of disposal to be adopted.

Local government has, therefore, a unique opportunity to influence the method of disposal. Whether the repository is on land or under the seabed, locally elected representatives have a moral responsibility to satisfy themselves that it will be safe, and to ensure that the host community receives adequate compensation for the inevitable impact on their environment, their life style, and their area's economic prospects, all of which are likely to suffer.

The Association of District Councils has already addressed the problem. They intend to monitor and shape Government policy by seeking representation on the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee and NIREX itself. The ADC is also attempting to open a dialogue with the Department of the Environment so that it can contribute to the development of a publicly acceptable method of disposal. The Association has even gone as far as suggesting that serious consideration be given to utilising a remote offshore island.

By contrast the Association of County Councils does not yet appear to have grasped

the nettle. It is currently involved in setting up a 'post-Chernobyl taskforce', to ensure that the country is properly prepared to cope with a peacetime emergency of a similar magnitude. Suggestions that the ACC set up a nuclear issues group with a wider brief have met with a mixed reaction. It is not yet clear whether the 'post-Chernobyl taskforce' will take on board issues like the transportation and disposal of nuclear waste.

Given the ACC's past reluctance to get involved with radioactive waste for fear of siding with one authority against another, the County Councils Coalition has written to the ACC urging them to take the lead on behalf of all County Councils. In the absence of any clear initiative from the ACC, the County Councils Coalition has decided to continue and waits with interest publication of NIREX's consultation document.

The NFZ movement itself has been supportive of our campaign in the past but now due to a lack of resources, more pressing commitments and in the absence of a single authority to step forward and take a lead on behalf of the movement it seems to have faltered. Perhaps the NFZ movement can reconsider their position at the annual conference in September, and explore the possibility of formulating a policy on nuclear waste disposal. After all, unlike the ACC and the ADC, the NFZ movement represents not only England, but also authorities in Scotland and Wales. It would surely be a mistake to opt out of the opportunity to determine radioactive waste management policy for the next century or so. Is it too late to think again?

Alex McKenzie (Humberside County Council)

NFZs & RADIATION MONITORING

When it became clear that the radiation cloud from Chernobyl was spreading across Britain, local authorities started to receive hundreds of calls from a very concerned public. Should we drink milk? Should we go out in the rain? I'm pregnant, what effect will it have? And so on.

In the immediate aftermath, most local authorities were as much in the dark as their public. But, if it happens again, a larger number of local authorities will now be able to rely on their own radiation monitoring facilities.

The National Steering Committee (NSC) of NFZs has been in the forefront of the promotion of radiation monitoring by local authorities. In December 1986 it organised a well-attended conference which discussed the type of monitoring that could be carried out, and the sort of equipment that could be purchased. This was followed up in April of this year with a conference for local government officers, which considered various case-studies of local authority radiation monitoring facilities and began to tackle the question of coordination between authorities.

DEVELOPMENTS IN MONITORING SCHEMES

The main reasons why local Councils have become involved in establishing monitoring facilities are: to provide local information (most national monitoring is undertaken on a limited regional basis at or around nuclear installations or at a small number of National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) sites); and to provide prompt results (there can be large delays in obtaining results from the established monitoring agencies).

Most schemes being established are following the recommendations of the Institute of Environmental Health Officers, and are geared to use in routine situations. By and large, they are being used to establish background radiation levels, detect changes, and to compare levels and trends with government published data. Most of the schemes involve land gamma monitoring to provide integrated gamma dose rates over periods of 1000 seconds at various sites, and gamma spectrometry for a limited programme of monitoring foodstuffs. A number of schemes involve arrangements for more detailed analyses of foodstuffs to be made at Universities, including alpha and beta contamination if necessary.

At the time of writing schemes exist or are being set up in the following parts of the country: Cleveland, Derbyshire/Cheshire/Shropshire/Staffordshire, Dorset/Hampshire, Lancashire, Lothian, Manchester, Severnside, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside. The schemes are based on a variety of organisational forms: either across a county or region and with the involvement of various combinations of Environmental Health Officers, County Analysts and Emergency Planning Officers.

RESPONDING IN AN EMERGENCY

Although most schemes are not designed for use in emergencies, they can be adapted to provide a quick response. Discussion about the role of local authorities in relation to radiation monitoring in an emergency has been promoted by the NSC.

If another major nuclear accident occurs outside Britain, it can be argued that the local authority role should be to: supplement the monitoring carried out by the national agencies (such as the NRPB); to link into the communications network with the established agencies and government departments and to exchange information; and, crucially, to keep the local population informed of the implications and developments. It can also be argued that for a major accident at a British reactor local

authorities should be called on to provide an independent assessment of immediate off-site radiation levels and the implications for the size of area which could be affected. They should also assist with the assessment of the extent of ground contamination away from the accident site to evaluate safe areas for evacuees and with the identification and interdiction of contaminated foodstuffs.

For this sort of role to work effectively there has to be an acceptance by all concerned parties that local authorities should have such a role, a clear and effective communication system between monitoring agencies, and a way of coordinating the monitoring results to effectively inform decision making.

The role of NFZ Authorities should surely be to ensure that these developments do take place.

Fred Barker (NFZ Unit, Manchester City Council)



Independent radiation monitoring of the discharge pipe at the Chapelcross nuclear reactor in Scotland

NFZs & THE ALTERNATIVES

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

In the past Nuclear Free Zones have very rarely addressed the positive alternatives to nuclear power in a Nuclear Free Zone context. We may have comprehensive policies opposing specific aspects of the nuclear fuel and weapons cycle, but we have failed to address the issues of alternative jobs and conversion to clean, safe and truly cost-effective renewable forms of energy. In other words, it is no good opposing an entire industry unless you have something just as large to put in its place eventually.

There are several ways local authorities working with trade unions can create jobs, as well as developing these policies for implementing a programme of alternatives to nuclear power. For some time now, local authorities have been engaged in energy efficiency/conservation and insulation programmes on their housing stock as well as council buildings. The council is usually the largest overall energy user in the area — some councils's energy bills amount to upwards of £5 million. It's long been known that with an efficient management programme for energy

efficiency, the energy savings can amount to between 10-20% of energy used, leading to savings in finance, to be used on other projects — services and jobs, etc.

It's long been argued that if central government started a national energy audit, the nation could save upwards of 20 per cent of energy, and since nuclear power contributes 4 per cent of energy (18 per cent electricity), the nuclear power programme would be made obsolete more than four times over. In addition, it has been calculated that 1/4 million manual worker jobs would be created in insulating public buildings, schools, factories, homes and so on, as well as jobs in manufacturing insulation materials.

Councils are also in a position to make sure that when building new housing schemes or public buildings, and as a planning/building regulation authority, buildings conform to a high standard of energy efficiency in their building design. There is also the possibility in future of more councils considering the application of solar heating schemes — some boroughs have already got pilot schemes, probably funded by EEC grants.

So, together as a Nuclear Free Zone movement, local authorities can have a massive impact on developing alternatives and reducing the 'need' for nuclear power. All it takes is the political will to do something about it!

Mike Malina (Haringey Council)

ARMS CONVERSION

Why should NFZ local authorities be interested in economic and arms conversion? There are many reasons why NFZs with Economic Development Committees should be linking conversion planning to their general economic development work, given the now wide acceptance that high levels of defence expenditure damage the economy.

Arguably, the major reason for NFZs to support conversion is to counter traditional press hostility that NFZ policy is 'negative' and threatens the jobs of workers engaged on nuclear work. Typical of this hostility was an editorial which appeared in the *Sheffield Morning Telegraph* in June 1983: 'More than £1 million worth of work on Trident, Britain's nuclear deterrent of the 1990s, is being done by Sheffield Forgemasters in the heart of the Council declared nuclear-free City. What does the Labour group want, jobs or moral platitudes?'

Conversion provides the vehicle to present the NFZ movement as a positive force, proactive rather than reactive, able to counter effectively press accusations of 'negativity' and concerned with the establishment of a coherent strategy for the protection and creation of non-nuclear jobs. Conversion equals enhanced credibility.

Conversion has many links to peace and employment issues and has gained widespread support in the labour and peace movements

over the past few years. To date the NFZ National Steering Committee (NSC) has adopted the fairly narrow focus of conversion necessary to remove nuclear weapons from Britain. It is now recognised that this role must be widened to take on the significant local authority policy development which is required: the integration of conversion with existing economic development work.

Some local authorities have already been engaged in conversion activities such as conducting research to provide an early warning of contract cancellations, providing resources for alternative product developments and the holding of conversion seminars. A major initiative is to take place in Sheffield Town Hall on September 22 of this year (postponed from 12 June as initially reported in the last Bulletin). The Local Authority Conference on Economic and Arms Conversion has set itself the objective of examining how to move from 'words' to 'action' by identifying the ways in which local authorities can integrate conversion with mainstream employment and economic development activities. The emphasis will be very much on the practical, and to this end Sheffield City Council will be proposing the establishment of a National Conversion Unit.

Conversion is one of the greatest challenges facing us all. It is doubtful whether Britain can ever regenerate its economy whilst burdened by the present levels of defence expenditure and the 'opportunity' cost it imposes. As Dwight D. Eisenhower put it in 1956: 'The problem in defence spending is to figure out how far you should go without destroying from within what you are trying to defend from without.'

Phil Asquith (Sheffield City Council, writing in a personal capacity)

For more information on the Economic and Arms Conversion Conference contact: Jim Coleman, Conference Administrator, Sheffield City Council (Tel: 0742 735357).

NFZs & PEACE EDUCATION

Peace education has proved a highly controversial area for local education authorities. The current debate over 'biased' teaching surfaced in the early 1980s through renewed public concern over nuclear weapons. Fears of school children being brainwashed by nuclear disarmers provoked parental outcry, media attention and ministerial intervention.

NFZ Local Authorities have adopted various approaches to the subject and in January of this year a national conference was organised by the National Steering Committee of NFZs. It brought to light the need for much greater discussion of this issue and also pointed to the need for a clear definition of peace education: a definition which would help to establish the whole principle of peace education amongst the general public.

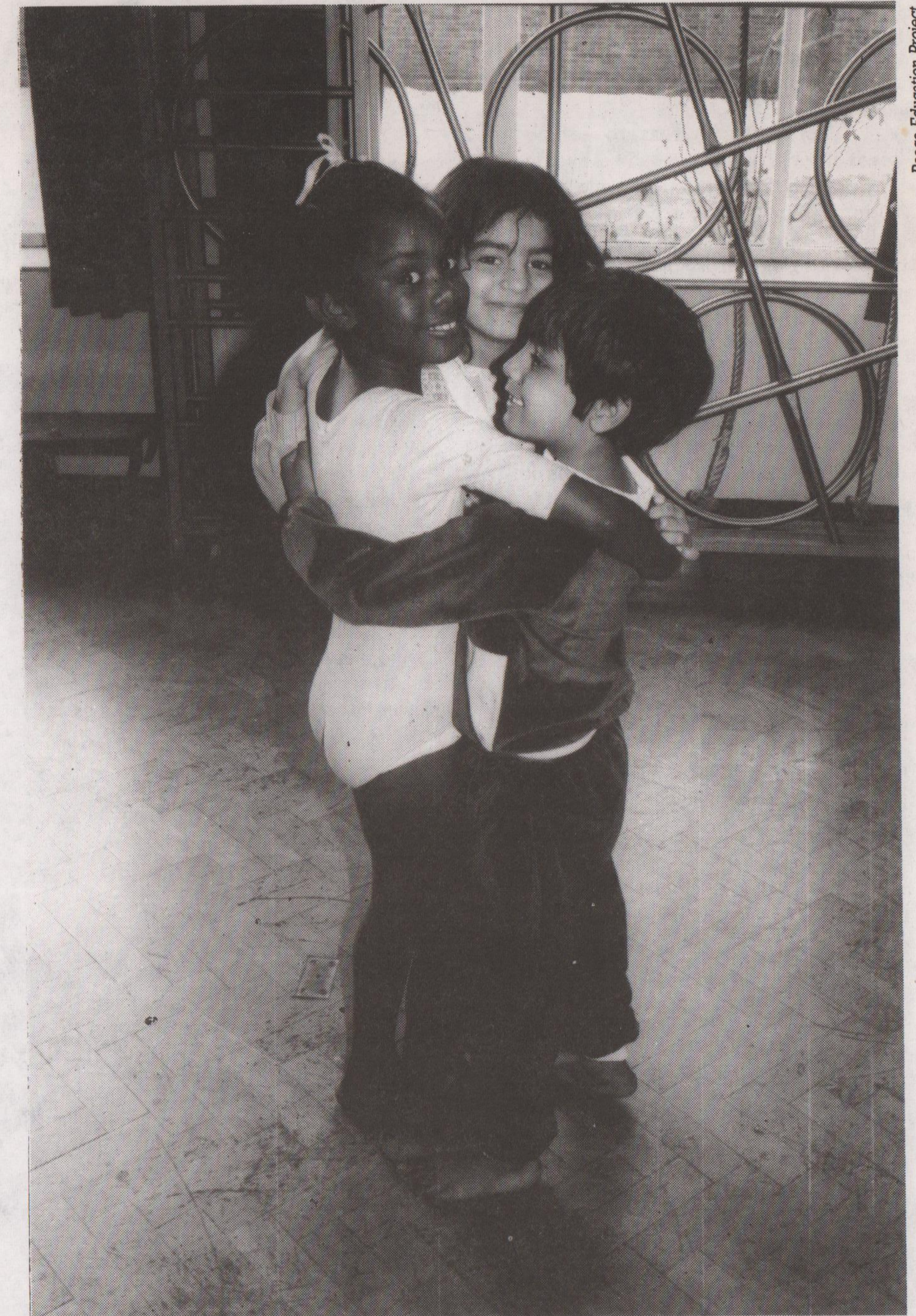
The report of the Conference (available from the NSC) illustrates numerous questions on the nature of peace education that need to be tackled: what it is, what its aims are, how and where to introduce it. Despite the many unanswered questions however, several themes and ideas relevant to the work of local authorities are raised.

For instance, many local authorities are actively promoting an anti-sexist, anti-racist, multicultural education across the curriculum which requires a critical awareness of school structures and management and of teachers' attitudes. Peace education embraces this approach and includes the need for an understanding of the issues behind global conflicts and struggles for autonomy.

In addition, teachers are often faced with children's anxieties about their future; about unemployment, Aids and nuclear war. They are becoming aware of the need to improve their counselling skills and encourage children to express their fears and feelings, as a first step to tackling these issues.

Peace education also aims to develop the critical faculties of individuals, to develop in young people a competence to assess information and apply it in a changing society. This is particularly relevant to the question of bias. The 1986 Education Act aims to curb any likelihood of indoctrination, an aim many teachers feel insults their personal professional integrity. To achieve 'balance', in terms of the Act, would require a value-free, morally neutral objectivity that, when controversial issues are being taught, may not be desirable or even possible. The introduction of the MoD video 'Keeping the Peace' provides an example of this and teachers may increasingly wish for guidance and training in these areas.

Peace education is not a 'subject' confined to the classroom. It can begin in the relationships we build in our own communities. Local Authorities have responsibilities for a range of services to provide a healthy environment and these can be integrated into a positive approach to living together. For instance, attempts to stem



Peace Education Project

Multi-cultural education at work

violence in the playground will have only limited results if bad housing and deprivation lead to violence in the home. Local authorities can help to promote peace education among all groups in the community and work towards putting understanding in place of hostility and cooperation in place of conflict.

At the beginning of next year, a conference for London Authorities is being organised to continue the discussion on the nature and implementation of peace education. It will be based on the working model of the Sheffield Conference and will look at ways in which peace education could be promoted within London. For details of

this event contact: London Nuclear Information Unit, 141 Euston Road, NW1 2LL.
Christine Kings (LNIU)



Martin Bond

Wind energy in the Orkneys