



An examination of the State's plans for repression in the north-east.

REGION I

By Martin Spence
Published by the Black Jake Collective
Sponsored by Tyneside ABC Defence Committee

This pamphlet could not have been produced without the help of many comrades, informants and acquaintances, to whom thanks are due.

The job isn't over, either. We have to be eternally vigilant if we are to offer an effective resistance to that dominant trend in society, which is putting more and more power into the hands of a bureaucratic ruling class.

We therefore invite anyone who has any information on "State security" in this area to contact us - whether it concerns Home Defence, local authority emergency planning, police, military, secret GPO activities, or whatever. We hope to publish further pamphlets on these issues.

We must fight fire with water. We fight obsessive State secrecy by refusing to be secretive. We are an open conspiracy against State power.

Contact us by writing to Black Jake at the address given below.

P&P Black Jake Collective, c/o 115 Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4AG.
May 1978.

I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The British State has been laying contingency plans, to deal with emergencies, for centuries. The classic "emergency" of course, has always been the threat of foreign invasion, and the modern system of Home Defence (or Civil Defence, for the terms are interchangeable) has its origins in pre-First World War anti-invasion precautions. But for our present purposes it is interesting to note that really detailed plans were not laid until after the War, when the State was threatened not by invasion from without but from resistance from within.

The revolutionary rumblings of the early 1920s alarmed the authorities and led Baldwin to set up, in 1923, a provisional system of regional government in Britain. The country was divided into eleven "Divisions", each with its "Civil Commissioner" (1), and these Commissioners were to become the power in the land if ever central Government were effectively deprived of its authority. The details of the system have changed, but Baldwin's plans have given us the essential shape of modern Home Defence (hereafter referred to as 'HD').

The overt object of the exercise has changed, of course. Nuclear war, rather than invasion, is now held up to justify HD. Soon after the Second World War a Civil Defence Corps was established, to train personnel and prepare the population for nuclear attack. But this Civil Defence organisation was "mothballed" in 1968, when a political assessment that nuclear attack was becoming unlikely combined with a wish to cut back on Government spending.

This decision was soon reversed, however, for the Tory Government of 1970-74 realised the importance to the State of HD measures. The reorganisation of local government, which was effective from 1974, was intimately connected with a parallel reorganisation of HD, and a closer liaison of both with the military. The Civil Defence Corps was not, however, revived. From the early '70s, a comprehensive system of "emergency planning", tying together central Government, local authorities, armed forces, police, health authorities, broadcasting and communications, has been developed and refined. The question we need to ask is, when would this system come into operation?

The "common-sense" justification for HD is that it is a necessary measure to meet the threat of nuclear attack. But this explanation is by no means fully satisfactory. The fact is that the shelters and communications so far constructed in Britain would quite possibly be destroyed in a nuclear attack. They might survive a relatively "light" bombardment by a few relatively small nuclear weapons, but if some of the massive 25 megaton weapons were used, they would stand no chance, (2). Russia is believed to have 288 missiles capable of delivering 25 MT warheads, (3).

In any case, even if the HD network has been constructed with nuclear attack in mind as the primary justification, this does not rule out the use of the system for other purposes. In fact it positively lends itself to other purposes. We should remember that when Baldwin appointed his Civil Commissioners in 1923, it was to defend the British State against the mass of British people. The HD system today can serve a similar function. Thus we find that in official writings on HD, the phrase "wartime and major peacetime emergencies" frequently occurs, (4). The two categories are lumped together in the mind of officialdom, and the HD system is clearly intended to deal with both. Now a "major peacetime emergency" could of course be a fire, flood or earthquake - but it could equally well refer to strikes, civil disobedience or revolution. This is made clear in a report produced for one local authority: "There is sometimes only a very marginal line between the physical activities of extremists and actual acts of war", (5).

The authorities certainly do perceive widespread political dissent as constituting a possible "emergency". In defining the aims of HD, the Home Office puts, first of all, the need "to secure the United Kingdom against any internal threat", (6). The same emphasis is taken up by other influential persons. For instance, Air Marshal Sir Leslie Mavor, Principal of the Home Defence College at Easingwold in Yorkshire, has expressed concern about some local authorities lack of interest in Home Defence. He has complained that "the full possibility of the present internal threat is only just sinking in", (7).

At present, the main burden of defending the State against the "internal threat" falls upon central Government and its agencies. The Special Branch and MI5 are involved in routine surveillance of dissidents; the Army has contingency plans for dealing with widespread unrest; a National War Plan exists which gives the security forces detailed data on the lie of the land, road widths, bridge capacities, and so on. All this is well documented, and we do not intend to repeat it here, (8).

What we want to do here is to give a general outline of the various emergency systems which the State has constructed in the name of "Home Defence", with special reference to Tyneside and the north-east. We know that these systems will be used not only in the event of nuclear attack or natural disaster, but also in the event of a serious internal threat to the power of the State. The systems exist not to defend "the people", but to defend the State, against the people if necessary.

We know this, because it was clearly demonstrated in 1973. During the confrontation between the Tory Government and the miners in the winter of 1973-4, Heath activated the Regional system of government, (9). It was quickly deactivated again when Labour won the February election, and it was only revealed a year later that the step had been taken at all. But if a demonstration were needed of the possible application of "Home Defence" as a tool of political repression, then this is it.

For these reasons, we feel that it is necessary to expose the HD system, and the steps which are being taken by the State, nationally and locally, to strengthen that system. All socialists need to be aware of the ways in which the State is progressively guaranteeing its own survival against any threat, external or internal. We should especially be aware of the local dimensions of this process.

The pamphlet is written so that most sections give a general introduction to a specific area of HD planning, and then explain what is being done locally in that area. Obviously our information is patchy, and may at times be misleading or incorrect - that is inevitable in a field of investigation such as this. What we hope to do is to convey

an awareness that the State is preparing these emergency systems now, here in the north-east and elsewhere. The person who researched and wrote this pamphlet, and the people who helped produce it, are libertarian socialists, and it is intended as a service to other socialists on Tyneside and in the north-east. If we want to move towards some sort of socialist future, where ordinary people exercise collective control over their own lives, then we had better find out what we're up against.

References.

- (1) Peter Laurie, Beneath the city streets, Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1970, p. 5.
- (2) ibid., p. 205.
- (3) C. Bruce Sibley, Surviving Doomsday, Shaw & Sons, 1977, p. 11.
- (4) e.g. Municipal Yearbook 1977, p. 69.
- (5) Report to Bedfordshire County Council Public Protection Committee, 24/3/76.
- (6) Home Office Circular, ES3/1973.
- (7) Quoted in Tony Bunyan, The political police in Britain, Julian Friedmann, 1976, p. 286.
- (8) See Bunyan op. cit.; Carol Ackroyd, Karen Margolis, Jonathan Rosenhead, Tim Shallice, The technology of political control, Penguin, 1977; plus various issues of Time Out, Peace News, The Leveller, etc.
- (9) Time Out, 4/3/77.

II. HOME DEFENCE: THE NATIONAL PICTURE

The regional division of the country for HD purposes was most recently adjusted in 1974, so that England and Wales now comprise a total of 10 Regions, several of which are subdivided to give 17 Sub-Regions. The 1974 adjustment brought the HD Regional boundaries into near-exact coincidence with the Army's UK Divisional boundaries. The TAVR was also reorganised in 1974 along lines which tally with these new arrangements, and the same period saw the reorganisation of police forces and local government throughout the country. This local government reorganisation was justified at the time as a long-overdue rationalisation of a chaotic mess, but with hindsight it seems rather to have been only part of a much wider range of reforms. These have welded local government, the military, and the emergency Regional network, into a single interlocking framework.

The Regional division of the country provides the means for administration in an "emergency", where central Government would be unable effectively to sustain its authority. Each Region has a Regional Commissioner, and each Sub-Region a Sub-Regional Commissioner. These people would be appointed by the Crown, and would carry Ministerial rank, (1).

In an all-out emergency in which central Government was severely crippled and the Regional authorities were under pressure, the Sub-Regional Controls would become very important. These are purpose-built shelters designed to accommodate teams of selected officials from central Government departments, vital services, police and Army, health, broadcasting, local industry, and so on. A team would operate under the nominal leadership of the Regional or Sub-Regional Commissioner, and could apparently number around 400 people. Sub-Regional Controls (S-RCs) provide accommodation, and several months of supplies; they have their own generators, water-pumps and sewage disposal; they have teleprinters, telephone lines, radio equipment and small broadcasting studios, (2).

The Regional or Sub-Regional Commissioners would legally exercise powers of life and death within their designated

areas, assuming the necessary emergency legislation had been passed. But important functions could be carried out below the Regional level. The new County Councils set up in the 1974 reorganisation play a crucial role in HD planning, for they would act as the link between normal peacetime administration and emergency administration. County Councils have been instructed by central Government to appoint Emergency Planning Officers and Emergency Planning Teams, to designate Council officers to take on emergency functions, and to liaise with other agencies in their planning, (ie. police, Army, voluntary organisations, etc.).

However, although County Councils are encouraged to think ahead and plan for emergencies, and although the Regional system is continually developed and strengthened, still it would be true to say that the State centrally is in control of HD planning. The whole area is the responsibility of a Home Office department, the Emergency Services Division (F.6), which is headed by an Assistant Secretary of State with responsibilities in the Police Department. (4) F.6 is based in London, but has offices in Banbury and Corby, and runs the Home Defence College at Easingwold in Yorkshire.

The Home Defence College was established on its present basis in 1973. Its functions has been admirably laid out in the following terms:

"The purpose of the College is to alert the higher echelons of management in local government, the armed forces and other services and in industry to what is required of them in home defence, and in particular to assist local authorities to discharge their responsibilities for translating peacetime services to meet the needs of wartime and the situation posed by major peacetime emergencies" (5).

The College is, in other words, a training school for the central figures within society's dominant institutions, and it concentrates on guaranteeing the maintenance of that dominance in the event of an emergency. Thousands of officials attend courses and seminars arranged by the College. From 1973 to 1976 nearly 5000 attended, including over 500 elected Council members, 52 County Council Chief

Executives, and 132 District Council Chief Executives, (6). As we shall see, plenty of officials from our own area have taken the opportunity to attend Easingwold.

Finally, it may be interesting to reveal the levels of national expenditure on HD. The following figures are misleading of course, in that they represent sums earmarked specifically for HD; a vast amount of money is spent annually by local authorities, broadcasting agencies, police, Army and so on, which is budgeted separately but which is contributing to the further development of the HD system.

Civil Defence 1969/70 to 1978/79

<u>Year</u>	<u>Current expend.</u>	<u>Capital expend.</u>
1969/70	9.3	-6.4
1970/71	8.1	-1.6
1971/72	9.5	-0.3
1972/73	9.9	-
-1973/74	9.2	3.6
1974/75	8.6	3.2
1975/76	8.7	3.2
1976/77	9.0	3.4
1977/78	9.0	3.0
1978/79	9.0	3.0 (7)

These figures, despite their inadequacies, are revealing. The steady capital expenditure seems to indicate that a consistent building programme is going on, presumably involving the construction of shelters, and specially-protected communications systems. The current expenditure probably represents grants made by the Home Office to local authorities and police authorities, to help them with the cost of HD preparations.

This then is the overall framework of national plans. The central State sets the pace and takes the initiative, instructing local authorities and encouraging local participation, especially at County Council level. Meanwhile the Regional system of emergency government has been set up, and has been recently rationalised. On the day of "the emergency", we should see local authorities, Regional authorities and military/police authorities lock together smoothly, into an efficient engine of social control.

References.

- (1) Peter Laurie, Beneath the city streets, Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1970, p. 113.
- (2) Tony Bunyan, The political police in Britain, Julian Friedmann, 1976, p. 279.
- (3) Home Office Circular ES1/1972
- (4) Municipal Yearbook, 1972, p. 127.
- (5) Municipal Yearbook, 1977, p. 69.
- (6) ibid., p. 69
- (7) Local Government Trends, 1975, CIPFA 1976.

III .COMMUNICATIONS

The HD system is about power and control, which means it is about effective communication, the effective movement of knowledge, analysis and instructions. We won't understand the HD system unless we understand the communications system attached to it.

The system nationally is obviously linked by a network of communications, and Laurie contends that this network is based on specially "hardened" telephone lines, which use the existing trunk cable routes, (1). Such a procedure would be common-sensical and economical, and the theory is strongly supported by the fact that all known S-RCs are on or very near to the trunk cable routes. Elsewhere in this pamphlet we trace the probable routes of trunk cables in the Northern HD Region, in an attempt to pinpoint the location of the Region's S.RC.

One of the first resolutions taken by the State, in its new-found enthusiasm for HD, was to complete the central-Regional-local communications links. County HQs and County standby HQs were linked by telephone line and radio to their nearest S-RC. In the metropolitan Counties, Borough HQs were also tied in, linked to their County HQs by radio, (2). (Metropolitan Borough Councils wield more power than rural District Councils, and this is reflected in HD planning as well).

But State planning doesn't only envisage highly-effective contact between different levels of authority - it also envisages the prevention of contact between ordinary people. In a 1975 Circular, the Home Office sets out its plans for a "Telephone Preference Scheme", which divides telephone subscribers into three categories: Category One includes "those lines vital to the prosecution of war and to natural survival after an attack on the United Kingdom"; Category Two contains "those lines additional to Category One necessary to maintain the life of the community in a peacetime emergency"; Category Three covers everyone else. In appropriate circumstances, all Category Three subscribers can be turned off and rendered incapable of making any calls, though they will still be able to receive calls from Categories One and Two. The implications of the Scheme, in terms of preventing contact between any

people not directly involved in the maintenance of State power, are enormous. Exchanges are now being built to conform to the Preference Scheme, which has been tested once, when a gas explosion here in Newcastle damaged an exchange. Subscribers were selectively cut off until power was restored, (3).

We can see that telephone lines are being used for all sorts of unexpected purposes. A further use to which they are put is to be tied into the BBC's medium wave broadcasting network. In emergency conditions, medium wave broadcasting would be the most appropriate way for State authorities to issue its news and instructions to the population, as it can be picked up by most receivers and requires little power in transmission. When we hear our first set of emergency broadcasts, they will probably be coming over the Radio 4 wavelength.

The State in fact has well-worked-out contingency plans for emergency broadcasting. In a serious-enough situation, all broadcasting would cease except for the "Wartime Broadcasting Service" (WTBS) on the radio, which would consist mainly of Government instructions and exhortations. Broadcasts would probably be made from the BBC's specially protected studios at Wood Norton, near Evesham. The BBC also has a network of protected transmitters throughout the country, and the whole WTBS system is linked in to the S-RCs, (4). Presumably Regional authorities might in some situations broadcast their own instructions or interpretations of events. In this area, they would have access to the facilities of Radio Cleveland, Radio Metro, and BBC Radio Newcastle whose offices are conveniently next door to the County HQ at Sandyford House. All these stations broadcast on the medium wave.

Finally, there is another mysterious broadcasting system which covers the country, is paid for by the GPO, but whose function is largely unknown. This is the microwave system, by which large quantities of data can be transmitted very quickly, using very short-wavelength signals. Microwave towers all over the country transmit and receive these signals. There is one on top of the GPO tower in London, another associated with the Wood Norton BBC HQ, and (in our own area) another about five miles north of Haltwhistle in Northumberland (5). Military data is currently carried

by the system, and obviously it is open to all sorts of other applications. One interesting aspect of microwave broadcasting is that the towers are relatively fragile structures, certainly easily damaged in the event of a nuclear attack. So maybe they were built with something else in mind.

References.

- (1) Peter Laurie, Beneath the city streets, Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1970, p. 147.
- (2) Home Office Circular ES1/1972.
- (3) Time Out, March 1976.
- (4) Undercurrents 12.
- (5) Peace News no. 2041, 8/4/77.

IV. THE NORTHERN HOME DEFENCE REGION: REGION 1.

We are living in the Northern Region of the HD network, which consists of the counties of Northumberland, Tyne/Wear, Durham and Cleveland. The Region comprises only one Sub-Region, and therefore presumably would have only one S-RC.

We don't know for sure where this S-RC is located, but can make educated guesses. If we are to believe Laurie, we should not expect it to be near the major conurbations of Tyneside, Wearside or Teesside. These areas may well represent targets in a nuclear attack, and may also represent centres of unrest in a civil emergency. We would therefore guess that it may be in the countryside of Northumberland or Durham, but of course it still has to be at a convenient point for communications - on or near to the trunk telephone lines. (1).

This still leaves an enormous area where the S-RC could be located. We should start by noting the apparent route of trunk cables through the Region. Tyneside acts as the nodal point. Two lines approach from the south, one up through Darlington, Bishop Auckland and Durham, and the other along the coast through Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Sunderland. From Tyneside, one line then heads west via Hexham, and the other northwards through Morpeth, Alnwick and Berwick. This hopefully represents the routes of the cables: but the Post Office does not reveal the actual routes, and all we can do is identify what seem to be the major exchanges in the area. Anyway, if this picture is substantially correct, we can rule out much of western Durham and central and north-west Northumberland: an S-RC located there would be too remote.

This still leaves us only with a large area where the S-RC might be - we now need positive clues. In our attempt to isolate this matter, all we could pick up were a number of rumours. For instance, we heard of a rumoured Government establishment near Witton Gilbert, on the A691 to the north-west of Durham. This would be able five miles from the Durham exchange, and within easy access of Durham Police HQ at Aykley Heads.

More substantial than this is a suggestion that there is some sort of shelter at Kenton Bar, associated with the complex of Government Buildings. Most of the offices housed

there deal with business such as VAT or gas standards, but in the same complex is the Crown Court. This building is not apparently large, yet it sports two big filter towers equipped with slatted filters. We are assured by a person who has worked in these offices that this is the site of a "Regional Seat of Government" (the old name for S-RCs). The filter towers, which are a regular feature of shelters, support this suggestion.

The case is further supported by the fact that the same area of Newcastle once housed the wartime regional air-base, which was then turned over to the post-war Civil Defence organisation and used by them until the 1960s. This shelter is now underneath the Blakelaw shopping centre, less than a mile from Kenton Bar. It must have been equipped with good lines of communication, which would provide a tempting reason to locate any new shelter in the same area, thus economising by utilising these ready-built lines. We have seen the the development of the HD system is characterised by an attempt to balance security with economy. So Kenton Bar may well contain the Northern S-RC, despite its position on the edge of a major urban conurbation.

References.

- (1) Peter Laurie, Beneath the city streets, Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1970, p. 182-3.
- (2) ibid., p. 229-31.

V. THE REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

The mere existence of the potential Regional system of government, and the readiness of local authorities, does not mean that the State would activate these alternative administrations at the earliest possible opportunity. If possible, the effective authority of the central State would be maintained throughout any crisis. But in certain circumstances, the Regional system will be brought into play. We have seen that it was activated during the crisis winter of 1973. It would also be activated if the Government were forced to move to its own emergency shelters: the Home Office has said that "as long as the central government could continue to function from its normal peacetime locations the wartime regional arrangements would not take full effect" (1).

Let us imagine that a serious crisis does occur, however, which dislocates central Government and leads to the passing of emergency legislation, conferring wide-ranging powers on the designated officers as Regional and Sub-Regional levels. We would then expect to see the Regional or Sub-Regional Commissioner putting together an emergency team of senior officers from the security forces, vital services, broadcasting and local industry. We cannot say exactly what the relationship would be between, say, a Regional Commissioner and a Chief Constable - the police is being given an increasingly independent and powerful voice in all matters of public order, as we shall see. It may be that the Government-appointed Commissioners would act mainly as coordinators, bringing together leading figures from a range of agencies, but leaving them to act with considerable autonomy in their own areas. If necessary, these teams would utilise the facilities of the S-RCs, described above.

In formal terms, a strict hierarchy of authority exists in HD planning. District Controllers are responsible to County Controllers, who are responsible to Sub-Regional Commissioners, who are responsible to Regional Commissioners. The Regional Commissioner is responsible for all initiatives taken within his designated area: which means that he has powers of life and death, since his subordinates at County and District levels can certainly order executions, (2).

We don't know what criteria are used to select the Commissioners. Bunyan suggests that they may be Junior Ministers (3), and they would certainly be of ministerial rank once appointed. Nor do we know the terms of the emergency legislation which would be passed, though it is clear that this legislation has already been drafted and is merely waiting to be enacted in appropriate circumstances. If it is similar to the emergency powers taken during the Second World War, then the Regional or Sub-Regional Commissioners would be able to take any measures judged necessary to secure public safety, supply, the defence of the Realm, and the maintenance of law and order (4).

This is an appropriate point at which to speculate as to who the Commissioners might be in this area. Presumably they would be selected from among the personnel of central Government - local government functionaries would not have the necessary prestige, and would have their own tasks to perform anyway. Commissioners would not however be from the very top ranks of Ministers and civil servants, for these would be needed to deal with the crisis at national level. So we are led to agree with Bunyan, that they would be Junior Ministers or reliable middle-rank civil servants. Of these two groups, the former is more likely, for Commissioners would need to have a good knowledge of their designated areas. In other words, they would be local MPs who had proved their reliability at junior ministerial level.

The two 'big guns' among northern MPs are Geoffrey Ripon and William Rodgers, both of whom hold or have held senior ministerial posts. In a serious crisis, either might be involved in a National Government, but if not then they could equally conceivably take up a Commissioner's post. Otherwise, there is quite a selection of candidates. We have a Parliamentary Undersecretary for the Army (R. C. Ewson); a voluble local Tory (Neville Trotter); a Government Whip with Treasury experience (J.D. Dormand); an Undersecretary for Transport with impeccable social-democratic credentials (J.R. Horam); and an Undersecretary for the DoE (E. Armstrong). Then there is the north-east's very own elder statesman, Lord Glenamara, formerly E. Short. Maybe he would emerge from semi-retirement to lead the Region safely out of a civil emergency.

Obviously these speculations may be of limited value, because in five or ten years there may be different names in the list. Even so, it is useful to bear in mind that someone, somewhere, has been selected to act as Regional or Sub-Regional Commissioner, with powers of life and death over us all.

References.

- (1) Municipal Yearbook, 1975, p.76
- (2) eg. Redbridge Recorder, 25/3/76.
- (3) Tony Bunyan, The political police in Britain, Julian Friedmann, 1976, p. 279.
- (4) Peter Laurie, Beaneath the city streets, Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1970, p. 114-5.

VI. COUNTY PREPARATIONS IN TYNE AND WEAR

Tyne/Wear County Council likes to project an image of a go-ahead authority. It is housed in solid modern accommodation at Sandyford House, Newcastle; it is promoting the multi-million pound Metro prestige project; and it has a well-established Emergency Planning Department to prepare for wartime or peacetime emergencies.

The Department is based on Floor 4A of Hadrian House, Higham Place, and it also apparently has officers working on the 5th floor of Sandyford House. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer is R. Martin, who was employed in a similar post by Newcastle-upon-Tyne County Borough Council before local government reorganisation. He controls a small staff consisting of a Deputy Emergency Planning Officer, two Assistant Emergency Planning Officers, one Administrative Officer, one Secretary, and one Junior Clerk/Typist, (1). This is in line with Government recommendations on the size of such teams.

Like all local authority departments, the Emergency Planning Department is technically answerable to the Council, via one of its committees. Until May 1977, it was answerable to the Management Committee, a general-purpose body dealing with a very wide range of issues. The Emergency Planning Committee seems to have kept quite a low profile under this arrangement.

In May 1977, the Council's committee structure was reorganised. A new Public Protection Committee was set up, to deal with matters under the general headings of Fire, Consumer Protection, Waste Disposal, Police, Safety of Sports Grounds, and "Home Defence and arrangements for dealing with emergencies and disasters", (2). At the first meeting of this new Committee, the heads of all relevant departments gave summaries of their duties and responsibilities, for the benefit of the Councillors. The report by Mr. Martin was minuted thus:-

"The Emergency Planning Officer explained the role of emergency planning under the 1948 Civic (sic) Defence Act which gave his department responsibility for coordinating arrangements for war plans, major disasters and oil pollution" (3).

This, as a description of the scope of County Council emergency planning, is totally misleading, though this could be the result of a bad report or of bad minuting. The 1948 Civil Defence Act set up a HD system which has now been largely superseded, first by the 1968 cutbacks and then by the drastic reorganisations from the early '70s onwards. Anyone reading these minutes might assume that the Emergency Planning Department was essentially a benign environmentalist agency".

We know that detailed local plans do exist, to meet most imaginable situations. This was revealed by the Chairperson of the Public Protection Committee, Cllr. Sleightholme, in answer to a question put by Cllr. Ellis. Cllr. Ellis asked, "What steps will the County Council take in the case of a declaration of national emergency?". The reply is worth quoting in full:-

"The question is couched in very general terms which could refer to peacetime or wartime national emergencies. In the case of a peacetime national emergency the County has plans for most contingencies at local level. If such an emergency was declared by the Government of the day the County would put into operation these plans working on information and directives issued by the Government. In a war emergency certain plans have been completed which would enable the County and the five constituent districts to mobilise their appointed staff to predesignated duties and activate controls. Progress is being made on more detailed plans affecting many other organisations which would be involved. The magnitude and lasting implications of a war emergency tends to overshadow national peacetime emergencies. However, the war plans can be adapted and modified to meet the needs of peacetime emergencies, particularly in the fields of emergency feeding, billeting and care of the homeless" (4).

Obviously there's a lot of flannel and waffle in this answer, but we can pick up the hints and so build a picture of how far advanced the County's preparations were in July 1977, when this answer was given.

It is clear that the County Council and Borough Councils have designated their emergency teams. It is also clear that

all of these authorities have prepared emergency HQs from which to operate - this is what is meant by the phrase "activate controls". When the councillor refers to "detailed plans affecting many other organisations" he must mean voluntary organisations and the armed forces. Emergency Planning Officers have been recommended to cultivate close relationships with their local Joint Services Liaison Officers, (5), and in a 1976 circular, the Home Office advised them to build links with groups and organisations "in the community" who might provide useful voluntary services in an emergency, (6). The idea of course is to draw in as many reliable people as possible, thus giving an emergency administration added influence and legitimacy. This course of action has been taken up very enthusiastically. We know of some Counties where surveys have been carried out by Emergency Planning Departments, which identify useful resources and personnel not only at District level but at Ward level. "Leading figures" have been picked out to act as local agents of the administration - figures such as doctors, magistrates, or vicars. Each Ward has one such contact. This task is known to have been carried out in quite sparsely-populated, unstrategic Counties, so we can be sure that it will also have been performed in the densely-packed urban areas of Tyne/Wear.

It was central Government which prompted the revitalisation of HD from 1971 onwards, central Government which advised County Councils on appropriate measures, and it is central Government which foots most of the bills of County Emergency Planning Departments. This much is clear from the annual budgets of Tyne/Wear County Council.

Tyne/Wear Emergency Planning Expenditure

	Total projected expenditure	Projected Home Office grant	Final projected expendtr.
1975/6	£39,300	£29,500	£9,800
1976/7	£37,590	£28,190	£9,400
1977/8	£35,970	£30,820	£5,150 (7).

If a crisis actually developed which led to the assumption of emergency powers by local and Regional designated officials, the Tyne/Wear County Controller would initially be based at Sandyford House, the Council's normal HQ. It is part of an

administrative complex which seems purpose-built for total control. Just across the road is St. George's TAVR Centre, which would probably be the Army's main base in the County. In Sandyford House itself is the "operations room", which played a central role during the firemen's strike, as we shall see. The operations room is presumably part of the protected accommodation from which the County Controller and his team would operate, keeping in contact with Borough Controllers and with the Sub-Regional Control. Next door to Sandyford House is BBC Radio Newcastle, whose facilities could be used to feed appropriate information and directives to the local population. If necessary, the Controller and his staff might move to their "standby HQ" which is somewhere else in the County, maybe at the Kenton Bar site discussed above. The Government recommends that each County Council should have such a standby HQ, as well as protected accommodation within its normal HQ, (8).

Who then is the "County Controller"? Normally he would be the County Chief Executive, and he would assume his emergency duties together with a team of officers, who would in normal times be the Directors of various Council departments. We should note that power would lie with Council officers, not with elected members. The only gesture towards democracy would be a three-person "Emergency Committee" of elected councillors, who would act as a consultative body for the County Controller. But he would not be answerable to this Committee. "The controller would report to the committee on the steps which he, as a regional government official, was taking. He would, however, be answerable to the commissioner, initially at sub-region and later at region" (9). Thus a perfect hierarchical chain of command would exist, consisting entirely of appointed officials.

References.

- (1) Tyne/Wear County Council Budget, 1974/5.
- (2) T/W CC Annual meeting, 18/5/77.
- (3) T/W CC Public Protection Committee, 25/5/77.
- (4) T/W CC General meeting, 19/7/77.
- (5) Municipal Yearbook 1976, p.68.
- (6) Home Office Circular ES2/1976.
- (7) T/W CC Budgets 1975/6 to 1977/8.
- (8) Home Office Circular ES1/1972.
- (9) Municipal Yearbook 1975, p. 77.

VII. METROPOLITAN BOROUGH PREPARATIONS

Most of the local planning for emergency conditions is done at County level, but some preparations are also made at District level - or rather, at Metropolitan Borough level, since Tyne/Wear is a metropolitan County. The County comprises five Boroughs: Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, and Sunderland, and all of these are expected to draw up quite detailed plans. A 1972 Home Office circular makes it clear that "In metropolitan counties, the districts will discharge functions which are not allocated to districts elsewhere..." (1).

These functions clearly include the nomination of officers to fill emergency posts, and we saw from the previous section that all local Borough Councils have apparently drawn up lists of designated officers. Each Council will also have nominated its emergency HQ, which will probably be within its normal peacetime offices. Each Council will also be aware of the various individuals and voluntary agencies within its boundaries which could be counted upon to cooperate with an emergency administration. As we have seen, links with "the community" are being forged not only at District level, but at Ward level. Borough emergency HQs should have been linked by radio with the County HQ, as required by the Government, (2).

However, it is difficult to obtain a positive picture as to what is happening in a given Borough, as Emergency Planning is technically a County Council matter and there is usually no committee at Borough level which will admit to dealing with it. Some information is available, however, from Gateshead Council. Apart from anything else, it should alert us to the fact that there must be a great deal of activity going on which is never reflected in Council minutes.

Gateshead Borough Council has drawn up its own Civil Disaster Plan, in consultation with the County Council, Police and Area Health Authority. It assumes that in a civil emergency the police would normally take charge of operations for the duration of the crisis, and they would mobilise all necessary resources, either directly or indirectly. The Council would apparently act under police directions. The Council's control room would be at Windmill

Hills Emergency Telephone Information Room, and all emergency business would be coordinated through the office of the Director of Social Services, which is also located at Windmill Hills, (3). If Gateshead has drawn up a Civil Disaster Plan, with preparations of this kind, then we can be sure that other Boroughs have done likewise.

At Borough level, as in the County, there would be a Controller (normally the Chief Executive), and a team of specially appointed emergency officers (normally departmental Directors). There would also be an Emergency Committee of elected councillors, to advise these emergency officers but with no powers to instruct them. The Borough Controller would be answerable only to the County Controller, and through him to Commissioners at Sub-Regional and Regional level.

In Appendices I and II we give tentative lists of the likely members of emergency teams at County and Borough level, for Tyne/Wear and Newcastle-upon-Tyne. These are based on information obtained from local authorities elsewhere in the country.

References.

- (1) Home Office Circular ES1/1972.
- (2) ibid.
- (3) Gateshead MBC, Public Protection Committee, 4/12/74.

VIII. THE POLICE ROLE

Obviously it would not be enough for the Government simply to announce emergency powers and appoint officers to emergency posts - the Regional and local authorities would need the support of well-trained and well-equipped security forces, on a scale much greater than we see at present. To this end, police forces all over the country are undergoing continuous training for emergency conditions, and the Army is making similar preparations. The notorious joint exercises at Heathrow in recent years can be seen as part of this training, as can the close Army-police liaison during the 1977-8 firemen's strike. And Northern Ireland has provided the State with a ready-made laboratory for counter-insurgency experiments over the last nine years.

In an emergency situation, where Regional, Sub-Regional or County authorities were granted wide-ranging powers, the police would presumably be the force which would, in the first instance, enforce those powers. They would certainly take on a whole new range of functions, such as: "Taking special measures to maintain internal security, with particular reference to the detention or restriction of movement of potentially subversive people", and "The guarding of key points, the maintenance of protected areas, and the restriction for security purposes of movement of the public", (1). In carrying out these sorts of tasks, the police would clearly draw on information which is being collected right now, as part of the Special Branch's routine surveillance of dissidents.

We imagine that police would be armed in order to enforce these powers, and police forces all over the country are creating and strengthening their own elite armed groups. This tendency seems to be the outcome of a longstanding debate around the idea of a "third force" in Britain, a force of paramilitary riot-police midway between police and Army. The debate has apparently been resolved not by creating a new force, but by extending the police role, to take in heavy riot-control and paramilitary duties. Thus in London the Special Patrol Group has been in existence since 1965, and has been a success from the authorities' point of view. Other police forces are now following this lead.

The police nationally are organised into a number of forces, usually corresponding to the new County boundaries. In the Northern Region we have Northumbria Police (a Combined Force which covers both Northumberland and Tyne/Wear), Durham Police and Cleveland Police. County forces are also in the process of building links at Regional level. Each HD Region has a Regional Police Commander Designate, who is presumably the most senior of the Chief Constables within the Region. While these Regional Commanders, and the other Chief Constables, would work alongside Regional and County officials in an emergency, it seems that they would also be subject to separate instructions from the Government, (2). This is consistent with the Government's aim of keeping responsibility for internal security in its own hands, as far as possible, (3).

Let us look more closely at the police in our own area. Over the past few years, officers from Northumbria and Durham forces have attended courses on a wide range of "War Duties" courses. For instance, police constables and sergeants in large numbers attend one-day courses on subjects such as air-reconnaissance, rescue techniques from crashed aircraft, and so on. This is clearly undertaken with conventional war in mind, but other more detailed courses are offered which show a different emphasis. Three-day courses are offered to constables and sergeants, which "provide for training in Home Defence subjects, first aid, major disasters, rescue from crashed aircraft, and the peacetime use of Police Support Units", (4). Once again, we can see how preparations for war and preparations for internal repression are lumped together under the general heading of "Home Defence".

On top of these formal courses, there are practical field exercises. For instance, over a period of about six months in 1977-8, the police regularly set up road-blocks on the A1 at Scotch Corner. When asked what the reason was, one policeman said that it was "an exercise", and that they might have to do such things "in times of civil commotion".

While sergeants and constables are thus engaged, their superiors are doing even more interesting work. Senior officers from Durham and Northumbria forces regularly attend courses and seminars at the Home Defence College, in Easingwold. The College also plays host to National Police War Duties Courses, which are attended by leading officers from all over the coun-

try. We have already seen the assumptions upon which the College operates: its Principal explicitly sees his task as being to oppose the "internal threat". In 1975, a total of 12 senior officers from Durham (5), and 15 from Northumbria (6), attended courses or seminars at Easingwold. A few top officers get the chance to go even further afield. In 1973 the Home Office introduced a special National Course for Senior Officers in Home Defence, and in 1974 and 1975 this was held at the Ministry of Defence School for Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Warfare, at Porton Down, Wiltshire. This seems to be only for the very top men - men who presumably have some significant designated duties in the HD system. In 1974, Northumbria sent an Assistant Chief Constable on the course (7).

However, merely attending training sessions at different Government establishments will not be enough to build a reliable local security organisation. In an emergency, we have seen that a Regional Police Commander would be appointed, and the police would presumably function largely on a Regional basis. It is necessary for them to work today towards such a Regional structure. To this end, Regional War Duties Courses have been held in recent years: in 1974 at Durham Police HQ, Aykley Heads (8); in 1975 at the Forum, Billingham (9); while in 1976 a course was held, though the venue is not revealed (10). These courses are organised under the auspices of the Regional Police Commander Designate (11).

Preparations also go ahead at force level. Northumbria Police have initiated a series of "Major Incidents" courses, with speakers such as the Emergency Planning Officers of Tyne/Wear and Northumberland, (12). They also have a Force Major Disaster Plan, for which Chief Inspector W. Carss is responsible. The same man is apparently Force Liaison Officer for the whole HD field, and he is in charge of the communications Control Room at Police HQ, Morpeth, (13). This Control Room would be a central link in the local security forces' organisation, in the event of an emergency.

In 1976 a review of the Major Disaster Plan led to the setting up of the Northumbrian Emergency Services Joint Planning Committee, (14). This Committee has representatives from the police, fire service, ambulance service, hospitals, and local authorities. It meets quarterly. It is an interesting pointer to the considerable degree of autonomy which the police clearly

have in this field, that they should initiate the creation of such a broad-based body. In fact, there are many indications that the police would effectively be in control of all local responses to a crisis, at least in its initial stages. We have already seen that Gateshead Council would expect to take its orders from the police.

A further indication of this powerful police role is the way in which Northumbria Police is progressively transforming itself into a formidable agency of enforcement. In early 1976, an Inspector was appointed to the force who was "highly qualified in handling firearms", with the brief of revising and improving the force's firearms training system, (15). By September 1977 enough police officers had become sufficiently adept for a Special Support Patrol to be set up, consisting of 22 officers specially trained in arms use and riot-control techniques. The Patrol is based on the Market Street station in central Newcastle (16). In other words, there are now armed policemen on the streets of Tyneside.

Recent Government statements suggest that, if troops were ever called in to deal with a civil emergency, it would be the police who made the crucial decision. The Army would come in under the provisions of "Military Aid to the Civil Power", and whereas the Civil Power was previously taken to mean mayors or JPs, it is now taken to mean the senior local police officer. These growing police powers must be a cause for concern, and for constant vigilance.

References.

- (1) From a Civil Defence Staff College training memorandum, quoted in Peter Laurie, Beneath the city streets, Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1970, p. 117.
- (2) Home Office Circular ES3/1973.
- (3) ibid.
- (4) Durham Chief Constables Annual Report, 1975.
- (5) ibid.
- (6) Northumbria Chief Constable's Annual Report, 1975.
- (7) ibid., 1974.
- (8) ibid., 1974.
- (9) ibid., 1975.
- (10) ibid., 1976.
- (11) Durham Chief Constables Annual Report, 1975.

- (12) Northumbria Chief Constables Annual Report, 1976.
- (13) ibid.
- (14) ibid.
- (15) ibid.
- (16) The Journal (Newcastle), 9/77.

IX. THE MILITARY ROLE

If an emergency situation were beyond the police's powers of control, the authorities would presumably turn to the military. As was stressed above, this would only happen if the police were quite definitely incapable of coping by themselves: calling in the troops is a serious matter, and the authorities will always want things to appear as "normal" as possible.

In fact there is a step between the police and the Regular Army - the TAVR. The TAVR was reorganised in 1974, to fit in with the wider reorganisation of the military, police and local government administrative systems. It provides part-time military training for its members, for which they are paid. (And at the same time, their employers must continue to pay their normal wages). The TAVR is currently engaged in a big recruiting drive, with large posters prominently displayed in many places.

The North of England TAVR Association, created on 1st April 1974, covers the same area as HD Region 1. Its main base on Tyneside is at St. George's TAVR Centre, Sandyford Road, directly opposite Tyne/Wear County Council HQ. The TAVR also has drill halls and depots scattered throughout the area. Their Newcastle depots apparently contain not only guns, ammunition and other conventional military equipment, but also such items as riot-shields, batons, and metal-tipped pick-axe handles, (1). These are clearly intended for use against a non-military enemy, and it doesn't take much imagination to guess who such an enemy might be.

There is no precedent for the use of the military in the recent history of Great Britain, in a peacekeeping (as opposed to strikebreaking) role. Ireland is of course another matter. However, the intended role of the TAVR in a civil emergency would apparently be to replace regular troops in their foreign postings, thus freeing "the professionals" to come back and deal with things over here. Even so, the use of the UDR in Northern Ireland shows that the State might have a place for loyal, part-time soldiers.

Still, it does seem safe to assume that regular, professional soldiers will be a more drastic threat. We are living in the Army's North-East District, which covers HD Regions 1 and 2 (ie. Northumberland, Tyne/Wear, Durham, Cleveland, Humberside, and North, South and West Yorkshire). Technically, its HQ is in York, but its effective strength lies of course in the large

tract of barracks, depots and training-areas at Catterick Camp, in North Yorkshire.

Catterick is the nearest large concentration of troops to us. If widespread civil disobedience, or effective revolutionary initiatives, were taking hold in the north-east, then the troops would probably come from Catterick. It is interesting to note that the A1(M) motorway happens to stretch almost all the way from Tyneside to Catterick, providing excellent access from camp to conurbation. Alternatively, the Army might fly troops and equipment into Newcastle Airport at Ponteland, and enter Tyneside from the north.

The 1977-8 firemens' strike brought the soldiers onto the streets (illegally, it now appears), and we may be able to learn from the experience. Tyne/Wear received an initial force of 260 soldiers and 19 "Green Goddesses" from Catterick. They were based at four main sites and several outposts:-

St. George's Drill Hall, Sandyford Road (outposts at Debdon Gardens Drill Hall and Government Buildings, Kenton Bar, which should ring a few bells!); Clifford Fort, Tynemouth (outpost at Moor Park Hospital, North Shields); Elmgrove Terrace Drill Hall, Gateshead (outposts at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Dunston Hill Hospital); Dykelands Road Drill Hall, Seaburn (outposts at Havelock Hospital, Sunderland and Ingham Infirmary, South Shields), (2).

This presumably gives us an idea of the sorts of places from which troops might operate. Police stations and schools might also be brought into use, as we can see from Northern Ireland.

The whole operation was carried out in close liaison with the police - a useful experience in practical cooperation, no doubt. Each Green Goddess going out to a fire was accompanied by a police car, to act as guide and communications link. The police also established themselves in the Army's main base in the County, at St. George's Drill Hall.

Communications were arranged so that 999 calls went initially to the police, and were then put through to the "operations room" in Sandyford House (mentioned above, of course). From there, the nearest Army base to the reported fire would be contacted, (3). All of these details are of interest, in that

they provide a picture of actual Army-police cooperation in this area, under conditions of stress if not emergency. It is also interesting to note that the fire-fighting troops were in no way put under the control of the local authorities, although they were replacing a local authority service. Troops and resources were at the independent disposal of Army District Commands, (4).

It is not at all clear what the relationship would be between military and civil authorities in an emergency situation. We have seen that the police would apparently act with quite a free hand, and they are certainly regarded as the natural agency to deal with local crises. If things got beyond the police's powers of control, and the Army were called in, then presumably they too would in practice act quite freely. The Army Land Operations Manual talks of a "triumvirate" of civil authority, police and Army in such a situation: it makes it clear that the civil authority should be publicly seen to be in control, while in fact the three agencies acted in concert (5).

Contingency plans exist for an emergency restructuring of the armed forces, each HD Region having a Joint Services HQ under a Regional Military Commander. The Sub-Regional Commissioner would also have a military adviser on his staff, and each County HQ would have a Joint Services Liaison Officer attached. Military deployment and operations in the Region would be under the control of Regional and Sub-Regional Military Commanders, and technically subject to the approval of Regional and Sub-Regional Commissioners. Troops could also be deployed in response to requests from County Controllers or Chief Constables (6).

Whatever the legal niceties of summoning and controlling the military, it is clear that once the troops are on the streets, they would in fact be the dominant force in society.

References.

- (1) These claims were made by a serving member of the TAVR.
- (2) Evening Chronicle (Newcastle), 14/11/77.
- (3) ibid.
- (4) Evening Chronicle, 22/11/77.
- (5) Time Out, 4/3/77.
- (6) Municipal Yearbook 1976, p. 68.

X. CONCLUSION

What we have tried to do here is to give some idea of the range of measures taken by the State in this Region, for its own defence. We have pursued the discussion on a number of levels, examining at one moment the everyday activities of the police and at another the existence of secret Government shelters. This may have seemed confusing, suggesting that the authorities accord equal importance to these different modes of social control.

Obviously, the State always wants things to appear "normal", and will resort to such drastic measures as calling in the troops, or activating the Regional HD system, only when absolutely necessary. But it is important for us to realise that these drastic measures are still only points on a continuum, and that the routine work of police surveillance, or the mundane activity of Emergency Planning Departments, or the regular process of Army counter-insurgency training, are also points on the same continuum. The State is preparing now for a situation where it may have to take on vastly-extended powers.

If a situation developed where ordinary people started taking matters into their own hands, the authorities would react. They would throw the whole weight of a biased vocabulary at us, and they would add to it the physical burden of State repression.

The State is ready to meet and repress our autonomous actions.

We must be ready to meet and resist the State.

APPENDIX 1. Possible Emergency Teams for Tyne/Wear County, and Newcastle upon Tyne Metropolitan Borough Council.

In The County Warbook (Mole Express pamphlet, 1977) details were published of some local authorities' emergency teams. Using these as a guide, we can make educated guesses as to the probable composition of the teams in our own area. Many of the emergency posts are clearly created with a wartime emergency primarily in mind, but many others would be clearly relevant in a political or civil crisis.

Tyne/Wear County Council, possible emergency team.

County Controller	J.J. Gardner (Chief Exec.)
Deputy Controller	J. McClumpha (Direc. of Admin.)
Assistant Controller	R. Martin (Chief Emer. Planning Off.)
Legal Officer	J.E. Hancock (Direc. Legal Services)
Information Officer	R.J.S. Kimmerling (P.R. Officer)
Emergency Repairs Officer	E. Aldred (County Architect)
Reconnaissance and Communications Officer	P.B. Rogers (County Planning Officer)
Financial Officer	C.J. Davies (County Treasurer)
Transport Officer	D. Fletcher (Transport Coordn. Officer)
Requisitioning Officer	H. Wilkinson (Central Purchasing Off.)
Fuels liaison Officer	D.K. Ellis (Chief Officer Consum. Protec.)

Newcastle upon Tyne City Council, possible emergency team

Borough Controller	K.A. Galley (Chief Exec.)
Food Officer	J. Chadderton (Direc. of Education)
Transport Officer	W.A. Tilbrook (City Engineer)
Intelligence & Information Officer	A. Redhead (Info. & publicity Off.)
Communications Officer	R.A.A. Brockington (Direc. of Admin.)
Officer for health sanitation & refuge	D. Harwood (Direc. of Envir. Health)
Officer for billeting & care of homeless	J. Roycroft (Direc. of Soc. Services)
Officer for works of repair & demolition	H. Padget (City Architect)

Officer for rescue	W.A. Tilbrook (City Engineer)
Officer for burial of the dead	L.F. Reid (Direc. of Recreation)

APPENDIX II. Important officials in Home Defence Northern Region (Region 1).

Chief Constables.

Northumbria - S. Bailey, Police HQ, Morpeth Road, Asington, NE63 8PU. Tel. Ashington 814511.
 Durham - A.G. Puckering, Police HQ, Aykley Heads, Durham.
 Cleveland - C. Payne, Police HQ, Dunning Road, Middlesbrough.

G.O.C. UK Land Forces, N.E. District

Major General G. de E. Collin, UK Land Forces N.E. District HQ, Fishergate, York. Tel. York 59811.

County Chief Executives (County Controllers Designate)

Northumberland - C.W. Hurley
 Tyne/Wear - J.J. Gardner
 Durham - J. Proctor
 Cleveland - J.B. Woodham

Borough Chief Executives in Tyne/Wear (Borough Controllers Designate)

Newcastle upon Tyne - K.A. Galley
 North Tyneside - E.B. Lincoln
 Gateshead - W. Miles
 South Tyneside - A. Stansfield
 Sunderland - L.A. Bloom

Regional Scientific Advisers

N. Thorley
 A.W. Wolfendale
 S.L. Ranson