

NOTES

They plan to gas us

Duncan Campbell writes: Remarkable evidence of secret plans to suppress dissent, in the event of war or crisis, by military force have emerged during researches for a documentary on civil defence. The programme, Southern TV's *People Rule*, is being shown this week.

The evidence relates to the last biennial 'Home Defence' exercise code-named *Scrum Half*, which was held in October 1978. The next such exercise of the home defence system and its secret bunkers will take place during the massive NATO exercise this autumn, *Crusader*.

Three days after the start of the exercise, an official military message (shown on TV this week) demonstrates that CS gas was issued on a vast scale to every platoon-scale sub-unit engaged in the exercise. The exact text of the message, sent from South Eastern District Army Headquarters to military teams at all of the region's bunkers, was:

Scale of CS gas authorised for any type of subunit is cannisters 150, CMM grenades 150, riot guns 25. Arrangements being made for issue asap to stage 2 CGR coys and for stocks (to be) available to all other subunits.

The message was dated 13 October 1978, just three days after the exercise had begun. The scale of implied (but imaginary) CG gas use suggests that the authorities anticipate using troops and weapons like CS on a considerable scale to control refugee and evacuee movement, and to suppress dissent.

From Aldershot, the message went to two underground Sub-Regional Headquarters, each responsible for half of the South East Region. These were No. 61, under a police HQ in Guildford, and No. 62, below the Civil Service Commission in Basingstoke. The message was also distributed to County Council War Headquarters for Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Hampshire.