



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YEA SPITTING MAD ...

SchNEWS

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JUSTICE?

- NEWBURY FIREBOMBER ACQUITTED
- KILLER CS GAS GIVEN THUMBS UP
- ID CARDS: THE NEW POLICE STATE

"Without stringent guidelines to restrict the use of identity cards, a voluntary card will swiftly become compulsory in all but name. As a result everyday activities such as cashing a cheque, buying cigarettes or alcohol or even travelling on public transport will become progressively more problematic for citizens who do not choose to obtain and carry an identity card."

Adrian Beck, Institute of Public Order, Leicester University.

What would you spend £15 on? A week's shopping perhaps. That shirt you've had your eye on? Well, if Michael Howard has his way, you'll be spending it on a bright, shiny new... ID card. This week the go-ahead has been given for the introduction of the cards, something which SchNEWS has commented on (and against) for many months. Forget the smokescreen on whether the Union Jack should be displayed on it or not. A compulsory scheme has been ruled out in name but that's what a voluntary scheme would be, in practice. Seven countries in Europe operate a compulsory scheme (in Portugal cards have on the a photo graph, a fingerprint, details of marital status and height, and require a PIN number for their use. They have to be shown to police, governments officials, customs officers, doctors, private security guards and in post offices.) Five countries operate a voluntary scheme, but even with these there is a degree of obligation to possess and carry the card as failing to do so can make life difficult. In France the police have the power to ask for proof of identification in any circumstance. If a person refuses or is unable to produce this, it is perfectly legal to take the individual down the station and detain them for up to six hours while identity is established. In Holland this questioning can be held for up to twelve hours, and a fine may also be charged. This could have important repercussions for protest situations and for groups in society who are not at the top of the cop's Christmas card list. There is also the danger of 'functional creep', where a card is required for more and more purposes. The police, retailers and

banks all favour this (semi) voluntary scheme, but, to paraphrase Christine Keeler, they would, wouldn't they? It seems as if in many ways the proposals which are to be put before Parliament this Autumn are even more menacing than a compulsory scheme, which would at least give the opportunity for instances of direct civil disobedience. This way it will merely be a case of creeping civil inconvenience, leading to a largely universal uptake.

From a basic human rights angle, we are who we are, and we should not have to supply personal details to some stroppy Big Brother figure just because the party line is for us to toe the line. ID cards smack of coerced conformity, a decreasing right to live life as one likes, a decrease in identity even. In these days of the 'free' market, we are becoming more constricted than ever. The advent of the cards means yet another layer of people in society to 'curtain twitch' on our lives. It's time to put up the shutters. We're not ones to condone overt consumerism, but you know you really do like that shirt that caught your eye...

*Frank Field, the 'Labour' (shurely not) MP has recommended that every adult be given a smartcard encoded with a DNA fingerprint to make the National Insurance system more secure.

DRUNKEN PRANK OR DRUNKEN PRAT?!

Dickon Walker, 22, who set fire to a petrol bomb next to a bus of Newbury protesters last November, has been cleared of attempted arson and endangering life. He told the jury, "We made some petrol bombs. I honestly don't know how we got to making petrol bombs. It's a mystery to me. The intention was a harmless drunken prank." The Third Battle of Newbury said, "How can a man walk free having admitted his part in a firebomb attack, while peaceful protesters are being sentenced for sitting down on public footpaths or dressing up as a pantomime cow?"

"CS spray takes us one step further away from policing by consent rather than coercion...confidence is more likely to be both secured and enhanced by policing methods which respect people's civil liberties and which uphold human rights standards, than by arming the police with a 'quick fix' solution based on secretive and muddled research"

Liz Parratt of Liberty.

This week Micheal Howard has given the go ahead for nationwide usage of CS gas after nearly six months of trials. He claimed that the deterrent is "effective and safe."

CS gas has been used on 582 occasions in five months and drawn, but not used, 350 times. That means that people have been sprayed nearly 4 times a day since the trials began (trigger happy or wot!?) Allegedly only 5 people have been taken to hospital, but *anyone* who is sprayed must be seen by the police doctor.

The spray (actually a crystalline solid) has a range of 8 to 14 feet. It causes streaming eyes and nose, eyelid spasm and a burning sensation in the throat and nose. It causes severe coughing and chest tightening leading to impaired breathing. These effects could be very serious for the 20% of the population that suffer asthma or other respiratory complaints. Liberty received reports of two incidents where the ACPO guidelines have clearly been breached. In the first, Ibrahim Sey died in police custody after being sprayed with CS while handcuffed. In March, 20 people were sprayed with CS inside a coach, after a scuffle outside a nightclub in Merseyside; they are now taking civil action against the police. The gas has been hastily approved without testing long term medical effects, and before the outcome of the trial concerning the death of Ibrahim Sey. Because of this two forces, Hertfordshire and Surrey, have decided against implementation of the approved version of CS gas. Hertfordshire's Chief Constable, Peter Sharpe, said "I still have concerns over the safety of the delivery agent and the issue of cross contamination with the use of CS spray". The Sey family are also upset about the decision. Mr Sey's cousin, Kura Nije, claims that the spray is five times stronger than that used in the U.S. She said "Someone has died in custody and CS was used. How do they know it's safe to use? You could spray someone who's got asthma. It's crazy."

COMFORT THE DISTURBED & DISTURB THE COMFORTABLE

THE SOLUTION TO POLLUTION ...

"Pollution has a long history...In earlier societies it is possible to find evidence of the many features which characterise the response to contemporary pollution: fatalistic acceptance of the pollution as an inevitable consequence of human activities; a lack of foresight; a preference for short term fixes and a failure for individuals or companies to take responsibilities for their actions."

'A Green History of the World' by Clive Ponting

This week, Environment Minister John Gummer told local authorities that they were responsible for cutting air pollution levels...but hasn't given them any extra dosh to do anything about it. The onus is on local authorities to implement measures that will reduce air pollution, primarily from car exhausts. Recommendations include traffic monitoring teams, who will issue on-the-spot fines to car owners. The target date for the initiative is 2005...a bit too late for the 77,500 who will die prematurely by this time because of tiny particles emitted by vehicle exhausts.

Despite the absolute lack of cash injection by the Government into the initiative, various local authorities are already experimenting with less polluting forms of transport. Ipswich councillors have the use of two electric cars, while their mayor has the option of using natural gas for short car journeys. The town also boasts a gas powered bus and litter cleaning machine. Coventry city council is to conduct trials of an electric car, and Camden Community Transport is using three electric and three natural gas mini-buses. Gummer says: "The motor car is a good thing in life, it's now got to learn to be a clean thing." SchNEWS says: "The motorcar kills 25 people a day from the effects of pollution. Drivers have to reduce their reliance on cars."

Last week, World Health Organisation figures for ozone were exceeded in all British cities and large towns last week.

Ralph Ryder, co-ordinator of Communities Against Toxics, said of the changes.

"The regulatory system has not yet caught up with hormone disrupting chemicals, and consequently does not take them into consideration. It remains to be seen when the government will acknowledge the danger and how it will regulate them."

The situation has become so severe that even the government sees that something should be done, and is very slowly, reluctantly putting the blame onto the car. This is a wrong headed approach, as it gives individuals (car drivers) a guilt trip when they are not given viable alternatives in getting from A to B. Industry should shoulder a lot more of the responsibility. After all, it is corporations not individuals which make the cars after all, and many more noxious contraptions besides.

* In Mexico City in 1988, there were 312 days of severe smog. In early 1989 school children had to be kept at home for a month because of high pollution levels. * Reports suggest that the Salisbury by-pass is expected to cost twice the forecast amount. After the projected costs of protests and sabotage are taken into consideration, it looks like being one bloody expensive stretch of road! (The energy required in building a road is three and a half times greater than the equivalent length of railway, and uses four times more land.)

* Controversy in Europe is surrounding attempts to get funding for 14 Trans-European Network highways. Suggestions include cutting the budg-

ets of 'non-priority projects' such as culture, education and training, energy and the environment. A decision is expected at a meeting in Dublin on September 20.

* **Communities Against Toxics** 0151 339 5473

* **Toxic Alert!** 01273 685913

...IS TO CREATE REVOLUTION!

* The Birmingham RTS was a great success, with 500 people enjoying a car-free carnival. Birmingham police were more than a tad nervous that the road might be dug up, so they arrested one person for conspiracy to commit Criminal Damage. The charge was changed to Section 18 of the Prevention of Terrorism Act when they realised they didn't know who he was conspiring with! Eight officers then raided his flat, but then got stuck in the lift on the way down, and had to smash their way out. After being released without charge, the innocent party-goer is now suing the police for wrongful arrest, false imprisonment, assault, invasion of privacy and defamation of character. He is also urging the council to sue for the damage done to their lift. * Brighton RTS this Saturday. Meet Churchill Square 1pm. * Compare and contrast these consecutive front-page headlines: **WARNING FOR ROAD BLOCKERS:** Outcry at protest that could gridlock Brighton (and the following day ...) **LITTLE VICTIMS OF ROAD FUMES:** Pollution brings on asthma attacks in children - cases have shot up by 16%. Well, exactly. * The houses on Methley Drive, Leeds have no gardens, but for a couple of days last week Methley Drive became a garden. Turfed from kerb to kerb, the street was the scene of the Methley's Olympics, which included an egg and spoon race. "I'd like the grass to be permanent", said one resident of 38 years standing. "That's what we like, a bit of greenery. We thought this road plan would be impossible, but they've proved us wrong. They've done a good job." And who are 'they', you might well ask? Baby-eating anarchists? Terrorists intent on destroying society perhaps? No, it's Transport 2000, who launched their Streets for People campaign at Methley. Curiously, there was not a riot cop in sight. * Saturday 17th saw Walker Street in Bath become a car-free party zone for four hours, and it seems that the police were well behaved. Well done! There'll be another in the city in October.

HUNGRY FOR NO CHANGE

On Sunday and Monday, Brighton claimants will embark on a two day hunger strike to demonstrate the dietary effects of 100% cut in benefit, brought about by the Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). 'A' day (Oct 7th), when the JSA is to be launched, is only SEVEN weeks away. * Wage Slavery or Starvation? T-Shirts are available from Nottingham Campaign Against the JSA, PO Box 192, Nottingham.

National contact: Claimants Action Group, c/o O.U.W.C.U.; East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street, Oxford OX4 1HU. Tel: 01865 723750.

Sat 7th Sept: Demo against the JSA. Assemble Shepherds Bush Green, W London 12 noon.

STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS!

We are receiving reports that Brighton Police have just paid a visit to The Beachcomber, the venue for a Critical Mass benefit gig, to cancel the gig. Apparently, the party poopers object to a money raiser for an 'illegal' demonstration.

STOP PRESS PLUS URGENT APPEAL

Litter Pickers are desperately needed in Stanmer Park on Sunday at 2pm meet in the Upper Car Park by the Freedom Festie organisers - as the Council are threatening huge fines if the site is not cleared to their specifications!

SCHNEWS IN BRIEF

*** The Mersey Docks Harbour Company, responsible for sacking the Liverpool dockers at the beginning of the year, have reported half year profits of £14 million, down almost 20% on last year. Looks like the international boycott might be hitting home *** Brighton Council has cancelled Brighton's Dance Parade, set for September, because it would create a public nuisance. For fuck's sake! *** The date of the Big Chill Gala in East Anglia has been changed. It's now in Norfolk, Aug 30th - Sept 1st. Info 0171 281 8106 *** A play about squatting called 'Tattooing Down' is nearing completion. Call office this week if you are interested in performing or technical stuff - 685913 *** Despite rumours, Faslane Peace Camp is not to close. Although the threat of eviction by the new Argyle and Bute Council remains, eight activists decided to keep the camp running. More activists needed! Phone 01436 820901 *** Check out 'Art Bypass', an art exhibition to run the length of the train. Meet this Sunday, 4.30pm at Newbury train station. Bring a torch! Next week, Newbury will stage the best free festy yet this year. 'It will be a huge free festival on DoT land with much entertainment, and there will be ample opportunity for fence climbing. We may even be able to undo a lot of the damage that has been done.' From 26th-30th August the Flim-Flam Festival will bring you bands including Julian Cope, Mother Samosa, Smokie Bears, Revolutionary Dub Warriors, Electric Groove Temple, Snails With Attitude, and others. There has now been OVER 1000 ARRESTS, and there are over 20 twenty people in prison at present... The story continues.

RTZ & NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

"Visit the new earth galleries. An earth shattering experience." So goes the blurb for the new exhibit of the Natural History Museum. Nothing so unusual about that, until that is, you look at who the primary sponsors are: RTZ, responsible for earth shattering projects around the globe, yet have very little to do with anything 'natural'. The Natural History Museum told SchNEWS, "We don't have any conflict with the interests of RTZ." Of course not, especially after having received £1m in sponsorship from the mining company.

* The MD of a Scottish company that export riot gear, defensive weapons and instruments of torture, received an electric shock as he entered his business premises last week! Justice?!

AND FINALLY...

SchNEWS extends a welcoming hand to Britain's newest - and perhaps strangest pressure group. 'Trolleys in Distress UK' have been set up to highlight a 'mass cruelty which occurs in our streets daily'... the 'abuse, neglect and slavery of millions of defenceless shopping trolleys, not forgetting baskets'. They continue in a similar vein: 'The time has come for drastic action, we have a member who has already released many trollies back to the wild.

Are these people a loaf short of a bag of groceries? Basket cases? Off their trollies? Or are they their ideas up the right aisle. One to check out perhaps. Trolleys in Distress UK, The Nuttier Buildings, 26 Phoenix Drive, Sileby, Loughborough, Leicester, LE12 7QU. 0116 255 0111.

disclaimer

Don't! (OK, do!)

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IS THE PARTY OVER? Michelle (Advance Party) & film on Exodus. MON SEPT 2nd @ The Albert, Trafalgar St 7.30pm

Did the Police object to the benefit gig, or did they hear Flannel were headlining?