



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER WIDE AWAKE...

# SchNEWS

www.schnews.org.uk

DAVID'S IDENTITY CRISIS

I CAN'T DECIDE...  
TOTALITARIAN OR  
AUTHORITARIAN?



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## I.D.EAL CITIZEN?

In May 1995 SchNEWS reported our fears about ID cards (SchNEWS 24). This May we voiced our fears again (SchNEWS 454), and reported on the proposed Children's Bill which will create a database of every child in the country (SchNEWS 452).

Last Month, Richard Thomas, a big fan of SchNEWS and The Government's 'Information Commissioner' did an interview in the Times, in which he said almost exactly the same stuff as we've been saying for years. He outlined his fears that Britain could be "sleepwalking into a surveillance society" and specifically mentioned the Children's Bill as he outlined how Britain could become "like East Germany or Franco's Spain".

Home Secretary David Blunkett is carrying on with his plans regardless. A bill authorising the creation of a National ID Card Register will appear in the Queen's Speech in November and is supported by both Neo-Labour and the Tories. This register of peoples' personal details linked to biometric information has had Blunkett getting all hot under the collar for a long time, claiming it will solve everything from illegal working and benefit fraud to crime and terrorism.

The whole point of illegal working is that it's all cash in hand, no-questions asked. How an ID card would stop this SchNEWS can't quite figure out. In the case of illegal immigration, if someone is entering the country illegally they're most likely to 'vanish' and end up exploited by unscrupulous employers earning very little and doing many jobs that no-one else wants to do. An ID card system will just mean that anyone who doesn't look "British" will be harassed more than ever, with immigration services and police demanding to see people's ID cards.

Blunkett and Co. reckon ID cards will make it easier to access public services, as a single piece of identity will help prove you are entitled to public services. But hang on, what about yer National Insurance number? ID fraud is a tiny fraction of total benefit fraud, a big proportion of which occurs through people forgetting to mention a couple of hours cash in hand work they do each week to top up their crap benefits. "Health tourism" would be stopped with the ID card (yes, tourists apparently come over here to use our world class health system - while British people go over to Europe for theirs!) Ignoring Blunkett's policy line, John Hutton, Minister for Health admitted that "it is the case of course that you can have entitlement to NHS care, but not an ID card and it is perfectly possible that you could have an ID card, but not be entitled to NHS care." Er, we think the government just shot itself in the foot there.

And of course as you rush to accident and emergency, nurses will have plenty of time to check everyone's ID card by taking their fingerprint before providing treatment...

But the most hyped argument the government likes to use is cracking down on organised crime and terrorism. Well for a start fake ID cards will provide a lucrative business for organised crime, and secondly the Met Police have admitted that the introduction of an identity card would not of itself lead to a reduction in crime or an increase in detection rates. The people involved in the 9/11 attacks had either legitimate identification papers or very compelling forgeries. Spain has a compulsory ID card which totally failed to stop the Madrid bombings. A Privacy International study found that "of the 25 countries that have been most adversely affected by terrorism since 1986, 80% have national identity cards, one third of which incorporate biometrics".

### Infomaniacs

Police, Inland Revenue, Customs & Excise, Security Services and the Department for Work and Pensions will all have access to your file. There's likely to be data sharing with other countries such as the USA. And private companies like banks and insurance companies will have the right to look at your ID cards and make a check on you. People administrating the system will also of course have access to your records. But the one person who won't be able to access your own personal details is...YOU! Yes, that's right a whole load of government and private agencies can know everything about you, but you'll have bugger all right to look at your own details and no way of knowing if they're correct.

## CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For having the crap of the week!

Student Jesse Huffman is facing charges of criminal mischief after blocking a toilet he used during a random search by border guards while traveling to Montana. Huffman said the clogged piping was completely unintentional, the result of an urgent, but natural bodily function: "I've never been arrested before or anything like that, and I get arrested for taking a dump."

Considering the record of companies administrating government computer systems it's time to get worried. Each month 100 people are falsely accused of having criminal records by Capita who run the criminal records bureau. Can we really trust them with running a scheme for 47 million people?

Another company seeking involvement is NEC who have Automated Fingerprint Identification software, considered to be the best on the market, claiming to be 99.3% accurate. So 420,000 people in the UK can expect to be mistakenly identified. Another company is Identix who have a \$27m, 5 year deal with the US Department of Homeland Security. Recently Identix paid \$3 million to settle a Class Action lawsuit for overstating revenues to artificially inflate the company's stock price.

As government doesn't want to appear draconian, the ID card will be voluntary. So voluntary that you'll need one to work, drive a car, travel abroad, use the banking or health system, vote, buy a house, or receive benefits. The draft bill which proposes the ID card contains provisions for the card to be made compulsory at a later date.

Through compulsory identification, the state is set to acquire unprecedented surveillance powers over all of us. In the current climate of eroding civil liberties and lack of democratic accountability, it can only be expected that these powers will be used to extend government invasion into our daily lives, buttress social inequalities and stifle political dissent.

SchNEWS reckons we should get our camcorders and cameras out and follow pro-ID politicians and policemen around, documenting their lives. If they get annoyed about this invasion of their privacy, remember the Blunkett mantra: "Nothing to hide - nothing to fear."

\* For more info check out: [www.defy-id.org.uk](http://www.defy-id.org.uk); [www.no2id.net](http://www.no2id.net) or [www.corporatewatch.org.uk/news/identity\\_crisis.htm](http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/news/identity_crisis.htm)

\* There's a conference to stop ID cards happening in Manchester on 11<sup>th</sup> September. 07980 291478 [www.defy-id.org.uk/gathering.htm](http://www.defy-id.org.uk/gathering.htm)

\* Haringey Solidarity Group have a public meeting on ID cards, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 7.30pm Tottenham Leisure Centre, Philip Lane, N15.

\* In 1987 a successful campaign stopped the introduction of ID cards in Australia, see [www.privacy.org/pi/activities/idcard/campaigns.html](http://www.privacy.org/pi/activities/idcard/campaigns.html)

### SchNEWS at TEN

On Saturday October 16<sup>th</sup> SchNEWS will be celebrating 10 years of publishing with a book launch, conference and party.

The party will be at the Coronet, Elephant and Castle in conjunction with Brighton based sound system Innerfield who are also ten years old.

The line up includes VJamm Allstars featuring Matt Black from Coldcut, Babyhead (Bristol ska, hip hop), Evil Nine and of course, Flannel with films throughout the night from Indymedia etc. Starts 10pm till 6 am and advanced tickets costing only eight pounds will be available in the next few days from SchNEWS; Community Base, Queens Road, Brighton; Access All Areas, 117 Kentish Town Road, London and online - for details see our website.

## Bank Robbed

Last Wednesday morning at 5.30 am around forty police and 30 bailiffs smashed down the door of the Ex Grand Banks Occupied Social Centre in Tufnell Park near Camden, London and evicted its inhabitants. The Centre had previously resisted eviction in May thanks to 120 people including many kids from the local school. The police Forward Intelligence Team filmed the event, photographed everybody, photographed notebooks and as much paper based material as they could find.

One of those running the social centre explained its importance "During a period of increasing privatization, gentrification and desire for an easy profit, where community resources are being closed down and sold off by the council, and the closure of youth clubs coupled with the new Anti-social behaviour curfews mean kids have nothing to do and nowhere to go, there is an urgent need to reclaim our spaces from greedy property developers and run them ourselves to meet our real needs."

In a place like Camden where the spiralling price of property means that no ordinary group of people can afford to rent or buy this space, and where many buildings lay empty, squatting seems the obvious practical and political answer - we decided to take back buildings ourselves, rather than fight a losing battle lobbying a council that appears to care less and less about the impact its policies have on people's lives."

The property - an ex-wine bar - had lain empty for over two years before it was occupied and the centre had proven to be one of the most successful community projects for some time, providing a vibrant mix of workshops and skills share from screen printing to radio training, free lunches for students, children's' days, English lessons, and a fair trade café supporting Zapatista communities in Mexico.

But don't worry though, they intend to squat another building soon. In the meantime to find out if there are social centres in your area go to [www.londonarc.org/social\\_centre\\_network.html](http://www.londonarc.org/social_centre_network.html)

\* The Saturday discussions in the lead up to the Beyond the European Social Forum Conference will continue at various venues. The next one is this Saturday (4) on the theme of flexible labour, casualisation and dole resistance. It's at the Archway Theatre, behind the Methodist Church, opp. Archway station. [www.wombles.org.uk](http://www.wombles.org.uk) or [www.altspaces.net](http://www.altspaces.net)

\* There's a new squatted social centre in Birmingham at the old Bournbrook nursery, No 1 Bournebrook Road, B29 7BC [scbrum@mail.com](mailto:scbrum@mail.com)

## Positive SchNEWS

"Alternative housing is the vision of sustainable, grassroots communities free from landlords, interference and powerlessness; and dynamic enough to be involved in promoting wider social change." Banging your head against the housing brick wall? Then why not pop along to the Alternative Housing Conference at Clays Lane Housing Co-operative in East London on the 11 September. Speakers will be talking about co-op networking, community, ownership, sustainable building and squatting. 11am till 6pm. The Clays Lane Summer Fayre will also be happening at the same time. [www.althousing.net](http://www.althousing.net)

### ID MATHS BOX

Cost of ID card system according to the Home Office: £1.3 to £3.1 billion (does not include the expense of biometric readers and other equipment to be installed in other Departments).

This is to save:

£50 million in benefit ID fraud  
£200 million in health tourism  
Hardly good value for money

## SchNEWS in brief

Andy Worthington will be talking about his new book 'Stonehenge: Celebration and Subversion' next Thursday (9) 6pm at the Cowley Club, 12 London Rd., Brighton. The book looks at the history of Solstice gatherings from late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards including the Battle of the Beanfield, road protest movement and the growth of paganism. For details of his excellent book [www.hoap.co.uk/alternative.htm](http://www.hoap.co.uk/alternative.htm) \*\*

There's an **indymedia short films** and discussion night next Tuesday (7) 'Fawlty Powers - The World Bank and IMF at Sixty' 8pm in the upstairs bar @ Brixton Ritzy, Coldharbour Lane. Cost - donations \*\* Also next Tuesday **Worthing eco-action** will be discussing 'Know Your Rights' upstairs at the Downview Pub (opposite West Worthing railway station) 7.45pm. \*\* **Benefit Night for Sudan** next Thursday (9) 9pm - 2am at Po Na Na, 75-79 East Street, Brighton with everything from balearic to breakbeat. Tickets £10 \*\* 'We Interrupt This Empire' and 'Uncovered: The War On Iraq' will both be showing at Red Dragon Hall, Drefach Velindre, West Wales next Thursday (9) [www.newcastle-emlyn.com](http://www.newcastle-emlyn.com) \*\*

**Brian Haw**, the anti war protestor who has been camped outside Parliament for over three years, is in court Tuesday 14 September 10am at Bow St Magistrates Court and would welcome any support \*\* **World Carfree Day** is happening this year on 22 September [www.worldcarfree.net/wcfd](http://www.worldcarfree.net/wcfd) For ideas on creative direct resistance against car culture: [www.carbusters.org/freesources/action\\_ideas.php](http://www.carbusters.org/freesources/action_ideas.php) \*\* **Rising Tide** have organised another **Climate Change Network Gathering** on 1-2 October at the Sumac Centre in Nottingham. Workshops include: Oil War and Climate Change, direct action training, blocking airport expansion and eco-Housing. Booking essential 01865 241097 [info@risingtide.org.uk](mailto:info@risingtide.org.uk) \*\*

The **Leeds offices of Ready-Mix Concrete** had its locks glued and the message 'No Marine Quarrying' scrawled across the front of the building this week. The action was part of a national fortnight against the company for their part in the sub-aquatic quarrying of gravel beds which are home to a rich diversity of marine beasts \*\* For a taste of the way protesters of any kind are likely to be treated over here in the years to come (G8 in Scotland next year, for instance) take a look at the reports on the **anti-Bush protests in New York** on <http://nyc.indymedia.org> \*\*

Hundreds of farmers occupied **BP facilities in Bolivia**, last month paralyzing oil production and demanding better distribution of land. They are pissed off at the proposed development of a \$5bn, 5,000-mile pipeline program to pump Bolivian gas to California to feed the energy hungry US. \*\* For **Latin American issues** from an anarchist perspective, check out the Venezuela group, **El Libertario** which is starting to produce a bi-monthly newsletter. email [ellibertario@nodo50.org](mailto:ellibertario@nodo50.org) or see [www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2004/08/296983.html](http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2004/08/296983.html) \*\*

**Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike** since August 15<sup>th</sup> have stopped their strike after the Israeli Government agreed to negotiate and grant more rights to prisoners. [www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2004/09/297168.html](http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2004/09/297168.html) or [www.palsolidarity.org/prisoners/](http://www.palsolidarity.org/prisoners/) \*\* The **BASS Community 'Fayre'** is happening on The Level This Saturday (4) from 12-6pm. Attractions include **SchNEWS movies**, kid's space and workshops, DJ workshops, Eco-Arcadia, cream teas and veggie food. [info@bass23.org](mailto:info@bass23.org) \*\* **Rebel Alliance** - the irregular get together of Brighton's Direct Action Groups, with a speaker from London NoBorder Network next Wednesday (8) 7.30pm at the Unemployed Centre, Tilbury Place.

## Asbometer

Two more protestors were this week dispersed by cops using the catch-all Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's). They were holding a banner and handing out leaflets outside Reed Exhibitions (owners of Spearhead and organisers of DSEi, the world's largest arms fair). One of those demonstrating said "The protest lasted around half an hour until a van of cops pulled up and said that whilst they respected our right to protest we couldn't do it where we were because we were on private property and if we took a step forward we would be on the highway and they would nick us for obstruction. They also claimed that it was illegal to display a sign outside a private building! However they did say that we could go and protest on the green which is a ten minute walk away and has no relevance." The ASBO banned them from Richmond for 24 hours. [www.dsei.org](http://www.dsei.org)

\* A wannabe copper, one of those Community Support Officers, in Richmond, south west London, told two 14-year olds to disperse after he observed them browsing CDs in local shops. He accused them of acting suspiciously and issued them with a leaflet including a map of Richmond marked as a "Designated Dispersal Area". Failure to comply with a dispersal order can result in a fine up to £2,500 or three months in jail.

## Animal Wrongs

Four years ago Steve Christmas was out trying to stop a fox cub hunt, when he was deliberately run over by Michael Maynard (SchNEWS 274). He has finally received some justice after being awarded £18,500 compensation for his injuries, which included a crushed pelvis, broken ribs and serious abdominal injuries. The driver of the vehicle escaped prosecution for the attack and it took the police two years from the time of the assault to bring a case against Maynard for driving with no insurance or license.

\* Cub hunting has started and with it looking increasingly unlikely that fox-hunting will be banned, despite Tony Blair's promises, the only way to save lives is getting out in the field. Contact the Hunt Saboteurs Association 0845 4500727 [www.huntsabs.org.uk](http://www.huntsabs.org.uk)

\* Harlan Firgrove, in East Sussex a breeder of rabbits and guinea pigs for vivisection has closed after a four year campaign. Harlan says it has nothing to do with the protests, although SchNEWS reckons the increased costs of security with a galvanised steel perimeter fence and 12 security cameras must have played a part. Harlan had also failed to get an injunction to stop some of the protesters costing them £70,000.

## ...and finally...

It's all go here at SchNEWS Towers, so don't expect a SchNEWS for the next couple of weeks. We are nearing the deadline for the SchNEWS at Ten book which will be out for our conference and big party on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October.

We are still finalizing details of the Conference which will be at the Camden Centre, Euston Road London so keep an eye on our website. Both the Conference and the Party are costing quite a bit to put on, so if you want to stop us worrying ourselves to death, you can get cheaper advance tickets for the party by sending a cheque for £8 (payable to Justice?) with an SAE to 55 Canning St., Brighton, BN2 0EF.

Keep sending us your party and protests cos we will be updating the party and protest section on the web each week cos we're nice like that.

### Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all snoopers ciphering off the profits - you're on a ID-ing to nothing in this ID-ill world. Honest!

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