



CARD SHARKS

“The technology gap between governments and organised crime has now narrowed to such an extent that even the most highly secure cards are available as blanks weeks after their introduction. Criminals and terrorists can in reality move more freely and more safely with several fake “official” identities than they ever could in a country using multiple forms of “low-value” ID such as a birth certificate.” - Simon Davies, Privacy International.

With the ID cards Home Secretary Blunkett is bringing in legislation for next January, Neo Labour is playing on its two strengths: stripping us of civil liberties and committing us to privatised corporate ‘outsourcing’ fiascos.

At first it will mean that those who apply for a new passport or driving license will be automatically issued with an identity card and their personal details stored on a new national identity computer database (see SchNEWS 422 & 363). They will also have to undergo hi-tech electronic eye and fingerprint scans – called biometric data - to allegedly prevent the new ID being forged. Now - these cards won’t be ‘compulsory’ at first, but the clever plan is that by 2013, 80% of the population will have them – and it’ll be then that Big Brother might just decide to make ‘em compulsory for access to public services.

Mark Littlewood from Liberty says that “all the evidence from other European countries suggests that ID cards are expensive, ineffective and damage community relations. In Britain, opinion polls show that several million adults would refuse point blank to carry one.” But at least you will have some extra room in yer hip pocket to fit the card in after having paid double for the cost of passports or driving licenses to fund the scheme.

The consolation is that the ID card system is not likely to work. Privacy International has dubbed the scheme “mathematically and technologically” impossible because of problems with biometric data. US government reports have already exposed massive problems; the largest iris database so far contains 30,000 records, and there is no knowledge or experience of how a database of 60 million would work. PI also reckon that for the iris scan to work the system would need to be one million times more accurate than current available systems! Almost every other country that has considered this system has rejected it, including China.

This ID database, which will provide an enormous resource for the tracking and holding of data on individuals, is also planned to be used in combination with other government databases. Blunkett has also claimed that the cost of the card could be offset by “benefits to the commercial world”. Oh right, we get it now, why didn’t you say that at the beginning?

Matrix Rebooted

All this iris scanning and recorded information will be an enormous mountain of data to manage – but luckily it’ll be in the hands of IT experts with good track records. Here’s a few examples of government adventures into computer and IT technology to calm yer nerves:

Just this week a huge project to put all the nation’s magistrates courts on one computer system was condemned in a report by the Commons public accounts committee as one of the worst public finance projects ever. The scheme, known as Libra, aimed to streamline more than 300 magistrates courts saving millions of pounds. In fact it did the opposite: The cost of installing 11,000 PCs in courts worked out at £21,000 per computer! The cost of operations tripled – and it doesn’t work! An MPs report found: “The department... ran a poor competition, attracting only one bidder (ICL), and it failed to take decisive action when ICL did not deliver what was required. For its part, ICL did not understand the department’s requirements, took on excessive risk and under-priced its bid.”

A report, ‘Public Interest, Private Profit’, by the London Assembly’s budget committee criticizes the way London’s congestion charge has been handled by Capita who were recently fined £1m for poor performance in the first seven months of operation. London mayor Ken Livingstone came close to sacking Capita, describing their customer services as “completely unacceptable”. However he still gave them an extra £31 million in July to iron out problems - £3.5m going to improving computer systems, which ought to have been

Thessaloniki Hunger Strikers In Critical Condition

Seven protesters were fitted up and banged up at the anti-EU demonstrations in Thessaloniki, Greece last June. **Simon Chapman** from London had molotov cocktails placed in his bag as he lay bleeding on the ground after being beaten by police (See SchNEWS 413). Now five of the prisoners: **Simon, Fernando Perez Gorraiz, Carlos Martin Martinez**, from Spain, **Souleiman “Kastro” Dakduk**, a Syrian and **Spyros Tsitsas**, a Greek have been on hunger strike for between 39 and 56 days.

Last Friday they collectively decided to refuse liquid as well in protest at not being allowed to receive mail, having no toilet privacy rights and not being allowed to contact their lawyer. After two days the authorities granted them these concessions but then at 2am on Tuesday, without their lawyer’s knowledge, all five were transported 400 miles to another prison hospital in Athens. Obviously seriously weakened, they were made to sit up for the whole journey in a cold cage in the back of a police van and weren’t even given any blankets for the cold. When they

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For holding a banner!

US activist, Brent Bursey is going to court this week after being charged for holding a sign reading “No More War For Oil” at an airport in South Carolina last October. Bush was supposed to be arriving later that day and people had gathered to show him what they thought of the war on Iraq. Bursey was charged with trespassing, even though he was on public property, ‘cos he hadn’t been standing in the marked “free-speech zone.” Protesters were only supposed to be half a mile away where nobody, least of all Bush, could see or hear them. Bursey told police he had been under the impression that the whole of America was a ‘free speech zone’ and local authorities dropped the charges. Six months later federal authorities renewed the case using a rarely enforced statute allowing the Secret Service to restrict access to areas near the president. If convicted, this charge carries a penalty of up to a \$5000 fine and six months in jail. Bursey is being denied a jury trial.

paid for by Crapita, rather than London’s taxpayers. They are also responsible for the Criminal Records Bureau - where last year delays in completing checks on teachers caused some schools to open late last autumn.

According to some projections the government will be spending £13.1 billion a year on IT by 2005. This is 14 times more than the average spent by other European governments. The spin is that IT investment results in more efficient public services and therefore is money well spent, which might be true if any of it worked!

Privacy International -
www.privacyinternational.org
www.defy-id.org.uk

reached Athens, Fernando and Kastro were in such a bad way they were taken to a civilian hospital instead of the prison one where they remain, unable to move.

There are ongoing demonstrations and actions all over the country and abroad in solidarity with the **Thessaloniki 7** so get involved – this is really important as these guys may die very soon. And why not ring the governor of the Athens Prison (Mr Stakias) and tell him what you think on 0030 210 777 2811. For more info email thessalonikiprisoners@yahoo.com or phone 07970 113770 for the full story www.freesimonchapman.org

* Benefit party for the prisoners this Friday (14) at The Eton Mission Social Club, 91 Eastway, Hackney Wick, London E9 8pm -6am £3

* Another benefit at the 1in12 Club, Bradford next Friday (21) with a short film about police beating and then fitting the prisoners up followed by a speaker about prisoner solidarity. 01274 734160 www.1in12.com

Bush Bashing Briefs

Dubya will be in England this week and would love to meet y'all. Actions are happening all round the country all this week.

15th Direct action training day to prepare for Bush's visit 2-5pm The South Wing, Community Base, Queens Road, **Brighton** ** **Sheffield** Demo assemble for 12pm Barkers Pool (in front of City Hall)

18th "Burning Planet" march against Bush - the day he arrives in the UK. 6 pm at Lincoln's Inn Fields (Holborn Tube) to march via the ExxonMobil (Esso) offices and US embassy.

19th RESIST BUSH - Day of mass non-violent civil disobedience, with announced meet up points or affinity group actions.

London Actions: Alternative State Procession Cavalcade with cyclists, taxi drivers, scooter clubs etc. 11am, Jubilee Gardens, South Bank. ** School Students' Rally. 11am, Parliament Sq. ** Street Party 12 noon, Malet St outside Uni of London Union - for a good old fashioned street party. ** O-I-L Womens peace picnic 1pm, Trafalgar Sq. ** Resist Bush Tea-Party, 3pm, Buckingham Palace.

Around The Country: Bristol Topple a statue of Bush 5pm, Bristol Peace vigil - City Centre,

opp Hippodrome ** **Cambridge** 6:00pm Market square ** **Chester** 5pm Town Hall Square ** **Edinburgh** 2pm Bristo Square, 6pm from Charlotte Square ** **Menwith Hill** Spy Base, Yorkshire 6-8pm ** **Oxford** Assemble 5pm, Oxford Brookes Uni outside main entrance, Gipsy Lane campus. 5.15pm ** **Sheffield** 12pm, 5pm Town Hall/Peace Gardens. ** **Swansea** Stop the City Assemble 5.30pm, Castle Square. ** 'Dharma-Yatra-style' walk to **Buckingham Palace** for meditation. 1pm, outside the Odeon, Marble Arch

20th: NATIONAL DEMO AGAINST BUSH. 2pm University of London, Malet Street, to Trafalgar Square. Organised by Stop the War Coalition, CND and Muslim Association of Britain. Transport details nationwide www.stopwar.org.uk/coach.asp ** Kids from four Schools in Bromley have already pledged to walk out of school and, er storm Buckingham Palace! They want other kids to join them.

21st: Guantanamo Bay Protest, 11am US Embassy, Grosvenor Square. Nearest tube: Bond Street

Go to www.schnews.org.uk for full national listings

Get Yer Bar End Away!

URGENT - Help is needed right now to help defend the tunnels and walkways preventing the completion of a park and ride on a meadow at Bar End near Winchester.

The story of Bar End goes back to the original Twyford Down road building in 1992-93 - the battleground which spawned the anti-roads movement. At the time the people of Winchester were promised as sort-of compensation for the destruction at Twyford Down that the site of the original Winchester by-pass would be returned to meadow land 'for perpetuity'. So the tarmac was removed, topsoil from Twyford Down put in its place and today it is a popular nature spot. Well now things have changed and the council want it back. A protester told SchNEWS that the vast majority of the locals don't want the park and ride, won't be using it, and that the whole scheme could be about extending the adjacent industrial park, which has got handy access to the M3.

"It's mad - they tarmac-ed the area for the Winchester by-pass, then they took that away

and made it a meadow... now they want to tarmac it again." says a Bar End protester.

This week the council cleared the way to bring heavy building equipment in to open the new park and ride, making an eviction eminent. The camp is registered as a land squat, but the council haven't applied for a court order to evict - so any eviction will be illegal. Added to this the Hampshire police have admitted already that they aren't too fussed about the finer legal points, and will call in 'colleagues' from other counties.

The camp is off Bar End Road, (an extension of Chesil Street) about a mile and half from the railway station. Or, leave the M3 at junction 10 and head for St Catherine's park and ride site, which is next to the proposed new site. The camp urgently needs people and tat now.

0776 4633056

* For some background about Twyford Downs www.schnews.org.uk/sotw/twyford-down-plus10.htm.

* If you've been Bush Bashing and are up for helping fight the destruction caused by the oil industry at ground level get down to Bar End now.

Subvert Central

Last Friday 500 people descended on the Paris métro armed with pots of glue, spray cans and colourful determination. More invaded the Brussel's metro with their own buckets of ideas. In Paris they split into groups of 40, radically repainting vulgar, buy-buy-advertising boards, transforming them with brushstrokes from private spaces for profits into public spaces of resistance. In Paris and Brussels subverted advert boards screamed "No Adverts!", "Advertising Kills", "The Street is Ours", "Advertising is Hazardous to Your Mental Health." In the end, 130 stations were reclaimed and repainted in Paris while 7 were visited in Brussels. All 40 adbusters arrested were quickly released back into a subverted Paris.

These actions of mass redecoration were called by Stop Pub ('Stop Ads') and other collectives in France. The aim was to 'reconquer public space' in the face of mass privatisation, repressive neo-liberal states and a life drowned in empty, consumerist adverts. "Everything is seen as a commodity", said one ticketless adbuster, Gilles, "We don't want to be visually polluted." And to the hundreds of students, workers, artists, mums,

dads and skaters that took part in these actions, the links between bigger adverts, less social rights and more cops was all too obvious. So the adbusters went calmly and non-violently from station to station, peacefully going about their decoration of vulgar car and clothes ads while chatting with the public and handing out info on the reasons for their actions. Métro passengers largely supported the actions, found them funny and in a few cases they even got their hands dirty doing some redecorating themselves.

This Thursday yet another action is planned. In the light of all this success, 16 organisations jumped on the adbusting train this week in France with Attac, Greenpeace and others starting a campaign against advertising. Why not bring this colourful train to a station near you? <http://www.bap.propagande.org>

For photos see: http://paris.indymedia.org/article.php3?id_article=9453

Celebrate SchNEWS 9th birthday party this weekend, Sunday (16) at the Free Butt with the Fish Brothers, Anal Beard, Crowzone and Amateur Ninja Club. £3, 7.30 till 10.30 pm

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SchNEWS in brief

Brighton's premier pirate's Radio 4A back on the airwaves this weekend (14-16) 101.4fm www.radio4a.org.uk ** There's a tenth anniversary demonstration to close down **Campsfield detention centre** on Saturday 29th November 12 noon to 2pm, Langford Lane, Kidlington, Oxfordshire. Speakers and music from Oxford Sol Samba Band, supported by Rhythms of Resistance. For transport details around the country call 01865 558145 www.closecampsfield.org.uk ** Next Monday (17) **Indymedia** are showing three films about the **Argentinian struggles** 7:30pm in the gallery area of the Spitz, 109 Commercial Street E1. Free/Donations ** **Political cartoonist Polyp** will be talking about his book next Thursday (20) from 6pm at the Cowley Club, 12 London Rd., Brighton. If you've ever wondered what a zine was or fancied putting one together then get along to the Cowley the following Thursday (27) at 6pm to find out about them. Both events are free. ** November 29th there's a **Mayday Conference** to chat about next years plans for "the ungovernable, non state sanctioned day of the year." 1-5pm in Room 3a at ULU, Malet Street London WC1 www.ourmayday.org.uk ** **The Vacuum Cleaner** will be aiding consumers of **Starbucks** in returning faulty paper cups to the coffee chain. Join them in the City of London this Friday (14th) at 11 am. Power dressed ladies and gents, armed with 200 defaced paper Starbucks cups, will be returning and installing the 'faulty cups' in the city Starbucks. www.thevacuumcleaner.co.uk/20803.html ** **Meanwhile an employee of Starbucks** has been given the sack for wearing a fuck off starbucks t-shirt. He told SchNEWS "A bit stupid of me I know but it took them a few months before they noticed!" www.starbucksfuckoff.com

Positive SchNEWS

Fed up of rip off landlords and spiralling rents? Then get along to the 'Introduction to Housing Co-operatives' meeting on December 13th @ Brighton Unemployed Centre, 6 Tilbury Place. It's free but you have to book yerself a place by calling 01273 327480 by the end of the month.

...and finally...

The Bush administration's crusade against environmentalists gained momentum last week with attorney-general Ashcroft wheeling out an 1870 law to launch a prosecution against Greenpeace. It is the first time an organisation has been prosecuted for the actions of individual members and could have serious civil liberties implications for environmental groups and free speech in general. If found guilty, Greenpeace will have to regularly report its activities to the government and will lose its tax-exempt status.

The law being used against Greenpeace has only ever been used twice before - in the nineteenth century - and was designed to prevent "sailor-mongers" from getting crew-members pissed, kidnapping them and then selling them on to another ship!

So is that the kind of thing Greenpeace activists are up to nowadays? Er...no. Their only crime was hanging a banner saying "Bush stop illegal logging" on a ship carrying Brazilian mahogany!

But the Bush administration has hated Greenpeace since they first dubbed Dubya the "Toxic Texan" though we can't see why they should object to such an apt nick-name. Only last week the Poisonous President announced that investigations into 50 power plants charged with violating the Clean Air Act were to be dropped.

Disclaimer

No SchNEWS next week cos we're all off to London to visit the Queen (and President Bush)