

NEW SUIT, SAME S*IT

The media have been merrily focusing on Blunkett's love affair, ignoring the fact that one of the most draconian changes to happen in British society, ID cards and the ID database, are being foisted upon us. The government is clearly keen to push the ID Cards Bill through Parliament as quickly as possible, with a Second Reading (the first stage of real debate in parliament) happening before Christmas. The new Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, says he will not stop the introduction of ID cards. We can!

IDENTITY CARDS BILL - A brief guide

The Identity Cards Bill could alternatively be known as the National Identity Register Bill since it seems to be primarily concerned with the establishment of a national ID database rather than with the issuing of ID cards. Indeed, it will be possible for the government to create an entry for you in the National Identity Register without issuing a card and without your cooperation or knowledge.

David Blunkett recently wrote a circular letter to various people at random. Written in an illiberal BNP-esque tone, the letter talked about ID cards as an aid to stopping terrorism, sex offenders, illegal immigrants, organised criminals, benefit cheats and as a way to prevent failed asylum seekers using services like the NHS. Crucially, it included the disingenuous information about ID cards that the government is going to be using to market them to the public.

"I want to reassure you" Blunkett offers "that the ID cards will not be used to build up a profile on innocent people or allow your private, personal information to be used without tight safeguards. The ID card will hold only very basic details, such as your name, address, date and place of birth and a finger print or the scan of your eye which securely establishes your unique identity. The ID card will hold just enough information to help us in the fight against crime and no more."

Hmmm.

An examination of the bill shows that Blunkett is stretching a point. For example, it won't just include your full name, but all the names by which you have ever been known. Not just your address, but all the addresses you have ever lived at. Not just your finger print or iris scan, but a photo as well. Also, your National Insurance number, immigration number, passport number, driving licence number, and, the number of 'any designated document not covered by the above'. Plus if you want to change any information (for which they will charge you, or fine you if you don't change it) the old information also stays on the card.

The ability to check your identity against your entry in the National Identity Register will not just be

ACTION STATIONS!!

Day of Action against ID cards January 28th

Defy-ID is putting out a call for a day of direct action on the ID cards issue on Friday January 28th.

Your group could do anything from leafleting, to blockading one of the companies involved in the ID cards process. There is a page on the Defy-ID website under 'resources' with loads of ideas for actions, and some possible 'targets'. We hope to be able to produce a proper 'greasy palms' leaflet soon, listing all the companies and organisations who are involved with, or stand to profit from the ID card legislation, and their locations around the country.

If you need any help with ideas, or want to discuss anything, or are desperate for a bit of cash to print some leaflets (and I mean desperate as we're totally unfunded) then email admin@defy-id.org.uk and we'll see what we can do to help you get an action off the ground.

available to the Immigration Service and the Police but also to “providers of public services and private sector organisations” (e.g. employers, banks, credit reference agencies, libraries, dentists, utilities companies, student loans company etc). The ID Card bill includes a power which in theory could force ‘any person’ to provide information about you for background checks. In practice this is likely to be credit reference agencies, inland revenue, and so on (though they make it clear that they won’t expect this information for free). The Bill also states that if the info the government receives from this ‘person’ or organisation differs from their own records, they’ll inform that organisation. So if, for example, you are running away from debts and tell the government your address, they can/will tell the credit reference agency who of course will tell the bailiffs.

Not compulsory?!?!

The government clearly believes that the ID card will be necessary to go about your daily life. One of the justifications they are using for ID cards is that they will make the lives of terrorists harder, and according to the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) published alongside the bill, terrorists will need an ID card, “to stay in hotels, rent accommodation, hire cars, buy mobile phone, and generally carry out their activities”. This implies we’ll all need ID cards for these purposes. The RIA also mentions that police can do a ‘card not present’ check. This means that the cops will be carrying the means of taking your biometric information - face, fingerprints or iris - and checking that against the database to establish your identity. ***No wonder the carrying of the card is not to be compulsory (yet) - they can just scan your eyes or take your fingerprints to access the information about you in the Register.*** The Police are already planning to deploy mobile fingerprint readers. The RIA also acknowledges that the Register will be a national fingerprint database that the Police will use to identify suspects in unsolved cases where there are scene of crime fingerprints that have not been identified.

Forgot to change your address? - Criminal!!!

The Bill creates a score of new offences including

- refusal to obey an order to register = £2500
- failure to submit to fingerprinting and biometric scanning = £2500
- failure to provide information demanded by the government = £2500
- failure to attend an interview at a specified place and time = £2500
- failure to notify authorities about a lost, stolen, damaged or defective card = up to 51 weeks in prison

and/or a fine

- failure to renew a card = £1000
- failure to notify authorities of any change in personal circumstances (inc. change of address) = £1000
- providing false information = up to 2 years and/or a fine

Limitless spying opportunities

The Bill states that the card scheme will allow “the provision of a secure and reliable method for registrable facts about such individuals to be ascertained or verified wherever that is necessary in the public interest.”

The government’s definition of ‘public interest’ would imply that the card and the register would be necessary to seek employment, to gain access to health and other services, and that it would be used by police and immigration officers in the course of their functions. However the words “for the purposes of the prevention or detection of crime” could be connected to financial control and money laundering regulations to provide a means by which the ID system can be used for an almost limitless range of purposes. The could include operating a bank account, using professional services such as a solicitor or accountant, applying for a permit or license, internal travel, buying property, stocks or shares, applying for credit or using large amounts of cash.

Data Sharing and the National Identity Register

Your identity number will be used to link all government databases in the future, e.g. NHS records. What is more, private companies are also likely to ask for this number which meaning the information that anyone holds on you will all be referenced with the one number, making it very easy to access and link up.

How much will it cost me to be controlled and spied upon?

The government acknowledge that the cost of the scheme over ten years would be £5.5 billion. We will pay for this scheme out of our own pockets twice - through taxes and directly. An “enhanced” passport, which includes entry on the national register, will cost around £85 (in today’s money - more allowing for inflation). An ID card without a passport will cost between £35 and £40. There will be a charge for the renewal or replacement of cards. Potentially they will also charge you to update the card

You can read the Bill and Home Office reports at www.identitycards.gov.uk



'A special circumstance'

INVASION OF THE BODY SNOOPERS

Our medical records about to go online!

The government is going to spend £40bn over ten years on an IT program of 'modernisation' of the Health System: the 'National Program for IT' (NPfIT). The NPfIT will include a national database of the medical records of all the NHS patients (Integrated Care Record Service', ICRS). The Health Authorities say that this program will respect patients' consent, and that patients will be allowed to 'opt out' of the database.

However, the reality is:-

* This database of is going to be created without patients' consent. We will only have limited rights to consent access to our data, once it is on the database.

* Our right to 'opt out' will be limited to our right to deny access to an 'identifiable' version of the database (where our names are explicitly written). But another version of the same data will be created in a 'pseudonymised' form (where our names are coded). This will be widely accessible to non-medical (private?) companies without our consent.

* The keywords to decode our 'pseudonymised' data will be kept by the government, and government authorities such as the police will be allowed to decode our data in (the suitably vague) 'special circumstances'. What are these 'special circumstances'? Plenty of repressive laws have already been introduced in the UK for 'special circumstances' or 'extremely serious crime' and have been used against political protests, extremely petty crime, and to harass ethnic minorities or the poorest in society.

The doctors rebel

In June 2004 the annual meeting of local medical committees of the BMA voted to boycott the ICRS. The GPs recognised that the holding of personal medical data on a central database demolishes the ethos of the professional and confidential doctor/patient relationship. The NHS website attacked our

GPs and said that: 'to boycott a programme of such huge importance to the NHS is unprofessional'.

NPfIT and a surveillance state.

In September 2003 Blunkett was already speaking of linking the NHS database to the national identity database. If Blunkett's plans go unchallenged, one day the police, the DSS (DWP), etc. will be able to type our 'unique' ID number and read all about our health problems (unwanted pregnancies? impotence? drug addictions? phobia of rats?...); our accidents and their circumstances; our sexual relations and next of kin.

Medical records can reveal private facts and relations. They can be humiliating. And besides purely medical data, the ICRS will also register our 'quality of life, activities of daily living and severity measures' - what we do during the day, our social class and living conditions!! Our medical records are useful also (and above all?) because they are information - and today, information, of any kind, is first of all valuable 'resources'

When information becomes 'resources', our medical records will lose the ball-and-chain of confidentiality and become a 'resource for opportunities', that is raw material able to flow at the rhythm of the profit-making pace of the modern world. Once our intimate information, formerly under custody of our GPs, becomes available on-line, it is very simple for the government to relax the legal terms and conditions for access. We are ruled by a business-bent government which one day may abide to the interests of private companies such as insurance agencies or of the UK employers and concede access to them...

The thin end of the wedge!

Virtual access to our records will be possible only if our doctors adopt a new computer system which allows for remote 'link' to our records. This will be soon realised. The NHS is now introducing the new 'Choose and Book' system in some surgeries. This system is designed to give an appearance of 'choice' to patients. But, more importantly it is also designed to make patients' records open to automatic remote access and download! The BMA has warned our GPs about the insecurity of the 'Choose and Book' trial, but it is up to the individual surgeries whether to boycott it or join it. The 'Choose and Book' system is the thin edge of the wedge: once our records are put on a system which is open to remote access, there will be no obstacles to the national database.

* PATIENTS. Ask your GPs to confirm that your

continued over...

The Defy-ID network

The network exists to raise awareness about ID cards, to actively resist the introduction of ID cards, and to support those taking action against the police state more generally. Defy-ID is not a national membership organisation, it is a network of groups from around the UK.

The best way to get involved with Defy-ID is to contact your nearest group. The contact details for local groups are listed below (some are just beginning - so be patient if you don't get a response immediately). If there is not one in your area perhaps you should think of forming one, or asking another group if they would be a contact point for people interested in these issues.

Armagh & Down
Organise! PO Box 547,
Craigavon, BT63 6WZ
tel: 07732 954 843
organise_armaghdown@yahoo.ie

Guilford
molemarvel@aol.com

Herts (South East)
southbigmouth@hotmail.com

London (Haringey)
PO Box 2474, London, N8
tel: 020 8374 5027
haringey@defy-id.org.uk
www.haringey.org.uk

Bolton
Pete tel: 07969657521

Leeds
incitement2@riseup.net

Manchester
manchester@defy-id.org.uk

Bradford
bradford@defy-id.org.uk

Leicester
leicester@defy-id.org.uk

Norwich
jacky@jackyhonour.freemove.co.uk

Brighton
Brighton@defy-id.org.uk

Lincoln
lincoln@defy-id.org.uk

Nottingham
245 Gladstone St, Nottingham,
NG7 6HX
tel: 0845 458 9595
info@veggies.org.uk

Bristol
c/o Kebele
tel: 01179399469

Liverpool
ju4justices@yahoo.co.uk

Cambridge
cambridge@lists.riseup.net
www.cambridgeaction.net

London (Barnet/Brent)
howard@starbuckscoffee.co.uk

Stoke on Trent
Sim
tel: 07751216564
simta@hotmail.com

Cheshire
mradams1107@aol.com

London (Hackney)
London Class War PO Box 467,
London, E8 3QX
www.londonclasswar.org

Worthing
worthing@eco-action.org

Glasgow
glasgow@defy-id.org.uk

continued....

medical records are and will be safe in their custody, in the present, future and after our death. That they won't be loaded without your consent into a system that allows for remote access (in particular the 'Choose and Book' system). If your doctors has already adopted the 'Choose and Book' system, do not give them your consent to book appointments for you though it. Ask your GP to stick to the boycott of the Integrated Care Record Service.

* DOCTORS. Be real doctors not state spies. Respect patients' consent as sacred and stick to the boycott of the ICRS. Boycott the 'Choose and Book' system and stick to your old IT or paper system.

* PROTEST AND CAMPAIGN. Help us informing as many people as you can. They count on our ignorance and on our silence. Pass this information to your friends, relatives, medical colleagues...

A longer version of this article, extensively footnoted, is available on a leaflet produced by Brighton Against Databases, which is on the Defy-ID website.

COPY & DISTRIBUTE

Please circulate this newsletter widely. There is a printable PDF version available to download on the Defy-ID website. You can also receive this newsletter and other updates by email. An email-friendly version of the newsletter is also on the website. To receive the newsletter by email, please send a blank email, with "Subscribe Newsletter" in the subject line, to admin@defy-id.org.uk

STAY IN TOUCH!

Email: admin@defy-id.org.uk
Website: www.defy-id.org.uk