

down. With all personal details held on a centralised computer belonging to a private company, it won't be hard for those fleeing violence to be traced, and if they try to sidestep this by using a different identity they may face up to 10 years in prison.

THE CORPORATE PROFITEERS

Many businesses have lobbied the Government for the extremely lucrative contracts for the design, manufacture, implementation and administration of the National Identity Register and identity cards. These companies try to persuade us that a big brother state is what we need to make us feel secure. They, of course, stand to reap the £3.1 billion (Home Office estimate) that it will cost to set the system up, not to mention running costs on top of that. On top of this they get to keep records on everyone, a handy database to keep tabs on anyone who decides to fight for their rights at work or in their communities.

Meanwhile, these are some of the same companies responsible for refugees and other migrants leaving their home countries. Western multinationals make billions from the weapons used in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. They make billions from the eviction of people to make way for oil fields, mines and cash crops for use in the West. They make billions from relocating their factories to the Third World to ensure a plentiful

supply of cheap labour with poor safety conditions. And now the companies are set to make millions from exploiting people's fears of scarcity of housing, health care and benefits here.

But how many people would want to leave their homes and families to live in a strange (often hostile) country if they weren't facing the threat of wars, or being without adequate means of subsistence? Multinational corporations profit all round and set us fighting each other instead of fighting back against the causes of poverty and oppression, and struggling for justice and freedom all around the world.

RESISTANCE

Even when the odds seem impossible we have to fight to defend our communities from the interests of the wealthy and powerful. It's when we stop fighting that we've lost, because Governments and corporations know they can get away with whatever suits them and makes them the most profits.

We need to create a society based on people's real needs, where ordinary people control their own lives, communities and workplaces. In the mean time, we need to resist ID cards and all other methods which make it easier for government and big business to control us.

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WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT IDENTITY CARDS?

The Identity Card bill is currently going through parliament and will probably become law this year.

Do you know how this legislation will affect YOUR LIFE?

What it will COST?

What YOU will have to do?

THE DATABASE STATE

The bill is not just about a card, but as importantly, it involves the creation of a computer database called the National Identity Register, containing information about everyone over 16 who is in the UK for more than 3 months.

This information will include all the names you've ever used, date and place of birth, all the addresses you've ever lived at, physical characteristics which could be used to identify you (including biometric identifiers such as an iris scan, fingerprint or DNA), nationality and immigration status. The Register will also include a list of other numbers allocated to you (i.e. National Insurance and NHS no's) which will be linked to your new national identity register number. This number will be used to link all government databases in the future, e.g. NHS records (which are in the process of being entered into a national database). What is more, private companies are also likely to ask for this number which means 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?

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.

ID CARDS COMPULSORY? NOT YET...

The Government claims that the scheme would be voluntary initially. But if you want to access healthcare, education or the benefits system, you'll need an ID card. Also if you renew or apply for a Driving Licence or Passport after 2007 you will be automatically entered into the Register and be issued with an ID card (at additional cost). In any case, the bill allows them to add information about you to the National Identity Register from other sources - so anyone could be added whether they like it or not.

On top of all that, the draft bill contains provision for registration to be made compulsory at a later date, and states clearly that this is the ultimate intention. When this happens the state can require you to attend to apply to be registered, and if you fail

to do so you face a penalty of up to £2500. Not just once, but every time you are sent a notice to register. You will be compelled to attend an interview and appointment to have your fingerprint taken, and iris scanned.

GOVERNMENT & CORPORATE SNOOPERS

A range of authorities including Police, Inland Revenue, Customs & Excise, Security Services, Immigration Service and Dept for Work & Pensions will have the right to access your file. And the

government will have the right to cross check your record with any records held on you by your bank, insurance companies and by credit checking agencies. It is likely there will be data sharing with other countries such as the USA too.

Both the private and public sector may have the right to look at cards and make checks on you. Whilst an entry must be made every time anyone checks your record, you have no right to see this 'audit trail'.

CAN YOU TRUST 'BIG BROTHER'?

Even if you trust this government (and not many people do), can you be sure that you can trust all future

governments. What if the BNP end up running your local council? Can you trust the private companies running the scheme; the data inputters with all your personal details; any hackers breaking into the system?

NEW CRIMINAL OFFENCES AND FINES

Once registration becomes compulsory, as well as the penalty for failing to register, people face a range of penalties for failing to comply with the new regulations, including failure to notify authorities about a damaged or defective card; failure to notify the Govt of any change in personal circumstances eg a change of address (up to £1000 fine); failing to attend an appointment for a biometrics scan (up to £1000 fine). In fact you can be required to attend a biometric scan for any change to your entry on the register, for example if you get married, or simply want to correct an error on your record.

ID CARDS TO STOP TERRORISM??

The government says ID cards are needed to protect us from terrorism, but even Blunkett recently admitted that their role in counter terrorism will be marginal. Anyone in the UK for less than 3 months will not have to have an ID card so any potential terrorists could use short stay documents instead. Most of the September 11th hijackers were travelling under their own names and didn't have criminal records, so ID cards would have made no difference.

Meanwhile, Spain has ID cards, but that didn't stop trains being blown up there.

In any event, why the fixation on terrorism? Many more people in Britain are killed every year at work; on the roads; waiting for operations; from the effects of pollution and climate change. Do these people not matter? Or is it just that there are not enough profits or political benefits to be gained from preventing these deaths?

NO ID CARD = NO STATE SERVICES

Aside from terrorism, the Government also claims that the cards will save money by preventing illegal immigration and benefit fraud. But only £50m of benefits are lost a year through identity fraud - so spending at least £3.1bn to set up the ID cards scheme is hardly cost effective, even in their own terms.

They also claim ID cards will prevent 'health tourism', but what the scheme actually means is that anyone without an ID card will be left without access to healthcare. The problem of waiting lists and delays needs to be resolved by re-distribution of resources (e.g. the billions wasted on war), not leaving people to die on the streets.

USE FALSE ID AND GO TO PRISON

The government plans to make carrying false ID a criminal offence. This is most likely to affect women fleeing domestic violence or others fleeing persecution, who might use a new identity to prevent their attackers from tracking them

