

Nottingham

DEFY-ID



RESISTING ID CARDS AND THE BRITISH DATABASE STATE :: Bulletin 5. March07 www..nottingham-defy-id.org.uk

ASBO TV

With 4.2m CCTV cameras already (that's one for every 14 people¹) and 300 new ones going up every week, Britain is the biggest user of CCTV in the world. It's about time that successive governments' arguments that the cameras are out to get 'the villains' were investigated.

Who is being watched?

A recent study² revealed that black men, young people and the homeless are twice as likely to be watched as white men, and that one in ten women were watched for "voyeuristic reasons". The fact of the matter is that CCTV doesn't impact equally on everyone. The racist, ageist and sexist attitudes of the operators and the institutions that employ them, inevitably inform who is profiled. As such, CCTV amplifies discriminatory policing and leads to greater levels of authoritarian intervention in the lives of marginalised people. It encourages a 'peeping tom' mentality and the punishment of those exhibiting deviant behaviour.

CCTV is not for reducing crime

So, are CCTV cameras really about reducing crime, as politicians and police are fond of telling us? Numerous studies, including those commissioned by the government, have found no evidence that CCTV reduces the overall crime rate of an area^{3,4}. These findings have largely been suppressed by Tory and Labour governments. It is also telling that the Home Office launched its first two-year study into "the impact of CCTV on crime, disorder and the fear of crime" after having already committed

£153m to a phased CCTV initiative. CCTV cameras have, however, been found to increase people's fear of crime⁵.

Who really gains from CCTV?

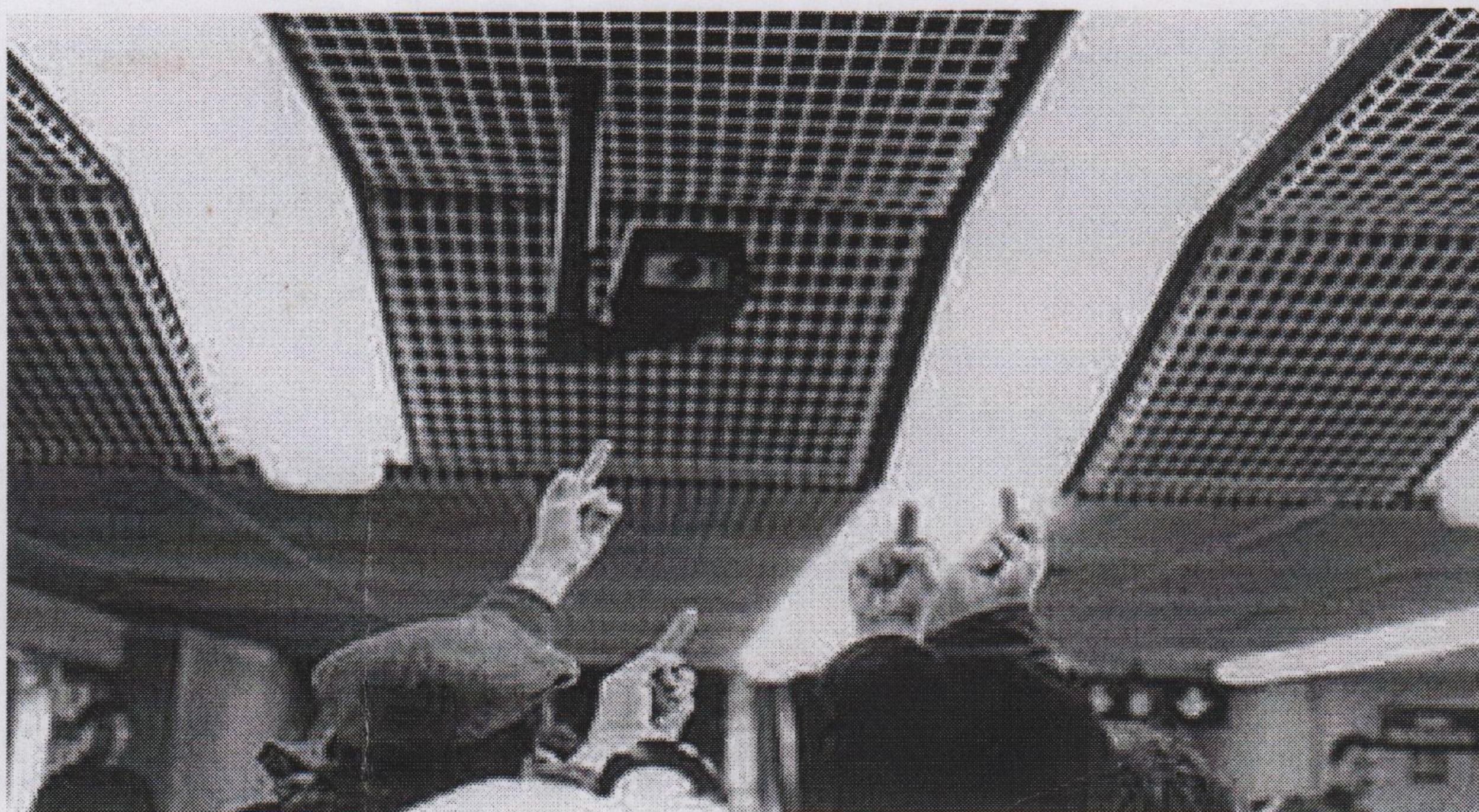
Despite the rhetoric, it seems that forces other than fighting crime are driving the boom in CCTV. The camera industry itself is a powerful player, with sales reaching £385m per year in the UK in 2001, and, through the development of facial recognition software, will increase its income. The main benefactor, however, is the state, which gets massive powers of social control through widespread camera coverage. CCTV helps to isolate and persecute those who instigate it by making sure that 'deviant' behaviour that challenges the state's authority (whether riding around on minimotoes or rioting in the estates) is recorded and made available to the police and the judiciary. They also serve as a potent reminder to anyone considering subversive acts that they are being watched. The cameras help to discipline society, so that we all accept our passive roles.

Total State control

The state can claim that it has seen everything, that it has seen almost everything, or that it has seen nothing, and even change what it says it has seen according to what is most convenient. We should remember the cameras are not there to protect us but to maintain the State's power over us.

References

1. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6108496.stm>
2. Norris, C. & Armstrong, G. (1997) *The unforgiving Eye: CCTV surveillance in public space*. Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice at Hull University.
3. Armitage, R. (2002) *To CCTV or Not to CCTV? A Review of Current Research into the Effectiveness of CCTV Systems in Reducing Crime*. London: NACRO; Gill, M. and Spriggs, A. (2005) *Assessing the Impact of CCTV*. Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.
4. Ditton, J., Short, E., Phillips, S. Norris, C. & Armstrong, C. (1999) *The Effect of Closed Circuit Television Cameras on Recorded Crime Rates and Public Concern About Crime in Glasgow*. The Scottish Office Central Research Unit.
5. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/607000.stm>
6. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4231169,00.html>



Identity cards coming soon...

... unless we stop them

The ID Cards Act was passed a year ago. Now 69 Identity & Passport interview (or 'interrogation') centres start opening in May, which will mainly affect first-time passport applicants like teenagers to begin with. At the same time asylum seekers in Britain, who are escaping repression abroad, already have their passport taken from them, are made to have an ID cards and are subjected to degrading fingerprint checks. This is a taste of things to come, for all of us, unless we resist. We must oppose ID not only for 'British' citizens, but for all people, and actively oppose tighter border controls as well.

It's not just a Labour thing either. If you listen to the Conservative Party you might believe they are opposed to ID. In fact they have just employed Lord Stevens of Kirkwhelpington, an ex-Metropolitan Police commissioner, to plan the creation of a 10,000-strong 'border' police force. The Tories may pretend this is an alternative to identity cards, but in October 2005 Stevens spoke in favour of Labour's ID Card Bill, and also for fingerprinting the entire population! Whatever we hear from the political parties about ID it is just made up to try and win political points.

NHS Database

The NHS plans to upload every individual's GP records onto a national database. Access to the database will be 'limited' to around 240,000 'health care professionals'.

The risks

So discussions between you and your GP will no longer be confidential. Inaccurate information on your records, which is not uncommon, could mean you get the wrong

treatment or medicines. It could also affect other aspects of your life where a report on your medical history is required.

Your data will be shared

Companies such as Experian gather personal data on every citizen and sell this to private businesses, political parties and the government. They use this personal information for their own gain and the data providers such as Experian are making fat profits out of it.

Don't think your medical records will be protected from this. The Dept for Health admit that they will share your personal details with other agencies, without your consent if, for example, they believe that the interest of the public is of greater importance than your confidentiality!

A true indication of the State's attitude to your personal privacy was exposed when the Dept of Health asked GPs to breach patient client confidentiality and forward correspondence from patients objecting to the database.

They also state they will share your details if required by law. But we have absolutely no idea what new laws may be passed in the future, and may not even be aware of them when they are buried within a larger piece of legislation.

Make sure you opt out

The current proposal is that every patient will be provided with the opportunity to visit their GP and view

their record and request amendments to errors. There will be a patient veto option, but anybody who does not formally opt out by a deadline date will be assumed to have consented!

Its about entitlement again!

Just as the ID Card and National Identity Register is really about controlling your entitlement to services, the Government's real motivation behind spending billions on the NHS database is about controlling your entitlement to health care.

How to opt out of the NHS database

For more information about the NHS database and how to opt out go to: - www.nhsconfidentiality.org

References

1. NHS Care Record Guarantee
2. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/6454947.stm>
3. Guardian Newspaper, Monday December 4, 2006

Get involved

Nottingham Defy-ID Meets at the Sumac Centre every Wednesday from 6-7pm. Individuals or community groups with concerns about the new Act and the effects it might have are welcome

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State harassment of the month

Arrested for not being burgled

A duo of Nottingham squatters who put to use a house which had stood empty for six years where visited by the police a total of 4 times in the first 36 hours. The visits were a result of malicious 999 calls from neighbours and general police harassment.

On the 5th visit the pair were arrested for not giving their names to the police. The spurious grounds for the arrest? "suspicion of obstructing a police officer" (suspicion??? seemingly her majesties finest can't tell for themselves whether they are being obstructed so have to trot off to the cop shop to ask the boss!).

A no-comment interview led to them being released without charge. But this is not the end of the matter as a case is now being prepared against the police.

