

Recent ID News

The ID Cards Act has now passed - but the real fight is only just beginning.

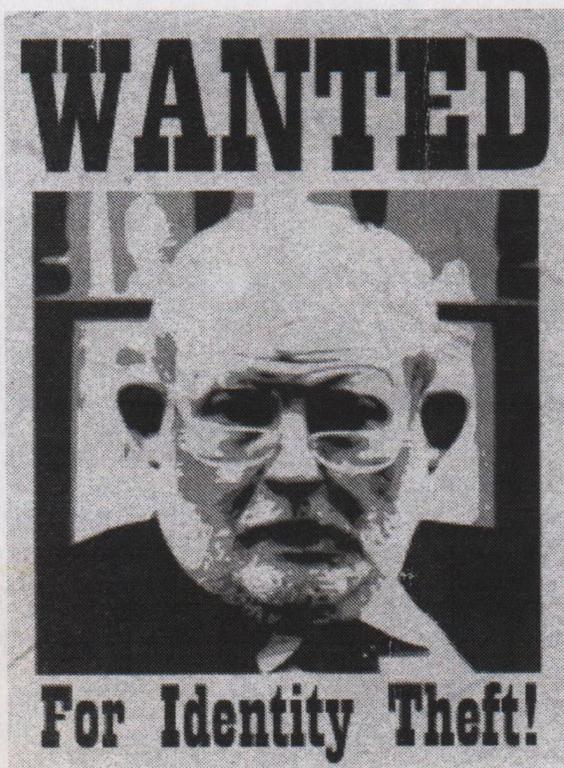
"Compromise" came when Broxtowe MP Nick Palmer suggested that from 2008, people getting a new passport would be put on the National Identity Register, but would have the option of not taking an ID card.

Given that the cards have never been anything more than a front to the real threat of the database, calling this a "compromise" is laughable.

Charles Clarke tells us that it's "voluntary", as we only have to register when renewing our passports. Yet it's clear that under this scheme, we have as much choice not to register, as of choosing not to eat, drink or sleep.

To say that we have a free choice over ID cards and the NIR, when we can only choose not to take part if we don't travel, is stretching the definition of "voluntary" to breaking point.

Perhaps it's time to give MPs some English lessons?



What's all the fuss about?

It's not really about a card - the cards are merely the outward face of the National Identity Register (NIR). Minimal personal information will be held on the card itself - most will be held centrally by the Home Office.

Individuals enrolling will be forced to submit a large amount of personal data to the NIR, as defined in Clause 1 and Schedule 1 of the ID card bill. This includes all previous names and aliases, current address and all previous addresses (UK and elsewhere), full details of residential status, permits issued, passport number, driving licence number, all 10 fingerprints, iris scans, photograph, signature and more

The Government wishes to make surrender and continual update of all this personal information compulsory. The fine for refusal to enrol is £2500, and failure to subsequently update the NIR whenever personal details (including appearance) change will incur a fine of up to £1000 (ID Cards Bill, Section 10, paragraph 7).

Every use of the card will be recorded on the NIR, including who asked to see it and the reason why: thus over time, the NIR will contain a complete audit trail of an individual's life. It is also being suggested that eventually all financial transactions above £200 will automatically require ID card verification.

Anyone believing that the card is "just another piece of plastic" should forget the card itself and familiarise themselves with the impact the accompanying NIR database will have on their everyday lives - for the rest of their lives.

Things You Can Do Now To Fight ID

We must prepare for refusal and outright revolt. The Poll Tax was defeated by local activists taking notice and learning from opposition to earlier trials in Scotland. ID is Labour's own 'tax on being alive'. We can scupper it as soon as they try and force us to register if we prepare now.

Get Involved

Get involved with your local Defy-ID or NO2ID group, or start a group yourself!

Get Informed

ID is likely to affect all of us in different ways. You may think that it won't affect you - think again! Student Loan applications will be linked to ID, and university students may even have to have an ID card to get a loan.

Get The Message Out

Make copies of this leaflet and distribute information in your local community, libraries, health centres - anywhere!

Get Your Passport

Personal information from passports will be used to build the NIR. Later, you will have to attend in person. If you need a new passport, get one now before the new systems are up and running. Make sure the photo isn't too clear - use the Post Office "Check and Send" service to see what you can get away with.

Get Angry

Local politicians can't be trusted. Under the Tories, Notts Labour councillors gleefully issued poll tax demands and court orders, sent in the bailiffs and condemned demonstrations as mindless riots. Local people supported each other, defied courts and saw off bailiffs. The days of lobbying are gone - the government does not listen! ID will be beaten on the streets or not at all.

Politics Of Fear

The government's plans for identity cards and a national identity register are presented to us as measures intended to protect us all from terrifying threats. However, this legislation is better understood as an opportunist attempt by the state to further extend its power over our lives.

In light of claims from highly placed intelligence officials that identity legislation would do little or nothing to help combat terrorism, the government has in recent times been careful not to explicitly suggest any link between the two. Nonetheless, it is surely the case that such invasive proposals would be met with more widespread discontent, were it not for the prevailing climate of fear that overshadows much of today's political discourse.

This climate of fear is something that the government is content to perpetuate. It has done this by talking about the inevitability of terrorist strikes in Britain using the biblical language of "armageddon", by deploying tanks and troops at Heathrow airport, by packing the streets of London with armed police, and by feeding into alarmist myths about the terror threat. These myths took two basic forms; first the government portrayed al-Qa'ida as a petrifying and powerful, highly organised global network of terrorists, then they exaggerated the violent hostility toward the West of some minority tendencies within political Islam into a widespread "evil ideology" that presents a major and constant danger.

This identity legislation is just one among many authoritarian measures that the state has or is seeking to implement under cover of the climate it has helped to create. Others include imprisoning suspects without charge or evidence, abetting the torture of suspects on foreign soil and introducing 'glorification of terrorism' offences that criminalise forms of dissent. All this it presents as proportionate given our "extraordinary circumstances".

Using fear as a mechanism for social control is nothing new. Politicians do it all the time, stoking fear of groups such as gypsies, paedophiles and immigrants, to name but three. The attacks of September 11th 2001 and the image of the falling towers, played on a loop alongside footage of people celebrating on the streets of Palestine, provided the government with powerful symbols, allowing them to construct a new menacing enemy, the mysterious and malign Arab 'other'.

A strong sense of fear serves to make people feel powerless, allowing the state to cast itself in the role of necessary protecting power, and thus legitimising it. In the face of this dark and sinister threat, we are told, there is nothing we can do but trust our leaders. The message from state is effectively "the best thing you, the people, can do is carry on fearfully about your daily lives, and leave us to exercise whatever power we see fit on your behalf." The powerful logic of the state is such that it makes sense from the perspective of government to grab extra power where possible as a means of imposing its model of social order. Thus it is politically expedient for the government to haunt us with the spectre of violent social chaos, allowing it to construct the narrative of a 'war on terror', which it is waging on our behalf against dangers that threaten to engulf our lives. The threat of this chaos is, though, largely illusory.

Much of the work done in creating a climate of terror is done by the state, with the complicity of the media, for whom fear-mongering is a short-cut to an arresting headline. In this sense it is accurate to say that the government is among the real terrorists, as an actor using terror as a weapon to advance its political ends.

Useful Web Links

www.nottingham-defy-id.org.uk (Us!)
www.defy-id.org.uk
www.no2id.net
www.nottingham-no2id.org.uk
www.indymedia.org.uk

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CONSTABULARY

Do you
lock your house?
Do you
lock your car?
Do you know
where your
children are?

Well Do You?

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Reassuring or fear mongering?

Get Involved

Nottingham Defy-ID meets at the Sumac Centre every Wednesday from 6-7pm.

New members of the group are welcome and there are lots of ways to contribute - bring along new information to discuss, producing and distributing leaflets and badges, planning local actions - we need it all! Now the ID cards bill has been passed, we need more than ever to build a strong local campaign.

We would love to meet with any community group that has questions about the new Act and what effect it might have. Please do get in touch!

Contact details:

Nottingham/Notts Defy-ID
c/o The Sumac Centre
245 Gladstone Street
Forest Fields
Nottingham NG7 6HX

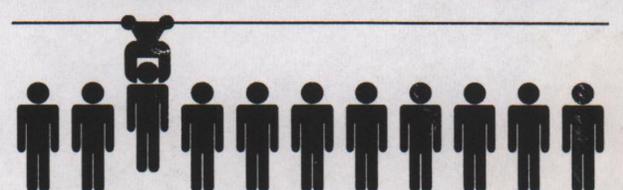
Phone: 0845 458 9595

E-mail: info@nottingham-defy-id.org.uk

Full meeting details are on our website:
www.nottingham-defy-id.org.uk

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DEFY-ID



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