



# Indypendent

Spring 2005

FREE Issue No. 7

*"The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed."* Steve Biko (1946-77) South African anti-apartheid activist

## Stop Big Brother ID cards

THE GOVERNMENT is trying to rush the Identity Cards Bill through parliament before people have a chance to realise what has hit them. It could be passed early this year unless there is a visible increase in opposition.

If passed it will bring in a range of new offences, requiring everyone over 16 (other than people on a short stay visa) to attend appointments to have their fingerprints, photograph and iris scans taken and have all their details logged into a new government computer database. Anyone not complying faces penalties of up to £2500. There's also a £1000 penalty if you don't keep your details updated and notify the government every time you move house.

Your details will be available to the Immigration Service, Police, Tax and Benefits offices, and also to "providers of public services and private sector organisations" (e.g. employers, banks, credit reference agencies, utilities companies). And those organisations can be required to supply information about you for the government database. We will pay for the cards, yet they won't entitle us to anything we're not entitled to already.

The Government is already employing more than 80 people to develop the scheme even though the bill has not become law yet. This includes 40 consultants from PA Consulting, who were awarded a contract worth approx £10 million to help develop and implement ID cards. Expected costs for the introduction of ID cards have already risen from



£3.1bn to £5.5bn - money that would be better spent on providing decent healthcare for all.

The government have repeatedly tried to prevent any public debate about ID cards by saying 'if you've got nothing to hide, you've got nothing to fear', implying that anyone opposing ID cards must be up to no good. Yet the Government has banned the release of legal advice it was given on whether the ID card scheme will invade people's privacy or human rights. Clearly they DO have something to hide.

We should always resist any government attempts to collect more information on us as it will be used against our interests. Once all your personal data has been collated there's no going back. Even if you trust this government, can you be sure you can trust all future ones?

Opposition to the ID card scheme has been growing throughout the country. In Tottenham a packed public meeting in September agreed to set up Haringey Against ID cards (HAID). Since then the group has met regularly, produced leaflets & posters, held

stalls and organised door to door leafletting. If you can help in any way, or would like to be kept informed please get in touch with HAID. Defeating the ID cards bill now will save a lot of hassle later!

Haringey Against ID Cards meets on the 2nd Saturday of every month 3-5pm at Wood Green Library, High Rd, N22 and the last Thursday of every month, 7.30pm at Tottenham Green Leisure Centre, Town Hall Approach Road, N15. Everyone is welcome to attend the meetings.

### CONTACT

✉ HAID c/o PO Box 2474, London N8  
 ✉ haringey@defy-id.org.uk  
 ☎ 020 8374 5027

### For more info see:

www.haringey.org.uk/ID.html  
 www.defyid.org.uk  
 www.no2id.net

You can read the ID cards bill (and associated reports) at:  
 www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/identitycards/

### WHAT YOU CAN DO...

- help with distribution of leaflets
- display a poster in your window
- sign the pledge to refuse to co-operate if ID cards are brought in
- write letters opposing the scheme to local and national papers, your union, or anyone else you can think of
- join protests against ID cards
- set up groups in your workplace, street, school or college

### GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES?

- **£50 million** – the money pledged by the British government to the Tsunami affected areas (as at 5th January 2005).
- **£6 billion** – the money the British government has spent on the Iraqi war and occupation.
- **£50million** is the same amount as the UK spends every five and a half days on the war

# Resisting the ALMOst privatisation of council housing

DESPITE A GROWING protest campaign throughout country, the Government is still scandalously refusing to release available housing funds to local councils, forcing them to privatise public housing, either by direct transfer to housing associations, or by the two-stage process which begins with setting up an Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs). The ruling elite can't stand the fact that, due to past campaigns and struggles, working class people are entitled to decent housing. Hence for decades they have starved such housing of the funding it needs.

Throughout the last few months of 2003 Haringey Council claimed to be consulting over the future of the 21,000 local council homes. To "help" tenants & leaseholders decide, the Council hired an "Independent" Tenants Advisor - the director of Mouchel Parkman Limited - a company which says it is keen to "exploit opportunities created through development of the PFI/PPP (privatisation) marketplace" and a company which already has at least 15 contracts with local authorities to run their housing stock!

## Tenants reject Propaganda

Despite this official blackmail and spin, a majority of tenants and leaseholders signalled their opposition to any form of privatisation. They have been backed by campaigners involved with Haringey Defend Council Housing, who've kept tenants informed of what's really going on, and demanded that government resources be released for improvements.

It looks like the campaign has forced the Council to concede that there should be a full ballot of all tenants & leaseholders in early spring, for them to decide if any changes are to be made. However, arguments continue over the likely wording of the ballot, and the Council is preparing to step up its propaganda in favour of an ALMO. If they succeed it will mean higher rents for tenants and big dividends for the private companies involved. As with all public services, the battle continues...

Contact:

☒ **Defend Council Housing**, c/o Unison,  
48 Grand Parade, Green Lanes,  
N4 1AG  
☎ 020 8888 7836

## MUMS STORM SCHOOL'S KITCHENS

MOTHERS OF KIDS at a Camden school have led a revolt after raiding its kitchen and finding freezers stuffed with reconstituted meat, tinned and packet food, and hardly any fresh vegetables or fruit. There wasn't even any flour or oil to cook with.

Since the discovery, the number of children eating school dinners has skunked from 210 to less than 50.

The unofficial inspection came after parents started phoning and writing to the council and privatised catering company Scolarest to find out exactly what their kids were eating. A typical day's menu at the school includes chicken dippers, cheese slices and breaded fish or vegetable shapes - hardly the most nutritious of combinations.

Even the school's head teacher has admitted that the dinners have "plumbed new depths" since they were privatised. So far the parents' protests have gone unheeded by Camden Council who continue to claim that quality has actually improved and that the meals meet government guidelines.

However, how long will Scolarest be able to keep the contract if parents continue to give their kids packed lunches instead of dinners?

We at *Totally Independent* support the actions these parents took. Maybe Haringey school kitchens are due a look...

## Curfew Copper by Sophia Koumi

THE ANTI-SOCIAL Behaviour Act, which became law in January 2004, makes hanging around on the streets with your mates illegal.

The Act includes provisions for a curfew for under-16s that starts at 9.00 pm and ends at 6.00 am. This means that you're not allowed on the streets during this time and can be taken home by the police if you are. The Act also gives power to the police to disperse 'threatening groups' of teenagers at any time. This means that if you're in a group of two or more, and not with a responsible adult, they can force you to go home and even ban you from going back to that area for 24 hours. Even if you're doing no harm! Apparently this is a 'discretionary power not a curfew' but it's a restriction on our private life, even if it is a free lift home.

The curfew has already been introduced in areas like The Cherry Tree and Hampden Square in Southgate. These are all places that have been made into teenagers' territory and which are thought by the council to be anti-social behaviour hotspots.

The trouble there started when teenagers became restless and started 'tagging' everything: bus stop signs, telephone boxes and even the pavement. Then there was the repeated smashing of

the same bus stop window and sometimes even massive after-school fights with the whole school involved and teachers trying to break it up: just a bundle of heads, legs, arms and hands.

The police now patrol these areas 24/7 so under-16s have no escape. Teenagers rush home at 8.45 pm because after 9pm



the police take over. They've been given too much power and are abusing it. They're discriminating against teenagers who aren't doing anything wrong.

Under the curfew, if you're under 16 you're going home. But what if you're 17 and look really young, or 14 and look really old, or just passing through a curfew area on your way home? How do the police know the difference? Will they just

take everyone off home because they've got lots of friends and are therefore in a big group?

Teenagers are already used to walking into a shop and having the security guard immediately on their back, checking they don't steal anything and being threatened with arrest because the Community Officer thinks they're 'acting suspiciously' by walking around.

We're used to being in the park and seeing all the parents slowly backing away, giving you evil looks and wishing there was a sign on the gate saying 'no teenagers allowed', or sitting on a bench, talking and joking around, and then being 'caught' and threatened with arrest.

Walking down the street, people avoid you completely, feeling threatened by the hands in pockets, the heads down and the hoods up. In doing this most teenagers are just trying to blend in but apparently this scares everyone into removing us from the streets.

We're not going to hurt anyone for no reason. We're only on the street because, when you're broke and have nothing better to do, the streets are free. Most

# Green Spaces Under Threat

THERE IS CURRENTLY a battle going on to save our green spaces for the enjoyment of all. Modern over-development is threatening havoc to the environment and local neighbourhoods: The Government and Greater London Authority are promoting a massive house-building programme in London despite local communities already suffering from inadequate infrastructure, services and facilities. Schools are desperately seeking to expand and are eyeing up our vital public parks. This municipal cannibalism has got local residents up in arms.

In October last year, 150 residents took part in a 'Save Our Parks' march from Wood Green library to White Hart Lane Recreation Ground. A local school had applied to fence off a well-used part of the park as a floodlit, all-weather sports pitch with restricted public access. The following month about 100 residents packed into the Council chamber for a highly controversial hearing of the Council's Planning Applications Sub-Committee. After two hours of argument and protests, residents cheered their victory as Councillors voted 5-0 to reject the land-grab application. It was felt by all concerned to be a 'test case' which could affect all Haringey's parks.

This isn't the first time this has happened. A few years back, we in Haringey Solidarity Group campaigned successfully against a threat to fence off part of Downhills Park in South Tottenham for the same reason. Then, at the end of 2003, there was uproar when the Council proposed changing its

policy to allow schools to annex parts of Bruce Castle Park in North Tottenham and Stationers Park in Crouch End. Again, they had to back down after public protests.

Over the last five years, users of many of Haringey's parks have set up 'Friends' groups to campaign for maintenance and improvements, and to organise events (bulb-planting, clear-up days and community festivals etc). These voluntary groups are helping regenerate our vital, but often



neglected, green spaces and helping local communities to take more control over their future.

Those behind the protests mentioned above, in particular these Friends of Parks groups as well as local Residents Associations, have pledged to remain vigilant to protect and improve Haringey's public parks and green spaces.

We urge residents throughout the borough to organise themselves to stand up for the interests of their local communities. **Contacts:**

- The Haringey Friends of Parks Forum is a network of local 'Friends' groups: c/o 14 Sandringham Road, N22
- The Haringey Federation of Residents Associations is an umbrella body for local residents' associations.

✉ info@haringeyresidents.org  
☎ 020 8211 0916

## Curfew Copper

... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

teenagers are just bored. If the government gave us something better to do we wouldn't have to be peeled off the street and stuck at home.

People are scared because their minds have been moulded to believe that all teenagers are rude, annoying, drug addicted yobs, full of raging hormones and out to cause damage. But we've been given a bad name by the very few teenagers who do get high to escape, or damage something for a bit of entertainment. These are the ones who brought on this curfew but we're all being punished.

All teenagers want is something to do but people seem to believe the way to stop them feeling restless is to limit their freedom.

*This article first appeared in **Exposure**, a Haringey magazine written by and for young people in the borough. If you are between 14 & 21 and want to get involved in **Exposure** contact them on either*

☎ 020 8883 0260 or 07947 884282 or  
✉ editor@exposure.org.uk

## ATTACKS ON WORKERS

ON WEDNESDAY 5<sup>th</sup> January workers at the *Haringey Advertiser* took strike action after their bosses tried to introduce new cost cutting ideas.

In the workers' own words: "*our employers, Trinity Mirror Southern (TMS), decided to take a number of cost-cutting measures, including staff redundancies and producing the paper over the other side of London, which we believe will leave Haringey with a vastly inferior newspaper.*"

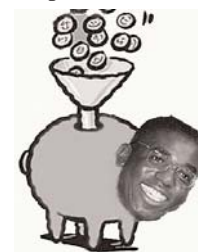
Workers were planning further strike action on 10/12<sup>th</sup> January. We at *Totally Independent* were going to join them on the picket lines. But, the employers took out a court injunction against the strike, claiming it was not organised in accordance with the law. Perhaps the workers should have gone on strike anyway, but they have decided to re-ballot for further strike action. The picket lines and strike should be back by the beginning of February.

We all know how difficult it is to get pay rises from our bosses and to stop redundancies. The *Haringey Advertiser* may have more adverts than news, but we should all support our fellow workers on strike. We should also resist any attempts to water down the news sections yet further.

**STOP PRESS: The workers have now come to an agreement with the management and the strike has been called off.**

## NICE LITTLE EARNER

A 2004 REPORT from a House of Commons select committee has revealed that Tottenham MP David Lammy received £12,000 last year toward the cost of a second home in central London, despite the fact that he only lives a 30



minute tube journey from Westminster!

This housing allowance was on top of his MP's salary of £59,000 a year, a ministerial top up, plus £115,000 in annual expenses. A

nice little earner if you can get it. And many times the average wage in Tottenham. Lammy also owns a flat in south London which he rents out.

How can this overpaid middle class ex barrister with his snout jammed deep in the public trough understand what life is like for working class people in Tottenham?

# Farming The Flames ?

TOTTENHAM residents wanting help with late-night problem drinkers are now stuck with a curfew for under-16s.

In the summer of 2003, residents in the Bruce Grove area had finally had enough of the problems from a group of late night drinkers, congregating around a hairdressers on a residential street and generally causing a nuisance. Fed-up locals found support at a neighbourhood residents' meeting and were hopeful that the problem would be tackled using existing restrictions on urinating in public areas, loud noise late at night and littering the pavement. However, a councillor present at the meeting decided to stick their oar in, without consulting local residents, and got an anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) imposed instead. Police can now disperse any group of two or more people in the area. But worse than that, it imposes a ban on all under 16 year olds being out after 9pm. The curfew on young people was completely unnecessary as the trouble had been coming from a group of older guys and had nothing to do with under-16s.

In an effort to divert attention away from their failings in other areas, the Government is introducing a range of measures supposedly to give control to communities facing problems, but ASBOs take little account of specific circumstances at local level. This story shows what happens when people do not have control over the decisions that affect their own neighbourhood. The solutions to local problems must come from local people.

IN OCTOBER LAST year the police started tearing up a garden in Willan Road, Broadwater Farm searching every inch of soil for forensic evidence of the death of PC Keith Blakelock during the Broadwater farm uprising on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1985. They have also been examining 6000 witness statements and thousands of photos from the night. The estate has also faced a fresh invasion of cops and hundreds of hours have been wasted leafleting the area to make their case.

It's interesting to compare the effort the Met is putting in to catching Blakelock's killers, to the amount of energy spent on bringing the police who were present at Cynthia Jarrett's death to justice; or for that matter the police killers of Roger Sylvester whose family were disgusted with the High Court's decision to overturn a verdict of unlawful killing; or the firearms officers who shot unarmed Harry Stanley in Hackney; or the officer who choked Kebbe Jobe to death in Camden; or the five

coppers who were filmed laughing as former soldier Christopher Alder died in front of them on the floor of his cell in Hull.

You can be sure that if a police officer dies heaven and earth will be moved and all the stops will be pulled out to make sure someone is punished, often no matter who. But if a working class person is killed by the police, or dies in strange circumstances in police custody - then the wheels of justice turn very slowly.

## Broadwater Farm Uprising 1985

MANY PEOPLE in Haringey remember the events of October 1985 on the Broadwater Farm Estate in Tottenham, when the police set off a chain of events that was to backfire on them spectacularly - costing two people their lives. Resentment had been building for some time as a result of police racism and harassment in the area, before a local woman, Cynthia Jarrett, died after she was pushed to the floor by police raiding her home for bogus reasons. An angry but peaceful demonstration was held outside Tottenham Police Station.

Later the same day, following a huge public meeting on the estate, a decision was made to return to the police station and continue protests there. But as residents attempted to leave the estate, huge numbers of police in full riot gear flooded into the streets leading into the estate and prevented people from leaving. Fearing for the safety of

their community and incensed by being imprisoned in this way, people began to fight back. Police came under sustained attack from local residents for several hours with whatever missiles and weapons were at hand. The uprising ended with one dead, PC Keith Blakelock, and dozens of injured on both sides.

In the months following, thousands of police swamped the estate and hundreds of homes were raided. People were arrested and held for days (often illegally) without being allowed to see a solicitor or notify anyone of their arrest. Many people were assaulted by the police and made to sign statements implicating themselves or others, including some who were nowhere near the Farm on the night in question. The police, desperate to convict someone for PC Blakelock's death, framed six people. Three were juveniles, who were found inno-

cent at the end of the trial, with police evidence discredited. Despite this, the police and media witch-hunt led to the conviction of three men. It was not until 1991 that their convictions were overturned when forensic evidence proved that police had falsified statements.

Tribute must be paid to the local residents who fought tirelessly to support those arrested and also worked hard for 20 years to put these events behind them and make substantial improvements to the estate.



### WHO WE ARE

We in Haringey Solidarity Group are a collective of local people who want to get rid of the current oppressive and unfair system which places profit and power before people's real needs. The only effective way to do this is for ordinary people to get organised, fight back and take over all the decision making power in our communities and workplaces. We encourage people to spread awareness and solidarity, co-operation and mutual aid amongst each other, and to build up the skills and confidence to be able to run things for ourselves. To that end we support and participate in local campaigns, spread ideas and help create effective opposition to the powers that be.

what we do >>>

### HOW TO CONTACT US

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